



ABBEY HILL ACADEMY

'Where amazing children do amazing things!'

Curriculum and Assessment

2020-21

Introduction

At Abbey Hill Academy we believe that our school's curriculum is much broader than subjects on a timetable. The school curriculum comprises all learning and other experiences that the school plans for its students. Our students have a range of needs that can change over time. In order to best support over 200 learners the curriculum is highly personalised and continuously reviewed and developed.

This document aims to provide an overview of the curriculum and examples of how it is personalised for a range of learners at different stages of development.

Aims

The aims of our curriculum are to provide a balanced and broad experience for students which promotes their spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development.

We are committed to preparing our students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life so that they become actively involved in their community, contributing to society and living as independently as possible.

The pedagogy and principles behind the range of learning programmes have a strong evidence base for raising attainment and preparing for adulthood.

Curriculum Framework

Our curriculum framework was developed through in-depth evidence based research and collaborative work between other special schools and our own teachers, assistants, families and students. The academy wanted a framework that could show how each student at the school benefits from Person Centered Planning (PCP). We believe that this model enables Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) outcomes to be embedded and central to our everyday work with each individual student at our school, whilst also ensuring that students have a broad and balanced experience.

Our curriculum framework is based on 3 key principles:

The 'Head' of our curriculum – empowering knowledge so our young people can join in and contribute.

The 'Heart' of our curriculum – experiences and situations focusing on developing young people who will enter the adult world as respectful, tolerant, valued, confident and independent young people with resilience and ambition.

The 'Hand' of our curriculum – promoting creativity and problem solving to ensure students play an active part.

(See Appendix 1)

Curriculum structure

In order to provide students across the school with experiences that are relevant, interesting and challenging and to identify opportunities for progression, we have adopted a curriculum structure with 3 broad levels: pre-formal, semi-formal and formal. These levels are not defined by age but by need and achievement; students may therefore move from one level to the next at any point in their school career. Each level covers skills, knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects.

	Self	Physical	Communication	Cognition	World	Creativity
Formal	PSHE Food Tutor	PE Sensory Physio	English Reading	Maths Enterprise	Science ICT Humanities	Art Music DT
Semi formal	My Care and Independence	My Body	Communication Literacy	Problem Solving Numeracy	Understanding My World	My Creativity
Pre-formal			My communication	My cognition	Me and My World	

Pre-formal Level

Our Pre-formal curriculum focuses on health, happiness and independence. Our students need to be able to make their own decisions and feel empowered. This curriculum is tailored to the individual and written with them at the centre; our unique curriculum where anything is possible.

- My communication
- My cognition
- My care and independence
- My body
- Me and my world
- My creativity

Semi-formal Level

Students accessing our Semi-formal curriculum benefit from a more specialist, experiential and process-based approach focusing on developing young people who will enter the adult

world as respectful, tolerant, valued, confident and independent young people with resilience and ambition. The knowledge they are exposed to helps them make sense of the world around them and builds an important sense of curiosity.

- Communication and Literacy
- Problem solving and numeracy
- My care and independence
- My body
- Understanding my world
- My creativity

Formal Level

Our formal curriculum has been designed to ensure that the knowledge being taught in Key Stage 3 prepares our students, not only for Key Stage 4 and accreditation, but for adulthood. We see the importance of a purely subject specific academic approach for our most able learners so that the complexities of a subject can be explored. We also value the need for a more thematic approach for some students at this level to ensure that knowledge can be experienced as a narrative.

- English
- Maths
- Science
- ICT
- Art
- PE
- Humanities
- PSHE
- Enterprise
- Music
- Technology
- Reading

Key curricular components

Communication

This learning area focuses on the development of independent communication skills. Students are supported in all stages of their development in both academic and social communication. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely with our Speech and Language Therapist to set outcomes for students utilising the SCERTS framework.

Communication can be spoken, signed, written and through the use of body language and expression, technologies and picture exchange (PECS).

