

Ark Priory Primary Curriculum Framework 2021/2022



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Introduction

Ark Priory Primary Academy's mission: *'To begin the journey to provide every pupil with the opportunity to go on to a university or pursue the career of their choice.'* This is the fundamental principle that underpins the design, implementation and ongoing review of the Priory curriculum. It is at the very core of our 'why' and defines us as a school.

Curriculum Aims and Rationale

The Ark Priory Curriculum aims to:

- Give all our pupils a rich knowledge of the world in which they live; experiences to make sense of it; and the confidence to make judgements on what they see
- Inspire young minds to keep learning, sharing a deep and meaningful foundation of knowledge that stimulates curiosity and inquisitiveness
- Create future citizens who have the courage to engage with major global challenges such as the environment, community cohesion, and ethical decision-making
- Equip pupils with the skills that will give them the confidence and resilience to shape their own path through life

Rationale

A high-quality education, built around a rich curriculum, is a matter of social justice. Our young people have a right to experience the best, and to be given the opportunity to make their own contribution to the continual reshaping of our civilization and their world. It is up to us to be champions of young people's hopes, talent and ideas.

There has been a dual focus on *what* children should be learning and *how* best it should be taught. Curriculum design architecture (the 'what') is tantamount to curriculum delivery architecture (the 'how'). In making decisions about what should be taught, we have ensured that the curriculum provides access to a common body of essential content, taken from the National Curriculum. It also draws upon the elements of exceptional practice from the UK and beyond, to embody 'the very best of what has been thought and said'. It is a coherent curriculum, with links and threads running through it, so that teachers how it fits together.

However, the content is rendered useless if the delivery architecture is weak. Therefore, we invest heavily in supporting our teachers with curriculum delivery, to develop pedagogy of repertoire, evidence and principal, as:

Good teaching makes a difference. Excellent teaching transforms lives.

Intent

The intent of our curriculum goes far beyond the outcomes seen at the end of Year 6. We have thoughtfully constructed a curriculum framework which focuses not solely on academia but on shaping our pupils into confident, passionate, life-long learners. We want our pupils to continue their journey with a secure foundation of knowledge, skills, ideas and most importantly-a relentless curiosity about the world around them. Thus, when designing this curriculum, we endeavoured to ensure it was broad, complimented by a wide range of experiences and provided pupils with far more than just academic achievement.

We believe that *‘Learning is defined as an alteration in long term memory... If nothing has been altered in long term memory, nothing has been learned.’* However, we recognise that knowledge alone is not sufficient and define it as “a lasting change in pupils’ capabilities or understanding” (Department for Education, 2019, p.10). We believe in the ‘Ark Priory’ child, that at the end of Year 6, will leave with the skills set out in this document and be able to be valuable and effective citizens of the world.

In our pursuit of providing Priory pupils with a balanced and rich education, we have crafted a curriculum based on four key constructs:

1) *Knowledge*

What we know allows us to read – it is our prior knowledge that enables us to comprehend new material. Knowledge is highly ‘transferable’ between contexts. Knowledge learned across the curriculum facilitates comprehension. The idea that a rich base of factual knowledge helps pupils to make connections and exponentially leads to further learning is at the heart of the design of each unit through the years. The framework for each year group details explicitly the knowledge that will be learnt and how this knowledge develops cumulatively throughout the unit. Our key questions that go across each year group per half term allow this knowledge to be built upon year upon year, providing the children with a concrete knowledge base and vocabulary to be free to explore, excel and endeavour within the curriculum and beyond.

2) *Skills*

Once pupils have a broad knowledge base, they need to explore, practice and master skills to allow them to apply this knowledge in a meaningful way. The Priory curriculum highlights these key skills and demonstrates how these are applicable in real life contexts. It is of crucial importance to us that our pupils are clear on how content relates to real life. This is integral to pupils’ developing positive learning attitudes from the earliest stages of their education.

