



Seekers Pathway: Curriculum Overview



Intent

At Walton Hall Academy, we believe all students deserve a curriculum that promotes their personal and cultural development and prepares them for adulthood. Our school ethos—**Nurture, Grow, Flourish**—underpins everything we do, ensuring that every student receives the support they need to develop confidence, independence, and essential life skills.

With a diverse range of student needs, we prioritise flexibility and creativity in our approach, allowing time in the school timetable for sensory breaks between shorter lessons. Many students benefit from sensory input, which helps ground them and prepare them for learning. Whether through daily sensory circuits or a personalised sensory diet, these interventions support students in staying focused and engaged throughout the school day.

Rationale

Our curriculum is designed around each student's Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) outcomes and is underpinned by the Preparation for Adulthood (PFA) framework. We recognise that students require a highly individualised approach to learning, ensuring that they develop essential life skills alongside academic progress. A sensory approach helps students develop, control, and explore their senses, allowing them to understand their environment and build meaningful connections with others.

A sensory curriculum integrates all familiar senses (taste, smell, sound, sight, and touch) alongside proprioception (body awareness), the vestibular system (balance and movement), and interoception (awareness of internal body signals). The goal is to develop and integrate these senses to enhance students' learning experiences whilst preparing for adult life.

Sensory Interventions

Students who struggle with sensory regulation may require interventions to support them with this. This need may be identified in their Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) or observed through specific behaviours like losing focus or reacting strongly to stimuli. Teachers and the nurture team assess students' needs, providing tailored strategies and resources, which are recorded in the Positive Support Plan and reviewed annually.

Progression Through Pathways



Key Stage 3 (KS3)

The Seekers' timetable is designed to meet the sensory needs of the students whilst preparing them for adult life through shorter, structured core skill lessons, allowing them to build resilience, tolerance, knowledge, and skills. Students take part in communication sessions each day, building positive relationships with peers and staff whilst using a multi-sensory approach. Core skills include structured literacy and numeracy lessons, tailored to students' individual needs, and delivered in a practical and engaging way.

To ensure full coverage of EHCP and PFA targets, students have dedicated sessions where specific Preparation for Adulthood topics are explicitly taught. For students who require an 'engagement approach,' there are opportunities for them to work 1:1 with staff in Intensive Interaction sessions or as small groups using the 'Attention Autism' approach. All other lessons are designed to develop these skills and embed learning across different contexts. Other lessons include ICT to develop digital skills including using AAC software, Makaton to develop communication skills through sign language, outdoor learning in Farm and Forest School, Swimming and Sports Activities to develop physical/sensory skills and for wellbeing, Creativity, Music and TacPac.

Key Stages 4 & 5

By KS4, many students have developed the ability to manage their sensory needs, reflected in their **Positive Support Plan**. They receive breaks to self-regulate as needed, using personal strategies or engaging in physical activities. Students can access interventions identified by staff, parents, or professionals.

Literacy and numeracy in KS4 are embedded within the **ASDAN Towards Independence programme**, which has been carefully designed to develop independent living, personal, and social skills within the PFA framework. The curriculum retains a multi-sensory component to ensure ongoing support, and students continue to work towards EHCP outcomes through practical, real-life learning experiences.

In KS4 & KS5, the curriculum emphasises independence through increased engagement in the community, helping students to develop resilience and confidence in new and busier environments. Where a Seekers 5 student shows a specific interest in an activity, such as cooking, music, or performing arts, they can participate in options available, joining with other pathways. Seekers 5 students will also work towards their Functional Skills Entry Level 1 & 2.

Students in KS5 typically understand their sensory needs and can self-regulate. They experience more frequent trips into the local community, helping them desensitise to new and busier environments. These outings prepare students for adulthood, giving them strategies to manage everyday life in more challenging sensory settings.

