KENSINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

FROM PROJECT K TO CURRICULUM K

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THANKS

Countless people have contributed and continue to contribute to the development of Curriculum K. A huge thank you to everyone who has been involved.

We are at the start of our journey. We welcome visitors to the school to discuss, challenge, and explore what we are doing. We are always looking for opportunities to be reflective and to learn from the experiences of others.

If you would like to visit the school, please contact us at: info@kensington.ttlt.academy or on 020 8470 2339. Alternatively, visit www.kensington.newham.sch.uk to find out more about the school.

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

LIKE SO MANY NEW IDEAS, PROJECT K WASN'T A THUNDERBOLT MOMENT BUT AN ACCUMULATION OF EXPERIENCES, THOUGHTS AND REALISATIONS OVER A PERIOD OF TIME.

57% of education professionals have considered leaving the sector over the past two years.

> By 2022 there will be a shortage of 3 million high skilled workers in the UK

factories

Six times more young people (4-24) have psychological problems today than a generation ago

Outdated curriculum as many people as over 150 years old to prepare children to work in

malnutrition

Obesity killing three times

87% of first year students find it difficult to cope with academic or social aspects of university life

> 47% of jobs will disappear in the next 25 years Oxford University Research



NOT ENOUGH TIME IN THE DAY

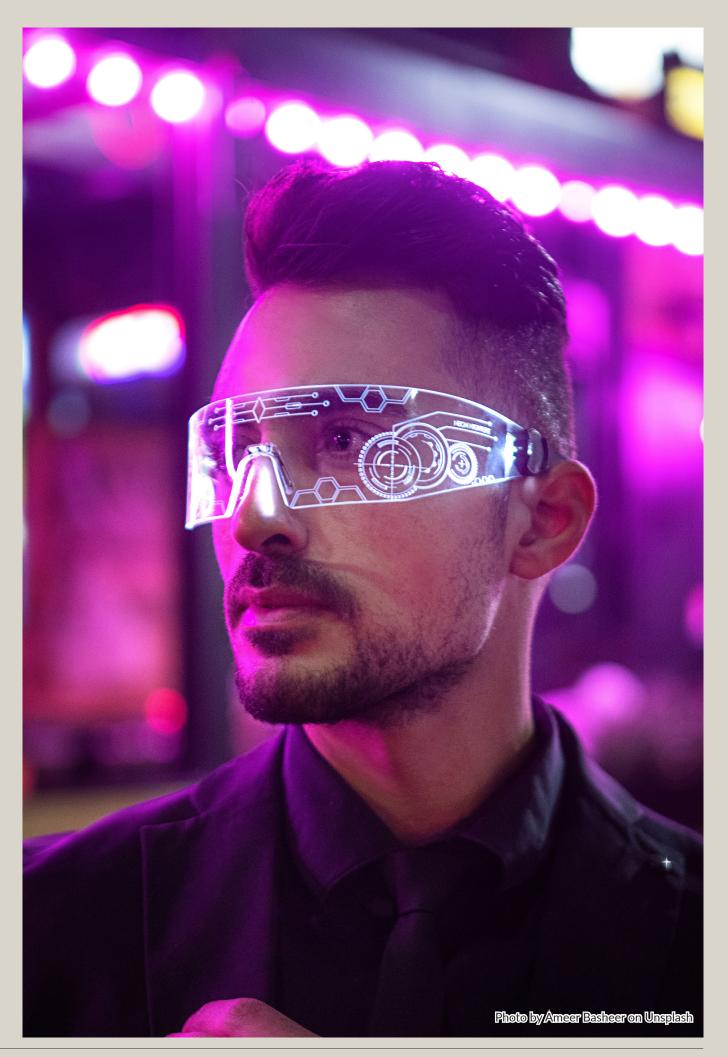
I remember as an NQT looking at a blank timetable and then at everything I was supposed to teach and thinking, 'these two just don't fit together'. The expectations on Primary schools of what constitutes a 'good' education simply don't match the number of hours we have with the children. Something always had to give. More often than not this came down to the personal choice of the teacher; which wasn't necessarily a good way to make these decisions.

