# Yorke Mead Primary School

# Curriculum Policy

# September 2026

***Our School Vision Statement***

***BRINGING LEARNING to LIFE***

*We are a school dedicated to creating an environment where children are able to grow into happy, well-rounded individuals with a love of learning through which they can achieve to the best of their abilities.*

*We want our pupils to enter the wider world as*

- *Happy, positive individuals*
- *Responsible citizens who make a positive contribution*
- *Confident, resilient, healthy & life-long learners.*

**D** - Determination
**A** - Ambition
**R** - Resilience
**E** – Enjoyment

**T** - Trust
**O** - Openness

*'At the heart of the educational process lies the child' (Plowden 1967)*
*'The school curriculum is at the heart of education' (DES 1981).*

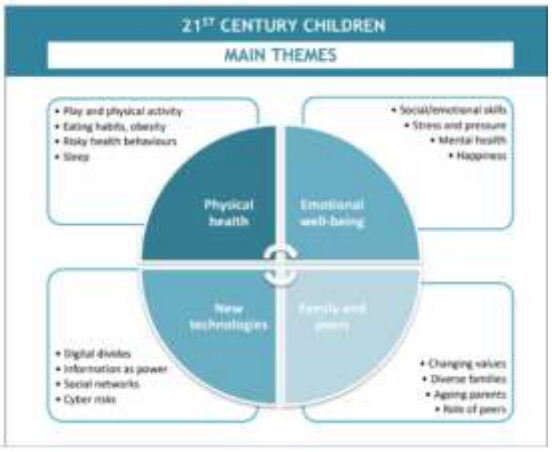
These two key quotes from the history of education can be interpreted as being at odds with each other. Both have important messages for education and in terms of ensuring schools achieve their core aims; both are of equal importance. The needs of the child are fundamental, and unless these needs are effectively met children cannot learn well. At the same time, the school curriculum must be carefully considered to meet the needs of the children it serves. A school's curriculum comprises all learning and other experiences that the school plans for its pupils. The 'national curriculum' forms one part of the school curriculum but not all of it. Often referred to as the 'hidden curriculum', a school's curriculum incudes everything a child learns by attending the school. This includes the transmission of values and beliefs conveyed in the classroom, in whole school events and in the social environment.

## Rationale and Ethos

This policy intends to support the understanding of the approach to the curriculum at Yorke Mead and allow an understanding of how and why we endeavour to ensure children at Yorke Mead have the opportunity to experience a broad and balanced curriculum that will meet the needs of the children today and in their future. Our curriculum approach is designed to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of children at the school and of society, and to prepare children for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life – both further into their education and beyond into adulthood.
The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has recently noted:

> *As countries and societies develop and prosper, older, better educated parents are increasingly advocating for their children and playing an active role in their education. Safer environments have helped reduce child mortality due to accidental injury across all of the OECD. New technologies help parents to stay in constant touch with their children. On a number of measures children's lives have clearly improved: better health care, public safety, and support for their physical and mental well-being.*
> *At the same time, however, the modern world has created new stresses. Children and adolescents are increasingly pushed to do more, and they are reporting higher levels of stress and less sleep. Child obesity is increasing across the OECD, bringing with it a host of potential physical, social and psychological challenges. The new technologies that help parents stay connected to their children also mean that new risks (for example, cyber-bullying) follow them from the school yard into their homes. These transformations are occurring at the same time as inequality is increasing. In most OECD countries, the gap between rich and poor is at its highest level in 30 years.*
>
> OECD 2019

With this in mind the OECD has identified four main themes that impact greatly on children in the 21st Century. The OECD also notes that:
*'We are currently preparing students for jobs and technologies that don't yet exist…in order to solve problems that we don't even know are problems yet'*
'Did you know' widely circulated Youtube posting



The 'Core Subjects' referred to in this framework are those we traditionally consider to be those in the school curriculum – English, Mathematics, Science, humanities, the arts etc. The National Curriculum refers to these as core and foundation subjects using the national curriculum.

Learning and Innovation Skills include critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, communication and collaboration. Information, Media and Technology Skills is about preparing children for the digital works so they are ICT literate whilst Life and Career skills involve enabling children to develop skills of flexibility, adaptability, self -direction, initiative, accountability, leadership and responsibility.

