An unequal relationship?

Three years ago a government minister announced that the main task of primary schools is to make children ‘secondary ready’. His view was widely criticised in the primary sector. Why?

Of course children leaving one stage of education should be ready for the next. That’s self-evident. What primary educators objected to was the implication that preparing for Year 7 is all that primary education is about, that educating children between the ages of four and eleven has no imperatives of its own, and that we no longer value education for its own sake. They were equally concerned that ‘secondary ready’ was defined exclusively in terms of DfE ‘floor standards’ in literacy and numeracy, with no mention of the wider curriculum that both primary and secondary schools are obliged to teach. And they objected to the implication that primary pupils must be ‘secondary ready’ but secondary schools don’t need to be ‘primary-responsive.’

This perceived inequality in the primary-secondary relationship seems to be confirmed by the evidence. A TLRP project directed by Martin Hughes¹ reported that while primary teachers had extensive knowledge of their pupils and were keen to make it available to their secondary colleagues, such knowledge was frequently ignored or dismissed. Hughes also found a general perception among secondary teachers that pupils transferring from primary to secondary should have a ‘fresh start’, with secondary schools making their own assessments without regard to evidence provided by the feeder primaries.

Then there’s the well-documented phenomenon of the Year 7 attainment ‘dip’, a dip that appears to affect much of Key Stage 3, during which, according to an NFER study, pupils make slower progress than in KS2 or KS4.²

The reasons for this are complex. They include the destabilising impact of moving from a small school to a much larger one, and from the simple familial dynamic of ‘my teacher’ and ‘my class’ to the initially bewildering environment of different teachers for different subjects, and cross-campus migrations between lessons; and the shock of being big fish in a small pond one day and tiny fish in an ocean the next. As if that weren’t enough, lurking in the wings is the roller-coaster of adolescence, so different from the relative stability of those years from 5 to 11 that Alan Blyth called the ‘midlands’ of childhood.

But the ‘dip’ is also pedagogical. One of Maurice Galton’s research studies found a significant drop in pupils’ interest in maths and science after transfer to secondary. Pupils themselves put this down to

¹ http://www.tlrp.org/dspace/retrieve/3589/Hughes_RB_45.pdf
too much writing and too little practical activity. Probing this through observation, Galton found Y7 classroom talk in these subjects dominated by closed questions and factual recall answers, with little questioning of an exploratory kind that opens up children’s thinking, or of discussion that tests children’s ideas.₃

And now we have Michael Wilshaw’s latest HMCI annual report.⁴ Secondary schools, he says, are less likely than primary to be good or outstanding. And where Key Stage 3 is not viewed as a priority, teaching may be weak and pupils will fall behind. Another Ofsted report, published last September, talks not of a mere ‘dip’ but scathingly of ‘the wasted years’.₅ This report found that when school leaders concentrated too exclusively on the necessary objective of maximising KS4 achievement, KS3 staffing could be compromised, for example by subjects being taught by non-specialists and by teaching pitched to a notional ‘middle’ that neglected the needs of disadvantaged pupils and offered little challenge to the higher attainers. Ofsted also found that assessment and progress tracking were less well developed in KS3 than elsewhere.

As for relationships between primary and secondary, Ofsted said:

Too many secondary schools did not work effectively with partner primary schools to understand pupils’ prior learning and ensure that they built on this in KS3. Some secondary leaders simply accepted that pupils would repeat what they had already done in primary school ... particularly in Year 7. This was a particular issue in mathematics and, to a lesser extent, in English.

And Ofsted stressed that although many schools work to secure pastoral continuity in order to make children’s transfer as comfortable as possible, it’s the academic continuity that’s the problem.

In light of all this you can see why primary schools were upset when ministers told them their job was to make pupils ‘secondary ready’. They might with some justice have retorted: ‘We are making them secondary-ready. But are you ready to receive them?’

