

THE CHATTEN CURRICULUM

Chatten Free School

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Introduction

In this document we outline the Chatten Curriculum, which is a broad and balanced curriculum used as a basis to develop individual programmes of learning for our pupils.

Identifying outcomes

The Chatten Curriculum is a fully individualised skills-based curriculum based around meeting the specific needs of the pupil.

Chatten Free School will cater for boys and girls with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) and severe language and learning delays. For information on our cohort please see our admissions document.

With this in mind we have developed our curriculum around these needs. This curriculum is based on the principle that all our pupils will one day be adults. A four-year-old will one day be 34 and what we teach that child now should improve the child's life in the long term.

We have identified two potential and desirable outcomes for our students depending on how they progress and what age they join us:

1. The pupil is able to transition into a less specialist education setting.
2. The pupil stays with us and after leaving lives a life of happiness, safety, independence and respect.

Both of these outcomes are positive to our pupils and depend on a curriculum aimed at individual needs.

Worst case scenario

Our pupils will usually join us at varying ages and at varying stages of dependence on others. Here we have outlined some of these 'worst case scenarios' as a way of explanation around the contents of our curriculum. Therefore we have listed a number of 'barriers' or skills not learned and the potential worst case scenario long term outcomes. This list is not inexhaustible.

Skills absence	Potential outcome
A functional form of communication	Pupil is never able to request the things they need and/or want. They are denied the basic pleasure of accessing enjoyable activities/items unless they are

	directly offered by another. They are open to abuse and neglect simply through an inability to communicate. Pupil may only be able to communicate through highly stressful challenging behaviour.
Pupil displays a dangerous or challenging behaviour which is not addressed	Pupil continues to display this behaviour which is highly stressful for the pupil themselves and will have a continued impact on their mental health as an adult. The behaviour requires a high support ratio to access any community activity which impacts how often (if at all) they are able to access preferred activities in the community. They are more dependent on others. They may spend their lives taking medication with numerous side-effects to negate this behaviour. The behaviour itself may cause physical damage especially where this behaviour is self-injurious.
Pupil does not learn how to independently use the toilet/dress/wash themselves	Pupil is entirely dependent on others for these highly private activities. At worst they are open to abuse on an ongoing basis either directly or through neglect. At best, as adults they are put in a position where other adults are attending to them (however kindly) with private activities.
Pupil is unable to attend doctors/dentists/nurse appointments	The outcome of this is death at worst. As an adult the pupil will not be examined by a medical professional or may not be able to access treatment. Where they do, they may need sedation. The pupil will not receive treatment and may suffer pain and/or discomfort as a result of lack of treatment. This will have further impact on quality of life in other areas.
Pupil does not learn to sit near/with peers	For some pupils this will mean that they will never access a less specialist education setting where they may have done with this skill. For others it will severely limit the activities they are able to partake in as adults where they need to sit near others. For example; eating out or using public transport.
Pupil has limited diet	For these pupils the impact may well be permanent ill health. They may be malnourished or develop diabetes. At best they will be denied the joys of experiencing a range of foods.

As stated previously these are only some examples and while they may seem extreme from one perspective, they are the end of a scale. There is a gradient for each of these skills depending on how well (or not) a pupil has developed a skill.

For example, a pupil who has learned to ask for their 5 favourite items will be less affected than a pupil who can only ask for one item but more affected than a pupil who has learned 20 items.

A focused curriculum

It is a point, self-evident, that the amount of time given to a particular skill will result in a better or worse level of competency in that skill.

For example, if Sam has a piano concert in 3 months' time and spends all of his practice time focusing on piano his playing will be better at the concert than if he spent 50% of his time on piano and 50% on violin. It is logical therefore that unless Sam needs to also perform with the violin that he will spend the majority of his time focused on piano.

