

ABBEY SCHOOL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

CURRICULUM POLICY



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Other relevant policies:

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy
Assessment Policy
SEN and Learning Disabilities Policy
Equality and Diversity Policy
PSHE Policy
Relationships and Sex Education Policy
Pupil Premium Policy
Learning Skills Framework
Reading Skills Framework

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1. Introduction

Abbey School for Exceptional Children is an Independent School for young people aged 4-19 with complex autism, learning difficulties and behaviours that challenge. We recognise that all pupils have a right to a broad, balanced, meaningful education which provides continuity and progression and takes individual differences into account.

Abbey School is aspirational for all the young people that we support. Our vision is that all children with exceptional needs receive a meaningful and fulfilling education that enables them to make their own choices about the direction of their adult lives.

We seek, through the curriculum, to broaden the experiences, knowledge, ability to communicate, confidence and independence of each pupil. Our curriculum places a strong emphasis on developing functional, socially significant, life-enhancing skills and knowledge, and on teaching appropriate behaviours. We focus on developing the key skills of communication, social interaction, cognition, independence, physical development and self-care; all of which are transferrable skills that will equip pupils for life beyond Abbey School.

During their time at the School, each pupil will receive an individually tailored curriculum based upon individual targets relating to the outcomes on their Education, Health and Care Plan. We use evidence-based practice to identify the unique strengths, needs and learning profile of each pupil to personalise our school curriculum to best meet the needs of our pupils. Our curriculum has the flexibility to address the individual and very specific needs of each of our pupils and is characterised by providing learning which is personalised, specialised, intensive, goal-directed, outcomes focused and guided by pupil performance.

2. Legislation

This policy reflects the requirements for independent schools to provide a broad and balanced curriculum as per the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and the [National Curriculum programmes of study](#) which we have chosen to follow.

In addition, this policy acknowledges the requirements for promoting the learning and development of children set out in the [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#).

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014](#) and [Equality Act 2010](#), and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education's [Governance Handbook](#).

3. Values

Abbey School is aspirational for all of the young people that we support. Our vision is that all children with exceptional needs receive a meaningful and fulfilling education that enables them to make their own choices about the direction of their adult lives.

The Abbey School values are the driving force which underpin our school curriculum and are at the very heart of all that we do. They are the core values of our school, upon which our curriculum is based.

- Special educational needs and/or disability should not be a barrier to a valued lifestyle
- Every pupil is a unique individual with potential
- All children and young people without exception are entitled to access the best education and support available
- Best practices in education are evidence-based
- Teaching and learning decisions should be evidence-driven
- Clear goals make data-based decisions more numerous and effective
- Education is for everyone and for the whole of a person's life
- Learning is enabling, empowering and extends the boundaries of autonomy

- If a pupil is not learning, it is the teaching that needs to change – the learner is always right
- The pupil voice should be heard and respected

4. Curriculum aims

The Abbey School curriculum, based firmly on these values, is designed to help pupils to become:

- Successful learners who enjoy learning, make outstanding progress and achieve their potential.
- Effective communicators who can express themselves, make choices and build positive relationships.
- Confident individuals who take an active part in activities within school and the wider community.
- Responsible citizens who lead safe, healthy, fulfilling lives and make a positive contribution to the school and the wider world.
- Lifelong learners who leave school equipped and empowered to make choices about the direction of their adult lives.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 The Proprietor

The proprietor is accountable for all matters relating to the curriculum and delegates day-to-day responsibility for overseeing the curriculum to the Principal and Senior Leadership Team.

5.2 The Advisory Body

The Advisory Body role is to provide strategic support, challenge and accountability. The advisory council will ensure that:

- Ensure members are familiar with the curriculum at Abbey School
- Review the Curriculum Policy and its implementation annually in line with the school's compliance diary
- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets.
- The school is complying with the standards in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations to give pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education.
- Proper provision is made for pupils with different abilities and needs.
- It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum.

5.3 Principal

The Principal is responsible for the day-to-day matters relating to the curriculum. The Principal will ensure that:

- All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met.
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the Advisory Body.

- Requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects are managed where appropriate.
- The School's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements.
- The Advisory Body is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum.
- The Advisory Body is advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions.
- Proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs.

5.4 Other staff

All staff working with pupils will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.

6. Organisation

6.1 Personalised learning

Abbey School offers truly personalised learning for all pupils through an individually tailored curriculum based upon individual targets relating to the outcomes on an Education, Health and Care Plan with reference to the National Curriculum.

Teachers' planning ensures that pupils take part in activities which are meaningful and interesting to them and through which they address relevant and challenging learning outcomes. This enables all pupils to maximise their progress.

The Abbey School curriculum is developmental and is designed to allow three different levels of access:

- **Engaging** - Pupils with complex needs learn through consistent routines, sensory engagement and interaction with adults. They build positive relationships which help develop a sense of security. Pupils develop an awareness of the world around them and develop the physical skills needed to control and explore the environment. Pupils develop behaviours through which they can express their feelings, make choices and communicate with other people and they experience life within the school community, responding to other people and sharing activities with them.
- **Exploring** - Pupils learn through play, exploration, practical activities and community involvement. They develop communication skills which allow them to interact with other people, make choices, follow instructions and access the key concepts needed for learning. Pupils begin to engage in subject-specific learning and develop key skills in the wider and core curriculum areas. They learn to co-operate with other people, to build positive relationships and to take responsibility for themselves. Pupils learn the skills which will help them be more independent and learn about the world around them and the wider community.
- **Establishing** - Pupils engage in subject-specific learning through the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, adapted to carefully match their individual needs. They build on prior knowledge, understanding and skills and apply their learning in different contexts to solve practical problems in real-life contexts. The curriculum supports pupils to develop effective methods of communication to interact confidently with other people and pupils develop self-awareness, increased independence, respect for others and a sense of responsibility, playing their part in the school and wider community.