I’m doing myself no favours saying all this in a room full of secondary school leaders. But it’s a risk I can safely take, not just because you wouldn’t want me to duck a problem that needs to be addressed but also because I know that ASCL is on the case. Last year ASCL appointed Julie McCulloch to the post of Primary Leadership Specialist. The spur to creating this post, as I understand it, was the growing number of secondary teachers moving into cross-phase leadership roles, whether by linking with primary schools to form all-through schools or by becoming heads or CEOs of primary/secondary federations or multi-academy trusts. I trust that this appointment also signals that ASCL is interested in the issues I’ve outlined.

Of course, my injunction cuts both ways, and primary school leaders must play their part. And I’m well aware that many secondary schools work hard and effectively to ensure that pupils’ transitions from Y6 to Y7, both pastoral and academic, are as seamless as possible. Unfortunately, even though the Ofsted report includes case studies of such excellent practice, its title - *Key Stage 3: the wasted years* - manages to tar all schools with the same brush.

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Ages, structures and cultures

In any case, we need to ask whether there are differences of a more fundamental kind between the two phases that need to be explored and understood in order to achieve true mutuality of effort and continuity in outcomes. I believe there are.

First, and self-evidently, pre-adolescent and adolescent children are at very different stages of development, and their needs are as distinct as their characteristics. Middle childhood is a period of rapid physical, cognitive, social and linguistic development but this follows a fairly steady trajectory. About teenage growth spurts, hormonal surges, sleep patterns, eating habits, identity crises, mood swings, emotional turbulence, peer power, ambivalence towards adult authority and all the rest I need do no more than remind you how very different pre-adolescent and adolescent children can be, including, as we now know from neuroscience, in the structure of their brains.

Second, primary schools are generally smaller and considerably less complex organisationally than secondary. School size apart, the key difference is that the professional default in primary schools is the generalist who teaches everything to just one class while in secondary schools it’s the specialist who teaches one or two subjects to several classes.

Third, while the secondary curriculum starts broadly and narrows and diversifies into multiple options as the pupil progresses from KS3 to KS4, the primary curriculum is more straightforward, remaining broad and uniform throughout because it seeks to provide a generic foundation for everything that follows.

These three defining features of primary schools generate a distinctive professional culture. Working with young children makes their teachers intensely protective, and working with them all day, every day and across what is supposed to be a broad and varied curriculum encourages a holistic outlook. Primary teachers talk frequently about ‘the whole child’ and ‘whole curriculum’, and since long before the naming of PSHE they have seen it as their responsibility to give as much attention to children’s personal and social development as to their academic progress. Further, the age of their pupils means that they meet parents frequently and informally, not just at annual parents’ evenings, while the smaller size and more localised catchment of primary schools allows them to become closely embedded in their immediate communities.

So there’s an intimacy, intensity and communality to the culture of primary schools that arises from pupil age, school size and the generalist teaching default. These characteristics may be obvious, but their ramifications are less straightforward.

Because primary teachers feel that their way of working gives them a deep understanding of their pupils in the round it’s not surprising that they object if they think this understanding isn’t valued by their secondary colleagues. And their suspicion that primary is classed as subordinate to secondary is confirmed not just by patronising talk of the need to be ‘secondary ready’ but in other ways too. Look at the September 2013 framework document for the national curriculum.\(^6\) The programmes of study for English, maths and science are much more detailed for Key Stages 1 and 2 than for KS3. 40 pages of the English framework are devoted to KS1 and 2 - that’s 20 for each key stage - but just three pages for KS3. In maths, KS2 has 28 pages compared with a mere seven for KS3.

So the message is clear: secondary teachers know what they are doing and need no more than an outline framework to nudge them in the right direction; in demeaning contrast, the extent of detail

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for KS1 and 2 signals that without this level of prescription primary teachers can’t hack it. And the fact that primary schools are subject to much tighter curriculum control, despite Ofsted’s finding that they do better than secondary, compounds the insult.

Then there’s the matter of leadership. I don’t know what proportion of primary-secondary federations, MATs and all-through schools are headed by secondary leaders as compared with primary, but I can guess, and again the hierarchical message is clear. Yet why should it be presumed that a primary leader is less competent to run a cross-phase school, federation or trust than his or her secondary colleague? Could it be a residue of that old, old assumption that the younger the child the less it takes to teach them?

