

The curriculum

This curriculum statement was devised in March 2024. We have an action plan and a 2-year implementation strategy to incorporate everything within the statement.

Our curriculum ambition is to enable our learners to **'Understand The World Around Them and Discover The Talents Within Them'**. The curriculum provision caters for learners who have a range of complex cognitive difficulties alongside sensory, physical and/or behavioural barriers to learning.

The curriculum aims to:

- provide equal opportunities, delivered through a curriculum which is broad, balanced, relevant and reflects cultural diversity
- provide a stimulating learning environment that promotes effective learning and enables the learner to experience a sense of enjoyment and achievement
- have plans that are sequential and create opportunities for repetition to embed knowledge and skills
- facilitate greater fluency, independence, maintenance and transference of skills to varied contexts
- provide progression and continuity of learning that is suited to individual needs and outcomes as set out in learners EHCP's
- maximise the learners' potential in mobility, physical abilities, communication skills, sensory capabilities, resilience and personal independence
- incorporate 'life skills' into our offer to enable our learners to transfer and apply their learning to 'real-life' contexts
- encourage each learner to recognise, record and celebrate positive achievements in all areas of personal, educational and community life
- regularly and consistently record each learners progress using appropriate methods of formative and summative assessment
- promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of learners' at the academy, and within society
- ensure equality of opportunity regardless of gender, race, culture, religion, social disadvantage or disability
- maintain a flexible, creative and reflective approach to curriculum design to ensure that our curriculum is appropriate, motivating and offers the right level of challenge and support

Our curriculum offer is delivered via the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Explorers and Connectors Pathways through a two year rolling programme across each key stage with a thematic approach to the National Curriculum programmes of study.

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Leycroft Curriculum Map 2024-2026						
Stage	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
EYFS	All About Me 	Festivals of Light 	Dragons and Castles 	Living on a Farm 	Growth and Change 	Transport and Journeys
1 st Year KS1	Childhood 	Paws Claws and Whiskers 	Moon Zoom 	Dinosaur Planet 	The Enchanted Woodland 	Bright lights, Big City
2 nd Year KS1	Muck, Mess and Mixtures 	Street Detectives 	Towers, Tunnels and Turrets 	Movers and Shakers 	Wriggle and Crawl 	Coastline/ Land Ahoy!
1 st Year LSK2	Gods and Mortals 	Scrumdiddlyumptious 	Mighty Metals 	Tribal Tales 	Predator 	Tremors
2 nd Year LSK2	Potions 	Blue Abyss 	Burps, Bottoms and Bile 	I am Warrior! 	Invasion/Traders and Raiders 	Misty Mountain Sierra/ Winding River
1 st Year UKS2	Pharaohs 	Stargazers 	Off with Her Head! 	Scream Machine 	Beast Creator 	Fallen Fields
2 nd Year UKS2	Darwin's Delights 	Blood Heart 	Frozen Kingdom 	A Child's War 	Gallery Rebels 	Hola Mexico!

Personalised teaching strategies:

We reflect teaching approaches and methods which best enhance the individual learners ability to learn. Examples of teaching strategies that are deployed include;

- the use of visual timetables
- separate work areas and individual workstations
- individual daily schedules
- personalised communication books and aids
- visual aids to introduce, model activity & respond appropriately in terms of understanding
- sensory stories
- intensive interaction
- motivators and incentives
- movement programmes
- continuous provision
- carousel of activities

Communication strategy to support curriculum implementation:

Our learners have the right to equality of opportunities, regardless of their method of communication. Appropriate systems must be available throughout the day to support and encourage functional communication across the curriculum.

We want to ensure all of our learners have a 'voice' that can be heard. In order to develop functional and effective communication skills our learners need access to a responsive and consistent environment. It is our responsibility to provide robust and varied communication strategies to ensure they are able to meet the potential. Our students need to be empowered to communicate for themselves, and challenged to move beyond their existing communication levels.

We want all learners to have:

- Means - way of communicating
- Reason – something to communicate for
- Opportunity – when they can communicate

Based on need the following universal approaches are adopted:

Receptive language: multi-sensory timetable, symbol support.

Expressive language: Intensive Interaction, aided language

Transitions: on body signing, symbol support (timetables and lanyards)

Reading:

The ability to read is fundamental to many aspects of life and is central to general progress and developing an understanding in a wide range of areas of the curriculum. The teaching of reading is given a high priority by all staff.

