



# TRUST CURRICULUM

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**PONTEFRACT**  
ACADEMIES TRUST

# OUR CURRICULUM FOR PUPILS AGED 4 TO 16

## OVERVIEW

As an education Trust that is located in a tight geographic area, the vast majority of our pupils stay in Trust schools for their education up to the age of 16. The advantages of the Trust's unique geographical makeup, consisting of two secondary schools and six feeder primary schools are considerable. It presents an opportunity for the trust to take a holistic approach to pupils' education across both phases, ensuring a smooth transition, which builds on previous progress.

In terms of the curriculum in our schools, we are very clear on our intention. The emphasis in all our schools is on providing a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils, opening rather than closing doors to future success.

We regard a broad curriculum as one in which there are enough subjects on a pupil's timetable to ensure a wide ranging experience, and this means not narrowing their options. To us, we believe a broad curriculum offers all pupils a wide range of subjects for as long as possible.

As a Trust, we believe that a balanced curriculum is one in which each subject is not only taught to all pupils, but is afforded sufficient space on the timetable to deliver its distinct contribution.

## FRAMEWORK

Six fundamental strands provide the framework for our planning. These are what we consider to be six crucial aspects of a well-rounded curriculum and they run our planning at all levels: **Acquisition of skills, knowledge/very important points/VIPs, Character/Wider Development, Co-Curricular, Assessment, Reading/Literacy.**

## WHAT DO WE THINK ABOUT WHEN DECIDING UPON OUR CURRICULUM?

### Identifying end points

Our leaders and teachers aim to ensure that each subject our pupils study builds towards clear end-points. In other words, our schools plan what pupils will be expected to know and do by each of these end-points, be that the end of a year, key stage or phase of schooling.

In this way our teachers know what the end-points are for each subject discipline they teach. Essentially, identifying end-points is about planting a flag at some point in the distance and then planning a route towards it. That flag may be planted at the end of the key stage, or indeed 10 years after our pupils have left school. If the latter, the question to ask is: what do we want our pupils to remember about our subject in 10 years' time that will be useful to them?

### Planned and sequenced

As a Trust, teachers in our schools work collaboratively so that each subject's curriculum is planned and sequenced so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught before, and towards those end-points. Whether we are talking about Year 2 in primary or Year 8 in secondary, it is important to us to build a joined-up, progressive subject curriculum which builds on what has gone before, and prepares pupils for what comes next. For example, our secondary schools need to know more about the primary curriculum so that Year 7 consolidates and extends what was taught in Year

6 and does not needlessly repeat prior learning in a confusing, contradictory manner. This is the advantage of our schools being in a tight geographic location. We can ensure that there is consistency, not just in what is taught, but in the language of learning used by our teachers.

### An ambitious curriculum for all

As well as being clearly sequenced and building towards a clear end-point, we ensure that our curriculum should also address typical gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. The curriculum should remain as broad as possible for as long as possible, too.

Whilst we strive to prepare our pupils as well as possible for SATs, it is crucial that key stage 2 does not become narrowed to a study of SATs subjects. Similarly in our secondary schools, at key stage 3 this lasts for three years, meaning that pupils are not forced to choose their GCSE options too soon.

We are ambitious for all our pupils. This means that our schools do not offer disadvantaged pupils or pupils with SEND a reduced curriculum. We have the same high expectations of all pupils and do not dumb down.



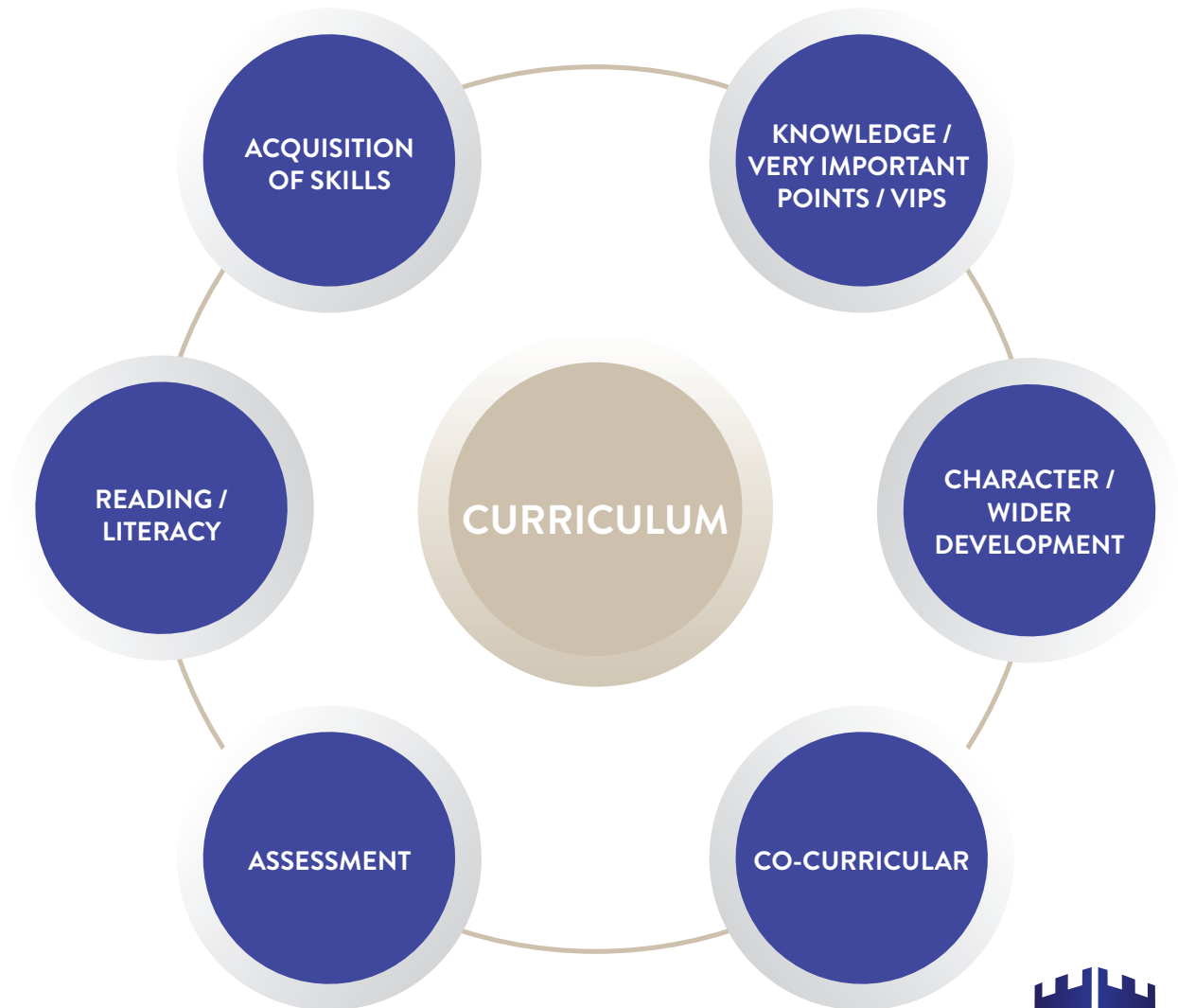
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# FUNDAMENTAL STRANDS

