

This curriculum statement was devised in May 2025. 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.

Curriculum Principles

1. Inclusive

Our curriculum provides equal opportunities for all learners, embracing cultural diversity and ensuring equality regardless of gender, race, culture, religion, social disadvantage, or disability. It is tailored to meet individual needs and outcomes, including those outlined in EHCPs, to maximise each child's potential.

2. Engaging and Meaningful

We create a stimulating and purposeful learning environment that promotes enjoyment, achievement, and motivation. Learning is relevant and connected to real-life contexts, incorporating life skills that support independence and personal growth.

3. Ambitious

Our curriculum is carefully planned and sequenced to enable repetition, embedding of knowledge and skills, and progression. It supports fluency, independence, and the transfer of skills to varied contexts, ensuring continuity and development over time.

4. Holistic Development

We promote the cultural, moral, mental, and physical development of each child. Our curriculum supports communication, resilience, mobility, sensory capabilities, and personal independence, fostering well-rounded individuals prepared for life beyond school.

5. Reflective and Adaptive

We maintain a flexible, creative, and reflective approach to curriculum design. This ensures the curriculum remains appropriate, challenging, and supportive, regularly using formative and summative assessment to celebrate achievements and inform ongoing improvement.

Our curriculum is delivered through four distinct pathways—Seekers, Explorers, Connectors, and Unity—designed to meet the diverse needs of our learners. These pathways are implemented via a carefully planned rolling programme: a three-year cycle across EYFS and KS1, and a four-year cycle throughout KS2. Each pathway is thoughtfully structured to provide a broad, balanced, and inclusive learning experience that supports progression and development across key learning areas. This is illustrated in the table below.

Sequential Skills and Knowledge			
EYFS	Reception	Seekers	
Key Stage 1	Year 1		
	Year 2		
Key Stage 2	Year 3	Explorers	Unity - My Communication - My Cognition - My Care, Independence & life skills - My World - My Creativity - My Physical Wellbeing
	Year 4		
	Year 5		
	Year 6		
			Connectors
			- English, Phonics, Reading - Maths - PSHE & Life Skills - PE - Topic: - Geography, - History, - Science, - Computing - DT - Food Technology - Art

Seekers Pathway Overview

The Seekers Pathway at Leycroft Academy supports children in EYFS and KS1 who are at the early stages of development. It is designed specifically to meet the needs of autistic learners by providing a child-led, play-based learning environment that encourages active engagement and exploration.

Learning is delivered through continuous provision, where children access four adult-led stations within the classroom. These stations may take the form of table activities, sensory trays, or designated spaces such as role play, calm, or reading areas. Each station focuses on key developmental areas:

- **Communication and Language**
- **Literacy**
- **Mathematics**
- **Understanding the World**
- **Expressive arts and design**

A floating adult supports children’s individual Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) and Personal, Social, and Emotional Development (PSED) targets throughout the day.

Teaching staff use a 4-Part Interaction Model at each station to support learning:

- **Engage:** Capture the child’s attention with motivating objects or activities to encourage focus and interaction.
- **Model (Activate):** Introduce new learning in small, manageable steps using clear instructions and visuals.
- **Demonstrate:** Observe children applying new skills with adult support, providing immediate feedback to guide understanding.
- **Consolidate:** Record learning progress through observations and tracking tools to inform future planning.

Children may take several sessions to visit all stations, allowing time to consolidate their learning. The curriculum is personalised, with everyday opportunities used to develop each child’s individual SALT, PSED, and EHCP targets, ensuring learning is meaningful and relevant.

Importantly, this curriculum pathway meets the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) by ensuring that all learning experiences are thoughtfully planned to support the three prime areas of learning:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social, and Emotional Development

It also integrates specific areas such as communication and cognition, for example through structured storytelling sessions that enhance vocabulary and foster early reading skills. This approach ensures the needs of our learners in their earliest stages of development are fully met. The Seekers Pathway helps children build foundational knowledge and skills through sensory-rich experiences and early learning opportunities, preparing them for more complex learning as they progress through school.

