



# Curriculum Policy (Primary)

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## Document provenance

This Policy was approved by Trustees as follows –

Approver: Education Committee

Date of Approval: October 2020

Date of Review: October 2022

Executive Leadership Team (ELT) Owner:  
National Director of Education

*Unless there are legislative or regulatory changes in the interim, this policy will be reviewed every 2 years. Should no substantive changes be required at that point, the policy will move to the next review cycle.*

### Policy Purpose and Summary

This Policy outlines the Trust's approach to curriculum design and delivery in Primary Academies.

### Summary of changes at last review:

- Changes made to fully reflect the Trust's 'Curriculum Strategy'.

### Related documents:

- Curriculum Policy Secondary

## Policy summary

This document sets out our policy with regard to the provision of a high-quality, aspirational curriculum in each of our primary academies.

The curriculum is at the heart of our strategy of 'Opening Minds, Opening Doors'. The curriculum represents what each of our primary academies stands for and what it believes its pupils and children should learn. Put simply, the provision of an outstanding curriculum in each of our academies is the single most important thing we can do to raise standards and aspirations, unlock potential and drive social mobility.

# Curriculum Policy (Primary)

## 1. Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1. The curriculum is all the planned activities that are organised in order to promote learning and personal growth and development. It includes not only the formal requirements of the National Curriculum, but also the range of extra-curricular activities that the academy organises in order to enrich the experience of pupils. It also includes the 'hidden curriculum', or what the children learn from the way they are treated and expected to behave. We aim to teach pupils how to grow into positive, responsible people, who can work and co-operate with others while developing knowledge and skills, so that they achieve their true potential.
- 1.2. This Curriculum Policy sets out our vision with respect to the purpose, organisation and aims of the curriculum. The curriculum is central to ensuring the highest possible expectations for the pupils, staff and communities we serve. It is at the heart of our core purpose and strategy, 'Opening Minds, Opening Doors'. In this document, the term curriculum is used with two meanings in mind. Firstly, to mean the curriculum in terms of the offer of subjects and other activities which our pupils follow. It is also used to mean the substance of pupils' education. That is, the actual knowledge, skills and understanding, including how this is chosen and sequenced, which we expect our pupils to learn during their time in school. The intended meaning in each case will usually be clear from the context.
- 1.3. The educational vision and curriculum design for our academy curriculum recognises that:
  - Although the pace of change in society and the workplace is increasing, the foundations of a strong education remain. We believe that all our pupils deserve a curriculum that provides them with secure and flexible knowledge across a broad range of subject disciplines;
  - young people have, and will have increasingly, greater access to information and learning material independently of school. However, formal education remains the most important way in which young people gain the knowledge and 'cultural capital' they need to thrive and succeed in their future lives;
  - Curriculum delivery should involve the flexible use of all adults, as well as teachers. These could include support staff, graduates, artists, sports people and people from industry and business to support curriculum delivery.
- 1.4. Our Curriculum Policy is based on the following aims and principles, to:
  - have pupils at its heart, putting their interests above those of the institution;
  - have a curriculum that is fit for purpose, and which meets the needs of all our pupils;
  - be a centre of excellence in curriculum design and development, supporting highly effective learning and teaching;
  - prepare all pupils for a successful adult and working life in a 21st century global society;
  - at least match national standards in achievement, attainment and progression;
  - be committed to excellence and continuous improvement;
  - nurture the talents of all and celebrate success;
  - support effective transition between primary and secondary schools and academies;
  - involve the community and other stakeholders;
  - to ensure it complies fully with the requirements of The Equality Act 2010, particularly in respect of pupils with protected characteristics as defined by the same Act.

## **2. Scope**

2.1. The policy applies to all leaders, teaching and professional services support staff.

## **3. Legislation and Regulation**

3.1. The Funding Agreement for each academy will indicate what should be provided in the curriculum and the Master Funding Agreement for the Trust is available on the E-ACT main website. In addition, each academy's website must also show the details of the curriculum provided, including – as a minimum – the long-term (or 'high-level') curriculum plan for each subject and phase.

## **4. Policy Statement**

4.1. The academy curriculum is underpinned by the values that we hold at our academy. The curriculum will inspire and challenge all learners and prepare them for their future lives. The trust and each academy's aim is to develop a coherent, well-sequenced and challenging curriculum that helps all young people to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens.