The following are some of the programmes that students may follow:

- PECS
- Makaton and BSL signing
- Boardmaker to build up signing, verbal and written communication
- Social communication-to develop turn taking, friendships, making conversations...
- Social Stories- used with individuals or small groups to teach appropriate responses to everyday or unusual events
- Speaking and listening programmes of study from National Curriculum, Entry Level Programmes and Functional Skills English.
- The teaching of writing through the English Curriculum, and spelling and reading through the Academy's Reading Programme.
- Outdoor and social learning experiences
- Enterprise
- Personal, Social and health education (PSHE)

Cognition

Students at all stages are taught the skills needed to be independent thinkers through a range of activities that include making choices, working independently, co-operating within a pair or group, understanding of self and learning to concentrate and focus in a group setting.

The following are some of the programmes that students may follow:

- Comprehension-at all levels including inference of texts or pictures through the English Curriculum
- Problem solving in Mathematics-includes a wide range of practical and mental strategies
- Enterprise
- PPU, Entry Level and Functional Skills Mathematic qualifications
- Generation of ideas through design and technology, art and Key Stage 4 options
- Opportunities to work and play together throughout the day
- A knowledge rich curriculum that drives curiosity

Creativity

Students are taught a range of techniques to develop skills and are given opportunities to enjoy the arts through creating music, song, dance and also using a wide range of art and construction materials. Students have opportunities to perform and celebrate their creativity at school and in the community.

The following are some of the creative programmes and enrichment opportunities for students:

- The Key stage 4 option structures include a variety of creative courses.
- Music and singing is embedded in daily life and is a regular feature of assemblies.
- Role play and drama across the curriculum
- School choir
- Individual instrument teaching
- A range of lunchtime clubs-open to all
- Students regularly perform or share their creative work in assemblies
- World Book Day-visiting authors, story tellers, poets running interactive workshops
- Workshop experiences in design technology
- Craft activities
- Tinkering
- Play
- Thank Goodness It's Wednesday (TGIW)
- A range of after school and Saturday activities and clubs

Self

This area of learning focuses on taking care of yourself and keeping safe and healthy. It includes keeping fit and learning to relax, making healthy and safe choices about food and lifestyle.

The following are some of the programmes and enrichment opportunities for students:

- Toileting and personal care programmes advised by appropriate health care professionals
- Cooking and nutrition
- Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)
- After school and Saturday activities and clubs

- Relaxation and mindfulness sessions form part of the day for some classes and techniques to aid positive wellbeing are taught
- Group and individual sessions for students covering a wide range of topics, including puberty, self-care, friendships and relationship work.
- Access to staff trained in counselling
- Interventions for anger management and managing anxiety
- E-safety is taught through computing sessions as well as whole school assemblies and themed weeks such as E-Safety week.
- Thank Goodness It's Wednesday (TGIW)
- Reward assemblies and celebrations

World

This area of learning may refer to the school community as well as the local area where the school is situated and the home communities of our students. Much learning takes place off the school site and classes make frequent use of the school's minibuses and local public transport to learn in the community. British values of democracy; the rule of law; individual liberty; mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith are embedded into learning about "Understanding My World". Where ever possible subjects are taught functionally and through real life experiences.

Other opportunities to learn and understand the world include:

- Theme days
- Active learning programmes
- Residential visits
- Local visits out of schools for most groups on a weekly basis
- CEIAG and options event
- Lunchtime and after school clubs, including 'Saturday Club'
- Citizenship
- Activities with other schools
- Student voice through tutor sessions, school council and leadership roles within school such as Anti-Bullying Ambassador
- Science curriculum including Entry Level at KS4
- ICT curriculum
- Humanities through topics based on historic, geographic and religious themes

- Outdoor learning and access to our academy woodland
- Special assemblies and participation in events for Comic Relief & Sport Relief, UNICEF Day for Change and World Book Day
- Picture News shared weekly in assemblies and tutor sessions
- Topics and themes to coincide with national and international events

Physical

Our physical education curriculum aims to inspire all pupils to succeed and excel in activities that help our students to learn by being active. This helps our students to gain confidence, develop their coordination and movement. Students are supported to make healthy choices about the food they eat in and out of school.

We provide opportunities for pupils to become physically confident in a way which supports their health and fitness. Students are given the opportunity to compete in sport and other activities. The aim is to build character and help to embed values such as fairness and respect.