The same can be said for our pupils. Chatten pupils attend school from 9-14:30 (5.5 hours per day). This equates to 27.5 hours per week. For a pupil who attends school from age 4 to 19 they will receive roughly 16000 hours of education at Chatten Free School. It is vital that we use these hours wisely to help our pupils to get as close to one of the positive outcomes identified. For our pupils the 'concert' is their life, and we are responsible for what they practice.

Here we provide a couple of examples of how this might play out for a pupil:

Abdullah joins Chatten Free School. He is pre-verbal, has no life skills and displays severely challenging behaviour, he is four years old and can point to the letters of his name when asked and count out 4 objects

In **example A** he spends the following amount of time engaged in learning different lessons/ skills:

Basic writing (his name)	15%
Reading (HFW)	10%
Number (counting to ten)	10%
Food technology	15%
PECS (snack time)	15%
Coin recognition	10%
Phonics	15%
Experiential science	10%

Assuming this is the contents of his time in school we might expect the following outcomes as an adult:

Abdullah can write his name, receptively identify 20 HFW, identify numbers to 20, mix a cake mix, recognise letters A-F from the phonetic alphabet, can give a 10, 20 and 50 pence piece when asked and will request a several specific food items at a time designated by others as 'snack time'.

Abdullah is dependent on careers to perform all basic hygiene routines. He is unable to access the community due to his challenging behaviour and is on a high level of medication to reduce this behaviour.

In **example B** Abdullah spends the following amount of time engaged in learning different lessons/ skills:

Functional communication	20%
Toileting	10%
Basic writing (his name)	10%
Reading (HFW)	10%
Number (counting to ten)	10%
Food technology	10%
PECS (snack time)	10%
Coin recognition	10%
Phonics	5%
Experiential science	5%

In this scenario Abdullah's long-term outcomes are slightly improved. He is now able to communicate some of his basic wants and needs using PECS and as a result his challenging behaviour is somewhat reduced. However, he struggles when he is unable to access a preferred item or has to wait and this will often lead to challenging behaviour. He is able to use the toilet independently but still needs support with washing and dressing. All the other outcomes remain static.

In the final **example C** Abdullah's curriculum is more focussed on his long term needs as follows:

Functional communication	30%
Independence skills	30%
Tolerating skills	20%
Social interaction	20%

In this scenario Abdullah is not able to write his name or identify letters of the phonetic alphabet. Indeed, his academic skills are almost entirely lacking. However, he is now able to communicate using a device he needs and wants on a daily basis.

This includes being able to ask for help, saying 'no' and requesting 'more' or 'less' of something. He is able to comment on his environment including answering questions about the location of items. He has almost zero challenging behaviour now and can access most activities. Abdullah is usually able to tolerate being told 'no' when something is unavailable and can wait for things, he requests which means he can eat in restaurants. Abdullah needs some help with dressing; however, this is in the form of clothes being left out for him and doing up shirt buttons. He is able to shower and toilet himself. Abdullah is 20 now and due to support around basic social interactions he lives in a supported living environment with three other adults with autism. He accesses supported employment in a café' designed to provide opportunities for people with learning difficulties.

The same examples might be given for younger pupils who might be able to access a less specialist setting. If the right skills are focused on then the positive outcome is more likely.

In essence the amount of time given to relevant vs irrelevant skills will place the future of that pupil somewhere on a spectrum as below:



It is actually unethical to spend time working with a pupil on a skill which will not support them in getting closer to the positive outcomes already described. As a school we must have high expectations of our pupils and what they can achieve, and this starts with providing the correct input for those pupils to help them meet those expectations.

Chatten Curriculum

The Chatten Curriculum includes 7 headings. Pupils may be working under all or a number of these headings at any one time. The headings often crossover with one another as this is the nature of our curriculum. In short the headings are:

1. Functional communication
2. Toleration
3. Safety
4. Movement and Health
5. Broadening horizons
6. Skills for new adventures
7. Daily life skills
8. Behaviour

Communication

All pupils at Chatten Free School will leave with a form of functional communication. This communication may come in many forms such as; speech, PECS, sign or electronic device. The focus will be on making it functional for the pupil.

