



Subject: <b>Curriculum</b>	Number: <b>POL00110</b>
Approved by:	Type: <b>Policy</b>
<b>Managing Director</b>	Issued: <b>February 2021</b>
	Revision: <b>4.0</b>
	Effective: <b>18 Sept 2024</b>

**1. Objectives**

**1.1 Overall Aims**

The Robert Holme Academy caters for students that have struggled to achieve in mainstream educational institutions, often with negative feelings towards education and limited positive experiences.

Our pupils require a more personalised education programme. Due to the complex nature of the students, Robert Holme Academy provide a specialised curriculum that includes life skills, personal, social, health and citizenship and spiritual, moral, social and cultural education along with a modified version of the national curriculum.

The curriculum offered at Robert Holme Academy is broad and rich in order to not only meet the needs of the students, but to engage and intrigue them, while helping them on first steps towards a successful career.

We encourage inquiring minds and curiosity to stimulate students and developing their reasoning skills. The idea of asking ‘why’ is important to their learning and a desire to learn in great depth is encouraged. At Robert Holme Academy, we do not put a ceiling on student achievement. The enriched curriculum allows for equality and opportunity for all students including offering Gifted and Talented STEM classes. Nurturing and encouraging talent and self-esteem is the foundation of preparing pupils for lifelong education.

The Robert Holme Academy offers topic-based learning for many of the subjects studied which allows for differentiated learning to meet the needs of the students within the class with different outcomes, based on assessment data, Individual Learning Plans and tailored educational and social targets.

Robert Holme Academy establishes individual education and care plan outcomes into classroom learning offering one-to-one and small group work in order to support this.

The curriculum is designed to recognise and support developmental and age-related learning while allowing students to take ownership of their own personal targets.

The curriculum’s ultimate aim is to support and boost student’s attainment and achievements within the core curriculum, along with social, emotional and cultural development in order to support them and, where possible, to return to mainstream learning over time. We also aim to develop students into well-rounded individuals who can integrate effectively in society.

Our curriculum model is based on a child’s stage rather than their age. Our classes are of mixed ages meaning the national curriculum and extended curriculum is delivered in a level appropriate manner, rather than focusing on age related expectations.



2. **Scope and Applicability**

This policy is applicable to all management and teaching staff.

The curriculum at Robert Holme Academy covers all Independent School Standards. Every level of learning incorporates linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education. The curriculum is broken down into timetabled lessons for English, Maths, Science, Computing, Physical Education, Art, Music, Technology, Religious Education and Humanities.

Formal lessons are also supplemented with dedicated enrichment times incorporating vocational projects, personal development linked to individual plans and age related milestones.

The long-term learning plans are available on request and include further details of the curriculum.

3. **Responsibilities**

The Robert Holme Academy has high expectations of staff and students and are committed to providing a high-quality learning environment.

The Managing Director and Headteacher are responsible for ensuring:

- the curriculum is in line with Robert Holme Academy mission statement;
- the curriculum is wide, balanced and appropriate;
- the curriculum offers logical sequence in order to promote continuity and progression;
- timetables allocate appropriate learning hours;
- clear direction is given to staff to guide programmes of teaching and learning;
- the curriculum is inline with the National Curriculum.

Teaching and support staff are responsible for the implementation of all aspects of the curriculum to ensure that:

- students are aware of their individualised targets and are encouraged to take ownership of these;
- attainment is closely monitored and regularly assessed;
- the curriculum is student centred and delivered in a multi-sensory approach; and
- where necessary, special intervention is introduced for specific learning needs and targets.

3.1 **Subject Coordinators**

The curriculum is supported by assigned Subject Coordinators. The assignments are as follows:

Kate	Richard	Kerry
Phonics and Early Reading Art PSHE	Maths Science Music PE RE	English Technology History Geography

The role of the subject coordinator is to:

- support with the implementation of the curriculum;
- ensure the curriculum is being taught appropriately and in with the values of the school;
- support and scrutinise assessment data;
- ensure consistency of subject teaching, including through observations and ‘book looks’;
- maintain curriculum sequencing and mapping.
- meet with the headteacher to discuss subject specific achievement data;
- meet with Ofsted inspectors about their subject;
- support planning, team-teaching, and delivering CPD;
- attend subject network meetings;
- organise subject events e.g., subject days, weeks, and assemblies;

**4. Resources**











The Robert Holme Academy is equipped with a range of resources that are beneficial for meeting the needs of the students and meet all the curriculum requirements. We also make use of the local community through arranged trips and visits embedded within the curriculum in order to promote social skills.