Opportunities to improve physical health and wellbeing include:

- Physical Education is taught throughout the school and includes games, athletics, swimming as well as rebound and hydro therapies
- Motor skills programmes and access to specialist resources and equipment as advised by Occupational and Physio therapists
- Horse-riding
- Our annual sports day
- Lunchtime and after school clubs, including 'Saturday Club'
- Local sporting events
- Fundraising activities and charity events
- Sensory curriculum, resources and personalised plans
- The Key stage 4 option structure includes a variety of active courses
- Outdoor learning experiences
- TGIW programme offers a range of sporting and active opportunities including swimming lessons, ice skating, dance and Judo
- The MOVE programme

Curriculum approaches

Our curriculum structure gives us our 3 broad levels; Pre-formal, Semi-formal and Formal. Our curricular components; Communication, Cognition, Self etc.... provide our content. Due to the complex needs of our students, our approach to delivery needs to be flexible and highly personalised.

Curricular approaches	Pre-formal	Semi-formal	Formal
	Themed approach developed by a specialist team		Subject specific approach developed by subject specialists
Year 7	Unique curriculum	Process-based curriculum	Academic curriculum (Pure or themed)
Year 8			
Year 9			
Key Stage 4	Unique curriculum PPU Pre Entry Qualification	Process – based curriculum PPU Pre Entry / Entry Level Qualifications	Academic curriculum (Pure) Range of Entry level and Level 1 &2 Qualifications

In Year 7, the main aims of the curriculum are to welcome, motivate, engage and create opportunities for thinking. The gathering of accurate baseline assessment information is a critically important part of teaching and learning in the first term. It is from this baseline that we map out a child's future curriculum.

Students tell us how and why they learn and we respond by planning curriculum approaches to suit each individual.

Students working at the Pre-formal level benefit from a unique curriculum that is built around individual need. The curriculum is designed to motivate, engage and promote thinking, uniquely for each student. Themes have been carefully sequenced to ensure students learning experiences encapsulate the 3 key principles of our curriculum framework: Head, Heart, Hand. 'Goals and Next Steps' give a clear focus for all activities and experiences to ensure meaningful progress impacts positively on the daily life of the student, their friends and their family. All work is accredited and portfolios are created, celebrating success.

Students working at the Semi-formal level benefit from a process-based approach. Again, themes have been carefully sequenced to ensure students learning experiences encapsulate the 3 key principles of our curriculum framework: Head, Heart, Hand. This is a holistic approach where teaching and learning becomes a narrative. It is important that learning remains in the long term memory of each student. Revisiting, expanding and putting learning into new relevant contexts enriches everything. The entire process of learning is taken as a whole, preparing our students for future life. Students access appropriate accreditation in a wide range of subject areas that ensure skills are externally moderated and recognised.

Students working at the Formal level are taught through a subject specific approach led by subject specialists, which wholly prepares them for adult conversations of the future and challenging accreditation in Key Stage 4. Empowering our students with knowledge and all the skills they will need to use it wisely in life is our aim.

Abbey Hill Academy understands the importance of getting it right for all children and this means that a flexible and intelligent curriculum is the only way to guarantee that all our children leave us knowing exactly how amazing they are.

Curriculum flexibility

As each curriculum level has a clearly defined content and approach, planning and teaching is most efficient where a class works within one level. There may, however, be valid reasons for mixed grouping in specific circumstances.

Key goals are drawn from student's individual needs within the two central pillars of **cognition** and **communication**. Additional goals from the broader curricular offer enhance very personalised teaching and learning experiences.

Learning outcomes are clearly related to student goals, therefore learning experiences provide a range and variety of opportunities for students to practise central skills over and over again.

Curriculum maps (long term)

Each curriculum component or subject specific area has a curriculum map which outlines the essential opportunities and experiences we want to provide for our students. These essential opportunities and experiences have been carefully planned and sequenced with the 3 key principles of our curriculum framework in mind and are based on what children need to learn in order to lead fulfilled lives, both as children and eventually as adults.