Seekers

Elements of offer:

- Access to outdoor space
- high staffing ratios
- personalised plans to include motivators
- promoting a sensory aware learning environment
- support to develop strategies to manage own behavior/regulation
- flexible timetable with continuous provision in the environment / routine led
- learning beyond the classroom
- inclusive communication approach
- therapeutic support services addresses the needs and requirements of each learner's EHCP

Curriculum areas:

- Non-subject specific skills and knowledge are developed through continuous provision and teacher-led in the following areas
 - Communication and Language
 - Literacy
 - Mathematics
 - Understanding the World
 - Expressive arts and design
 - Personal, Social and Emotional Development
 - Physical Development

Specific focus throughout all learning:

- Communication and Language
- Personal, Social, Emotional Development
- Physical Development

Enrichment opportunities across the year:

- History/ Cultural special days
- Religious Education
- Music lessons
- Drama sessions (Open Theatre)
- Sherborne Movement

Approaches to T&L:

- PWS approach (Pedagogy within Seekers)
- use of visual timetables
- use of now/ next boards (OOR/ Symbols)
- transition and schedules
- focus on developing communication through AAC
- repetition, maintenance and generalisation of learning
- regulation strategies embedded throughout the day
- continuous provision learning with focused 1:1 teaching opportunities
- reinforcement and motivation used to develop learning
- sensory strategies embedded throughout the day
- Continuous provision



The Seekers Pathway empowers children to become confident and compassionate individuals who understand themselves and others, manage their emotions effectively, and develop the practical skills necessary for active participation in society. This pathway supports children to grow into independent, resilient individuals capable of forming meaningful relationships and making positive contributions to their communities. These key outcomes, alongside the progressive steps and stages that guide this development, are outlined in this diagram.

Explorers Pathway Overview

The **Explorers Pathway** is designed for Key Stage 2 learners with autism who benefit from a sensory, child-led, and exploratory approach to learning. This pathway supports learners in developing cognition, communication, emotional regulation, and essential life skills while preparing them for future independence.

Curriculum Delivery:

Learning takes place through immersive, hands-on activities that are highly motivating and personalised to each child's needs and interests. Adults guide learning by modelling interactions and then providing opportunities for independent exploration and practice.

Key Development Areas:

- My Communication
- My Cognition
- My Care, Independence, and Life Skills
- My World
- My Creativity
- My Physical Wellbeing

Teaching Approach:

The pathway uses a dynamic **4-Part Interaction Model** to support learning at various zones inside and outside the classroom:

- 1.Connect:** Revisiting previously acquired skills and knowledge to build a foundation for new learning.
- 2.Model:** Explicitly demonstrating new skills and concepts aligned with session objectives.
- 3.Demonstrate:** Allowing learners to show their understanding, enabling facilitators to assess support needs and plan next steps.
- 4.Consolidate:** Employing assessment for learning strategies such as checking understanding, positive reinforcement, and reflection to celebrate progress.

Weekly Learning Activities:

- Teacher-led sessions introducing new learning linked to specific objectives.
- Carousel provision enabling learners to practise skills in a supportive environment.
- Movement and sensory circuits designed to teach self-regulation strategies including alerting, organising, and calming.
- Developing independence areas with visual supports, clear organisation, and individualised strategies to enhance communication and autonomy.

Philosophy and Values:

- Every learner is unique and learns at their own pace.
- Emotional regulation and safety are prioritised to support learners and those around them.
- Strong, positive relationships between learners, practitioners, and families are essential.
- Learners are supported to develop effective communication in their preferred ways.
- Learning environments are designed to be supportive and responsive to individual interests and needs.
- Integration into the wider community is encouraged to foster social inclusion.
- The Explorers Pathway ensures that learners build skills progressively, with personalised support that promotes resilience, confidence, and independence.

Explorers

Elements of offer:

- High staffing ratios
- Personalised
- Promoting a sensory aware learning environment
- Support to develop strategies to manage own behavior/regulation
- Highly structured environment functional / skills-based routine lead
- Therapeutic support services
- Generalising learning beyond the classroom
- Inclusive communication approach
- Addresses the needs and requirements of each learner's EHCP

Curriculum areas:

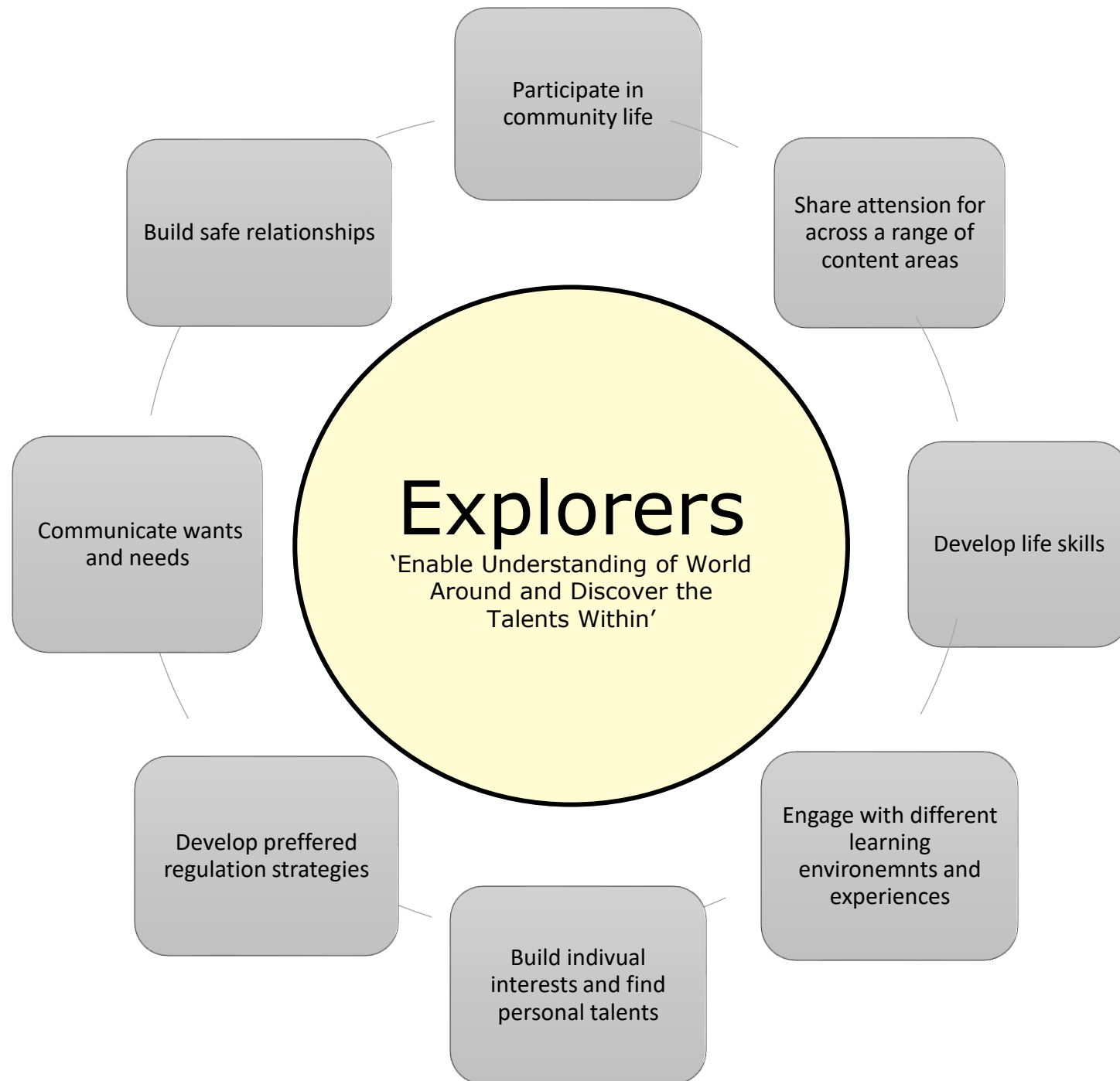
- My Communication and Phonics x 5
- My Cognition x 5
- My World x 1
- My Creativity x1
- My Care, Independence and Life Skills x 5
- My Physical Wellbeing x 2

Enrichment opportunities across the year:

- History/ Cultural special days
- Religious Education
- Music lessons
- Drama sessions (Open Theatre)
- Sherborne Movement

Approaches to T&L:

- PWE approach (Pedagogy Within Explorers).
- Use of visual timetables
- Use of Now/next boards
- 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
 - Carousel of activities



The Explorers Pathway inspires children to engage with curiosity, creativity, and a sense of adventure as they discover and make sense of the world around them. Through purposeful learning experiences, children develop critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and resilience, fostering a love of inquiry and discovery. This pathway encourages children to take risks, ask questions, and explore new ideas, supporting both their intellectual growth and personal development. By nurturing these qualities, the Explorers Pathway empowers children to become confident, independent learners who are motivated to uncover their talents and contribute innovatively to their communities. This diagram outlines some of key outcomes of the Explores pathway.

Unity Pathway Summary

The Unity pathway at Leycroft Academy is specially designed to support pupils who find it challenging to thrive in traditional classroom settings and may struggle to access the curriculum through Leycroft’s conventional pathways. Our specialist approach focuses on creating a safe, supportive, and personalised learning environment that meets the unique needs of these learners.

Learning Environment and Approach

We prioritise giving pupils control over their physical space to reduce social anxiety and encourage engagement. Many pupils in the unity pathway have experienced disrupted education due to exclusion or reduced timetables elsewhere. Our Unity pathway aims to rekindle their enthusiasm for learning, address missed opportunities and rebuild their confidence and trust in education.