I first encountered this over fifty years ago, when as a young Cambridge graduate I made what at that time was a pretty unusual decision - to teach in a primary school - and was told by more than one person that I was wasting not just my degree but also my mind. ‘Teaching?’ they queried, ‘Well that’s just about tolerable, although you know what Bernard Shaw said about those who can and those who can’t. But teaching in a primary school? Isn’t that no better than child-minding, give or take spelling tests and times tables?’ Well no, on the council estate in Birkenhead where I landed it definitely wasn’t.

I encountered the same prejudice a few years later when, hearing that I was moving to a senior post in another primary school a parent said to me, ‘I hear you’ve been promoted. So you’ll be moving up to a grammar school, then?’ (This, for the youngsters among you, was in the olden days).

So, all these years and several more degrees further on, and after working in schools, colleges and universities in Britain and other countries, it’s a bit depressing to find oneself still arguing that teaching pre-adolescent children, properly conceived and pursued, is in its way as intellectually challenging as teaching their older peers.

But if policy sustains the secondary-primary hierarchy, and if teachers feel that Y6 achievement isn’t respected in Y7, the primary world isn’t entirely blameless. Over the years I’ve encountered professional thinking in primary schools that is informed, responsive to evidence, creative and principled; but I’ve also witnessed uncritical dependence on pre-packaged online lessons of doubtful provenance. I’ve encountered intellectual excitement and the sharpest of educational debate; and a strident anti-intellectualism that dismisses all hard-won ideas and carefully-researched evidence as ‘airy-fairy theoretical nonsense’. The latter posture rather subverts my attempts to persuade people that primary teaching is a complex, inventive and reflective activity worthy of the highest esteem. But, as the Cambridge Primary Review said, ‘Children will not learn to think for themselves if their teachers merely do as they are told.’

Equally, it’s too easy to presume that through close and constant engagement with one class of children the primary generalist model of itself generates deep insight into children’s minds and personalities. But insight is never automatic. It has to be worked at. Proximity doesn’t necessarily generate understanding, and while the generalist classteacher default provides opportunities it doesn’t guarantee outcomes. Understanding children is less about proximity or time than mulled-over experience and the capacity for empathy.

It’s also about pedagogy. We won’t get inside a child’s head, and discover how they think as well as what they know, if we confine classroom talk to exposition and closed questions. (That could take me into the topic of dialogic teaching but I must resist the urge).

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Generalist teaching and curriculum capacity

In fact, what looks at one level like the abiding strength of primary schools - the generalist classteacher system - is in three respects the system’s Achilles heel. First, young children do indeed need stability and continuity but because their development and emerging talents take many forms they also need variety. It is difficult to evoke and develop another person’s latent talent if your own understanding of the field in question is limited. A recent Ofsted survey reported that many primary school leaders were satisfied with their schools’ music provision, even though Ofsted judged it weak, because they didn’t have the expertise to know that they were expecting too little. This relationship between expertise and expectation applies in every subject. Second, while in a secondary school an unproductive relationship with teacher x may be offset by a rewarding one with teacher y, a primary pupil may find himself or herself stuck with teacher x all day, every day, for the whole year. Third, as my example of music reminds us, we know that subject and pedagogical content knowledge are key ingredients of successful teaching at every level of education; but only a renaissance superteacher (to mix metaphors) can command equal depth of curriculum expertise across all subjects.

Here it is important to remember that the primary generalist arrangement was devised for the nineteenth century elementary schools from which today’s primary schools are descended not for educational reasons but because it was cheap, and that what worked in 1870 for a curriculum comprising the 3Rs and little else may not necessarily work in 2016 for an eleven-subject national curriculum.

In fact, the capacity of primary schools to plan and teach a broad curriculum to a high standard in every subject has provoked concern since the 1960s. It has prompted reports from researchers, HMI, Ofsted, the House of Commons Education Committee, the ‘three wise men’ enquiry of 1991-2 in which I was involved, the Cambridge Primary Review in which I was also involved, and most recently DfE itself. In 2011-12, at the instigation of the Cambridge Primary Review, DfE undertook an in-house enquiry into primary schools’ curriculum capacity. Its report confirmed the Review’s conclusions and recommended solutions, but wasn’t published.8

This, then, is the nettle that successive governments have refused to grasp, and perhaps understandably - not just for reasons of cost but because the whole child/whole curriculum outlook is so fundamental to primary professional identity. As primary teachers used to say, and many still do, ‘We teach children, not subjects’. That, of course is a simple category or case confusion which as subject specialists you’ll spot immediately, for you - like they - teach both children and subjects, but you’ll recognise the sentiment being expressed.