Since many pupils with learning difficulties demonstrate strengths in some areas, whilst exhibiting difficulties in others (otherwise known as having a 'spikey profile'), each pupil will follow a highly individualised curriculum throughout school based on their unique and diverse needs. At Abbey School we feel passionate about not placing limits on our expectations of pupils. For this reason, pupils may be 'engaging' with the knowledge and skills in one

curriculum area, while 'exploring' or 'establishing' curriculum knowledge and skills in other areas.

7. Curriculum statements of intent

The Abbey School curriculum can be divided into core areas of learning and the wider curriculum, although there is much overlap between the two. The core areas of learning are what we consider to be the essential life skills needed to prepare children and young people for life beyond Abbey School. The wider curriculum ensures that pupils access their right to a rich, relevant, broad and balanced curriculum, personalised to meet each pupil's needs.

Pupils are supported to practise, generalise, apply and maintain the knowledge and skills that they learn in the core curriculum areas in a wide range of subject areas, settings and contexts, both in school and the wider community.

7.1 Learning Skills

For successful learning to take place in any context, learners require command of many skill areas including language, social interaction, self-help, academic and motor skills. Broadly speaking, these are the prerequisite skills which enable children to interpret what is happening around them and create the foundation on which subsequent learning is built. For typically developing children, these skills are assimilated as part of their early development before entering primary school and they do not need to have them formally taught in a structured way. However, for children with learning difficulties these skills are not acquired naturally and they will often only learn cognitive skills if they are purposefully taught in order to fill in developmental gaps.

As part of the Abbey School curriculum, we recognise the importance of teaching children and young people the prerequisite skills required for learning if they are to engage with a meaningful curriculum and develop into lifelong learners. On entry to school, pupils' prerequisite 'learning' skills are assessed by our Behaviour Analysts and a personalised programme of support is designed to help pupils to acquire the essential skills required for successful learning.

For further information please refer to our Learning Skills Framework.

8. English for Life

The ability to both understand messages that are being conveyed and to be able to communicate needs, wants, likes, dislikes and broader opinions are key to being a part of any community, so language and communication skills are essential for all of our pupils. English for Life is concerned with developing pupils' communication skills and increasing their command of language through listening, speaking, reading and writing. All pupils within Abbey School participate in literacy lessons in which the joy of sharing books and making marks to communicate something are encouraged and developed.

At Abbey School we aim for our pupils to develop a meaningful and effective form of communication. We will:

- Provide appropriately structured models of communication so that pupils experience the richness and variety of language.
- Encourage pupils' confidence and desire to initiate and participate appropriately in social interaction.
- Teach each pupil the skills to communicate in ways relevant to their individual needs.
- Teach pupils the skills required for functional reading and writing.

8.1 Language and communication

Communication is at the heart of all we do at Abbey School and permeates the entire curriculum. As many of our children find it very difficult to communicate via the spoken and written word, a variety of alternative augmentative communication systems such as signing, PECS or objects of reference are used to enable all children at Abbey School to become more

effective communicators through their individualised learning programmes. Throughout the school day, pupils are given opportunities to communicate effectively – making requests, commenting, developing appropriate attention, taking part in turn taking and sharing activities etc. Key in the development of pupils' communication skills is the work of our Speech & Language therapists. Teachers and learning mentors work in close partnership with Speech & Language professionals and implement the child's S< programme on a daily basis. Receptive and expressive language skills are developed according to pupils' personalised targets and all staff are aware of the need for our pupils to have appropriate processing time. For further information please refer to our Communication & Learning Skills policy.

8.2 Reading

There are two core aims of the Abbey School reading curriculum:

- Enhanced quality of life through shared literature
- Increased independence as readers

At Abbey School, we believe that fluent, confident reading is a crucial life skill that improves life chances and is necessary for people to function fully in society and as such we recognise functional reading as a priority for all pupils. We aim to ensure that all pupils read fluently and with good understanding, develop the habit of reading for both pleasure and information and develop and broaden their vocabulary through reading.

The teaching of reading consists of two elements: word reading and comprehension. In most schools, an emphasis is placed on phonics in the early teaching of reading as successful word reading is underpinned by the understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words. However, for pupils with learning difficulties, a phonic approach does not always work and a sight-reading approach may work better to assist students to memorise whole words. At Abbey School pupils are taught to approach reading and writing via a phonetic as well as a whole sight word recognition approach. Pupils are carefully assessed to identify which approach or combination of approaches is most suitable to match their needs.

Good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge and on knowledge of the world. Wide reading of both fiction and non-fiction develops both types of knowledge, as well as encouraging a love of reading. At Abbey School we develop pupils' understanding of the meaning of written word by including activities focused on reading for meaning, including following written and visual instructions, responding to written and visual questions and by using appropriate questioning techniques when reading or during read aloud sessions. Pupils will experience a rich variety of fiction and non-fiction texts appropriate to their age and level of development as they move through Abbey School. Examples of texts include nursery rhymes, poems, traditional tales, stories by significant authors, classic fiction and letters, newspapers, magazines, plays, extended stories, myths and legends, biographies and autobiographies.

For pupils who experience difficulties with reading, Headsprout Early Reading is an evidence-based, targeted online reading intervention used by Abbey School which is designed to instill key reading fundamentals like phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and beginning comprehension. Once readers have demonstrated a solid grasp of the basics, they can move on to Headsprout Reading Comprehension, a targeted intervention that helps pupils to learn the four primary components of reading comprehension: finding facts, making inferences, identifying themes, and learning vocabulary in context.

For further information please refer to the Reading Skills Framework.

