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Curriculum Policy

1. National Aims

1.1 The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 gives expression to the knowledge, skills and values worth learning in South African schools. This curriculum aims to ensure that children acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives. In this regard, the curriculum promotes knowledge in local contexts, while being sensitive to global imperatives.

1.2 The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 serves the purposes of:

1.2.1 Equipping learners, irrespective of their socio-economic background, race, gender, physical ability or intellectual ability, with the knowledge, skills and values necessary for self-fulfilment, and meaningful participation in society as citizens of a free country;

1.3 Providing access to higher education;

1.4 Facilitating the transition of learners from education institutions to the workplace; and

1.5 Providing employers with a sufficient profile of a learner's competences.

2. National Principles

2.1 Social transformation:

2.1.1 ensuring that the educational imbalances of the past are redressed, and that equal educational opportunities are provided for all sections of the population;

2.2 Active and critical learning:

2.2.1 Encouraging an active and critical approach to learning, rather than rote and uncritical learning of given truths;

2.3 High knowledge and high skills:

2.3.1 The minimum standards of knowledge and skills to be achieved at each grade are specified and set high, achievable standards in all subjects;

2.4 Progression:

2.4.1 Content and context of each grade shows progression from simple to complex;

3. Operational implementation at Sun Valley Primary Grade 1—Grade 7:

In order to implement this curriculum effectively, we have opted to divide our curriculum into three Curriculum Programmes.

3.1 Sun Valley Aims and Principles

3.1.1 Although deep respect is given to the National **Curriculum and Assessment Policy** statements, a generalised programme is often not the best curriculum for a high performance school.

3.1.2 In 1993, Sun Valley embarked on Curriculum renewal, developing a brand new curriculum from Grade 1 to 7 called The Integrated Thematic Approach. This approach was designed to create a meaningful professional learning community where content drove learning in progressive steps to master Skills, Concepts, Attitudes and Values.

3.1.3 Sun Valley was at the forefront of curriculum development for OBE and was proud to present as a model OBE school.

3.1.4 In 2010 Sun Valley embarked on the **Understanding by Design** approach, by making sure that the Transfer of Knowledge was at the heart of all learning. This meant an indepth re-working of our Curriculum design.

3.1.5 With the redesign of the National curriculum, Sun Valley has decided to make use of the **best practice policy**, to ensure our school continues to offer the very best schooling based on international and national standards.