The dip: a different perspective

On the other hand, though ‘we teach children, not subjects’ is a false dichotomy, its reminder of the need to attend to the way children are might prompt us to venture a different perspective on Ofsted’s ‘wasted years’ in Key Stage 3. Are those years wasted - if indeed they are wasted - solely for the reasons given by Ofsted: lack of challenge, insufficient specialist teaching, inadequate tracking of pupil progress, and a failure to build on prior learning? Or might it also be the case that the way schooling is structured pays too little attention to the way children between the ages of 11 and 14 develop, think and learn? Are the timing and structure of the school day properly attuned to what

research tells us about adolescent body clocks and sleep patterns? Should we heed the view of the Oxford Teensleep project that if adolescents were to start the school day at 10 am their learning would be more efficient and productive? Does KS3 pedagogy give young adolescents the respect, space and independence they crave? But if it does, does Ofsted call it a waste of time?

This prompts a suggestion. If the majority of England’s secondary schools are now academies, and academy status confers freedoms, how about some adolescent-friendly experimentation with the school day and the length, timing and balance of terms and holidays? In federations and MATs, why not introduce more fluid staffing arrangements so that subject expertise is available where it is needed, including in primary schools? And in all-through schools, why not re-assess the internal boundaries? And should we revisit the middle school idea of a 9-13 phase developmentally tailored to children’s transition from late childhood to early adolescents?

And here’s another thought: in its pursuit of data about standards and how to raise them, shouldn’t Ofsted include data on human development and learning? Earlier, I mentioned research on the Y7/8 dip. Interestingly, while confirming that the dip happens, NFER noted that it is not unique to England or Britain. If this is so, then perhaps Ofsted should range more widely in its search for explanations and solutions.

The Cambridge Primary Review

The need to broaden the explanatory field is my cue for mentioning the Cambridge Primary Review, for the Review’s remit took it beyond what happens in schools and classrooms to encompass children’s upbringing, development, motivation and learning, their lives outside school and the contexts of demography, income, environment and culture by which those lives are shaped.

![THE CAMBRIDGE PRIMARY REVIEW THEMES AND EVIDENCE](http://www.ndcn.ox.ac.uk/research/sleep-circadian-neuroscience-institute/research-projects-4/teensleep)

Through four exhaustive strands of evidence - thousands of written submissions, nearly 300 focus group sessions in different parts of the country, 28 reviews of research by 66 leading academics in 20 universities who interrogated over 4000 published sources, and reassessments of official national and international data - the Review explored ten educational themes: the purposes and values of primary education; learning and teaching; curriculum and assessment; quality and standards; settings and professionals; diversity and inclusion; parenting and caring; children’s lives beyond

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school; school structures and phases; and policy, funding and governance. All this yielded 100 research questions, mountains of data, 31 interim reports and a final report and companion research volume culminating in conclusions and recommendations for policy and practice.\(^{10}\)

I won’t dwell on the way the Review was handled by the then government, except to note that ministers’ efforts to marginalise such an exceptional educational resource were widely regarded as irresponsible and anti-democratic and did New Labour no good. Despite this, the Review did percolate into policy in a number of ways, and it continues to do so. But more important is the impact foreshadowed in the final report’s last words:

[The Cambridge Primary Review] is not just for the transient architects and agents of policy. It is for all who invest daily, deeply and for life in this vital phase of education, especially children, parents and teachers.\(^{11}\)

It’s in that spirit that the Cambridge Primary Review Trust was established in 2013, with generous support from Pearson, in order to disseminate and build on the Review’s work. The Trust now has thirteen regional networks, an alliance of leading primary schools committed to working in accordance with the review’s aims, principles and evidence, a research programme funded by Pearson, the Educational Endowment Foundation and Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, a joint Trust/Pearson CPD programme, an expanding publications list comprising reports, briefings and books, and a lively and resource-rich website with a weekly blog that both inspires teachers and ruffles political feathers.\(^{12}\)

**Priorities and aims**

The Trust's work is driven by eight priorities.\(^{13}\) These derive from the Review’s headline findings and the extensive discussion prompted by its final report. I’d like to take you quickly through each of these priorities in turn, for I believe they may add to our understanding of what really matters in primary education, and some of them may speak to the condition of secondary education as well.