Curricular plans (medium term)

Each curriculum map has finer curricular plans attached to it. These medium term plans provide a structure for the activities and ideas we teach aiming to motivate, engage and inspire thinking. Teachers use these plans to help them create and deliver lessons that touch the head, heart and hand of our students each and every day.

Essential Enrichment and Preparing for Adulthood

All students access enrichment activities as part of TGIW as well as two tutor and sessions per week and our amazing Abbey Hill assemblies.

TGIW (Thank Goodness It's Wednesday) is an afternoon each week valued by all students and staff. Delivered by our dedicated teaching assistant team, students access enrichment activities driven by student voice that take account of individual needs and parent aspiration. Activities currently include:

- **Learn to ride a bike**
- **Swimming lessons**
- **Instrument tuition**
- **Academy bistro management**
- **Dance**
- **Judo**
- **Football**
- **Ice skating**
- **Bushcraft**
- **Active learning**
- **Pottery**
- **Jewellery making and crafts**
- **Play therapy**
- **Community life**

Tutor sessions each week provide opportunities for planning and reflection. Our students benefit from time each Monday to look at the week ahead as a whole school and then in more a more focused tutor group setting. Equally as important is time each Friday to review and absorb all the learning that has happened and celebrate success together as a community.

Preparing for adulthood in a very practical way becomes a focus in Key Stage 4 as students access the academy option structure and take part in meaningful vocational experiences.

Students access up to 4 vocational option subjects in Key Stage 4. We offer our students the very best suite of qualifications to prepare them for adulthood, taking account of their dreams and aspirations. Student voice dictates the subject offer each year.

Vocational option choices together with our personalised PSHE and careers curriculum credit our students with the **Diploma in Skills for Further Learning and Employment; Preparing for Adulthood:**

- **Adventure**
- **Animal care**
- **Art, Craft and Design**
- **Digital Media (Photography)**
- **Music**
- **Performing Arts**
- **Retail**
- **Resistant Materials**

- **Food, Drink and Hospitality**
- **Horticulture and Floristry**
- **Computing**
- **Sport, Health and Fitness**
- **Textiles**
- **Hair and Beauty**

In Key Stage 3 and 4 all planning begins with our curriculum framework key principles:

- The Head of our curriculum – What knowledge will empower our children?
- The Heart of our curriculum – What do we want our young people to become?
- The Hand of our curriculum - How can we ignite every child's unconscious mind through enrichment and opportunity?

Assessing the impact of our curriculum at Abbey Hill Academy

As part of our commitment to ensuring that each child makes exceptional progress from their own starting points we have implemented a robust target and tracking system, so that a student's progress can be mapped out over time and each term teachers will be able to report on how far each student has progressed in terms of meeting specific targets. At Abbey Hill Academy this is a vital tool that ensures consistent high expectation which leads to stronger outcomes.

When students arrive at Abbey Hill Academy with National Curriculum KS2 data in core subject areas, we can use this information to dictate a progress factor for each individual student.

On arrival in year 7 we baseline students. Students complete assessments in October (Autumn) of year 7 and this gives us a place to begin targeted and focused teaching. Occasionally this baseline assessment shows regression from the end of KS2. If necessary, we spend the first term addressing students gaps in knowledge to ensure by December they are working at or beyond their KS2 level.

We then use our February (Spring) data to formulate our academic targets. A student's spring data becomes their KS3 starting point and their progress factor ensures we always aim high.

So, in Key Stage 3 we begin each student's teaching and learning journey from their own starting point. We assess using National Curriculum Year Expectations. Students working within the Year Expectations framework are assessed using our Academy Key Skills. Our Academy Key Skills can be explained by the following example: "Student X is working within Year 2 expectations, we report that they are working within Key Skill 2 (K2)". For each Key Skill, there are a series of objectives that are to be mastered before a student can progress onto the next Key Skill.

Students working below the National Curriculum Year Expectations framework are assessed using an ipsative approach. Ipsative assessment is based on each student's previous achievements rather than based on performance against external criteria and standards. Our students work towards personal 'Goals and Next Steps' that are pertinent to them as individuals and their families. Our skilled staff use a research-based approach to assessment based on their specialist knowledge of child development.

