

# Dodford First School

## Curriculum Rationale

### Basic Principles – What is Learning?

*Learning is a process.*

*We understand that learning is a change to long-term memory.*

We accept that learning cannot be observed in the here and now. The only way to see if something has been retained over time and transferred to a new context is to look at what students can do elsewhere and later. Cognitive development happens gradually and by increments

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 knowledge.

### Our Curriculum Intent Model

#### Identifying our Curriculum Drivers

**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. They are used to ensure we give our students appropriate and ambitious curriculum opportunities. The Curriculum Drivers which underpin and shape our Curriculum at Dodford are derived from our motto; Achieve, Believe, Create and fly high.

#### Cultural Capital

**Cultural capital** gives our students the vital background knowledge required to be informed and thoughtful members of our community who understand and believe in British values. Our community lacks diversity and it is important that our Curriculum at Dodford allows our pupils to explore the diverse world around them, considering a range of different cultures, beliefs, disabilities and relationships. Our pupils also need to develop resilience and have the courage to take measured risks.

#### Curriculum Breadth

Curriculum breadth is shaped by our curriculum drivers, cultural capital, subject topics and our ambition for students to study the best of what has been thought and said by many generations of academics and scholars. We ensure that all of our pupils have equal access to all subject areas throughout their time at Dodford First.

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### Our Curriculum Design

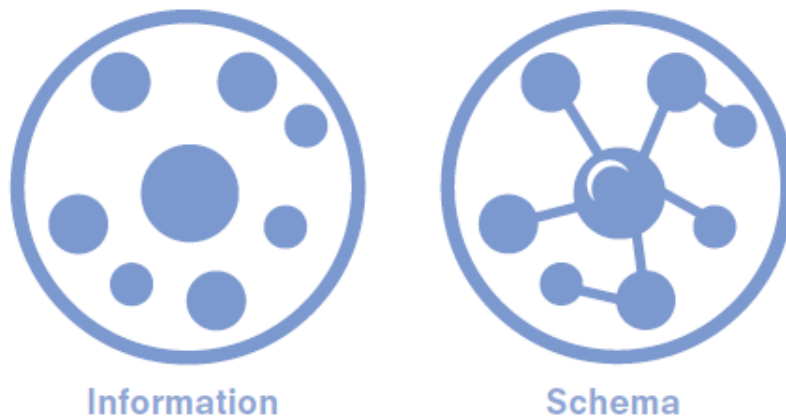
#### Rationale

We have considered a range of Cognitive Learning research before considering how to design our curriculum. Consequently, we decided that our curriculum should be designed to help our pupils form a **schema** within their long-term memories.

Schema theory states that all knowledge is organised into units and is a conceptual system for understanding and organising knowledge in a meaningful way.

A schema is distinct from information, which is just isolated facts that have no organisational basis or links. We have developed a curriculum which:

- Uses **Threshold Concepts** as the basis for the schema
- Strengthens the schema with knowledge
- Deepens connections



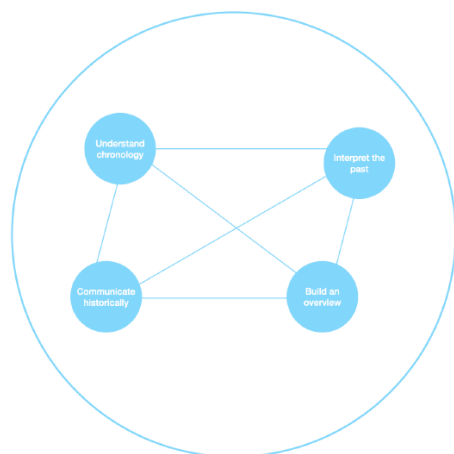
#### Threshold Concepts

Threshold concepts are the 'Big Ideas' that underpin a subject.

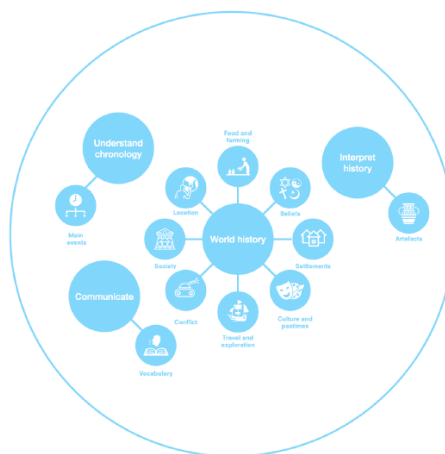
Threshold concepts tie together the subject topics into meaningful schema, thereby enabling pupils to retain knowledge in the long term. The same concepts are then explored in a wide breadth of topics. Through this 'forwards-and-backwards engineering' of the curriculum, students return to the same concepts over and over and gradually build understanding of them over time.

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So for example, building a schema for pupils in History would look something like this:



**History schema  
based on concepts**



**History schema  
strengthened with  
knowledge categories**

## Progression of Threshold Concepts

For all subject areas, we have mapped out the progression of skills and knowledge for each Threshold Concept.

## Learning Lenses

We have developed Learning Lenses for all of our foundation subjects. These are effectively the knowledge categories in each subject. These are referred to explicitly within our lessons.

For every Foundation Subject, one learning lens is a focus on key vocabulary, which is taught explicitly and then embedded across the learning sequence and referred to frequently. This Key Vocabulary is mapped out for all subjects within our Vocabulary Spine (see separate document).

