Curriculum Policy

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1.1	September 2026	Sophie Spencer

Introduction

At Ryecroft School, we believe that every learner is entitled to a curriculum that is personalised, meaningful and appropriate to their individual needs. All of our learners have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which sets out their individual long-term outcomes across five key areas. These outcomes provide the foundation for each learner's individual curriculum provision and wider experiences provided throughout their time at Ryecroft.

EHCP outcomes are translated into short-term targets, which are developed collaboratively by class teachers, the SENCO, Curriculum Lead and on-site clinical team. These targets provide clear, achievable steps towards each learner's longer-term outcomes and are directly linked to medium-term and weekly planning. They are also embedded within formative and summative assessment processes, enabling staff to monitor progress, identify next steps and adapt accordingly. This creates a clear and consistent link between each learner's EHCP outcomes, curriculum, teaching and assessment.

Learners follow one of three learning pathways: Seedlings, Roots and Branches. Each pathway is designed to provide an appropriate balance of challenge and support, considering each learner's cognition, communication, development and individual needs.

Whilst learners follow a specific pathway, the level of support, differentiation and approaches used within their learning are personalised according to their individual cognition and development. As learners develop their knowledge, skills, communication and independence, they may move between pathways where this is appropriate. This ensures that each learner's curriculum remains responsive to their progress and continues to provide appropriate challenge and support.

Across all pathways, our overarching aim is to develop as much independence as possible for every learner and prepare them for life beyond school. Preparation for adulthood and Learning for Life are woven throughout the curriculum and daily experiences, providing meaningful opportunities to develop communication, independence, self-care, functional skills, relationships, decision-making and participation in the wider community. We recognise that independence will look different for every learner and therefore focus on developing each individual's skills and confidence from their starting point, enabling them to make choices, participate in their daily lives and work towards their individual aspirations.

Our school values of Respect, Care and Teamwork underpin everything we do across learning and are reflected in the way we teach, support and interact with our learners.

Seedlings

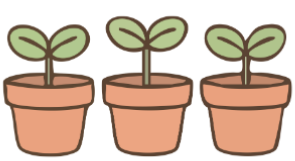
The Seedlings pathway provides a highly personalised, sensory and hands-on curriculum for learners working at a pre-formal level. The pathway recognises that learners may have complex communication, sensory and developmental needs and therefore places a strong emphasis on engagement, interaction, exploration and meaningful experiences. Learning is carefully adapted to each learner's individual cognition, communication profile and developmental stage, with opportunities to build skills through practical and play-based experiences.

Implementation

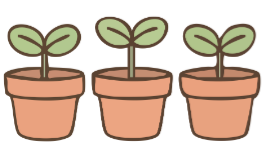
- Clear and consistent routines to provide structure, predictability and security.
- Sensory, exploratory and engaging activities that promote curiosity, interaction and participation.
- Close collaboration with the on-site clinical team to support individual communication, sensory, physical and behavioural needs.
- Little Wandle Foundations for Phonics and SEND to develop early phonological awareness and engagement with books and sounds.
- Intensive Interaction to develop shared attention, communication and social interaction.
- Play-based approaches to develop learning through exploration, choice and meaningful experiences.
- Total Communication approaches, including speech, symbols, objects, signs, gestures and visuals.
- Learning for Life and independence embedded throughout daily routines, developing functional skills and preparing learners for adulthood.

Assessment

- Termly EHCP focuses are identified collaboratively by the class teacher, SENCO and Curriculum Lead, with input from the clinical team where appropriate.
- Evidence for Learning is used to capture progress against individualised small steps from each learner's baseline, with progress assessed as Emerging, Developing, Secure or Mastered alongside the Engagement Model.
- Formative and summative assessment is used across curriculum areas, with learning and progress recorded through Evidence for Learning.
- Development Matters is used to support assessment and identify appropriate developmental next steps.
- KS3/4 Seedlings learners access appropriate AQA Unit Awards and ASDAN Life Skills Challenges, providing meaningful opportunities to recognise and celebrate progress and achievement.



EYFS Curriculum areas	What does it look like in the Seedlings Pathway?	Assessment
Communication and Language Literacy	My Communication My Reading & Writing	Development Matters Little Wandle
Personal, Social & Emotional	PSHE My Independence (Cooking & Travel)	PSHE Framework OFG
Physical Development	PE & Movement	Development Matters
Mathematics	My Problem Solving	Development Matters
Understanding the World	The World Around Me My Outdoors	Development Matters
Expressive Arts & Design	My Creativity	Development Matters
EHCP targets are met through curriculum, individual tasks and daily activities with the support of Clinical Team.		



