



LOCATION: CURRICULUM HANDBOOK, DOCUMENT 2

THE LEARNING POLICY (Including Curriculum Design)

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Reviewed By: Zoe Silvester

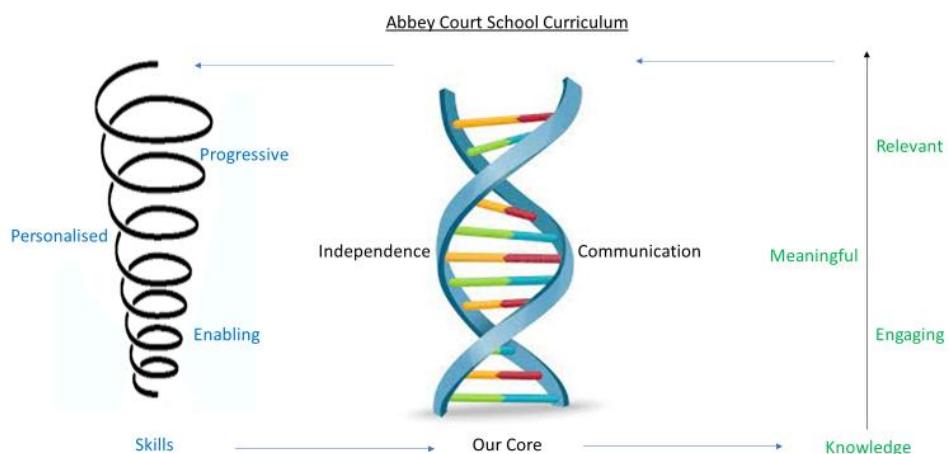
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Abbey Court Foundation Special School is maintained by Medway Local Authority for pupils with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) or Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) as their main presenting need. Additional educational needs may include visual/hearing impairment, sensory impairment, autism and or physical disability. As a result, all pupils at Abbey Court are working below the standards of National Curriculum assessments and significantly below the level of their age-related peers. At Abbey Court, we believe that all learners should access a full and varied curriculum that is personalised and relevant to their specific learning needs.

To achieve this, teaching and learning at Abbey Court is delivered through a curriculum that aims to be exciting, motivating, broad, relevant and personalised to each individual pupil. It is intended to present the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills needed to enable independence and the ability to communicate their wants and needs in their adult life. We aim to promote lifelong learning by supporting pupils to learn to engage with the world and the people around them.

To achieve this, we teach all National Curriculum subjects as a vehicle for exploring new ideas, developing knowledge and skills and as a way of learning to use and apply these in new contexts.



Curriculum development is an ongoing process at Abbey Court School, and we endeavour to continually refine and modify the curriculum to ensure that it effectively meets the needs of the pupils. In addition, there is substantial review and development on a regular basis, which is outlined in the school's monitoring and PARR policies.

The opportunity available within the National Curriculum to design and deliver a **whole** curriculum is welcomed at Abbey Court as it enables us to offer our pupils and students learning opportunities to realise their potential to become *successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens*.

Curriculum design and delivery in a school for pupils with severe and profound needs must be flexible, appropriately differentiated and personalised to meet the wide range of learning difficulties and individual needs. Therefore, Abbey Court provides a challenging curriculum, ensuring that all pupils maximise their progress and personal achievement in relation to their abilities. There is an emphasis on developing the whole person, through a multi-agency approach, working in partnership with parents and carers and other stakeholders.

To achieve our curriculum intent, teaching and learning are delivered through a diverse topic-based creative Curriculum, at the Primary site, where links are made between subjects so that children develop a broader understanding of a topic and learn to use and apply their knowledge and skills in a range of contexts that are relevant to them. Topics change each term and are on an annual cycle. At the Secondary School, the curriculum is subject-based and builds on the skills and knowledge already gained at Primary. This is the basis for our spiral curriculum, enabling pupils to revisit key ideas and concepts and contextualise them.

Both schools follow the National Curriculum, and schemes of work are differentiated to meet the needs of individual pupils and are individually progressive and age-appropriate to the learners. Regular review and development of our curriculum enables us to ensure relevance and representation of all our learners and celebrate the diverse culture in which we live.

