



RADLETT LODGE SCHOOL LOCAL PROCEDURE FOR:

CURRICULUM

INTRODUCTION

It may be an obvious statement but it is imperative to recognise that despite the commonality of autism, **our pupils are all different**; thus, we needed a curriculum which puts the individual child at the centre and meets their specific learning requirements.

The underlying characteristic is to provide our pupils with the opportunity to reach their potential as skilful learners. We recognise they will be with us for a relatively brief period in the context of their whole lives and as such **outcomes** and **future aspirations** should be highlighted, strived towards and become part of each pupil's curriculum pathway (See also the NAS 'Quality of Life Framework' Policy).




AIMS

We have developed two different pathways to meet our pupils' needs based upon their current stage of development. We strongly believe that there is not a significant correlation between a child's learning and their chronological age or key stage and therefore our focus at RLS is to educate each child based on their social, communicative and emotional developmental stage (see '*RLS Pathways Explained*' diagram below).

Where appropriate pupils will be taught in small classes of age and ability but the curriculum they follow will allow for greater flexibility and personalisation. All of our pupils or students fit into one of our three learning groups, namely **Explorers**, **Discoverers** and **Challengers** and our specialist and highly trained staff deliver successful interventions as and when required for each child at every stage of their development.

In simple terms, the Explorers are provided with an informal learning environment which best meets their developmental needs. The Discoverers, who generally follow the same curriculum pathway as the explorers, have moved through this informal stage and are beginning to require what we call a semi-formal learning environment and finally, the Challengers, who experience a far more formal setting in which to learn and develop (see '*Pathways and Key Stages*' for further discussion around the different pathways).

RLS Pathways Explained

	<u>Pathway 1</u>		<u>Pathway 2</u>
	 <u>Explorers</u>	 <u>Discoverers</u>	 <u>Challengers</u>
EHCP Link	As an Explorer I can:	As a Discoverer I can:	As a Challenger I can:
Communication and Interaction	Communicate through my actions, gestures, facial expressions, vocalisations, and / or single words (spoken or using AAC).	Communicate using word combinations (spoken or using AAC).	Communicate using sentences and link ideas using basic conjunctions, for example: <i>and / or / because</i> (spoken or using AAC).
Communication and Interaction	Engage and respond when familiar adults join in with my activity, actions or sounds.	Participate in two-way interactions with a familiar adult.	Participate in structured rule-based games and group discussions with peers (either verbally or using AAC).
Cognition and Learning	Attend to activities of my own choosing and, with support, engage in short (up to 2 minutes) highly motivating adult-led activities.	Focus my attention on what an adult is doing, in a small group situation, when engaging resources and activities are used.	Engage in learning activities with minimal support, for an extended period in a small group setting.
Social, Emotional and Behavioural	Express my emotions through actions, gestures, facial expressions, and vocalisations, and may engage when adults provide regulating activities or input.	Use early emotion words (e.g. happy, tired, sad, and angry) to express my emotions, and actively participate when adults give me choices or regulating input or activities.	Use a range of emotional vocabulary to describe my own and other people's feelings, and I can reflect on situations with minimal support.
Physical and Sensory	Engage in exploratory mark-making activities.	Beginning to copy lines and draw simple shapes.	Write words and 2 – 3 word phrases or simple sentences (using handwriting or ICT).
Community and Independence	Cooperate with adults during activities of daily living (e.g. dressing, toileting, washing hands), with visual / gesture / touch support.	Carry out some basic activities of daily living independently e.g. following a visual jig, imitating a model or responding to a gesture cue.	Complete most key activities of daily living independently (e.g. dressing, eating and drinking, basic food preparation, toileting, washing), and can organise my own belongings for routine activities with minimal prompts.