Our curriculum is set out in six fundamental strands which run through our curriculum at all levels. Examples are; mathematical methodology is the same in KS2 as it is in KS3, knowledge in Science taught in KS3 is accessible far more quickly because of what our pupils have learnt and retained in primary, and the understanding and knowledge of different cultures is a key focus due to the population makeup of the local area.

Our framework ensures our pupils leave us with a high level of knowledge, a vast expanse of skills, have developed into well rounded citizens and are well prepared for their next steps. We are highly ambitious for our pupils, we don't put a ceiling on what they can achieve and we are committed to ensuring our curriculum opens many doors of opportunity when they leave us.

Our six fundamentals alongside the national curriculum form our framework.





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## CURRICULUM

### KNOWLEDGE

Key subject knowledge is chosen across all subject areas and sequenced to ensure pupils have the right foundations moving forwards. We have **Very Important Points** (VIPs) which is a common language in all phases. These are the fundamental facts that pupils need to know, they are taught in context. VIPs are interleaved, embedded overtime and shameless repetition is one of our mantras because we know the retention of this knowledge a foundation to success.

### ACQUISITION OF SKILLS

Across the curriculum and specific subjects there are a set of competencies required to move through more challenging content. These vary and in some cases are transferable. For example; analysing data, comparing and contrasting evidence, comprehension or presenting to an audience. These skills are mapped across the curriculum and become more complex as students move through school. We've ensured consistency with methodology across phases so our pupils can move seamlessly through Key Stages.

### ASSESSMENT

On-going assessment is essential to our work. It informs teachers if students are on track to embed key knowledge, the application of key skills, and are ready for the next step of learning. A range of assessment strategies are used to inform teachers, pupils and parents the progress which is being made and what the best next step is. Our assessments ensure all content is re-visited at spaced intervals and we understand formative and summative assessments both have appropriate roles to play in building a bigger picture.

### READING / LITERACY

The ability to read effectively is fundamental to success for our pupils. Reading is needed to master all subjects therefore it's the most important skill we teach. In our primary schools carefully chosen books (**literary canon**) form the centre of the curriculum and these books as used as the stimulus for the entire curriculum. Reading is taught explicitly up to the end of KS3 and progress is tracked in detail with a range of support strategies in place where needed. We promote the explicit teaching of subject vocabulary, have a whole school approaches to promote reading for pleasure and a consistent approach to the teaching of grammar.

### CHARACTER / WIDER DEVELOPMENT

The development of our pupils wider personal skills and character is at the centre of our curriculum, so it helps pupils improve their academic achievement and be thoughtful citizens that can make informed choices. Opportunities to develop in these areas are threaded throughout the curriculum which include key SMSC themes. In our primary schools 6 key themes form a key part of the work in this area and the literary canon has been chosen because they allow opportunities to explore these key themes; **Culture, Modern Britain, The World Around Us, The World Beyond Us, Technology in Action and Healthy Bodies Healthy Minds**. In secondary the tutor programme, visits, assemblies and our **Deeper Learning Days** are also key elements of their delivery.

### CO-CURRICULAR

We are passionate about the impact that activities outside of the curriculum have on our pupils. Our schools have a wide range of activities, trips and experiences on offer including; sports, music, drama, technology and residential trips. This is so our students can discover new interests, develop existing ones and further develop their character and wider personal skills. We ensure there are a number of opportunities for our pupils to experience leading and be involved in community projects including charity work so they have a understanding of what community service is and why it's important. We have **50 must dos** in our primary schools and the **KS3 graduation process** which forms a structure for some of this work.