Reading develops imagination, experiences and supports conceptual learning. For learners with additional needs, reading may be interpreted as any activity that leads to the

derivation of meaning from visual or tactile representation, which may be assessed visually, aurally or through touch.

Our reading strategy demonstrates the inextricable link we recognise between reading and communication, developing an understanding that words have meaning, power and consequences. In order to promote this, learners are provided with a language-rich environment, conducive to supporting the acquisition of reading skills at every level.

Reading for Purpose:

Sequential reading begins by developing our learner's skills to gain meaning from objects, symbols, text and the environment. These early reading skills are taught by building on the ability to visually track from left to right, to developing an understanding of referential objects, symbols or photographs.

We aim to develop learners' ability to understand that objects, symbols or photographs represent something else. We use symbols through the use of alternative communication (AAC) systems including picture exchange communication (PECs) and communication books. At this stage, learners begin to further develop their understanding of objects, symbols and photographs in meaningful ways. Evolving further to the stage where learners are able to exchange or add more meaning to the object - developing functional and purposeful uses of objects, symbols and pictures to communicate.

Moving on from this, reading is then taught through a systematic synthetic phonics programme (SSP), Read, Write, Inc. (RWI). Learners are assessed through a PiRA (progress in reading assessment) reading test as well as a Read Write Inc. phonics assessment to determine the stage of the programme and book band level they are working at. This provides a starting point and a baseline from which progress can be tracked. Learners at this stage work through the Read Write Inc. synthetic phonics programme which is delivered systematically across the pathways where it is relevant and appropriate for individual learners.

For learners who are unable to access the reading and phonics tests, sound boxes are used to teach and expose children to the different phonemes. Pupils are also exposed to environmental sounds, sound books and are read to regularly. They also engage in 'Intensive Interaction' sessions to support attention and get them ready to move onto the next stage of learning to read.

Once learners are able to decode or sight read words and are working through the book bands appropriate to their level, they then work towards developing their comprehension skills. In some cases, learners are moved to a lower book band level in order to focus on their comprehension. Research into reading suggests that learners should know no less than 85% of the words in their reading texts to be able gain adequate comprehension (Schmitt et al.).

Throughout all of the reading opportunities, a learners' readiness to read will be assessed, recognising a learners' ability to maintain concentration and attention, display positive dispositions and attitudes to learning and engages with environmental sounds and visual or tactile cues.

Reading skills are implemented within all areas of the curriculum provision, across all pathways, to promote fluency, frequency and access to information, as well as developing enjoyment of reading and supporting learning beyond the classroom.

Reading for Pleasure:

At Leycroft Academy, we believe that reading and literature should be enjoyed by all. Storytelling is a fundamental part of being human, it is a vehicle for supporting our learners in engagement, communication and understanding. Reading has the power to create a communal experience for all.

We can approach reading in this way through drama, sensory stories, call and response, individual reading for pleasure opportunities and small/whole class story times.

Stories provide real opportunity for learners to become familiar with the rhythm, characters and settings of stories, practicing their sequencing and turn-taking, as well as their anticipatory and memory skills - the basic elements of communication.

For more information around our quality of education around reading, please read our Reading impact document.

Capable environment:

Adapting the environment (both the social and physical environment) has been shown to improve quality of life and therefore we ensure elements noted below are embedded into our daily practice and curriculum provision. This also forms part of the universal Positive Behaviour Support provision.

- Capable Environments (McGill, Bradshaw, Smyth, Hurman and Roy, 2020)

Communication	Cognition	Physical Wellbeing	Reflective practitioners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive social interactions • Support for communication • Support to establish and maintain relationships with others • Provision of opportunities for choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for participation in meaningful activities and learning • Provision of consistent and predictable environments with personalised routines and activities • Encouragement of more independent functioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal care and health support • Provision of acceptable physical environment (sensory aware) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindful and skilled staff

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) to support curriculum implementation:

At Leycroft Academy we use a PBS approach which is embedded through the curriculum as a vital part of learning. PBS aims to improve quality of life and ensures learners’ needs are at the heart of what we do. As part of our curriculum we teach vital skills such as communication, personal skills and coping strategies to ensure our learners are as independent as they can be.

