

## Education Curriculum guidance

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## Vision

### Purpose

The core purpose of the Raleigh Education Trust is to ensure all children and young people are equipped for early adulthood, ensuring they can function successfully in the world outside school.

### Mission

Our aim is that children and young people learn and develop the skills and character required to foster confidence, curiosity, creativity and empathy. We believe this will provide them with the confidence necessary to embrace life's challenges.

## Values

**CONFIDENCE – CHALLENGE – CURIOSITY – CHARACTER - CREATIVITY**

### Vision for learning

Our values influence everything that we plan, teach and that our children learn – confidence, challenge, curiosity, character and creativity. Academy staff support children and young people to embody these values through their experiences in our academies.

Pedagogies that support high-level learning and engagement are evidence based. Deep and powerful understanding is formed through the use of memory and recall and children are challenged by personalised learning and project-based learning connected to the world around them which encourages opportunities for peers to work collaboratively to develop skills that go beyond their time in school.

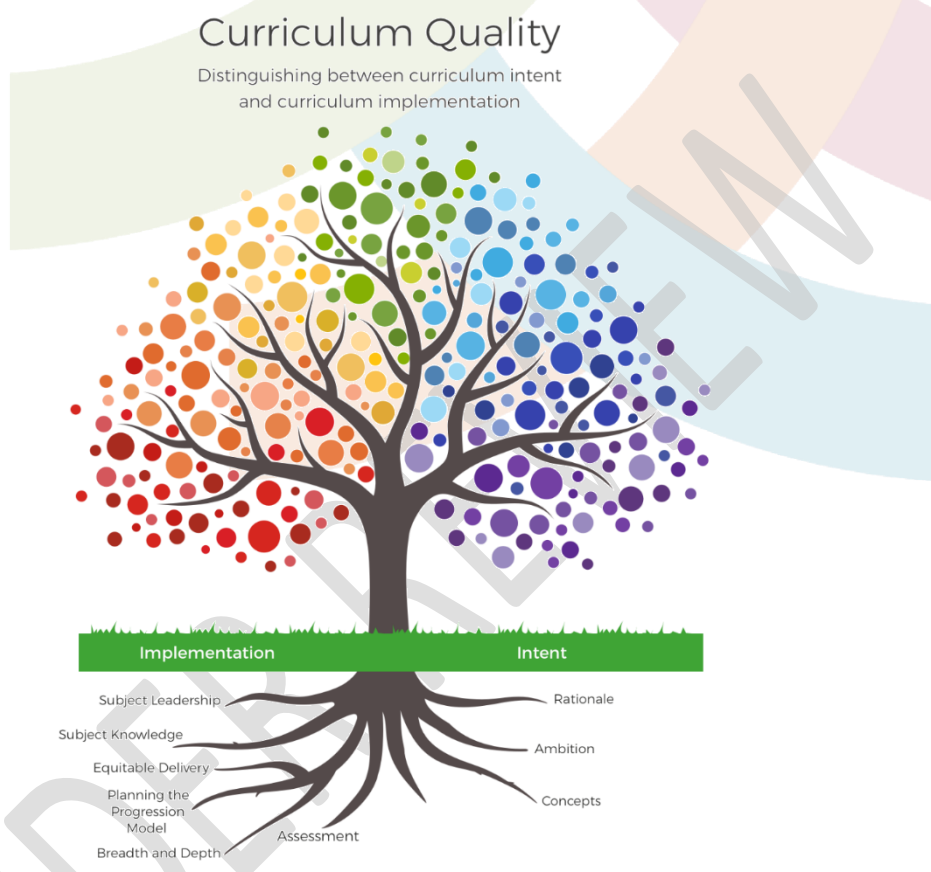
### Context

A high proportion of learners attending our settings have experienced trauma and have a wide range of previous learning experiences. These have led many to associate schooling with a sense of failure and a negative view of school. The pandemic has led to significant periods out of school for all children and disrupted their sense of ambition and connectivity to societal norms. These barriers to child development are heightened for complex learners with social, emotional and academic needs, which further impacts their mental health and well-being and ability to access learning.