Inclusion is central to our philosophy. We ensure all pupils have the opportunity to participate meaningfully and achieve through a combination of structured learning and self-directed activities, recognising that engagement can take many forms.

For learners with complex autism, busy classrooms can be overwhelming due to sensory sensitivities and social communication difficulties. The unity pathway provides a calm, predictable environment with smaller group sizes and individualised support to reduce stress and promote learning.

Curriculum Structure and areas of Learning

Pupils in the unity pathway access the same curriculum content as those in the Explorers, pathway, ensuring a cohesive educational experience. Learning is organised into six key areas:

- Physical Development
- My Communication
- My Cognition
- My Physical Wellbeing and Independence
- My Creativity
- My World

The curriculum is implemented through a carefully structured and supportive learning environment designed to meet the individual needs of each child, particularly focusing on cognition and communication development.

1.Movement Area and Independent Engagement:

Children have access to a dedicated movement area where they are encouraged to independently engage with activities tailored to support their cognition and communication skills.

2.Focus Work with Visual Supports:

Focused learning tasks are supported by visual aids such as "now and next" boards and work symbols to encourage children to complete their activities independently. Recognising the diverse needs of our children, adults adapt by delivering focus work directly to children who may find it challenging to remain in a designated area, ensuring accessibility and engagement.

3.Thematic Exploration in ‘The Cave’:

The curriculum incorporates thematic exploration within a dedicated space called ‘The Cave,’ where children explore topics relevant to their lives, such as "All About Me," including likes and dislikes, feelings, home, family, and friendships. This supports personal development and social understanding in a meaningful context.

4.Outdoor Learning with Small Group Focus:

Outdoor learning is organised with planned focus work and targeted interventions aligned with each child’s EHCP Target. Learning is closely monitored through weekly observation sheets, enabling staff to track progress and tailor support effectively.

Structured Interaction Model

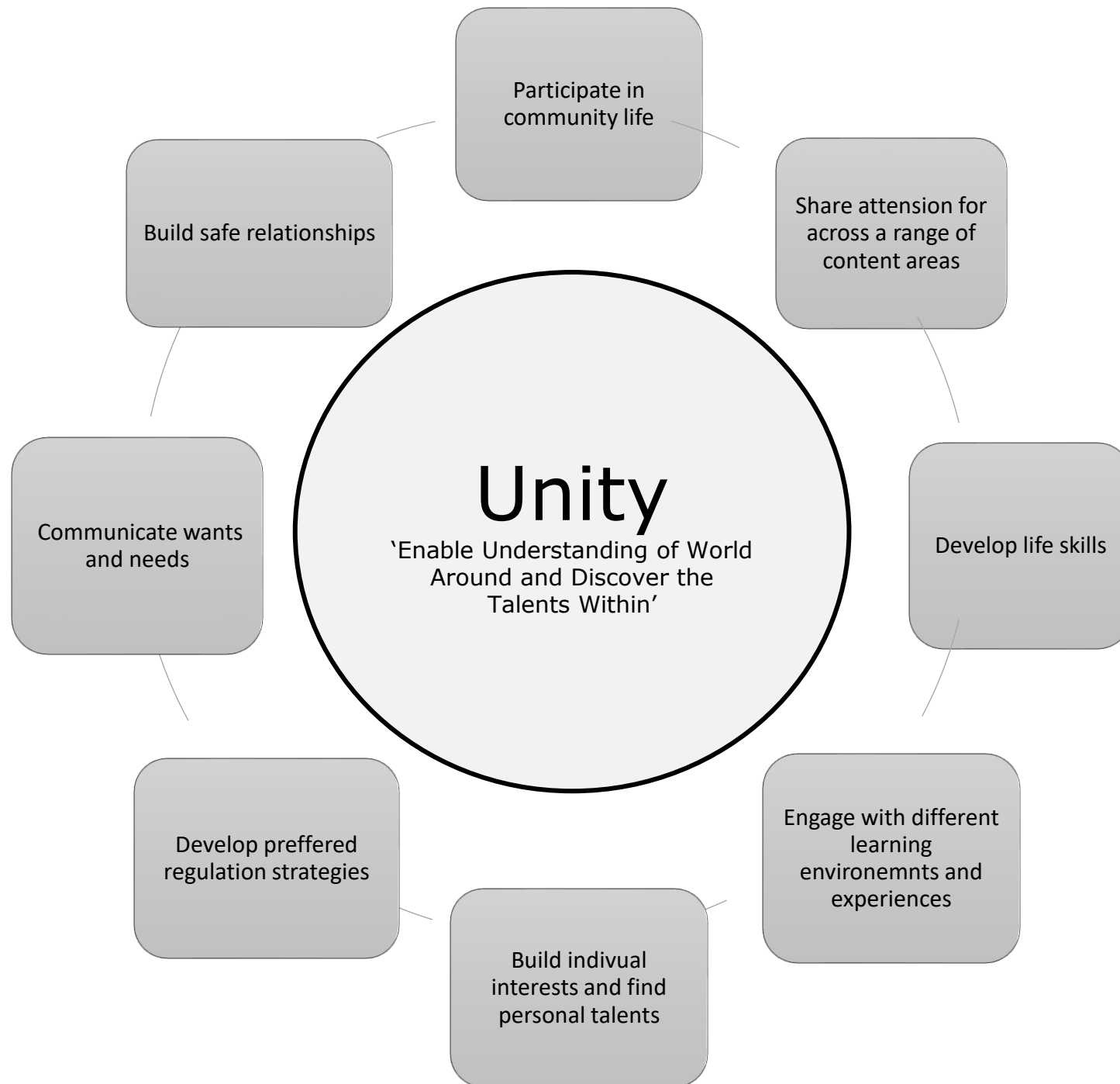
Staff use a four-part interaction model to support learning, tailored for autistic learners (see explorers pathway)