1. **Equity.** Tackle the continuing challenge of social and educational disadvantage, and find practical ways to help schools to close the associated gaps in educational attainment. Britain, we know, is one of the most unequal of the world’s rich nations, and the gaps in income, employment, health, wellbeing and educational attainment closely coincide. Inequality is not only an injustice; it’s also a massive waste of talent. This priority is the focus of three of our research reports, a large-scale Educational Endowment Foundation project on dialogic teaching and social disadvantage, and a schools roadshow starting next month in Leeds.

2. **Voice.** Advance children’s voice and rights in school and classroom in accordance with the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. Student voice is the flavour of the decade, and rightly so, but it must never be merely tokenistic. Here, too, we have commissioned a research report which many schools are now discussing and acting on.

3. **Community.** Promote community engagement and cohesion through school-community links and a community curriculum that supplements and enriches the national curriculum, and by developing communal values in school and classroom. At best, primary schools not only have a unique place at the heart of their local communities but in their day to day interactions they can

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\(^{10}\) http://cprtrust.org.uk/cpr/


\(^{12}\) http://www.cprtrust.org.uk

\(^{13}\) http://cprtrust.org.uk/about_cprt/cprt-priorities-in-action/
also model what community is all about.

4. **Sustainability.** *Embed sustainability and global citizenship in educational policy and practice, linking to the UN agenda for global education after 2015.* If the science is right, then the window of opportunity is small and the moral imperative is urgent, for we are talking less about our own lives than those of the children we teach. The Trust has just released a report on how primary schools can take up this challenge.

5. **Curriculum.** *Develop a broad, balanced and rich entitlement curriculum which responds to both national and local need, eliminates the damaging division of status and quality between core and non-core, and teaches every subject, domain or aspect to the highest possible standard.* The central problem here is politicians’ belief that the way to raise standards in literacy and numeracy is by hammering the 3Rs and ignoring the rest of the curriculum, coupled with ignorance about the educational power and social value of the arts and humanities. Yet even in relation to a narrow view of standards the Ofsted evidence is clear: in our best primary schools there is an association between standards in literacy and numeracy and the quality of the wider curriculum. Not only is a broad and rich curriculum essential to educational entitlement and to making primary pupils in the best sense ‘secondary ready’; it also increases pupil engagement, maximises cognitive transfer and raises standards of learning. But, in light of what I’ve said about the generalist teaching model, a commitment not just to breadth on paper but also to quality in every subject as taught really does test schools’ curriculum capacity and leadership. Incidentally, one of the Review’s recommendations for strengthening such capacity was primary/secondary cross-phase partnerships. These are also commended in the Ofsted KS3 report and will be facilitated by the new school structures and freedoms.

6. **Pedagogy.** *Develop a pedagogy of repertoire, rigour, evidence and principle, rather than mere compliance, with a particular emphasis on fostering the high quality classroom talk which children’s development, learning and attainment require.* ‘Good teachers make a difference’, said the final report of the Cambridge Primary Review, ‘but outstanding teachers transform lives.’ That’s a truth, not a cliché. A few years ago I tried to persuade a minister that pedagogy isn’t about the tired and pointless opposition of ‘traditional’ and ‘child-centred’ methods but the quality of classroom interaction, for language empowers thought and cognitively-challenging talk advances learning and understanding. He replied: ‘I hear what you are saying, but I don’t want to encourage idle chatter in class.’ Consequently, if you look for spoken language in the new national curriculum you won’t find much.