CHANGING WORLD

I was really aware that the world around us was changing, and fast. Despite this, the fundamental curriculum hasn't changed since the Victorians first introduced it 150 years ago. Personally, I left University just over 20 years ago, at which point I didn't have a mobile phone or an email address and I'd just been on the Internet for the first time. Change continues to accelerate and we were preparing our children for a world 20 years hence. There seemed to be a disconnect.

CHALLENGES

Everywhere I looked and everyone I spoke to identified challenges. Whether it was mental health, obesity, the ability to communicate, or the gaps between different sectors of society. Not to mention climate change, the changing political landscape, and rapid advances in technology. The world was challenging and it seemed that our children were not adequately prepared to cope.



A BELIEF THAT THERE WAS A BETTER WAY

A PLACE EVERYONE LOVES TO BE

PRIMARY SCHOOL SHOULD BE A PLACE EVERYONE LOVES TO BE. WE BELIEVE THAT IF OUR CHILDREN LOVE BEING HERE THEY WILL LEARN AND THEY WILL MOVE ONTO SECONDARY SCHOOL INSPIRED AND ENTHUSED.

All of this combined to suggest there might be a better way.

At Kensington Primary we had already embraced what is now one of our guiding principles: thinking about what we do and why. We applied this principle to our lesson planning, to our feedback to children: why should the curriculum be any different? Maybe there was a different way. Maybe there was a way that prepared our children for their futures.

At the same time we were developing our new school vision. For us, Primary school should be a place everyone loves to be. We believe that if our children love being here they will learn and they will move onto secondary school inspired and enthused. We want our staff to love being here too because it is such a significant part of their lives but also they'll be better teachers if they are happier and healthier. We want our parents to love being here so they can be engaged in their child's education and confident about where their children are every day. When we looked at the curriculum at that time, we weren't convinced that the children loved learning it or that the teachers loved teaching it. There were many great aspects but others where it was hard to see what the point was.

RESEARCH

Over 100 parents

87 members of staff

2 Trust members

Over 200 children

2 main secondary schools

TTLT CEO

Cabinet members and senior members of staff from the Local Authority

OFSTED

2 universities

10 local, national and global businesses

FIRST STEPS

We knew what a significant undertaking this could potentially be and started by appointing an Assistant Head - Kayleigh Cowx - whose initial role would be to focus on carrying out the research. We set aside the academic year 2018-19 to complete this and consider a way forward. (As it turned out, Kayleigh was so enthusiastic we actually started in Summer Term 2018.) Our research took us far and wide.

- We sought legal advice from Browne Jacobson on what we were required to do as an academy

- We liaised with a researcher from GfK on how to best carry out our research

- We spoke to staff at Cambridge University and the Institute of Education
- We contacted a wide-range of businesses local, national and global

- We visited schools from London to the Isle of Man to see what they were doing with their curricula

- We read everything we could get our hands on about curriculum design and learning

- We surveyed children, staff (school and Trust), governors, parents, businesses, our main feeder secondary schools, the Director of Education for Newham and the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board amongst many others

Anyone and everyone who had a view we asked and we listened. During this time, we would meet regularly to reflect on what we were hearing and, through this process, the first shoots of what was to become Curriculum K began to emerge.

CHANGE

RISK VS REWARD

WE KNEW THAT WHAT WE WERE DOING CARRIED SIGNIFICANT RISK: CHANGE ALWAYS DOES. IN PARTICULAR, WHEN YOU ARE STARTING FROM A GOOD PLACE, CHANGE CAN BE EVEN RISKIER.

We are an Outstanding school with amazing children who make great progress; our staff are engaged and committed; our parents are fullysupportive. If we decided the curriculum really did need to be changed root and branch, we could be risking all of this. We mitigated the risk by carrying out in-depth, substantial research. We also kept everyone on board through engaging with key groups - parents, staff, governors throughout the process so that they were clear on where we were at and how it was developing. We had an opportunity to invite OFSTED in and get their views as they were in the process of developing their new framework. Ultimately, if all of the research did indeed show there was a better way, then it was worth all of the risks to build something that made a real difference to the lives of our children.