Programmes and Therapies

Walton Hall Academy offers a range of sensory and therapeutic programs, including:

Sensory Rooms and Garden

Nurture and Free Play

Forest School/Outdoor Education

Swimming

Music Therapy and Sensory Story Sessions

Tac Pac, Sensory Circuits, Yoga, Breathing, and Mindfulness

Woodland Walks and Farm Visits

Resources

Two Sensory Rooms (KS3 and KS4)

Outdoor Gym Equipment and Playground

Indoor Sensory Tools (e.g., rice, flour, water, bubbles)

Shared sensory play ideas and resources for learning

Assessment, Recording, and Reporting

Assessment is an integral part of our teaching and learning approach, ensuring that students make meaningful progress in core skills and towards their EHCP outcomes. Assessment considers each student's individual learning style, including sensory-based approaches, and focuses on how they engage with and respond to tasks. Video and photo evidence is used to document progress and feedback into EHCP reviews through the **Evidence for Learning tool**.

In KS4 and KS5, students complete accredited modules that are internally and externally moderated. These provide opportunities for students to gain recognised qualifications, as well as internally assessed certificates.

Progress towards EHCP outcomes is assessed termly, with evidence collected through the **Evidence for Learning** tool. This ensures that progress is well-documented and informs both teaching strategies and future planning. Reports generated from this tool are shared with parents each term and contribute to the Annual Review, helping to keep parents and professionals informed.

By embedding assessment within a sensory and practical learning approach, we ensure that students develop the skills needed for greater independence, engagement, and preparation for adulthood.



Seekers Communication Overview and Progression Plan



Overview

Students will engage in a structured daily communication routine designed to develop their communication skills while fostering familiarity with classroom expectations. The routine follows a predictable format to help students anticipate activities and participate with confidence.

Communication methods may include verbal language, symbols, Grid Player, Makaton, or gestures, ensuring accessibility for all learners. This time also provides opportunities to reinforce literacy and numeracy skills in meaningful, practical contexts.

The PFA element of Employment/Higher Education (Time Management, Communication, Self-Awareness, Being Responsible, Work Skills) will be covered in the Morning Communication Routine and throughout the day. Assessed termly.

The communication routine is designed to **progress over time**, introducing new words, songs, signs, and concepts to expand students' communication abilities. Recognising that some students may take longer to acquire skills, **adaptive teaching** is essential. Teachers should tailor activities to individual learning targets, use questioning techniques, and provide appropriate levels of support to ensure all students can engage and make progress.

The Communication Routine May Include:

1. **Greeting/Chat** – Encouraging social interaction.
2. **Check-in** – Expressing emotions and feelings.
3. **Taking the Register** – Practicing names and responses.
4. **The Weather** – Observing and discussing daily changes.
5. **The Day/Date/Time** – Reinforcing calendar awareness.
6. **The Season** – Connecting time concepts to real-world observations.
7. **The Daily (Visual) Timetable** – Supporting routine understanding.
8. **Word of the Day** – Expanding vocabulary.
9. **Phrase of the Day** – Developing sentence structure and comprehension.
10. **Makaton Signs** – Building signing skills.
11. **Phonics/Letters** – Linking to literacy targets.
12. **Core Vocabulary/Key Words** – Reinforcing essential communication.
13. **Links to Book Themes** – Using words and symbols related to current texts.
14. **Links to PFA (Preparation for Adulthood)** – Embedding functional language.
15. **Symbols** – Supporting communication and comprehension.
16. **Numbers/Counting/Position/Direction** – Connecting to numeracy learning.
17. **Colours and Shapes** – Enhancing descriptive language.
18. **Smells and Textures** – Encouraging sensory exploration.
19. **Fine Motor Skills** – Strengthening hand control for communication tools.
20. **Gross Motor Skills/Movement/Dance** – Encouraging physical expression.
21. **Songs/Signing Videos/Videos** – Reinforcing learning through music and visuals.
22. **Jobs** – Introducing responsibilities and roles.
23. **Turn Taking** – Developing social and conversational skills.

This plan serves as a framework to **guide teachers in designing engaging and adaptive communication sessions** that support students' individual progress.

Communication Skills Progression

Key Area	KS3	KS4	KS5
Core Vocabulary	Introduction to essential words and symbols	Embedding vocabulary in structured activities	Expanding vocabulary through real-world applications
Expressive Communication	Using single words or short phrases	Developing structured sentences with support	Communicating needs and choices with greater independence
Receptive Communication	Understanding basic instructions and key words	Following multi-step instructions with support	Processing and responding to familiar instructions more independently
Social Interaction	Basic turn-taking and greetings	Engaging in structured social exchanges	Applying learned skills in real-world contexts with support
Functional Literacy	Recognising key symbols and words	Using literacy in familiar contexts (e.g., reading labels, signs)	Expanding literacy use for personal and practical purposes

Assessment and Progression

Assessment is ongoing and embedded within daily communication sessions. To track progress effectively, we use the **Evidence for Learning** tool to capture video, photo, and written observations linked to students' **EHCP outcomes** and individual learning targets.

