

# The Rydal Academy

## Teaching and Learning Policy

**Accepted by:** The Rydal Academy LGB January 2018

**Approving Body:** Local Governing Body

**Committee:** LGB

**Review Cycle:** 3 years

**Last reviewed:** December 2023

**Date for next review:** December 2026

### Statement of intent

Every child has the right to the best possible education. We aim to ensure that all pupils, regardless of ability, SEND or circumstances, reach their full potential and gain the skills and knowledge necessary to lead successful lives.

This policy provides procedures aimed towards ensuring high quality teaching and learning throughout the school.

Our Teaching and Learning guidelines are organised into 3 main sections below:

- Teaching and learning statements
- Developing the learning environment
- Developing the teaching environment

*\*We also have an appendix which contains specific information about our current curriculum provision.*

### Teaching and learning statements

All teachers are individuals who bring a wide range of skills, knowledge, talents and experiences to teaching, which includes different styles of delivery. At our school we promote and encourage staff to be individuals working within agreed professional frameworks at all times.

As a school we will:

- Plan, organise, facilitate and evaluate an outstanding curriculum built specifically for the children in our school.
- Set high, but realistic standards in learning and behaviour.
- Organise teaching and groups in such a way that it supports effective learning; taking into account the full range of needs within our classrooms.
- Work with all relevant parties to ensure that every child receives their full entitlement
- Provide a framework of professional support and development for all staff
- Share information with relevant partners which leads to a greater understanding of children's needs and achievements
- Use all available information to monitor and evaluate the success of our work
- Have a clear agenda and programme for school improvement

As teachers we will:

- Plan and be prepared to adapt effectively for all groups and individuals.
- Deliver purposeful lessons which are linked to real life situations and prepare children for their futures.
- Identify and build on links with other subjects where relevant.
- Use effective questioning techniques in every lesson to ensure that children are challenged in their thinking.
- Deliver lessons that are interesting, thought provoking and relevant to our children.
- Deliver lessons which have rigour, challenge and pace.
- Enlist the support of other professionals and external agencies to help every child to learn.

- Assess learning continually and use this to identify, plan and share next steps.
- Share and celebrate successes of every child.
- Allow time for children to understand and consolidate what they have learnt.
- Use marking, self and peer assessment to fully establish where children are in their learning.

As subject leaders we will:

- Develop and review curriculum policies and schemes of work in collaboration with colleagues.
- Update the curriculum section of the website to reflect current practice and planning for subject.
- Complete subject development plans annually.
- Monitor implementation of subject and support all relevant staff appropriately in delivering a high-quality curriculum for the subject.
- Take accountability for the progress of pupils in our subject.
- Report on the effectiveness of the curriculum to the Senior Leadership Team and, where appropriate, the Governing board.

As learners we will:

- Participate fully in all lessons and activities; including using active listening, answering and asking questions and following instructions.
- Take responsibility for our own learning and actions.
- Complete work at home and in school to the very best of our ability.
- Complete tasks in the time that we have been given.
- Feel confident in asking for help when we are unsure.
- Assess and comment on our own work and the work of others.
- Support others in their learning.

## **Developing the learning environment**

The school's collective and individual learning environment is crucial in improving the range, quality and number of learning opportunities. An environment which is based on a positive inclusive approach through recognition and equal opportunity will best achieve our aims.

We will help to improve the range, quality and number of learning opportunities:

- Through linked units
  1. Relating work to real life
  2. Enhancing inter-subject understanding
  3. Providing stimulating and inspiring lessons.
- With parents/carers
  1. Setting high quality out of school learning opportunities.
  2. Providing parents with information detailing curriculum focuses and potential home activities in all subjects (see curriculum section of the website).
  3. Reporting individual progress and attainment of children to parents each term.
  4. Running curriculum workshops & family learning sessions where relevant
  5. Providing an annual written report on attainment and progress in each curriculum area
- Through our displays
  1. Providing scaffolding displays to support learning in each classroom
  2. Building engaging and interactive displays in the corridors and hall
  3. Displaying examples of pupils work and evidence of extended learning
- Through visits and visitors
  1. All year groups to have at least three visits and/or visitors linked to a unit of work across the year

