



# **Peak Curriculum Policy**

**(For pupils in Nursery up to Year 11)**

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## Context and Rationale

Peak School is an academy community special school located in the North of Derbyshire and as the only Special School in this area serving a large catchment area from Tameside and Glossop to the North, as far as Chesterfield to the East and Derbyshire Dales to the South of the county, while also catering for pupils from Cheshire. Due to our large catchment area and our isolation as a school, we cater for pupils with a wide and varied profile of need and learning difficulty.

Peak School is co-located with Peak Lodge a Social Care residential and respite provision for pupils with additional needs and Alderbrook is an adult care day centre to adults with additional needs. All pupils resident within the Peak Lodge provision attend Peak School and have entered care due to the impact of their behaviour and / or medical need on their families, in many cases they have moved to us from other Derbyshire special schools as a consequence of placement breakdown or coming into care.

In response to the wide profile of need of our pupils, Peak School has developed a curriculum that starts in Early Years and takes pupils on a developmental learning journey, following the pathway(s) suitable to their developmental, social and academic needs. This journey concludes at 19, for the majority of young people in Post 16 pathway preparing them for moving into adulthood and the next phase of their life after Peak School, the exception being those residing at Peak Lodge and moving out of area for their adult placement at 18.

Topics are used a vehicle for learning, which ensures there are firm foundations to build an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum. The creative, thematic approach allows the pupils at Peak School to make connections between the different elements of their learning. Topics were chosen in consultation with class teachers, ensuring topics were engaging, relevant and challenging. Careful consideration was given to ensure coverage in all curriculum areas provide breadth and balance as well as the appropriateness of the timing. This allows planned activities to build on real life experiences. Topics are sequenced so they allow pupils to learn more and do more as they progress through the topics.

## Curriculum Vision

Our vision at Peak School is for all students to experience an appropriate, accessible and engaging curriculum enabling them to explore a wide range of concepts. The curriculum helps pupils to develop and build upon their knowledge and skills, therefore allowing them to develop a positive identity as a learner. At Peak School, we aim to make learning meaningful for our pupils, striving for mastery development across all pathways. Within these pathways, students develop skills supporting them in applying their knowledge to the wider world and their lives beyond Peak School.

## Curriculum Aims

Due to the wide profile of need and ability at Peak School, teaching and learning will look very different across pathways, but ultimately our aims for our students remain the same.

- For all students to have a positive experience of learning, by boosting self-esteem, self-image and experiences of success.
- For teaching and learning to be appropriate and adaptive for individual learners, to meet individual needs and learning styles, while providing an appropriate level of pace and challenge.

- For students to experience a broad and balanced curriculum with embedded learning across lessons, activities and experiences.
- For learning to be practical, purposeful and meaningful for all students.
- For students to develop independence, but also the ability to work co-operatively with others.
- For students to be able to apply their knowledge into everyday life and preparing them for their adult lives beyond Peak School

## Leaps including EYFS

Pupils who start at Peak School in the early years of education start their journey on Leaps Pathway. These pupils have complex learning needs and not ready for a more traditional EYFS curriculum because of a complex range of learning and physical needs. Pupils are assessed on entry against Birth to 5 Matters, following which a decision is made regarding the pathway best suited to the individual pupil. Following this, for some pupils it is most appropriate that they start their learning journey on Engagement Steps.

The implementation of this curriculum requires careful and creative planning as well as extensive knowledge of each individual pupils' needs to fulfil a stimulating and meaningful life. Every moment is a learning opportunity and therefore teaching happens continually throughout the school day, raising self-esteem through nurture and focusing on a sense of collaboration and belonging.

The impact of this curriculum will be ensure pupils are fully prepared for the next pathway and their educational journey, they will become more aware of the world around them and be able to respond to change. All pupils, wherever possible, will be able to make choices and communicate their basic needs and wants through a communication system appropriate to their level of need.

Pupils are assessed following the Peak Assessment System which is developed from the B Squared Engagement Steps and broken down by the school into five areas; communication, functional movement, making connections, self and emotions, functional movement and sensory.

Recording is completed through Seesaw following the Plan, Praise and Progress format, evidencing the learning that has taken place and providing a record of progress. Formative and summative assessment is shown through the pupils' individual trackers.

