

ACT Schools – Curriculum Policy

Commitment

ACT Schools is committed to providing a curriculum that enables pupils to learn, grow and develop the skills needed for employment, lifelong learning, and active citizenship, in line with the principles of the Curriculum for Wales.

Purpose

ACT Schools' curriculum is planned with its pupils at the centre. The new, reformed curriculum from 2026 will align with the foundational concepts of the Curriculum for Wales, and aims to offer a bespoke programme of study to suit our unique pupils' individual learning needs and future aspirations. The curriculum will be tailored to support those of all abilities, regardless of their entry point and enrolment year, to ensure they can achieve and progress towards specific qualification and vocational pathways. The curriculum will ensure that teaching is planned holistically, to support pupils with a range of real-life applicable skills, as well as the preparation needed to become active citizens after school.

Scope

This policy applies to all ACT Schools staff, directly or indirectly involved with teaching and learning, or in supporting pupils with teaching and learning. This will also be relevant to all members of staff involved in the Quality Assurance processes within Schools. This policy will be shared with all school staff, school management and senior leaders within ACT, and will be made available and accessible to parents and pupils through the school website.

Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for this document lies with the Deputy Head of Curriculum and ALN. However, ACT Schools adopts a whole school approach to meeting the needs of pupils and further responsibilities have been outlined below.

Schools Leadership Team

- Monitor consistency
- Support school staff in implementing all aspects of the policy
- Share best practice to ensure ongoing consistency
- Provide ongoing training and resources to support delivery
- Review policy effectiveness regularly and make appropriate adaptations

Head of Continuous Improvement

- Monitor effectiveness of policy
- Respond appropriately to feedback to ensure processes remain consistent
- Oversee implementation of policy by Schools Leadership team

Teachers

- Read and understand the policy to ensure consistent application
- Ensure planning and teaching aligns with the information set out in the policy
- Encourage effective engagement from pupils

Pupils

- Respond to and engage with teaching and learning

Communication and Storage

This policy will be shared with all staff through email communication upon implementation. It will be accessible through the staff SharePoint for Schools to ensure relevant staff can access it whenever needed. It will be included as part of ongoing training and CPD, where relevant to school staff. The policy will also be stored on Calon and be made accessible by parents/carers and pupils through the school website. The fundamentals of the policy will be routinely shared with teachers and pupils as part of ongoing reflection and the sharing of best teaching practice.

Principles of the ACT Schools curriculum

ACT Schools' curriculum is underpinned by the following key principles in its method, implementation and delivery:

- To be tailored to the individual needs of our unique pupil intake, enabling fair and equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- To develop strong foundations in literacy and numeracy, enabling all pupils to communicate effectively and apply mathematical understanding with confidence.
- To prepare pupils for life after school, and enable them with the skills and experiences needed to become active citizens and participate in a range of opportunities, including employment, enrichment and self-development
- To develop holistic skills for lifelong learning, including a focus on interpersonal and relationship skills, promoting confidence to engage with effective and respectful relationships
- To teach and encourage the development of core/foundational skills within literacy and numeracy that are applicable to day-to-day life, as well as skills to promote independence, self-growth and self-worth
- To promote engagement and foster a love of learning, with opportunities to access and record learning in a variety of ways and using a variety of methods
- To provide a broad range of enrichment opportunities, including trips, visits, and wider curriculum experiences, to enhance learning and develop pupils' interests and talents, including areas such as financial literacy, social empowerment, and everyday life skills.
- To appropriately prepare pupils for life after school, with a focus on World of Work embedded across the curriculum and targeted support with post-16 transition opportunities
- To empower pupils by supporting their wellbeing, emotional and social development in alignment with the school's ethos of 'Together we belong, grow, learn and achieve.'

Organisation and Planning

ACT Schools has a thematic approach to curriculum design, guided by the Curriculum for Wales and influenced by its key principles.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, allowing pupils of differing ages, abilities, and aptitudes to progress appropriately and develop in the ways described within the four purposes.

ACT Schools utilises and adapts the Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs) to enable meaningful progress across all subjects. The AoLEs are adapted and streamlined to support pupils in progressing towards becoming well-informed citizens, as well as offering a competitive alternative to traditional, mainstream education pathways.

Core Curriculum

ACT Schools' core curriculum comprises of the three most relevant AoLEs from the Curriculum for Wales to our pupils.