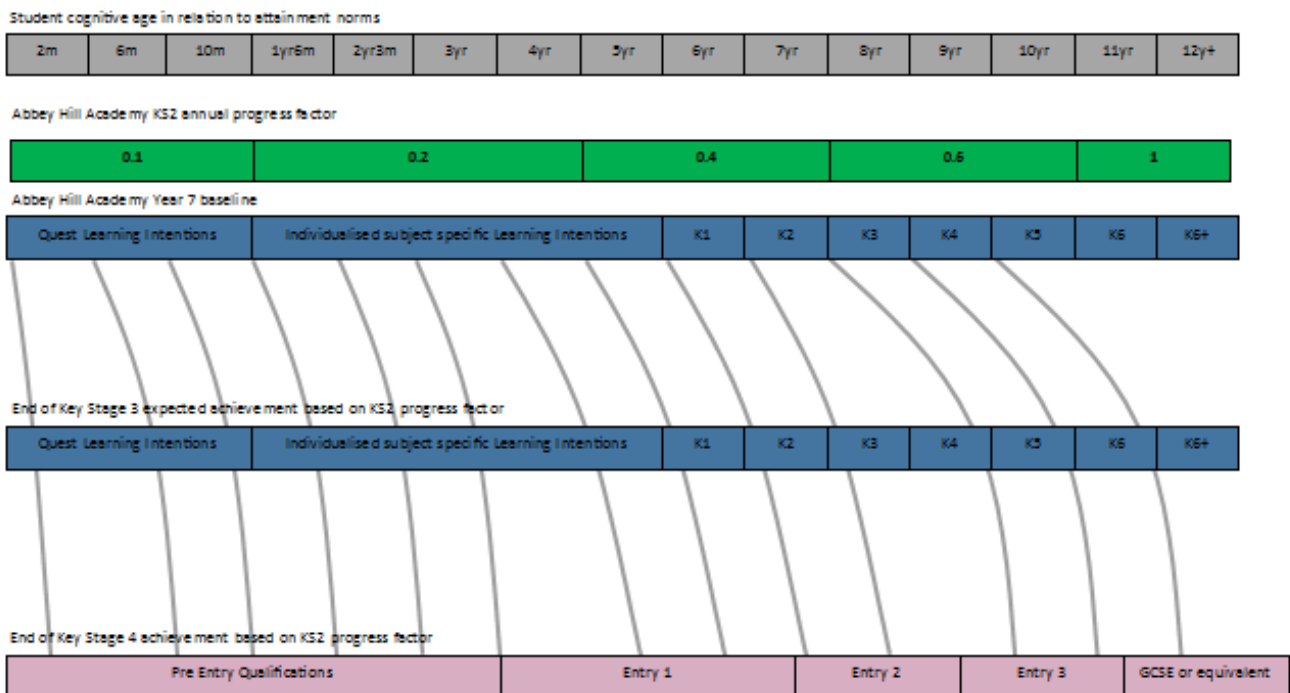
In Key Stage 4, the majority of assessment carried out is against Entry Level criteria. A student's Entry Level pathway is determined by the progress they make in Key Stage 3.

Some students may be working above Entry Level 3, which is the highest Entry Level qualification and so we begin preparation for GCSE.

Our Key Stage 4 accreditation map (*See Appendix 2*) outlines all the externally, RQF recognised qualifications we deliver at the Academy, ensuring we prepare our students for life in the real world.

Strong progress at Abbey Hill Academy

Abbey Hill Academy knows that a key stage target setting system that projects where a child could be is important to ensure expectation is always high. This helps teachers, students and parents understand what we work towards for our students to ensure a minimum expectation of strong progress. The aim being for 100% of our students to reach or exceed their potential projected expectations.



We discuss each student's learning journey with them and celebrate every step of progress made. Each member of the staff team follows our **Marking, Assessment and Feedback guidelines**.

We value both external and internal feedback on our Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 assessments and hold termly moderation events to ensure our judgments on attainment and progress are accurate. We use all feedback constructively to help inform future planning, as all that matters to us is student success.