Communication and Resources

All learning activities are underpinned by Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) targets to meet individual communication needs. Practical, hands-on experiences are supported by visual and concrete resources to deepen understanding. Learning takes place in environments where pupils feel comfortable and motivated, including classrooms, breakout rooms, corridors, and outdoor spaces. These spaces are carefully organised to be clutter-free, structured, and equipped with accessible communication aids to support emotional regulation and curriculum access. Purposeful movement is integrated into learning to promote active engagement and exploration. Themes and resources are personalised to reflect pupils’ interests, ensuring relevance and motivation.

Inclusion

For Year 4 pupils primarily accessing the Unity Pathway, we begin early transition planning for secondary education. During the spring term, multi-agency meetings are held to identify appropriate Year 7 placements and to determine necessary support. Following this, we make efforts to establish strong links with prospective schools to ensure a well-coordinated and seamless transition starting in Year 6.



The Unity Pathway fosters a strong sense of belonging, collaboration, and mutual respect among children, enabling them to engage meaningfully with their peers, adults, and the wider community. Through purposeful teaching and inclusive practises, children develop essential social skills, empathy, and an appreciation of diversity. This pathway supports children in building positive relationships, working cooperatively, and contributing compassionately to group activities. By nurturing these qualities, the Unity Pathway empowers children to become active, responsible citizens who value connection and collective well-being, thereby enriching both their personal growth and their contribution to the school's inclusive culture. This diagram outlines some of key outcomes of the Unity pathway.

Unity

Elements of offer:

- High staffing ratios
- Personalised
- Promoting a sensory aware learning environment
- Support to develop strategies to manage own behavior/regulation
- Highly structured environment functional / skills-based routine lead
- Therapeutic support services
- Generalising learning beyond the classroom
- Inclusive communication approach
- Addresses the needs and requirements of each learner's EHCP
- High control environment

Curriculum areas:

- My Communication and Phonics x 5
- My Cognition x 5
- My World x 1
- My Creativity x1
- My Care, Independence and Life Skills x 5
- My Physical Wellbeing x 1

Enrichment opportunities across the year:

- History/ Cultural special days
- Religious Education
- Music lessons
- Drama sessions (Open Theatre)
- Sherborne Movement
- Regular Farm visits
- Regular swimming sessions

Approaches to T&L:

- PWE approach (Pedagogy Within Explorers).
- Use of visual timetables
- Use of Now/next boards
- 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
- Child led learning
- Carousel of activities

Connectors Pathway Summary

The Connectors Pathway provides a personalised curriculum for learners with autism. It exposes children to a broad and balanced curriculum which focuses on the world around them, It features a timetable which allows for sessions on thematic learning and focused sessions on individual personal development targets. It aims to prepare learners for their future by equipping them with life skills such as communication, emotional regulation and daily living skills.

Learning is facilitated through small group work and a mixture of concrete, pictorial and abstract content. Adults will scaffold learning to each child’s needs and will focus on independent and fluent skill recall as well as generalisation in a variety of contexts.