All children are unique, and their uniqueness requires our schools to develop curriculum models that respond to these differences, in addition, children are responding in different ways to their disrupted education over the last two years.

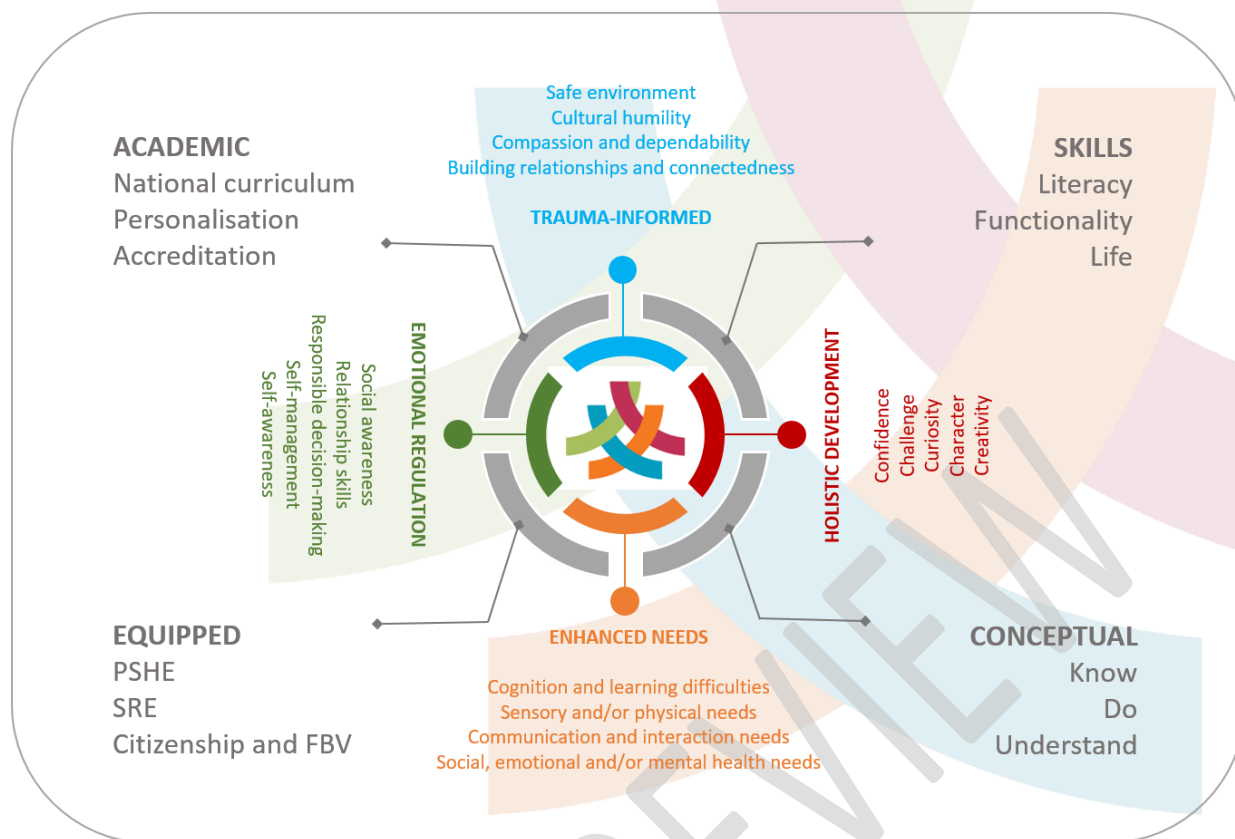
The quality of each curriculum is set out on the diagram below; school leaders hold the autonomy to ensure their carefully designed curriculum meets the contextual needs of their settings. The impact will be evidenced through internal quality assurance, Trust activities (see MAT assurance framework guidance), published school performance measures, and external validation exercises (Ofsted).