## Hills

The Hills Pathway provides the opportunity for learners to engage with varied and enriching sensory experiences through the familiar routines embedded in process based learning. The curriculum is organised into the four areas of need identified in the SEND code of practice and learning intentions closely correlate with outcomes on the Education Health Care Plans for pupils on the pathway. The aim is to provide opportunities for learning which enable pupils to gain skills in order to reach their full potential and prepare them for future life.

All pupils within this pathway have an Engagement profile, this supports practitioners to design and facilitate learning opportunities which: interest the learner, motivate the learner, are enjoyable for the learner, provide optimum opportunities for learning, and enable the learner to participate and/or be good at something. Observations are made against the individual's engagement profile in the five

areas of engagement during process-based learning. These observations are used to inform future practice and identify personalised areas for development.

Functional skills are embedded in routines with a view to optimising a pupil's skills and independence. Cognitive development is embedded in accessible activities, as things must happen in real time, within real contexts & situations and with real people in order to make sense to the learner. Communication, including the use of Intensive interaction, is embedded in the way we communicate with pupils in order to establish and maintain trustful relationships between staff and learners, and to develop communication pathways. Focus areas for skill development are identified and learning intentions are accessed through process-based learning and bespoke learning programs that are built into individual timetables. Focus areas are pupil specific, but may include opportunities for pupils to work on communication strategies, choice making, switch progression, positive looking and physical & mobility skills, as appropriate for the individual.

Assessments are observational (notes, photographs & videos) and evidenced using Seesaw and paper-based assessment tracking and reporting systems which link to the curriculum. There are assessment systems in place linked to learning programs to measure skill progression in choice making, switch progression and positive looking. It is acknowledged and understood that many pupils on the pathway will follow a pattern of progression, plateau and then maintenance of skills. We also recognise that pupils with degenerative conditions may experience a decline in skills over time.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Physical &amp; Sensory</b> <i>Well-Being, Sensory, Physical, Self Determination &amp; Independence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gross Motor Skills &amp; Physiotherapy (inc MOVE)</li> <li>• Fine Motor Skills (Tactile)</li> <li>• Visual Skills (Positive Eye)</li> <li>• Auditory Skills (Auditory Hierarchy, Phonics)</li> <li>• Sensory Exploration (Tactile, Olfactory &amp; Gustatory, Visual, Auditory)</li> <li>• Sensory Experiences (inc Vestibular, Proprioception)</li> <li>• Sensory Diet</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Emotional &amp; Expressive Arts</b> <i>Well-Being, Communication &amp; Social Relationships, Self Determination &amp; Independence, Creative</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional Communication &amp; Regulation (inc Interoception) &amp; Behaviour Support</li> <li>• Social Experiences &amp; Social Skills</li> <li>• Building Trustful Relationships &amp; Connections</li> <li>• Cooperative Play (Turn Taking, Collaborative Work)</li> <li>• Identity, Self-Esteem &amp; Expressing Individuality</li> <li>• Exploring and Expressing Creativity (The Arts)</li> <li>• SMSC, PSHE, RSE</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Accessing the World</b> <i>Well-Being, Communication &amp; Social Relationships, Sensory, Self Determination &amp; Independence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receptive Communication (OOR, TaSSeLs, Sensory Cues)</li> <li>• Expressive Communication (Verbal &amp; Non-Verbal)</li> <li>• Language ~ Phonics, Stories, Poetry, Drama</li> <li>• Demonstrating &amp; Communicating Likes/Dislikes &amp; Preferences</li> <li>• Choice Making</li> <li>• Engaging with People (Familiar/Unfamiliar, Different Ages, Ethnicities etc, Through Various Means)</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Knowledge &amp; Know-How</b> <i>Cognition &amp; Challenge, Self Determination &amp; Independence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring Cause &amp; Effect</li> <li>• Gaining Control &amp; Purposeful Manipulation</li> <li>• Switch Progression</li> <li>• Interacting with Equipment (Switch work, Eye-gaze, Musical instruments, Interactive Toys)</li> <li>• Demonstrating Curiosity/Problem Solving Skills</li> <li>• Demonstrating Cognitive Understanding</li> <li>• Links to Formal Learning (Careers, Geography, Science, Personal History, Maths, RE, SMSC, )</li> </ul>

## Peaks

Pupils within the Peaks pathway are mainly from years 2 to 11. They are split into classes based on the age of the pupils, broadly KS2, 3 and 4. This pathway is delivered holistically through adult led learning and small group work, alongside opportunities for pupils to remain engaged through pupil led learning opportunities. This well planned curriculum, follows topics and all pupils have the opportunity for some subject specific learning in core subjects when they are ready to access this. That said, this pathway largely supports pupils who find it challenging to engage in subject specific learning in a more 'typical classroom environment' due to their additional needs and levels of engagement.

