

# Developing a broad curriculum base

TEACHING AND LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT



SHARING LEARNING ACROSS THE LEARNING PARTNERSHIP  
PEER PARTNERSHIP VALIDATED SCHOOL STRENGTH

*“Our theme weeks have a unique design. They are underpinned by two clear priorities: developing children’s skills and encouraging creativity.”* **TARA BAIG, HEADTEACHER**

## Intention

Miles Coverdale Primary School is a one-form entry primary school, with a resource base for pupils with identified speech and language needs. It has many pupils with English as an additional language; it also has exceptionally high levels of pupils who are identified as disadvantaged.

“When we were constructing our curriculum, we wanted to bring the museum culture to the children. We wanted to help them to engage with the richness of our culture,” says the science co-ordinator.

One of the solutions to meeting the particular needs of Miles Coverdale’s pupils has been to develop regular focus week activities to educate and inspire children.

These focus weeks are an essential part of the school’s bespoke curriculum. They have been designed to be broadly inclusive and especially suit the wide diversity of the children attending the school.

The science co-ordinator is clear that all the children in the school benefit from the special activities that are introduced during this time.

Science is the key subject area that is



used as the lever into the focus week. It provides the pathways into other discrete subject areas. Science is the core of a week’s special focus on a range of subjects, such as:

- history,
- music,
- mathematics,
- design and technology.

Focus weeks are not ad hoc activities, but form a cohesive basis to then further develop pupils enquiry related skills.

“We start with a science theme and then work out which other subject areas will fit with this core theme,” says the science co-ordinator.

“We want all our year groups to get involved in the focus week activities, from nursery to Year 6, and that includes too, all the children in our resource base.”

*“Our teachers all want to get involved in focus week activities because they know that the children in their class will benefit in so many different ways.”* **LAUREN PICKEN, SCIENCE CO-ORDINATOR**

## Implementation

Each focus week requires special advance planning. This is led by different subject co-ordinators according to the subject foci for the week. Subject leaders and teachers then share in rigorous planning sessions, where learning objectives are shared and further refined.

School leaders have a clear purpose in mind when matching themes and content to the learning objectives. These include:

- pupil voice
- application of specific skills
- curriculum design
- impact on progress overall
- assessment, and particularly assessment for learning.

The science lead says, “A child who is a scientist at our school asks questions, makes predictions, observes closely, collects results and makes conclusions. She shares learning with others.”

For the pupils the focus week starts with a special assembly where specific subject content and ideas are shared.

It finishes with another assembly,

where the week’s work is celebrated and shared across the school.

There are three elements in the curriculum design of the focus week:

- workshops
- trips
- visitors.

Recent themes have included subject pairings between:

- science, music and history, and art
- science, mathematics and design technology.

Science is given prominence in focus week planning and practice because of its importance in the curriculum.



*“The integrated curriculum themed weeks have helped to consolidate enquiry skills in science amongst teachers and pupils alike.”* **HFLP PEER REVIEW REPORT, LESLEY LEAK, 2018/19**

## Impact

The headteacher and science co-ordinator are very clear about the positive impact that this form of teaching is having on teachers and pupils alike. They comment:

For our teachers:

- Planning is enriched when there are a number of teachers planning together. Having the science co-ordinator and other key subject specialists together with our teachers, develops our overall curriculum design. It also enables us to address how to plan and deliver teaching that will develop children’s enquiry skills.
- Teachers have a broader range of skills, knowledge and understanding, and attitudes to learning to assess. This helps them to understand pupils’ strengths and needs that might not always be evident in everyday learning.



For our pupils:

- Our pupils are confident and articulate. They are able to talk about their learning. Our peer review commented that our children are articulate and fluent.
- Through focus week activities, children learn the subject matter that gives them learning that builds up cultural capital.
- Focus weeks make our pupils inspired and enthusiastic about the wider curriculum. During a Year 3 art session with an external art specialist, one boy commented, “It’s making me feel excited, and you just want to get inside the painting.”

For more information contact Tara Baig, Headteacher at:

Miles Coverdale Primary School, Coverdale Road, London, W12 8JJ

Telephone: 0208 743 5847

Email: [admin@milescoverdale.lbhf.sch.uk](mailto:admin@milescoverdale.lbhf.sch.uk)