

A parent's guide to our curriculum for pupils aged 5 -16



James Rennie School

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A parent's guide to the curriculum at James Rennie School

This booklet is about our curriculum; it talks about what parents and staff said was important for our pupils to learn, and what we want them to have learnt in terms of knowledge and skills when they leave us.

For our pupils it's not just about what they learn it's about how they learn and what they need to do get ready to learn.

You can find our full Curriculum document with much more detail on the School Website or request a paper copy from the School Office

What do want our pupils to be when leave School

Below are the things that parents and staff said were important for our pupils when they leave School.

Be as happy as possible
Be as independent as possible
Enjoy learning
Be as confident and self-assured as possible
Be able to forge positive interpersonal relationships
Have control and influence over their own lives

Be creative, adaptable and able to manage change
Be able to transfer their learning
Be able and confident to communicate
Be able and confident to manage their emotions

Be aware of healthy lifestyle choices, and be able to make healthy choices
Be able to access their community and all its benefits

Have their achievements recognised (if appropriate through qualifications) and celebrated
Have the skills and knowledge to access their chosen vocations once they leave School

Respect other people, cultures, religions, genders and choices
Be proud of themselves and their achievements
Be able to make the next step away from School

Have secured independent learning and thinking skills
Have reached the highest levels of function in literacy, numeracy and ICT
Have understanding of historical and current local, regional, national and international matters

What will our Curriculum be

Is founded upon a developmental level – balanced with age and experience – where each pupil has their own starting point

Has high expectations and is personalised in terms of approach, content, pathway and assessment

Looks at the whole person, and targets barriers to learning as well as looking towards the end goal

Creates a learning environment which is relevant, stimulating, challenging, motivating, rewarding and fun

Encourages and teaches application of learning, connections, creative thinking and problem solving

Develops pupil voice alongside their ability to listen to others and see their perspective

Has a strong social, moral, spiritual, cultural dimension which acknowledges the learners and others humanity

Has high expectations and is personalised in terms of approach, content, pathway and assessment

Focusses on learning for life, and the ever changing world around us including new technology and ways of communicating

Supports and develops well-being, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Is built upon support from families, professionals and the communities we can link with

Develops pupils curiosity about themselves, others, connections and the environment

Enriches pupils lives with new experiences and opportunities they may not have thought about

Has a view of pupil's future potential and not just the immediacy of any one year or key stage

Is connected to the real world, providing tangible links for pupils to grasp and explore further

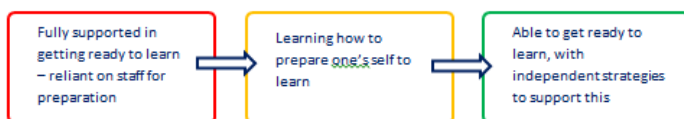
How will our pupils learn

Our pupils learn in lots of different ways, need different kinds of support, need to learn different things and these can change from year to year, day to day and hour to hour, so a single way of learning won't work for our pupils and School.

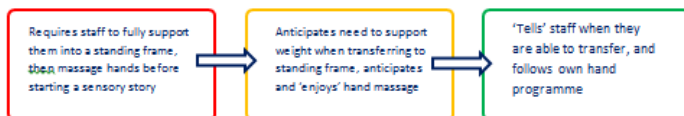
So if we can begin to put pupils of a similar needs, abilities and ages together then their learning will be better.

We want pupils to be in the best place to be happy, learning and becoming more independent.

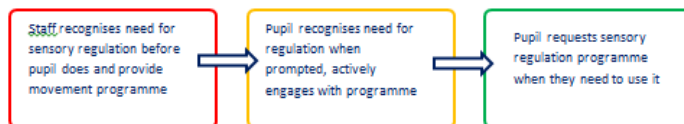
Getting ready to learn – we know that for many of our pupils learning is just one part of their School day, and that they need to do things that enable them to learn, this might be a physio program or sensory regulation. The new curriculum sees this as an essential part of their learning and not a *bolt on* or an *extra*. Some examples are shown below.



An example for a pupil with profound movement needs



An example for a pupil with complex autism and sensory regulation



The curriculum also recognizes that getting ready to learn can change from day to day. As an example a pupil with complex physical needs may need longer in the colder winter months to warm their body up than in the summer, a pupil with complex sensory needs may need longer to sensory regulate if their journey to School was delayed because of roadworks. The underlying approach is that if a pupil is not ready to learn then they won't learn, and they must be put in place where they can.