We have access to a local leisure centre and local parks for further exercise. These allow our students to develop independence and thrive socially, emotionally, academically and physically.

**5 Curriculum Design**

**5.1 Overall Structure**

The main thematic curriculum has 10 Big Ideas which are designed to be covered and built upon throughout the curriculum. These Big Ideas are the overarching (global) aims of the curriculum and draw on common themes within the national curriculum framework. These 10 big ideas are also intertwined into the other discrete learning topics.

 <p><b>Humankind</b> Understanding what it means to be human and the cause and effect of human behaviour.</p>	 <p><b>Processes</b> Understanding the many dynamic and physical processes that shape the world around us.</p>	 <p><b>Creativity</b> Understanding how everyday and exceptional creativity can inspire and change perceptions.</p>	 <p><b>Investigation</b> Understanding the importance of asking questions, formulating hypotheses, gathering information and analysing evidence.</p>	 <p><b>Materials</b> Understanding the unique and physical properties of all matter and how we interact with them.</p>
 <p><b>Nature</b> Understanding the complexities and interdependence of the plant and animal species that inhabit the world's many ecosystems.</p>	 <p><b>Place and space</b> Understanding the visual, cultural, social and environmental aspects of different places around the world.</p>	 <p><b>Comparison</b> Understanding how and why things are the same or different.</p>	 <p><b>Significance</b> Understanding why significant people, places, events and inventions matter.</p>	 <p><b>Change</b> Understanding why and how things have changed over time.</p>

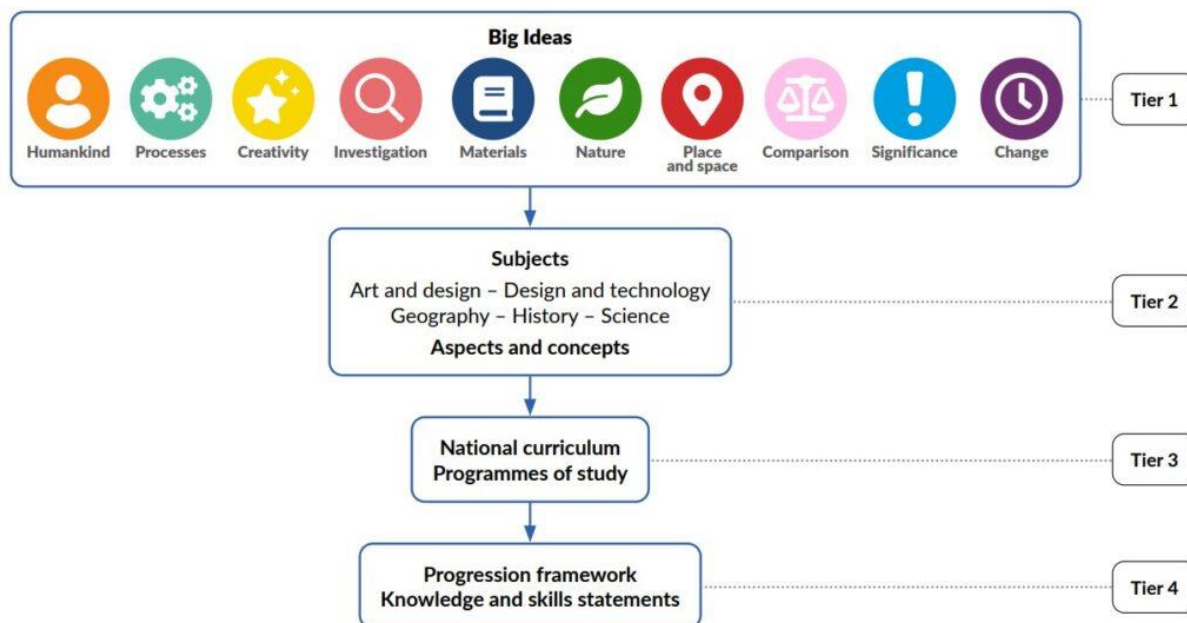
**5.2 Subject Aspect and Concepts**

An aspect within our curriculum is a particular part of feature within a subject. A concept is an abstract idea within a subject. Each Big Idea is directly connected to curriculum subjects. Different aspects and concepts within the curriculum subject allow for the Big Idea to be delivered. This allows for the Big Ideas to be ‘threaded’ throughout the curriculum in both subject and level.

The use of the aspects and concepts allows us to match our curriculum threads to the national curriculum programme of study in the form of knowledge and skill statements which are the smaller stepping stones for evidencing pupil’s achievements.