4.2. E-ACT wants all of our pupils to realise their full potential through our values of:

- Thinking Big;
- Doing the right thing;
- Showing team spirit.

4.3. The curriculum should help young people to:

- learn well, be challenged, achieve high standards and make good progress;
- develop a breadth of knowledge and understanding that underpins a range of skills, such as problem solving, analysis, evaluation and communication, and helps them to become confident, resilient and life-long learners;
- have and be able to use 'basic' or core skills and knowledge fluently and confidently, including literacy, numeracy and computing skills;
- enjoy and be committed to learning, in school and beyond;
- value their learning outside of the curriculum and link this to their learning in the taught curriculum;
- enable pupils to be creative and to develop their own thinking;
- teach pupils about their developing world, including how their environment and society have changed over time;
- help pupils understand Britain's cultural heritage;
- enable pupils to be positive citizens in society;
- teach pupils to have an awareness of their own spiritual development, and to understand moral values, such as the difference between right and wrong;
- help pupils understand the importance of truth and fairness, so that they grow up committed to equal opportunities for all;
- enable pupils to have respect for themselves and high self-esteem, and to be able to live and work co-operatively with others.

## 5. Organisation and Planning

- 5.1. Each academy plans its curriculum in four 'layers'. Academy's agree a set of principles which apply to their curriculum across the academy. From this flows the 'subject curriculum intent statements'. These set out the aims, purpose and rationale for the curriculum in each subject at the academy.
- 5.2. Next, each subject sets out its long term (or 'high-level') plan for each year group. This shows the content to be taught across a series of units or topics in each term, and to which groups of pupils. Each subject area will keep these plans under continuous review.
- 5.3. The next layer is subject medium-term plans. In these the specific skills, knowledge and vocabulary which we want pupils to learn, and how this these are sequenced and organised, is set out. These plans also include detail about how knowledge and skills will be assessed, and how pupils who require support to access the curriculum successfully, will be supported. They will also show how learning will be deepened for higher-attaining pupils.
- 5.4. Short-term plans are those that teachers may write on a weekly or daily basis. Teachers will use these to set out the specific learning and assessment for each session, and to identify what resources and activities to be used in the lesson.
- 5.5. E-ACT has developed the 'E-ACT Passport'. This will make up part of the curriculum and, wherever possible, be an element of topics/themes delivered. This may not always be possible so discreet activities will need to be planned. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure the activities contained within the E-ACT Passport are planned for each year group.

## 6. Our curriculum principles

- 6.1. The curriculum will remain as broad as possible, for as long as possible. Our curriculum does not narrow pupils' experience of subject learning inappropriately. While many pupils benefit from a strong focus on English and mathematics, our pupils are entitled to receive a curriculum which provides them with the essential 'cultural capital' they will need to succeed and flourish in their future lives.
- 6.2. The curriculum will provide at least the breadth and entitlement of the National Curriculum ([link](#)). This is particularly the case in primary academies and in key stage 3. The National Curriculum sets out the expectations for different subject areas in terms of the broad outcomes that pupils ought to reach by the end of each key stage. Our curriculum will ensure that pupils have the opportunities they need to reach these outcomes. For example, in practice, this means all our secondary academies will provide a three-year Key Stage 3 programme.
- 6.3. The curriculum will reflect each academy's context. We do not intend that all academies, in each phase, will offer the same curriculum, either organisationally or in terms of curriculum content. Academies have freedom to organise the curriculum, and to select and sequence the content they teach, to best suit the needs of all of their pupils. Academies are held to account for the impact of their decisions through regional and trust-level review processes, and in terms of the impact on pupils' learning, enjoyment and achievement. However, this does not inhibit any shared curriculum planning between academies, should they wish to share resources and expertise.

