

Overall Curriculum Approach at Burnt Tree – The Learning Challenges

The Learning Challenge Curriculum used at Burnt Tree Primary School uses the process that young people are working to a real purpose or outcome. Children know, and where possible, are involved in deciding what the outcome should be. The outcomes are always done for real and not for pretend. It is through completing this outcome that children use their learning and understanding for the purpose; it is a way of them communicating their findings and hopefully making some sort of impact through this.

By the achievement of the outcome being presented as a Challenge from the start of the learning, children know that they have to achieve. By further breaking that challenge down into a set or steps or sub-questions, the journey through the challenge can be further considered; and the knowledge and skills needed to achieve this attached to the steps or sub-questions. The idea of this approach is that each topic is driven by a challenge or question that opens out the plans for the whole topic and directs the learning of knowledge and skills through the learning journey.

Each topic/theme developed is driven by an overall challenge and an outcome being worked towards. From the overarching challenge, teachers create sub-questions or steps that the class should work through to reach the outcome and thereby find answers to their question. The cross curricular approach to learning is about bringing a purpose and outcome; children connect to what they are studying in the specific subjects, why it is important to gather knowledge and understanding to then be able to apply this into their purpose. There are frequent opportunities for children to demonstrate that they can apply the knowledge and skills gained in core lessons (Reading, Writing, Maths and SPAG) into their thematic work.

The idea of challenge is about encouraging children to see the learning opportunity as something that they should rise to, and also as a clear way of children taking responsibility for their learning. If constructed effectively, there should be clear opportunities within the learning challenge for children to take responsibility for decisions, work in teams or independently, and to take on various roles within the process of learning and achieving.

Appropriate learning challenges may be any of the following.

- Designing and selling a publication (book, guide, newspaper, magazine)
- Running a website
- Setting up a community museum (specialist exhibition, gallery, festival)
- Setting up a shop (stall, fayre, garden centre)
- Running a market (restaurant, healthy food stand, take away)
- Designing and selling a product (food, craft, fashion item)
- Running a conference
- Planning and undertaking an educational visit (trip, expedition, excursion)
- Creating an educational resource (guidance sheet, pack)
- Creating a workshop
- Providing a community service (talk, workshop, information service)
- Running a consultancy (social media, energy efficiency)
- Creating a re-enactment day
- Making real changes within school (healthy eating programme)
- Running an enterprise based event to raise money (water aid, save the pandas)
- Planning, organizing and running a production (performance, concert)