This guidance sets out the principles and expectations established by the trust board.



## Curriculum Principles

Given the context set out above, the Trust Board wants to see all settings respond to their local context. However, as the school sponsor, the Board is clear that all schools should ensure their curriculum reflects the curriculum model set out on the diagram below that outlines the Board's ambition for all children.



## Intent

School leaders should work with their local governing body hub to ensure the aims and ambitions for all children are underpinned by strong medium terms plans for each subject that are tightly aligned to the school's longterm overview documentation.

Strong curriculum planning is strengthened by what each school wants children to know, do, and understand in each subject and phase. Coupled with the right skills children will be equipped for modern Britain and will ensure all children are academically successful – relevant to their starting point.

These successes will be built on a foundation of trauma-informed settings where children can regulate their feelings in safe environments. Safe, because their enhanced needs are recognised and planned for, and as children develop their holistic needs, these will be celebrated by adopting the Trust Values Assessment and Rewards Framework.

The Trust agrees with Ofsted that “all behaviour is a form of communication” and “those who care for children have a duty to understand what the children’s behaviour communicates” (Positive environments where children can flourish. Oct 2021). This belief is at the heart of the Trust curriculum model principles. An effective, knowledge-rich curriculum that goes to the heart of meeting the holistic needs of all children supports Ofsted’s view that the:

The Foundation of good practice in working with children should be:

- Protecting and promoting children's rights
- Recognising that staff have a responsibility to understand children's needs
- Building relationships of trust and understanding
- Understanding triggers and finding solutions
- If incidents do occur, knowing enough about the child and positive behaviour support techniques to defuse the situation and/or distract the child where possible

The culture of our settings, underpinned by a highly stimulating, contextual curriculum, will ensure all children flourish. The trust will measure the impact of this model in each setting by reducing numbers of exclusions, periods in isolation, and the occasions (and justification) for physical intervention.

## Implementation

The first focus is to ensure all staff have an accurate understanding of what children know, understand and can do in each subject area. There should be a strong emphasis on reading, spelling, literacy, numeracy and science. Where assessment identifies age-appropriate gaps, schools should ensure individual plans are developed with specific measurable targets (linked to EHCP requirements where appropriate). For pupils who join school with identified complex needs, there should be a strong emphasis on transitional arrangements that develop communication, self-regulation, literacy and numeracy and independence/social skills.

Pupil progress must be monitored and reviewed through each school's structures and systems that offer regular feedback to pupils and their families and clear SMART targets for further improvement where this is required.

Regardless of the type of setting across the Trust, all pupils gain support through:

- Carefully considered integration to each school and be placed in settings most likely to be conducive with re-engagement with education (specialist settings) □ Effective use of specialist staff and deployment of resources.
- Consistent high-quality learning and expectations.
- Outstanding professional relationships between staff and pupils.
- All staff receiving regular high-quality training and development, including access to external qualifications.
- Focused reading opportunities in place with assessment procedures leading to a rigorous and sequential approach to developing skills.
- Celebrating and engaging all stakeholders in the learning process, examples include, review meetings, reports, newsletters, website, phone calls, trust values assessment.
- A comprehensive assessment system and the use of standardised testing.
- Effective use of staffing and resources to support learning and promote independence, to ensure all children are prepared for the next phase.
- Robust policies, procedures and practices that are applied consistently.

## Medium-term planning

The Trust believes school leaders should adopt curriculum planning tools that work in their individual context, although generic templates can be provided, and we encourage Principals to share exemplar materials with each other and through the curriculum network. Regardless of the tool used, there are five practical considerations when you begin to plan or review your current planning. These practical steps are set out as a learning cycle and suggestions by Jerome and Bhargava (effective medium-term planning for teachers, chapter 3: 9781446273715).

