

Curriculum Overview

Curriculum Design, Cognitive Load and Long-term Memory:

Our curriculum sets out the aims of our programme of education. In all subjects it has a **clear structure** where **knowledge** and **skills** have been **logically sequenced** to enable children to reach clearly defined **end goals** (End points). Our curriculum fully covers, and reaches **beyond**, the prescribed National Curriculum. It is expected that all children will be **'GIVERS'** when they move on to secondary school.

When thinking about our curriculum design we consider learning blocks like a Jenga tower:

| Solid learning | Unstable learning |
|--|--|
|  |  |
| <p>This tower represents a child who has learnt all the knowledge components of our curriculum in a logical and sequenced way. Knowledge has been committed to long-term memory via thinking, talking and doing. The tower is solid but may not be quite as high as the unstable tower. This tower represents a great knowledge foundation for secondary school.</p> | <p>This tower represents a child who has learnt some knowledge components but gaps in knowledge still exist. Knowledge may not be fully committed to long-term memory. The curriculum may have been poorly sequenced. Knowledge did not move from short-term memory to long-term memory well enough. The tower could be higher but is very unstable. This is not a strong knowledge foundation for secondary school.</p> |

Thinking about the Jenga tower, long-term memory consists of a range of **schemata**. These are complex structures that **link knowledge, create meaning** and allow **skills to be performed**. They are built up over time and could be represented by the strong tower.

Before information enters long-term memory, it needs to be **processed** by the short-term or **working memory**. This has **limited capacity**. It is not able to retain knowledge or develop

connected schemata if it is overloaded i.e. when we are given too many things to think about at once, not all the information is retained.

To **support children** to **process knowledge** and **convert** it from their short-term memory into their long-term memory, staff are mindful of applying the **right levels of cognitive load**. Therefore, learning in our curriculum is **broken down** into smaller chunks (**components**) and children are encouraged to **think** about what they are learning, **talk** about what they are learning and be active '**do something**' with their learning. These actions help **move knowledge to long-term memory**.