3.2 We are a Six Star School

A learning community where each student will grow into a

3.2.1 Healthy fit, collaborative individual in a

3.2.2 Safe environment, with a

3.2.3 Deep sense of belonging, while being

3.2.4 Challenged emotionally, academically, creatively and spiritually, in order to

3.2.5 Taste suggest and

3.2.6 Transfer meaningful knowledge at a tertiary and vocational level, and into their adult life.

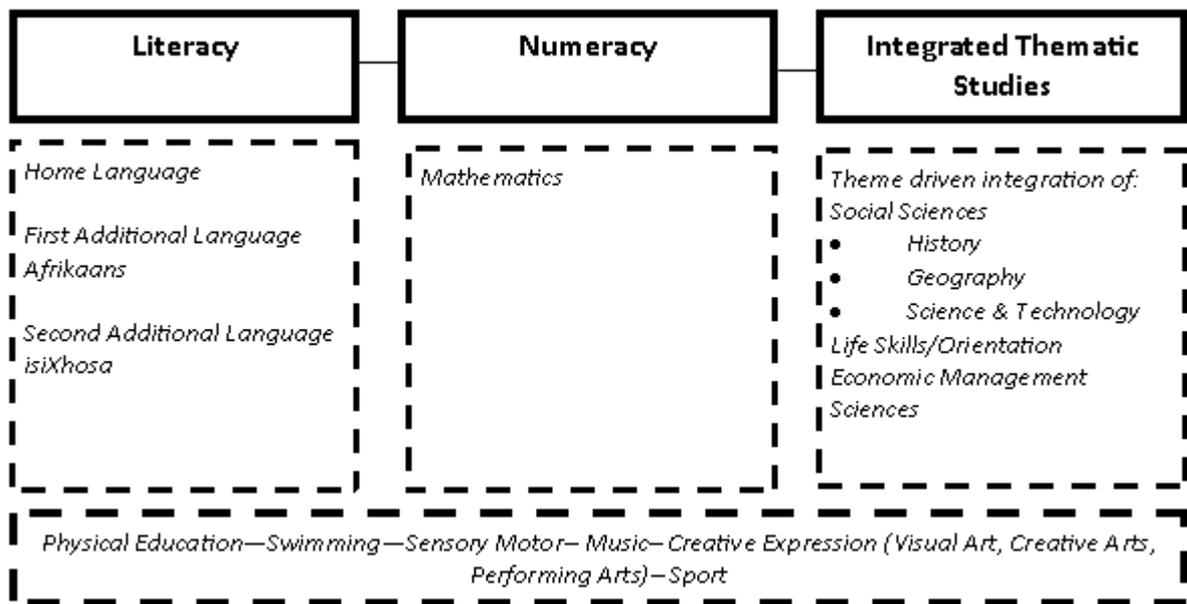
3.3 Curriculum Planning

3.3.1 Management and Leadership of the Curriculum (the three learning programmes mentioned below) falls under the responsibility of the Director: Curriculum Services. A Deputy Principal heads up this Directorate.

3.3.2 The school is then divided into two phases—Foundation Phase Grade R-3 and Inter-Sen Phase Grade 4-7. The two Phase Heads report directly to the Director: Curriculum.

3.3.3 Each Grade within a Phase has a Grade Head. The Grade Head is appointed according to performance as a Top Teacher. The Grade Head co-ordinates the teaching and learning within the Grade and reports directly to the Phase Head.

3.3.4 The entire curriculum has been mapped to ensure progression from Grade R to Grade 7. As a professional learning community, we plan together, evaluate our strengths and growth areas and constantly tweak our programme to ensure mastery of assessment criteria in the various learning areas.

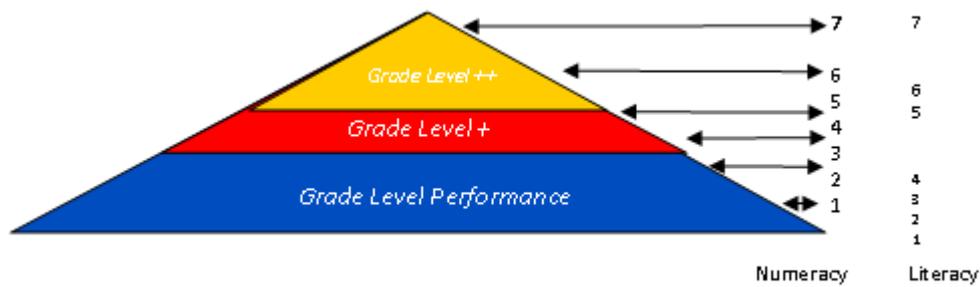


3.4 Literacy Hour

3.4.1 This hour follows closely to the CAPS curriculum, but not necessarily in the same time line. This includes Silent Uninterrupted Reading Experience (SURE), Language structure and usage, Reading and Comprehension, Listening and Viewing skills and Creative writing. Speaking and Oral communication skills are taught.

3.5 Numeracy Hour

3.5.1 Mathematics *Tuition and Mastery* forms part of our School Improvement Plan. We have divided our students into PACE Groups to ensure that our extension groups are accelerated while our support groups receive additional attention.