8.3 Writing

The teaching of early writing focuses on the development of fine motor skills, mark making, correct letter formation and the conveying of meaning through marks and symbols. At Abbey School we use the Handwriting Without Tears curriculum to teach these fundamental early writing skills; a program which draws from years of research on how children learn best, to

provide developmentally appropriate, multisensory strategies for a hand-on approach to teaching handwriting.

Across the wider curriculum, activities such as tracing, overwriting, and copy writing are used to develop pupils' early writing skills. Once pupils have developed confidence in these early writing skills, they will begin to write simple captions for pictures and start to produce simple word banks. As pupils' confidence and skills in writing develop, they begin to write sentences and create their own writing using a range of media. They produce or participate in the production of books, learn to use simple punctuation and communicate ideas, experience and feelings in writing. Pupils practice writing for a range of different real-life purposes, such as writing lists, messages and letters. Depending on the individual needs of the pupil, a range of scaffolds and supports are used including shared and modelled writing, use of a scribe or using technology.

9. Maths for Life

At Abbey School, the aim of our Maths for Life curriculum is to enable pupils to develop functional numeracy skills which can be applied to everyday situations. We aim for pupils to be able to:

- Count and use the number system to solve real life, everyday problems including those involving measurement
- Read the time, relate it to common events during the day and to develop an awareness of the passage of time
- Use the current British payment methods effectively

Numbers are so familiar that we can easily forget how often we use them in everyday life, (telling our age, identifying channels on the television, identifying our houses, catching a bus, telling the time, seeing how much something costs, and so on). Therefore, knowing and understanding numbers is an essential part of our society and forms an important part of the Abbey School Maths for Life curriculum. Although numbers and the number system are familiar to most, they can be very confusing for pupils with learning difficulties. At Abbey School, Maths for Life starts with developing an understanding of numbers and the number system. This aspect of number comprises three parts: knowledge of number names (words or signs), numerals (symbols) and the physical number of objects these represent. Understanding numbers and the number system is then used as the basis for learning in other aspects of maths including calculations (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division) and subsequent work on time, money and some elements of shape, space and measure. As pupils progress through the Maths for Life curriculum they will increase their knowledge of mathematical language, develop the ability to reason mathematically and increase their ability to use mathematics to carry out practical tasks and to tackle and solve real life problems.

For pupils who do not make expected progress in numeracy, Abbey School uses 'Teaching Early Numeracy to children with Developmental Disabilities' (TEN-DD), an evidence-based targeted numeracy intervention which focuses on teaching early numeracy skills.

10. Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education

Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education is all about teaching pupils the skills and knowledge they will need to safely and effectively engage with the world around them. We hope to maximise each pupil's potential for independence, taking into account their individual needs and abilities and to help them develop effective relationships, assume greater personal responsibility, cope with changes at puberty, make healthy life choices and manage personal safety. We will also introduce them to the wider world, including the world of work, economics and politics and enable them to make an active contribution to their community.

The PSHE curriculum offers both explicit and implicit learning opportunities and experiences which reflect each pupil's increasing independence and physical and social awareness as they

move through the school, building on skills previously learned. Although the many aspects of PSHE are developed throughout each pupil's time at school, emphasis on particular teaching areas will shift depending on the age group and individual needs of the pupil. For instance, early intervention in teaching personal care skills is particularly important with refinement of these skills taking place as the pupil grows older.

We aim for our pupils to learn skills appropriate to their individual capabilities, which are necessary for the development of independence and responsibility. We aim for pupils to:

- Achieve competence in personal care skills
- Learn functional skills for everyday living
- Learn the skills they need to take responsibility for their own health and safety by making informed choices about their own lifestyles
- Recognise their own rights, needs and responsibilities as well as developing an awareness of the rights, needs and responsibilities of others
- See themselves as part of many communities including family, the school and the local town and to play an active role within them
- Recognise their personal strengths and view themselves positively
- Play an active part in the management of their finances and the decisions that affect them

For further information please refer to our PSHE Policy.

11. Relationships and Sex Education

Relationships and sex education forms part of the wider PSHE curriculum at Abbey School. We believe that it is everyone's right to have relevant knowledge of their sexuality, regardless of whether or not they have special educational needs. Disability does not rule out sexual feeling, sexual needs or in many cases sexual capabilities. But it can sometimes cause sexual difficulty and, where this applies, the young person should be prepared for this. Certainly, he or she should be prepared for general sexual development or this may come as a surprise to them as they get older. To deny young people sexual knowledge can make life very difficult for them. They may also be at a disadvantage as compared with more knowledgeable young people. We have a duty to see that this knowledge is passed on in a suitable form. Only in this way will our pupils become capable of taking over responsibility for their own bodies and obtaining the sexual enjoyment which is their right. Any education in sex must include education in responsibility. Young people must understand the risks which arise from irresponsible behaviour. Knowing these risks, they will also know how to behave with other people and they themselves will become less vulnerable.

The Abbey School Relationships and Sex Education curriculum is based on a spiral curriculum model, where pupils revisit key concepts and teaching areas more than once but at a level appropriate for their age and stage of development. The curriculum is designed around the following 5 key areas:

1. Knowing your own body
2. Recognising exploitation
3. Gender concepts and growing up (including physical and emotional changes)
4. How babies are made
5. Contraception and sexual health

Stages 1 to 3 are taught at each key stage, with careful regard to the age and stage of development

of the individual pupil. Stages 4 and 5 are not introduced to pupils until Key Stages 4 and 5.

For further information please refer to our Relationships and Sex Education Policy.

12. Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development and the promotion of fundamental British values

At Abbey School we recognise that the personal development of pupils, spiritually, morally, socially and culturally (SMSC), plays a significant part in their ability to learn and achieve. We therefore aim to provide an education that provides pupils with opportunities to explore and develop the following:

- Values and beliefs
- Spiritual awareness
- A sense of right and wrong
- A positive, caring attitude towards other people
- An understanding of their social and cultural traditions
- An appreciation of the diversity and richness of their cultures

SMSC plays a significant part in learning and achievement at Abbey School and is lived through the school's ethos and values. We adopt a whole school approach to developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and we believe that all curriculum areas have a contribution to make to this area of pupils' development.