Our curriculum also focuses on developing the key skills of communication, cognition, independence, physical development and self-care; all transferable skills that equip children and young people for life beyond the school, to ensure the development of the whole child. Abbey Court's farm curriculum has been carefully designed to complement and build upon classroom learning, allowing pupils to develop meaningful and relevant skills for the future.

Teaching and learning at Abbey Court School is supported by a range of co-providers, all of whom support the teaching staff in meeting the needs of individual pupils. The specific impact on teaching and learning that each group has can be briefly described as:

- Therapists: The specific expertise of the therapists is used by teaching teams to support pupils' physical needs whilst ensuring minimum disruption to the curriculum. Indeed, the approaches used are designed to facilitate access to the curriculum whilst Mobility Opportunities Via Education impact on teaching and learning by motivating and enabling the pupils (See the MOVE section within the P.E. policy, available on request).
- Educational Psychologist: A significant number of pupils have complex barriers to learning, which can include challenging behaviour. The skills of teaching staff, supported by the knowledge and advice of the Ed. Psych., enable the effects of their behaviours not only to be minimised on the education of all pupils, but indeed, to endeavour to modify the behaviours which will positively impact the specific pupil's learning.

- Visiting Teachers for Sensory Impairments: The specific expertise of the visiting teachers is used by teaching teams to support pupils' sensory needs to impact teaching and learning by facilitating and enabling the pupils.

The Quality of Teaching and Learning.

At Abbey Court School the core of the education is what takes place day in and day out in the classroom. The quality of the learning that takes place equates to the success of the school. At Abbey Court, the curriculum; the school organisation and management; and the physical environment are designed to assist the class teacher in their role, but it is how the class teacher functions that dictates effectiveness and this relates directly to pupil progress. It is expected that all class teachers therefore are, or endeavour to be, proficient class managers and the main focus of any lesson is on the learning that is taking place.

Learning

Abbey Court has a child-centred philosophy. This means that children are at the heart of all that happens and there are some key principles in place when it comes to learning and teaching:

- Teaching staff value and focus on every pupil, recognising and celebrating diversity
- Pupils are trusted. They are given responsibility and develop independence
- Pupils enjoy joining in and contributing
- The pupils feel secure, are secure and develop well
- Everyone is included
- Assessment informs planning and practice

Staff at Abbey Court show that they value each pupil and treat each pupil as an individual. Pupils are listened to and responded to sensitively, which enables them to feel safe and make good progress in all areas of learning. The pupils delight in participating in learning events.

Expectations of pupils are high, and both initial and ongoing assessment, with good communication amongst staff, identify what pupils can do, what they like to do and what they need to do to progress in their learning. Effective plans are agreed upon to set the next challenges to extend each pupil's learning. This means that pupils consolidate what they have learnt and make further progress in their learning.

Time and thought is given to make sure that pupils can make informed decisions. Pupils are helped to understand how to keep themselves safe (as opposed to just being kept safe), how to be healthy and how to maintain their personal care. They learn to manage their own behaviour, taking on responsibility, building up their confidence, and this further promotes learning. Personal, Social, Health Education and Citizenship (PSHE&C) is a core subject at Abbey Court School with close links to a pupil's Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural learning.

Pupils are provided with varied and exciting opportunities which enhance their life experiences and enrich their learning. We see the pupils participating eagerly with smiles or concentration. Pupils who are engaged and learning can be seen to enthusiastically communicate their thoughts through speech, signing, communication aids, touch, symbols and facial expressions. We see pupils in regular positive interaction with staff and their peers, which enables them to feel secure, take risks and thrive in their learning.

The pupils learn through activities that are carefully planned and adapted to their individual needs which engage and motivate them and aim to extend their ability to attend.

Irrespective of who the pupil is or where they have come from, staff know each pupil well and address any of their needs. They ensure that all pupils can join in, have fun and learn through new and challenging contexts and experiences. Any barriers are actively addressed and overcome, for example, by finding creative solutions to allow freedom of movement around the school even when a pupil has challenging behaviours or profound and multiple difficulties.

At Abbey Court, the pupils learn beyond the classroom: they can be enthusiastic and are encouraged to talk about things they have seen or been involved with. They like to share what they have done at home. The pupils work on their individual targets at home and use resources beyond the school to enhance their learning, particularly in real-life and social situations. We recognise the importance of learning beyond the classroom in equipping our pupils to learn to transfer their knowledge and skills into the community, thus preparing them for adulthood.