7. **Assessment.** *Encourage approaches to assessment that enhance learning as well as test it, that support rather than distort the curriculum and that pursue standards and quality in all areas of learning, not just the core subjects.* With children’s experience of primary education topped and tailed by baseline assessment and KS2 Sats, both of which are hugely problematic, need I say more?

8. **Aims.** *Develop and apply a coherent framework of aims for 21st century education; enact them through curriculum, pedagogy and the wider life of the school.* This is where the list ends, but where we should start. In Britain we tend to take the Mrs Beeton approach to aims - first plan your curriculum or impose your policy, then liberally garnish with high-sounding aims that bear little or no relation to what actually happens. The current Commons Education Committee enquiry into the purpose and content of education is a prime example of this topsy-turvy process. But the Review’s aims are grounded in extensive, nation-wide consultations. They balance the needs of the individual with those of society and the wider world. And they really do drive the work of an increasing number of primary schools. Here they are. [For the aims descriptors, see Appendix].
Carpe diem

Does this speedy romp through the themes, aims and priorities of the Cambridge Primary Review and Cambridge Primary Review Trust give us a prospectus that is unique to the primary phase, or does it resonate with secondary schools as well? I very much hope so. The distinctly primary pedigree of the 12 aims is evident, for they make no reference to secondary schools’ task of opening up students’ post-school educational and training options or preparing them for the world of work. Yet I doubt whether you would want to reject any of them as inapplicable to secondary education, so I hope they offer common ground between our two phases, especially between key stages 2 and 3. If this is so, let’s consider how we can develop and deepen the conversation now that ASCL has expanded its remit to include primary.

Here’s a final thought on primary/secondary relationships, transfer, continuity, the dip, and Ofsted’s ‘wasted years’. During the past decade there have been two major independent enquiries into primary and secondary education: the Cambridge Primary Review led by myself, and the Nuffield 14-19 review led by Richard Pring. But no such attention has been devoted to education between the ages of 11 and 14. True, Labour had a KS3 strategy, but its focus was narrow and it ignored or pre-empted most of the questions that ought to have been asked.

So, ASCL, how about initiating an independent 11-14 review, or even - so as to foreground my concerns about purposes, maturation, continuity, progression and structures across Key Stages 2 and 3 - a 10-14 review? Ask the kinds of questions that we asked. Go beyond the official information given. Test the evidence. Challenge political dogma. Take control of the discourse, and hence of the practice. We know about school self-improvement. What we need now is system self-improvement, initiated from within rather than from above.

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The Cambridge Primary Review proposes twelve overarching aims for primary education. They are grounded in extensive evidence from parents, teachers, children, community leaders, international research and a wide range of official, professional and voluntary stakeholders. The aims are intended to shape curriculum, pedagogy and school life as a whole, and they counter the tendency in policy circles to treat educational aims as cosmetic. They have now been adopted in many schools.

The aims are in three groups that echo the title of the CPR final report – Children, their World, their Education. The first group identifies those individual qualities and capacities that schools should foster and build upon in every child, in whatever they do, and the personal needs to which schools should attend. The second group includes four critically important orientations to people and the wider world, reflecting witnesses’ concerns about the opportunities and challenges of life in the 21st century. The third group focuses on the content, processes and outcomes of learning itself.

The individual

- **Well-being**. To attend to children’s capabilities, needs, hopes and anxieties here and now, and promote their mental, emotional and physical well-being and welfare. Happiness, a strong sense of self and a positive outlook on life are not only desirable in themselves: they are also conducive to engagement and learning. But well-being goes much further than this, and ‘happiness’ on its own looks merely self-indulgent. Caring for children’s well-being is about attending to their physical and emotional welfare. It is about inducting them into a life where they will be wholeheartedly engaged in all kinds of worthwhile activities and relationships, defined generously rather than narrowly. It is about maximising children’s learning potential through good teaching and the proper application of evidence about how children develop and learn and how teachers most effectively teach. Fostering children’s well-being requires us to attend to their future fulfilment as well as their present needs and capabilities. Well-being thus defined is both a precondition and an outcome of successful primary education.

- **Engagement**. To secure children’s active, willing and enthusiastic engagement in their learning.

