



St Dominic's
School

TRUST
me
I'M
awesome

**A Guide to the changes in curriculum and
assessment at St. Dominic's from 2015**

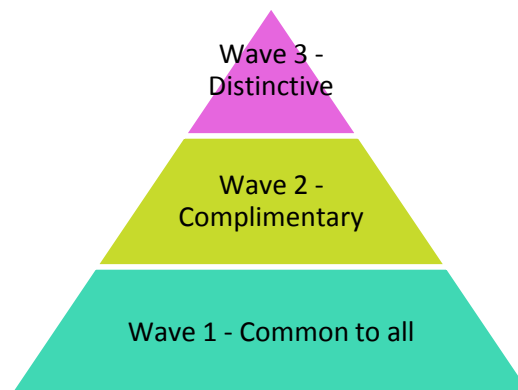
What changes should I know about?

- In 2014, the Department of Education introduced a New National Curriculum and at the same time removed National Curriculum levels.
- Across the country all schools have been developing their own assessment systems to record pupils' attainment using the new National Curriculum programmes.
- At St. Dominic's we made the conscious choice to keep using National Curriculum levels in 2014-2015 academic year to allow time to develop a system that worked for pupils, students, parents and staff
- This led to the development of our Needs Led Curriculum and an assessment system of 'Learning and Thinking Skills' to track progress in all areas of provision: education, therapies and care which was implemented from 2015-16

What is the Needs Led Curriculum?

At St. Dominic's, we follow the National Curriculum which, as we are an SEN school, we can deliver 'in a modified format'; this has not and will not change.

The curriculum at St. Dominic's also encompasses the delivery of blended therapies by the trans-disciplinary team at wave 1, 2 and 3 through the wave model. This model shows what level of provision a child or young person receives. They may move up or down the waves of provision depending on progress, changing needs or within an agreed timescale. Additionally, they may require some wave 2 or 3 provision, even if the majority of their needs can be met at wave 1 (for example, a child may be at wave 1 but accessing a literacy intervention at wave 3). With regard to the needs led curriculum, at wave 1, this is integrated into classes. At wave 2, this takes place in small group interventions (these are additional to timetabled lessons and personalised based on need) and at wave 3 this is delivered in a 1-1 setting.



The model of provision is also utilised for residential pupils and students as part of the waking day curriculum and those pupils and students who stay to access the extended day curriculum.

The 'Needs Led' approach has been designed specifically to unify all aspects of curriculum delivery at St. Dominic's, putting **the needs of pupils and students firmly at the forefront of everything we do**. The revisions to the curriculum at key stages 2, 3 and 4 have increased the range of interventions on offer, particularly at waves 1 and 2.

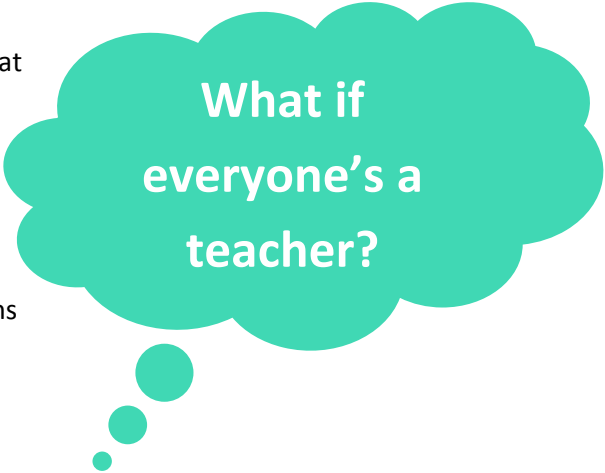
Why does St. Dominic's need a 'Needs Led' Curriculum?