- Through a variety of learning styles
  1. Regular individual, paired and group work opportunities
  2. Written, practical, facilitated, child directed, open and closed activities
  3. Encouraging problem solving and creative thinking skills
  4. The opportunity to access the outdoor learning environment
- Through planning and evaluation
  1. Objectives, activities, differentiation and support clearly identified in planning
  2. Target groups identified and progress analysed on a regular basis
  3. Lessons evaluated and used to inform further learning
- Using assessment
  1. Evidence of continuous assessment in all lessons which informs next steps and planning
  2. Regular discussion with children to review achievements
  3. Marking which makes use of comments from teacher, pupil and peer group
  4. Marking which is informative and helps to move children on
  5. Time for reflection and discussion of 'working levels' and 'next steps'
  6. Opportunity to reflect and discuss learning strategies
  7. End of topic/ year assessments which indicate National Curriculum standards
- Through homework and extension activities
  1. That help to consolidate and extend curricular learning
  2. Which allow opportunity for family learning
  3. Which encourage independent research and choice of activity focus
- Through extra curricular activities
  1. That reflect the children's interests
  2. That enrich or extend the curriculum
  3. That engage children in a range of healthy activities to encourage a healthy lifestyle
  4. That emphasise enjoyment and well-being

### **Developing the teaching environment**

Teaching is a demanding job which requires clear knowledge and understanding by every member of staff. Meeting the challenge of balancing planning, teaching, assessment, behaviour management, reporting and many other duties requires skilful management of time throughout the year and is one which cannot be accomplished alone. Being a good teacher and staying a good teacher requires staff to be part of and work in a professional framework at all times. By doing so we can ensure that we achieve appropriate work/life balance whilst remaining focussed on the quality of and opportunities for teaching and learning throughout school.

We will continue to work on improving the quality of and opportunities for teaching through:

- Providing support for teachers to meet their performance management objectives
  1. INSET courses
  2. Resources
  3. Advice from colleagues (Internal and external)
  4. Non-contact time
- Providing professional development opportunities
  1. INSET courses
  2. Local Authority and externally provided training
  3. Secondments
  4. Networking
  5. Mentoring opportunities

- Ensuring the necessary resources are readily available
  1. To support subjects/topics/units
  2. To support classroom management
  3. To support independent learning
  4. To support preparation and planning
  5. To support the assessment process
- Protecting the work – life balance for teachers and support staff
  1. Monitoring of the number and duration of meetings
  2. Where possible meetings to be planned in advance with clear agendas
  3. Use of IT to reduce workload
  4. Creative use of INSET
  5. Monitoring of number of observations
  6. Planned programme of school developments (School Improvement Plan)
  7. Careful, balanced timing of events during the year (School Self-review map)
- Ensuring that Planning Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time takes place
  1. Agreed timetable for all staff
  2. Fully resourced room
  3. Agreed methods of planning, recording and reporting
- Teaching and learning time
  1. Agreed contact time
  2. Agreed processes of communication
  3. Agreed procedures for collecting and recording money eg. trip money
  4. Agreed ground rules for when it is reasonable to disrupt a lesson
- Providing an exciting and stimulating curriculum map
  1. Develop the curriculum through discussion with all partners to consider what is best
  2. Follow an agreed approach to delivering the curriculum
  3. Monitor and evaluate the curriculum
- Policies, planning and assessment data
  1. Completing and requesting only necessary documentation
  2. Shared access to all appropriate documents
  3. Agreed approach to recording information
  4. Agreed approach to completing plans, forms and input of data
  5. Use of non contact time to complete tasks
- Providing additional support when necessary
  1. Focus on the needs of the child
  2. Flexibility in deployment
  3. Matching individual skills to individual/groups of children
  4. Support staff to be fully involved in the planning process
  5. Support staff to work in class/out of class as appropriate

### **Links**

Our policy for teaching and learning is supported by policies such as our SEND policy, Assessment policy, Marking policy, Behaviour policy and Accessibility plan.

