



Curriculum Policy

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Aquinas Church of England Education Trust





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Curriculum

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Statement of Intent

AQUINAS Church of England Education Trust (the ‘Trust’) and all its academies, value pupils’ education and aim to provide a broad, balanced, and diverse curriculum that is accessible to all. We believe all our pupils should experience “life in all its fullness”.

We are committed to mutual support and respect in pursuit of educational excellence for all our children and young people, educating the whole person. Our curriculum celebrates the diverse nature of our society, powerfully addresses social disadvantage, provides pupils with the knowledge to be educated citizens and enables them to embrace the world around them. The curriculum equips pupils with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life and encourages adherence with fundamental British values. It also promotes the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, creative, mental, and physical development and the well-being of pupils.

The curriculum provided by each academy is designed to ensure the life chances and educational achievements of all children and young people are positively transformed because they are part of our Trust. This policy outlines our dedication to establishing a well-rounded and robust curriculum, as well as the provisions surrounding its creation.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 2002



- Children Act 2004
- The Equality Act 2010
- DfE (2015) 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'
- DfE (2013) 'The national curriculum in England'
- DfE (2023) 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following Trust policies:

- British Values Statement
- Early Years Policy
- [English as an Additional Language Policy](#)
- [More Able and Talented Policy](#)
- [Primary Literacy Policy](#)
- [Primary Numeracy Policy](#)
- Provider Access Statement
- [Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy](#)
- [Pupil Premium Policy](#)
- [Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy](#)
- [Remote Education Policy](#)
- [Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy](#)

2. Roles and responsibilities

The **Trust Board** is responsible for:

- Approving this policy.
- Overseeing standards of achievement, pupil progress and attainment.
- Ensuring curricula comply with the National Curriculum.
- Ensuring curricula are inclusive and accessible to all.

The **Headteacher** is responsible for:

- Designing a curriculum that is inclusive and accessible to all.
- Communicating the agreed curriculum.
- Devising progression documents, long and medium-term plans for the curriculum in collaboration with other leaders and teachers.
- Assisting teachers with the planning and implementation of the curriculum, ensuring their workload is manageable.
- Ensuring the curriculum is implemented consistently throughout the academy and ensuring any difficulties are addressed and mitigated as soon as possible.
- Receiving reports on the progress and attainment of pupils and reporting these results to the Trust.



- Making any necessary adjustments to the curriculum where required.
- Keeping up to date with any relevant statutory updates and acting where required.
- Creating and maintaining an up-to-date curriculum statement.
- Ensuring the curriculum is created in accordance with this policy.

Teachers are responsible for:

- Implementing this policy consistently throughout their practices.
- Creating effective plans for curriculum delivery, with fellow colleagues.
- Reporting plans to the subject leader, senior leaders or headteacher as required.
- Ensuring all plans are reflective of the school's curriculum.
- Implementing the curriculum in creative ways, appealing to different learning types, and keeping pupils engaged in content.
- Working closely with the **SENCO** and teaching assistants to ensure those in need, receive additional support in lessons.
- Reporting progress of pupils with special educational needs to the **SENCO** and ensuring any difficulties identified are discussed and resolved.
- Making sure disadvantaged pupils make good progress and have opportunities to widen their experiences.
- Ensuring academically more able pupils are given additional, more challenging work to celebrate their talents.
- Celebrating all pupils' academic achievements.
- Working with subject networks to develop an effective education, as appropriate.

Subject leaders are responsible for:

- Devising and overseeing plans for the subject or curriculum area, in collaboration with teachers.
- Providing strategic leadership and direction to their teams.
- Ensuring all teachers have appropriate subject knowledge and pedagogical subject knowledge.
- Supporting and advising colleagues on issues relating to the subject or curriculum area.
- Assisting teachers with the planning and implementation of the curriculum, ensuring their workload is manageable.
- Adjusting the curriculum as required.
- Providing efficient resources management for the subject.
- Ensuring the curriculum is inclusive and accessible to all.
- Monitoring pupils' progress within the subject, curriculum area or year group and report this to the headteacher.
- Ensuring there are specialist resources and equipment available for pupils in need so that everyone can have full access to the curriculum.