**5.3 Organising the Curriculum**

These learning pathways allow for an ambitious, broad, and balanced curriculum where we cover, revisit, and build upon knowledge and skills in both subject and cross curricular to build a bigger picture and an interconnectivity web and to maximise meaningful links between subjects, aspects and concepts. All thematic projects follow the Cornerstones pedagogy of Engage, Develop, Innovate and Express. This means that the content is organised in a way to ensure that smooth, buildable learning experiences occur.



#### 5.4 *Phonics and Early Ready*

The Phonics curriculum is based on Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised Programme which is a Department for Education recognised fully synthetic Phonics programme for early reading. We also use the Little Wandle Rapid Catch Up Programme for pupils who are aged 7 and above that still require a phonics programme.

The phonics programme works with phonically decodable reading resources, including Big Cat for Little Wandle Letters and Sounds and Big Cat Phonics readers, directly matched to their individual phonics knowledge and needs.

Pupils work through the reading scheme, following careful assessments of phonics knowledge by teachers until they ‘graduate’ of phonics following the phase 5 assessment. Pupils have access to additional learning sessions as required to ensure all gaps are plugged and no pupil is ‘left behind’.

Following phonics and the early reading programme, pupils continue to read daily with books of their choice (designed around their reading level, emotional age and cognitive abilities). Pupils also access spelling sessions daily within Class 3 to continue to build a love of reading, confidence in spelling and improve overall standards of literacy.

#### 5.5 *Literacy*

The literacy programme of choice is Literacy Tree.

We chose this as the curriculum is based around whole books. It’s not just about individual book choices but about how these books weave together to provide pupils with a rich and varied literary diet across their school journey. Pupils we cater for do not always have the experience or access to literature and using the Literacy Tree curriculum gives them the opportunity to experience a wide range of literature in different forms from different time periods and culture. They also have the opportunity to explore picture books, novels and novellas, poetry and non-fiction to allow them to develop their own preferences and opinions and to delve into both contemporary and classic writing by a diverse range of authors which links across the wider curriculum. This in turn develops pupils literary repertoire so that they can comfortably navigate a book shop and foster a life-long love of reading.



The aim of our literacy curriculum alongside our phonics and reading curriculum is to make ‘skilled readers’ which covers the Reading Frameworks main areas of expectation including:

- creating mental models as they read, amending and updating what they know with new information;
- drawing on their experiences and knowledge to make inferences, filling in gaps as they go;
- considering the meaning, implications and nuances of words and phrases, drawing upon wide and deep language banks and bodies of knowledge;
- drawing upon their knowledge of sentence structure, including punctuation;
- constantly anticipating what might come next and activating meaning.

### 5.6 ***Topic learning careers, Information advice and guidance***

In line with current national careers strategies the Robert Holme Academy aims to provide an education platform to promote social mobility and provide its students with the best possible opportunities to boost their long term earning power, irrespective of their background.

As part of this, we aim to break down the barriers that mean the students who have special educational needs, or come from disadvantaged backgrounds, experience significantly lower employment opportunities.

We recognise that our students may come from disadvantaged backgrounds and may have limited access to role models with experiences of different jobs and careers and acknowledge that children may have fixed views about what kind of jobs may be suitable for them. We have the opportunity to influence limiting attitudes and behaviours at an early age. We therefore aim to challenge existing perceptions and inspire every student so that their long-term career choices are free from gender bias and the limitations of their immediate environment so that they aspire towards new and exciting opportunities.

We also aim to introduce the work and skills that are valued by employers and, as far as possible, provide some first-hand experience of the workplace, while providing insight into the full range of opportunities that are available.

Thematic subjects allow pupils to study, imagine, and develop interest in job roles. Pupils also have access to a wide range of role play experiences and visiting careers talks to continue their career development. A more immersive curriculum allows our pupils to remove the barriers they have to specific subjects and engage in full topics and all aspects of these. Pupils access a range of discrete and thematic learning opportunities. Where possible, we offer memorable learning experiences linked to learning projects. These may not be at the time of the learning, but are often planned as a method of revisiting topics. This means the pupils feel more prepared and equipped to access a memorable experience. It also allows pupils to put learning in practice and build upon learnt knowledge with skills.

Thematic subject expectations allow our pupils to become and experience job roles in the fields they study. This can help to inspire pupils with limited positive role models from a young age and open opportunities.