The five A's of effective medium-term planning are principles because research and experience show that effective teaching and learning require these elements to be in place, and steps, because they provide a practical set of things to do when approaching your planning or reviewing.

### **Articulation**

You should have a clear idea of what you want your pupils to learn and why this is important and appropriate.

### **Alignment**

You should structure the learning so that the order in which pupils engage with new material enables them to progress to higher levels of understanding and skills.

### **Activation**

You should provide activities that support this learning.

### **Assessment**

You should know how you are going to assess the important things you want your pupils to learn.

### **Adoption**

Along the way you should monitor the pupil's progress against your intentions and update your plans to ensure they learn effectively.

## **Knowledge-rich curriculum**

The Trust adopts the position that a knowledge-rich curriculum is one that is **focused and sequenced**.

### **Focused**

Early Ofsted research defined a knowledge-rich approach as one in which curriculum leaders are clear on the "invaluable knowledge they want their pupils to know. Essentially, this means schools must make choices about what to prioritise, when and for whom.

## Sequenced

A successful knowledge-rich curriculum must be designed to help pupils remember what they have been taught. Such a curriculum must be well-sequenced and underpinned by understanding how children learn. In addition, it must be based on a rich conception of knowledge that includes the skills and attitudes that contribute to success. This view is central to the development of the trust curriculum principles model.

## Keep it simple

There is a risk that settings will overcomplicate curriculum planning, which will divert energy from the simple things that matter: **does your curriculum identify the knowledge pupils need to achieve the goals of their education, and have all pupils learned that knowledge?**

## Responding to the pandemic

We know that all settings continue to deal with all the pressures created by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This disruption makes it more critical that each school focuses on what is most important for pupils' life chances.

Research has highlighted that some pupils in primary schools have gaps in phonics knowledge. In both primary and secondary schools, some pupils are catching up on practical skills, such as sciences and physical education (PE). These 'gaps' in knowledge are either because schools had not taught this content while partially closed or because pupils did not learn effectively during this period.

Modified medium-term planning must respond to these challenges by using regular, informal assessments to determine what knowledge pupils have (and have not) remembered from their teaching during a lockdown. Regular informal assessment can help identify pupils who may benefit from additional support, such as one-to-one intervention, to catch up.

Understanding what pupils do and do not know and using this information to make necessary adjustments to the curriculum is an essential part of education recovery. However, effective approaches to assessment and catch-up will be different in different subject areas and school contexts.

## Phonics

The Trust believes in the importance of utilising assets across the group of schools. At Ambleside Academy they have developed a highly effective policy for the teaching of phonics which follows a systematic synthetic approach. The school explicitly teaches the correspondences between letters and sounds to segment for spelling and blend for reading.

Whilst this approach follows the phases set out in the 'Letters and Sounds Document' the bespoke approach is driven by high quality half termly assessment which informs next steps of learning to ensure that their children demonstrate good progress in the number of sounds that they know and words that they can read.

Leaders have a clear structure to the teaching sequence of a phonics lessons at their academy which impacts positively on the progress that children make. The repetition of sessions throughout a day allows children to be successful decoders.

## The Structure of a session



## Revisit

This is the most important part of the session to make sure that the children are making links to previous learning. This is consolidation of previous sounds learnt and ensure that the children can build the capacity to retain and recall sounds that they have been previously taught. They can use fastest finger sheets. They must also read lots of words including the sounds to ensure that the children are applying reading of words.

## Teach

This is the part of the session whereby a new sound is taught. Teachers should skywrite the grapheme in lots of different ways to make sure that the children remember what the sound looks like.

## Practise

The children help you read/write lots of words together, segmenting, blending, using robot actions are extremely important to aid pupils in remembering.

## Apply

Reading and writing at word and sentence level related to the new sounds. Key teaching points that are paramount for children include: Use of robot talk and actions, use of sound buttons, incorporating diagraphs, trigraphs and tricky blends including d and b, ff and th and g and y. These are common difficulties within phonics as are exposing children to polysyllabic and compound words that all children experience.