- Working with subject networks to develop an effective education, as appropriate.

The **SENCO** is responsible for:

- Collaborating with the headteacher and teachers to ensure the curriculum is accessible to all.
- Collaborating with class teachers to ensure pupils individual education plans are utilised when planning for delivery of the curriculum.
- Ensuring teaching materials do not discriminate against anyone in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- Carrying out SEND assessments where necessary and ensuring pupils receive the additional help they need.
- Liaising with external agencies where necessary to ensure pupils who require additional support receive it.

3. Curriculum principles

The curriculum is underpinned by the overarching vision and values of the Trust and reflects those specific to the academy.

All our academies provide a curriculum which develops knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes and has pupils' learning at the centre. We recognise curriculum must be broad, balanced and offer pupils opportunities to grow as individuals as well as learners. The curriculum has clear progression in subject knowledge, skills and is flexible and responsive to individual needs and interests. There is a focus on developing meaningful links between areas of knowledge across the curriculum.

We value the input of pupils, parents, and the local community with regards to the planning and delivery of the curriculum. We believe pupils get a well-rounded education if everyone is involved in shaping it. The curriculum has a local, national, and international dimensions providing pupils with an understanding of their environment and preparing them for the future.

We want pupils to enjoy learning and feel prepared for the next stage of their education. We believe in the importance of rich, first-hand experiences and the use of environments and expertise beyond the classroom. We offer our pupils new and exciting experiences through extra-curricular activities that are designed to build resilience, confidence, and self-esteem.

Classroom-based learning: Accessing different learning resources and equipment to broaden pupils' knowledge and making cross-curricular links where possible within lesson plans, so that pupils can draw upon knowledge from different subjects and understand how each topic plays a part in everyday life. Classroom teaching also includes one-to-one and small group work for pupils who require additional support.

A list of the subjects available to our pupils can be found in [section 7](#) of this policy.



Extra-curricular activities: All our academies provide a variety of extra-curricular activities for pupils that enhance their learning experience, form personal connections with their peers, and teach skills essential for life after school.

4. Ethos and aims

The overarching aims of our Trust's curricula are to:

- Enable all pupils to understand that they are all successful learners.
- Enable pupils to understand the skills and attributes needed to be a successful learner.
- Enable pupils to develop their own personal interests and develop a positive attitude towards learning, so that they enjoy coming to school, and acquire a solid basis for lifelong learning.
- Teach pupils the basic skills of literacy, numeracy, ICT, and science.
- Enable pupils to be creative through art, dance, music, drama and design and technology.
- Enable pupils to be healthy individuals and appreciate the importance of a healthy lifestyle.
- Teach pupils about their developing world, including how their environment and society have changed over time.
- Help pupils understand the fundamental British values and enable them to be positive citizens in society who can make a difference.
- Fulfil all the requirements of the national curriculum and the appropriate syllabus for Religious Education.
- Teach pupils to have an awareness of their own spiritual development, and to understand right from 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.
- Enable pupils to be passionate about what they believe in and to develop their own thoughts on different topics.
- Enable pupils to develop their intellect including their emotional development, ask questions and take appropriate risks.
- Enable pupils to experience playing a musical instrument.
- Teach pupils about the importance of forming healthy relationships with friends, family, and peers.

Through the aims outlined above, pupils will benefit by:

- Learning how to lead safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives.
- Understanding that failure is part of the road to success.



- Being rewarded for academic successes.
- Being supported with their next stages in education and feeling prepared for life after school.
- Becoming responsible individuals who contribute to community living and the environment.
- Achieving to the best of their ability.
- Acquiring a wealth of knowledge and experience.
- Becoming critical thinkers.
- Finding a sense of belonging to the school and its community.
- Learning how to cooperate with their peers and respect one another inside and outside the classroom.