The communication component of the curriculum is a vital element. Of course all elements are adapted to the needs of the pupil but the heading below provide an overview:

Choosing a system

A functional system of communication must be identified – this might be PECS, MAKATON or spoken. It may even be a hybrid of these systems.

Elements of communication

Usually individual elements will be taught by noun first with adjectives and verbs being added later. This is based on the need of the pupil. For example it is more functional to be able to request an apple than a green but it may be useful to be able to request a green apple when red and green are both available.

Requests

Pupils learn to request the things they want, when they want them both in and out of context. This may include requests for information.

Labels

Pupils learn to identify different things in their environment using their communication system. They may learn to identify emotions and feelings in themselves.

Conversation/intraverbals

Pupils learn to answer questions, ask questions and fill in the blanks to what others are saying.

Listener communication/ Receptive instructions/objects

Pupils learn to listen and respond to the requests of others in a functional way. For example, having heard; “go and get the ketchup”, they go to the fridge and get the ketchup.

Answering questions

Pupils will learn to answer simple questions, for example answering yes or no correctly when asked, “ are you hungry?”

Echoics

Where appropriate, pupils will be encouraged to copy sounds or words to help their articulation of adult form words and discover the function of spoken word.

Making choices

Pupils will be taught how to make choices using a functional method of communication.

Social Skills

Where appropriate, pupils will be taught a variety of social skills from appropriate greeting to requesting to peers.

Toleration

There are many things in the world which our pupils may struggle to tolerate. For some these things might be simple barriers to specific environments, for example not being able to tolerate dogs at a proximity of 50 metres will likely restrict access to a local park. For others this could be life threatening, for example tolerating a doctor's examination while severely ill.

There is an inexhaustible list of things which it may be beneficial for a pupil to learn to tolerate. A limited list includes:

- Tolerating self-care
- Waiting/delayed access to an item
- Adult led instructions
- Interrupting play or an enjoyable activity
- Denied access/ told no
- Transitions
- Sensory stimuli (noise, mess, lights)
- Devices designed to support with sensory stimuli
- Animals
- People
- Change

Safety

Teaching children to be safe is vital. This might include anything as simple as not running away from an adult while in the community to not drinking cleaning fluids. For pupils who have allergies it could be avoiding foods containing those products.

As with toleration there is an inexhaustible list of safety skills a pupil might need. A limited list includes:

- Safety instructions such as stop/ stay close to a carer in the community
- Safety within self-care such as not consuming medicine unsupervised/ or touching sharp objects
- Stranger danger
- RSHE

Movement and health

Keeping our children healthy is a pre-cursor to helping them be happy. This might include regular exercise/ play, eating a varied diet, attending the dentists or attending to personal hygiene. For some pupils it will be about engaging in activities which support their sensory processing.

Movement and health is another very long list of potential topics. Subjects may include:

- Accessing sensory processing interventions
- Accessing exercise or physical play
- Eating a varied diet and trying new foods
- Occupational therapy programme

Broadening horizons

Broadening horizons is about learning to engage in new activities and being in new locations. It might be about something as simple as discovering a new way to spend spare time or going to the cinema.

Examples of skills taught through this element may include:

- Play skills, such as playing appropriately with toys or following an activity schedule
- Joint attention, such as attention autism and social engagement routines
- Leisure skills, such as playing computer games, visiting a restaurant or going bowling
- Social skills, such as engaging functionally with peers or playing a team game

Skills for new adventures

Some of our pupils will be able to move onto new adventures. For some this will mean a new learning environment and for others it will mean supported employment. Skills for new adventures is about teaching specific skills for those environments. For example, someone entering supported employment in a café may learn to use a till, or a pupil who is working toward joining a different provision may need to learn to follow the routines of that environment.