A range of faith backgrounds are explored and respected through assemblies and other recognised annual events. The diversity of spiritual traditions is recognised, and pupils are given access to alternative views.

All adults model and promote positive behaviour and values, treating all people as worthwhile individuals and showing respect for pupils and their families. Pupils learn to differentiate between right and wrong in as far as their actions affect other people. They are encouraged to value themselves and others.

Pupils understand the need for rules and the need to abide by rules for the good of everyone. School and classroom rules reflect, reiterate, promote and reward positive behaviour and provide opportunities to celebrate the work of pupils and their achievements. All curriculum areas use illustrations and examples drawn from as wide a range of cultural contexts as possible.

At Abbey School we promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs through our SMSC education which are lived through the school's ethos and values and support the development of the whole child. The curriculum provides many opportunities for discussing and promoting British values through areas of learning such as PSHE, English for Life and Humanities, as well as through assemblies, school visits and the wider annual calendar of events.

For further information please refer to our Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (including British Values) Policy.

13. Science

At Abbey School we aim for our pupils to develop an understanding of scientific investigation and to acquire the practical skills and knowledge that relate science to everyday life. Pupils will:

- Investigate the natural world and the effects of forces and sources of energy
- Investigate the properties and uses of materials and how they react to different external influences
- Investigate life processes and increasing knowledge of animals and plants in the environment

Through the teaching of Science, we encourage our pupils to develop an awareness of, a curiosity in, and an active exploration of the world around them. Practical investigations enable

our pupils to use their cognitive skills to discover and make sense of their findings. By using everyday situations and materials familiar to them, and gradually extending these learning experiences, we make the teaching of Science relevant and accessible to every pupil, helping them to find new ways of looking at the world. Examples of this might be to relate their understanding of Science to familiar domestic and environmental contexts, and to consider how to treat living things and the environment with care and sensitivity. Pupils are therefore taught to notice, respond to, describe, compare and contrast, categorise, question, interpret and draw conclusions from their environment through supported participation, as well as to work safely.

The three components of our Science curriculum - Life Processes and Living Things, Materials and their Properties and Physical Processes - are all strands through which our pupils develop a better understanding of scientific enquiry skills. This process enables our pupils to approach problems and investigations in a logical and scientific way. Scientific enquiry skills do not form a discrete strand of Science but are incorporated into all of the learning our pupils do.

14. Humanities

At Abbey School we aim for our pupils to increase their knowledge and understanding of themselves and the world around them. Pupils will:

- Develop self-respect, respect for others and an objective awareness of different cultures and beliefs
- Develop an awareness of the past and the sequences of change over time
- Gain knowledge and understanding of people, their environment and how they affect each other

Through the teaching of Humanities pupils will use and develop their cognitive skills in practical activities, thereby increasing their understanding and refining their interpretation of the world around them. Pupils will initially draw on their first hand and immediate experiences such as where they live, what they were like as babies and their relationships with familiar people. They then move on to use their skills and knowledge to investigate the wider world.

In order to build upon their experiences, field trips around the school site, around Chester and further afield are used to support classroom activities. Where appropriate, visitors are invited into the school to support the teaching of Humanities, explaining their own role, knowledge, beliefs or actions and answering pupil questions. At Abbey School, Humanities is about creating rich and exciting learning opportunities that will help pupils to increase their knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live. In doing so, we would also hope for pupils to be able to accept and value themselves and others as well as beginning to foster their own understanding of the world around them.

15. Computing

In an increasingly digital age, it is becoming more and more necessary to be aware of how technology is influencing our everyday lives and how we can use technology skills and understanding safely and to our benefit. At Abbey School we wish our children to regard the use of technology skills and understanding as a familiar and effective method of analysing and solving problems. We follow a bespoke computing curriculum, broadly based on the National Curriculum and pupils are given opportunities to experiment and develop their technology skills in many curriculum areas.

We define computing as any electronic means by which children can gain access to information, or present information to others. The curriculum framework for this area has been designed explicitly to set out the links between the physical skills for computing and the educational reasons for using it. We believe that computing can support our pupils' learning in any subject.

Our computing curriculum is organised into four strands:

- **What is a computer?**
 - Everyday technology
 - Key Skills
 - What is the Internet?
- **Communication: data**
 - Counting
 - Sorting
 - Pictograms and charts
 - Databases
- **Communication: multimedia**
 - Digital Art
 - Sound & Music
 - Photographs
 - Films
 - eBooks
 - Posters & Presentations
 - Working with text
 - Animation
- **Programming and algorithms**
 - We Control Technology
 - Sequencing Instructions
 - Finding Patterns
 - Simple Programs: Bee-Bots, Scratch Jnr

Online safety is embedded across the strands of the computing curriculum and is also taught through specific PSHE lessons.

16. Design and Technology

The Abbey School design and technology curriculum is designed to encourage children to work through simple processes and projects, step by step, solving problems as they progress and evaluating the effectiveness and quality of the end result. Pupils are given opportunities to explore how familiar things work and to talk about, draw and model their ideas. As they progress, they begin to work on their own or in small teams, on a range of designing and making activities. We encourage pupils to think about what products are used for and the needs of the people who use them. Pupils plan what has to be done and identify what works well and what could be improved on.

16.1 Developing and communicating ideas

Our pupils need many skills in order to visualise and plan a product. We aim to enable all of our pupils to be involved in generating a design, a process which involves a progression of skills from choice making, at the simplest level, through to drawing detailed plans where appropriate. The design process includes time for becoming familiar with materials, exploring how they can be shaped and how components can be combined to help pupils to develop their ideas.