### **Monitoring and review**

We will monitor and measure the success of this policy by:

- Engaging all partners in regular discussion
- Using questionnaires
- Formal and informal observations
- Scrutiny of work, planning scrutiny and analysis of achievement including test results

## Appendix

### Our Curriculum Offer

**Swift Academies provide a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum that ignites pupils' love of learning and successfully unlocks the true potential of each individual.**

Our curriculum is carefully constructed to capitalise upon the experiences and backgrounds of our pupils whilst simultaneously providing relevant, new experiences to build their knowledge and understanding of the wider world around them. Underpinned by the National Curriculum (2014), our provision has been coherently planned and sequenced by our subject leaders and year group teachers to ensure that, alongside breadth and variation, we prioritise children's depth of learning.

To support this progressive process, our end points are clearly defined, and we return to intended learning in different contexts, multiple times within and across year groups. Each of our subjects are taught through separate, discreet lessons across each week. Where there are strong cross-curricular links, these are utilised effectively to deepen children's understanding. We ensure that our children develop an increasingly insightful understanding within each subject and are able to apply their knowledge and skills within and across subjects fluently.

Pupils access their sessions with their class teacher or a teacher in their cohort. Teachers adjust their timetables flexibly to fit around pupils' learning needs and lesson design. Pupils who require further support or extension may access further adult support in the class or be withdrawn for intervention activities.

Our curriculum aims for pupils to accelerate their progress from their starting points to ensure that they reach or exceed national expectations in each of their subjects. Within our curriculum, the development of reading is prioritised for all children to ensure that they can confidently and successfully access all areas of the curriculum from the earliest opportunity. As well as developing children's knowledge and skills, our wider curriculum aim is to provide a full spectrum of enriching experiences whilst developing happy and healthy individuals.

In short, we equip our pupils with the core skills, knowledge and cultural capital that they need to succeed in life whilst also ensuring that children are socially and emotionally prepared for their future.

### Our Extended Curriculum

Enrichment activities, trips and workshops are built into our curriculum each year, plus an extensive range of free extra-curricular clubs on offer every week.

Our extra-curricular timetables are published on the school website annually. All activities are free and are run by school staff. Clubs are accessible to pupils from Reception to Year 6, depending on the activity, and cover all areas of the curriculum and all sports the children can compete in locally.

### Home Learning

Pupils are encouraged to extend their curriculum learning using several online platforms including Mathletics, Times Tables Rock Stars, Developing Experts (science), Reading Eggs/Eggspress as well as the daily reading of their phonics or Accelerated Reading book. For our younger children, we also have 'Read to me' books which are high quality texts for parents to read to children to promote talk about the story or information within the book.

Each of our dedicated subject pages on the website contain more information about additional learning activities that are encouraged at home. We also have workbooks, phonics packs, talk boxes and language and listening packs all available on request.

## **Curriculum Overview**

Below you can find specific curriculum information for each of the subjects that we teach in school. Please see the individual website pages for each of our subjects to find out lots more about the exciting learning opportunities in store for our children and to discover more home learning opportunities.

## **Phonics**

### **Subject Leader: Miss Staples-Clough**

The Rydal Academy follows the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised systematic, synthetic phonics programme to teach reading and writing. Phonics is taught daily from Nursery to Year 1 and these sessions are in addition to our reading and writing sessions.

In Nursery we provide a balance of both child led and adult led experience for all children. These include: sharing high quality stories and poems; learning nursery and action rhymes; listening and speaking games which include oral blending of words. We ensure our Nursery children are well prepared to begin phonic lessons in Reception.