## Aims of the Curriculum

The curriculum at Yorke Mead is intended to ensure each child:

- Develops high self-esteem, confidence and a true feeling of self-worth
- Develops a lively, enquiring mind and life skills so that he/she will have the ability to experiment, investigate, take risks, challenge, discriminate and make informed choices
- Is enriched, motivated and challenged by a broad and balanced curriculum and recognises the value of all areas of learning, including literature, sciences, the arts and humanities.
- Is valued for their individual contributions, recognises their role and develops a positive attitude towards everyone in the life of the school and community.
- Develops the positive skills and attitudes necessary to work both independently and collaboratively.
- Will be given equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life, with high expectations and ambition for every child and appropriate levels of challenge and support to enable them to achieve.
- Develops an understanding and respect for other races, cultures, gender, people with disabilities, people with learning disabilities, religions and associated points of view.
- Understands the importance of and develops responsibility for keeping themselves physically and emotionally healthy
- Acquires a set of moral values and attitudes including honesty, respect, sincerity, trust and personal responsibility.
- Is supported in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Is equipped with the knowledge, skills and cultural capital they need to succeed in life

To do this we provide a broad and balanced education for all pupils that is coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge for skills and future learning and employment.

## Legislation

This policy reflects the requirements of the National Curriculum programmes of study, which all maintained schools in England must teach and Government relationships education, relationships and sex education and health education 2019.

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014 and Equality Act 2010, and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education's Governance Handbook.

In addition, this policy acknowledges the requirements for promoting the learning and development of children set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework.

## Curriculum Design

Our curriculum is designed with the aim of developing the whole child, maintaining positive mental and physical well-being. In designing our curriculum and methods of deliver we are conscious of maximising all learning opportunities for the children.

### Subjects: Core and Foundation

These include all National Curriculum Subjects. Where possible appropriate links are built between subjects, with a key focus on applying skills learnt in the classroom into 'real life' situations. However, it is essential that cross curricular teaching does not weaken the subject specific teaching and subjects are taught as subjects in their own right.

Where appropriate strong links are made to literacy and books may be chosen to enhance learning in a specific subject. Again, this is only where this enhances learning both in a particular subject and supports effective development of literacy skills.

Reading is a fundamental skill and the school is determined that every pupil will learn to read, regardless of their background, needs or abilities. As such this area of learning is given the highest priority and teaching across **ALL** aspects of the curriculum and subjects. Where possible subject leaders and those delivering the curriculum will take opportunities to further develop the children's love of reading using stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction. Texts will also be chosen to develop pupils' vocabulary, language comprehension and love of reading.

The curriculum is designed to grow in content with the children's experiences and development. As such, children will begin with aspects of learning within living memory; their own experiences and close geographical location and as they grow and develop further begin to explore areas of the curriculum that involve greater reasoning, logic and think more abstractly including understanding life in different time periods, wider geographical sources and understanding concepts they have not directly experienced.

At Yorke Mead we firmly believe the curriculum should be broad and balanced. Our curriculum is not narrowed and children will have the opportunity to study a wide curriculum. Active learning strategies and the opportunity to take learning outside of the classroom are fundamental to the approaches we employ and are used to foster both positive attitudes to the individual subjects alongside the skill development and knowledge and understanding.

The curriculum is designed so that essential knowledge and skills are identified and through HIPPO learning, these core elements are revisited and built on regularly. There is also a sharp focus on developing the essential foundational skills and knowledge that future learning is built upon. In each lesson these are given appropriate focus and priority so the establishment of these is secure.

### Emotional Wellbeing

*Schools are in a unique position, as they are able to help prevent mental health problems by promoting resilience as part of an integrated, whole school approach that is tailored to the needs of their pupils. A whole school approach is one that goes beyond the teaching in the classroom to pervade all aspects of school life, including:*

> *• culture, ethos and environment: the health and wellbeing of pupils and staff is promoted through the 'hidden' or 'informal' curriculum, including leadership practice, the school's policies, values and attitudes, together with the social and physical environment;*
> *• teaching: using the curriculum to develop pupils' knowledge about health and wellbeing; and*
> *• partnerships with families and the community: proactive engagement with families, outside agencies, and the wider community to promote consistent support for children's health and wellbeing*
>
> (DfE Mental Health & Behaviour in Schools November 2018)

At Yorke Mead we directly teach children strategies to support their emotional wellbeing and our curriculum is designed to support children in developing an understanding of the Five Ways to Wellbeing (Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Give and Keep Learning). We recognise that there are key skills to support children in being able to thrive and that children should be given opportunities to practise and develop these skills. We do this through:

- Mindful practise and core breathing daily

- Ensuring children understand the working of their brains
- Direct teaching about emotions and use of emotion coaching strategies
- Philosophy for Children teaching
- Forest School Learning
- Additional intervention such as My World & Me; Zones of Regulation; Book of Brilliance etc as required (see below)

We also recognise there are times in children's lives when they may need additional support as they adjust to change in their lives or deeper support as they learn to manage more permanent issues. These are described in more detail in the school Emotional Health – How we support our children and Emotional Wellbeing and PSHE Curriculum documents.

## Physical Health

At Yorke Mead each child receives the core offer of at least two hours of physical education. The PE curriculum ensures the children develop the key skills development of agility, balance and coordination, healthy competition and cooperative learning.

In addition to the core PE teaching our curriculum further enhances children's physical health through:

- Play ranger activities two lunchtimes per week
- Daily Mile activities
- A wide range of PE related after school clubs
- Engagement in the local sports partnership
- Forest School learning
- Wide ranging outdoor play facilities
- OPAL Play

Reference should also be made to the school Relationships Education, Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) and Health Education Policy for further details about how our curriculum supports development of physical health.

## Family and Peers

Understanding our place in the world, and how we fit into it, is key to developing our sense of self. Having a sense of understanding about our family and our peers, in a diverse world, is part of this.

The work we do, both in our core curriculum and 'hidden' curriculum, provides the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults. Children learn what a relationship is, what friendship is, what family means and who the people are who can support them. They learn the skills of functioning well within relationships: how to take turn; how to treat each other with kindness; consideration and respect; the importance of honesty and truthfulness; permission seeking and giving; and the concept of personal privacy. Key learning around personal space and boundaries, showing respect and understanding the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical contact are the forerunners of teaching about consent, which they will learn about later in their secondary education. At Yorke Mead we recognise that families can look different for a number of our children, for example, single parent, same sex parents, adopted and that all these are included, catered for and are taught about so that all our children are aware and respectful of the diversity in our school and wider community.

## Learning and Innovation Skills

This includes developing the skills of critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, communication and collaboration. Our teaching and learning approaches are focused upon developing these skills. Most fundamentally this work is enhanced through two key approaches:

- ***Philosophy for Children (P4C)*** is an approach to learning and teaching that enhances children's thinking and communication skills. The aim of our P4C work is to teach reasoning and argumentative skills to children working in a collaborative way and developing their ability to give and justify their own opinions whilst also learning to consider those of others.

- ***Forest Schools*** exposes children to new situations and challenges, allowing children to develop the necessary skills to evaluate and navigate risk so that they can learn to manage these safely. By taking their learning into the natural environment children learn to respect this environment and value it for what it can offer. Being outdoors in the fresh air, in all types of weather, develops children's resilience and also supports and enhances their physical health and mental wellbeing. Outdoor learning improves children's health, engages them with learning and leads to a greater connection with nature. Play not only teaches critical life skills such as resilience, teamwork and creativity it is also central to children's enjoyment of childhood.

### Information, Media and Technology Skills

*"New technologies help children to learn, socialise and unwind, and older, better-educated parents are increasingly playing an active role in their children's education. At the same time, we are more connected than ever before, and many children have access to tablets and smartphones before they learn to walk and talk… Globally competent students have an understanding of recognised academic subjects, such as reading, mathematics and science, but equally non-cognitive abilities like tolerance, empathy and perseverance."*

*OECD 2019*

The technical world we live in is changing at rapid pace and preparing children for this can seem an impossible job. Whilst we teach directly the core skills of computing and how to behave so children keep themselves safe in the online world, the work we do to develop our core DARE TO skills and attributes is fundamental to enabling children to change and adapt to embrace the changes as they come, and to understand that learning never stops.
This work is fundamentally supported by the mathematics, computing curriculum alongside features that develop critical thinking, creativity, collaboration etc.

### Life and Career Skills

We recognise that many of the skills that previously would have been learnt in the family home may not be doing so as demands on parents and expectations change. The school has established a series of lessons focused on developing these simple life skills such as very basic first aid; making a drink/snack; learning to fasten a shoe lace or tie etc
We do not focus specifically on career skills at primary school, though the skills of flexibility, adaptability, self - direction, initiative, accountability, leadership and responsibility, all are fundamental career skills. Children at Yorke Mead are given wide ranging opportunities to develop these skills with play leader training, reading partners, buddy groups and Year 6 responsibilities all playing a key part in this. We do, however, aim to inspire the children for the future through science week and sharing with them the opportunities qualifications in science and technology can afford them.