Roots

The Roots pathway provides a semi-formal curriculum that offers meaningful and purposeful learning opportunities at an appropriate developmental level. Learning is delivered through practical, theme-based and multi-sensory approaches, enabling learners to engage with National Curriculum outcomes through personalised and accessible learning experiences.
The curriculum builds on the foundations developed within the pre-formal pathway, supporting learners to develop greater independence, communication, confidence and functional skills. Learning is embedded within real-life contexts and everyday experiences, helping learners to apply their skills meaningfully and participate more independently in daily life.

Implementation

- Clear routines and individualised support to provide structure, consistency and access to learning.
- Lessons with appropriate learning outcomes and differentiated activities.
- Play-based, engaging and practical learning to develop knowledge and skills through meaningful experiences.
- Close collaboration with the clinical team to support learners' individual communication, sensory, physical and behavioural needs.
- Problem-solving activities and opportunities to develop thinking, independence and functional skills.
- Total Communication approaches to support learners to understand, communicate and participate.
- Little Wandle SEND to support the development of early reading and phonics skills.
- White Rose Maths to provide a structured approach to developing mathematical knowledge and understanding.
- Star Reader and Accelerated Reader to support reading assessment, progress and engagement with books.

Assessment

- Termly EHCP focuses are identified collaboratively by the class teacher, SENCO and Curriculum Lead, with input from the clinical team where appropriate.
- National Curriculum outcomes are used to assess progress across curriculum subjects, with outcomes adapted to each learner's developmental level and individual needs.
- Evidence for Learning is used to capture progress against individualised small steps from each learner's baseline, with progress assessed as Emerging, Developing, Secure or Mastered.
- Formative and summative assessment is used to monitor progress, identify next steps and inform future planning.
- Star Reader and Accelerated Reader are used to assess and monitor reading progress and engagement.
- KS3/4 Roots learners access appropriate AQA Unit Awards, ASDAN Life Skills Challenges and other formal qualifications where appropriate.



Primary National Curriculum Areas	What does it look like in the Roots Pathway?	Assessment
Mathematics	My Problem Solving	Primary National Curriculum
Personal, Social & Emotional	PSHE My Independence (cooking & travel)	PSHE Framework
Physical Development	PE & Movement	Ryecroft Framework
English	My Reading & Writing My Communication	Primary National Curriculum Little Wandle/Star Reader
Science, Geography, History	The World Around Me My Outdoors	Ryecroft Framework
Art & Design Music	My Creativity	Ryecroft Framework
EHCP targets are met through curriculum, individual tasks and daily activities with the support of Clinical Team.		



Branches

The Branches pathway provides a flexible and individualised curriculum that combines academic, practical and functional learning, tailored to each learner's interests, aspirations and developmental needs. Learning is delivered through a theme-driven approach, providing meaningful opportunities to apply knowledge and skills in real-life contexts.
A strong emphasis is placed on Learning for Life, independence and preparation for adulthood, with learners developing practical living skills, communication, decision-making and the ability to participate more independently in their daily lives and the wider community.
Learners are provided with opportunities to develop vocational and work-related skills, including work experience and practical activities that support exploration of future pathways. Alongside this, learners can work towards formal qualifications, AQA Unit Awards and ASDAN accreditation, where appropriate, enabling achievement to be recognised and supporting progression towards their individual aspirations.

Implementation

- Clearly structured learning with purposeful learning outcomes and appropriately differentiated activities.
- Close collaboration with the clinical team to support learners' individual communication, sensory, physical and behavioural needs.
- Time to embed learning, with opportunities for repetition, mastery and consolidation of key knowledge and skills.
- Problem-solving and thinking skills developed through practical, meaningful and real-life learning opportunities.
- Star Reader and Accelerated Reader to support reading assessment, progress and engagement.
- White Rose Maths to provide a structured approach to developing mathematical knowledge and understanding.
- Careers pathways and vocational opportunities to develop employability skills, explore future options and support preparation for adulthood.

Assessment

- Termly EHCP focuses are identified collaboratively by the class teacher, SENCO and Curriculum Lead, with input from the clinical team where appropriate.
- National Curriculum outcomes are used to assess progress across relevant curriculum subjects.
- Evidence for Learning is used to capture progress against individualised small steps from each learner's baseline, with progress assessed as Emerging, Developing, Secure or Mastered.
- Formative and summative assessment is used to monitor progress, identify next steps and inform future planning.
- Star Reader and Accelerated Reader are used to assess and monitor reading progress and engagement.
- Learners are provided with opportunities to work towards formal qualifications and accreditation, including AQA Unit Awards, ASDAN and Functional Skills, where appropriate to their individual needs and aspirations.