16.2 Working with tools and materials

The practical aspects of design technology give pupils the opportunity to develop and practise many intellectual and reasoning skills, principally cause and effect, sequencing skills and a wide variety of finer motor skills. The making process could involve very basic skills (e.g. hitting

a pre-sawn plank to separate it) through to comparatively complex ones (e.g. using tools independently, correctly and safely).

16.3 Evaluating processes and products

Having generated ideas for products and gone through the making process, pupils will need to consider how successful they have been, not only in terms of creating the product they envisaged, but in gathering feedback from other people on how well it meets the original aims that were set out.

16.4 Knowledge and understanding of materials and components

When evaluating their designs, pupils are encouraged to make the link between their work in the classroom and designs in the wider world. Throughout the designing and making process, certain key Design Technology concepts will be discussed, albeit often at a very simple level, and pupils will be encouraged to look for those concepts in the successful designs which surround us. Our pupils will be encouraged to consider in their own work and that of others whether designs meet their purpose, are securely constructed, are of quality and are aesthetically pleasing. The use of appropriate vocabulary for naming and describing equipment, materials and components and an awareness of the health and safety issues involved in Design Technology will also be an important element when teaching knowledge and understanding of this area of the curriculum.

17. Physical Education

Abbey School strives to be a healthy school and Physical Development, Physical Education, sport and leisure opportunities play an important role in this. Studies indicate that children and adults with autism are at risk of leading an inactive lifestyle and developing obesity, so physical development, sports and leisure are actively promoted by Abbey School, both in school and in the wider community.

As a practical subject, Physical Education enables all pupils to actively participate in enjoyable, exciting and challenging physical activities. Physical Education provides opportunities for the development of physical, personal, social and thinking skills. It encourages respect, excellence, friendship, courage, determination, inspiration and equality.

The teaching of Physical Education is designed to engage pupils in activity and encourage longer term participation in physical activities. To achieve this goal, the curriculum is designed to introduce pupils to as many different activities as possible. As a school we firmly believe that every pupil should have the opportunity to experience the joy of being active. The range of opportunities provided give each pupil the chance to thrive and achieve at Abbey School and remain healthy and active long after leaving the school.

The Abbey School PE curriculum contains the following six strands through which a wide range of skills and activities are taught and developed:

- Making relationships and connecting with others
- Decision making
- Creative skills
- Knowledge and understanding (Healthy Active Lifestyles)
- Health and well-being
- Personal challenge

Every PE activity which is offered to pupils is underpinned by the following important concepts:

- All exercise develops some aspect of our physical well-being, whether it be muscle tone, cardio-vascular function or flexibility. This can only be achieved by regular exercise over a prolonged period of time;

- All exercise has an effect on our body and we need to prepare before we engage in any form of physical activity. We need to be aware of changes which take place during exercise and learn how to monitor these. Warm-ups and cool-downs will always be a part of our lesson plan
- The safety aspects of PE should always be regarded as a high priority, thereby ensuring that following simple rules and instructions, being aware of potential dangers and using equipment appropriately are seen by the pupils to be important. This should promote a positive, energetic but controlled learning environment;
- PE is available to every child regardless of their physical ability. Working cooperatively with others and considering their individual needs is an important element of our P.E. curriculum. We also hope to foster positive attitudes towards working individually, in pairs and in larger groups; and
- Having learned a range of skills in a variety of different activities, pupils should be encouraged to evaluate their own progress and contribution.

For further information please refer to our Physical Education Policy.

18. Art and Design

The art and design curriculum can be divided into three areas. Through these three areas pupils will have a wide range of experiences and opportunities to develop their skills. Pupils will be encouraged to create their own pieces of work both to express their feelings and to record their observations. It is likely that many activities will involve more than one of these areas.

18.1 Colour/shape/pattern/texture

Pupils will be introduced to and given opportunities to explore the creative potential of visual and tactile elements. This will include pattern and texture in natural and made forms; colour matching and how colour is mixed from primary colours; how images are made using line and tone and the use of shape, form and space in images and artefacts.

18.2 Media and techniques

Pupils will experiment with different tools and techniques including those used for drawing, painting, printmaking, photography, collage and sculpture. Flexible resourcing enables us to explore as wide a range of materials as possible. Pupils will be taught that it is possible to work creatively, to work cleanly and tidily at all times and to handle the tools and materials appropriately.

18.3 Artists and cultures

Pupils will be introduced to the work of artists past and present from a variety of cultures. It might be appropriate for the pupils to use this work as a stimulus for their own pieces of art, applying learned skills. Work within school will be supported by visits to exhibitions, both locally and when on residential trips. Where appropriate, local artists will be invited in to school to work with the pupils.

19. Music

Music is a powerful, unique and accessible form of communication that can change the way our pupils feel, think and act. Musical appreciation and the development of musical skills are valued as significant contributors to the overall creative atmosphere of the school. Music offers pleasure and enjoyment; it enables pupils to work together; and it develops an understanding of our own and other cultures.

