

St Charles' Curriculum

Over the last two terms, St Charles' Academy has been developing an engaging, intelligently sequenced, knowledge-rich curriculum, informed by the best research evidence available.

St Charles' VC Academy is a diverse place with children from a variety of backgrounds and therefore a variety of experiences. It is our aim, to ensure that all children within our care receive the very best education and leave our school 'secondary ready' with the same knowledge, skills and experiences as any other child in the country.

As Isaac Newton famously declared in 1675 "If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants". Therefore, at St Charles, we believe that children accomplish and achieve so much more when they do not have to begin every time from scratch. If they build upon previously learnt knowledge and skills, they will have a firm foundation stone on which to further develop and soar. It is paramount for pupils at St Charles to have opportunities to revisit learning to consolidate and deepen their understanding and knowledge of concepts before they continue to explore new ideas and learning.

In order to ensure that pupils at St Charles' Academy leave 'secondary ready' it is important that the knowledge and skills taught are stored in their long-term memory. We strive therefore to ensure that our curriculum is continually revisited to support this. Each lesson revisits the previous meaning and pupils get regular opportunities to practice new learning, in line with Rosenshine's (2012) principles of effective instruction. This is also supported by continually revisiting the knowledge mat for the unit during the teaching sequence so that teachers can continually make judgments about gaps in knowledge as well as strengths in learning.

After a unit has finished, children are given an opportunity to respond to their learning through an open-ended project. This is something that the children complete at home to allow them opportunities to share their learning and skills with family members as well as further consolidate their understanding of the topic. Children can respond to these tasks in any style they choose, enabling pupils to further develop their own learning style as well as make curricular links.

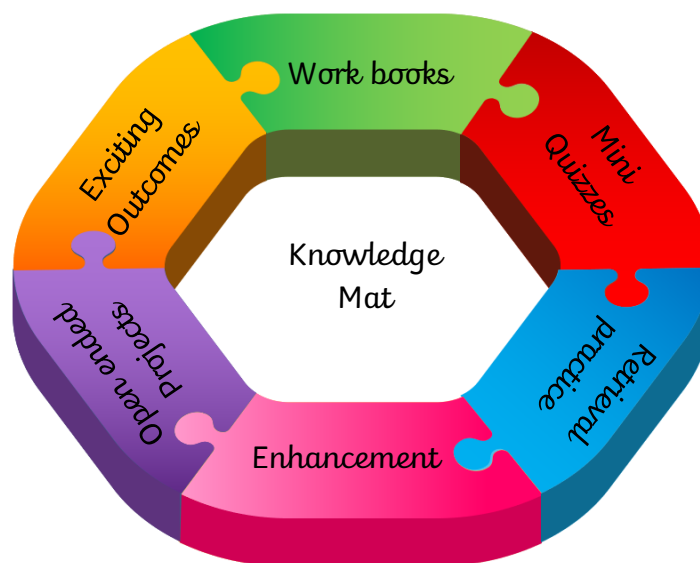
EEF research and best practice tell us that new learning is fragile and usually forgotten unless explicit steps are taken over time to revisit and refresh learning. Teachers should be wary of assuming that children have securely learnt material based on evidence drawn close to the point of teaching it. Therefore, teachers will need to obtain feedback at some distance from the original teaching input when assessing if learning is now secure. Consequently, assessment of topics is not completed immediately after a unit has finished but in the next half term. Pre and post unit mini quizzes linked back to the unit's Knowledge mat along with evidence in books and the open-ended tasks help teachers assess how much information has been learnt and remembered by pupils. Low stakes multiple choice quizzes are efficient, effective and motivating for pupils, whilst providing teachers with vital information about what pupils have misunderstood, and/or what they are struggling to remember. These questions can be easily recycled, utilising the spacing effect and

ensuring content is retained in for the long term, and not forgotten soon after the lesson or unit has ended.

