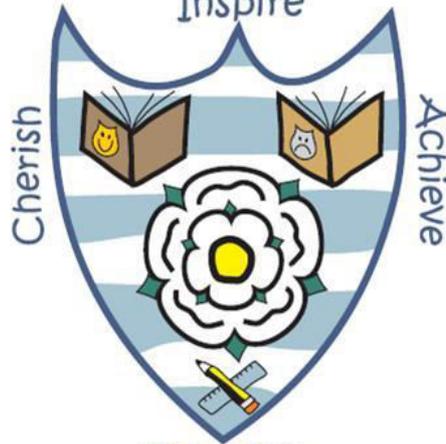


Birkwood Primary

Inspire



Cherish

Achieve

Together

School

# **OPEN FUTURES POLICY**

**UPDATED NOVEMBER 2017**

## **Rationale**

Open Futures is a skills and enquiry-based curriculum development program, linking learning and life. Open Futures is an alternative way of meeting learning needs through helping children discover and develop practical skills, personal interests and values, which will contribute to their education and help to enhance their adult lives.

The Open Futures Curriculum consists of the following strands:

- Grow it
- Cook it
- Ask it
- Film it
- Design it (Piloting stage)

Open Futures seeks to address current concerns about children's health and well being through hands-on learning opportunities that awaken interests and stimulate curiosity about the world.

Open Futures links to many key areas in school:

- Healthy Schools
- Every Child Matters
- Personalised learning
- SEND inclusion
- Providing a broad and rich curriculum
- Developing and deepening the relationships between school, parents and the community
- Attendance
- Achievement in PSHE, citizenship, emotional health and wellbeing, healthy eating, physical activity
- Opportunities for children to explore the natural world
- Developing the use of ICT
- Increasing speaking and listening skills
- Development of higher order thinking skills

## **Skills**

Open Futures places emphasis on the acquisition of:

- Practical, creative, life enhancing skills useful to children immediately and later in their adult lives.
- Thinking, enquiry and communication skills which helps pupils to be more in charge of their own learning and aims to increase their interest, confidence and motivation

## **Teaching and Learning aims**

The Open Futures curriculum aims to:

- raise attainment in Literacy, Numeracy, Science and ICT by working in context on work appropriate to pupils of all abilities
- ensure children have appropriate skills, attitudes and confidence to become active independent learners
- involve and support parents in strategies to promote healthy eating
- increase motivation and thereby improve attendance and behaviour
- help children make a positive economic contribution to society

- provide a rich and broad curriculum which includes a wide range of practical activities in and out of school
- provide opportunities for children to explore the natural world
- revitalise teachers as creative learners themselves

As well as the overarching aims of the project, there are some teaching and learning aims specific to each strand:

**Grow It** is about helping children to plant, nurture and harvest vegetables and fruit, thus developing their levels of appreciation and understanding of plants, produce and the seasons. The children use proper tools under the guidance of fully trained staff.

Grow it incorporates many other areas of the curriculum:

- Maths: measuring out the beds before digging
- Science: looking at the insects and invertebrates they dig up
- Health: planning what to grow in the garden
- Global Citizenship: cooking recipes from different parts of the world
- Geography: where do the ingredients come from?
- History: 'Dig for victory'
- English: expanding their vocabulary as they discuss what they are doing.

**Cook It** engages children with the hands-on experience of preparing produce to eat and so providing a good culinary understanding of how the fruit and vegetables they grow, relate to their own physical development and wellbeing. It increases pupils' knowledge of nutrition, healthy eating, food chain principles, food hygiene and safety. They are taught to use proper equipment and correct knife techniques for slicing tomatoes, onions etc under the guidance of trained staff. Many children do not regularly share food with families and a lack of awareness of a healthy diet has contributed to the crisis in children's health. The more children are given ownership of the food they eat and the opportunity to engage with the actual growing of fruit and vegetables, preparing and cooking their produce, the more adventurous they become with what they are prepared to actually taste and eat.

**Ask It**, also referred to as Philosophy for Children (P4C) focuses on thinking skills and communal dialogue ('philosophising') It contributes towards Literacy, Citizenship, RE, PSHE, Science and the Humanities. It aims to build 'Communities of Enquiry' where children develop creative, critical, caring and collaborative thinking skills. Ask it sessions provide opportunities to discuss issues that are meaningful, as the children practice skills of negotiation, seeing things from another perspective and making decisions together.

**Film It** offers children a new way to express themselves, it has the potential for a wide range of applications across the school curriculum. It helps children communicate with each other and to share educational experiences using video. By combining video production with internet sharing Film It is exciting and relevant for children. For teachers it offers a way to work with new technologies to find new forms of literacy and new ways to document their pupils' work.

**Design it** is closely linked to Ask it. Design it is a creative process intended to solve a problem, to fill a need for the people that will ultimately interact with the creation. Design it is still in the piloting stage and links are being made with The Design Museum to embed this strand in our school.

### **How Open Futures is delivered through the school:**

In Birkwood Primary School Open Futures is taught regularly by HLTAs, TAs and Teachers.

**Grow It** is taught by our 'Grow it Champion' Heather Greenwood; all classes have one session every week; it is timetabled for small groups. Grow it has been planned this way to ensure all children are experiencing expert gardening knowledge and teaching which is consistent throughout school. The school has recently developed a Community Garden which has a raised bed for each class to nurture, as

well as a communal potato patch, soft fruit area and pergola with fruit trees. Most 'Grow it' sessions take place in our Poly Tunnel especially during winter months. We feel the Poly Tunnel acts as an outdoor classroom and is essential for the delivery of the 'Grow it' strand. Afterschool clubs are also offered to all children in school and are very well attended.

**Cook It** – Each class has one 'Cookit' week every half term. Within that week, the class may use the kitchen to develop their cooking skills. Small group sessions focus on the progressive acquisition of practical skills and techniques and the understanding of how to use specialist equipment. There is also a place for whole class teaching, linked to topic work, where all children are involved. At all times, safety and the level of children's involvement in their learning should be the key in deciding which approach to take. Afterschool clubs are also offered to all children and are very well attended.

**Ask It** - (P4C) is linked to English, Speaking and Listening, PHSE and RE. It is taught by the class teacher, HLTA or Cover Supervisor and is slotted into the timetable whenever is best for each particular class. It is taught at least once a week thereby developing children's speaking, listening and enquiry skills.

**Film It** - Each class has one 'Filmit' week every half term. Within that week, the class may use the iPads and other filming equipment to create short films. Software such as iMovie and Movie Maker are used to develop these films. We are currently developing skills such as animation and the use of Green Screen Technology.

**Design it** – Design it is a strand being piloted by a few 'Open Futures Flagship Schools' We are currently trying to embed this strand and are in the process of finding out what works best in our school.

### **Equal opportunities**

Open Futures is accessible to all pupils, regardless of gender, race or ability and can play a very effective role in breaking down sexual stereotypes and exploring the traditions of different cultures. Open Futures lessons ensure we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's needs. Teachers should be aware of any physical disability that may affect a child's ability to access the lessons and make appropriate provision for that child.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

End of year questionnaires give an indication of which aspects of Open Futures the children have particularly enjoyed. This helps to give direction and focus to the next year's cycle of work. Monitoring and assessment in English, Maths, Science and ICT reflects the impact on standards in these subjects.

This policy will be reviewed in November 2019.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Headteacher

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chair of Governors

Date \_\_\_\_\_