

A World Class Curriculum – The Principles

There is not a single version of a world class curriculum that can be bought ‘off the shelf’ and used effectively in any school in the world. A truly world class curriculum will be rooted in its own locality and context, and will meet the needs of its own learners. It will take national requirements and international expectations and put them in a local setting. It will make learning real, exciting and inspirational. It will develop the whole person: intellectual, aesthetic, physical, emotional, spiritual and social. It will excite imaginations and fire curiosity. It will raise aspirations and widen horizons. It will enable every learner to leave school with the confidence, the ability and the desire to make the world a better place.

Therefore a world class curriculum is defined by principles rather than by set content.

As a result of both analysis of international research and its work with schools around the world, the Foundation has identified ten principles of a World Class Curriculum, organised into four domains as shown in the table below.

Domains	A world class curriculum will:
Values, aims and principles	...be based upon clear, shared values, aims and principles which put learners at the heart of the curriculum and recognise their role as citizens of the world
	...provide exciting opportunities for the intellectual, physical, emotional, social, scientific, aesthetic and creative development of every learner
Key competencies for learning and life	...ensure the development of competencies for learning and life and a sense of hope and agency in every learner
	...encourage independence of mind and action and the development of individual interests and talents
	...excite the imagination, encourage curiosity and develop creativity
The world’s major branches of learning	...secure learners’ knowledge, skills and understanding of the world’s major branches of learning, disciplines and subjects
	...ensure understanding of how learning in different disciplines is interconnected and relevant to life, global issues and world events past, present and future
	...provide clear and relevant pathways for learning and the flexibility to respond to developing needs, interests and contexts
Community, local, national and global contexts	...locate learning in the context of the learner’s life and local community, and also within a national and international dimension
	...address contemporary issues as well as the big ideas that have shaped the world

These ten principles can be used as the basis for curriculum development, and also as an audit framework to consider and evaluate an existing curriculum.

The audit tool provides prompts with respect to what to ask and what to look for when using the principles in this way. A column is provided for schools to RAG rate their current curricula. (Red = not met; Amber = partially met; Green = fully met)

The principles are usually applied to the curriculum as whole, although schools have also found it useful for evaluation of individual departments, Key Stages or phases. The evidence relating to each principle will be found in the school’s provision, in the nature of students’ learning experiences and, most importantly, in the quality of students’ learning.

The RAG rating process will assist schools with identifying their curriculum development priorities and hence with their strategic curriculum planning.