- 6.4. An important principle underpinning curriculum content choices and sequencing is respect for subject disciplines. Whether organised in discrete subjects or in 'topic' based approaches (for example, in primary academies), progression in knowledge and understanding in subjects will usually drive choices and decisions about curriculum design. Supported and challenged by senior leaders, subject leaders and co-ordinators will usually lead on subject curriculum decisions.
- 6.5. The curriculum will ensure access and inclusion. An overarching principle is equality of access to the curriculum. For example, SEND pupils and EAL learners will, wherever possible, be supported to access a common curriculum, rather than be taught a restricted or unduly narrowed curriculum.
- 6.6. Curriculum development is an on-going and a part of academy self-review. Every academy's cycle of self-review and improvement planning will include the curriculum as a core focus area. As academies are responsible for determining and implementing their curriculum and approach to assessment, the self-review processes will focus on the effectiveness and impact of academy curricula. In addition, our termly Governance Review Days (GRDs) will scrutinise the quality and impact of the curriculum across the academy.
- 6.7. The curriculum is the cornerstone for workforce development. Good curriculum thinking and design requires intellectual and professional development and commitment. Working on the curriculum is an essential part of developing the skills and expertise of teachers and leaders. A focus on on-going curriculum development will help to strengthen recruitment, retention and succession planning.

## **7. Early Years and Key Stages 1 and 2**

- 7.1. The curriculum in Early Years meets the requirements set out in 'Development Matters' and the statutory framework for the EYFS<sup>1</sup>. Our curriculum planning also focuses on the Early Learning Goals and on developing children's skills and experiences, as set out in these documents. In addition, we ensure that our Early Years curriculum provides a strong basis for subject-based learning in Key Stage 1. We do this by ensuring that children are taught the key knowledge and skills they will need to be successful as they move from reception to Year 1.
- 7.2. Our approach to the curriculum fully supports the principle that young children learn through play, and by engaging in well-planned structured activities. Teaching in early years builds on the experiences of the children in their pre-school learning. We do all we can to build positive partnerships with the variety of nurseries and other pre-school providers in the area.
- 7.3. Children in Early Years are ready for a rigorous, challenging curriculum, including in early reading. Along with statutory requirements, the Early Years curriculum should reflect the principles of learning in early childhood. It should always make explicit the knowledge and vocabulary that children will learn and take account of subject progression in Key Stage 1, ensuring it provides a sound basis for this. Senior leaders and subject co-ordinators should understand how the curriculum in Early Years provides a foundation for the knowledge and understanding pupils will develop in Key Stage 1.
- 7.4. The curriculum in Key Stage 1 should ensure a strong focus on reading, writing and early

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<sup>1</sup>[EYFS Statutory Framework](#)

mathematics. While pupils should usually begin to experience subject-based learning in the wider curriculum, the onus in key stage 1 should firmly be on ensuring pupils make a strong start in literacy and mathematics. In particular, all academies should expect at least 90% of children to pass the Year 1 phonics screening check.

- 7.5. The curriculum in Key Stage 2 should provide pupils with a sufficiently broad and deep curriculum in all their subjects. In practice, this will mean that curricula will not be unduly heavily-weighted to English and mathematics, but take a proportionate approach which provides time for pupils to study foundation subjects in sufficient depth. While pupils in Year 6 in particular should be familiarised with national tests, the curriculum will not normally be substantially skewed towards the demands of these assessments.
- 7.6. The curriculum may be arranged according to subjects or delivered through a theme-based, 'topic' model. However, whatever model is used to organise the curriculum, it must ensure that pupils receive an authentic, rigorous and challenging experience which respects subject disciplines and progression. Topic themes and links should not drive the curriculum or be contrived in ways which compromise the integrity and rigour of individual subjects (for example, as is commonly seen in theme-based approaches for art and Design and Technology).

## **8. Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities**

- 8.1. The curriculum in our academy is designed to provide access and opportunity for all children who attend the academy. If we think it necessary to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of individual children, then we do so only after the parents of the child have been consulted. However, in the great majority of cases, pupils who have SEND will be 'scaffolded' or supported to access the same curriculum content as other pupils. This principle underpins our approach to 'mastery' and inclusion. The curriculum will uphold fully the requirements set out in the DfE (January 2015) SEND Code of Practice<sup>2</sup>.

## **9. Monitoring and Evaluation**

- 9.1. The Regional Education Directors and Regional Operations Directors work with individual academies to create a curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. The curriculum is scrutinised at termly Governance Review Days (GRDs) and at regional level through the termly Regional Performance Boards (RPBs).

## **10. Review**

- 10.1. This Policy will be reviewed every two years by the National Director of Education and approved by Executive Leadership Team and the Education Committee. The Policy will then be adapted as necessary by academies, with the approval of the Director of Curriculum and Regional Education Directors.

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<sup>2</sup> [SEND Code of Practice](#)