The school has devised its own Ambleside Phonics Family. Each puppet has a special name which relates to the family of which they are experts of. The aim of this is to help the children remember the sounds related and brings a purpose for learning. Within our approach we also use repetition, rhymes, actions and pictures to aid memory for different sounds/spelling patterns this has proven highly effective for us at Ambleside.

## Phonics support package

The trust phonics package of support is intended to rapidly increase the quality of teaching and learning and increase the number of sounds that the children know.

*At Ambleside Academy the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in this aspect is judged to be good. Last year our phonics score increased for 66% of children passing the phonics screening to 83% above national.*

*We have a rigorous and consistent approach to the teaching of phonics where accurate assessment is the heart of our approach.*

## The approach

The school has created a mock up assessment pack of phonics screening tests. One per term.

Initially all children are screened on a baseline test. This informs us of how many words the children can read through accurate segmenting and blending and which words and sounds they need to learn next.

From this initial score the children are banded into their phonics groups across all of the adults available to the class to teach phonics. At our academy we have six adults and six groups.

From this staff complete planning based on the sounds that the children do not know, linking to the phases of phonics to ensure breadth of coverage, linking groups of sounds together. Therefore if the children do not know the oi sound from the screening then staff in their teaching will cover both spelling patterns for that sound, “oi” and “oy”.

These children receive two phonics sessions daily in focused targeted groups for 20 minutes.

Each class will also receive targets intervention within an afternoon whereby they learn specific sounds that they were not able to read within the baseline assessment.

The children will then be given a different mock test from then on at the end of each term and the leadership team will track the progress that is being made through the improvement of scores each time. Each time they take the test it will be on a different set of words. This provides new sounds each time that the children do not know.

### **The structure of a phonics session**

Part of the reason why this approach to teaching phonics is successful is due to the clear teaching sequence that is repeated for these children several times a day. See above for structure details.

Collectively, we strongly believe that learning should be purposeful and in context. We link phonics to our topic work, for example helping the alien to collect his spaceships into the space bin or the golden sun.

We will often use hands on and practical methods to ensure that children can form their letters properly for example in the alien gloop (paint in a plastic wallet) or working for the aliens on their space paper (silver shiny foil)

We believe that phonics should be active and that children should have the chance to get up and learn through doing. Phonics trails whereby children can collect sounds and work for the aliens on their secret mission provides them with a reason to read.

### **How the approach can support each school to improve**

- We have an assessment system that is completely transferable to another school.
- Our Assistant Principal of Year 1 will come and baseline some of the children using 2019 phonics screening paper and create a clear indication of the sounds that the children do not know, their current score and what sounds the children need to know next to make next steps of progress.
- A lead teacher at the academy requiring improvement will be supported to use this data to group the children, with clear direction of the sounds that each group of children need to learn next in order to maximise pupil progress.
- Staff from Ambleside academy will offer guidance with effective planning of phonics through support in PPA/ planning format to be shared that is clear, concise and effective.
- The lead teacher from Ambleside academy will follow the collaborative planning in each school, demonstrate how that should be resourced and teach a model lesson for staff to see what a good phonics session should look like.

- This could then be replicated by the teacher observing, team teaching and peer observations in a coaching style to improve the quality of teaching and learning through an effective strategy proven to sustain improvement in another academy.
- Teaching assistants from the academies will have the opportunity to shadow and team up to improve the quality of phonics intervention sessions.
- The cycle of assessment will then be repeated with the assistant principal re screening the children on the next mock test at the end of the half term to see if the children have increased in the number of sounds that they know and can read in words.
- Thereafter the data would inform next groupings for the children for morning and afternoon phonics and intervention.
- Support with planning will be given to ensure that the next 6 weeks of planning is pitched appropriately for individual group needs and that the coverage is as expected linking to the sounds that the children do not know.