3.6 Integrated Thematic Approach

3.6.1 The Integrated Thematic Approach is true 21st century learning. Clearly defined cross-curricular SKILLS, CONCEPTS and ATTITUDES & VALUES have been identified that need to be mastered progressively during the primary school phase. In order to master these, themes are used to ensure that the content is always new and exciting. As the students engage with the content, they master the skills concepts and attitudes and values required to achieve the aims and principles We report in detail on these in our Reports. SKILLS are referred to as PROCEDURAL KNOWLEDGE (how we do things) and CONCEPTS are referred to as DECLARATIVE KNOWLEDGE (what needs to be declared at any given time). Declarative knowledge can be learnt, but procedural knowledge must be practiced.

3.6.2 For a detailed summary of the Curriculum, please refer to: Understanding By Design—Grade 1-7

3.7 Assessment for Competency ensures that Assessment is part of the teaching and learning experience. Before, the policy was TEACH, TEST HOPE FOR THE BEST. Now, Assessment is about finding out what the student knows and coaching them to competency.

3.7.1 The emphasis is on: What must the student be able to:

- KNOW (declarative knowledge)
- DO (procedural knowledge)
- APPRECIATE & VALUE (attitudes and values)

3.7.2 As soon as the educator has the above Aims and Principles clearly defined, they write/design a RUBRIC that describes a competent performance. It is essential that the educator KNOWS what competence LOOKS LIKE before one is able to teach it and later assess it. If, after the Assessment, the teacher sees that the student has not achieved competence, opportunities can be given to COACH the student to competence.

3.7.3 The process at The Sun Valley Group looks like this:

- Identify Outcomes—Know, Do, Appreciate & Value.
- Design Rubrics (Competence descriptors)
- Use appropriate content to drive the learning programme. Although we attempt to be CAPS compliant in content, the need for the curriculum to be relevant, meaningful with a strong digital influence, outweighs the content-based recommendation.
- Select a teaching style for the various modalities (Visual/Auditory/Kinaesthetic)
- Assess student performance using the Rubric
- Coach students to competence (PACE teaching, Peer Teaching, Room Parents, Interventions: Small Group Tuition, Inclusion Tutor, Full Service Team, Facilitators)
- Report to role players (Assessment Report, Parentline, Mark Schedules, WCED)
- Intervene where necessary (Education Support Team: Occupational Therapy, Psychometric Assessments, Specialised Support)

3.8 The Three Big Ideas in Assessment at Sun Valley Group of Schools:

3.8.1 BIG IDEA ONE:

The purpose of the school is to ensure high levels of learning for all students.

The emphasis here is HIGH LEVELS for ALL. We teach in order to give students the best opportunities. We do not stream children in order to give certain children better opportunities. We design a learning programme so that all students can be exposed to high levels of learning.

3.8.2 BIG IDEA TWO:

We can only achieve high levels of learning for all students if we work together in high performing teams.

A professional learning community is defined by the effectiveness of the inter-relationship between high performing teams. We have designed our school to operate in teams with full authority and responsibility being delegated to the team-leader. Team-leaders meet weekly with their supervisors in order to chart a pathway. They are constantly assessed in terms of performance reviews. Climate analysis and SWOT reviews are carried out to assess our team efficacy.

3.8.3 BIG IDEA THREE:

We assess our effectiveness based on results and not activities.

We look at multiple indicators in order to assess our students. Class work assignments, Homework tasks, Projects, Orals, Groups Assignments, Portfolio items, Assessment Tasks, Tests and Formal Assessments are an indicators that are used to gauge competence. The results for each of the above are recorded as Formative Assessment scores.

3.9 Reporting on Competence

3.9.1 At the end of the term or cycle, educators have a number of assessment results for the various assessment criteria that have been assessed. Based on the expectations set out in the various rubrics, teachers in consultation with their Grade Heads, sum up the performance of each student and award a grade. From Grade 1 to Grade 7 we make use of a 7 point competency scale. Here moderation process is applied to ensure an accurate, fair and balanced assessment of the entire Grade.

3.9.2 The Director of Curriculum tracks all the reporting to ensure that sufficient intervention has taken place through the Education Support Team, headed by an HoD: Interventions.