In Reception and Year 1 we teach phonics for 30 minutes a day. Children's progress in phonics is tracked very carefully throughout the year and any child who needs additional practice has daily keep up sessions.

In Year 2 and Key Stage 2 we timetable daily phonic lessons for any child who is not fully fluent at reading or who has not passed the Year 1 Phonics Screen. More information about the Year 1 phonic screen can be found on our school's dedicated phonics page alongside a programme overview for Little Wandle Letters and Sounds.

As well as this information and guidance, you will also find further learning opportunities for children to practise their phonics at home through our phonics home learning packs.

## **Reading**

### **Subject Leaders: Mrs Mellard and Miss Timney**

We know that confident reading supports children's learning throughout all subjects and so the teaching of reading is highly prioritised within our curriculum.

Whole class reading is taught daily from Monday to Friday for approximately 30–40 minutes per day (Y1–Y6). Core texts are carefully selected by reading leaders to ensure that there is progression in the difficulty of texts children encounter. Whole class reading is structured to ensure that, once per week, all children: read aloud and explore the context of a text, investigate relevant vocabulary, analyse an element of spelling, punctuation and grammar within a text and complete and discuss carefully selected comprehension questions designed by the teacher based on the text. All children also have regular opportunities to listen to their teacher reading planned, class texts; this promotes reading for pleasure and further class discussions. Reading skills are also developed throughout children's English lessons and actively put into practice across our full curriculum e.g. reading and evaluating sources of evidence in History lessons.

Once children are fluent in their reading, we use Accelerated Reader as our independent reading scheme from Y1—Y6. Prior to Accelerated Reader, children use carefully matched phonics books as their home readers (see phonics section below for more information). Accelerated Reader is championed weekly within the classroom through a reward system aimed at individuals improving their own previous achievements.

Reading enrichment opportunities:

- All Reception to Y6 children have access to Reading Eggs/Eggspress for further independent reading practice focused at their current ability.
- 'Read to me' books are provided to Nursery – Y2 children to take home on a weekly basis. Parents and carers are asked to read these books to children and to talk about the story/content. This is so that children have regular access to a new high-quality text each week and to promote discussion.

- Reading club is held after school every day. Teachers actively encourage any children finding it difficult to read at home to attend at least one of these sessions each week.
- All children visit the local library annually on a school trip and/or the librarian visits their classroom. We encourage as many families as possible to sign up to the library during this process.
- World Book day is celebrated each year and reading for pleasure is highlighted through the activities undertaken on the day and through ongoing assemblies and competitions across the year.

## Writing

### **Subject Leaders: Miss Cockerill**

Writing lessons are taught daily for approximately 60 minutes per day in Year 1–Year 6 and approximately 30 minutes per day for Reception.

The majority of units build towards children creating a longer piece of writing over a fortnight. Each unit is inspired by a relevant, age-appropriate novel and/or uses learning in children's other subjects (e.g. science, history, geography etc) as the stimulus. Through a range of practical, discussion-based and written tasks, children build towards producing a longer piece of independent writing in the second week of the unit and publish it for a specific audience in their purple publishing book.

All texts studied have been carefully selected by our writing leaders to ensure that they build in difficulty and provide children with opportunities to read a wide variety of novels and non-fiction. Children receive ongoing verbal feedback from their teacher and peers to develop their writing within their lessons. Teachers continually assess the areas for the class and individuals to work on and adapt their lesson focus as appropriate.

Spelling, grammar and handwriting are taught in specific, separate lessons as well as throughout English lessons. Children in Y2–Y6 are sent specific spellings to learn at home each week based on the spelling rule being taught in school that week. Children's understanding of the focus spelling rule is then tested each Friday.