Multi-disciplinary support:

At Leycroft Academy we pride ourselves in meeting the individual needs of our learners, and our therapeutic provisions are a key aspect in achieving this. The following therapeutic provision is in place to support learning and wellbeing:

Speech and Language Therapy: Our aim for Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) is to upskill teachers and support staff to enable them to provide consistent communication support throughout the curriculum. The therapist also supports the implementation of the communication strategy and provides regular communication support within classes.

Occupational Therapy: The Occupational Therapist supports staff in creating a sensory aware learning environment in order to meet learners’ sensory needs. For our FFL pathway the therapist supports the development of sensory circuits and provides guidance for teachers when developing individual sensory profiles. The therapist also provides regular support in classes to offer advice and guidance relating to the implementation of sensory profiles.

Additional support:

In addition to the therapies listed above we also liaise with Educational Psychologists, School Nurses, and Forward Thinking Birmingham (emotional and mental health service).

Enriched curriculum:

All enrichment activities are woven into the heart and soul of our offer. We do not see enrichment activities as being distinct from learning. It is these rich experiences that make learning memorable.

To enhance the curriculum we provide:

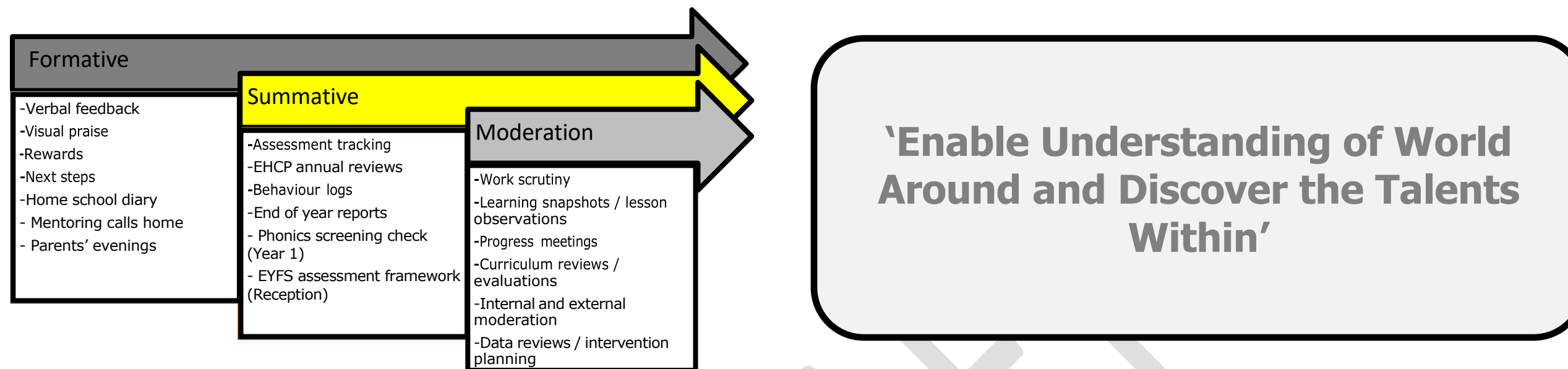
- a variety of out-of-school activities,
- educational visits,
- holding specialist curriculum days / week
- offering opportunities to learn outdoors / within the community
- residential trips
- lunch time clubs

These opportunities enable learners to:

- develop new learning
- embed / generalise existing learning in a variety of different contexts,
- promote skills for independence

