

Curriculum Policy

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Our Purpose:

We educate children so they can lead great lives

Our values

Expect the best

The relentless pursuit of excellence drives every aspect of our work. We understand that this is a journey best undertaken by working closely with others within Education South West and beyond.

Challenge and pace are integral to our culture. We support students and staff to rise to that challenge, and feel the joy and satisfaction that comes when we are working at our best.

Learners with character

Our staff are committed to continuous improvement. We support them with high-quality, tailored programmes of professional development whatever their role and stage in their career.

We inspire students to develop the knowledge and character that enable them to leave school ready to lead rewarding lives in a rapidly changing world. Cultural, sporting and artistic experiences help them discover their full potential. They further develop character through a resilient, determined and positive response to challenge. We want students to leave with the academic qualifications, skills and personal attributes that open doors to a fulfilling future.

Care about people and the environment

To be caring and considerate, kind and respectful is at the heart of everything we do. We carefully nurture the centrality of such relationships with others in our schools, with parents, our local and, ultimately, our global communities.

Caring for people leads us to care for our environment. This starts with our own schools and ends with our planet. The curriculum we follow and the attitudes we nurture are our contribution to a sustainable future.

Everyone is a leader

Our students are the leaders of tomorrow. We create rich opportunities for students to work in teams and learn by leading.

Every member of staff in every school is a role model. We all influence, challenge and inspire the young people around us through our words and actions. We recognise that the best leadership releases the potential in others, and builds the possibility of great lives for us all.

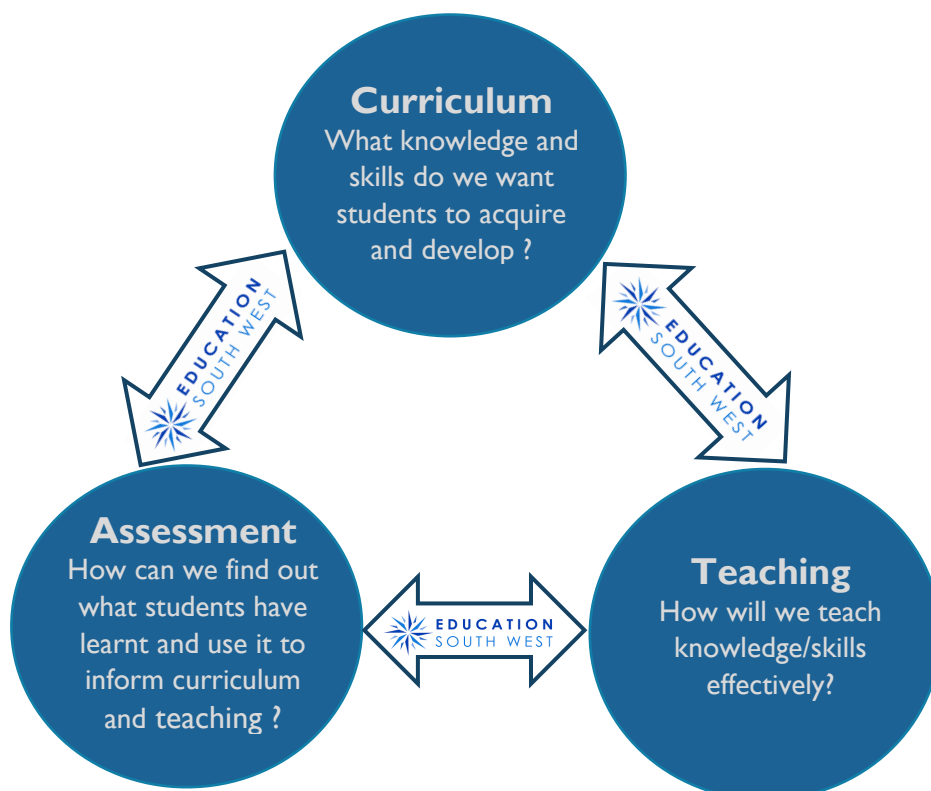
The elements of the curriculum can be seen as:

1. **Intended:** aims, objectives, plans
2. **Enacted:** pedagogy: what actually happens in lessons
3. **Assessed:** the effectiveness of pedagogy in delivering your intentions, and how you address gaps
4. **Learned:** that which is retained in long-term memory

(Sherrington 2017)

Objectives

1. This Curriculum policy is central to ESW's core purpose, 'To educate children to lead great lives'. It advances our core values:
 - Expect the best
 - Learners with character
 - Care about people and the environment
 - Everyone is a leader
2. The curriculum inspires and challenges all students, including those most at risk from disadvantage, to:
 - 2.1 Develop and retain knowledge, skills and personal aptitudes that prepare them for future education and employment, enabling them to continue learning and lead fulfilling lives.
 - 2.2 Develop the spiritual, emotional, moral, social and cultural capital that empowers them as individuals and citizens.
 - 2.3 Achieve outcomes that show well-above average progress, whatever their starting points.
3. Staff and schools plan all aspects of the curriculum collaboratively in order to drive high expectations of curriculum content, resourcing and pedagogy whilst seeking to optimise the balance between workload and impact.



CURRICULUM

Objectives

The curriculum is inspiring, challenging, deep and broad so that all students:

- Develop transformational knowledge and skills that take them beyond their experience.
- Appreciate the value of each lesson.
- Are well-prepared for terminal exams.
- Build their academic background knowledge and cultural capital by acquiring broad and deep vocabulary underpinned by a focus on Tier 2 and Tier 3 words.¹
- Build character as well as scholarship to prepare them for life.

Evidence-informed principles

- The curriculum specifies the knowledge and skills to be taught. Teachers adapt this to respond to the differing needs of classes and individuals.
- The curriculum is taught in a coherent and carefully considered sequence, building on the incremental development of knowledge within each subject/topic.
- Broad and deep factual knowledge is usually the prerequisite for skills such as critical thinking, creative thinking, craftsmanship, creative and sporting expression, evaluation and analysis developing procedural knowledge.
- Curriculum design supports learning which involves durable changes to long-term memory.
- Developing vocabulary, literacy and numeracy is fundamental to learning.
- Purposeful Home Learning is planned and focused.

How do we achieve this?

- Each subject has a long-term map of the curriculum which makes explicit the sequenced knowledge and skills students learn in each academic year.
- Subject teams identify the concepts that are central to the mastery of each unit and the best way to teach this knowledge.
- Regular retrieval practice and spaced practice is built into the curriculum to help students form durable long-term memories.
- Each unit of work is supported by a knowledge organiser that precisely stipulates the knowledge and skills to be learned. This includes relevant upper-tier vocabulary and is used consistently across each subject.
- Explicit strategies support students in self-regulating their learning and developing meta-cognitive skills. (eg. Personal Learning Checklists, DIRT Time)
- Home Learning is planned into the curriculum where relevant and consistently set by all teams. It provides students with the opportunity to practise, embed, extend or apply the knowledge and skills that they have been taught in lessons, or provide the opportunity to improve a piece of work.
- Key curriculum documents are made available for students, parents and carers in the school's secured online area.

Monitoring & Evaluation

- Subject and School Leaders are responsible for the quality-assurance of curriculum plans and content. (This includes ensuring knowledge organisers have sufficient detail and precision, quality of home learning).
- ESW termly reviews have a deep-dive focus on selected curriculum plans.

¹ Tier three vocabulary - words belonging to specific subjects e.g. equation, photosynthesis etc.

Tier two vocabulary - robust, academic words likely to be encountered across subjects e.g. environmental, analysis etc.