3 different approaches

There are 3 different curriculums

- Pre-formal
- Semi-formal
- Formal

Each of these curriculums is split up into these different areas

Pre-Formal	Semi-Formal	Formal
My Independence	Living Skills – Myself and Others	Living Skills – Myself and Others
My Communication	Communication and Literacy	Communication and Literacy
My Thinking	Numeracy, Thinking Skills & Problem Solving	Numeracy, Thinking Skills & Problem Solving
Me and My Community	Creative Development	Creative Development
	Knowledge & Understanding of the World	Knowledge & Understanding of the World
My Body	Physical Development	Physical Development

The Pre-formal Curriculum

This is set up for our pupils with the most profound learning needs, and is split into 5 different areas; depending on each pupils needs the curriculum fits around them – so if a pupil has limited mobility and this prevents them interacting with the world around them then more time will be spent on this, whilst if a pupil has very complex sensory issues then more time through *My Thinking* will be spent on this. The class team will build learning around the pupils on a termly basis changing the curriculum for each pupil as their needs change.

My independence – is all about getting pupils to be as independent as possible, practicing skills with reducing support – this could be using a switch,

showing a preference for music, getting dressed, making a choice or feeding themselves.

My Communication – developing the pupils preferred methods of communication, this could be PECS, eye gaze computers, signing or signing; the aim is about enabling pupils to communicate their wants and needs in as many different places as possible.

My thinking – develops pupils understanding of themselves in relationship to others and their environment giving them time and space to experiment and then try things for themselves.

Me and My Community – looks to expand pupil's skills and knowledge by working in broader areas. This might mean learning about tolerating new experiences, sounds, textures and smells, or it might be about working with new people, or having the confidence to visit new places outside of School.

My Body – looks at pupils understand the world through their body; this could be becoming more aware of what their body can do, practicing fine and gross motor control or having the confidence to move themselves around their environment.

The Semi Formal Curriculum

This where we begin to see subject based learning but in much broader areas than the National Curriculum and there's an ongoing focus on life skills, independence and learning in the local community. There remains a focus on numeracy, literacy and communication as these act as the building blocks to enable the pupils across their School life. We also introduce Personal Learning and Thinking Skills which teaches pupils how to learn, how to be independent and how to work with other people.

It's also really important that like the Pre-Formal Curriculum that we recognize the things pupils need to do to be ready to learn; at this stage it is very much about pupils learning what they need to do to be ready to learn. This might mean learning to take care of and put in their own hearing aids, learning about and leading their own physio programs, recognizing they need to sensory regulate or being able to get changed independently for PE. These should never be seen as a *bolt on* or something additional as they are crucial to young people becoming independent

On the following page is a breakdown of the different areas of learning and what you would expect to see in them.

	National Curriculum Subjects	Activities you might see
Living Skills	Food technology, PSHE	Learning to plan, shop for and cook a meal. Dressing skills. Using a local leisure center. Communicating with people outside of School.
My Self and others	PSHE, RE	Learning to work in team or independently. Understanding how others see the world. Developing confidence and an understanding of yourself
Communication and Literacy	Literacy, Drama	Learning to read, communicate and write with a focus on using these skills in the community and across School life.
Numeracy and Thinking skills	Maths Computing	Learning and developing numeracy skills and then using these in a functional way across School and in the local community.
Creative Development	Art, Dance, Music, Design and Technology, Computing	Creative projects linked to the arts, helping pupils explore the world and express themselves.
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Geography, Science, History, RE, Design & Technology	Understanding the world around us, how it works, where and when things happen
Physical development	PE, Science, PSHE	Developing physical skills such as dressing, understanding how our bodies change. Learning to enjoy physical activities in school and in the local community
Personal sensory, communication and physical learning		Personal programs for the different areas set in smaller group or 1:1 learning

What might this look like in a typical week?

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:50 - 9:20	Getting ready to learn and independent learning tasks				
9:20 - 10:20	Numeracy – Using and applying Money and Capacity	Numeracy – addition and subtraction	Numeracy – measure length and size	Communication – area of development will depend on group – SUP, targeted PETS, targeted LT based communication etc – Links to Speaking and Listening	Living Skills – Shopping for ingredients for dinner (Numeracy / Literacy targets)
10:20 - 10:40	Morning break				
10:40 - 10:55	Life Skills & independence tasks centred around healthy snacks and drinks				
10:55 - 12:00	Literacy – non-fiction texts reading instructions for planting seeds	Literacy – writing about plans for planting seeds	Literacy – preparing a shopping list for Living Skills (writing)	Myself and Others – Changes in my Body – body part names	Living Skills – cooking our own meal
12:00 - 12:40	Life Skills & independence tasks centred around eating, dinner and social skills				
12:40 - 1:20	Mid-day break – including social learning				
1:20 - 1:30	Getting ready to learn				
1:30 - 2:30	Knowledge and Understanding of the World – Buddhism and mindfulness	Personal Learning and Thinking Skills – planning a garden area with a focus on creative and reflective learning	Knowledge and Understanding of the World – understanding what plants need to grow	Physical Development – undressing / dressing skills, personal hygiene and Yoga	Creative Development – Using simple colour palettes related to Van Gough's Sunflowers
2:30 - 3:20	Using a computer to design plant bed signs	Preparing to go home with independent learning tasks			
3:20 - 3:30					