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Curriculum assessment



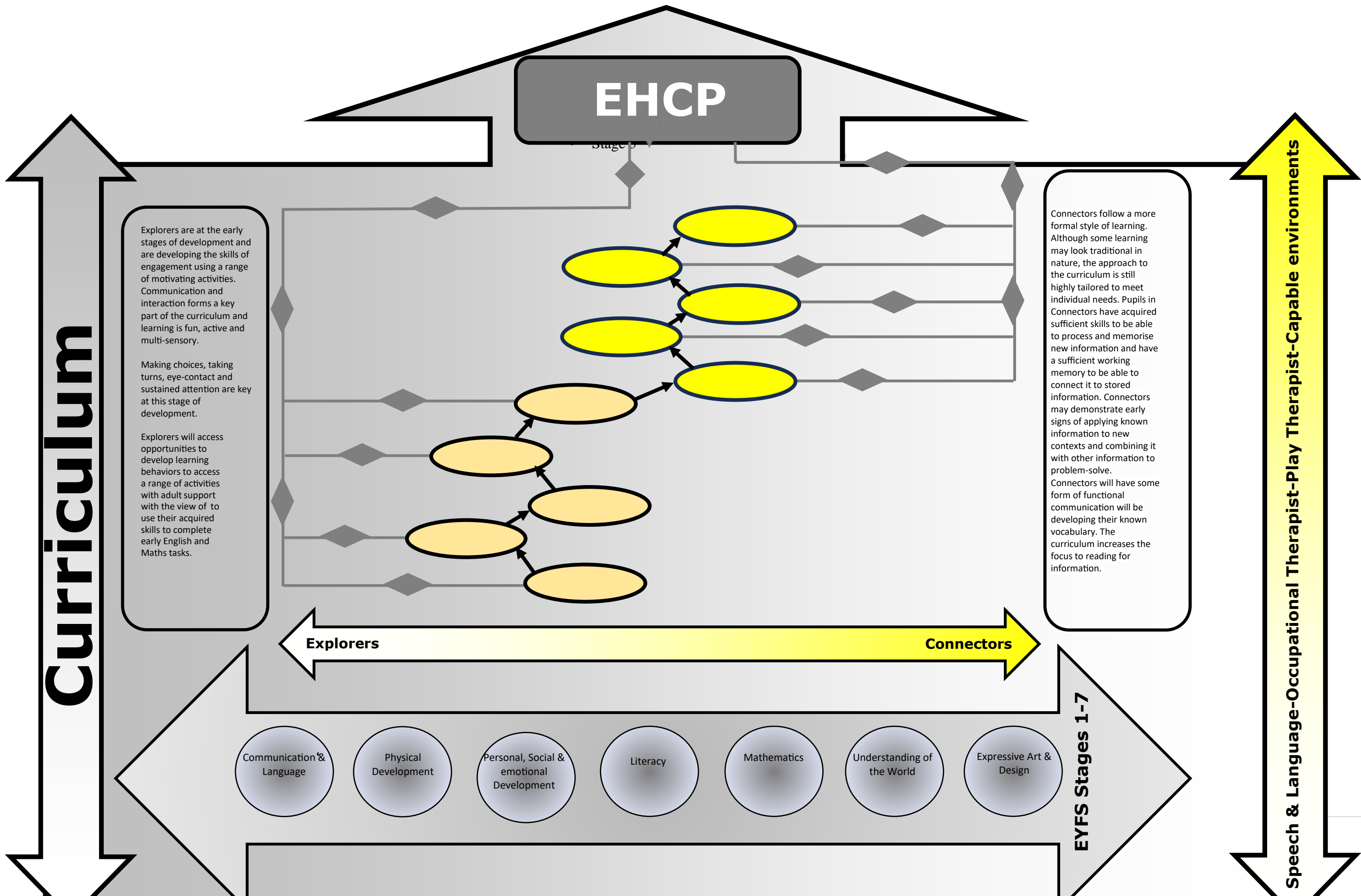
Learner progress is shared with parent/carers during Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) review meetings, parental consultation meetings and through informal meetings throughout the year. Parent/carers are also able to arrange meetings with the class teacher or their Department lead to discuss the progress their child is making.

Wellbeing through the curriculum

Our curriculum enables learners the opportunity to:

- recognise own strengths
- build suitable interactions/ respectful friendships
- learn how to respect themselves and others
- develop self-esteem and confidence in their abilities
- follow their own interest and be themselves
- learn in a supportive environment
- be supported to learn how to self-regulate when anxieties become heightened
- Find a way of being active that they enjoy
- support others in the school community and wider community

'Enable Understanding of World Around and Discover the Talents Within'



Explorers are at the early stages of development and are developing the skills of engagement using a range of motivating activities. Communication and interaction forms a key part of the curriculum and learning is fun, active and multi-sensory.

Making choices, taking turns, eye-contact and sustained attention are key at this stage of development.

Explorers will access opportunities to develop learning behaviors to access a range of activities with adult support with the view of to use their acquired skills to complete early English and Maths tasks.

