

The Year of the Curriculum

The programme consists of four modules, each with two units:



Unit1: How to ensure your curriculum is consistent with your aims and values

Why 'The Year of the Curriculum'?

The government has frequently highlighted the new freedoms that schools in England now have to use their knowledge of their own communities and exploit the space created by the slimming down of the National Curriculum.

With the September 2014 implementation date, this watershed moment presents schools with an opportunity to design a 21st century curriculum that will give their students the very best start in life.

Participants in this programme will gain the skills to do this.



By the end of this first unit of module 1 you will have:




- your own clear definition of the curriculum and a vision of its potential impact on your learners [In this Unit 1A](#)
- a clear understanding of the importance of establishing curriculum aims and values at the outset plus an overview of how to go about it and what evidence to take into account
[See Unit 1B](#)
- a vision of a curriculum which provides all the learning needs of a young person in the 21st century including knowledge plus skills and broader understanding
[See Unit 1C](#)

Unit 1A

Your own clear definition of the curriculum and a vision of its potential impact on your learners

This section explores different perceptions of the meaning of the word 'curriculum' and their potential implications for young peoples' learning

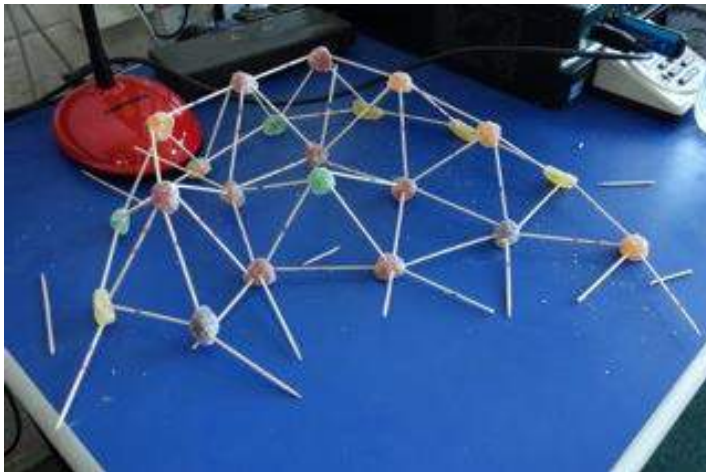
What do we mean by ‘the curriculum’?

Who said.....?	Click to find out
A. “The challenge for schools is to create a nourishing and appetising feast that will sustain learners and meet their needs”	
B. "Think of the curriculum as a forecast of possibilities within an arena of opportunities"	
C. “I want children to become authors of their own life story. I think that education is a process of emancipation, of liberation.”	

Consider.....

- How appetising is the curriculum feast for everyone in your school?
- Do any of your learners turn their noses up at it? If so, why?
- To what extent does it emancipate and open up a world of possibilities for all?

Make some 'notes to self'. This analysis is a crucial stage in setting curriculum aims and defining values.



What do we mean by ‘the curriculum’?

UNESCO's International Bureau of Education considers three interrelated dimensions of the curriculum:

- **the intended or official curriculum as defined in guidelines, frameworks and guides that specify what students are expected to learn and should be able to do;**
- **the implemented curriculum that is actually taught in the classroom, including how it is delivered and who teaches it;**
- **and the attained curriculum that represents what students have actually learned.**

They go on to point out that the challenge is ensuring coherence and congruence between curriculum policy documents, the actual pedagogical process and learning outcomes.

If you wish to read more about UNESCO's work on the curriculum [Click here](#)