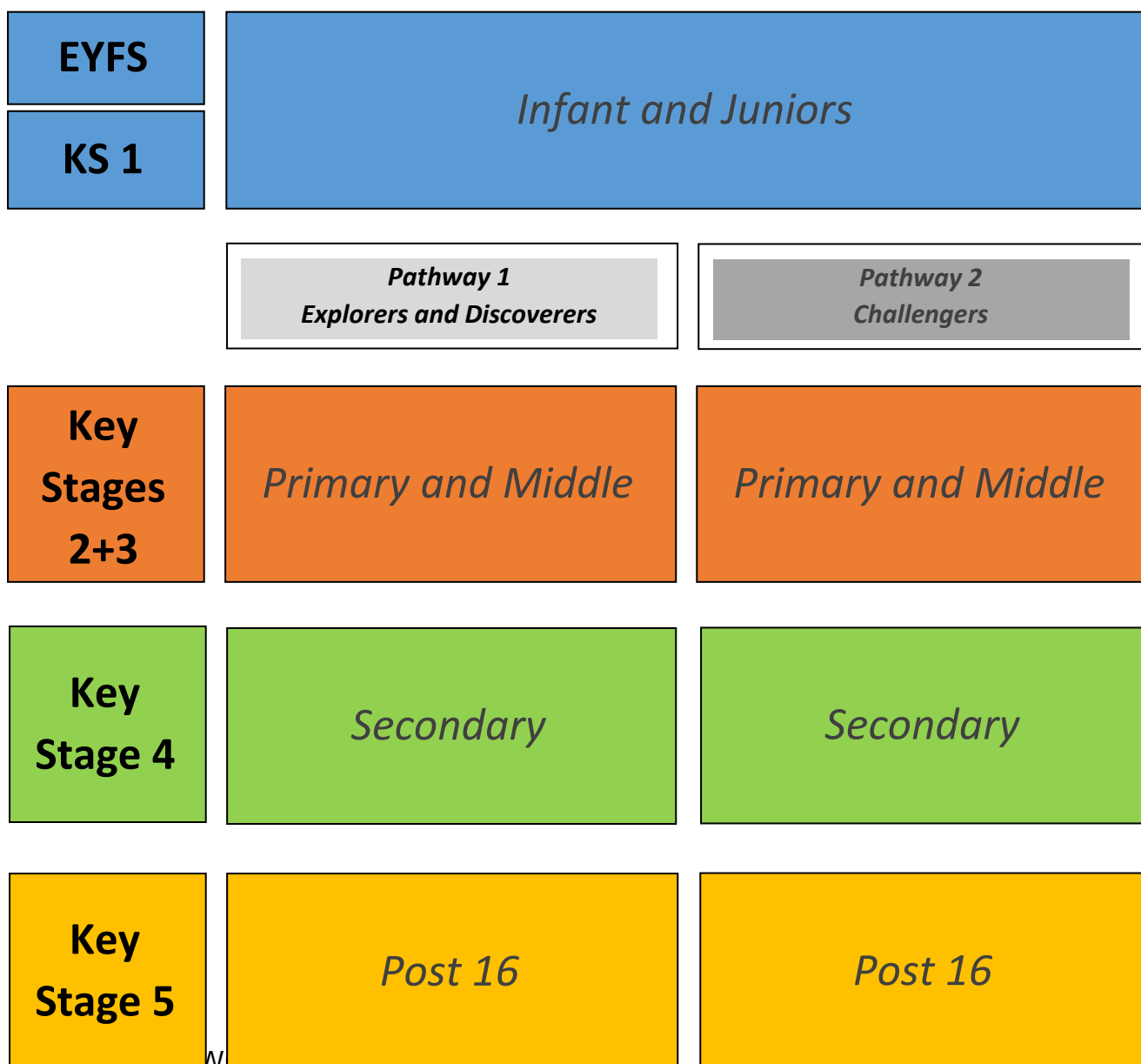
PATHWAYS AND KEY STAGES

At Radlett Lodge School, all pupils and older students are vertically grouped according to their specific individual needs, including: communication, cognition, social, emotional and sensory.