Tier one vocabulary – everyday words familiar to most students through everyday conversation

TEACHING

Objectives

- To teach the content of the curriculum in a way that inspires and challenges students to learn effectively

Evidence-informed Principles

Students learn most effectively when they connect new knowledge and skills to what they already know, and successfully retain that new knowledge. To achieve this, teaching involves:

- **Challenge and inspiration:** students have high expectations of what they can achieve and are motivated to learn.
- **Explanation:** students understand and so acquire new knowledge.
- **Modelling:** how to apply their knowledge (including explicit modelling of metacognitive strategies)
- **Questioning:** students are challenged think hard with breadth, depth and accuracy.
- **Feedback:** to help students further develop their knowledge and skills.
- **Deliberate practice:** to develop fluency.
- **Positive and effective classroom climate and relationships:** a structured and safe classroom environment built on mutual respect.
- **Memory:** explicit teaching how to store and retrieve knowledge using learning strategies such as retrieval practice, spaced practice, dual coding, interleaving and self-testing

How do we achieve this?

- Blending the active ingredients of expert teaching (Fig 1) as the basis of classroom practice, contextualised to the subject and the needs of the students.
- Through explicit instruction that includes specific practices such as **reviewing** previous learning, providing **models** for students, retrieval **practice**, planning time for students' deliberate **practice**, ensuring appropriate **challenge** for all students and the effective **scaffolding** of this challenge.
- By teachers asking **questions** at lower cognitive levels (e.g. recall questions), and higher cognitive levels (questions that require students to manipulate previously learned information), to embed and develop knowledge.
- By teachers **modelling** and **explaining** metacognitive processes explicitly, demonstrating the thinking processes of experts, and breaking down and solving problems. This supports the development of students' planning, self-monitoring and self-evaluation skills.
- Through written and verbal **feedback**, – as outlined the Assessment policy.
- By teaching high-level vocabulary explicitly.
- CPD that supports development of pedagogical subject knowledge which focuses on how to teach effectively the curriculum in that subject area.
- By creating and maintaining a productive classroom climate through positive interactions with students, active and early parental contact and adhering to the school behaviour & rewards policy.
- Through the explicit instruction of cognitive strategies including [retrieval practice](#), [spaced practice](#), [dual coding](#), [interleaving](#), [concrete examples](#) and [elaboration](#).
- Through personalised approaches to supporting individual's learning such as *Graduated Response* so that all students can experience achievement.

Monitoring & Evaluation

- School self-evaluation process, involving a combination of lesson observations, work sampling, parent and student voice, exam and test outcomes.
- Appraisal targets and actions that are aligned to teaching principles.
- ESW termly reviews

ASSESSMENT

Objectives

To measure the development of detailed knowledge and skills so that:

- Leaders and teachers can adapt the curriculum and lessons in the light of what students have successfully learned.
- Students have a clear understanding of how to improve their learning.
- Errors are corrected
- Work is acknowledged and praised
- Leaders and teachers at all levels have a clear picture of how students are performing and can intervene appropriately.

Underlying Principles

- Assessment operates on two layers:
 - **Formative** – ongoing assessment of small chunks of the curriculum to find out what students know and understand to inform teaching and planning.
 - **Summative** – less frequent assessment of larger chunks of the curriculum to provide reliable information about student learning and performance.

Assessment:

- Is principally **formative** in nature as this has the greater impact on learning. Where summative assessment is used, the outcomes are used to inform teaching, feedback and learning.
- Supports and informs the cumulative and sequential mastery of the curriculum.
- Is tailored to the subject and carried out with consistency by all teaching staff in the department.
- Focuses on the building blocks of the scheme of learning and not just the final outcome – *eg. with extended writing, Low-stakes quizzing, peer and teacher review etc*
- Aims to improve reliability (the consistency of outcomes and judgements within and across classes) and increase the validity (the accuracy of inferences drawn from an assessment) by understanding the limitations of assessment and how it can be improved.
- Provides useful and timely data in order for effective intervention at whole-school, subject and classroom level.² Testing also *causes* learning; therefore students will learn more when they are regularly tested, though the ‘testing effect’ is most likely to occur using low-stakes testing (eg quizzes).

How do we achieve this?