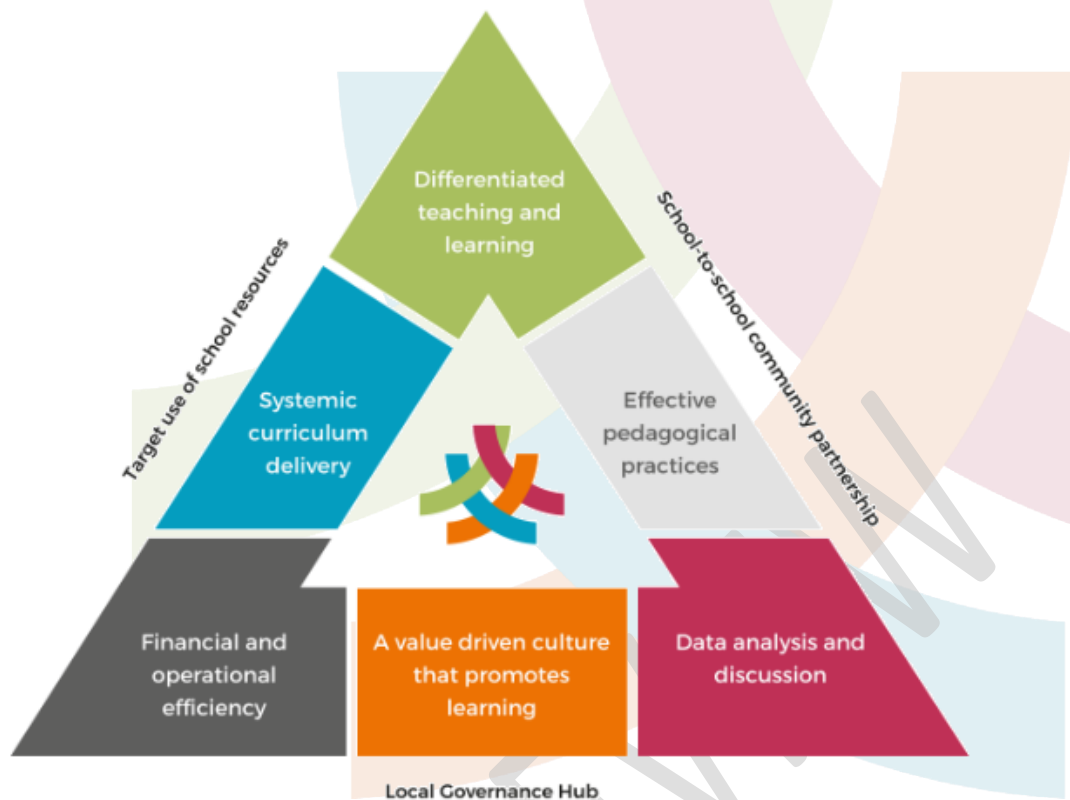
Further support available includes:

- Pure sounds training
- How to make phonics fun and in context
- Making a learning environment that is rich in print
- Phonics in English sessions and independent application
- Workshops for parents to help understand methodology and expectation (Workshop 1. at Ambleside Academy 13.02.2)

## School Improvement guiding principles

School improvement planning is a strategy to achieve the core purpose of the school. The aim is to change classroom practice and management procedures in order to support the teaching and learning process.

School leaders should read the Trust School Improvement Framework alongside this guidance. It will cover three key issues: how well a school is performing; what the school's key strengths and areas for development are; how the school can achieve its aims via action planning.



## School Improvement Model

Driving continual improvement to make the biggest difference to the life chances of pupils in our schools.

This model aims to clarify what makes the difference and act as a benchmark to measure progress.

Trust schools that improve have a vision that has the support from local governors, school staff, pupils, parents/carers and the wider community.

A strong vision is underpinned by the importance of focused leadership, and a strong ethos and value base.