The benefit of retrieval practise is one of the most robust findings in cognitive psychology (Roediger & Karpicke, 2006; Storm, Bjork & Storm, 2010) and therefore, each lesson starts with a 'retrieval practise' to encourage the children to retrieve knowledge from their memory before using their knowledge mat as guidance. Retrieval practise is a learning strategy where we focus on getting information out. Through the act of retrieval, or calling information to mind, our memory for that information is strengthened and forgetting is less likely to occur (Agarwal, Roediger, McDaniel & McDermott 2018)

Increasing the subject knowledge of teachers at St Charles is paramount as "pedagogical content knowledge" has been identified as the most important controllable factor associated with student outcomes (Coe et al, 2014) therefore staff 'before you begin' sessions are built into the schools CPD calendar to ensure that teachers have sufficient knowledge to plan and teach upcoming units.

The curriculum has been constantly refined over the two terms and our approach has developed based on feedback from teachers and support staff who have taught the lessons as well as the children themselves. We will continue this feedback cycle moving forward in order to further develop the curriculum to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the pupils in St Charles'.



Exciting Outcomes

During the units, children work towards an 'end point' which allows them to share their learning with their class as well as the school. These are sometimes collaborative projects which accumulate to a whole key stage outcome.

Work Books

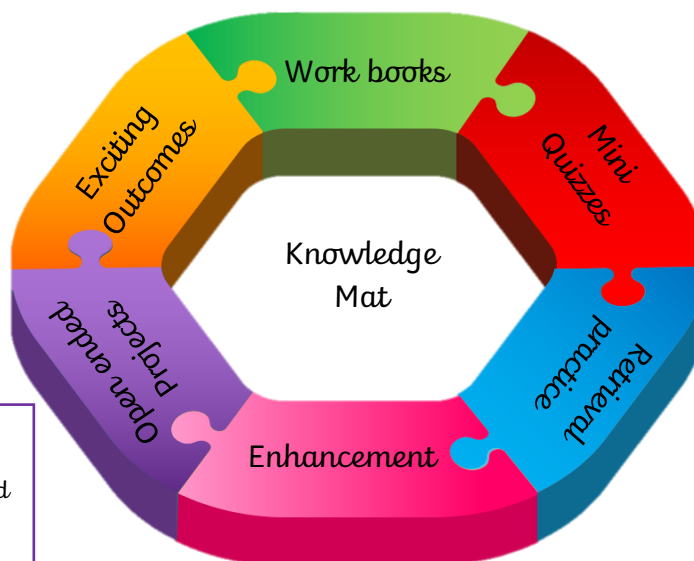
Evidence is built up over the unit in the pupils work book and forms part of the evidence base when teachers make assessments about the pupil.

Mini Quizzes

Pre unit mini quizzes are used to assess the children's prior knowledge of a unit in order to plan their next steps carefully. These are then revisited as part of the Post unit Mini quiz.

Post unit Mini quizzes take place after a unit, allowing the child sufficient time for knowledge to move from the short term to the long term.

They are a reflection of the Knowledge Mat content.



Open Ended Projects

At the end of each unit, children are encouraged to share their learning with their family and complete an open-ended task. This allows the children to respond to their new learning in a way to suit their own learning style to help consolidate their knowledge and understanding of their new learning.

Retrieval Practice

Retrieval practices happens every lesson. It is a pacy activity where children retrieve knowledge from their memory in order to strengthen their memory of the key information or fact. Children then have the opportunity to 'tick or fix' this in order for them to consolidate their learning or address misconceptions or errors.

Enhancement








Teachers plan a variety of opportunities for children to experience learning outside of the 4 walls of the classroom and in a creative way. They allow children to have new experiences, deepen their knowledge and enhance their learning through engaging, practical tasks.

Knowledge Mats

The knowledge mats are the core of each unit. Over the course of the years, these knowledge organisers ensure that all pupils become 'culturally literate' (Hirsch, 1987) and have the opportunity to engage in 'powerful knowledge' (Young, 2008, 2013). A knowledge organiser acts as a planning, teaching and assessment tool. It provides complete clarity to leaders, teachers, pupils and parents about what is expected to be learnt and remembered by the end of the lesson, the unit, and in the long term.