Connectors follow a more formal style of learning. Although some learning may look traditional in nature, the approach to the curriculum is still highly tailored to meet individual needs. Pupils in Connectors have acquired sufficient skills to be able to process and memorise new information and have a sufficient working memory to be able to connect it to stored information. Connectors may demonstrate early signs of applying known information to new contexts and combining it with other information to problem-solve. Connectors will have some form of functional communication will be developing their known vocabulary. The curriculum increases the focus to reading for information.

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At Leycroft Academy our equally ambitious and adapted curricular offer aims to enable learners 'understand the world around them and discover their talents within them' therefore enhancing their quality of life and widening access to opportunities into adulthood.

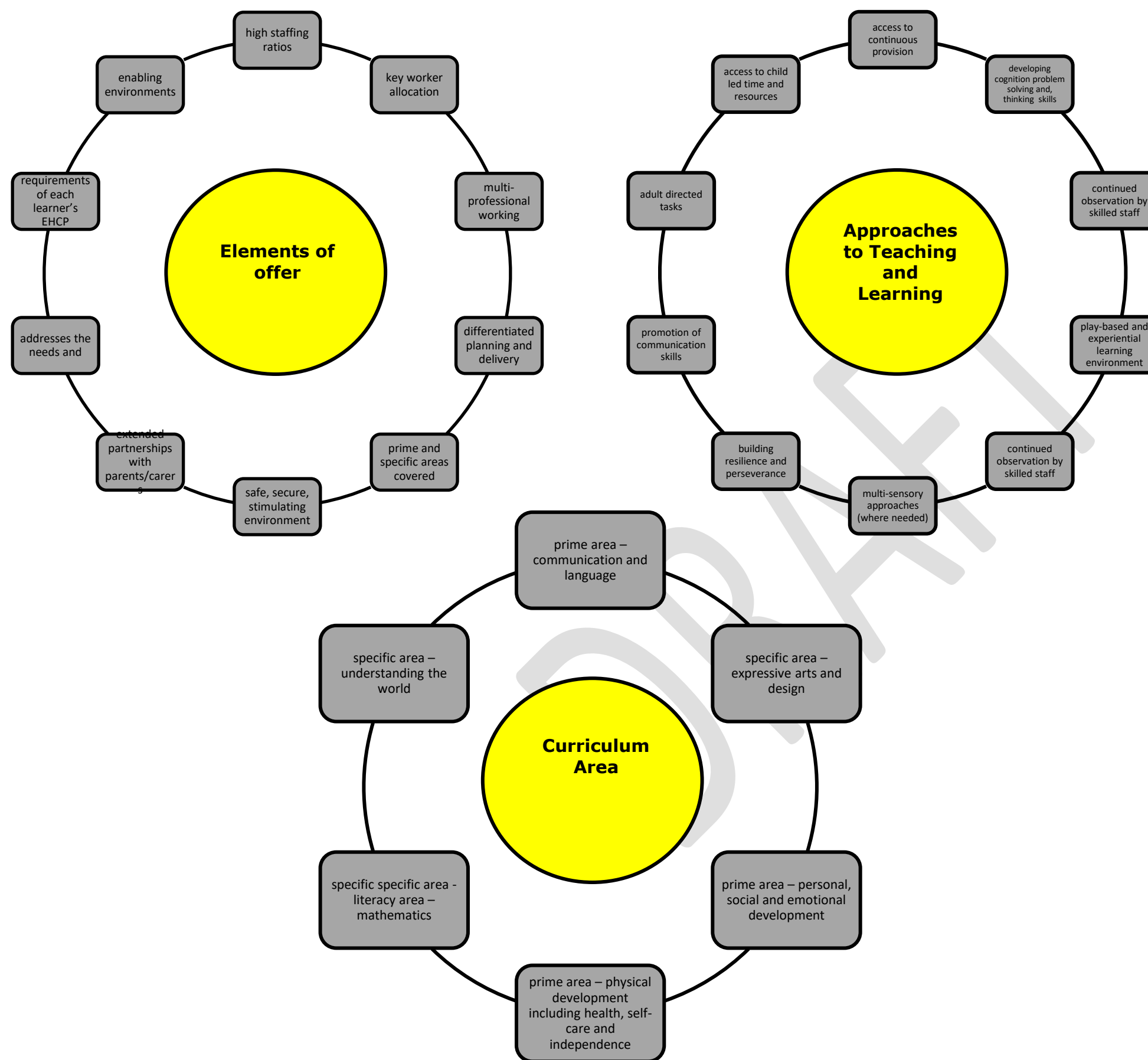
In line with learners' Educational, Health & Care Plans and their aspirations the curriculum offer enables learners to:

- be as independent as possible
- achieve their fullest potential
- be safe and happy
- lead fulfilled lives
- make positive contributions to society

Our curriculum is organised to ensure access is equitable, age appropriate builds on learning, is enjoyable and relevant. This is complimented by conditions that support and develop learners' creative, cognition, social, emotional, physical and/or sensory needs.