Keeping everyone on board is the key to any change project. The process had really begun five and a half years ago when I joined Kensington. I was fortunate enough to work alongside and learn from Paul Harris - NLE and now CEO of The Tapscott Learning Trust. Together, we worked to turn Kensington around and build a school that was deserving of its community. This involved huge change. Throughout this process, a key factor was keeping everyone moving in the right direction. Ultimately, this comes down to a million and one daily interactions alongside everything else that is done from policies and processes to informal gatherings, staff training, Friday briefings, assemblies and so much more. What it meant was that we had a team and a wider community who were resilient to change, open-minded, and had seen the benefits of our already innovative approaches.

From this starting point, selling the vision and the reasons behind why we were doing this was at least possible. It is testament to the amazing staff, children, and parents that they have fully supported this development and understand why we are building a new curriculum. Many are now our biggest cheerleaders.

ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION HEALTH CULTURE

Through countless hours of research, discussion and reflection, we developed the key elements of Curriculum K. For our children to be happy and successful, they need to be readers, writers, mathematicians and scientists. If they are going to fulfil their academic potential, then they need to be physically and emotionally healthy. They need the ability to communicate to different people and in different circumstances. And they need a broad understanding of and interest in the world around them. These four strands formed the basis of Curriculum K: Academic, Health, Communication, and Culture.

GLOBAL HEAD OF PLANING - MEDIACOM

We are in a period of unprecedented change and believe that will only accelerate in the lifetime of kids now. Intellectual and emotional adaptivity and agility will be crucial

JOHN RATEY

SPARK: THE REVOLUTIONARY NEW SCIENCE OF EXERCISE AND THE BRAIN

The real reason we feel so good when we get our blood pumping is that it makes the brain function at it's best.

TTLT TRUSTEE

Being confident in themselves no matter what social says! A lot of our younger generation are plagued with images of perfection, which leads to all types of issues. Teaching our children to be confident in who they are and their ability is key.

KENSINGTON CHILD

When I was asked to work with someone I would not normally choose, it taught me how to tolerate and I eventually enjoyed it.

EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION

METACOGNITION AND SELF-REGULATION

Self-regulated learners are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and can motivate themselves to engage in, and improve, their learning

HOW WE LEARN

ALONGSIDE THE 'WHAT' OF THE NEW CURRICULUM, WE ALSO DEVELOPED THE 'HOW'.

What we teach was enshrined in our four key areas. How we were going to teach that became our 7K. The 7K were the strategies we identified through our research that will help children to acquire, develop, and then retain what they are taught. We combined this with a better balance of episodic and semantic learning and provided CPD for staff and support through PPA for them to be able to better plan a mix of episodic and semantic opportunities.



7K

1. Step by Step – Learning is broken down into small key steps.

The average brain is only able to manage four pieces of information at one time. Breaking learning down into small steps helps the brain's working memory to chunk together key bits of learning and store them in the longterm memory as one piece of information, freeing up the working memory to access more new information. The more knowledge a child gains, the more they are able to chunk their learning and the more space they free up in their working memory

2. Pairing pictorials with words

We have two primary pathways for receiving information: words and graphics. New learning increases when we combine both.

3. Linking abstract concepts with concrete materials

Using concrete materials to explain abstract concepts improves understanding and helps to apply learning in different contexts.

Connecting Information to Deepen Understanding

4. Posing Probing Questions

Asking children 'how', 'why' and to 'compare' and 'contrast' helps to clarify and deepen understanding of new concepts.

5. Alternating problems with solutions

Children learn more when they are given incremental guidance for solving problems. Seeing examples of how the problems can be solved helps children focus on the key principles and steps required.