The Learning Environment

This must be organised to ensure that children have the opportunity to:

- work individually, in groups and as a class;
- make decisions;
- work co-operatively;
- solve problems;
- be creative;
- discuss their ideas;
- develop social skills;
- develop independence;
- use initiative;
- receive support;
- achieve academically and personally.

Learning takes place in an environment which:

- is challenging and stimulating;
- is peaceful and calm;
- is happy and caring;
- is well organised;
- is well resourced;
- makes learning accessible;
- is encouraging and appreciative;
- is welcoming;
- provides equal opportunities;
- provides a working atmosphere.

Children should be encouraged to develop organisational skills and independence through:

- appropriate tasks;
- confidence building;
- example;

- co-operation;
- provision of suitable opportunities;
- responsibilities.

Routines and Rules

(Also see the Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policy)

Routines and rules in the classroom contribute to a healthy learning environment.

All rules should result in the children knowing the boundaries of behaviour and should be set within the terms of The Behaviour Policy. Classes have their own charters in line with UNICEF, which are written collaboratively with pupils and reflect the classes' thoughts and expectations.

Learning: Enabling versus Disabling

Pupils learn best by:

- Trying things out for themselves
- Trial and error
- Being presented with manageable challenges
- Being allowed to take safe risks
- Being allowed to make mistakes and get things wrong

This means that staff at Abbey Court School endeavour to enable pupils. In a context where pupils need a lot of support with their physical and primary care needs, this can be a fine balance between supporting a pupil up to the point at which they can attempt to support themselves.

All staff are encouraged to self-reflect on their support of pupils, and this features in induction and ongoing training with staff.

Pupils are regularly assessed, and subsequently, the support that is provided is reviewed accordingly. Staff have pupils' long-term goals in mind so that they consider how to help improve their independence and take steps towards these goals. This will include, for example, carefully considering the prompts that are used and how they can be altered to increase independence in tasks.

Learning: Assessing Progress

We track the progress of all pupils rigorously to promote high expectations and to strive for outstanding progress for all. Assessment is an integral element in each and every learning opportunity, and staff strive to develop a thorough and extensive knowledge and understanding of every learner to inform their assessment and planning. Reference should be made to Abbey Court School's Planning, Assessing, Recording and Reporting Policy and the Monitoring and Evaluation policy for full details on how we implement this.

Evaluation of this policy

All teaching staff are involved in the development of the learning policy and are central to the implementation and ongoing evaluation of it.

The individual subject policies are an integral part of this policy and each subject leader has responsibility for the monitoring and evaluation of these incorporating the other teaching staff.

The school development plan is used as the vehicle for the identification and action planning of Abbey Court School's priorities.

This policy is evaluated and dated every other year and addresses changes in legislation, OFSTED requirements, and Abbey Court School Re-organisation.

Appendices:

1. *Curriculum Time allocation*
2. *Curriculum overview*
3. *Accreditation offer*
4. *Core Group learning rationale*

Other documents and policies to reference:

- There is a separate policy for each of the subjects taught at Abbey Court to further outline curriculum intent and implementation. This includes all of the National Curriculum Subjects as well as policies that outline our farm and swimming curriculum.
- The school's Planning, Assessing, Recording and Reporting Policy and the Monitoring and Evaluation policy give full detail on assessment and monitoring processes
- Curriculum maps, coverage plans and schemes of work for each subject give further detail of curriculum implementation
- There are separate EYFS and Further Education Policies which give further detail of how our curriculum and learning intent is communicated within these stages of education

Appendix 1:

THE SCHOOL DAY - Curriculum Time Allocation

Legislation has offered no rigid guidance for the allocation of time to subjects. At Abbey Court, we have devised a table that offers guidance for planning purposes.

These guidelines are intended to assist teachers in achieving a reasonable balance in their timetable, but are subject to a variety of constraints. For example, the key stage being taught, the abilities of the pupils in the class, the need to meet individual speech and physiotherapy needs, and emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Teaching times are based on:

- 24 hours and 10 minutes per week in the Primary Department
- 25 hours and 50 minutes per week in the Secondary Department
- 15 hours per week in the Nursery Department

(Pupils in the Nursery are entitled to five three-hour sessions a week (15 hours in total). These are a mix of morning and afternoon sessions running from 9 am-12 noon and 12.30-3.30 pm. During these sessions, the Early Years Foundation Stage is delivered through topics and according to pupils' interests. Observations are regularly carried out to plan for the next steps and possible lines of development.