The impact of this curriculum is that by the time pupils are ready to transition into the next pathway, they will be as independent as possible and be prepared for the Mountains/Post 16 curriculum. They will have the skills, knowledge and confidence for future learning, as well as beginning to become self-regulated with a well-rounded character. Wherever possible, pupils will be ready to undertake some subject specific learning in the pathway.

Pupils are assessed following the Peak assessment system which combines the EYFS, pre key stage and end of year outcomes to align them into the 'Peak Steps'. Steps run from Step 6 to step 20 with each step broken down into five smaller pre-steps, ensuring that every pupil has the best possible opportunity to make progress within the pathway. This assessment system stays with the pupils as they move into the Mountains pathway, therefore building on the knowledge' and skills taught.

Recording is completed through Seesaw following the Plan, Praise and Progress format, evidencing the learning that has taken place and providing a record of progress. Formative and summative assessment is shown through the pupils' individual trackers

## Mountains Pathway Functional Curriculum Intent

Pupils within the Mountains pathway are broadly from years 5 to 11. They are split into classes based on their level of ability with their learning supported by structured Medium Term Plans for both core and foundation subjects. Learning progressively builds upon prior learning through the vehicle of different topics which gives all pupils access to a broad and balanced curriculum as we believe that every pupil deserves the opportunity to explore a wide range of concepts. The Mountains Pathway is engaging and offers a range of topics to ignite curiosity, provides the breadth of learning and allows pupils to proceed to new topics having secured foundational understanding.

Core Subjects	Foundation Subjects	Additional
Phonics	Religious Education	SOSAFE! (Social Safety)
English (including Communication)	Physical Education	Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural Development
Mathematics	Creativity	Fundamental British Values
Science	Humanities	
PHSE / RSE	Computing	
	Careers	

Through the Mountain Pathway, we aim to create confident, capable, and engaged learners who are well-prepared to embark on their individual journeys beyond Peak School.

Pupils are taught in classes where teaching and learning is expertly tailored to accommodate the individual needs of each pupil. The impact is evident in the holistic growth and development of our pupils shown through academic achievement, personal development and the acquiring of essential skills which contribute to the overall development of our pupils. Through our curriculum, pupils not only acquire knowledge but also develop the ability to apply it effectively in real-life situations. They learn problem-solving, and communication skills, preparing them for a future after Peak School.

Pupils are assessed following the Peak assessment system which combines the EYFS, pre key stage and end of year outcomes which are aligned into the 'Peak Steps'. Steps start at Step 6 to step 20. Each step is broken down into five smaller pre-steps, ensuring that every pupil has the best possible opportunity to make progress within the pathway. This assessment system stays with the pupils as they move from Peaks pathway, therefore building on the knowledge' and skills taught.

Recording is completed through Seesaw following the Plan, Praise and Progress format, evidencing the learning that has taken place and providing a record of progress. Formative and summative assessment is shown through the pupils' individual trackers

## Reading, Communication and Language, how it's taught:

At Peak early reading is taught through Jolly Phonics Scheme. This is a Structured Synthetic Phonics Scheme which teaches both reading and spelling. Each pupil progresses through the scheme according to their pathway and individual needs. Pupils are provided with time to overlearn and embed skills. Pupils are supported to use their phonics skills across all curriculum areas. Pupils read Jolly Phonics books linked to their phonics ability.

Pupils who are not ready for phonics are taught the pre-requisites to phonics through a pre phonics curriculum. These opportunities are embedded into the curriculum to enhance learning experiences.

At Peak school we aim to foster a love and enjoyment of reading that encourages all pupils to read regularly whilst experiencing a range of books from a wide range of genre and authors.