### 5.7 ***Religion***

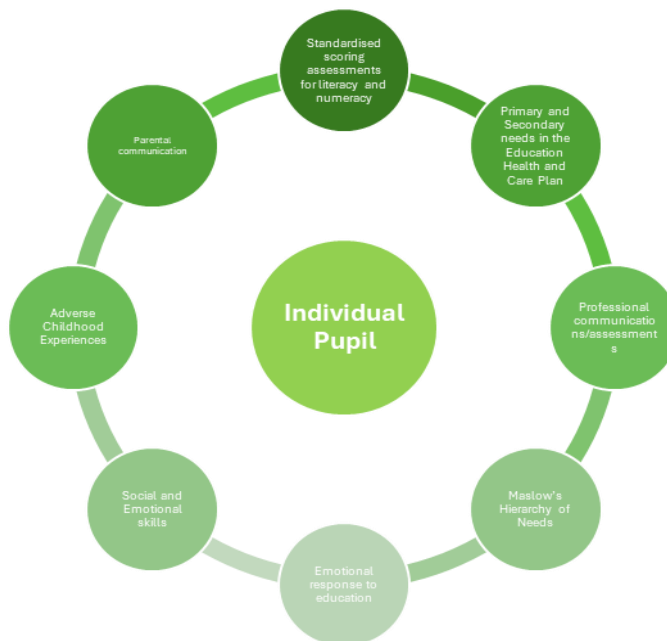
Being nondenominational, Robert Holme Academy embraces all types of religion and is able to support students of different religious beliefs. Students are offered a diverse timetable which covers a range of religious beliefs without forcing any religious belief on to students. This is delivered through the main curriculum, enrichment activities and personal development programmes.

Extremist views are not tolerated and will be reported to appropriate authorities in line with safeguarding policies and procedures.

## 6 Implementing the Curriculum

### 6.1 Classroom Placement

The key areas that are involved in deciding on classroom placement are:



We initially assess pupils on entry with the following standardised scoring assessments:

- York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension; and
- Rising Stars Basic Number Screening Test.

This will give us an accurate working level which we can translate to an appropriate classroom environment and curriculum. It also gives us guidance on areas where specific intervention is needed. Pupils that can access this assessment usually access Class 2 or Class 3.

If this is not deemed appropriate as a pupil fails to meet the assessment level (above aged 5), we then complete further assessment using:

- Little Wandle Phonics screening and placement assessment; and
- Cherry Garden Branch Maps.

This will then give us a current working level for the child and whether they are most suited for the classroom and curriculum in Class 1 or Class 2. This can be linked with any Educational Health and Care Primary and Secondary needs and observations to provide a holistic support plan and a supportive placement decision. Due to the nature of our pupils, academic data alone does not give a robust enough basis for pupil placement.

We follow a theory based approach to placement, encompassing Maslow's Hierarchy of needs, and evidence based approaches such as Alongside the Code of Practice and National Curriculum Guidance.

We expect progression through this channel. Some pupils enter further up the 'classroom ready' scale, and others lower on the scale and of course, this can become intertwined. At times, we recognised that pupils may have events that challenge their coping skills and may move down the scales. This is where intervention is used to help the child to move back up the scale with new coping mechanisms.





Our classes are:

- Class 1 (The Bee Hive) this class follows - Cherry Garden Branch Maps
- Class 2 (Strawberry Fields) the class follows - Levels 1-3
- Class 3 (Maple Tree Grove) this class follows - Levels 3-6

### 6.2 ***Why Cherry Garden Branch Maps and not P Levels?***

The CGBM provide a more holistic approach to assessing pupils and preparing them for the next stages in the curriculum. CG is a unique, child-centred framework for pupils working at a level expected for typically developing children aged 0-5, with an additional bridging framework for branch maps 11 and 12 in key areas at a level expected in Year 1.

The P levels were replaced by the Engagement Model which caters for pupils who have more profound needs than those in our care. The Engagement model does fit into the CG and is covered in stage 2 (of 4) in our observational toolkit within CG. Although the progress of our pupils may be slower than their peers, we still believe it is achievable for these children to progress into the main assessment scales and we do not want to put a limit on their achievements. The CG assessment data can be converted into P scale or EYFS equivalents which allows us to share the data with other professionals who work with different systems as well as allows a seamless transition to the main curriculum scale upon completion.