Curriculum Structure and areas of Learning

The curriculum responds to the following areas of need:

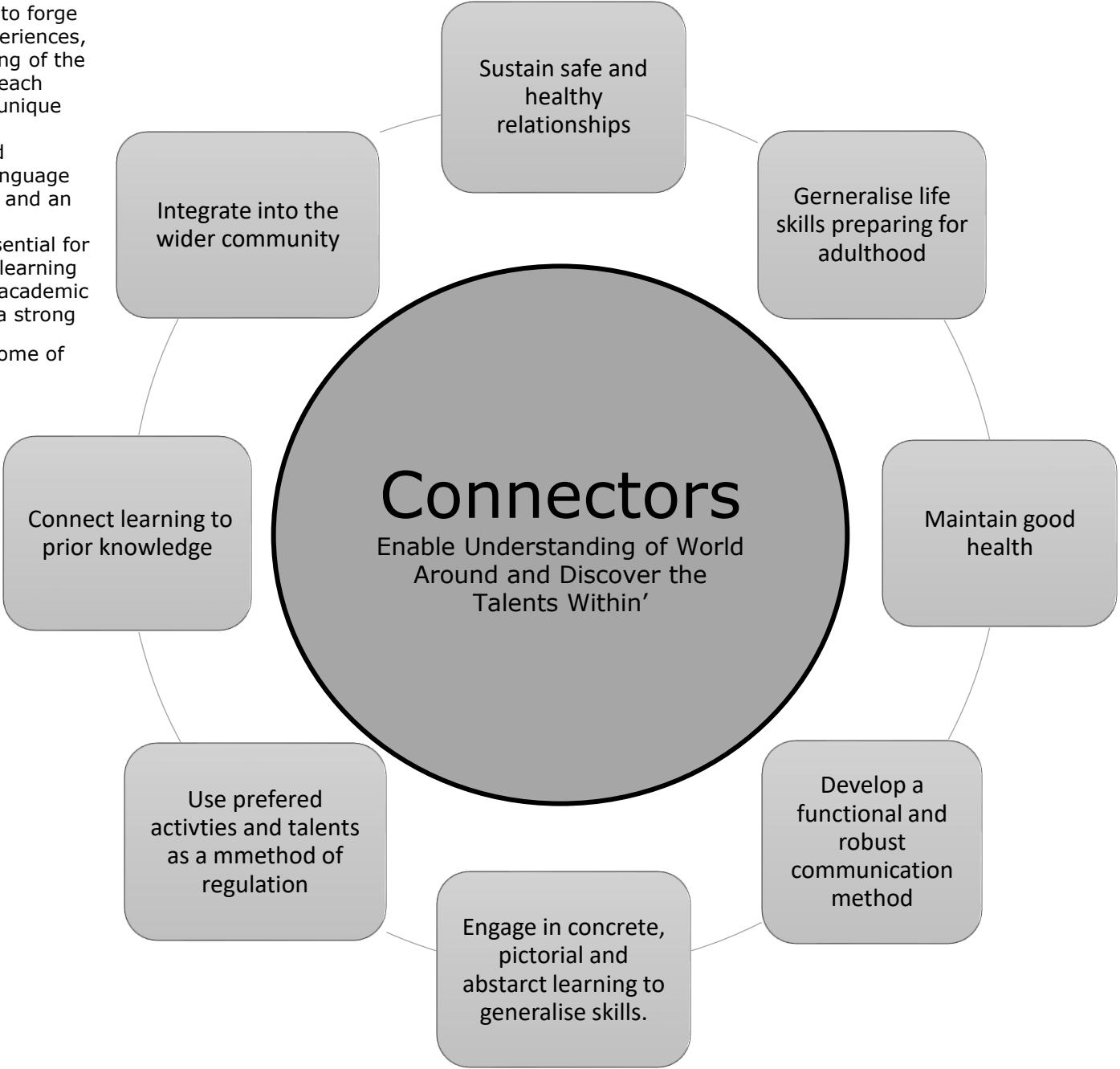
- Mathematics
- English
- Phonics/Reading
- Physical Education
- Science
- Topic
- Personal, Social and Health Education
- Life skills

Philosophy and Values:

- Every learner is unique and capable of learning skills and becoming confident and self-assured.
- Children need to acquire life skills in order to have independence as they move into adult hood
- 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’s voices need to be heard through the use of their chosen communication method.
- Children can learn to apply knowledge where teaching allows for generalisation and application of skills to variety of contexts.
- Children can integrate and be an active member of their community.

This curriculum pathway 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.

