

The Tree

Part 1: A background to Learning at WFA

Layers of learning at Wallscourt Farm Academy

September 2015



Learning at WFA

We want all of our learners to be full of ideas and love using their imagination. We want them to leave primary school as idealists who believe that everything is possible and focus on the way life could be. They will also be goal focused and action orientated learners who are naturally ambitious and self-determined.

Through looking at learning in different ways throughout their school life, learners will become versatile, independent, life long learners. They will develop new ideas quickly and challenge accepted norms in order to contribute to communities that promote respect, sustainability and equality. They will be vigilant, resilient, energetic self-starters that are good at carrying on even when learning is seemingly too challenging.

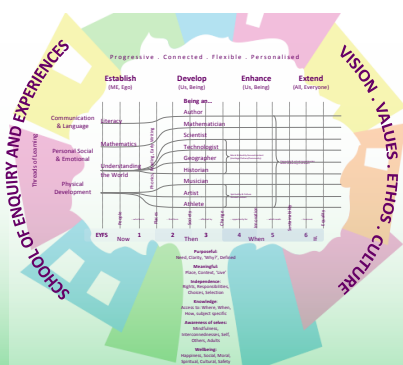
We create these habits in learners through a blend on innovative and traditional practices. Learning opportunities are future facing, progressive and cohesive; the overview of the curriculum is designed and planned for. Whilst we use the National Curriculum 2014 as a frame of reference, we are committed to providing further opportunities: *'National Curriculum, and then some'*.

The main vehicle for learning is enquiry-led learning throughout the school. School adults challenge learners to seek answers to questions that intuitively create opportunities to refine knowledge and skills in different states of being, for example: authors, mathematicians, technologists, artists...

Adults do this predominately through following Lines of Enquiry with the children and take different roles as children develop year on year, establishing, developing, enhancing and extending learning. Early in a child's school life, adults are focused on supporting learners to master basic tools and knowledge. As children move through the year groups, opportunities to use knowledge and enact creativity deepen.

The concept of The Tree is central to Wallscourt Farm. Not only are learning zones identified by them, The Tree enables interconnectivity between all of the elements; a new layer grows year on year, building on the growth of the previous year.

This document explains how the different elements of the tree connect and enable learning to live and flourish.



Background

Wallscourt Farm Academy (WFA) is a member of the Cabot Learning Federation, a Bristol based family of schools. WFA is a new purpose built school that combines traditional teaching with innovative learning opportunities, and nestles within a new community and the University of the West of England; one of it's closest neighbours.

It has been designed from the learning, and as a result, an open-plan, zoned, flexible learning environment has been created.

This document seeks to explore the core principles of the school through an explanation of the learning layers; it's highly visual, accessible to all, and seeks to use simple, non-educational jargon.

Purpose

We aim for the mapping, planning and facilitation of experiences at Wallscourt Farm Academy to be as straightforward as possible. It should have the greatest impact possible of releasing the potential in our learners by focusing on pedagogy and principles, not purely content and coverage.

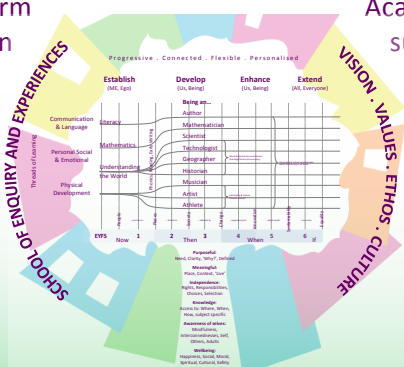
We value both skills content. It is clearly demonstrated by research and practice that a highly effective learner has an understanding of, and can draw on both in order to demonstrate and articulate thinking and learning.