Each student also has a **Personal Support Plan**, which outlines any additional help they require.



Seekers Literacy and Core Vocabulary Overview



Literacy Overview

Literacy is a fundamental skill that underpins all areas of learning and daily life. Our approach focuses on developing students' reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in a way that is accessible and meaningful to them. We aim to build confidence, communication, and independence through structured, engaging, and multi-sensory activities tailored to individual needs.

For our Seekers students, we use symbols alongside text to support understanding and communication. This visual approach helps reinforce key vocabulary, improve comprehension, and enable students to express themselves more effectively. By embedding core vocabulary, fostering comprehension, and encouraging expressive communication, we support students in developing essential literacy skills that will help them navigate the world around them.

Key Stage 3

Core Structure

- **3 dedicated literacy lessons per week**
- **Core Vocabulary Programme** (36 words per year, one per week) integrated into **reading, writing, comprehension, and communication**
- Additional **topic-based vocabulary extensions** linked to books, numeracy, PFA, and everyday language

Yearly Cycle: Embedding and Extending Core Vocabulary

Each term covers **1 word per week in depth** alongside phonics, comprehension, and writing skills.

Teachers will use the Core Vocabulary programme supplied in the first year, using extensions below.

- **Terms 1-6 (36 weeks):** *Say it, find it, hear it, watch it, play it, read it, learn it, practise it, write it*

	<u>Autumn 1</u>	<u>Autumn 2</u>	<u>Spring 1</u>	<u>Spring 2</u>	<u>Summer 1</u>	<u>Summer 2</u>
Year 1	I, want, it, more, go, open, up	like, help, why, this, different, stop, put	on, don't, they, where, that, some	look, get, in, finished, you, what, here	all, need, make, out, yes, who	when, are, is, can, turn, over, not
Year 2 & 3 – Repeat and embed. Use with other vocabulary and in different contexts.	Review vocabulary to consolidate and increase independence with the vocabulary. For new students, use simple activities focused on core vocabulary, while for returning students, increase the complexity of the activities. AAC devices, visuals, or symbols are integrated into every lesson. For new students, these tools will be key in helping them connect vocabulary with real-world concepts. Tracking Progress: Regularly assess the students' understanding of the vocabulary, especially for new students, through informal assessments like games, role-playing, or using AAC devices to check vocabulary recall and usage.					
Vocabulary Categories Covered – see Assessment Grids and Shared folders on Widgit Online for full list of words. Add words if required.	• Basic needs & requests (e.g., want, need, help) • Action words (e.g., go, stop, turn) • Descriptive words (e.g., big, small, fast) • Feelings & emotions (e.g., happy, sad, angry) • People & relationships (e.g., friend, teacher, family) • Places at school (e.g., classroom, library, playground) • Social words (e.g., hello, goodbye, please) • Things in the house (e.g., chair, table, bed) • Toys, hobbies & sport (e.g., ball, game, run) • Places (e.g., park, shop, home)					

Application Across the Curriculum:

- **Key words from book themes** (e.g., Gothic Fiction = dark, light, ghost, castle)
- **Numeracy links** (e.g., position words like in, on, over, under)
- **PFA links** (e.g., job-related words, social words)
- **Useful everyday objects** (e.g., cup, plate, toilet, food)

Lessons can be divided or elements taught together. To include:			Alternative/Extension
Reading & Comprehension: Phonics, blending, key words, symbols, colourful semantics, book theme links	Writing & Mark Making: Tracing, copying, forming letters, typing	Core Vocabulary Programme: Deep dive into weekly word using multisensory approaches	Attention Autism & Intensive Interaction: Multi-sensory engagement, role-play, Grid Player/symbol use

Book Themes

Seekers will follow the same book themes as the rest of the school but will choose their own books/comics/films to follow. Students will be able to explore the stories through creativity, multi-sensory means, and adaptive learning.