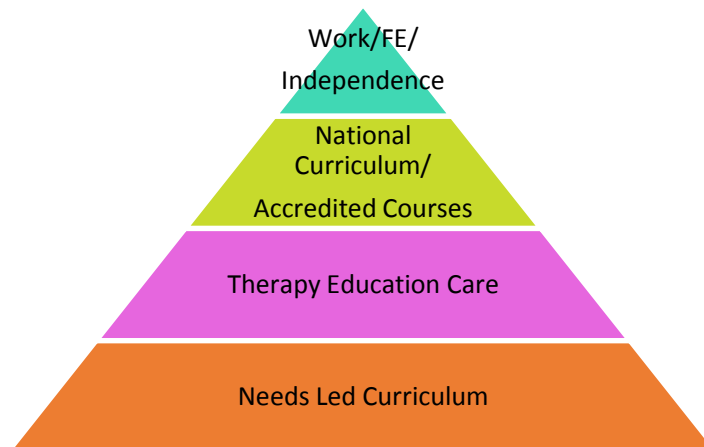
Pupils and students who attend St. Dominic's present a range of challenging and complex needs. Whilst all are able to access the National Curriculum 'in a modified format', their learning and needs profiles may be different from other children and young people of their age who don't have a diagnosed condition. Our job at St. Dominic's is to focus on improving the areas of deficit and capitalise on the areas of strength for every pupil and student. The Needs Led Curriculum allows us to examine all areas of pupil and student development across different disciplines so that we are able to provide truly bespoke programmes of study that maximises the potential of each individual.

How is the Needs Led Curriculum being delivered?

The Needs Led Curriculum is built on the ethos that teaching does not just take place in the classroom at St. Dominic's and is not just delivered by the teacher. Pupils and students learn from staff appointed in all positions, from etiquette in the dining room to work experience with the maintenance team; and that's without counting the hundreds of small daily interactions that take place in the school day!



What if
everyone's a
teacher?



At wave 1, the Needs Led Curriculum underpins every other aspect of provision starting with therapies, education and care interventions and feeding into all National Curriculum requirements and accredited courses at Key Stage 4. This then informs the process for preparing pupils and students for life after St. Dominic’s, whether their destination is work, further education or independence.

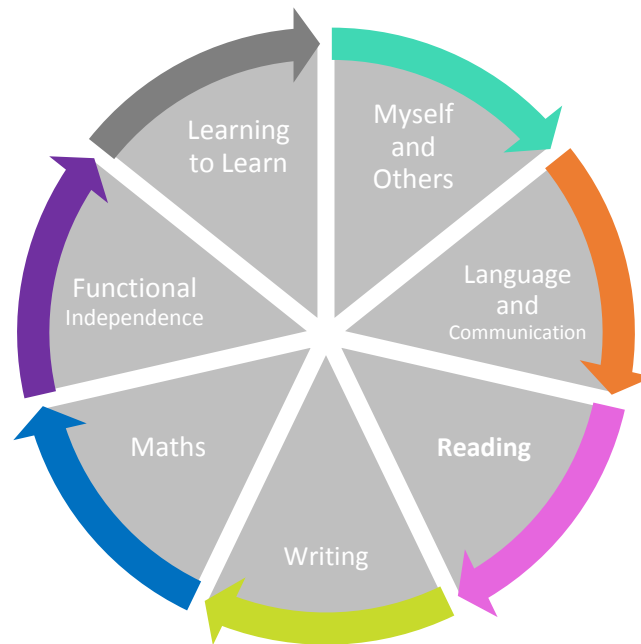
In addition to this at wave 2, pupils at Key Stage 2 receive interventions for at least one lesson every day, whether they are funded at wave 2 or not. At Key Stage 3 this is one lesson per week as a minimum and at Key Stages 4 and 5, this is assessed on individual requirements. Interventions include:

Behavioural and Emotional	Occupational Therapy	Language and Communication	Literacy	Numeracy
Talking it out	Early Birds	Social skills	Reading	Number calculations
Small Animal Care	Cooking	Attention and Listening	Spelling	Multiplication and division
Art/Lego/music therapy	Handwriting	Emotional understanding and development		
Forest Schools				

Interventions are delivered by a range of trained professionals including teachers, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, literacy and numeracy leads and behaviour and inclusion leads.