- To ensure reliability and consistency of summative assessment, subjects standardise the conditions of delivery and moderate the accuracy of judgements. This way, consistent inferences can be made.
- There are sufficient summative assessments to inform three tracking points per academic year per year group.
- Regular assessment of high-level vocabulary through low-stakes quizzing.
- Teachers give qualitative feedback on summative assessments. This is individual and/or whole-class feedback.
- An appropriate range of strategies are used regularly to assess and improve retention of knowledge. For example, low-stakes quizzes, multiple-choice questions, short answer questions and completing blank knowledge organisers.
- Formative assessment happens regularly in the classroom through teacher questioning, live marking, discussion and peer feedback.
- Questioning in class is used to assess strengths and weaknesses in student knowledge and understanding and inform future teaching.
- Summative assessments are cumulative. This means that termly assessments include the testing of knowledge covered in previous units as well as the most recent.
- Assessment is shaped by, but not necessarily identical to, the final assessment e.g. KS2 tests, GCSE exams. Often, component parts require a narrower assessment focus e.g. how to write an effective story opening rather than a whole story; how to execute a relay handover, rather than the whole race

Monitoring & Evaluation

- Assessments are regularly evaluated by subject and school leaders, external agencies and partners, within and across ESW schools to check reliability, validity and consistency
- School leaders evaluate the accuracy of assessments in comparison with exam grades actually achieved by individuals
- Assessments are evaluated and reviewed by subject leaders continuously in light of how effective they are at supporting learning.

² feedback does not only mean written marking and is inclusive of: verbal feedback; whole-class feedback; adaptations to teaching; live-marking or any other method fit for purpose. (EEF – *A Marked Improvement* 2016)

I. Curriculum: the knowledge, skills and personal attributes that we plan for students to learn and develop our *intent*

Sherrington (2019) defines a “knowledge-rich” curriculum as:

“Skills and understanding are seen as forms of knowledge and it is understood that there are no real generic skills that can be taught outside of specific knowledge domains.”

There are 3 elements:

1. The **knowledge** content is specified in detail.
2. Knowledge is taught to be **remembered** not merely encountered.
3. Knowledge is **sequenced** and mapped deliberately and coherently

The curriculum outlines the key knowledge, skills and personal attributes that students learn over their time with us. This is the “what”, our *intent*. In turn it drives the “how”, our pedagogy and assessment, which is *implemented*.

There is synergy between the importance of developing knowledge and skill: the one depends upon the other.

ESW places knowledge at the heart of its curriculum as culturally important in its own right and as an essential part in the symbiotic relationship with skill development by ensuring:

- Knowledge acquisition is its driving, underpinning philosophy;
- Knowledge content is specified in detail;
- Knowledge is taught to be remembered, not merely encountered;
- Knowledge is sequenced and mapped deliberately and coherently.

Personal attributes are developed by the challenges and relationships in and out of lessons, the PSHE curriculum and wider sporting, cultural and artistic opportunities.

2. Teaching or implementation



Teachers combine evidence with experience to enable effective learning. When we talk about learning, we mean the retention of knowledge and skills that can be applied in a variety of contexts and applications. Such deep learning, as opposed to superficially compliant performance, is the measure of whether teaching is effective over time. This is what the ESW ‘Active

Ingredients of Expert Teaching’ aim to do when contextualised to different curriculum areas:

Challenge, explanation, modelling, deliberate practice, questioning and feedback

The ESW model for expert teaching provides a framework (nb this is not a template for a lesson, but reflects typical practice over time) for understanding what is needed (‘The Active Ingredients’) in order to teach excellent lessons and ensure learners can successfully access the knowledge-rich curriculum. Assessment is used to support this process, providing **feedback**, setting appropriate levels of **challenge** and returning to **explanation, modelling** and **questioning** when knowledge is being revisited.

