

Our Lady of Lincoln Catholic Primary School

Creating our intent – Emma Jefferson (Assistant Headteacher)

We first started to review our intent in the Summer term. In some respects, we have always known what our 'intent' is but, whilst on our curriculum journey, it seemed timely to start looking more closely at what we wanted our curriculum to achieve.

I started to research how different schools were articulating their intent and whilst doing so, stumbled across an article by Michael Tidd titled 'the troubling rise of curriculum intent statements.' (<https://www.tes.com/news/troubling-rise-curriculum-intent-statements>) Whilst smiling at the irony of finding this article when looking for ways of writing our intent statement, it did hit a nerve. Who was our intent for? Ofsted – no, our community – more so, our children – definitely.

I attended lots of events over the Summer and into the Autumn term, all giving out lots of information about intent, implementation and impact. I remember turning to my Headteacher and telling her that we needed to do something different in order to stop this from becoming just words on paper.

We set to work and our process, in brief, included gathering all of our staff team together to revisit our curriculum aims and the core skills we wanted children in our school to develop. We did an activity which had been shared at the LARC workshops, thinking about where our children start in Reception (small stick person) to our aspirations for them leaving Year 6 (larger stick person) We didn't know at this point that this visual would be the thing that 'stuck' for our staff and would be a way of visualising our intent. When we had our list of aims and skills, we sent them all out to parents and asked them to rank which they felt were the most important for their children to develop at our school. Analysing all of their responses, this is how we eventually decided on the core 7 which would form our intent.

In the meantime, I continued to work on framing our intent. Some may say contradictory to the earlier point made, I found myself writing our intent statement. I wanted the words to reflect what we want for our children and our community and words seemed to be the way to do this. I shared it with staff and made reference to where their ideas fitted in and those of our parents and we were pleased with the content but I knew that this wouldn't be lived, breathed and understood by our children without further development. It was in the staffroom when, in passing, I heard a member of staff talking about the stick person activity we had done and how clear this had been. Moving forward, I asked one of our arty TAs to create the concept of a child starting our school and leaving our school with the road representing their primary journey (also linking with our mission statement.) The curriculum aims were placed on the road and the key intent statements for our curriculum were added in succinct, child-friendly form. This was now something that was visually appealing in classrooms, could easily be spoken about by all and acted as a constant reminder for our children about what it is we are intending to do for them.

A few weeks ago, we shared this with the children in a whole school assembly, explaining each curriculum aim and how we may see this in their classrooms. By breaktime, a child had

stopped me in the corridor saying “Mrs Jefferson, I was being positive in lesson this morning.” When asked how they were being positive they added “it got a bit tricky but I remembered it’s one of the skills you said.”

We are now asking teachers to refer to our intent, when relevant, in lessons so that it becomes embedded in the life of the classroom and so that all children are under no illusion about what we want for them. We are still at the beginning of our journey and even though we do have a written intent statement, (sorry Michael Tidd!) we also have children who would be able to explain to anyone visiting their class what the aim of the curriculum is at Our Lady’s.