## **Calculations and Mathematics**

### **Subject Leaders: Miss Denham**

Our mathematics curriculum is taught through two types of lessons each week. These lessons consist of a calculations-based lesson and a shape, space and measurement-based lesson. Across each the week, we blend both types of lessons to teach the equivalent time of seven 40-45-minute mathematical lessons per week in Y1–Y6 and five 30-minute lessons per week in Nursery and Reception. Units build and develop in difficulty over a two-week basis, allowing time for children to progressively deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding.

Our mathematics curriculum runs in a cycle; allowing our pupils to experience and further their understanding of each area of the mathematics curriculum, at least three times a year. Teaching our mathematics curriculum this way allows more opportunity for children to develop deeper understanding through revisiting each area in different contexts. We build on children's prior knowledge each time they re-encounter each objective. This embeds fluency, reasoning and problem-solving knowledge and skills across the year.

Mathletics, a specialist maths program, is utilised both at home and at school to further extend children's understanding and passion for the subject. Children also have school and home access to the Times Tables Rock Stars platform. This website is used to specifically enhance children's recall of multiplication facts.

## **Science**

### **Subject Leader: Mrs Campbell**

Children have a dedicated science lesson every week. We promote awe and wonder of the world around us as well as developing children's knowledge and skills in a specific scientific unit. Lessons include a wide range of practical, discussion-based and written tasks. Most scientific units are studied across a

half term or full term depending on their content and complexity. Children's prior science learning is expertly built upon as they progress throughout the school. Our dedicated science curriculum page gives more information about each of the units studied in each year group and a range of useful activities that can be completed at home.

Our Reception – Year 6 children also have access to an online programme called 'Developing Experts'. This online programme enables children to consolidate their scientific learning at school through additional lessons and quizzes which can be accessed at home.

## **Computing**

### **Subject Leader: Mrs Whinfield**

Children have three computing lessons each fortnight and study a different unit each half term. These units are specifically planned to ensure children gain the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in a digital world. Children continually revisit and build on their previous learning as well as encountering new and exciting challenges within each unit. Units include coding and programming their own games, websites, and apps as well as progressive opportunities to develop and refine other computer life skills such as typing, word processing, data handling, and creating and editing pictures.

Central to the computing curriculum is how to use the Internet in an effective way; including how to keep safe, protect our information, prevent cyber-bullying and how to access support. We are proud to have been awarded the National Online Safety School Community Award for our dedication to keeping children safe online.

## **Geography**

### **Subject Leader: Mr Ellis**

Children have a dedicated geography lesson every week. They study focused units across a half term or term depending on the learning within the unit. Where relevant, links are made to children's learning in their science and history lessons.

Through our geography curriculum, children develop their understanding of the world and the diverse places, people, resources and features within it. They explore and discover natural and human environments and develop their knowledge of how these are formed and used by people.

Additionally, children become increasingly confident with using maps, atlases and globes to identify places around the world and in the UK and leave our school with a breadth of knowledge about the world and its physical and human processes.

## **History**

### **Subject Leader: Mrs Senior**

History is also taught as one lesson per week and units are half termly or termly. Our carefully sequenced units enable children to explore different eras and to build a deep knowledge and understanding of civilisations and cultures over time. We ensure that our pupils gain a coherent knowledge and understanding of Britain's past and that of the wider world.

As well as the pursuit of knowledge, our history units are designed to ignite children's enthusiasm and curiosity and stimulate questions as well as answers. The structure of lessons supports children in developing their enquiry skills including asking perceptive questions, thinking critically, weighing evidence, sifting arguments, and developing perspective and judgement.

## **Art & Design**

### **Subject Leaders: Miss Edgar**

Our Art & Design curriculum is structured in a mixture of half termly and termly units. We teach the equivalent of one lesson per week but the length of the lessons vary based on the learning activities children are undertaking e.g. double sessions are often preferred when children are creating a piece of artwork as it gives them more time to utilise resources and develop their ideas.



