

## Curriculum Journey 2012 until present day...

Once upon a time there was a 'Castle' in Stevenage, named Camps Hill (because of the Saxon settlement that had existed on the site many moons ago). The school had previously implemented a curriculum called the 'International Primary Curriculum' and the EYFS used the 'Reggio Emilio' Curriculum. Poor outcomes, fragmented systems and inadequate teaching and learning proved that these were not the right 'fairy wands' needed for the job. The young apprentices were not making enough progress (some made absolutely no progress between KSI and 2) and only 43% were reaching the combined expected standards. The characters at Camps Hill had welcomed a new Fairy Godmother and Deputy Fairy Godmother in 2011 and some of the characters from previous 'chapters' had been replaced by new characters: wands were redistributed. By 2012-13 the cast was secured and pages were a blank canvas ready to reflect the vision, innovation and strategic plan for future teaching and learning.

At this point in time there was a rumour of more flexibility for maintained castles around curriculum and although the new National Curriculum had not yet been launched, the subjects were eager to begin to explore this freedom. The starting point for our curriculum was to begin to work from an informed perspective. As a team, we shared, 'discussed passionately' and agreed upon what was missing from our current curriculum: Values, more first-hand experiences to apply skills/gather knowledge, character building opportunities, aspiration and the ability to see themselves as growing learners.

Characters (including Governors) researched approaches and theory that they felt that may make a difference. Each 'region' explored an element of research or theory such as Growth Mindsets, Guy Claxton's work, Pie Corbett, Will Ord and Chris Quigley. Each of the characters researched during the first term, choosing an element to trial in their own practice. This intent was introduced to all the characters. The second term was the implementation stage which included monitoring the success of their actions for all stakeholders. In the third term, the team measured impact and made recommendations to start on the journey to 'happily ever after'. The Golden Threads were created!

During this period a decree was made to support the young apprentices to manage their emotions and a de-escalation approach to managing the land was introduced. A united focus on wellbeing for all and an awareness of attachment: changed attitudes, made

everyone feel safe and brought greater contentment to the region. Younger apprentices were welcomed into the castle grounds and the age changed to 2-11 years.

The storytellers realised through this year; that the key to enabling all of the characters to live 'happily ever after', was to teach a relevant curriculum in which the skills were able to be applied first-hand and with involvement of all stakeholders. Many of the young apprentices had never ventured out of the kingdom: so first hand experiences and exposure to different types of fairy tales was pivotal to their understanding of the formula of life. Wow days, an enriched curriculum, a pastoral team and the school chickens were born and opportunities to meet characters from other lands were introduced.

The maintained castle joined with another from a land with the same values in 2017 and the two castles were twinned; giving opportunities to collaborate across lands, share good practice amongst all and improve outcomes for a greater number of the people.

This evolving and child-initiated curriculum now gives our apprentices (and their families) a chance to succeed, support others in their journey, apply key life skills/values and ultimately become the stars of their own fairy tales- wherever their adventures in life may take them.