What is being assessed as part of the Needs Led Curriculum?

There are 7 strands of the Needs Led Curriculum:



Learning to Learn assesses the skills pupils and students require to be independent learners, work as part of a team, reflect on their learning, manage themselves in a learning environment, participate effectively and think creatively. It is delivered by **education staff** and **therapy staff** as part of blended provision.

Functional Independence assesses the skills pupils and students require for self-care, personal safety and welfare, independent living skills, organisation and preparation for work, and functional motor and sensory skills. It is delivered by **occupational therapists, care staff and a careers guidance practitioner** primarily throughout the waking day curriculum, and through the delivery of PSHE by the trans-disciplinary team.

Language and Communication assesses attention, listening and understanding, narrative, vocabulary and social interaction. It is delivered by **speech and language therapists**.

Myself and Others assesses spiritual, moral, social and cultural development along with citizenship and emotional resilience. It is delivered by **behaviour and inclusion leads** and **therapy staff** and through the delivery of PSHE by the trans-disciplinary team.

Maths assesses the core components of the National Curriculum: number; algebra; ratio, proportion and rates of change; geometry and measure; probability and statistics. It is delivered by **specialist mathematics teachers** and qualified **numeracy support staff** through 'Catch Up Maths.' At St. Dominic's mathematics is also cross-curricular.

Writing assesses transcription, handwriting, comprehension and vocabulary, grammar and punctuation. It is delivered by **specialist English teachers** and qualified **literacy support staff**. At St. Dominic's, writing is also cross-curricular.

Reading assesses word reading and comprehension. It is delivered by **specialist English teachers** and qualified **literacy support staff**. At St. Dominic's, reading is also cross-curricular.

What are Learning and Thinking Skills?

The new National Curriculum does not specify levels of attainment. Instead pupils and students are expected to complete the content set per year at Key Stages 1 and 2, and by Key Stage at Key Stages 3 and 4. At Key Stages 4 and 5 this is alongside the externally accredited courses they access.

At St. Dominic's, pupils and students make progress at different rates due to their SEN; most having uneven 'spiky' profiles of strengths and areas of deficit. Pupils and students also come to St. Dominic's at different points in their academic careers, some having missed significant periods of schooling. This means that year by year milestones for attainment can be problematic. St. Dominic's has developed a system to assess pupils' Learning and Thinking Skills based on Bloom's Taxonomy (<http://www.learningandteaching.info/learning/bloomtax.htm>) and Marion Blanks 'Levels of Questioning' (<http://www.wisewordsaustralia.com.au/levels-of-questioning>) to create universal criteria for each Learning and Thinking Skill. The language of this research has been adapted so that it is child friendly and accessible for all. Universal Learning and Thinking Skills are:

	Say	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can say what something is I can make a choice between 2 options I can make a choice when given more than 2 options I can make a choice when given no options I can answer a 'wh' question e.g. Who? What? Where?
	Describe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can describe an object I can describe present events and actions I can describe past events and actions I can use describing words
	Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can remember facts, key words, basic ideas and answers I can remember subject and topic words and facts I know what to expect in my different lessons and can use subject rules, patterns, categories and methods I know that there are exceptions to some subject rules
	Understand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can find the main facts and ideas I can organise information I can compare facts and ideas I can put things in my own words I can give descriptions that show I understand
	Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can use knowledge I already have in new situations I can solve problems in new situations I can use my knowledge and facts, techniques and rules I know in new ways
	Analyse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can identify motives or causes I can make inferences and find evidence to support generalisations I can analyse different parts of a problem I can analyse relationships between people, ideas and things I can analyse rules and principles
	Evaluate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can present and defend opinions by making judgments about information, validity of ideas or quality of work based on a set of criteria I can make judgments in terms of internal evidence I can make judgments in terms of external criteria
	Make Links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can build a structure or pattern from different elements, often to form a whole I can put together and organise information in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern or proposing alternative solutions I can produce unique communication I can produce a plan, or proposed set of operations I can see and explain abstract relationships
	Extend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can demonstrate all of the above skills with flair, originality and creativity of thought.