As previously discussed, we use two distinct pathways to deliver the most appropriate curriculum for each child:

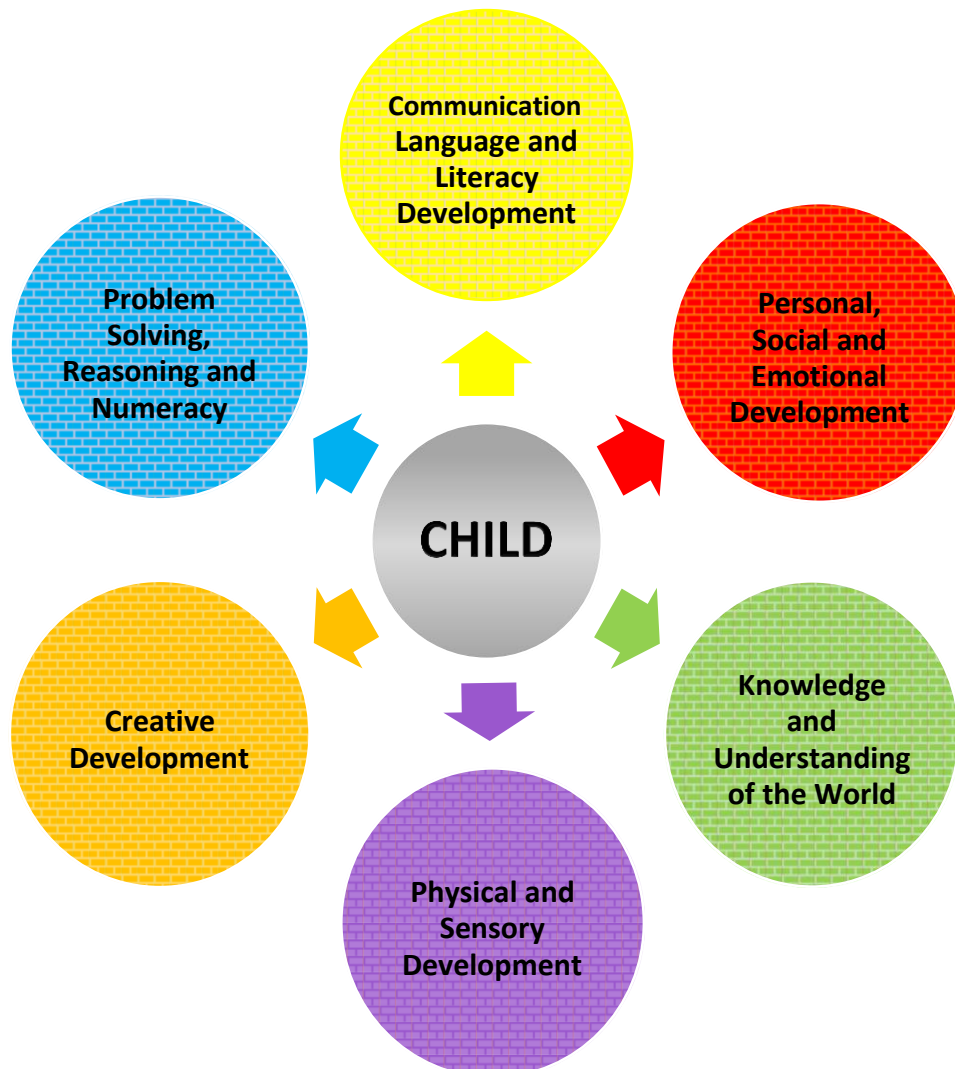
Pathway 1 is designed for our pupils who we classify as **Explorers** and **Discoverers**. This includes those learners who experience through sensory sessions and play and their curriculum is delivered through mainly informal or semi-formal learning environments. In terms of the SCERTS[®] Model, these pupils would typically be at the **Social Partner** and **Language Partner** stages of development.

Pathway 2 is for our pupils who are **Challengers**. They require a learning environment which is becoming more formal in design and in terms of the SCERTS[®] Model, Pathway 2 pupils would typically be at the **Conversational Partner** stage.



FRAMEWORK

The framework which underpins our curriculum is based on the DfE's *Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS): 7 areas of learning*, but we have adapted it to meet the needs of our pupils by combining 'literacy' with 'communication and language'. Therefore, the **6 learning areas** at RLS are:



We assess each child's development in these fundamental areas of learning, we collect data where appropriate and have created an assessment policy to reflect progress in these areas (see also the RLS local procedure for Assessment, Recording and Reporting).