Pupils understanding and enjoyment of music will be developed across three component parts:

19.1 Listening

Pupils will be encouraged to develop:

- A general enjoyment of music
- A sensitivity towards different musical moods
- Choice and musical preferences
- An ability to analyse what they can hear drawing from what they already know
- An understanding of music from different times, places and cultures

19.2 Composing

Pupils will also be encouraged to:

- Create musical patterns and organise sounds and musical ideas
- Compose in response to a variety of stimuli
- Compose for a variety of purposes
- Modify their work after personal reflection and other feedback

19.3 Performing

This will involve opportunities for pupils to learn and explore:

- Rhythm and percussion
- Playing simple tuned/untuned instrument
- The development of singing and simple song writing
- Improvisation
- Standard and non-standard notation
- How to rehearse and perform with others

Within each of the component parts above, pupils are provided with opportunities to develop their ability to:

- Use sounds and respond to music individually, in pairs and in groups
- Use technology to explore, record, play back and analyse sounds
- Recognise, rehearse and apply the musical elements that permeate all our teaching:
 - Pitch
 - Timbre
 - Tempo
 - Duration
 - Structure
 - Texture
 - Dynamics

20. Curriculum organisation by Key Stage

20.1 EYFS/Key Stage 1

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and in Key Stage One follow a curriculum based on the EYFS curriculum. While for typically developing children the EYFS curriculum is intended to run until the end of Reception and lead into a KS1 curriculum, the profound and complex needs experienced by children at Abbey School means they need additional time to develop and consolidate those basic skills that underpin the curriculum and give access to learning.

At this key stage, the statutory framework for EYFS is taught to our pupils by providing routine, structure and carefully planned, targeted play activities. Individual targets for children are set with the purpose of enhancing opportunities for learning and personal development and overcoming barriers to learning.

There are seven areas of learning in the EYFS framework: literacy, mathematics, understanding the world, expressive arts and design plus three 'prime' areas of learning which are:

- Communication and Language (listening and attention; understanding and speaking)
- Physical Development (moving and handling; health and self-care)
- Personal, Social and Emotional (self-confidence and self-awareness, managing feelings and behaviour; making relationships)

The Characteristics of Effective Learning and the prime and specific Areas of Learning and Development are all interconnected.

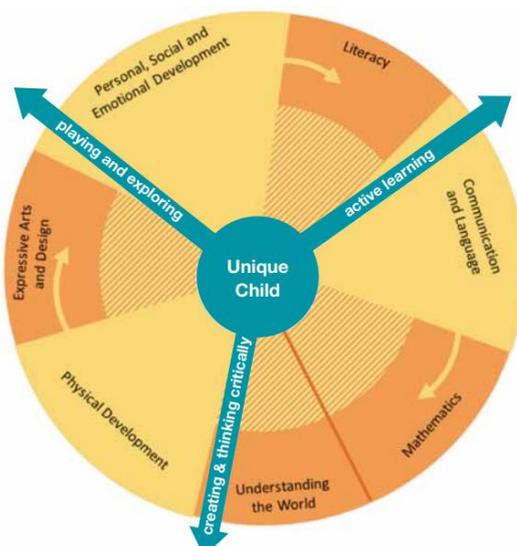
- The ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment – playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically – underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.
- The **prime** areas begin to develop quickly in response to relationships and experiences, and run through and support learning in all other areas. The prime areas continue to be fundamental throughout the EYFS.
- The **specific** areas include essential skills and knowledge. They grow out of the prime areas, and provide important contexts for learning.

The Unique Child reaches out to relate to people and things through the **Characteristics of Effective Learning**, which move through all areas of learning.

- playing and exploring
- active learning
- creating and thinking critically

Children develop in the context of relationships and the environment around them.

This is unique to each family, and reflects individual communities and cultures.



Prime areas are fundamental, work together, and move through to support development in all other areas.

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

Specific areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Our timetable allocates a lot of time to these three 'prime areas'. All the learning that goes on in EYFS and Key Stage One is designed to promote these core skills and to provide opportunities for children to generalise them. The entire day is considered learning time, with circle time at the beginning and the end of the day; break and lunch times provide opportunities for pupils to develop in the three prime areas and to work on skills identified as IEP targets to reduce barriers to learning.

The curriculum is organised thematically on a three-year rolling programme. Themes or topics are carefully chosen to support pupils to acquire and consolidate skills, knowledge and understanding in the four specific areas and three prime areas of learning.

EYFS, KEY STAGE 1 Rolling Programme of Themes			
	AUTUMN	SPRING	SUMMER
Cycle 1	People Who Help Us	Journeys	Me & My Body
Cycle 2	Weather & Seasons	Clothes	My Home & Family
Cycle 3	Plants & Animals	My Town	Food & Drink

See our EYFS policy for information on how our early years curriculum is delivered.

20.2 Key Stage 2

The core curriculum at Key Stage Two consists of English (speaking, listening, reading and writing); Mathematics (using and applying number, shape, space and measure) and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), including Spiritual, Moral and Cultural Development.

The curriculum is organised thematically on a four-year rolling programme of carefully chosen themes which are the vehicle for teaching the wider curriculum which consists of Physical Education, Science, Humanities, Technology and Creative and Expressive Arts. Computing is taught through discrete lessons and also across the curriculum in the context of the different subject areas. The development of communication skills continues to form an integral part of teaching across the curriculum, as does working on key learning skills to address barriers to learning identified as IEP targets.

Although the timetable is organised in discrete subject areas, pupils' teaching and learning is highly personalised, with pupils working on individual targets to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding in at their own particular level of development. Many pupils will not yet be able to learn in a group context, and will therefore be taught skills on a one-to-one basis. The prerequisites for learning in a group setting (joint attention; generalisation, etc.) are taught and practised across a variety of contexts, including during circle and break times.

KEY STAGE 2 Rolling Programme of Themes			
	AUTUMN	SPRING	SUMMER
Cycle 1	Festivals & Celebrations	Transport	My Body
Cycle 2	My City	Food & Drink	Materials
Cycle 3	Plants & Animals	Light & Dark	My School Community
Cycle 4	Weather & Climate	Caring for Animals	Buildings

As in EYFS and Key Stage one, the entire day continues to be considered as learning time, with circle times at the beginning and the end of the day and break and lunch times providing opportunities for pupils to develop core learning skills and to work on skills identified as IEP targets to reduce barriers to learning.