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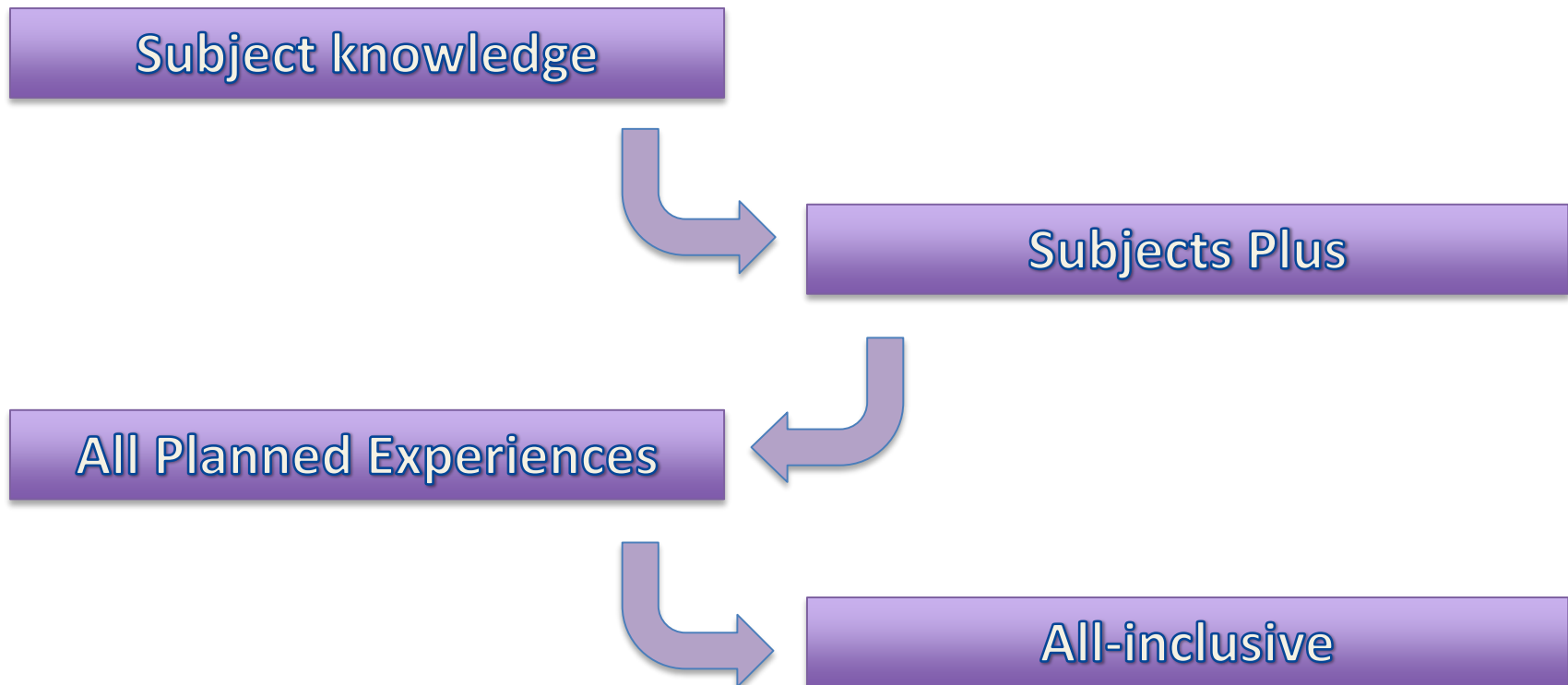
The National Curriculum in England:

- 2.2 The school curriculum comprises all the learning and other experiences that each school plans for its pupils. The national curriculum forms one part of the school curriculum.
- 3.2 ...There is time and space in the school day and in each week, term and year to range beyond the national curriculum specifications. The national curriculum provides an outline of core knowledge around which teachers can develop exciting and stimulating lessons to promote the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills as part of the wider school curriculum.

For full document [Click here](#)

What do we mean by ‘the curriculum’?

Different people will give different answers if asked to define the curriculum. These answers can be categorised as below.



Which of these is the 'curriculum paradigm' in your school? Is there a need for change?

Curriculum Type	Characteristics
Subject knowledge	The curriculum is all the documented subject learning schools (are required to) teach
Subjects Plus	In addition to this subject teaching there are wider elements of the curriculum addressed in other ways e.g. through tutor time, visits, assemblies, performances, extra-curricular(!) activities
All Planned Experiences	Everything planned is part of the curriculum i.e. all of the above learning opportunities plus sports events, parents' evenings, visitors to the school, volunteering opportunities, duties, peer support, etc.
All-inclusive	Everything that happens in school reflects the school ethos and culture and hence everything that happens in school (including unstructured time such as breaks) or through school is part of the curriculum

Remember....

The broader your definition of the curriculum, the more likely it is that children will receive consistent messages

It can be illuminating to consider whether there are any conflicting messages given to children through different activities or in different situations e.g. through school routines, through application of rewards and sanctions, in the playground, on the school bus, in corridors, through display etc.

What is the curriculum for?

This is the question to be considered in more depth in the next section on curriculum aims and values.

However, it is also pivotal to the definition of the word curriculum.

If we accept that the purpose of the curriculum is to ensure our young people benefit from all the learning we want for them, the definition is quite straightforward.



Our Definition

Throughout this programme the word 'curriculum' is used in its broadest sense

The school curriculum is everything that happens in school plus everything that takes place through school

Does this definition feel right for your school?