3) *Experiences*

Pupil’s experiences are of paramount importance in the delivery of the Priory curriculum. It is these experiences that provide meaningful context to learning. In other words, it makes the learning ‘sticky’ and gives something for pupils to pin their developing understanding to. The curriculum details experiences that

enrich and complement each unit and offer teachers suggested educational visits that will ultimately enhance pupil understanding. These experiences also serve a different purpose- it allows our pupils, who come from differing backgrounds, equal opportunity to experience people and places that they may not have access to otherwise. Through these experiences, they will also develop key life skills that we too often take for granted- how to use transport systems, how to interact with others and how to conduct themselves in public- essential development of them as both student but more importantly as active citizens in our society.

The curriculum covers all areas of the statutory National Curriculum and offers equal importance to all subjects- a move away from the more traditional focus on Reading, Writing and Maths. Rather, these 'core' subjects are interspersed in all subject areas to allow pupils to flourish across a range of areas and develop multiple interests and talents.

Our intent is that all Ark Priory children leave our school with these key skills embedded.

4) *Cultural Capital*

Ofsted define cultural capital as:

'...the essential knowledge that pupils need to be educated citizens, introducing them to the best that has been thought and said and helping them to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement'.

Our curriculum strives to enable children '**...to stand on the shoulders of those that have gone before and create new and exciting forms of culture**' through providing enrichment opportunities, such as visits to art galleries, theatres and museums, within a rich and cultured curriculum.

As Martin Robinson states '*the most expensive seats in the theatre are not the ones with the best view. For some people it is more important to be seen going to the theatre than the actual going itself*'. We apply this analogy to our curriculum; it is not enough for children to be seen reading Shakespeare, they need to feel the humour, the passion and the beauty of the literature. They need much more than to be told that Shakespeare was a great writer; they need to experience it.

Knowing itself is not enough

We do not want our children to be sat in 'boxes' at the theatre. We believe that our children should go to the theatre to experience it. To be able to appreciate something, you need to participate in it, before going on to make judgements and decisions.

To support children to succeed in life, the curriculum aims to give our pupils wisdom; knowledge of the world in which they live; experiences to make sense of it; and the confidence to make accurate judgements of what they see.

Values and Building Moral Character

For our children to succeed they need to be equipped with **Universal competencies** which prepare them for further studies and the world beyond. They are taught explicitly and then practised across a wide range of subjects. They include:

- Debate, discussion and co-operative techniques
- Performance and Public Speaking
- Critical thinking
- Financial Literacy
- Digital Literacy

The Ark Priory Curriculum is firmly rooted in Ark's six pillars.

We set high expectations for all our pupils, and we do whatever it takes to meet them. Our aspirations are no lower for our most vulnerable pupils. We strive for excellent teaching, because a teacher affects a pupil's achievement more than any other factor.

To nurture a love of reading and develop fluent communication skills, we also dedicate more time to oracy, literacy and English. When children build firm foundations in English and maths, they find it easier to do well in other subjects too. That's why we prioritise depth in these subjects, giving our pupils the best chance of success. Every hour of every day is devoted to children learning, with no wasted time.

We have designed our curriculum around the rigour and challenge of the Ark Base Curriculum and a number of other programs of study with the addition of rich experiences, and local knowledge. By the time our children leave us, aged 11, they will have a deep understanding of their local community and how it connects them to London, the UK and the world beyond. They will understand what it feels like to try something new, and actively seek new opportunities, and they will take their love of success with them, as they move on to secondary and further education.

We have a set of school values which are explicitly taught to our pupils throughout their time in our school. They are 'Explore, endeavour and excel' with the 'courage to fly'. The values permeate our school at all levels, they are understood and modelled by all staff and pupils. There is clarity around the expected behaviours linked to each value.

By the end of their time at Ark Priory, we expect all children to possess the characteristics highlighted in our an 'Ark Priory child' diagram (see below).



At Ark Priory we use the following programmes of study:

- Mathematics Mastery
- Ark Curriculum+ science
- Ark Curriculum+ humanities