MARISH

ACADEMY TRUST

Curriculum Intent, Implementation and Impact Statement and Policy 2025-2026

Resilience for learning and resilience for life, through our 4D curriculum

Contents

Curriculum Intent Statement

At Marish Academy Trust, our curriculum is always evolving in response to the needs and interests of our pupils and our community, but it remains based on the following key principles:

1. We believe that learning is a change to long-term memory.
2. Our aims are to ensure that our students experience a wide breadth of study and have, by the end of each key stage, long-term memory of an ambitious body of procedural and semantic knowledge, which is interconnected and creates meaning.

Curriculum Intent model

1. Curriculum drivers shape our curriculum breadth. They are derived from an exploration of the backgrounds of our students, our beliefs about high quality education and our values. At Marish Academy Trust, our key curriculum drivers are:
    - Aspiration: enshrined in our vision for all children to achieve the best possible outcomes, and so improve their life chances.
    - Resilience building: ensuring each child leaves our schools equipped with the capacity to overcome the challenges and changes they will inevitably face in life.
    - Rich, varied and ambitious curricular and extra-curricular opportunities: endowing pupils with cultural capital and character education.

    NB. We believe cultural capital gives our students the vital background knowledge, which is required for them to be informed and thoughtful members of our community to understand and believe in British values, and make a positive contribution to society throughout life. SMSC and PSHE strands are also embedded throughout the curriculum.
2. Curriculum breadth is shaped by our curriculum drivers and subject topics. It provides the opportunities needed for each child to become a proficient communicator, reader, writer and mathematician by the end of KS2. As well as this, our curriculum breadth is designed so that our pupils will get to study the best of what has been thought and said by many generations of academics and scholars.
3. Our curriculum distinguishes between subject topics and 'threshold concepts'. Subject topics, the specific aspects of subjects that are studied and incorporated together, create curriculum breadth. This is sometimes described as *substantive knowledge*.
4. Threshold concepts connect subject topics and key skills into meaningful schema. They are sometimes described as *skills* or *disciplinary knowledge*. The same concepts are explored in a wide breadth of topics. Through this 'forwards-and-backwards engineering' of the curriculum, students return to the same

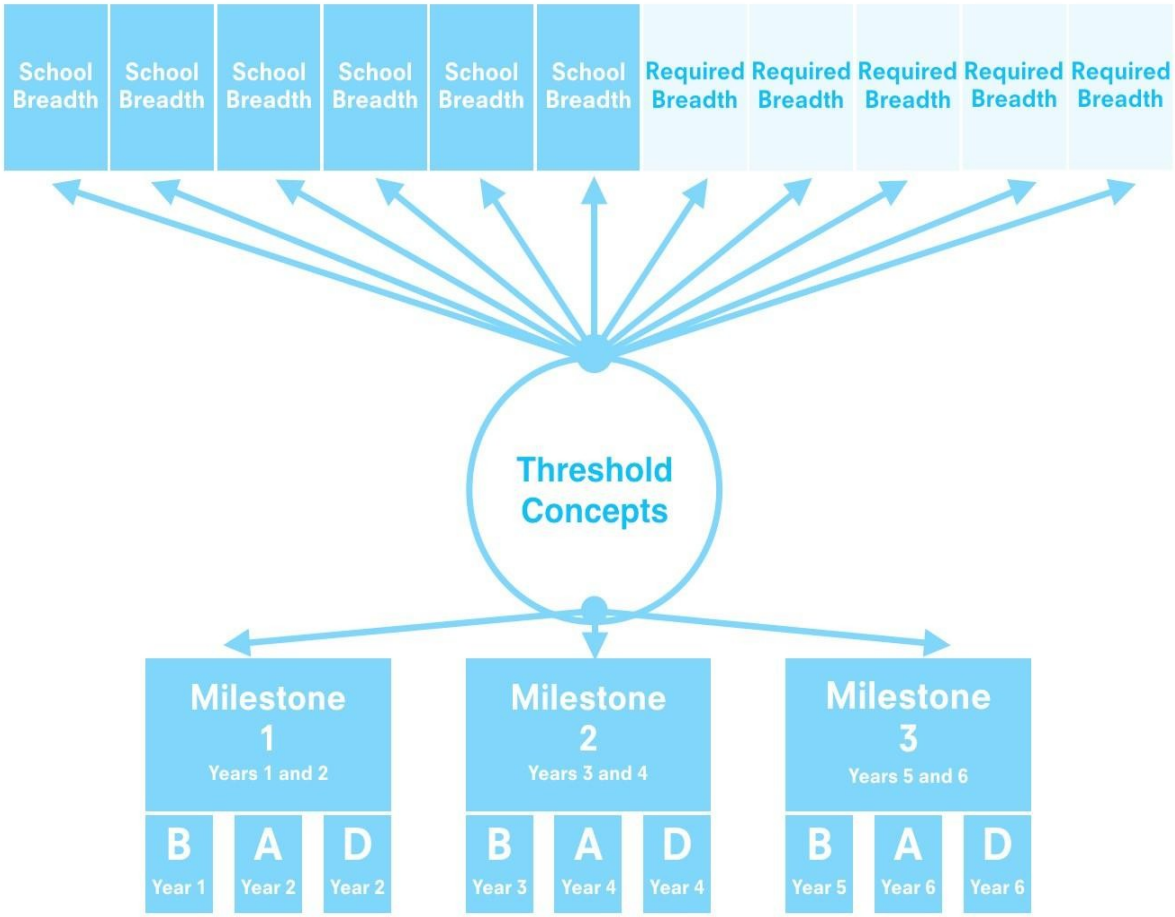
concepts over and over and gradually build understanding of them; from basic, to advanced, to deep understanding.

