



## **Vision**

**The school first existed as a force for social change and we remember this within our historic original mission as we continue to inspire and transform the minds and hearts of everyone we serve today and, thus, the wider world. Everyone associated with our school will experience life in all its fullness, as promised by Jesus. We do so with **Love and Determination**.**

## **Our original Mission**

“A school for the education of children only of the labouring mining and manufacturing and other poorer classes in the Parish of Gosforth and for no other purpose.”

## **Mission Statement:**

At ARFS, we promote educational excellence, for everyone. Our purpose in education is to enable the children, families, staff, Governors and the wider community we serve to flourish. The Christian values of **Love and Determination** are at the core of teaching and culture within the school. We believe this makes us distinctive in the learning experience on offer. This is firmly rooted in the following epistle:

***Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong.***

***Do everything in love.***

**1 Corinthians 16:13-14**

Great are the works of the Lord; They are studied by all who delight in them.

**Psalm 111:2**

## **Curriculum Intent**

Everything within the school, including our curriculum, is built around our collective vision. We believe it is our responsibility for all children to experience life in all its fullness, as promised by Jesus, and our carefully designed curriculum is part of how we live out this mission, being equipped for the journey ahead both spiritually and academically.

As expressed in our ethos statement, we teach rigorous lessons with high expectations with a loving, nurturing environment, enabling all to flourish.

We value the uniqueness and God-given potential of all children. We believe as a school that it is part of our social and Christian mission that all children are exposed to a broad, balanced and challenging body of deep knowledge. This is especially the case for vulnerable children, who are equally entitled to acquire and celebrate the knowledge and cultural capital that an ambitious curriculum can provide. This comes from our strong belief in inclusivity, so they can fulfil their God-given talent.

At the heart of our curriculum is the intent to:

- Embody our values through the ‘hidden curriculum’: specifically, how our children learn from the way they are nurtured, treated and expected to behave.
- Develop children’s thirst for learning and reform for the future, serving the common good beyond their time at ARFS. This means being prepared not just for the next step within their educational journey but courageously advocating for a kinder world throughout the rest of their lives.

- Construct a sequential, academically rigorous curriculum that cumulatively builds a deep body of knowledge, increasing not just what children know now but which better their life chances and prepares them for an unmapped future.
- Understand that our curriculum is consistently evolving according to the needs of our school community.
- Celebrate the local area and people wherever possible and what makes Newcastle-upon-Tyne such a historically important, diverse and ever-changing city.

Our practice is informed by the latest educational research. This suggests that children learn best through explicit, direct instruction (DfE, Reading Framework 2021; EEF, SEND in Mainstream Schools, 2021), understanding that memory is how children make connections both within and between subjects, as well as real life.

We have high aspirations for all children. Teachers adapt *how* they deliver the curriculum, for almost all children, rather than *what* is taught, ensuring the significant majority of children access the same broad and balanced curriculum. At times, we may have to prioritise this core knowledge but its delivery should be careful and deliberate to ensure minimal impact on children’s exposure to as deep and wide a curriculum as possible.

We are constantly reshaping elements of each subject’s curriculum to meet the needs of the pupils and to keep up with current educational research. Reading is a key skill across the curriculum and children are given the opportunity to practise and apply a range of reading skills across the entire curriculum.

Our curriculum decisions come both from agreed shared principles but also considering the community that we serve. We regularly consider the contextual information of cohorts when renewing our school’s curriculum intent and reviewing its implementation and impact. In addition, we recognise that the school serves more than just our current pupils but the wider community, meaning that the curriculum goes beyond the school building, including ensuring strong relationships with families.



**Concept development**

Individual subjects are taught discretely at ARFS, helping children to see the unique nature of each subject. However, we aim to make relevant, appropriate links between and within subjects. We develop the children’s knowledge, understanding and skills progressively through their time at our school, constantly revisiting prior learning and ensuring that children are retaining information long-term.