Often, autistic children experience differences in the way they 'sense' the world around them as compared to non-autistic children. In addition, they often experience major difficulties in social communication and social interaction and may even present a lack of flexibility of thought. By underpinning our curriculum with these six areas, our pupils can reach their potential as learners. Our pupils achieve success when this curriculum is supported by sensitive, caring educators who utilise a whole range of tried and tested interventions whilst under the main umbrella and principles of SPELL (NAS).

WHAT PROGRESSION THROUGH RADLETT LODGE LOOKS LIKE

THEMES

To ensure Radlett Lodge School's curriculum offer is broad and balanced, stimulating, challenging and appropriate to our pupil's needs we offer a thematic approach for the younger pupils.

At Key Stages 1-3, whichever pathway pupils are in, they all follow a themed approach which repeats in cycle every three years.

Cycle	Autumn Term		Spring Term		Summer Term	
	ME	ME and OTHERS	MOTIVATING	LIVING THINGS	MY SURROUNDINGS	BEING ACTIVE
1	All about me	How + when we celebrate	Local area/ Jobs	Field to fork	Going places	Keeping healthy, keeping fit
2	My story	Religious stories	Water and Senses	Habitats	Environment	Time to play sport
3	My Home	Spiritual places + people	Food and drink	Animals	Staying safe (at school)	Summer holiday

Rationale for the order of our topic cycles

Each year the pupils go through a similar range of topics following an autism friendly pattern:

- 1) Themselves
- 2) Others (other people, other things)
- 3) Something motivating
- 4) Living things and wider world
- 5) Their surroundings
- 6) Being healthy

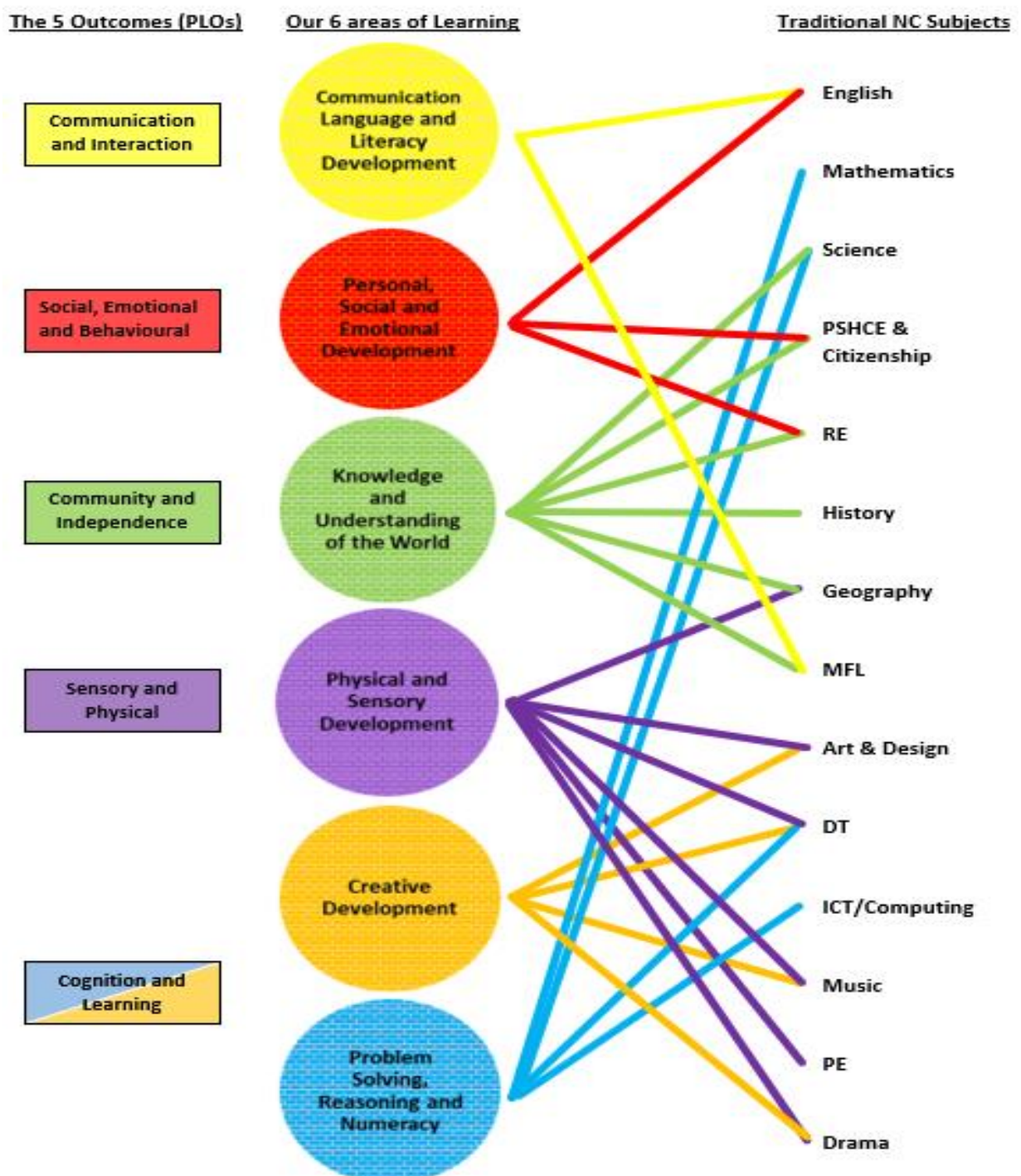
Based on the age of each pupil, the curriculum offer and teachers planning allows for a unique focus which is considered to facilitate year on year progression of skills, knowledge and understanding.