## Organisation and planning

### Organisation

At Yorke Mead we value the team approach and with this in mind we group subjects together so that consistency across similar subjects is maintained as far as possible. This is predominately used as a way to support subject leaders so that they are not working in isolation. Our subjects are therefore grouped under the following key headings:

| DISCOVER | EXPLORE | CREATE | FLOURISH |
|---|---|---|---|
| Maths | History | English | PE |
| Science | Geography | Music | PSHE |
| Computing | French | Art | Forest Schools |
| DT | RE | | Mindfulness |
| | | | P4C |

*NB: It should be noted that the children will not be directly aware of these groups of subjects – these are teams to support subject leaders*

As explained on page 5 of this policy the approach to the curriculum is thematic where this is appropriate and creative elements are also encouraged. However, at Yorke Mead, we fully believe that it is essential to use the most appropriate methods in each situation and that no one approach will meet all needs. As such we do not allow one approach to drive our curriculum, but ensure we adopt the best approach for the situation and cohort of children. Specific subject curriculums have been designed to build skills carefully and to ensure sufficient opportunities have been given for the skills and knowledge to be developed. In doing this we are conscious of Bloom's Taxonomy (see below). Please see individual subject policies for further details.

### The Yorke Mead Specific Context

Yorke Mead is situated in an area of Hertfordshire that is predominately of low deprivation. However, we are conscious that Yorke Mead supports a number of children who live in families on the edge of deprivation and for whom it is important to facilitate access to experiences that widen and enhance educational opportunities. At the same time Yorke Mead serves predominately secondary schools that are partially selective in their admission criteria, which can put additional pressure on children striving to achieve. We also support a number of adopted children who may have aspects of life they are still needing to process. Our curriculum is designed with these wide ranging needs in mind.

### Planning

Teachers at Yorke Mead are provided with a broad long term plan by subject leaders outlining the curriculum content and learning intentions to be covered throughout the year. It is the teacher's job to outline the delivery of this curriculum in a detailed medium term plan, which may be paper format or powerpoint in style depending on the preference of the teacher. There is no need for teachers to produce individual lesson plans for subjects other than English and Maths, which again may be paper or power point format. The purpose of this is to manage workload of the teachers and to ensure that time spent on planning is the most purposeful it can be to meet the needs of the teachers and the children.

In planning units of work teachers are mindful of the importance of revisiting core learning to embed this into the children's long term memory and ensure that the necessary prior learning is in place for new learning to be successful. With this in mind at Yorke Mead we refer to **Hippo Learning** (long term memory is in the hippocampus). Quizzes, missing words, thought showers etc all allow previous learning to be revisited and reinforced. Knowledge organisers also are used to support the learning processes

### Early Years

All aspects of our curriculum for Key Stage One and Two build from the Early Years curriculum, which is centred around the needs and interests of the Early Years children at Yorke Mead. Whilst this policy is relevant to all stages of education at Yorke Mead it is essential this is read in conjunction with the EYFS policy.

This curriculum policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Relationships education, sex and relationships education (SRE) and health education
- Emotional wellbeing and PSHE curriculum
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy
- Subject specific policies – curriculum
- Personal Development at Yorke Mead

## Inclusion

Teachers set high expectations for all pupils. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

- Currently higher attaining pupils
- Pupils with low prior attainment
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Pupils with SEN
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)

Teachers will plan lessons so that pupils with SEND can study every National Curriculum subject, wherever possible, and ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.
Teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, and to support pupils to take part in all subjects.
Further information can be found in our statement of equality information and objectives, and in our SEN policy and information report. The Equality Scheme Action plan highlights the keys focuses for the school which are reflected throughout the curriculum.

## Safeguarding and Safe Practice

In all areas, at all times, staff at Yorke Mead are aware of safeguarding responsibilities. Some aspects of learning naturally require greater need to be aware of planning for safe practice than others. Where there is any form of risk to children staff will have completed a risk assessment to manage this risk and ensure procedures minimise or remove the risk. The school has a number of generic risk assessments to cover those aspects where risk will be evident at all times such as outdoor play in Early Years, cooking, PE etc.