(Please see the 'Times of School Day' document in the school handbook for details).

Appendix 2:

What
are we
trying to
achieve?

Curriculum aims

Successful learners
high but realistic expectations
development of independence
pupils feel safe, secure and comfortable enabling them to
focus on learning
a vision for each and every pupil

Opportunities for SMSC

Being healthy

High quality resources

Involvement in pupil focus groups

The curriculum aims to enable all young people to become

Confident and responsible individuals

to develop into good citizens who participate actively in
their community

to learn in different ways through a rich, varied and
individualised curriculum, choices and preferences

How
do we
organise
learning?

The curriculum as an entire planned learning experience underpinned by a broad set of common values and purposes										
EYFS	Communication and language		Physical development		Personal, social and emotional development		Literacy		Mathematics	
	Co	Co	DT	English & Drama	Cg	Hi	Mathematics	Music	PE	FSHE
KS1	A & D	Co	DT	English & Drama	Cg	Hi	Mathematics	Music	PE	RE
KS2	A & D	Co	DT	English & Drama	Cg	Hi	Mathematics	Music	PE	RE
KS3	A & D	Co	D & T	English & Drama	Cg	Hi	Mathematics	Music	PE	RE
KS4	A & D	Co	D & T	English & Drama	Cg	Hi	Mathematics	Music	PE	RE
FE	Current affairs		Personal & social development, SE		Health, personal independence skills		Home & household management		Swimming, sport, leisure & recreation	
	World religions and cultures		History		Key functional skills		Key functional skills		Independent living skills	
									Creativity, art, music and drama	
									Vocational studies	
									Work experience	
									Horticulture and outdoor learning	
									Work experience	
									Sensory development	
									Enterprise education	
									Duke of Edinburgh award	
									Scout troop	

How
well are we
achieving
our aims?

Evaluating impact

Looks at the whole child
Ensures assessment is on-going
IEPs reviewed
Individual input reviewed
Behaviour and attendance

Scrutiny of work
Pupil progress meeting to look at evidence of progress and achievement
Progress tracker
Evidence of pupil achievement collated and in pupil portfolios

Understand the effectiveness of teaching and learning and plan how to improve

Creates a continuous cycle of improvement
Links to overall school development plan
Links to curriculum subject area development plans

Links to on-going training
Lesson observations
Subject monitoring
Department monitoring
IEP targets reviewed
Progress meetings
Annual review reports

A climate of communication, consultation and shared decision-making
Feedback to pupils is incisive, focusing on what pupils can do to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills

Appendix 3

Abbey Court School – Accreditation Offer

Key Stage	Accreditation Overview	Additional Offer
EYFS		
Key Stage 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ducklings - Halliwick - 'I Can' Awards for Gymnastics (and Rebound Therapy, where appropriate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tonto - Rebound Therapy - Hydrotherapy - Stay to Tea/Camp Day - Inclusion Projects
Key Stage 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AQA Unit Awards – Computing and Maths (other AQA Awards at Subject Leaders'/class teachers' discretion) - Ducklings - Puffin - Rainbow - 'I can' awards followed by Winstrada Gymnastics (and Rebound Therapy, where appropriate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Horseriding - Tonto - Rebound Therapy - Hydrotherapy - Onsite Residential - Inclusion Projects
Key Stage 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asdan New Horizons - AQA Unit Awards – PSHE&C (other AQA Awards at Subject Leaders'/class teachers' discretion) - Halliwick - Water Skills - Learn to Swim - Winstrada Gymnastics (and Rebound Therapy, where appropriate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Horseriding - Tonto - Outdoor and indoor Rebound Therapy - Hydrotherapy - Offsite Residential - Sports Partnership activities - Skiing - On-site work experience - Shakespeare for Schools
Key Stage 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asdan Transition Challenge - AQA Unit Awards – PSHE&C (other AQA Awards at Subject Leaders'/class teachers' discretion) - Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award - Learn to swim - Halliwick - 'Learn to swim' - Water Skills - Winstrada Gymnastics (and Rebound Therapy, where appropriate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scout Group - Trampolining - Tonto - Outdoor and indoor Rebound Therapy - Hydrotherapy - DofE Expeditions (onsite and offsite) - Sports Partnership activities - On-site work experience - Shakespeare for Schools