- Following a classroom routine such as independent work tasks
- Entry level academics such as using stationary, spelling and writing, reading maths and time
- Employment skills such as using a till
- Vocational skills such as planting seeds
- Shopping skills such as using a debit card and following a shopping list
- Travel skills such as using a bus
- Visual performance such as imitation, matching and sorting

Daily life skills

There are many skills which we take for granted on a daily basis. These skills are the things which lead to higher levels of independence on a day-to-day basis. They can be as simple as wiping our bottom after using the toilet or as complex as setting up a direct debit or cooking a meal. Some skills we might teach our pupils include:

- Toileting
- Hygiene
- Dressing
- Washing clothes
- Cooking/meal prep
- Washing up

Behaviour

Where a pupil has a dangerous or limiting behaviour it will often be a focus for them to find alternatives to that behaviour. This topic usually crosses over with others.

To learn more please read our behaviour policy.

Prioritising for the moment (re-focus)

As with the section on 'focused curriculum' we will always focus our curriculum on the needs of the pupil. We will endeavour to teach skills which will get our pupil as close to the positive outcomes identified as possible. However we also recognise that there are times when we must focus on something specific because it has an immediate and dramatic impact on that pupil's day to day life. We need to 're-focus' Some examples follow:

- A pupil engages in severe self-injurious behaviour (head banging) which doctors say will lead to detached retina if not addressed quickly. In this scenario we must **re-focus** and **prioritise** the reduction of this behaviour to avoid the outcome described
- A pupil has severe tooth decay and is experiencing toothache which leads to an inability to focus on any other activity. The pupil will not attend a dentist appointment even to be anaesthetised. In this scenario the pupil is unable to attend to any other work and is in immense pain. It is clear we must **re-focus** and **prioritise** support them to access treatment.

- A pupil has built a wide variety of skills and is now ready in most senses to attend a mainstream setting with support. However, they have not learned to use a toilet and currently smear faeces. The mainstream placement has said that they cannot support this behaviour as it will have hygiene implications. If we do not **prioritise** and **re-focus** then the pupil will be unable to access a new provision which will be of benefit to them.

How the Chatten Curriculum relates to the national curriculum

As an independent free school Chatten is allowed to follow a curriculum of its choosing providing that curriculum is broad and balanced.

We strongly believe that our curriculum is broad and balanced as well as being focused and individualised. However, we do want to take this opportunity to demonstrate that, although our focus is the Chatten Curriculum, we do cover the national curriculum in an appropriate and functional way as part of our approach.

Chatten pupils will work on a variety of skills or targets that are relevant to them as individuals. You are unlikely to see ‘literacy’ or ‘numeracy’ specified as a discrete lesson on a pupil’s timetable due to the nature of our teaching and learning system. However, these curriculum areas are built into the very fabric of the skills and lessons taught.

Below is a brief explanation of ways in which core and foundation subjects may be taught through the individual pupil programmes.

There is also a brief explanation as to how these subjects might be addressed by the hypothetical pupils A and B so that application of the below is clear.

<i>NC coverage - general</i>	
<i>Subject</i>	<i>Comments</i>
English	English is a key part of any child’s curriculum and education programme at Chatten School. The subject comprises communication; both receptive and expressive as well as reading (decoding and understanding) and writing (spelling, handwriting etc.). English is incorporated differently for each pupil at Chatten but will always be included. It may include (but will not be limited to): Developing expressive communication skills at a level appropriate for the pupil, developing receptive communication skills appropriate for the pupil, learning to ‘read’ images or signs, learning to read key words relevant to their daily lives, experiencing books and reading, reading instructions (either in words or images) classic reading