Our core curriculum consists of the following subjects, where progress is tracked and content is planned using the 'what matters' statements from the Curriculum for Wales as a foundation:

- Languages, Literacy and Communication (English and Literacy)
- Mathematics and Numeracy (Maths)
- Health & Wellbeing

Core curriculum subjects are taught by subject specialists and are planned using progression steps within each of their respective AoLEs. Each subject also culminates in a qualification pathway for Years 10 and 11, where the subjects align directly with the following qualifications:

- Essential Skills Wales Qualification in Communication (Entry 3, Level 1)
- Essential Skills Wales Qualification in Application of Number (Entry 3, Level 1)
- SWEET- Level 1 Personal Growth and Wellbeing Programme

Essential Skills and wellbeing qualifications allow pupils to be entered for qualifications at the appropriate entry point, ensuring the most equal opportunities for success and attainment, fostering a sense of achievement and self-worth (see ACT Essential Skills Policy). Whilst being adequately supported, pupils for whom it is appropriate will have opportunities to access and complete GCSEs qualifications in English and Mathematics as part of our core offer. This is to ensure that all pupils are appropriately supported, as well as offering adequate and targeted stretch and challenge.

Progress is tracked and monitored using the school Arbor system. This will track progress within core qualifications to monitor progress towards qualification completion, as well as monitoring holistic progress through the relevant AoLEs.

Supplementary Curriculum

All pupils from Year 7-11 will also have equal access to the school's supplementary curriculum, which comprises of 3 additional subjects offering access to further learning opportunities. These roughly align with the remaining AoLEs and progress is tracked across all 3 subjects collectively as such. The supplementary curriculum offer consists of the following lessons:

- Enrichment
- Physical Activity & Outdoor Learning
- Creative Arts

These additional lessons combine elements from the following AoLEs:

- Science and Technology
- Humanities
- Expressive Arts

The supplementary curriculum will offer qualifications in the following:

- King's Trust Qualification
- Art & Design GCSE

- Duke of Edinburgh (where appropriate)

Each of these subjects will provide further opportunities to access wider aspects of the curriculum, including enrichment opportunities and the development of academic skills more in line with those accessible within mainstream teaching provisions. These AoLEs are streamlined and focused on holistic progress within their fields to ensure they remain appropriate for pupils at ACT Schools. Whilst they may not be delivered to the same degree as they may in mainstream education providers, there is not a set qualification route for these supplementary subjects. As such, progress can be tracked holistically within key skills that are relevant to ACT Schools' pupils, whilst providing opportunities to gain knowledge and understanding in line with their peers. This will ensure they have a core understanding of the wider curriculum in order to prepare them for future opportunities after school and to offer a competitive level of experience for further education, training and employment.

Timetable and frequency

Pupils are timetabled three 1-hour lessons per day, Monday to Friday. The timetable works across a two-week rolling period to ensure that pupils have consistent and equal access to different subjects across the fortnight. All pupils will have 5 taught hours of each of the 6 subjects offered across a two-week period. This will ensure that all pupils have equal access to all core and supplementary subjects within the curriculum, allowing teachers to plan consistently for progression.

As part of the timetable, there is also an additional 30-45 each day to allow for form time activities and end-of-day reflections. This time is protected to ensure that teachers can communicate necessary messages to pupils for the upcoming day or week, as well as completing any necessary safeguarding and wellbeing checks. These times will also allow for delivery of extracurricular content, such as discussing current events that week, or as time for teachers to speak to pupils individually about behaviour and progress.

Cross-curricular Skills

ACT Schools is also committed to providing regular access to key skills across the curriculum to ensure consistency and opportunities to develop and progress within the following areas:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Digital Literacy

Whilst some core subjects will embed these skills more than others, it is expected that these 3 key skills are embedded appropriately and consistently across the curriculum. Teachers are to provide regular, meaningful opportunities to develop these skills in line with curriculum expectations within the subject. The school's marking and feedback policy will also ensure that literacy and numeracy progress is tracked consistently within each subjects' work books through appropriate marking codes and trackers. Access to school technology, such as iPads and laptops, will also be provided to support learning opportunities where appropriate, and to develop digital literacy skills.

Cross-curricular skills are currently tracked within the AoLE progression step trackers and are separated by relevance to areas of learning and experience.

Post-16 Preparation

The curriculum is planned carefully to ensure that foundational skills are developed in readiness for appropriate further education, training and employment pathways. Utilising the CfW as a framework ensures that a range of skills are developed that are relevant and applicable to everyday life, including the basic skills necessary for future employment, training or study, such as essential communication skills, functional mathematics, basic health and wellbeing skills and strategies to support independent living and self-regulation.

As part of our offer, ACT Schools also provides regular opportunities for pupils to learn about, reflect upon and ask questions on various pathway options after school. Each pupil will have access to a dedicated Careers Advisor from Careers Wales who will support their journey to different post-16 destinations. Regular meetings are scheduled for Year 11 pupils, as well as training and informal talks by different providers and pathways for lower year groups. A World of Work teacher from the wider company will also support Schools' pupils 1 day per week. This will ensure that regular opportunities are given to discuss pathways and to arrange the appropriate next steps, including visits, applications or work experience.