- **Empowerment**. To excite, promote and sustain children’s agency, empowering them through knowledge, understanding, skill and personal qualities to profit from their present and later learning, to discover and lead rewarding lives, and to manage life and find new meaning in a changing world.

- **Autonomy**. To foster children’s autonomy and sense of self through a growing understanding of the world present and past, and through productive relationships with others. Autonomy enables individuals to establish who they are and to what they might aspire; it enables the child to translate knowledge into meaning; it encourages that critical independence of thought which is essential both to the growth of knowledge and to citizenship; it enables children to discriminate in their choice of activities and relationships; and it helps them to see beyond the surface appeal of appearance, fashion and celebrity to what is of abiding value.
Self, others and the wider world

- **Encouraging respect and reciprocity.** To promote respect for self, for peers and adults, for other generations, for diversity and difference, for language, culture and custom, for ideas and values, and for those habits of willing courtesy between persons on which civilised relations depend. To ensure that respect is mutual: between adult and child as well as between child and adult. To understand the essential reciprocity of learning and human relations.

- **Promoting interdependence and sustainability.** To develop children’s understanding of humanity’s dependence for well-being and survival on equitable relationships between individuals, groups, communities and nations, and on a sustainable relationship with the natural world, and help children to move from understanding to positive action in order that they can make a difference and know that they have the power to do so.

- **Empowering local, national and global citizenship.** To help children to become active citizens by encouraging their full participation in decision-making within the classroom and school, especially where their own learning is concerned, and to advance their understanding of human rights, democratic engagement, diversity, conflict resolution and social justice. To develop a sense that human interdependence and the fragility of the world order require a concept of citizenship which is global as well as local and national.

- **Celebrating culture and community.** To establish the school as a cultural site, a focal point of community life and thought. To enact within the school the behaviours and relationships on which community most directly depends, and in so doing to counter the loss of community outside the school. To appreciate that ‘education is an embodiment of a culture’s way of life, not just as a preparation for it.’ Establishing itself as a thriving cultural and communal site should be a principal aim of every school.

Learning, knowing and doing

- **Exploring, knowing, understanding and making sense.** To enable children to encounter and begin to explore the wealth of human experience through induction into, and active engagement in, the different ways through which humans make sense of their world and act upon it: intellectual, moral, spiritual, aesthetic, social, emotional and physical; through language, mathematics, science, the humanities, the arts, religion and other ways of knowing and understanding. *Induction* acknowledges and respects our membership of a culture with its own deeply-embedded ways of thinking and acting which can make sense of complexity and through which human understanding constantly changes and advances. Education is necessarily a process of acculturation. *Exploration* is grounded in that distinctive mixture of amazement, perplexity and curiosity which constitutes childhood wonder; a commitment to discovery, invention, experiment, speculation, fantasy, play and growing linguistic agility which are the essence of childhood.

- **Fostering skill.** To foster children’s skills in those domains on which learning, employment and a rewarding life most critically depend: in oracy and literacy, in mathematics, science, information technology, the creative and performing arts and financial management; but also and no less in practical activities, communication, creativity, invention, problem-solving, critical practice and human relations. To ally skills to knowledge and a sense of purpose in order that they do not become empty formulae devoid of significance.

- **Exciting the imagination.** To excite children’s imagination in order that they can advance beyond present understanding, extend the boundaries of their lives, contemplate worlds possible as well
as actual, understand cause and consequence, develop the capacity for empathy, and reflect on and regulate their behaviour; to explore and test language, ideas and arguments in every activity and form of thought. We assert the need to emphasise the intrinsic value of exciting children’s imagination. To experience the delights – and pains – of imagining, and of entering into the imaginative worlds of others, is to become a more rounded and capable person.

• **Enacting dialogue.** To help children grasp that learning is an interactive process and that understanding builds through joint activity between teacher and pupil and among pupils in collaboration, and thereby to develop pupils’ increasing sense of responsibility for what and how they learn. To help children recognise that knowledge is not only transmitted but also negotiated and re-created; and that each of us in the end makes our own sense out of the meeting of knowledge both personal and collective. To advance a pedagogy in which dialogue is central: between self and others, between personal and collective knowledge, between present and past, between different ways of making sense.