

Broad Oak Primary School



Cornerstones Curriculum – Gigantigut project

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Mr. Kevin Corteen (Headteacher) with pupils

Three years ago, it became obvious that our curriculum needed significant overhaul. It met statutory requirements, but was in no way as exciting and engaging as our children deserved. Our inspection in May 2013 confirmed what we knew, giving us the impetus for root and branch change. This change was based on a thematic four step learning philosophy called Cornerstones.

Each unit begins with memorable first hand experiences, which either involves a visit out of school or inviting visitors into school. The purpose of which is to *engage* and stimulate the children's imaginations, encouraging them to make observations and begin to formulate questions to be answered later. As the topic progresses, the children increase their knowledge and understanding and practise and *develop* new skills. They then *innovate*, applying this knowledge in solving real or imagined problems. Finally, the children *express* their learning, becoming the 'experts and informers', linking their learning back to the questions they generated earlier in the topic. Our children see a real purpose to their learning and consequently are highly motivated and engaged, and consequently proud of what they have achieved. Examples of this 'Express' element have included: pupils setting up and running a one day café; the creation of a classroom sized aquarium simulation; performances of Macbeth and A Midsummer Night's Dream at a city centre theatre; a 60M model human digestive system (Gigantigut), and an Egyptian funeral procession involving all of our pupils.

The positive impact on pupil outcomes has been very clear. In 2015, attainment and progress in writing is significantly above national averages; the levels of absence and persistent absence fell to well below national averages.

REPORT CARD

- » Headteacher: Mr. Kevin Corteen
- » Location: East Didsbury, Manchester
- » The school serves a diverse population and is part way through an expansion from 2 to 3 forms of entry
- » 530 pupils and 86 members of staff
- » 34% of pupils have English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- » 26% are Pupil Premium qualifiers

“Our children have ownership of what they learn and how they are going to learn ”

Our Assessment for Learning (AFL) strategies are at the heart of all that we do, from the use of red, amber and green (RAG)cups and self-selection of activities, to quality questioning and thinking time and the use of green pens to highlight strengths and pink pens for areas for development.

RAG cups as tools for pupils to self-assess are rather like a traffic light. A child selecting green is ready to go and be challenged; amber may need support and red needs a different approach from the teacher. This visual approach ensures that the pace of learning is brisk in all lessons and frequent checks on pupils' understanding are used effectively so individuals can self-select well matched activities, which build upon their knowledge and skills. Pupils have more opportunities to learn independently and collaboratively. These simple but powerful strategies have raised teacher expectations, as well as the quality and quantity of work that our pupils are producing. Our children have ownership of what they learn and how they are going to learn, whilst driving the lesson forward and being totally immersed in learning.

With an increased focus on the mental health of young people we support the

Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) of identified pupils through our work with **eQe** (Equilibrium and Enablement) accessing whole school input and capacity building interventions that are underpinned by the principles of therapeutic play, safety, creativity and emotional literacy.

For classes/groups we provide indoor and outdoor interventions which are appropriate to need.

Where pupils present with higher levels of social, emotional and well-being needs Broad Oak provides individualised therapeutic provision. Pupils receive weekly sessions with a play worker or play therapist who nurtures attitudes and strategies to help our pupils to recognise and address their issues.

Impact is measured by tracking pupil attainment and entry/exit data from the Goodman's Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (a brief behavioural screening questionnaire about children's behaviour, emotions and relationships). Each child receives a score relating to their social abilities with exit data demonstrating a reduction in social difficulty and improved social ability.

Additionally Broad Oak funds a coaching mentor from the company *One Goal* to deliver a universal offer for all pupils to build character by developing the pupils "six habits". This is a bespoke programme designed to give our pupils the required skills to think in an informed way, to work collaboratively with others successfully and have positive mind sets that will set them on the path to success.

At Broad Oak we understand the importance of physical education, recognizing that it has significant benefits to health and wellbeing, improving brain function and thus the ability to learn.

Outdoor Intervention
(Forest Crew)



We use our Sport Premium money innovatively to ensure we provide high quality PE and school sport for all pupils. Bespoke CPD for staff is provided by a PE specialist one afternoon a week through team taught sessions.

Targeted physical intervention groups support learning. A physiotherapist works with our SEN children to develop their balance, co-ordination and agility. These children also access a multi-sensory room experiencing combinations of sound, light and aromas to meet their sensory needs. Fitness sessions are run for our less active children.

We have developed a broad variety of enrichment opportunities before, after school and at lunchtimes to engage all children in sport and physical activity. The percentage of KS1 and 2 children taking part in these activities has risen from 56% to 78%.

In 2013 the proportion of children achieving a "Good Level of Development" at the end of Reception was 42%, well below the national average. In 2015 this had risen to 76% (national 66%).

Underpinning the drive for improvement has been a focus on the quality of relationships between the Early Years team and the children and families in their key worker groups. During the summer term the new nursery intake are invited to individual family meetings with their new keyworker to share important information about the child and the setting. Nursery practitioners support parents to complete an "Ages and Stages Questionnaire" to gain a better picture of the child's development so far and enable quality dialogue with the parents. Areas of concern are identified quickly and early interventions planned right at the start of the school year.



Early Years Foundation Stage

Regular parent workshops are held to inform parents about how and what we teach, with presentations and teaching video clips posted on the school website.

Moderation is key in increasing the accuracy of assessment judgements. This is done in various ways; with the whole team, with individual keyworkers and with other schools in the local Early Years cluster group. Rigorous tracking ensures that children are identified early for interventions in speech and language, phonics or fine motor skills to develop hand muscles ready to write, and keyworkers meet with the phase leader every half term to discuss their observations of independent learning, levels of attainment and progress and to plan next steps for each child.

A joint project with the local Surestart Centre enabled school to increase links with the local community and target vulnerable families for early language support prior to starting school. The school hosts a weekly "Stay and Play" session for parents and children 0-3 years, a baby massage group and several adult education courses including a "Family Language" course for parents with English as an additional language.