3.9.3 Detailed Report Cards are printed with a Narrative Report indicating the child's self-value and strengths. A particular growth area is highlighted. Parents are then given a compulsory 10 minute interview to discuss the Report.

3.10 The Role of the Parent in Assessment

3.10.1 Parents are the primary educators, but few are trained as teachers. Therefore a *partnership in parenting* with the parent, teacher and school is essential.

- i. **Know what is expected.** Each year our school offers a Back to School Evening. The purpose of this evening is to bring the parents up to speed with the curriculum and classroom management procedures. Here the class teacher will share vital information with the parents.
- ii. **Track your child's homework, tasks, projects and tests.** By going through the Homework diary each evening, parents need to be fully aware of what is required. Monitor that all assignments are started in good time. Review performance and make lists of how to improve performance if competency was not achieved.
- iii. **Formal Assessment Support:** Your child will require a lot of assistance and support during tests and formal assessment periods. A Study timetable is given to each child at least ten days before the Assessment Week.
 - Go through the assigned sections of the work with your child, guiding him/her how to make study notes.
 - Keep all the study notes in a book/file for use at a later stage .
 - De-stress your child by keeping the home calm and ordered.
 - Create a study centre (space in the home) where you can keep tabs on the progress. Keep distractions low.
 - Allow your child to work for short periods of time.
 - Test the work by questioning him/her.
 - You build confidence by feeling that you have support.

- Make sure your child sleeps well , exercises and eats well specifically during this time.
- Review their performance after they have written the paper. Talk about what was easy and what was challenging.

3.11 Formal Assessment Papers: Formal Assessment Examination Papers and Written Papers are not sent home after the Assessment period. Students will have an opportunity to peruse their performance, but the papers will not be sent home. The papers are often adjusted and re-used in future years in order to reduce the work on our teaching staff.

3.11.1 The **Formal Assessment Week** is designed as a LIFE SKILL lesson. We use this week to teach:

- Study skills
- Time management
- Prioritisation
- Organisation skills
- Stress management
- Examination writing technique (working on your own in silence)
- Reflecting on personal performance and writing personal improvement plans

3.11.2 The results from the **Formal Assessment Week** form only part of the Formative Assessment. The Class Teacher will **SUM UP** after reviewing the entire Competency of Performance, and Grade the criteria. These Grades are then discussed at the **Parentline**.

3.11.3 At the Sun Valley Group of Schools, we want to ensure that each child tastes success. We are gifted in different fields and it is our task as parents and teachers to help our children to recognise their gifting and work at their challenges. Use every incident to teach a coping strategy or a life lesson. Assist them to strategise and draw up an improvement plan. Talk about what went wrong or where they succeeded. Never show your disappointment. Rather, always plan to improve by working on it together.

3.12 21st Century Learning

3.12.1 A rationale: 21st Century tools benefit learners by:

- Providing a visual and organisational tool that enables students to make meaning in concrete ways that they can control with immediate access.
- Developing a different kind of thinking tool helps them develop their critical thinking by making choices, stimulating visual reflection and developing their verbal expression
- Increasing engagement because of immediate excitement, control and interactivity
- Allowing transfer of engagement and interaction into other aspects of the curriculum

- Increasing classroom teaching and learning time by minimising intrusive routines
- Increasing the likelihood of completion of academic work during out of school time.

3.12.2 A commitment: **21st Century** teachers commit to:

- Using technology to enhance learning
- Finding the appropriate technology that suits the unit of study
- Showing technological evidence in student products and performances

3.12.3 Sun Valley has made THREE distinct SHIFTS to create a 21st Century learning community

I. SHIFT ONE

Move from **KNOWING THE RIGHT ANSWER** to **KNOWING WHAT TO DO WHEN THE ANSWER IS NOT READILY AVAILABLE**

II. SHIFT TWO

Move from **TRANSMITTING KNOWLEDGE** to **CONSTRUCTING KNOWLEDGE**

III. SHIFT THREE

Move from **EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT** to **SELF-ASSESSMENT**