ESW CPD, support and evaluation of teaching is aligned with this model:

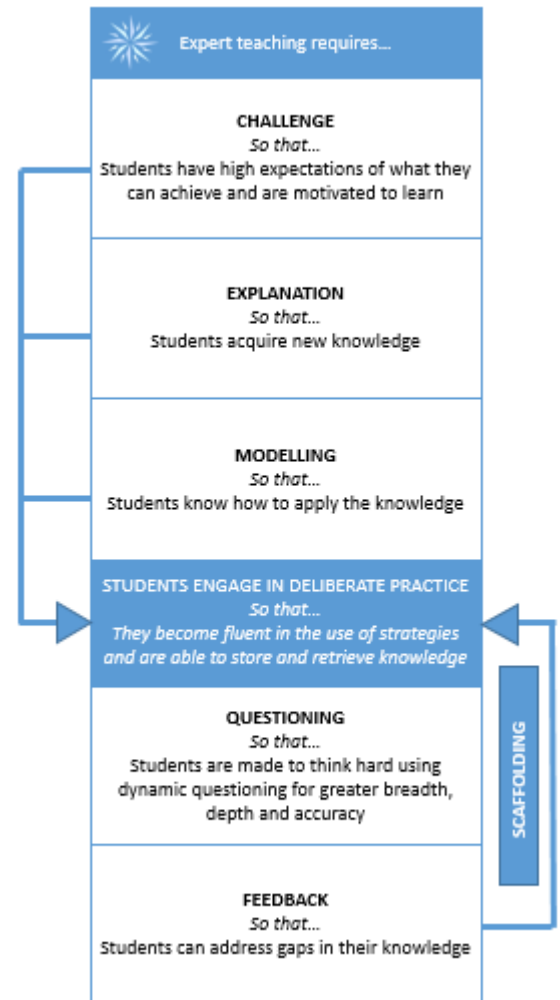
- Inspires and challenges staff just as we do with students
- A focus on the **student-centred** rationale for this model, namely *progress* and *outcomes*
- Develops teacher understanding of the **evidence-base** for each of the approaches used to support this model
- Provides clear, actionable **feedback** for teachers to improve through incremental coaching
- Empowers teachers critically to **evaluate** the impact of their teaching on student learning

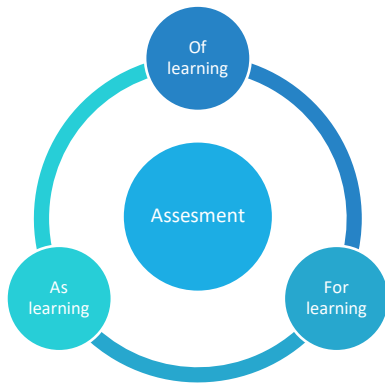
3. Assessment: judging the impact of our curriculum and teaching

Assessment is the bridge between teaching and learning: “It is only through assessment that we can find out whether what has happened in the classroom has produced the learning we intended.” (Dylan William)

Valid and reliable assessment informs our planning. For example, if assessment reveals students have not fully learnt a particular topic, then teachers re-teach specific aspects of that topic. Curriculum Leaders may then review their curriculum to see how that particular topic is being covered - e.g. *is the level of challenge too high or too low? Is it in the right sequence relative to other topics that are needed to understand it?*

FIG. 1





Assessment not only captures what has been learned (assessment of learning) but also provides the foundation for responsive teaching and/or students acting on formative feedback to improve (assessment for learning). In addition, assessment often utilises the ‘testing effect’ which suggests learning takes place through the testing process itself (assessment *as* learning).

Expert teaching utilises the motivational power of assessment to ensure that students have an accurate picture of what they are likely to achieve with more, less or the same investment in improving their learning. Various strategies contribute to the accuracy of assessment:

- Keeping up-to-date with assessment information from exam boards including Chief Examiner reports
- Attendance at exam board training
- Using enhanced results analysis
- Recalling scripts for in-subject CPD to moderate marking against examiners
- Marking moderation within school, across ESW and beyond

Marking and feedback

We know from the evidence that feedback is one of the most powerful tools we have for progressing learning. Marking is just one form of feedback. ESW is committed to providing students with the feedback they need to be successful whilst recognising the importance of balancing this with teacher workload and avoiding too much marking for too little reward.

Schools develop marking and feedback policies that meet the needs of students in different subjects whilst respecting teacher workload. For example, considering:

- Real time marking whilst circulating in lessons
- Self and peer marking
- Frequency of marking
- Use of shortcuts such as stickers/abbreviations