Utilising the skills and experience of both the Careers Advisor and World of Work teacher, work and training topics will be embedded within the curriculum to ensure that appropriate subjects deliver regular reminders about the importance of preparing for the future. These topics will also give further opportunities for pupils to learn about and reflect upon their own plans post-16.

Progress tracking and monitoring

Academic progress and data capture

Progress within the Curriculum for Wales Areas of Learning and Experience will be tracked for all pupils to monitor their holistic development. This will be tracked using teacher input at key data capture periods at the end of the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms. Data will be collected through Arbor in order to assess which level each pupil is working at within their respective Area of Learning and Experience. Within each of the 6 AoLEs, pupils will be working at one of the following levels, which equates roughly to the progression step skills within the CfW. Each level will also have a corresponding 'learner profile' for reporting purposes and for pupil feedback.

- Progression Step 1 (Beginning)
- Progression Step 2 (Progressing)
- Progression Step 3 (Secure)
- Progression Step 4 (Advanced)
- Progression Step 5 (Accomplished)

Data provided by teachers will give a 'fine-grade' within 6 sub-skill areas for each AoLE, and will also provide an average level as an overview of progress within each AoLE. These will be tracked generally on Arbor and more specifically in pupil workbooks to ensure they have visible and active targets in each subject.

For Years 10 and 11, data will also be provided by subject teachers and stored on Arbor to track progress towards qualification completion within each qualification subject. This will include ESW qualifications, SWEET, Kings Trust and any other relevant qualifications that may require regular tracking or progress updates, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Online mark books will be stored on Arbor for teachers to update progress at key intervals. Teachers will also contribute fine-grades/ assessment objective completion updates as part of the termly data capture periods. Further information can be found in the ACT Schools Assessment and Tracking Policy.

As part of termly data capture, Engagement and Attitude to Learning scores will also be provided by class teachers to track engagement within lessons and provide data around potential future academic or wellbeing interventions.

Teachers are encouraged to keep their own mark books as part of their daily teaching practice. Whilst this may not be stored centrally, it will provide key data for them to inform their future planning in response to pupil needs and can be used to track alternative means of assessment for specific qualification criteria, such as portfolio management or collation of evidence.

Engagement and progress monitoring

Youth Learning Mentors are responsible for monitoring pupils' progress and engagement within sessions. All pupils have one literacy, numeracy, and well-being target to work towards, which are created collaboratively with them. These targets are reviewed fortnightly by Youth Learning Mentors using a tracking sheet. In addition, targets are reviewed on a half-termly basis via Edukey to determine whether they have been achieved or need to be adapted. This ensures that each pupil is supported effectively and able to work towards their personal goals.

ALN processes

The ALN team also tracks and monitors termly assessments through relevant educational tests and mock examinations. They also monitor IDP targets within Section 2B using an IDP tracking system on a termly basis. Tracking and monitoring processes are further detailed in the ALN Policy.

Enrichment opportunities

At ACT Schools we believe learning should not be restricted to the classroom, therefore we are incredibly proud of our enrichment offer, which provides our pupils the opportunity to engage in a range of external activities and off-site visits, giving them memorable and meaningful experiences to further their development.

Our enrichment offer is informed by our supplementary curriculum and provides structured and purposeful opportunities that extend beyond the core curriculum, designed to broaden pupils' experiences and support their personal development. Through a wide range of activities, including educational visits, extra-curricular clubs, guest speakers, and workshops, pupils are given opportunities to deepen their knowledge and understanding across a variety of subjects. Key skills from the Curriculum for Wales will be embedded across the Enrichment lessons, as well as tracked appropriately using progression step documentation and on Arbor.

Inclusion

ACT Schools adopts a whole school approach to meeting the needs of pupils. All staff are responsible for meeting the needs of pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) through high quality differentiated teaching and support. ACT Schools will ensure an inclusive and person-centred approach to learning, recognising the diversity of pupils. This approach to practice will enable all pupils to access the curriculum, participate fully in learning activities and demonstrate their knowledge and strengths during assessment. Support will be identified by the ALN team at the pupil's entry point through a cognitive assessment and during the Person-Centred Planning (PCP) meeting to develop or review their Individual Development Plan (IDP).

Document / Policy Change Request

Any changes to the policy and procedure will be overseen by the Deputy Head of Curriculum and ALN, working with the Head of Continuous Improvement.

Document / Policy Reviewing and Approving

The policy will be reviewed yearly by the Deputy Head of Curriculum and ALN, working with the Head of Continuous Improvement.

References

ACT Schools Marking and Feedback Policy

ACT Schools Assessment Policy

Essential Skills Policy

ALN Policy

Quality Policy

Glossary

CfW	Curriculum for Wales
AoLE	Area of Learning and Experience
DIRT	Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time
ALN	Additional Learning Needs
EduKey	An online platform used to create Individual Learning Plans and Pupil Passports for school pupils
Arbor	The School Information Management system used to track progress and data for school pupils