Key Stage 5 (FE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asdan Towards Independence (Sensory, Introduction, Progression) - AQA Unit Awards – Pre-Entry and Entry-Level Units - Duke of Edinburgh Bronze/Silver/Gold Awards - Farm-related learning and work experience awards (AQA or ASDAN) - Halliwick <p>NB: <i>Individualised accreditation is always considered wherever a pupil's strength is identified</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tonto - Rebound Therapy - Hydrotherapy - Off-site leisure swim - Scout Group - College Vocational Taster Sessions - Broomhill Park work experience - On and off-site work experience - Fishing - Cinema/Bowling/Theatre trips - Travel Training - Sports partnership activities - D of E expedition residential - Shakespeare for Schools
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Appendix 4: Core Group Rationale

At Key Stages 1 and 2, targeted group interventions are delivered with a focus on developing literacy, engagement and physical development. Pupils receiving these interventions are identified through pupil progress meetings and reviewed termly to monitor impact. Group interventions are led by the school therapy team and the phonics reading assistants, and good practice is shared with class teachers.

Key Stages 3 & 4

Organisation of Communication & Literacy, Mathematics and Physical Education

Communication and Literacy – Core groups

Core Groups are organised for the Core subject of Communication/ Literacy at both Key Stage 3 and 4 by the Department Co-ordinators / English Subject Leaders together with the Class Teachers at the beginning of each academic year. These groups are organised according to the ability of the pupils concerned. There are usually three groups: Higher Achievers/SLD, and PMLD. The P Level and Engagement scale data of individual pupils are used as one criterion for their placement within a particular Core Group. Appropriate staffing, locations and resources are allocated to each group. Any changes to the placement of individual pupils throughout the year are discussed at a Department Meeting and with the Subject Leader concerned. Communication/Literacy Core Groups take place four times per week, and sessions last one hour.

Core Groups offer pupils the opportunity to: -

- practise and develop language and literacy skills with others of similar ability.
- allocate appropriate resources to aid the development of pupils' communication and literacy skills.
- Intensively teach language and communication skills and concentrate on IEP targets in a small group situation
- set specific language and communication targets which can be generalised to the classroom
- promote social skills by providing the opportunity to interact with every other member of the group
- undertake intensive pupil/adult interaction
- closely monitor each pupil's language and communication level through ongoing assessment

Maths – Core Groups

Core Groups are organised for the Core subject of Maths at both Key Stage 3 and 4 by the Department Co-ordinators/ Maths Subject Leader, together with the class teachers at the beginning of each academic year. These groups are organised according to the ability of the pupils concerned. The P Level data of individual pupils is used as one criterion for their placement within a particular Core Group. Appropriate staffing, locations and resources are allocated to each group. Any changes to the placement of individual pupils throughout the year are discussed at a Department meeting and with the Subject Leader. Maths Core Groups take place four times per week and sessions last for one hour.

Core Groups offer pupils the opportunity to: -

- practise and develop their numeracy skills with pupils of similar levels of ability
- allocate appropriate resources to aid the development of pupils' maths skills
- undertake intensive teaching of maths in a small group and focus on IEP targets
- monitor pupil progress through ongoing assessment

PE – Core groups and discrete class sessions

There is one weekly session of PE that is taught in Core Groups to pupils at a similar level of development. In addition to this, there is one weekly class lesson. The Department Coordinators / PE Subject Leader and class teachers agree on these at both Key Stages 3 and 4.

It is felt that Core Group PE sessions allow pupils to undertake physical activity appropriate to their ability. Some of our pupils can make use of all available resources in school and the local community, including Sports and Leisure Centres. For other pupils, Core Groups allow their individual needs to be met through PE by using the session to incorporate their MOVE programmes during PE activities. Some pupils undertake Sherborne Movement during their Core Group session, giving them space and freedom with appropriate support from adults.

The weekly class lesson of PE offers an inclusive session during which pupils can engage in social interaction with their class group and participate in whole-group activities.