The Formal Curriculum

This is the curriculum for our most able pupils, but crucially it still retains many of the features of the Semi-Formal Curriculum such as a focus on life skills, communication becoming independent and using the local community. It also recognizes that pupils still need to get ready to learn but has a greater onus on pupils doing this more independently.

As pupils enter the Formal Curriculum they will be more able to access individual subject areas such as Science or, Geography or Design and Technology, they will learn to research and investigate through the subjects independently. They will choose areas in these subjects where they can work in small groups or independently to expand their knowledge and skills.

Even for our most able pupils there is still a need for much of their learning to be tangible, so for subjects such as RE, science, geography and history there will be balance of expanding horizons beyond the local area whilst retaining learning which pupils can see locally.

Tempering these specific subjects will be specific Living Skills such as learning to shop, access local leisure facilities independently, learning to travel independently.

What might this look like in a typical week?

On the next page is a typical weekly timetable.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:50 - 9:20	Getting ready to learn and independent learning tasks				
9:20 - 10:20	Numeracy – Using and applying Money and Capacity	Numeracy – addition and subtraction – planning a budget for shopping	Numeracy – measure length and size – planning how much to buy for living skills lesson	Communication – area of development will depend on each pupil – SULP, targeted PECS, targeted IT based communication etc. – Links to Speaking and Listening	Living Skills – Shopping for ingredients for dinner (Numeracy / Literacy targets)
10:20 - 10:40	Morning break				
10:40 - 10:55	Life Skills & independence tasks centred around healthy snacks and drinks				
10:55 - 12:00	Literacy – non-fiction texts reading instructions cooking a recipe	Literacy – writing a plan for recipe reading & using a website to get the information	Literacy – preparing a shopping list for Living Skills Lesson(writing)	Myself and Others – PSHE & Science Changes in my Body – Puberty	Living Skills – Food Technology cooking our own meal
12:00 - 12:40	Life Skills & independence tasks centred around eating, dinner and social skills				
12:40 - 1:20	Mid-day break – including social learning				
1:20 - 1:30	Getting ready to learn and independent learning tasks				
1:30 - 2:30	Knowledge and Understanding of the World – RE Buddhism and mindfulness	Personal Learning and Thinking Skills History – Learning about Team Work through researching and presenting a project on local history	Knowledge and Understanding of the World – Science – What's photosynthesis?	Physical Development – PE Using the Youth Zone gym	Creative Development – Art – Looking how famous artists painted landscapes
2:30 - 3:20	ICT – Desk Top Publishing				
3:20 - 3:30	Preparing to go home with independent learning tasks				

What Curriculum will my child learn through?

At the start of each year we will make a decision about which curriculum best fits your child's needs, there will be a chance to discuss this at parents evenings (one at the start of the School year and one in January) or at the annual review.

For some young people the choice will be very obvious, for others there can be more thinking around this, whilst for others with a particular talent in an area they may spend the majority of their time working through one curriculum but for certain subjects they join another. As an example we have some very talented performers in School who may work in the Semi-Formal curriculum but for Drama they may join more able pupils. Equally a pupil working in the Formal Curriculum may benefit from joining the Semi-Formal Curriculum for Physical Development where they can have more support for this area.

Qualifications and Accreditations

We use qualifications and accreditations to mark and celebrate achievement, in our School it's particularly important they serve a purpose and are not just worked for because they are qualification.

For some pupils in the Formal Curriculum qualifications may allow them to access college courses when they James Rennie. For other pupils it may help them develop subject interests and extend their learning. For many pupils it teaches personal responsibility and pride in work. For all pupils they will celebrate achievement.

For the very most able pupils there are the opportunities to join *mainstream* Schools for specific qualifications where the expertise or facilities don't exist at James Rennie School.



You can find full details of the curriculum on our School Webpage in the curriculum section

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