Children learn and develop a wide range of knowledge, skills and techniques within their Art and Design lessons. They learn about great artists, architects and designers in history and compare and evaluate different elements of their work. Using their knowledge and skills, children are encouraged to make their own artistic decisions fuelled by their ever-growing imaginations. You can see children's developing ideas and pieces of artwork in the sketch books that they keep throughout the school.

## **Design & Technology**

### **Subject Leaders: Mrs Jones**

Our Design & Technology curriculum is taught weekly and split into three units each year. The first half of each term focuses on children developing their understanding of the unit project and the necessary knowledge and skills to successfully complete the project. The second half of the term is designing, making and evaluating the project.

Children learn about a wide range of materials, manufacturing processes and creative design-based activities with a focus on working increasingly independently to develop their own ideas effectively both individually and within groups. The various projects, which are completed throughout the children's schooling career, build on the work completed in previous years, ensuring children are constantly developing their knowledge, skills and understanding as they review and evaluate their design proposals and project outcomes.

Children develop their own portfolio of work in Design & Technology as they progress throughout Primary School and transition into Secondary School.

## **Physical Education**

### **Subject Leader: Mr Park**

Every half term, through twice weekly sessions, children are taught the relevant knowledge and skills to progress their learning in two different sports. Our PE curriculum ensures that children progress within sixteen different sports throughout their time at school: athletics, basketball, cricket, dance, dodgeball, football, gymnastics, hockey, netball, new age kurling, orienteering, parachute games, racket sports, rounders, rugby and swimming.

To support children's progression and development within physical education, every unit ensures that children retrieve prior learning as well as having a new, specific skill(s) focus that lessons will be centred around.

Every year we enter all school sports competitions available to us in the local area. We have been awarded and retained the School Games Gold Award for five years running due to our commitment to the development of competition across our school and into the community.

## **Personal, Social, Health and Relationships Education (PSHRE)**

### **Subject Leader: Miss Chapman**

Our PSHRE curriculum develops children's depth of understanding through individual and group work, discussion, role play and practical activities. We return to areas of learning in different contexts within and across year groups in order to support children in gaining a deeper and more insightful understanding of the knowledge, skills and processes within PSHRE.

As well as our weekly lessons, the PSHRE curriculum is complemented through related assemblies and visits from outside agencies such as the school nurse, NSPCC and dentist.

Our PSHRE curriculum is structured as follows: Autumn 1: Friends, Autumn 2: Ourselves, Spring 1: Online safety, Spring 2: The wider world, Summer 1: Mental wellbeing and Summer 2: Families.

## **Religious Education**

### **Subject Leader: Mrs Wright**

We follow the guidelines in the 'Darlington agreed RE syllabus' and tailor our RE units to best fit our children's needs. Through weekly lessons, we ensure a balanced curriculum promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of all pupils.

Along with Christianity, our teaching of RE takes into account the teachings and practices of other principle religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam Judaism and Sikhism. Exploring the concepts of religion and beliefs supports the celebration of diversity and plays an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning.

## **Music**

### **Subject Leaders: Mrs Salt**

Children have a discreet music lesson every week. We use the Charanga Musical School scheme supplemented by our own detailed planning. Our music curriculum enables children to understand musical concepts through a repetition-based approach to learning as we know that learning about the same musical concept through different musical activities enables more secure, deeper learning and mastery of musical skills.

From Reception to Year 6, our music curriculum consists of six half-termly units of work. The final unit in each year – Reflect, Rewind and Replay – allows for revision and more extension activities. Each unit of work comprises the strands of musical learning which correspond with the national curriculum for music: Listen and Appraise, Musical Activities (including Games, Singing, Playing, Improvising and Composing) and Perform/Share.

## **Languages**

### **Subject Leader: Mrs Fox**

Our languages lessons are taught weekly from Y3–Y6. We focus on children learning French as we know that this is the language that most secondary schools in the town focus on as children move to Year 7. We promote a passion for learning a new language alongside building children's knowledge and skills. We utilise resources made by specialist French teachers and use technology to ensure that children regularly hear native French speakers.