20.3 Key Stage 3

The curriculum at Key Stage three builds on prior knowledge, understanding and skills acquired at Key Stage two, and continues to be broad, balanced, relevant and functional. As part of their PSHE education, pupils learn about relationships and sex. Learning continues to be completely personalised to meet the needs of each pupil, with continued emphasis on pupils acquiring the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to apply their learning across a range of contexts, and on enabling pupils to access learning in a group setting, where possible. Communication skills and computing continue to be threaded through the curriculum. Every opportunity will continue to be used to practise pupils' key skills to reduce barriers to learning (IEP targets) and address pupils' specific areas of difficulty.

Science, Humanities, Technology and Creative and Expressive Arts continue to be taught in Key Stage 3 through carefully chosen themes designed to build on pupils' prior knowledge, increase their skills, knowledge and understanding of scientific, historical and geographic concepts and support pupils' transition into Key Stage 4.

KEY STAGE 3 Rolling Programme of Themes			
	AUTUMN	SPRING	SUMMER
Cycle 1	Caring For Plants	Travel & Transport	Farms & Farming
Cycle 2	Caring For Our World	Light & Dark	Changes
Cycle 3	Making Things	Healthy Eating	Finding Our Way Around

In Key Stage 3 pupils' physical development skills continue to be taught through Physical Education lessons and wider opportunities through links with local providers and venues. Learning is supported by classroom activities, the use of the outdoor area and extra-curricular opportunities. Pupils build upon learning from Key Stage 2 to develop a deeper understanding of how to use and apply skills in different contexts. Opportunities are provided for pupils to further improve basic skills such as running, jumping, throwing and catching and a broader range of activities are developed including cycling, panathlon and athletics. Pupils also have the opportunity to take part in outdoor adventurous activities (OAA) at a local venue.

20.4 Key Stage 4

At Key Stage four, pupils no longer follow the thematic approach to the curriculum that is adopted in the earlier Key Stages. A learner-centred, activity-based curriculum is introduced at Key Stage four to introduce pupils to the world of work through a programme of vocational 'taster' pathways and to prepare them for transition to Sixth Form. Learning continues to be highly personalised, but a greater emphasis is placed upon pupils' ability to learn successfully in a variety of contexts and with a less intensive ratio of support.

At Key Stage four, the core curriculum continues to consist of discrete English, Mathematics and PSHE lessons (including RSE), and builds on prior knowledge and understanding, but with an increased emphasis on applying skills and knowledge acquired to enable pupils to solve practical problems and deal with real-life situations and issues within each of the vocational pathways (e.g. applying mathematical knowledge of money and time to support work in the retail pathway). Computing is embedded throughout the vocational pathways with a focus on the functional use of technology. Each vocational pathway includes practical, hands on simulated work-related learning opportunities on the school site in the following vocational areas.

KEY STAGE 4			
	AUTUMN	SPRING	SUMMER
Cycle 1	Catering	Office Skills	Horticulture
Cycle 2	Hospitality & Events	Retail	Environment & Conservation

Each vocational pathway includes several opportunities for pupils to visit related places of work in the community, for example making visits to garden centres, offices or shops to learn about the types of jobs available in those work places.

The foundation curriculum continues to support pupils to develop their science and humanities, technology and creative and expressive arts skills, enabling pupils to apply concepts and skills in a practical way through the vocational pathways. Science is taught discretely but opportunities are developed to link this area of the curriculum to the relevant vocational pathways, with an increased emphasis on applying skills and knowledge acquired to enable pupils to solve practical problems and deal with real-life situations and issues within the vocational pathways (e.g. applying scientific knowledge about what plants need to grow to support work in the horticulture pathway).

Each Work-Related Learning topic concludes with a 'mini-enterprise project', affording pupils an opportunity to meaningfully share what they have learnt, repeated opportunities to present their learning, to prepare for events and to engage with family members and the wider school / local community.

In Key Stage four, pupils access a wide range of community sport and leisure activities through a community leisure pathway, designed to encourage pupils to develop lifelong interests and healthy habits. Weekly activities such as gym and fitness classes, martial arts, cycling, climbing, abseiling, golf and water-based activities are available but activities will be adapted and adjusted to meet the interests and needs of individual pupils. A particular interest in an activity may result in that activity running for a longer period of time, possibly alongside other

activities. Pupils also have the opportunity to work towards The Duke of Edinburgh Award of the Junior Award Scheme for Schools.

Throughout Key Stage four, pupils' achievements are externally recognised through nationally accredited awards and qualifications such as ASDAN's Transition Challenge programme, a framework of activities designed to develop and accredit learning within the programmes of study for the Key Stage four National Curriculum, along with activities to develop the essential skills required for adult living.

20.5 Sixth Form

Although English, Maths and PSHE continue to be taught as discrete areas, the majority of learning in these areas will take place through the vocational pathways which make up the majority of the teaching time during the week. Discrete English, Maths and PSHE time is used to ensure pupils have acquired the skills, knowledge and understanding they need in order to pursue their vocational pathways successfully, and as an opportunity to acquire specific areas of knowledge or skill needed, and to practise and consolidate these to enable pupils to apply them.

All pupils continue to participate in a session of Physical Education of some sort through a carefully tailored community leisure pathway – according to their particular aptitude and interest – e.g. some pupils may benefit from working out at a local gym; others may enjoy swimming; some may like to cycle/run, etc. In addition to the obvious health benefit of this, it is important for pupils to develop an interest in a physical activity that will be maintained as they become adults. In addition to physical activity, community leisure activities will also be introduced to pupils, such as arts and crafts, cinema trips, visits to a café or library, etc.