Reading is assessed following the Peak assessment system which combines the EYFS, pre key stage and end of year outcomes to align them into the 'Peak Steps'. Steps start at Step 6 to step 20. Each step is broken down into five smaller pre-steps, ensuring that every pupil has the best possible opportunity to make progress within the pathway. This assessment system stays with the pupils as they move into the Mountains pathway, therefore building on the knowledge' and skills taught. School has a library area where pupils are able to choose books and enjoy books in this area.

## Writing, how it's taught:

Writing is taught as part of the English curriculum. Pupils who are at an early stage of writing use a range of mark making and experimental activities. Gross and fine motor skills which underpin the ability to perform writing tasks are integrated into class activities. Pupils are taught progressive spelling, grammar and punctuation through Jolly Phonics scheme of learning. Pupils are supported to

use a range of methods to compose ideas using narrative approaches at both sentence and text level to scaffold their writing. Pupils are supported to orally rehearse writing as part of the writing process. Pupils write for a range of purposes; they plan writing using adapted frameworks and use technology to support their writing.

## Mathematics, how it's taught:

Our aim at Peak School is for all pupils to experience an appropriate, accessible and engaging maths curriculum which enables them to explore a wide range of mathematical concepts. The maths curriculum helps pupils to develop and build upon their knowledge and skills, therefore allowing them to develop a positive identity as a mathematical learner. At Peak School we aim to make maths learning meaningful for our learners, striving for maths mastery development across all pathways. Within these pathways, students develop skills in reasoning and problem solving, which in turn will support them in applying their mathematical knowledge to the wider world and their lives beyond Peak School.

The Long Term Plans across these pathways are sequential, starting at experiential maths in Leaps and Hills Pathway, more concept-based pre-number learning in Peaks Pathways and leading to more formal maths approaches across the Mountains Pathways.

Within our maths teaching we embed a Concrete, Pictorial, Abstract (CPA) approach to maths. This is a system of learning in which objects are initially used to build a child's understanding; this could be with Numicon, base 10, tens frames, real objects etc. All students will start using concrete apparatus in maths blocks. When they are secure with using concrete materials they then move onto using pictorial representations of objects. Finally, if the other two areas are secure, students move onto abstract representations of concepts, including numbers, symbols, word problems etc. so that they can apply their acquired knowledge. At Peak our main emphasis is on the concrete materials and students will always be able to use apparatus to support their learning as needed to ensure that we are continuing to build confidence within maths.

At Peak School we strive for students to develop their mathematical understanding and to achieve mastery of a number of concepts. In order to achieve maths mastery, taught sessions are designed to enable students to make small steps of progress, building upon their existing knowledge and allowing them to make connections within a concept. Students begin a new concept or topic by accessing fluency activities. They demonstrate their knowledge through the use of resources and practically carrying out activities, often supported by stem sentences and adult led activities. As they gain confidence they should also gain greater levels of independence which allows them to progress to the next step. When concepts are secure, students are then able to apply their knowledge to pictorial representations and eventually the reasoning and problem solving tasks. Staff support students in their maths development by ensuring that concepts are truly grasped before moving on. For example, students need to truly understand numbers to 10 before they are able to calculate with them; they should be able to represent them in a range of ways, recognise them in these formats and be able to show how to make a certain number through careful counting. Although rote counting may have its place within the early number curriculum, it is not a true reflection of a student's understanding of number.

## Science, how it's taught:

Science is linked to the class topics where possible, with long term plans that ensure there is coverage across each pathway with the key aspects of science. Scientific inquiry skills are built in the curriculum as pupils experience and take part in investigations.

In the Peak Pathway scientific understanding is taught as part of learning around 'Understanding the World' which allows pupils to learn the underpinning knowledge and skills required to progress in their scientific understanding.

Pupils on Mountains Pathway learn science as a discreet subject with a balance between gaining knowledge and the application of skills

## Religious Education (RE), how it's taught:

RE is a statutory part of the curriculum and is provided for all pupils in full time education except those withdrawn at the request of their parents. RE is mostly taught as a discreet subject with key themes being integrated to assemblies. The curriculum has been adapted from the Derbyshire Agreed Syllabus for RE. At Peak School for our pupils this means:

*'RE explores life's big questions to understand what people believe and how it shapes their lives. This helps us reflect on our own ideas and values.'*

The RE curriculum is organised into pathways, ensuring RE is made accessible for all pupils across school. The pathways are designed to promote engagement, learning and personal growth and development.

