**Curriculum at Reay**

At Reay we believe that how we learn is as important as what we learn. We aim to provide a stimulating and academically ambitious curriculum which encourages children to think critically and creatively. We believe passionately in the inclusion of all children and in the reflection of our local community in the school’s curriculum.

We adhere to the philosophy that children should be the subjects and not the objects of their education. By this we mean that children need to feel that they are at the centre of their own learning with a sense of agency in it. In the words of Einstein “It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge”. This means we do not see children as “empty vessels” to be filled but rather active learners with a voice in the process of learning. We see them as people who can add to their own learning and that of others, to go beyond the norm.

With this view in mind, we have built a curriculum which is creative, and that makes pertinent links within and across subjects in order to deepen and embed knowledge so that children “know more and remember more” and have a thirst for further learning. Our highly experienced staff are adept at linking subjects to make learning a rich experience. Vygotsky claimed all human beings are creative and creativity is the foundation for art as well as for science and technology.

Our progression grids clearly lay out the expectations for the progression of knowledge and skills in each subject, with knowledge being built in incremental steps in order for it to be deeply learnt. Alongside this we teach the skills of collaboration, discussion, inquiry and independence.

Our curriculum is planned with purpose- we want children to engage with our interesting topics and most of all to know more and remember more. Our curriculum engages our community with black history running throughout the year. Our local community enriches our learning. For example, 47% of our children have English as an Additional Language (EAL. We held a multi lingual week to value the many different languages that are pupils speak.

We use the National Curriculum to ensure key content is covered and build our topic based curriculum around it as you will see from our curriculum maps. We believe that the National Curriculum is the minimum requirement for our children and our teachers enrich it.

Ken Robinson , international advisor on education, believes that education is treated solely as a means to prepare pupils for the workforce, it risks hindering the kind of vibrant, healthy and productive outputs that public education is intended to achieve. Thus we ensure our curriculum is engaging,

For example one topic in Year 2 ‘Sea sides in the past’ uses The Lighthouse Keeper’s Lunch as a text stimulus, in maths they learn about time to set the lighthouse bulb and the best time to send Mr Grinling his lunch, in DT they engineer ways to defeat the pigeons from eating Mr Grinling’s lunch, in science they create circuits for the lighthouse bulb, in geography use world maps, atlases and globes to identify the UK and its countries as well as the countries, continents and oceans studied in KS1 Use simple compass directions – North, South, East, West, and in history they learn how people have used the seaside in the past. They also learn about Grace Darling and the importance of lighthouses. In Year 3 there is another link to this learning as pupils learn about Mary Anning and fossils for their Victorian topic.

We have high expectations for all our pupils and adapt our teaching to remove barriers from learning. To embed knowledge and recall facts we generally use Rosenshine’s Principles of Learning, this develops a cycle of learning to enable pupils to meet the learning objective for lessons. Teachers frequently recap and build upon prior learning. However, we believe in our teachers’ ability to create more exploratory lessons where there is not a fixed and rigid structure as this greatly supports independent learning. In this we draw on the findings of the Durham Commission on Creativity in Education 2019.

Through our entire curriculum, we embed a creative approach. We think Creativity is crucial in today’s world. The OECD report “Fostering Students Creativity and Critical Thinking” points out that the modern world requires far more creative thought. This begins with education and it is a mission that we take seriously. We want our young people to leave our school with the skills and knowledge that they will need for the next stages of their life, up to and including their adulthood. We believe our curriculum and pedagogical approach gives them a good start.

In line with the work of Alison Peacock and the Learning without Limits project from Cambridge University, we understand that streaming and setting, even within a class is detrimental to the learning of all from the lowest to the highest attainers. We therefore use mixed attainment seating and adaptive teaching methods. There is much research to support this view. The inequity of ability grouping, a form of ‘educational triage’ ([Marks, 2014b](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959475221000517" \l "bib49)), is evident in uneven distribution of benefit across children, advantaging some children (e.g. girls, high ability, white) above others ([Hallam & Deathe, 2002](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959475221000517" \l "bib29)). The ‘fixity’ associated with misassignment to and lack of movement between ability groups impacts on children's perception and experience of learning in classrooms ([Campbell, 2014](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959475221000517" \l "bib13)), as well as on longer term educational trajectories ([Boaler, Wiliam, & Brown, 2000](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959475221000517" \l "bib9); [Hallam & Parsons, 2012](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959475221000517" \l "bib31)). Grouping by ability shapes how children ‘do’ and ‘feel’ learning in the classroom impacting their psychosocial wellbeing ([McGillicuddy & Devine, 2020](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959475221000517" \l "bib79)). Conceptualised as an act of ‘symbolic violence’ ([Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1990](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959475221000517" \l "bib11)), ability grouping serves to restrict learning opportunities for children ([McGillicuddy & Devine, 2018](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959475221000517" \l "bib78)), compounding inequalities and widening the achievement gap between pupils ([Lleras & Rangel, 2009](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959475221000517" \l "bib44); [Schofield, 2010](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959475221000517" \l "bib69)). This paper argues that ability grouping may also restrict the nature of interactions and friendships between peers.

There is evidence that proves it is very hard to move out of the bottom set thus ability grouping limits the chances for some children.

‘We are all too familiar with the results: a widening gap between high achievers and low achievers.’ Dr Spencer Kagan

We are constantly seeking to develop and improve our curriculum and are undertaking action research into our creative approaches in order to further strengthen our provision further.