Our curriculum provision is delivered via the:

- Early Years Foundation Stage
- Explorers Pathway
- Connectors Pathway



The EYFS Pathway offers a secure foundation that creates learning and opportunities focused on developing learners’ knowledge, skills and understanding through the guiding principles of three prime and four specific areas of learning.

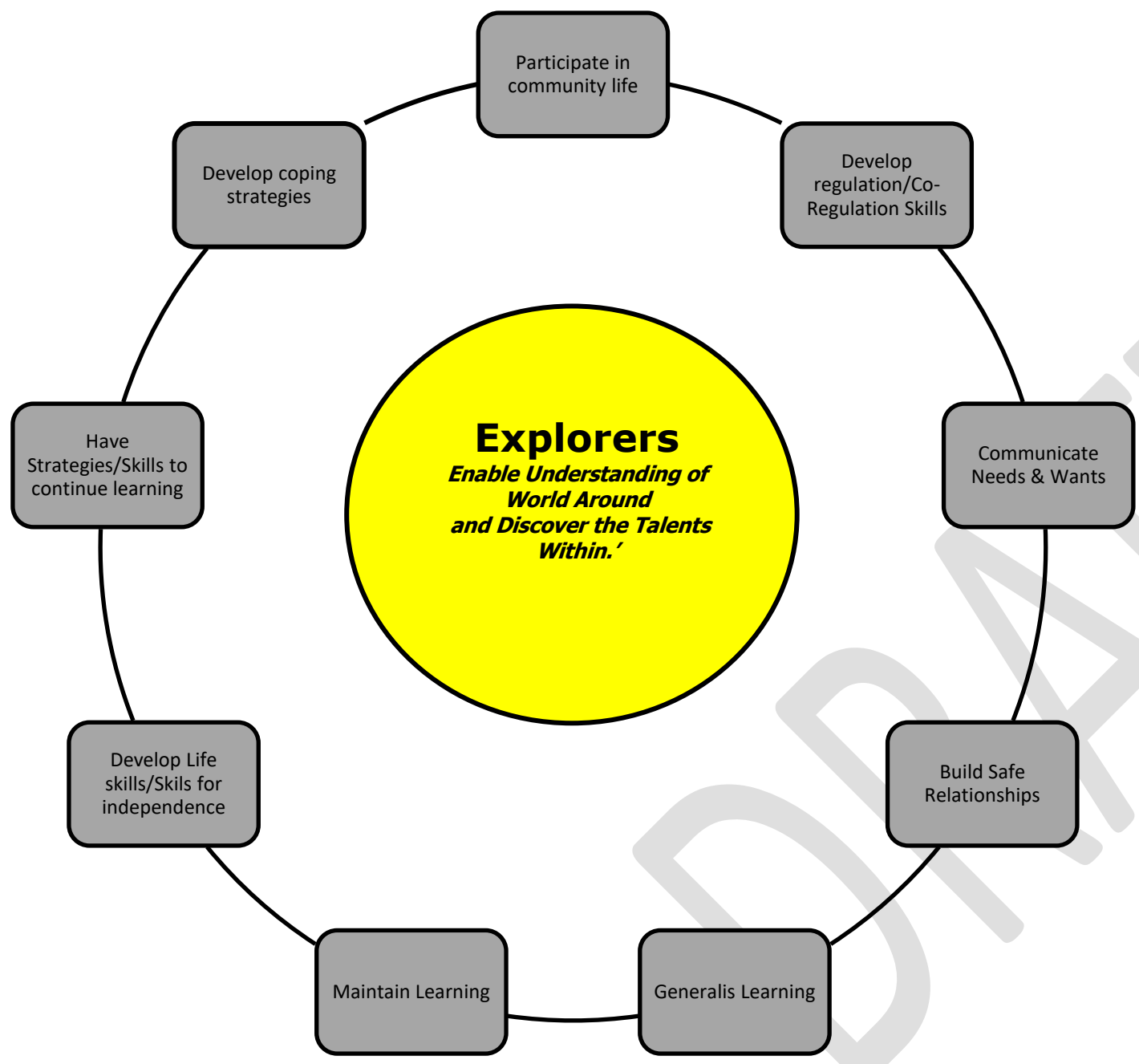
The curriculum responds to the following areas of need:

- communication and interaction
- cognition and learning and developing control.
- social, emotional, and mental wellbeing
- physical and sensory
- self-care and independence

Leycroft will integrate the following overarching principles of EYFS into our delivery:

- every learner is a unique child, who is constantly learning in order to be able to be resilient, capable, confident and self- assured.
- children learn to be strong and independent through meaningful positive relationships and benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- children learn and develop well in enabling environments where teaching and support from adults, respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time.
- recognising that children develop and learn at different rates.

The curriculum provides a play-based and experiential learning environment, combined with focused adult-led teaching interaction in order to ensure learners make progress and develop their pre-requisite skills before moving onto the next stage of their learning.



The Explorers Pathway provides a personalised curriculum for learners with profound autism. It aims to prepare learners for their future by equipping them with life skills such as communication, emotional regulation and daily living skills. Learner’s sensory needs are supported throughout the day.

The curriculum responds to the following areas of need:

- communication and interaction
- cognition and learning
- self-help, regulation and independence
- sensory needs
- social emotional and mental wellbeing

The curriculum is flexible, highly personalised with motivating activities delivered through meaningful and purposeful teaching approaches. Skills are broken down into small steps and built upon sequentially with repetition of skills to ensure maintenance.

We aim for learners to:

- be as independent as they can be
- be able to communicate functionally.
- become resilient and regulate their behaviour
- live a safe, healthy and happy life
- be active participants in their community

The illustration to the left provides examples of learner outcomes within the explorer’s pathway based on their life need.

Explorers

Elements of offer:

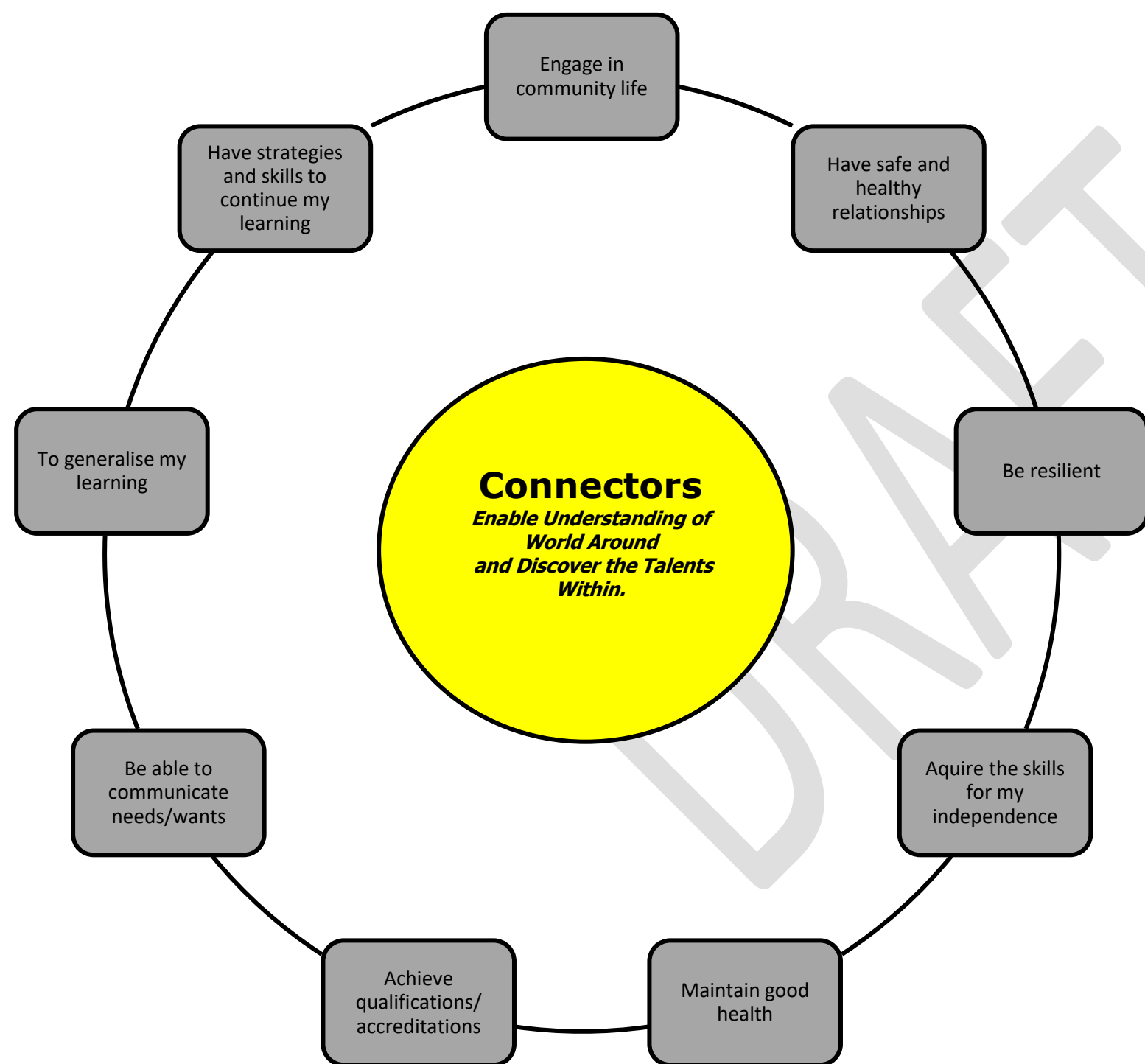
- high staffing ratios
- personalized
- promoting a sensory aware learning environment
- support to develop strategies to manage own behavior/regulation
- highly structured environment functional / skills-based routine led
- generalising learning beyond the classroom
- inclusive communication approach
- addresses the needs and requirements of each learner's EHCP