Fig. 1 Universal Learning and Thinking Skills

The universal criteria for Learning and Thinking Skills (Fig. 1) has informed assessment criteria for all areas of the curriculum and are linked to age related norms. This exciting, cutting edge work means that we are able to assess pupils and students across the Needs Led Curriculum with a shared, uniform assessment criterion and against age related norms i.e. progress in speech and language therapy can be measured against the same criteria as science or English or art, for example.

While this is bespoke to St. Dominic’s, all aspects of the National Curriculum are included for curricular strands and subjects. These form ‘I can’ statements for each subject so that progress can be measured in incremental steps. The additional benefit of this is that pupils and students are not measured by a ‘best fit’ level. The areas they excel in are documented along with the areas where more work is required.

This focus	NLC: English: Reading	NLC: English	Emerging	Developing	Mastering	Consolidating
Percentage	27.36%	Average % 38.61	Average %	36.96		
Points	16.42	Average points 15.69	Average points	15.00		
Level	Describe 3	Level Describe 2	Level	Describe 2		

Say	Emerging	Developing	Mastering	Consolidating
I can listen to poems, stories and non-fiction books	0	1	2	3
I can say how something I have read or been read could link to me	0	1	2	3
I can tell others simple stories I know well	0	1	2	3
I can recognise fairy stories and traditional stories	0	1	2	3
I can recognise and join in with phrases that I can predict	0	1	2	3
I can list the events of a story	0	1	2	3
I can say the things stories have in common	0	1	2	3
I can enjoy joining in with stories and rhymes I know well	0	1	2	3
I can show how what I have learned helps me understand stories and poems	0	1	2	3

Fig. 2 Example grid showing ‘I Can’ statements and levels of mastery

Fig. 2 demonstrates how progress is logged for the all curricular and needs led outcomes. In this example blue circles indicate where an assessment has been made and grey circles indicate a gap where further work is required.

Levels of Mastery

Each Learning and Thinking Skill is subdivided into 4 levels of mastery; this is not a new concept: National Curriculum levels were divided into sublevels e.g. 1a, 1b and 1c for example. Levels of mastery are:



Fig 2. Levels of Mastery

Levels of mastery allow staff to fine grade pupil progress and better assess next steps.

How will I know how much progress my child is making?

Families will continue to receive end of term reports 3 times per year. Pupils will continue to have targets and progress will be reported against Learning and Thinking Skills. Per subject/strand, you will see a percentage of completion along with the Learning and Thinking Skill and level of mastery.

E.g. 46% → Understand 3 (mastering)

You will be able to see the specific skills pupils and students have acquired through reporting against the assessment grid through 'I can' statements.

National measures of progress (end of Key Stage 2 testing and end of Key Stage 4 testing) will also continue to be reported. At Key Stage 2, due to national changes to assessment, this will be a numerical score (a score of 100 will represent the average at age 11). At Key Stage 4, this will be dependent on the qualification pupils are working towards.

Pupils and students will be given targets for attainment, and progress will be measured against these targets. Measures of 'expected' progress or 'on track' for each child and young person will be drawn from the progress pupils make towards their age related expectation e.g. what is the average 11-year-old able to do and is the gap between the child or young person and the average closing?

Some young people attending St. Dominic's are working at above age related expectation in some subjects. For these pupils and students, stretch targets are set so that the gap between them and their age related counterparts with the goal of increasing the gap between them and their age related counterparts.