In the infant and junior years, pupils at RLS follow a play model as it is typical for autistic children to need to be *specifically* taught play skills which neurotypically developing children may pick up naturally. This then allows us to teach them in an autism-specific manner to implant planned, purposeful play through a mix of *adult-led* and *child-initiated* learning.

Pupils working in Key Stages 2 and 3 (our Primary and Middle) build upon the foundation from previous cycles and years, consolidating earlier learnt skills, whilst the emphasis switches to establish greater life skills, independence and challenge.

This is a key transition period for our pupils and this functional phase is designed to be a link between our lower/primary and senior school. For some of our Discoverers and Challengers, the move is away from themes and the many of the traditional *National Curriculum* subjects are taught through our cross-curricular method.

How our RLS terminology relates to that in a 'traditional' school with National Curriculum subjects.



The six areas of learning are brought to the forefront as lessons are delivered through these subject areas. The structure from TEACCH and SPELL (NAS) continue to be prevalent with the following planned benefits:

- Increasing community access
- Generalising previous learned skills
- Challenging pupils' understanding of the wider world
- Experiential, opportunistic approach to trying new activities
- Greater 'practical' application to learning
(e.g. **maths** in shopping or **geography** in transitioning the local neighbourhood)

PREPARATION FOR ADULTHOOD

For older secondary pupils (Key Stages 4 and 5), their curriculum phase is based around each young persons' interests and abilities with a greater focus on outcomes and future opportunities. It begins with a 'person-centred planning' (PCP) meeting which informs future planning and offers a chance to accomplish accredited awards (such as 'ASDAN' and 'OCR Life & Living') for each student's level of achievement.

Much of the time is spent accessing the community and allows students the opportunity to generalise skills whilst experiencing different environments and interacting with the wider society.

(See the RLS Local Procedure for 'Post 16 Education' for further details).

The Radlett Lodge School Local Procedure for Curriculum should be read in conjunction with:

NAS POLICIES:

Quality of Life (QoL) Framework Policy
Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Policy
Supported Home Learning Policy
Remote Learning Policy

RADLETT LODGE SCHOOL LOCAL PROCEDURES:

Teaching and Learning
Assessment, Recording and Reporting
Post 16 Education
Careers
EYFS Curriculum