Autumn 1	Spring 1	Summer 1
Gothic Fiction	Detectives	Travel
Autumn 2	Spring 2	Summer 2
Differences in Relationships	Power and Money	Fantasy and Magic
Autumn 3	Spring 3	Summer 3
Conflict	Education	Myths and Legends

Key Stage 4

Transition to Communication-Based Learning

- **Core Vocabulary Programme continues** as part of the **daily communication sessions**
- Literacy is embedded into **real-world contexts** (functional literacy)
- Students continue to **expand** their vocabulary using words from **PFA, numeracy, and key life skills**

Key Focus Areas in KS4

- **Functional Literacy:** Reading signs, instructions, labels, timetables, menus
- **Personalised Communication:** Using symbols, AAC, Grid Player, speech, or writing
- **Social Communication & Independence:** Shopping lists, job applications, emails
- **Work-Related Vocabulary:** Jobs, community words, safety signs

Daily Communication Session Focus	Examples
Core Vocabulary Review & New Word Introduction	Continue 36-word cycle with extended words
Functional Literacy	Reading menus, shopping lists, street signs
Personal Communication Goals	Using preferred communication method (speech, symbols, writing)
Practical Application	Using vocabulary in community settings (e.g., asking for help, ordering food)

Key Stage 5

Embedding Communication in Daily Life

- Communication lessons each morning followed by phonics and reading.
- Separate literacy lessons following Functional Skills Entry Level 1.
- Skills are embedded in other PFA based modules and all areas of school life, promoting independence

Key Focus Areas in KS5

- **Workplace Communication:** work skills and vocabulary to describe different jobs.
- **Independent Living:** Reading signs, instructions, bills, shopping lists
- **Community & Social Skills:** transitions, visits, personal interactions
- **Expanded Vocabulary:** Words for travel, health, emotions, money management

Practical Communication Skills	Examples
Workplace	Recognising Logos, job-related vocabulary
Shopping & Money	Reading price tags, using self-checkouts
Travel & Transitions	Using transport, visiting new places
Social & Personal Wellbeing	Engaging in conversations, sharing an activity

Summary of Literacy & Core Vocabulary Progression

Stage	Approach	Vocabulary Focus	Outcome
KS3	Structured Literacy Lessons	Core vocabulary, book themes, numeracy, PFA	Build foundation in reading, writing, comprehension
KS4	Communication Sessions	Functional literacy, expanded vocabulary (PFA, numeracy, independence)	Apply literacy skills in daily life
KS5	Functional Skills and Life Skills Focus	Workplace, community, independence vocabulary	Fully embed communication for independence

This plan ensures **progression from KS3 to KS5**, embedding literacy **beyond classroom learning** into **real-world communication**.

Seekers 3 in KS4/5, will follow the same core vocabulary but additional vocabulary will focus on the lessons and activities within their timetable.



Seekers Numeracy

Overview



Key Stage 3

Overview:

- Seekers will follow the *Functionals Skills Maths Specification* being supported by the *Maths for Life* Scheme of work.
- All students will receive two dedicated numeracy lessons per week to develop functional maths skills.
- Learning will be structured around three key topics, each delivered in a specific term:

Autumn	Spring	Summer
Developing skills in number, using numbers, and understanding the number system.	Using common measures, shapes, and space, including money, time, position, and direction.	Handling information and data, including sorting and classification, and recognising and describing a list of up to five items.

- Skills will be revisited throughout the year to reinforce learning, with opportunities to challenge students and for them to progress further in understanding and using numeracy in real world contexts.

Application Across the Curriculum:

Students will transfer and consolidate their mathematical skills across other areas of learning, including:

- **Daily communication routines** (e.g. telling time, understanding position and direction, recognising numbers and sizes)
- **Literacy** (e.g. sequencing events, using numbers in context)
- **Art and Music** (e.g. recognising patterns, rhythm, and timing)
- **Book Themes** (e.g. identifying quantities, categorising objects, interpreting data from stories)
- **Preparation for Adult Life (PFA)** (e.g. budgeting, time management, shopping calculations)

Key Stages 4 & 5

Overview:

- Students will follow the *ASDAN Towards Independence* programme, which integrates numeracy skills relevant to *Preparation for Adult Life (PFA)*.
- *Seekers 5* students will work towards *Pearson's Functional Skills Entry Level 1 & 2*.
- The numeracy elements within this programme will build upon the foundation laid in Key Stage 3, reinforcing functional maths skills in real-world contexts.
- The curriculum will ensure students develop independence in applying their numeracy skills in everyday situations, including financial literacy, time management, and problem-solving.