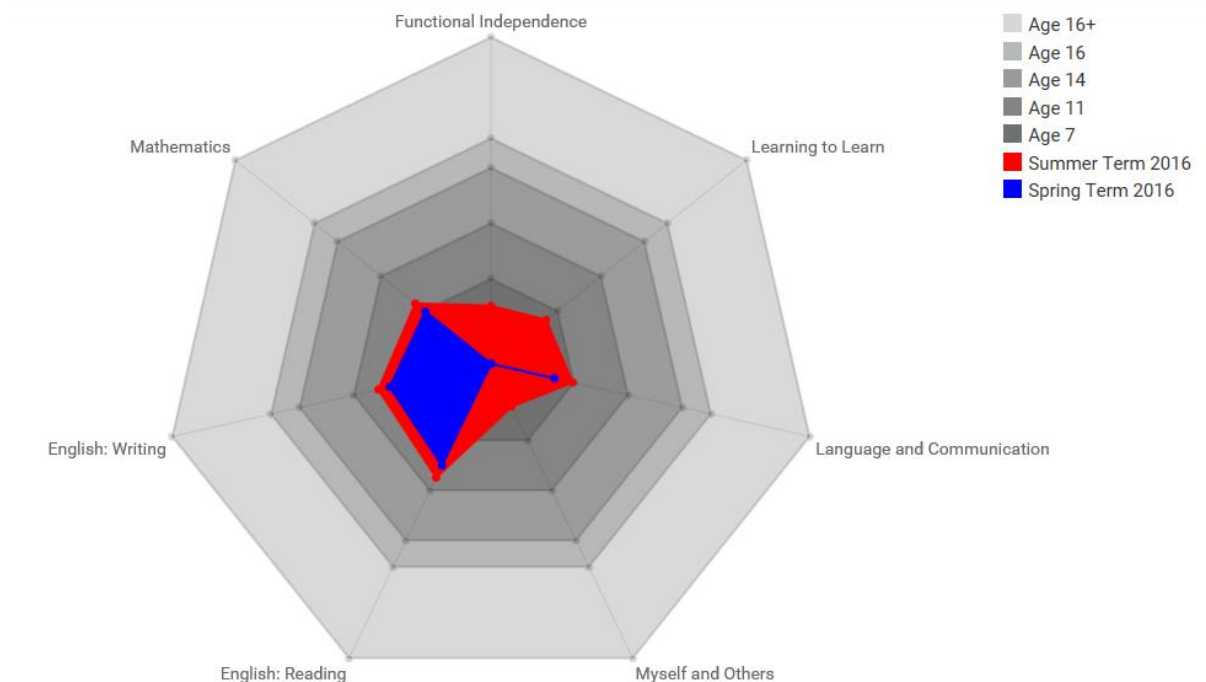


Fig 3. Radial diagram demonstrating progress against age related expectations

Fig. 3 demonstrates the progress pupils and students make term on term. This is used by the transdisciplinary team to assess what additional interventions pupils and students need in order to even out their learning profile and address any gaps in learning.

In each subject the following percentages represent the age related expectation for development represented by the greyed out areas of the radial diagram:

Age 7 – 26%

Age 11 – 43%

Age 14 – 60%

Age 16 – 69%

Age 18 – 100%

We are developing the ability for Parents and pupils to be able to also check progress with more regularity using SAVI, our online tool for computers, tablets and smartphones. Key achievements will be shared with pupils and parents regularly through the E-Portfolio feature and assessments will be accessible half termly through the pupil and parent applications.

Further reading

There is lots of literature on national changes. Should you like to find out more, some links are listed below.

DfE guidance on assessment without levels:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/standards-and-testing-agency>

DfE 2014 National Curriculum:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum>

Guidance for families on the primary curriculum:

<http://www.theschoolrun.com/primary-national-curriculum-2014>

AIAA:

<http://www.aaia.org.uk/assessing-without-levels/>