The Connector Pathway empowers children to forge meaningful connections between ideas, experiences, and knowledge, enriching their understanding of the world around them. This pathway nurtures each child's ability to discover and express their unique talents with confidence and clarity. Through intentional teaching and carefully structured opportunities, children develop advanced language skills, greater coherence in communication, and an increased ability to articulate their thoughts effectively. These foundational skills are essential for active, compassionate engagement in both learning and social interactions, promoting not only academic achievement but also personal growth and a strong sense of belonging. This diagram outlines some of key outcomes of the connector pathway.



Connectors

Elements of offer:

- High staffing ratio
- integrating skills for independence work related learning
- Flexible grouping strategies (paired/ group work)
- learning within the community
- Adapted planning and delivery
- Personalised resources based on needs
- Multi-professional working
- Therapeutic support services addresses the needs and requirements of each learner's EHCP

Curriculum areas:

- English Phonics and Reading x 5
- Maths x 5
- Science x1
- Topic x2 (History, Geography, Computing Art, DT, Food Technology)
- Physical Education x1
- PSHE and Life Skills x2

Enrichment opportunities across the year:

- Enterprise
- History/ Cultural special days
- Religious Education
- Music lessons
- Drama sessions (Open Theatre)
- Sherborne Movement

Approaches to T&L:

- PWC approach (Pedagogy Within Connectors)
- 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

Reading at Leycroft Academy

The Importance of Reading

Reading is fundamental to learning and understanding across the curriculum. At Leycroft Academy, all staff prioritise reading to develop imagination, experience, and conceptual learning. For learners with additional needs, reading includes deriving meaning from visual or tactile representations, assessed through sight, touch, or oral responses.

Reading for Purpose

We begin by building learners’ skills to understand meaning from objects, symbols, text, and their environment. Early reading focuses on visual tracking and recognising that objects, symbols, or photographs represent something else. We use alternative communication systems (AAC), including PECs and communication books, to support meaningful communication.

Learners then progress to systematic synthetic phonics through the Read Write Inc. (RWI) programme, with assessments guiding their starting point and progress. For those unable to access RWI, we use sound boxes, environmental sounds, sound books, and Intensive Interaction sessions to develop foundational skills.

As learners decode or sight-read words and progress through book bands, they work on comprehension, with research suggesting learners understand texts best when they know at least 85% of the words (Schmitt et al.).

Throughout, we assess readiness to read by observing concentration, engagement, and positive learning attitudes. Reading skills are embedded across all curriculum pathways to promote fluency, access to information, and enjoyment beyond the classroom.

Reading for Pleasure

Reading and storytelling are vital for engagement, communication, and shared experiences. We foster a love of reading through drama, sensory stories, call and response, and both individual and group story times. Stories help learners develop rhythm, sequencing, memory, and turn-taking skills—key elements of communication. For more details on our approach and impact, please refer to our Reading Impact document.

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:** symbol support (timetables and lanyards), Objects of reference (OOR), motivators, waiting for the child to be ready and being patient, give processing time

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)

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) to support curriculum implementation:

At Leycroft Academy we use the principles of the 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 therapists also support 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 Seekers and Explorers pathways 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.
- **Behaviour support specialist:** At Leycroft, our behaviour support specialist provides comprehensive support to staff, pupils, and parents in order to meet learners' communication, sensory, social, emotional and mental health needs. This is achieved through observations, the trial and implementation of positive and proactive behaviour strategies, targeted staff training, relationship building, and parental workshops.

Educational Psychologist: Our Educational Psychologist supports with making planned and targeted observations of children and suggesting strategies to support them in our setting. They also meet with staff and parents to discuss their recommendations.

Additional support:

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

Enrichment

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,
- Specialist curriculum days / week
- Offering opportunities to learn outdoors / within the community
- lunch time clubs
- Open theatre – Non-verbal drama
- Music lessons
- Sherborne Movement sessions
- History & cultural experiences