The Derbyshire Agreed Syllabus outlines that each religion should be approached from three perspectives:

- Believing- learning about religious beliefs, teachings, sources and questions about meaning and purpose.
- Expressing- learning about forms of expression in different religions, questions about identity and diversity.
- Living- learning about the practical ways of living and religious practices.

Close links with the local church community support visits to places of worship and community links for key Christian festivals. Alongside the curriculum pupils access a range of assemblies, some of which relate to religious festivals and whole school special days.

Pupils on the Hills Pathway are taught through a holistic curriculum which is sensory based. They explore emotions, stories and festivals with RE being fully integrated into their curriculum. There are close links between the RE and PSHE curriculum allow pupils to reflect on their personal beliefs and values.

Pupils on the Leaps and Peak pathway will learn through a half termly RE day following the Peaks RE curriculum. They explore RE through adapted themes from the Derbyshire Agreed syllabus which facilitates their learning through play, sensory and story based learning.

Pupils on Mountains pathway learn RE as a discreet subject. They learn the knowledge and skills related to the key themes Derbyshire Agreed syllabus. This includes exploring a range of



festivals and religions and how to apply learning to develop their own beliefs and values to live by.

### **PE, how it's taught:**

All children will be taught to enjoy a healthy and active lifestyle through taking part in a range of sports and activities following the Getset4Pe scheme of work that has been adapted appropriately for the needs of the children within that curriculum pathway. This means that the programme of PE taught is sequential and builds over time, allowing for opportunities to practice and develop their skills through their primary journey.

We also recognize it is important for our children to have access to a range of real-life sporting activities that they may not be able to access otherwise. Pupils also access a range of adventurous activities which is provided through adventurous activities and swimming, both in school as well as using the school pool.

Pupils on Peaks pathway are delivered an adapted PE curriculum that focuses on introducing them to PE and the fundamental for movement. They also learn through gymnastics, dance and learn ball skills. As well as physical skills the curriculum embeds social, emotional, and thinking skills.

Pupils on the Mountain pathway in addition to the fundamental skills, access gymnastics, dance and learn ball skills, pupils learn about Net and Ball games, invasions games, athletics to expand their experiences of engaging and motivating physical experiences. As well as physical skills the curriculum embeds social, emotional, and thinking skills.

### **PSHRE (Personal, Social, Health, Relationships and Economic Education), how it's taught:**

The aims of the PSHRE curriculum are:

- To enable pupils to be as independent as possible, and prepare them for adulthood beyond Peak School
- To enable pupils to understand how they can stay safe within a range of contexts, including online
- To enable pupils to be able to express their needs and wants appropriately
- To enable pupils to develop positive & trusting relationships with others
- To enable pupils to be able to understand, express and use strategies to support them to manage these
- To enable pupils to understand that there are certain behaviours (linked to relationships) that require consent
- To enable pupils to understand the concept of consent

PSHE is taught discreetly through a carefully sequenced curriculum but is also woven throughout the curriculum offer at Peak and teachers address aspects of it holistically throughout the curriculum to ensure that concepts and skills taught within classes are practiced in a range of settings, including the community, in a way that is relevant and meaningful to pupils.

RSE is supported by the school nursing team and is delivered as individual or small group sessions, as well as aspects of this being taught in classes where appropriate. Both PSHE and RSE must be taught sensitively and inclusively, with respect to the backgrounds and beliefs of pupils and parents while

always with the aim of providing pupils with the knowledge they need of the law. Government guidance states 'In primary schools, we want the subjects to put in place the key building blocks of healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships, in all contexts, including online. This will sit alongside the essential understanding of how to be healthy. At secondary, teaching will build on the knowledge acquired at primary and develop further pupils' understanding of health, with an increased focus on risk areas such as drugs and alcohol, as well as introducing knowledge about intimate relationships and sex.' With this in mind, our PSHE and RSE curricula develop student's mental, physical, and social wellbeing.