5. Organisation and planning

The curriculum will be delivered over 190 days and will be delivered equally throughout the school week.

- Each academy will publish a curriculum statement and a full list of subjects for each year group.
- The academy will always have due regard to the national curriculum throughout the academic year.
- Teaching hours will be in line with national expectation for each key stage and with parity between schools in the same phase.
- Learning will be contextualised and include connections to home and community.
- The curriculum flexibility will promote depth of conceptual development, acquisition of knowledge and transfer of learning.
- Subject leaders will plan for progression, so pupils develop a deep body of knowledge.
- Planning will be used to identify any possible difficulties within the curriculum and will break down barriers to learning.
- Each school day will be split into two sessions and pupils will receive at least one break (lunch).
- Teachers and teaching assistants will be deployed effectively.
- Additional funding will be used strategically to enrich experience and improve outcomes.
- Planning includes opportunities for cumulative, formative assessment in which pupils are active partners.

Lessons will use a range of teaching techniques.

- Teachers will plan lessons which are challenging for all pupils and ensure that there are provisions in place for more academically able pupils.
- Teachers will plan lessons to accommodate for pupils of mixed ability, making cross-curricular links where possible.



- Teachers will have due consideration for pupils who require additional help within their planning and organisation of lessons.
- Teachers will plan specific provision for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND and EAL.
- Teaching assistants will be deployed strategically.
- Pupils with EAL will be given the opportunity to develop their English ability throughout lessons where necessary.
- Any difficulties identified will be addressed at the outset of work.
- Classrooms will be organised so that pupils have full access to resources and equipment which broaden their knowledge.
- Pupils will be provided with a rich and varied learning environment that will enable them to develop their skills and abilities.
- Lesson plans include cross-curricular links where possible, so that pupils can draw upon knowledge from different subjects and understand how each topic plays a part in everyday life.
- Classroom teaching may include one-to-one and small group activities. Structured group work and effective talk will be used to secure access to learning.
- Pupils have opportunities to experience challenge and learn to recover from mistakes or failure.

6. Remote learning

Attendance at school is mandatory for all pupils; however, there may be circumstances where in-person attendance is either not possible or contrary to government guidance.

The Trust's [Remote Education Policy](#) sets out how education will be delivered if pupils cannot attend school in person.

7. Subjects covered

Our academies will always have due regard to the national curriculum.

Respective primary schools will have due regard for the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'.

All our academies will ensure every pupil has access to the following core subjects:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- RE
- Relationships and Health Education

All our academies will ensure pupils also have access to the following foundation subjects:

- Art and design
- ICT



- Design and technology
- Languages (from KS2)
- Geography
- History
- Music
- PE
- Sex education

Details of what is included in the curriculum for each subject can be found on each academy's website.

8. Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)

Part of the national curriculum includes PSHE lessons where everyday topics, e.g. raising awareness of different cultures or anti-bullying, can be addressed.

9. Reporting and assessment

Informal assessments will be carried out regularly to measure pupil progress. The results of the assessments will be used to inform future planning.

Pupils will also complete national assessments. The results of these assessments will be reported back to the headteacher, pupils and their parents.

Assessment of pupils with EAL will consider the pupils age, length of time in UK, previous education, and ability in other languages.

Special measures will be given to pupils who require them, e.g. pupils with SEND, pupils who are ill, or pupils who suffer from conditions that inhibit their academic performance.

10. Equal opportunities

Our academies will not discriminate against, harass, or victimise any pupil, prospective pupil, or other member of the school community because of their:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Any pupil or teacher found to be discriminating against any of these characteristics will be disciplined in line with the relevant policies.



The academy's curriculum will celebrate diversity and leaders have a responsibility to ensure the curriculum does not discriminate against any of the above characteristics.