Lesson Elements for Foundation Subjects

Bauersfeld (1979) discusses three 'levels' of curriculum: the intended, the implemented and the enacted. As well as setting out the intended curriculum through our long term plans and knowledge mats, and the implemented curriculum through our lesson plans and PowerPoints, we have also set out a number of 'lesson elements' which appear throughout each unit. Senior leaders will work along-side staff to train and coach them in each element, which include disciplinary skills as well as techniques aimed at enhancing long term retention of substantive knowledge.

Symbol	Strategy	Teacher should:	Pupil should:
	Retrieval Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate the classroom as pupils complete questions. • Record/note common misconceptions. • Note pupils to celebrate for speedy recall. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer questions in silence. • Try and retrieve the answers from memory • Do not look back at notes or previous learning. • Self-mark or peer-mark at the end.
	Find the answer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the question aloud. • Ask pupils to independently revisit the text, image or data to find the answer. • Reveal answer and ensure pupils self-mark or correct/edit their answers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils should know this is a straightforward retrieval task, with the answer in text. • They should reread and search to find the answer or key information. • Self-mark or edit incorrect answers.
	Tell The Story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher should use narrative to reveal key events or processes. • This retelling should be performative, exciting, memorable and clearly sequenced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen and watch the teacher's story. • Volunteer to take part in the story as one of the characters. • Act out the story, repeating the key steps.
	Partner Talk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly state the question, problem or topic. • Scan to ensure all pupils actively engage in purposeful talk, with eye contact and turn taking. • Drop into conversations to correct/question/move on thinking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn and face your partner. • Repeat the question, problem or topic. • Review key information and vocabulary in the booklet. • Build on each other's responses
	Analyse the Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display the source on the board. (geography – map/photos, History – evidence/diary/artefact) • Model looking closely/reading carefully • Think out loud to model making links with your own background knowledge and the booklet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look closely at the source. • Annotate it if is helpful. • Link back to information in the booklet and in your own background knowledge
	Disciplinary Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly read the question and give the pupils a set amount of time to independently answer. • Explain that pupils will need to justify their response with evidence/reasoning. • Circulate to spot misconceptions and address. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the question carefully. • Use background knowledge to write a full answer, justifying the response. • Be ready to share the answer you've written. • Edit and improve answer based on feedback.
	This Reminds Me	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make explicit a link to a previous topic which shares a similar/contrasting theme, concept, person or event. • Ask pupils to make a link between this topic and something studied in a previous unit of work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils should be encouraged to make links from previous units and share these with the class. • Pupils should explain how previous learning links. • They should give reasons for why they think that there are similarities/differences between times.

Measuring the impact of our Curriculum

The curriculum at St Charles' is well planned and thought-through to develop knowledge and skills across the curriculum, not only within class but in providing out of class opportunities to enable children to develop themselves as learners and encourage each child to be as independent as possible and 'secondary ready'. Pupil staff and parent voice feedback, whole staff planning assessment and moderation tasks during staff meetings allows the staff to regularly review and assess the impact that the curriculum is having.

Regular and robust monitoring and scrutiny by SLT and Subject leaders provide first hand evidence of how pupils are doing and ensures that high expectation and demanding outcomes are maintained. In-school assessments and moderations are quality assured through Trust wide moderation as well as 'share and collaborate' sessions for key year groups.

The progress pupils are making in Reading, Writing, Mathematics and RE along with wider curriculum subjects is reviewed termly in Pupil progress meetings where the impact of quality first teaching on every child are discussed, but especially individual vulnerable pupils, and interventions agreed to bridge attainment and progress gaps.

The impact the curriculum is having is also measured at a Trust level through Headteacher reports, Curriculum review visits, Interim academy review meetings, Data collections which direct termly data presentations, Target setting autumn term visits as well as regular Executive Head Teacher monitoring and visits from the Trust board of directors.