Improving retention through retrieval

6. Distributing Practice

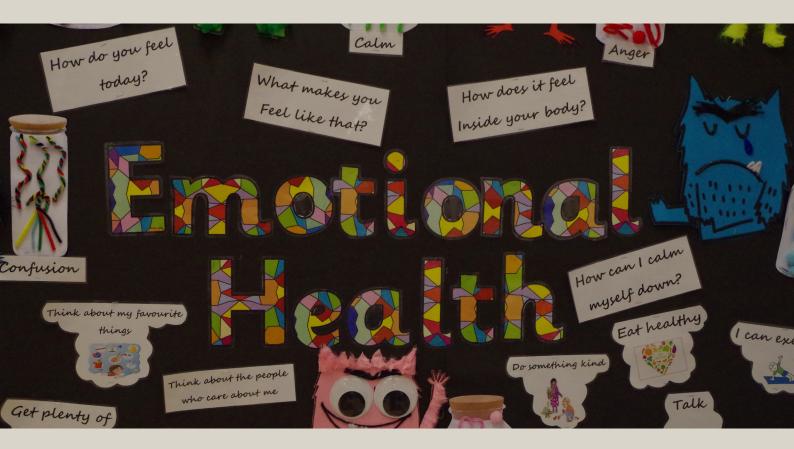
Learners remember information better when they are exposed to it multiple times, over spaced, significant periods. Children should be exposed to new learning at least twice, which is then revisited at planned reviewed periods.

7. Assessing to Boost Memory

Every time someone tries to retrieve information, it becomes more cemented in their long-term memory. Quizzing and assessing children helps us to identify if learning has been remembered and boosts learning and retention.

FROM THEORY TO REALITY

THERE HAVE BEEN MANY SIGNIFICANT QUESTIONS ON THE JOURNEY FROM PROJECT K TO CURRICULUM K. ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT WAS HOW BEST TO ROLL IT OUT?



Rolling it out in stages posed serious challenges. We would be in transition for at least a year. The leadership structure would need to adapt over time rather than being a clean, new start. Tying the curriculum together would be difficult or even impossible until all the parts were in place. Equally, rolling out the whole curriculum at once would mean such significant change for children and staff. It wasn't just what we were teaching but also how we were teaching it. After much deliberation, we felt the greatest chance of success was to roll it out stage by stage.

PREPARING FOR PHASE 1

In the Summer of 2019, we appointed new leads for Physical Health and Outdoor Learning. Along with our Science and Maths Leads, and in consultation with other staff, children, parents etc, they developed new schemes of work for Science, Maths and Physical Health. We ran CPD for our staff on the new curriculum through staff training sessions and INSET. We communicated plans to the children, parents, and staff, as well as the wider community.



PHASE 1

IN SEPTEMBER 2019 WE ROLLED OUT OUR PHYSICAL HEALTH, SCIENCE AND MATHS CURRICULA

PHYSICAL HEALTH

This has been the most visible change. Children now do two 30 minute fitness sessions per week, with the aim of raising their heart rate and getting them to sweat. Y5 and 6 are using MyZone heart rate monitors to provide motivation and track their progress. Additionally, children do an hour's Skills 4 Life lesson, focusing on core skills of: flexibility, strength, balance, and coordination. Workout Wednesday's get children, staff and parents moving before school. Children have active learning breaks during lessons as well as active, outdoor lessons at least once a fortnight.

SCIENCE

Our new Health Science curriculum teaches our children why it is important to be healthy and how to stay healthy. They learn about nutrition, sleep, and exercise and how this impacts on chemical changes in their body, which then impacts on mood and attitude. We have plans to focus on plants and growing in our new edible garden. Physical Science provides the opportunity to further learn about the world around them. We also have new plants all around the school and are planning episodic visits to engage our learners.

MATHS

Our maths curriculum focuses on teaching children the core building blocks of number, place value and calculation. We use the mastery approaches of fluency, variation, and mixed-ability, alongside concrete and pictorial representations of abstract concepts. Our curriculum moves at a pace that allows children to secure these key concepts before moving on to broader content.

FEEDBACK

"My daughter is enjoying school more."

> "The children are very engaged. Mixing the daily timetables up has improved the focus because the children are no longer in the robotic routine of guided reading, English and maths."

> > "We really like all these lessons."

"Skipping skills in Y3 and Y4 have drastically improved, particularly with the boys. The children love skipping."

"I want to join in!"

"Fitness levels are already improving and the children can run for longer."

"This curriculum is good for students." "Physical health is fun and we are learning about how we should fuel our bodies."

"Awesome!"