Progression and Assessment:

- Continuous assessment will track students' development in core numeracy skills.
- Progress will be measured through practical applications and real-world problem-solving tasks.
- Individualised targets will be set to ensure each student achieves their potential, with additional support or challenge provided where necessary.
- Accreditation through ASDAN in KS4/5 and Pearson Functional Skills in Seekers 5

This structured approach to numeracy will enable students to develop essential mathematical skills that will support them in everyday life, further education, and future employment.



Seekers PFA Overview **and Progression Map**



Overview

Our Preparing for Adulthood (PFA) curriculum is designed to equip students with essential life skills, independence, and confidence as they transition into adulthood. It focuses on four key areas: **Community Participation, Employment & Higher Education, Good Health, and Independent Living.**

In **KS3**, students have dedicated PFA/PSHE lessons to explicitly develop these skills. Additionally, key aspects of PFA, such as time management, communication, and social skills, are embedded within the **morning communication routine and throughout the school day** to reinforce learning in meaningful, real-life contexts.

In **KS4 and KS5**, PFA is integrated into the **ASDAN Towards Independence** modules, ensuring that students continue to develop independence skills in a structured yet personalised way. This approach allows students to apply their learning in practical situations, supporting their journey towards greater autonomy and confidence in daily life.

Personal Development

<u>Spiritual, Moral, social and cultural development/capital and Character</u> ▪ Guided meditation ▪ Sensory room activities ▪ Sensory walks ▪ Forest school ▪ Library visits ▪ Lunchtime clubs e.g. radio club ▪ Friendship group, interventions ▪ School assemblies ▪ Religion through RE ▪ Religion through Science ▪ Church visits – Christmas ▪ Music sessions ▪ Performing arts and cultural week ▪ School concerts and shows ▪ Celebrating special/themed days ▪ Educational visits and trips ▪ Votes for schools' sessions ▪ Circle time sessions ▪ Student council – democracy ▪ Emotion coaching	<u>Preparation for next stage of life</u> Education, training and Employment/Careers Guidance: ▪ BTEC Mandatory Units ▪ Educational visits ▪ Work Experience ▪ Managing money units in PSHE ▪ Apprenticeships/supported internships ▪ CV Writing ▪ PFA evening ▪ EHCP reviews ▪ ILPs ▪ Record of achievement ▪ College Visits ▪ PHSE topics ▪ Post 16 Friday Café ▪ Vast range of Vocational Options ▪ Careers advisor
<u>Fundamental British Values and Citizenship</u> ▪ History Lessons ▪ Decorating the church - Poppies, Christmas trees ▪ Votes for schools' lessons ▪ Celebrating special days/themes ▪ Equal opportunities ▪ Charity fundraising ▪ Student council - democracy ▪ Community links ▪ Organised voting in class ▪ Duke of Edinburgh ▪ Assemblies ▪ Belonging to the school community ▪ Work Experience ▪ Volunteering ▪ 3 R's – Be ready, be responsible and be respectful	Independent living ▪ Transition days ▪ Residence provision ▪ Work Experience ▪ Managing money units in PSHE ▪ MyBnK - financial education sessions ▪ Travel Training ▪ Cookery Community Inclusion ▪ Educational visits ▪ Reward visits ▪ Travel Training ▪ Post 16 Friday Café ▪ Duke of Edinburgh ▪ Active life sessions ▪ Shopping visits
<u>Equality and Diversity</u> ▪ Makaton and communication ▪ Oasis centre provision ▪ Transition days – moving between groups ▪ Interventions ▪ History lessons ▪ Assemblies ▪ Votes for schools	Staying Healthy/Healthy Living ▪ Swimming ▪ Football club ▪ Gym sessions ▪ PSHE units ▪ School nurse sessions ▪ Encouragement to try new foods ▪ Cookery sessions ▪ PE lessons across the school ▪ Science – hazards and safety ▪ Sex Education ▪ Hygiene – PSHE, school nurse, residence ▪ Science units ▪ PSHE/ICT – keeping yourself safe