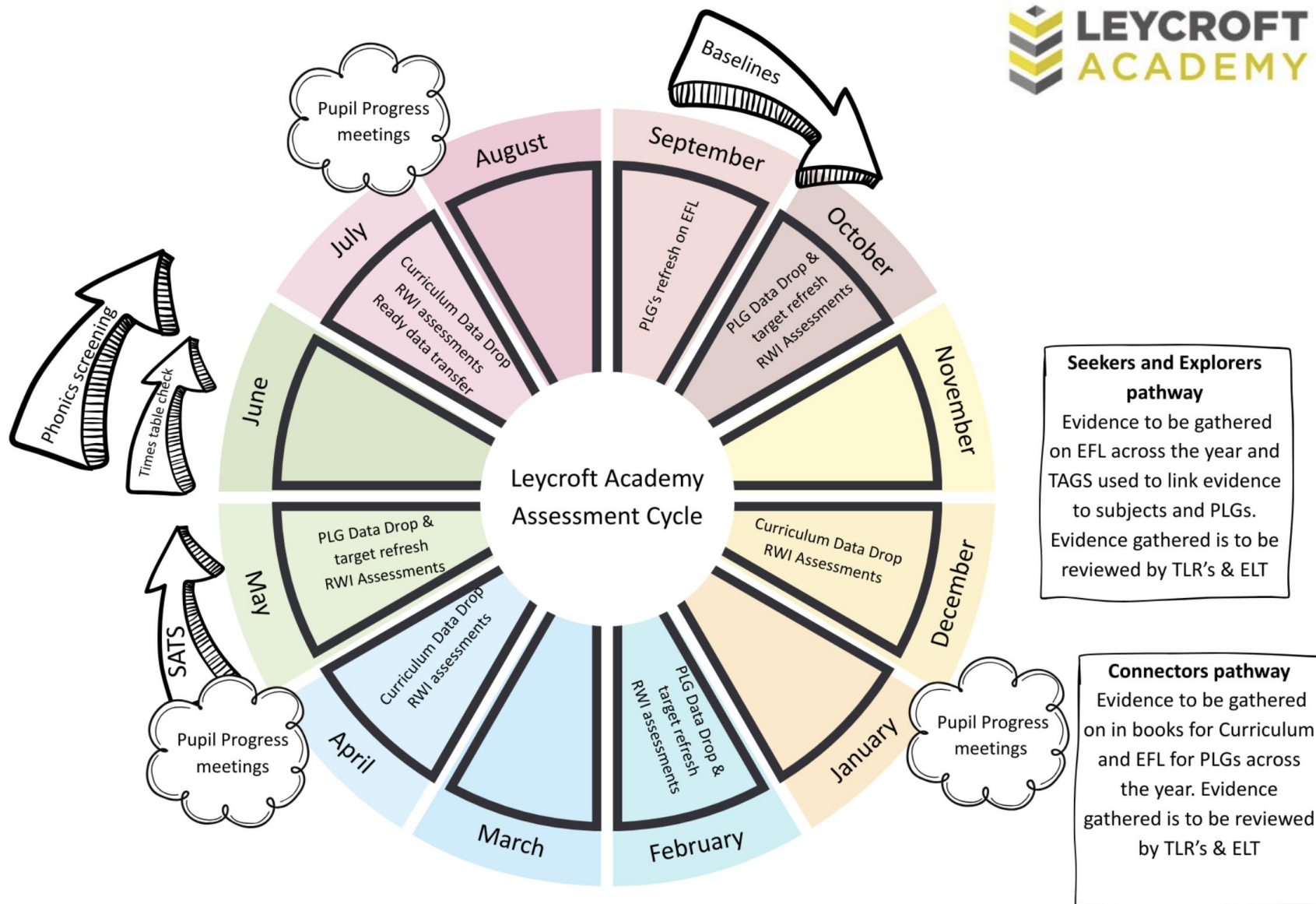
These opportunities enable learners to:

- Explore their own interests, express their true selves and begin to learn about their recreational purpose
- Develop new learning
- Embed / generalise existing learning in a variety of different contexts,
- Promote skills for independence

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



At Leycroft Academy, assessment is an ongoing, dynamic process integral to supporting primary children with complex autism. Formative observations are made daily, with many recorded via the Evidence for Learning platform, capturing rich, detailed snapshots of children's engagement and learning behaviours. For example, teachers observe key indicators such as how a child initiates interaction, responds to sensory input, or sustains attention during activities. These observations inform immediate decisions about next steps within lessons and across sequences of learning, ensuring teaching is responsive to each child's unique needs. Termly, teachers make professional judgements to summarise learning progress at critical curriculum milestones, evaluating the curriculum's impact on children's development. Additionally, observations contribute to progress monitoring against EHCP targets, with formal snapshots taken three times a year. Termly pupil progress meetings provide a collaborative forum for teachers and leaders to review progress against both curriculum and EHCP goals, forming a holistic picture that guides targeted interventions. At the class level, interventions might include adapted sensory activities to enhance focus or structured communication opportunities embedded in daily routines. More bespoke interventions could involve individualised programmes such as intensive speech and language therapy, personalised behavioural support plans, or specialist motor skills sessions, tailored to meet specific EHCP objectives and accelerate learning outcomes.