### 6.3 ***In Class 1 – The Bee Hive – Pre level 1***

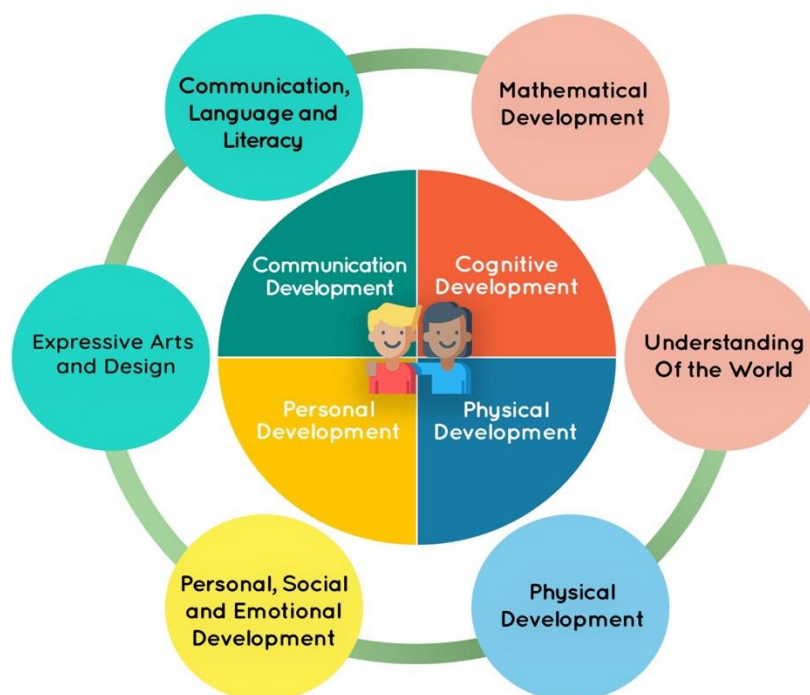
Pupils work on a curriculum that focuses on a personalised learning approach in line with the Cherry Garden model. This curriculum is an adapted continuous provision model with learning activities planned through a thematic approach. Pupils may also access some Level 1 and Level 2 learning if and when appropriate. Pupils in this classroom are not deemed as typically ‘Classroom ready’.

Each project covers 4 elements:

- Communication Development;
- Cognitive Development;
- Personal Development;
- Physical Development.

Inside the project the children are assessed against the CG strands of:

- Communication;
- Language and Literacy;
- Mathematical Development;
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development;
- Physical Development;
- Understanding of the World;
- Expressive Arts and Design.



#### 6.4 *Class 2 –Strawberry Fields- Predominantly Levels 1 & 2*

Pupils in this class are starting to develop more subject specific learning. They still require support in the 4 areas of need but can access a semi- formal curriculum. Core subjects are taught in discrete lessons and the wider learning is delivered as part of a thematic approach. Pupils in this class tend to be working towards being ‘classroom ready’ and still require support with communication, resilience, attention and listening skills.

Bespoke support plans are in place with visuals, and Makaton to support with communication and regulation.





The main lessons covered are:

- Phonics;
- Literacy;
- Reading;
- Numeracy;
- Topic;
- PSHE;
- PE;

### 6.5 *Class 3 – Maple Tree Grove – Predominantly Levels 3-6*

Pupils are working quite securely with subject specific learning. They are continuing to develop their communication, resilience, attention and listening skills but are able to purposefully engage in discrete subject lessons.

Core and foundation subjects are delivered via a thematic approach but they are underpinned and supported with more discrete subject lessons. This allows a preparation for Secondary Education by distinguishing subject content.

Pupils in this class are typically able to maintain a longer focus in order to achieve more extended working.

The curriculum is ambitious, an adapted national curriculum model that allows pupils to work at a range of levels and complete work that can challenge and accelerate progress when appropriate.

The main lessons covered with an overarching topic are:

- Spelling;
- Literacy;
- Reading;
- Numeracy;
- Science;
- Humanities;
- Art;
- Design;
- Music;
- PSHE;
- PE.

### 6.6 *Assessment*

Students' progress both academically and socially are regularly assessed against both curriculum targets and tailored learning plan outcomes. This is carefully monitored by teachers and reviewed by the headteacher. The results of reviews are used, as necessary, to revise learning plans, individual targets and to further enhance the learning experience.

Throughout teaching and learning there is embedded assessment of different types. Further details are provided in the assessment policy.



#### 4 References

Further information can be found in:

1. The Department for Education Independent School Standards, available at:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/800615/Independent\\_School\\_Standards- Guidance\\_070519.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/800615/Independent_School_Standards- Guidance_070519.pdf)
2. The National Curriculum in England: primary curriculum, available at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-primary-curriculum>
3. Careers strategy: making the most of everyone's skills and talents 2017, available at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-strategy-making-the-most-of-everyones-skills-and-talents>