The academy will have due regard for the [Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy](#) always when planning and implementing the curriculum.

11. Supporting pupils with SEND

Pupils with SEND will receive the additional support they require both academically and with their personal development, in line with the Trust's [Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy](#).

Pupils with SEND will not be discriminated against in any way and they will have full access to the curriculum.

The progress of pupils with SEND will be monitored by teachers and reported to the SENCO. The SENCO will work closely with teachers to help them break down any barriers pupils with SEND have to education.

12. Co-curricular, extra-curricular, support, extension, and enrichment activities

We provide a variety of extra-curricular activities for pupils that enhance their learning experience, form personal connections with their peers, and teach skills essential for life after school.

Co-curricular activities enrich pupils' learning and development and provide opportunities to develop a wider range of knowledge, creativity, skills, and talents.

Visitors, trips, and educational visits are used thoughtfully to raise aspirations, enrich experience, and bring learning to life.

Additional intervention or support sessions are planned to support those at risk of underperformance and to reduce gaps in learning.

Homework is set to challenge pupils and assess their knowledge and understanding of concepts studied in class. It also encourages independence and provides pupils with opportunities for personal research. Through independent endeavour they learn to use resources judiciously to deepen and extend learning, present findings, and develop personal learning autonomy.

13. Monitoring and review

[UPDATED] This policy is reviewed on a [biennial](#) basis by the **Education Scrutiny Committee** and **Chief Executive**. Monitoring is conducted through the Trust's programme of quality assurance and that undertaken by the individual academy. Changes to this policy are communicated to relevant stakeholders.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is [March 2026](#).



Appendix

Aquinas Approach to Curriculum Design

“The love of knowledge and truth should invite us to continue learning.

The love of others should compel us to teach.”

Saint Augustine of Hippo (Answers to the Eight Questions of Dulcitius, 3)

The curriculum in each of our academies sets out the knowledge and skills our children should know, understand, and use, why we have chosen it, when will pupils encounter it, and in what order. The knowledge we choose is life transforming learning in its purest sense, the beating heart of each school. Children know more because they are part of The Aquinas Trust - The curriculum always comes first. This document links closely to our Aquinas Trust Thoughts About Teaching document.

Who is our curriculum for? (Our Curriculum)

All our pupils deserve the very best taught and wider curriculum experience. When each academy plans their curriculum, they are acutely aware that:

- Curriculum development is always ongoing.
- Our pupils come from all backgrounds and start points.
- Pupils possess a multitude of skills and talents.
- Pupils have their own history and bring a unique viewpoint.
- Pupils learn at different rates and have differing educational needs.

Whilst the knowledge we teach is for all, we adapt and enhance our curricula to ensure the needs of all pupils are met.

Why is our curriculum so important? (Purpose)

Pupils who know and can use the knowledge we have chosen, will flourish and live life in all its fullness (John 10:10). It is important that pupils find a place and a voice in their future communities. They should:

- Value knowledge and possess a thirst for new knowledge.
- Be able to challenge existing knowledge.
- Feel empowered to speak with a confident voice.
- Be wise and virtuous.
- Live well with others and respect and celebrate difference.
- Have competence in literacy, articulacy, the correct use of standard English, and mathematics.
- Gain success across a wide spectrum of specialist learning courses at school, in further and higher education, and throughout their careers into the future.



What knowledge do we teach? (Curriculum Content)

Such knowledge that leaders, having listened to a range of different voices, judge to be the most powerful knowledge for children to know.

Knowledge that is benchmarked to match the aspiration of the national curriculum as a minimum, but enhanced within each school to reflect local context, include all pupils, celebrate diversity, and to reflect knowledge chosen from different viewpoints.

Each school unlocks a broad 'hinterland' of knowledge and sparks curiosity for those things that are beyond the taught curriculum; they achieve this through careful choice of curriculum content, suggesting independent learning opportunities and the wider opportunities co-curricular programme on offer.