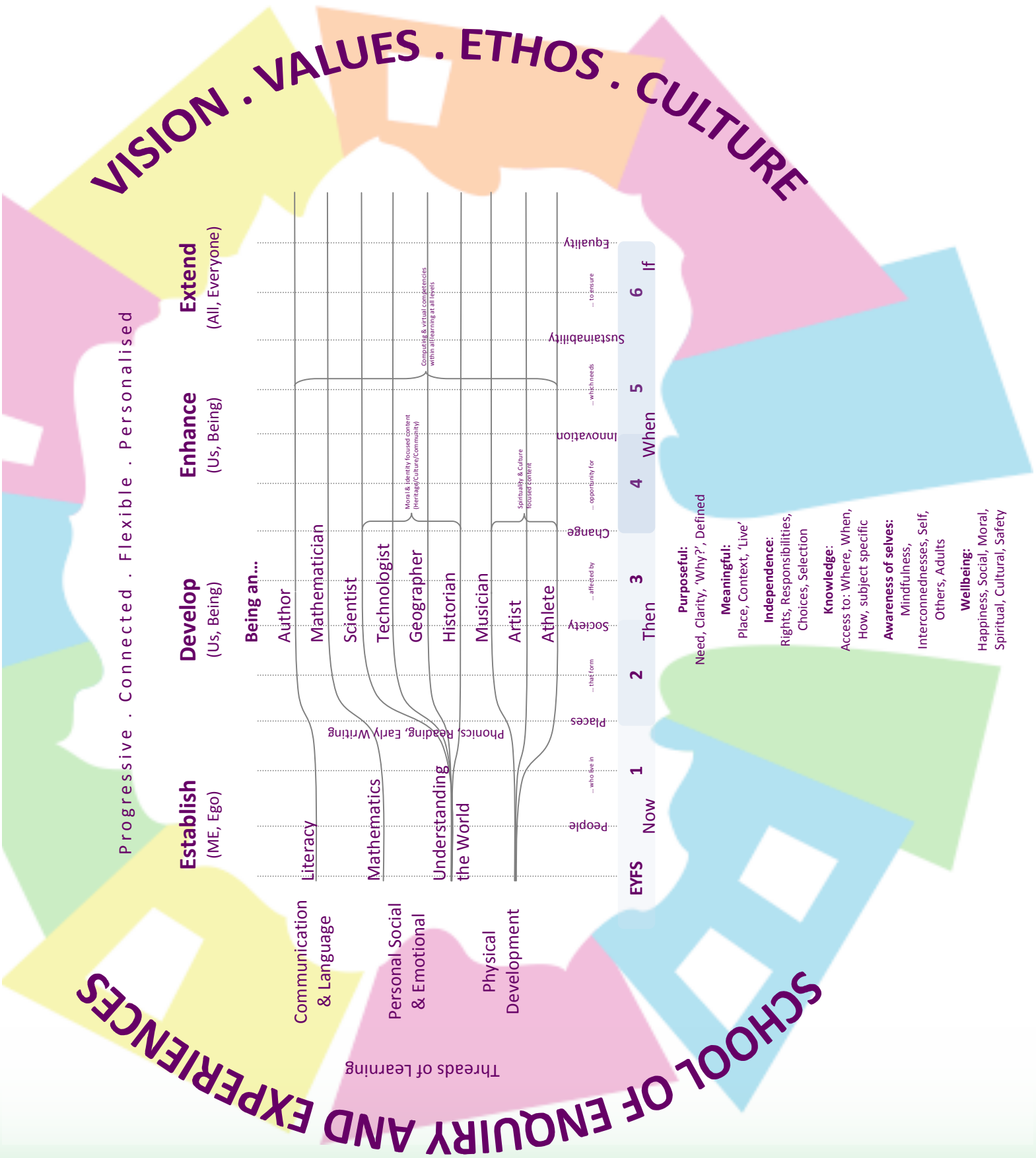
We recognise the importance of specific subject knowledge and skills balanced with broader listening, speaking and learning skills; being aware of how one learns best is as important as remembering and re-interpreting information.

We acknowledge that in order to plan and enable experiences that encompass the whole child from the moment they walk through our doors, to the conversations they have at home with their families, that it takes time to establish quality. We may not get it right along the way. However, because we are not afraid to take risks and share these risks with our learners, and because we are reflective and resilient, this means that we will never stand still; we will constantly strive to make the curriculum, both in approach and content, as relevant to the current day as possible.

We work closely with Lighting Up Learning Limited (www.lightinguplearning.com), curriculum innovation specialists, who supported our journey, in developing and creating a bespoke curriculum for our setting and learners. They have shared their pedagogy with us and we have chosen to adopt fundamental principles because they are rooted in an understanding of cognitive and learning development of children.

As a result of this partnership The Tree of Learning and Life (The Tree: see following page) has been created to exemplify learning at Wallscourt Farm Academy. The Tree has a number of layers, each of which are explained in subsequent pages.





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