Pupils choose three out of a possible six vocational pathways which they pursue during their time in the sixth form (selecting one pathway choice per year). Throughout the year, pupils work through all three modules within their chosen vocational pathway (Preparing for the Workplace, Health & Safety, Me at Work). The aim is for the vocational pathways to be as applied as possible, and for every pupil to spend at least one day out of school a week engaged in vocational activity – wherever possible in a work setting (for example a local shop; garden centre, café, etc).

Throughout their time in Sixth Form, pupils will also work on developing important daily living skills that will prepare them for adulthood.

Pupils achieve accreditation at the end of Key Stage five through ASDAN's Towards Independence programme.

Sixth Form Employment Pathways – Pupils select one pathway per year. (Accreditation: Towards Independence/Personal Progress)		
AUTUMN	SPRING	SUMMER
CA Preparing for the workplace HA Preparing for the workplace LA Preparing for the workplace OA Preparing for the workplace RA Preparing for the workplace WA Preparing for the workplace	CA Health and Safety HA Health and Safety LA Health and Safety OA Health and Safety RA Health and Safety WA Health and Safety	CA Me at Work HA Me at Work LA Me at Work OA Me at Work RA Me at Work WA Me at Work
Catering Assistant (CA) Office Assistant (OA)	Horticulture Assistant (HA) Retail Assistant (RA)	Leisure Assistant (LA) Practical Workshop Assistant (WA)

Please refer to [Appendix 1](#) for a whole school curriculum overview.

21. Planning

21.1 Long-term planning

Our long-term curriculum overview defines the broad areas to be taught throughout Abbey School for each area of the curriculum. The school curriculum is based on a spiral curriculum model, meaning that pupils revisit the topics throughout their school career, with each encounter increasing in complexity and reinforcing previous learning.

Termly schemes of work are in place which act as a starting point for teachers to define the structure and content to be taught in different subject areas in deliverable units of work.

21.2 Medium-term planning

For each termly scheme of work, a more detailed medium-term plan is in place which sets out a clear sequence of work within a subject area. Medium term plans offer suggested teaching and learning activities and indicate what to teach over a period of weeks, most often a half term.

21.3 Short-term planning

Teachers work as members of trans-disciplinary teams alongside Behaviour Analysts, Occupational Therapists and Speech and Language Therapists to plan highly personalised sequences of lessons to deliver the content of medium-term plans and incorporate pupils' individual IEP targets. Short term plans are adapted by teachers based upon moment-to-moment data captured in assessments of pupils' learning throughout the course of a day.

22. Inclusion

Teachers set high expectations for all pupils. They will use appropriate assessment to set appropriate targets and plan suitably challenging work for all groups of pupils including:

- More able pupils
- Pupils with low prior attainment
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)

Teachers plan lessons so that all pupils, regardless of SEN and/or disability access a broad and balanced curriculum wherever possible, and ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.

Teachers also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Lessons are planned so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, and to support pupils to take part in all subjects.

Further information can be found in our statement of equality information and objectives, and in our SEN policy and information report.

23. Monitoring, evaluation and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team.

At every review, the policy will be approved by the Principal, Senior Leadership Team and Advisory Body.

Appendix 1: Whole school curriculum overview

What are we trying to do?	Curriculum Aims <i>All pupils will become</i>	Successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve their potential		Confident individuals who lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives		Responsible citizens who make a positive contribution and make successful transition into adulthood				
	<i>All pupils will achieve</i>	Belonging & Connection		Autonomy & Control		Gifts & Talents		Speaking & Listening Skills & Sense of Self		
	Areas of Need	Communication & Interaction		Cognition & Learning		Social, Emotional & Mental Health		Physical & Sensory		
	Focus for Learning	Attitudes & Attributes resilience, perseverance, motivation, curiosity, determination			Skills communication, literacy, numeracy, learning skills, self-help & daily living, social skills		Knowledge & Understanding Safe and meaningful community presence & choice and ambition for adulthood			
How do we organise learning?	<i>Learning is enriched through</i>	Lessons		Assemblies & school events		Community-based learning		Educational visits		
	<i>Teaching is underpinned by</i>	Evidence-based approaches to teaching & learning		Positive Behaviour Support		Trans-disciplinary approach		Focused / universal interventions	Close partnership with families & carers	
	<i>All pupils receive a broad, balanced, meaningful & functional curriculum</i>	EYFS & KS1	Personal, Social & Emotional	Communication & Language	Physical Development	Learning Skills	Maths for Life	English for Life	Understanding the World	Creative Development
		KS2 & KS3	PSHE	English for Life	PE	Learning Skills	Maths for Life	Science	Humanities	Expressive Arts & DT
		KS4	PSHE	English for Life (applying skills & knowledge)	Sports, Leisure & Recreation Pathway	Learning Skills	Maths for Life (using & applying, problem-solving)	Work-related Learning + Vocational Pathway Experiences Catering – Office Skills – Horticulture – Hospitality & Events – Retail – Environment & Conservation		
		KS5	PSHE	English for Life linked to chosen vocational Pathways	Community Sports & Leisure Pathway	Learning Skills	Maths for Life linked to chosen vocational Pathways	Science	Humanities	Expressive Arts & DT
	<i>The curriculum is organised to provide differentiated access for all pupils</i>	The 3 Es of differentiation		(i) engaging		(ii) exploring		(iii) establishing		
<i>All pupils will apply core skills across the curriculum</i>	Communication		ICT	Learning skills / barriers to learning			SMSC inc. British values		RSE	
How well are we achieving our aims?	Evaluating Impact <i>Assessment will</i>	Be an integral part of teaching & learning, drawing on a wide range of assessment frameworks		Promote a broad, engaging & highly individualised curriculum		Provide clear feedback to learners & stakeholders		Help to identify achievements & next steps in learning		Links to national standards
	Accountability Measures	Attainment & improved standards		Positive behaviour & attendance		Healthy & positive lifestyle choices		Greater independence		Positive destinations beyond Abbey School