		and phonics programmes where appropriate, basic letter/shape formation, writing words important to them such as name, address etc., typing on text to speak machines. All of these activities (as appropriate for the individual) will be taught throughout the day and be embedded into daily activities.
	Maths	Maths is a core subject and vital to the development of our pupils. The ways that maths is incorporated into the school day for pupils (depending on need) may include but will not be limited to; counting objects or requesting amounts of objects, recognising more in receptive and expressive terms when requesting, experiencing time through waiting, experiencing or understanding timetables at varying levels of complexity including parts of the day and days of the week, weighing or counting items in cookery, paying for items in shops (both real and pretend) recognising shapes through image and symbol recognition, following directions, sharing items food with others.
	Science	Science is worked into the school day in many ways including; cooking and food preparation, learning to problem solve, mixtures, heat and cold through safety, chemicals and electricity (again through safety), biology including understanding themselves and their bodies and experiencing other animals such as the school dog.
Humanities	History	History for most of our pupils will be something experienced on a personal level as opposed to a whole world. All pupils will experience timetables to some extent which will require an understanding of; what has happened, what is happening and what is going to happen.
	Geography	Geography is a personal topic to our pupils and will be experienced via individual rooms, the school, the school local community and the family local community. This may be purely experiential and geared toward 'way finding' and direction following.
	Art and design	For many pupil's art and design is an area of interest that will be incorporated into rewards that they receive. Alternatively it may be addressed when learning colours (such as for requesting) Many pupils will experience art and design during sessions via music, art materials which are also sensory (paint, modelling clay etc.) or through other areas. NET (natural environment teaching) sessions will often incorporate art and design elements.
	Food technology	Food is a huge area of interest and importance for many Chatten pupils. Food technology is a subject that all pupils will address on some level. This may include; preparing and cooking foods, cleaning work areas, experiencing new tastes, broadening nutritious repertoire, tolerating the smells of the food of others, eating near others, being near others while they eat, requesting food items. As there is no specific 'lunchtime' pupils can work on a number of different targets using the numerous resources around the school.

RSHE/PSHE/RE	These topics are the core of the Chatten curriculum. Our pupils are learning about themselves and how to tolerate/interact with the world around them. Individual topics are taught using a proactive approach relevant to each pupil. For many pupils understanding and managing their own emotions or urges/actions will be key parts of their programme.
Computing	As with all targets computing is a topic that is geared towards the needs of the pupil. This might include using electronic equipment that is relevant to their daily lives (TV, washing machine, microwave, fridge, oven) or accessing ICT equipment in a rewarding fashion such as games on the I-pad. It may also include more formal ICT skills when this becomes applicable.
Physical education	It is vital for our pupils' health that they take part in physical activity. For some this means walking, for others it may mean accessing play equipment as a reward (or as part of a NET session). Some pupils will access the equipment in the soft play rooms as part of their programme, others will access the gym equipment we have on site. It is unlikely that our pupils will access team sports but when this is deemed appropriate opportunities will be provided.
Modern foreign languages (MFL)	The majority of our pupils will be pre-verbal and even those who have verbal skills will experience significant challenges in this area. For that reason, MFL in terms of the languages of other countries is not an area we are likely to cover. However, MAKATON sign language will be taught to many of our pupils as a form of communication or as supplementary support to support spoken communication. Adults around the school will be trained and encouraged to use MAKATON to support receptive understanding of the language.
Special events/topic days	Throughout the year the school will recognise special events and holidays such as; from a range of cultures. On such occasions a range of experiential activities will be included which continue to address ongoing targets through a NET style teaching system but which address a range of curriculum topics including PHSE, RE, PE, Art, Drama, music, food technology etc.