National Curriculum Areas	Branches Pathway	Assessment
Mathematics	Maths	National Curriculum
PSHE	PSHE Learning for Life (cooking, travel, independence) Careers Enrichment	PSHE Framework OFG
Physical Development	PE & Movement	Ryecroft Framework
English	English	National Curriculum
Science, Geography, History	The World Around Me Outdoor Learning	Ryecroft Framework
Art & Design Music	Art & Design Music	Ryecroft Framework
EHCP targets are met through curriculum, individual tasks and daily activities with the support of Clinical Team.		



Curriculum Design and Implementation

Our curriculum is underpinned by a three-year thematic rolling programme, designed to provide a broad and balanced range of learning experiences across all subject areas and developmental stages. The themes provide meaningful contexts for learning and allow knowledge and skills to be revisited, developed and built upon as learners progress through the pathways.

The curriculum is designed to ensure that learning is personalised to individual learners, with outcomes and activities adapted according to cognition, communication, development and individual need. The three pathways provide an appropriate framework for progression, while ensuring that learning can be appropriately scaffolded and differentiated for each learner.

The Curriculum Lead develops the Medium-Term Plans, which provide the overall curriculum coverage, progression and key learning opportunities. Teachers then work collaboratively in pathway groups to develop weekly class and subject planning, ensuring that learning is adapted to the individual needs, interests and starting points of the learners in their classes.

Reading is woven throughout the curriculum to develop a love of reading and expose learners to a wide and diverse range of texts. Books are carefully selected to complement each theme and include traditional tales, cultural and diverse stories, as well as new and emerging authors and titles. Texts are incorporated into learning opportunities and activities across the curriculum, providing opportunities for learners to develop their vocabulary, communication, comprehension and enjoyment of reading.

A range of evidence-informed programmes, approaches and learning tools support teaching and learning across the school, including:

- Little Wandle – phonics and early reading, including the SEND programme.
- White Rose Maths – structured development of mathematical knowledge and understanding.
- Star Maths and Star Reader – assessment and monitoring of maths and reading progress.
- Accelerated Reader – supporting reading engagement, comprehension and progression.
- OFG Handwriting Curriculum – developing handwriting skills through a structured approach (supported by OT)

- Concrete–Pictorial–Abstract (CPA) approach – supporting mathematical understanding through practical and visual experiences before moving towards abstract concepts.
- Colourful Semantics – supporting language development, sentence construction and communication.
- Total Communication approaches – using a range of communication methods and systems to support understanding and expression.
- Sensory Circuits – supporting regulation, readiness for learning and engagement.
- Intensive Interaction and play-based approaches – developing communication, interaction, engagement and social connection, particularly for learners working at a pre-formal level.

These approaches are used flexibly and appropriately across the pathways, ensuring that teaching remains personalised, purposeful and accessible.

Enrichment and Preparation for Adulthood

Enrichment opportunities are an integral part of the Ryecroft curriculum, providing learners with meaningful opportunities to apply their learning in real-life contexts, develop independence and life skills, build confidence and experience the wider community.

- Off-site visits: Each half term, every class has at least one off-site visit linked to the current curriculum theme. These visits provide opportunities for learners to apply their knowledge and skills in practical settings, experience new environments and develop confidence and independence within the community.
- Weekly swimming: All learners access weekly swimming sessions, supporting the development of an important life skill alongside physical health, confidence and water safety. Swimming also provides opportunities for learners to develop independence and interact appropriately within a community setting.
- Outdoor learning: Learners regularly access our off-site allotment and forest school setting, developing practical outdoor education skills, independence and an understanding of the natural environment. These experiences provide opportunities for learners to work collaboratively, develop resilience and engage meaningfully within the wider community.
- Community experiences: The curriculum provides regular opportunities for learners to access and explore their local community. This includes visits to supermarkets and local amenities, using public transport, visiting community facilities and exploring different workplaces and vocational environments. These experiences support learners to develop functional skills, confidence, communication and independence in real-life situations.
- Secondary enrichment: Secondary learners have access to a weekly enrichment club, providing opportunities to explore personal interests, develop new skills and experience activities linked to potential vocational pathways. The club supports learners to develop confidence, independence and practical skills as part of their preparation for adulthood.
- Learning for Life: Enrichment is closely linked to the Learning for Life curriculum. Weekly cooking and life skills sessions provide learners with opportunities to participate in the full process, from choosing and writing recipes and shopping for ingredients through to preparing, cooking and sharing food. These experiences develop functional literacy and numeracy alongside communication, independence, decision-making and practical life skills.

Through these opportunities, learners are encouraged to experience and practise skills beyond the classroom, helping them to become increasingly confident and independent participants in their school, community and future lives.