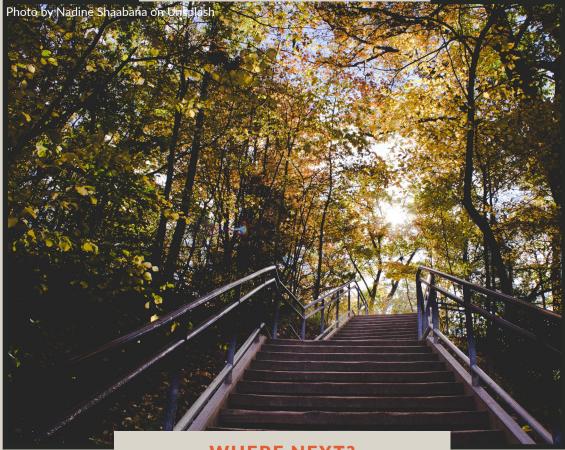
"In Physical Health we talk about how our bodies change and we help our hearts to get healthy when they pump more blood around the body."

"My daughter really enjoys the sessions she has set for her class and she explains it well when she is feeding this information back."

> "The fitness lessons are fun."

"The children are really enjoying the practical and active approach to learning."

> "The science lessons help us to know what is happening during physical health lessons so we know what we need to do to get stronger."



WHERE NEXT?

We still have a long way to go. Our Emotional Health curriculum was rolled-out in January. This has been a collaboration with CAMHS, Place2Be, Headstart, NewDAy, and a range of other experts. This will combine the taught curriculum with the wider factors of: pupil voice, community, and how we teach the children about behaviour.

Next up are the English and Communication curricula with Culture and Technology to follow in September 2020.

ONE RING TO BIND THEM

Another challenge of staggering the roll-out has been how we tie the curriculum together. We knew that we wanted this to be delivered in a thematic way. We would keep the integrity and focus of the individual areas so that learning was clear and defined but we would build coherence and engagement, and develop specific language and knowledge through tying together the key areas under a theme. This is still a work in progress. At the moment we have identified drivers that would provide a framework for teachers but freedom within that to go with their passions, those of their children, or current affairs. Again, there is a tension between providing flexibility versus the workload implications of developing new themes from scratch.

ASSESSMENT

We are also reviewing how we assess. For all of the noise around assessment, ultimately its value is in helping us to identify what children know and what we need to teach them next. We have created a simple assessment system that allows teachers to use their professional judgement. Alongside this we are developing further measures for physical health using simple tests of fitness. We are looking at how we 'assess' culture - currently the working model is a journal that tracks a child's cultural experiences through the school. We are also working with our two main secondary schools so we can track children into Y7, Y8 and beyond to ensure our curriculum is having a positive impact on their future and tweak it where necessary.



META-COGNITION, CREATIVITY, TECHNOLOGY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND SO MUCH MORE

(BUT NOT TOO MUCH MORE)

IN THIS PROCESS, WE KNEW WE WERE GOING TO HAVE TO MAKE SOME HARD DECISIONS ABOUT WHAT WE TEACH AND, THEREFORE, WHAT WE DON'T TEACH OUR CHILDREN.

From the start, one of the driving forces behind Project (and then Curriculum) K was the overwhelming amount of 'curriculum' schools need to deliver.

The next exciting initiative or 'opportunity' is always just around the corner. It's very hard to say no! This is how schools end up with a written curriculum that fills more than a full week's timetable AND a supplementary curriculum of wonderful activities, themed weeks, special days, and so on and so on.

In this process, we knew we were going to have to make some hard decisions about what we teach and, therefore, what we don't teach our children. Many of the hardest are yet to come. We always knew that part of the 'savings' would be delivered through more effective use of time. We also knew that we wanted our children to have a breadth of cultural knowledge but that we just didn't have the time or expertise (and children were not developmentally ready) to effectively develop the skills we purport to develop in the wider curriculum. How we balance this but ensure that children are still prepared and advantaged rather than disadvantaged through Curriculum K continues to be a challenge.

Further, we know we want meta-cognition and self-regulation in there. We also know that creativity, technology, and sustainability are all crucial areas for our children as they grow into adults and face the challenges ahead. We know that we will need to carefully map what themes our children learn so it is progressive and provides a varied diet. What we are extremely mindful of is ensuring we don't end up where we started: with a curriculum that is undeliverable in the time we have.

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