### Threshold Concepts

### Milestones

### Learning Lenses (Knowledge Categories)

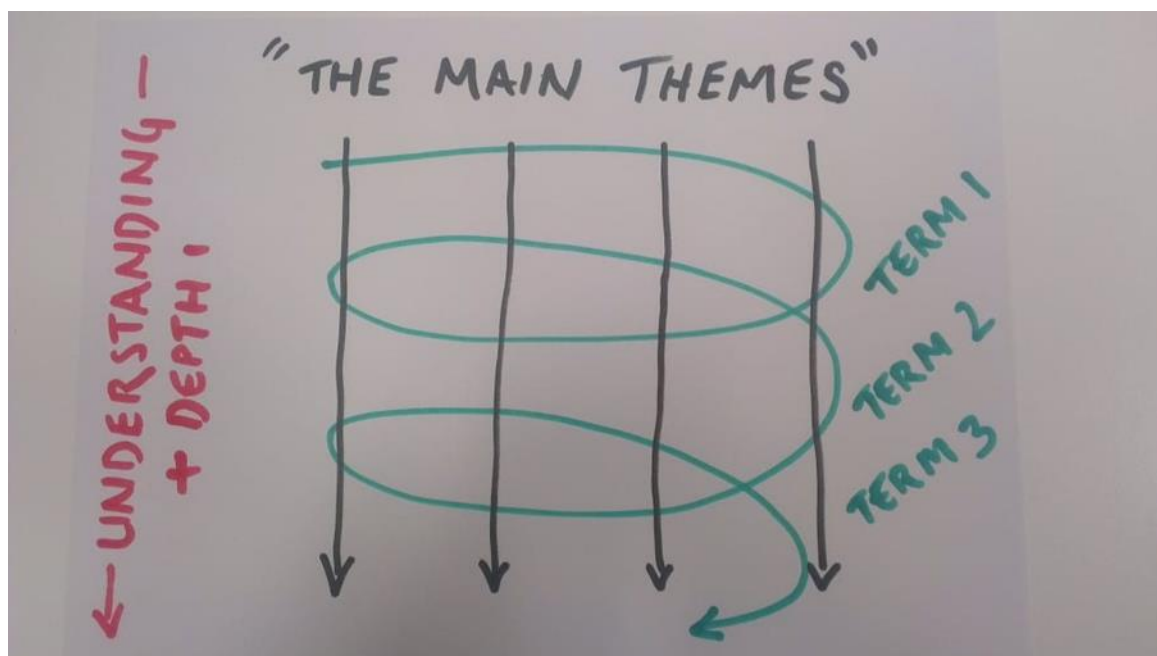
Investigate Places	Investigate Patterns	Communicate Geographically
Milestone 1-3 A description of the end goals	Milestone 1-3 A description of the end goals	Milestone 1-3 A description of the end goals

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### The Spiral Curriculum

The Spiral Curriculum is a method of designing a course of work around basic yet fundamentally important and recurring themes (Threshold Concepts) in a discipline.



We have developed Learning Pathways for our Foundation Subjects to ensure that our pupils' learning revisits Threshold Concepts repeatedly throughout their time in our school. By doing this, pupils will be able to strengthen their schema, adding new knowledge to previously taught concepts.

### Mixed Year Groups

Due to the size of our school, we have mixed year groups in Years 1 and 2, 3 and 4. We group these as follows:

EYFS

Key Stage 1 (KS1)                      Years 1 and 2

Lower Key Stage 2 (LKS2)              Years 3 and 4

Designing a spiral curriculum which is sequential and builds on prior knowledge is challenging in a Mixed Year Group school. Therefore, we have carefully designed Learning Pathways for the majority of our Foundation Subjects, in all year groups alternating between Year A and Year B.

Academic Year	Teaching Year (A or B)
2022 – 2023	Year A
2023 – 2024	Year B
2024 – 2025	Year A
2025 – 2026	Year B

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We have endeavoured to map our Curriculum so that there is a clear progression within each Key Stage, but also within and across each Teaching Year.

### Timetabling

We have decided, that in order to ensure our pupils are regularly revisiting Threshold Concepts and subject specific vocabulary, that a number of subjects will be taught on a weekly basis:

English	KS1	KS2
Writing sessions	Monday to Thursday	Monday to Thursday
Reading	Monday to Thursday	Monday to Thursday
Phonics	Monday to Thursday	Monday to Thursday
Spelling and Grammar	Spelling Test 30 mins Fridays	Spelling Test 30 mins Fridays
Handwriting	08.50 – 09.00 as pupils come into school/registration 1 taught session every fortnight	08.50 – 09.00 as pupils come into school/registration 1 taught sessions per week (20 mins)
Class Read	Books in Assembly Class teacher reads daily	Books in Assembly Class teacher reads daily

Subject	KS1	KS2	Schemes Used
Maths	5 hours per week (combination of 4 x 1 hour lessons and 10 minute fluency sessions daily and times tables tests)	5 hours per week (combination of 4 x 1 hour lessons and 10 minute fluency sessions daily and times tables tests)	White Rose NCETM
Science	1 hour weekly	1 hour weekly	Essentials Curriculum (Chris Quigley)
Computing	45 minutes weekly	45 minutes weekly	Purple Mash Scheme
Physical Education	90 minutes weekly	90 minutes weekly	Teacher led External Specialists
Religious Education	60 minutes weekly	60 minutes weekly	Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus
PSHE/RSE	45/60 minutes weekly	45/60 minutes weekly	Jigsaw Scheme
Music	45/60 minutes weekly	45/60 minutes weekly	Charanga Scheme
French		30 minutes weekly	PlanIt
History/Geography	90 minutes per week on a half termly rotation (A and B half terms)	90 minutes per week on a half termly rotation (A and B half terms)	Essentials Curriculum (Chris Quigley)

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Art/DT	90 minutes per week on a half termly rotation (A and B weeks)	90 minutes per week on a half termly rotation (A and B weeks)	KAPOW
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### History/Geography/Art/DT rotation:

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Geography	√	√	√		√	
History		√		√		√
DT		√		√		√
Art	√		√		√	