Primary schools prioritise the explicit teaching of phonics and reading. Regardless of phase, subject or setting, it is every teachers' responsibility to teach the context and etymology of vocabulary deliberately and explicitly, to foster a continued love of reading, and to teach literacy and oracy skills.

Teachers should ask:

- What vocabulary might pupils find it difficult to access here?
- What are the common misconceptions likely to be?
- Is my curriculum representative of the students in front of me?

Alongside substantive content knowledge, sit a range of different skills and techniques that are inherent within each subject.

A key leader could ask:

- What teaching techniques do, for example, Historians, Geographers or Scientists inherently use to teach children?
- What skills do future Historians, Geographers and Scientists always need to have?
- Does this always remain the same or does it change over time?
- How does my subject treat newly discovered, argued, or uncovered knowledge?

We deliberately link knowledge from different subject areas together so that pupils can build on previous knowledge and use it in different settings and in different ways.

Teachers and leaders should ask themselves:

- How does my subject link to others?
- Where else in the school curriculum do pupils learn about this concept?
- Do the pupils know this?
- Could and should techniques for learning this concept match across subjects, year groups or phases? E.g. handwriting taught in primary schools, mathematical techniques across different subjects such as Science or Geography?



When do we teach it? (Sequencing)

A subject curriculum spans the entirety of a pupil's time with us. Sequencing and spacing the curriculum correctly therefore is vital if children are to build links, effectively recall and apply knowledge and skills. Teachers and curriculum leaders should regularly ask:

- Why are we teaching this knowledge?
- Why are we teaching it now?
- How does it fit with what pupils have learned before?
- What will learning this knowledge now enable pupils to learn in the future?
- How often should we revisit this knowledge to embed it?
- When and how should we do that?

How do we know if our curriculum is effective? (Assessment)

An excerpt from the Trust's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy states that assessment is **"a continuous process which allows pupils to achieve their full potential. We believe that appropriate teaching, learning and assessment will help pupils to lead happy and fulfilling lives."**

Assessment is a fundamental part of the curriculum; it is therefore very carefully planned, so much so, that the curriculum becomes our progress model in schools. It impacts upon curriculum sequencing, future teaching and, of course, pupils' secure understanding and application of the knowledge and skill they have learned. Teachers and leaders should ensure that:

- A range of high and low stakes assessment techniques are used to ensure pupils can recall the knowledge they have been taught and to tackle common misconceptions.
- A range of assessments are deliberately planned to improve pupils' skill and metacognition.
- Pupils are encouraged to take ownership of assessment and are given strategies to improve and increase levels of independence over time.
- Assessment allows pupils to demonstrate what they know and what they can do in different contexts, including extended writing or project work.
- Assessment allows pupils to show scholastic excellence within subjects and a greater depth of understanding and mastery.
- The purpose of assessment is identified beforehand, leading to accurate diagnosis of gaps in achievement, attainment or learning technique which, in turn, informs curriculum re-assembly and future planning for targeted individuals, classes or cohorts.
- Highly inclusive assessment celebrates the knowledge and skill that has been taught for its own sake; it is not simply beholden to the examination mark scheme.

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels...and understand all mysteries and all knowledge... but have not love, I am nothing."

St Paul 1 Corinthians 13 NKJV



How do we measure the impact of our curriculum?

We have faith that what we choose to teach our children during their time with us has real impact on their futures. Whilst not everything that adds value to our children can be measured easily, we:

- Prioritise the continuous development and improvement of our curriculum.
- Take time to watch the implementation of our curriculum in action.
- Speak regularly with teachers and leaders.
- Look carefully at the way in which our groups of pupils perform, particularly those who may be disadvantaged.
- Listen carefully to pupil voice.
- Look closely at the destinations of our pupils at 16 and 18 to continue their education, training, and employment.
- Treasure following the successes that our pupils enjoy later in life.