5. For each of the threshold concepts in the core subject areas, we will formally assess progress twice yearly, with the exception of years 2 and 6. In these year groups, which face statutory tests, we will formally assess three times a year in the core subjects. Our aim, for all children, is that they will meet or exceed age related expectations, with specific targets that are measured from individual starting points. Informal assessments, which inform future planning, will continue to be carried out on an ongoing basis in all lessons (please refer to the Trust's *Assessment Recording and Reporting Policy* for further details).
6. For foundation subject threshold concepts, which are interwoven throughout the subjects and whole curriculum, we have created a progression model based on *three milestones*. Each milestone includes the procedural and semantic knowledge students need to understand the threshold concepts. These milestones assess whether a pupil's understanding is at a *basic, advancing or embedded level*. Given that learning is a change to long-term memory, milestone assessments in foundation subjects are carried out regularly through Proof of Progress (POP) tasks. Our expectation is that, after one year of study, children who achieve the basic level of understanding will have reached age related expectations and after a second year, children will be at either an advanced or embedded level of understanding.
7. Cognitive science confirms that working memory is limited in humans. Pupils who are rushed through content, without explicit and repetitive '*over learning'* of threshold concepts (skills), descend into '*cognitive overload'*, which limits the acquisition of long-term memory. Cognitive science also tells us that pupils need to first master the basics in order for them to become creative thinkers, or have a greater depth of understanding. This takes time and repetition of threshold concepts through a variety of different content. So, for example: in Geography we might learn about Africa, USA, Scandinavia, India and Italy in comparison with the UK, without ever learning the skills of 'being a Geographer', such as identifying physical and human features accurately, or interpreting maps, or the impact of humans on the landscape.
8. Within each Milestone, pupils gradually progress in their procedural fluency and semantic strength through three cognitive domains: basic, advancing and embedded. The goal for pupils is to display sustained mastery at the 'advancing' stage of understanding by the end of each milestone and for the most-able to have a greater depth of understanding at the 'embedded' stage. The time-scale for sustained mastery or greater depth is therefore two years of study and, although we will assess pupils' progress in the foundation subjects once a year, we will only expect advanced or embedded understanding of threshold concepts at the end of the second year.
9. As part of our progression model, we use a different pedagogical style in each of the cognitive domains of basic, advancing and embedded. At the basic stage of learning, there is more direct instruction as teachers

explain and model and pupils practise and repeat. We move on to discovery-based approaches later and problem-solving investigation in the embedded domain. This is a reversal of common pedagogical practices over the last 20 years in UK schools.

10. Also, as part of our progression model, we use POP tasks which assess and demonstrate our typical curriculum expectations in each cognitive domain.

Diagram of Curriculum Intent model



Implementation at Marish Academy Trust

11. Our curriculum design is based on evidence from cognitive science; three main principles underpin it:

a Learning is most effective with spaced repetition.

b Interleaving helps pupils to discriminate between topics, and aids long-term retention (Geography and History taught separately).

c Retrieval of previously learned content must be frequent and regular, which increases both storage and retrieval strength in long term memory.

In addition to the three principles, we also understand that learning is invisible in the short-term and that sustained mastery takes time.

Our content starts as subject specific. This is a one-dimensional curricula model. We make links across subjects and through topics creating a 2D curricula model. The model becomes 3D as we interweave threshold concepts and skills into what we teach and pupils learn, repeatedly over time. Finally, we make intra-curricular links to strengthen schema and connections between new content and what the pupil or class already has learnt and stored in their long term memory. Thus becoming a 4D curricula model. Getting this last part right takes real skill, careful planning and delivery and an awareness of the whole curriculum and threshold concepts/skills' progression across the whole Primary Phase.

Continuous provision, in the form of daily routines, replaces the teaching of some aspects of the curriculum and, in other cases, provides retrieval practice for previously learned content.

Impact of the Curriculum at Marish Academy Trust

As learning is a change to long-term memory, it is impossible to see impact in the short term.

We do, however, use assessment based on threshold concepts as described above. We review our ongoing curricula practice to determine whether it is appropriate, related to our goals and likely to produce the results we want.

We use comparative judgement in two ways; in the tasks we set (POP Tasks, see point 10) and in comparing a student's work over time.

We use lesson observations, learning walks, pupil voices, book and planning scrutiny to see if the pedagogical style and delivery matches our pedagogical and milestone expectations (see point 11).

Online learning

EYFS uses Tapestry, in conjunction with parents' contributions, to build a special record of a child's experiences, development and learning journey throughout their early years. The children's work, videos, photos and diary entries can be uploaded and these contribute to an online journal, which documents the child's development. The journal can be accessed by parents and used as a permanent record of their child's unique learning journey.

We also have a number of online subscriptions to support the children's learning, encourage engagement and provide a tool for independent study, which adds another dimension to their learning experience and timetable. This also supports the lower attainers with work that is specific to their needs, whilst providing extra learning opportunities for the higher attainers. These online subscriptions are in line with the core subject progression models outlined in the National Curriculum:

- MyMaths, Numbots, Times Tables Rock Stars - to support mathematical learning
- REN - to aid the acquisition of reading skills
- SpellingShed - an age-related scheme to support spelling
- SPaG.com for supporting an understanding of grammatical structures

Each half term children are given 'special projects' linked to the curriculum overview. This is an opportunity for children to apply their researching skills; to become a geographer for example, and share the knowledge and skills they have accumulated to date.

Revision History

Version	Date	Author	Comments
	27.01.21	EDC	
	12.01.23	SQ, DS, SC	