**‘Making it Stick’**

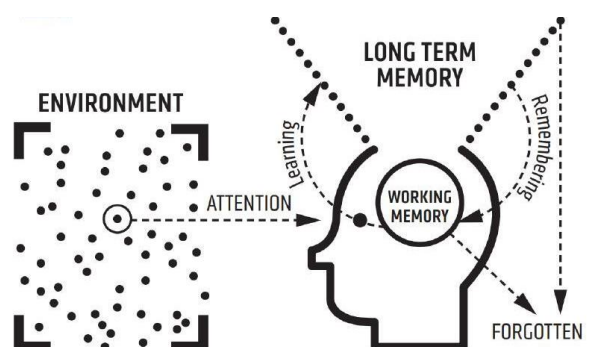
As a school we have looked at a wide range of research around memory, learning and children’s cognitive development. In each subject, children are given multiple opportunities to use and apply their new learning to ‘Make it Stick’ (or ensure that there is a long-term change in memory). To do this, we: practise skills deliberately, focusing in on small elements of learning at a time; practise using a variety of task formats so that information is encoded in multiple ways; and recap prior learning regularly.

**Explicit Instruction**

Teachers understand the principles of explicit instruction – specifically, that systematic teacher-led explanation and practice (e.g. I do, we do, you do), is an evidence-based approach that has maximum impact. By focusing on small steps, checking for understanding and ensuring there is active participation by children in lessons, the curriculum can be delivered most effectively.

**Retrieval practice**

Children at our school are taught about the importance of attending to the information they are learning, practising and applying their learning and recapping prior learning regularly to ensure that it does stick in the long-term memory.





### Ensuring lessons are pitched correctly

At ARFS, we strive to ensure that we know all our children (and their needs) on an individual level. This helps us to design our lessons around what the children already know and how quickly they grasp new material. We ensure that scaffolded tasks and adult support is available for children who require a little help being successful in lessons; we also provide opportunities for children who are more confident in individual subjects to extend their learning beyond the basic requirements of each lesson.

### Key concepts

Within each subject, key concepts are mapped out year-by-year to ensure progression and development. In Science, for example, children look at an aspect of animals (including humans) every year.

### Our lesson design

Quality-first teaching is the most important factor in ensuring impact for all learners. Although lessons in each subject will look different from one another, every lesson will contain opportunities for children to: receive feedback about what they're doing well and how to improve; recap prior learning; practise important vocabulary for the topic; apply their knowledge and understanding. This lesson structure is supported by regular, research-based CPD for staff.

### Schemas

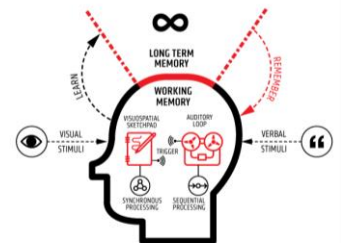
The curriculum is built so that key ideas and concepts can be built upon one another, building links (or schemas) within the minds of children. This is at the heart of the long-term curriculum plans. Deep learning is when children can link taught ideas both within and between subjects e.g. first learning about the impact of Greek language in History to connecting this to the New Testament being written in Greek within RE. Staff themselves require expert knowledge of the curriculum they teach, supported by strong senior leadership mentoring and coaching – in turn, this allows opportunities for children to make the most complex connections.

### Reducing cognitive load

Deliberate decisions are made across the school to reduce cognitive load, such as reduction of visual noise within classrooms (particularly crucial for children with sensory needs) to having tasks be focused on the precise learning intentions e.g. keeping resources, like worksheets, simple. For children to make complex connections and access the challenging curriculum as well as possible, staff seek to reduce cognitive load so that children's attentions can be focused on the most crucial aspects as presented by the teacher.

### Dual coding

'Dual coding' means harnessing both visual and auditory stimuli to ensure they complement one another and consolidate learning. Staff understand that, whilst managing cognitive load, what teachers show and talk about has considerable impact on embedding within children's long-term memories.



### Keep up, not catch up

We take a keep up, not catch up approach for all children, but particularly bearing in mind those who are at risk of falling behind, who may be disadvantaged or may have SEND. This is based on the principles of asking more (of certain children in the class, both in terms of questions during input and of their efforts in general), giving more (support where necessary), and getting more (out of the children, understanding that children with SEND may need to work harder than their peers in order to reduce and eventually eliminate the attainment gap).