There are times when children may be more likely to disclose a safeguarding concern, for example as part of sex education or PSHE work. Individual policies give more detail around how the school works to support this and ensure safe practice, but as a general note the school always follows the safeguarding policy whenever there is a safeguarding concern or disclosure.

Importantly, we also actively teach pupils how to keep themselves safe, both online and in the physical world. This is done through themed weeks and our PSHE curriculum. Pupils deemed vulnerable are given a little more support through Protected Behaviours Support.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### School Governors

The governing board will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the head teacher to account for its implementation.
The governing board will also ensure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets
- Enough teaching time is provided for pupils to cover the National Curriculum and other statutory requirements
- It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- Proper provision is made for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs (SEN) and those eligible for pupil premium
- The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements
- It fulfils its role in processes to disapply pupils from all or part of the National Curriculum, where appropriate, and in any subsequent appeals. (see DfE guidance ' Disapplication of the National Curriculum (revised) July 2006)
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### Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the governing board
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements
- The governing board is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum

- Where appropriate, the individual needs of some pupils are met by permanent or temporary disapplication from all or part of the National Curriculum, allowing the most appropriate individual curriculum needs to be met.
- They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate
- The governing board is advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions
- Proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with SEND

### Subject Leaders and Other Key Staff

Other staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy and specific subject policies.

- Key stage leaders will ensure they carefully monitor the provision of and standards in the curriculum within their key stage and discuss any key needs with key stage staff, senior leaders and subject leaders.
- Subject leaders will carefully monitor provision of and standards in their specific subject area and ensure that the individual subject curriculum is implemented according to this policy and the specific subject policy.
- The SENCo will ensure the school curriculum is appropriately differentiated and adapted to meet the needs of all SEND children including those with social, emotional, mental health (SEMH) needs.
- The Assistant Head teacher, who is the curriculum lead, will ensure the school curriculum effectively meets the needs of all children eligible for pupil premium including children previously looked after.
- The Deputy Head teacher will ensure the school curriculum effectively meets the needs of all children with a key focus on all vulnerable groups and gender needs.

### Staff who teach

All teaching and support staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy and specific subject policies by

- Ensuring the curriculum is delivered in a positive manner that meets the aims of this policy.
- Is carefully planned and adapted to meet the needs of the specific children being taught.
- Allowing time for individual aspects of the curriculum to be effectively developed making appropriate links across the curriculum whilst also ensuring children value subject areas in their own right.
- Developing approaches to support children who are falling behind in one key area without this creating a further gap in another key area. (See Teaching and Learning Policy).

## Engaging Stakeholders

The school's curriculum has been developed over time taking account of the views of parents, children, staff and governors. As new thinking and understanding about children's learning is developed staff at school consider this and build this into our curriculum approach. A copy of this policy is available for parents who specifically request it and is also available on the school website.

## Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation

### Monitoring arrangements

Each governor at Yorke Mead has a link role and responsibility. Governors monitor coverage of National Curriculum subjects and compliance with other statutory requirements through:

- Regular (at least twice a year) meetings with the subject leaders to which they are linked
- Termly governor visits to school with an agreed area of focus for consideration
- Discussions with pupils and staff informally and formally
- Meetings with the school council
- Parent questionnaires
- Subject specific presentations by staff

Senior Leaders monitor the curriculum through:

- Regular learning walks
- Discussions with pupils, staff and parents (formal and informal)
- Work scrutinies
- Assessment data (formal and informal)
- Completing own assessments (yearly – KS2)

Key Stage Leaders and subject leaders monitor the way their subject is taught throughout the school by:

- Completing learning walks
- Planning scrutiny
- Monitoring work through learning observations and book scrutiny
- Discussions with pupils
- Discussions with staff
- Analysis and moderation of assessments made by teachers
- End of key stage data

Subject leaders, supported by specific teaching support staff also have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed.

**Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the headteacher, senior leadership team and governor curriculum team. At every review, the policy will be shared with the full governing board.

## Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- EYFS policy
- Assessment policy
- SEN policy and information report
- Equality information and objectives
- Equality Scheme Action plan – this will highlight the keys focuses for the school which are reflected in the curriculum
- Inclusion Policy
- Subject specific policies
- Relationships Education, Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) and Health Education Policy
- Pupil Premium Policy