Curriculum areas:

- Communication and English
- Reading
- Problem Solving
- Computing
- Exploring the world around us
- Music
- Art & Design
- Physical Education
- PSHE
- Life Skills

Approaches to T&L:

- use of visual timetables
- transition and schedules
- focus on developing communication through AAC
- repetition, maintenance and generalisation of learning
- regulation strategies embedded throughout the day
- structured teaching approach
- reinforcement and motivation used to develop learning
- sensory strategies embedded throughout the day
- Continuous provision
- Carousel of activities



The connectors Pathway provides a personalised curriculum for learners with autism. It aims to prepare learners for their future by equipping them with life skills such as communication, emotional regulation and daily living skills.

The curriculum responds to the following areas of need:

- cognition & learning
- communication and interaction
- social emotional and mental health
- sensory and/or physical needs

The curriculum comprises of an adapted version of subject specific knowledge taken from relevant parts of the National Curriculum, coupled with opportunities for learners to generalise their learning and develop important life skills.

We aim for learners to:

- acquire skills for independence
- enjoy learning through a broad range of subjects / experiences
- become confident individuals who are happy to live safe, healthy and happy lives
- become active, responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society
- be able to communicate in a range of contexts, using AAC as needed

The illustration to the right provides examples of learner outcomes within the connectors pathway.

Connectors

Elements of offer:

- adapted National Curriculum offer
- sequentially mapped out curriculum areas
- high staffing ratio
- integrating skills for independence work related learning
- learning within the community differentiated planning and delivery
- personalised resources based on needs
- multi-professional working
- addresses the needs and requirements of each learner's EHCP

Curriculum areas:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Technologies (Computing/Design Technology/Food Technology)
- Humanities
- Religious Education
- Music
- Art & Design
- Physical Education
- PSHE
- Life Skills

Approaches to T&L:

- promotion of communication skills with ability to use AAC as required
- consolidation and generalisation of learning
- learning beyond the classroom / externally
- developing problem solving and thinking skills
- creative teaching approaches
- learning is relatable with opportunities to apply to a real world setting
- multi-sensory approaches (where needed)
- developing positive relationships with adults and peers
- making requests/choices promoting interests /motivators
- acquiring knowledge and applied skills
- building resilience