<i>NC coverage – hypothetical pupils</i>		
<i>Subject</i>	<i>Child A</i>	<i>Child B</i>
English	Receptive and expressive communication, symbolic recognition,	Receptive and expressive communication, symbolic recognition, forming vocal sentences, reading key words on site (key to pupil)

Maths	Understanding timetables/sequences of events, experiencing quantities of time. Building toward requesting by quantity, understanding link between distance and time	Understanding timetables/sequences of events, experiencing quantities of time. Building toward requesting by quantity, understanding link between distance and time
Science	Experiential through cooking activities	Experiential through cooking activities
Humanities	Experiencing time and events, navigating around localities, understanding link between distance and time, directions,	Experiencing time and events, navigating around localities, understanding links between distance and time, directions, understanding 'people who help us' (doctors).
Art and design	Taught as part of NET sessions	Taught as part of NET sessions
Food technology	Currently requesting based – pupil asks for preferred foods. Also daily lunches, experiences being part of preparing food and making choices	Requests based, daily lunches, prepares favourite snack
RSHE/PSHE/RE	Understanding self needs, waiting to run, communicating needs as alternative to behaviour	Understanding self needs, waiting, communicating needs as alternative to behaviour
Computing	Currently experiential- pupil will request I-pad and access preferred games/activities.	Currently experiential-pupil will request I-pad and access preferred games/activities.
Physical education	Running, walking, gym,	Play, walking
Modern foreign languages (MFL)	Staff support with use of MAKATON	Staff support with use of MAKATON

How can a focused curriculum be a broad and balanced curriculum?

It might occur to someone to ask, 'how can a focused curriculum be a broad and balanced curriculum'? Surely it would be oxymoronic to suggest this is the case. If a pupil has a curriculum focused entirely on learning a system of communication, then they cannot also be learning any numeracy skills and if a pupil is learning to tolerate attending a dentist's appointment as a strong focus everyday then how can they possibly be accessing art and design?

The answer is that although we split our curriculum into topics, these topics actually interact so much with each other that generally speaking, to teach one topic is to teach several.

If a pupil is learning to shower for example, they will be learning to follow steps, to safely set the heat of the water, to choose correct materials with which to wash, to tolerate heat and steam, to ask for help or to be left alone.

Provision for EYFS if appropriate including provision for play

Access to play is a vital part of the EYFS curriculum and this is no different for pupils at Chatten School. For younger pupils many skills will be taught in discrete sessions and then generalised in NET sessions comprised of play. Expressive communication sessions will also have a focus on play and preferred play activities. Staff will receive training and part of their recruitment will be based on an ability to be playful.

There are considerable resources throughout the school to allow for play including resources in individual classrooms, soft play, multisensory and outdoor play areas.

Planning

Because of the nature of our pupils and of the programmes that we run; planning expectations will differ from those found in most schools.

The purpose of planning should be to ensure that there is a clear structure to the learning opportunities of our pupils and that senior management or other relevant parties are able to easily ascertain what pupils are doing, when, and what this might look like.

The expectations of teaching staff and tutors with regards to planning are as follows.

Individual timetables – all pupils should have current individualised timetables. These should be reviewed frequently and will be accessible via the Hi-Rasmus system. Timetables should outline the goals of a session (these will likely be multiple), what type of activity will be involved and what data should be collected.

Programmes – Programmes are located on the Hi-Rasmus system. Each task will include a detailed instruction on how to run the programme including activity, prompting level, reinforcement and data collection. Programmes will be updated

frequently via the assessment cycle. This means that if a pupil does not make progress for a pre-determined amount of time the programme (specifically that element) will be reviewed and updated. If a pupil makes progress, the Hi-Rasmus system will automatically update the target to maintenance or generalisation. If a target is mastered and moved to maintenance or generalisation a new target/programme will be set.

Monitoring- Teachers will frequently monitor the running of individual programmes and timetables as run by tutors. BCBA's will monitor timetables and programmes on a fortnightly basis to ensure they are kept up to date.

Conclusion

Chatten provides a fully individualised focussed curriculum for its pupils which aims for:

1. The pupil is able to transition into a less specialist education setting.
2. The pupil stays with us and after leaving lives a life of happiness, safety, independence and respect.

This curriculum is both focussed and broad/balanced. Although we follow our own curriculum, we also cover the NC in an appropriate way. This is demonstrable in the pupil programmes although you may not see subjects highlighted in the way you might see in other schools.