

CURRICULUM STATEMENT

Elmley Dray School — Whole-School SEND Curriculum

Pathways, three-year progression and depth of learning

Prepared by Creative Education for Elmley Dray School · Draft for review

1. Our Intent

Every child at Elmley Dray School follows a curriculum that is ambitious, coherently sequenced, and built on what they already know and can do. The curriculum is organised into five developmental pathways and a three-year rolling thematic cycle. Together, these give every pupil two things at once: a clear, evidenced sequence of learning within their own pathway, and a genuine, well-founded route to move to a different pathway when their attainment and independence show they are ready. Neither route is a compromise of the other, because both are built on the same underlying design: every concept in the curriculum is taught more than once, at a greater depth each time, rather than once and then left behind.

This statement sets out the rationale for that design, how it delivers achievement and self-esteem, how PSHE, RSE, careers education and life skills are embedded rather than added on, how communication runs through every subject, and how the approach reflects current Ofsted expectations and Department for Education guidance on SEND.

2. Why a Pathway Model

A single, age-based curriculum cannot serve a school where pupils with very different starting points, rates of progress and long-term destinations sit alongside one another. Elmley Dray therefore groups pupils into five pathways by developmental stage rather than chronological age. This is not a ceiling on ambition; it is what makes ambition meaningful for every pupil, because it means each pupil is taught the next appropriate step rather than the next step for their age.

Pathway	Developmental focus	Accreditation route	Curriculum emphasis
Falcons	Early Years – Lower KS1 equivalent	Engagement Model; AQA Unit Awards where appropriate	Sensory, communication and exploratory learning; the Engagement Model's five areas underpin assessment
Hawks	Upper KS1 – Lower KS2 equivalent	AQA Unit Awards	Emerging subject identity; consolidating communication, independence and early functional skills
Ravens	Upper KS2 – Lower KS3 equivalent	AQA Unit Awards	Widening subject range and vocabulary; increasing independence and self-management
Owls	Upper KS3 – Entry Level equivalent	AQA Unit Awards; Entry Level Certificates	Subject depth and application; explicit preparation for accreditation and post-16 choices

Pathway	Developmental focus	Accreditation route	Curriculum emphasis
Eagles	KS4 / Post-16 equivalent	AQA Unit Awards; Level 1–3 qualifications	Functional, vocational and life-skills application; explicit Preparation for Adulthood outcomes

Pathways are named to reflect a shared journey rather than a hierarchy of ability, and pupils are placed according to holistic developmental evidence, not diagnosis or age alone.

3. The Three-Year Rolling Thematic Cycle

Because pathways group pupils across a wider age range than a single year group, the school runs a three-year rolling cycle of whole-school themes: Year A — Me, My World & My Community; Year B — Discover, Explore & Create; Year C — Grow, Prepare & Contribute. Every pathway addresses the same theme in the same year, at its own depth, so that whole-school assemblies, community links, Arts Award activity and enrichment can be shared meaningfully across the school even where the academic content differs by pathway.

A pupil who stays in the same class or pathway for more than one year therefore meets a different theme each year rather than repeating content, while the underlying subject and concept sequence within their pathway continues to build. The theme is the shared context; the pathway sets the depth.

4. Progression Within and Between Pathways

4.1 Progression within a pathway

Within a single pathway, each of the three yearly themes is delivered across every subject, and each subject's schemes of work are sequenced so that vocabulary, skills and concepts taught in Year A are the deliberate foundation for Year B and Year C. A pupil who remains in the same pathway across the three-year cycle experiences visible, evidenced progression: the same core concepts — number, communication, self-management, the wider world — recur, but each time with less scaffolding, greater independence, and a wider range of application.

4.2 Progression between pathways

Because every pathway is built around the same set of core concepts rather than a different curriculum altogether, a pupil who is ready to move to the next pathway is not asked to skip content or start a new curriculum from scratch. They move to the next depth-level of the concepts they already know. This is what makes upward movement between pathways genuinely possible and genuinely evidenced, rather than a judgement made on age or optimism: the receiving pathway's schemes of work show precisely what "the next depth" of a concept the pupil already has looks like, and staff can identify readiness against that evidence before any move is agreed.

The reverse is equally deliberate: a pupil who needs longer at a given depth is not held back within an age-based year group they have outgrown, but continues to deepen the same concept within their current pathway until they are ready. Depth of understanding, not time served, is what moves a pupil on.

4.3 A worked example

The table below illustrates how a single golden thread — communication — is expressed at increasing depth across the pathways. The same structure is applied to every core concept (number and money, independence and

self-care, the wider world, working with others), so that the principle of "same concept, greater depth" is consistent and auditable across the whole curriculum, not confined to one strand.

Golden thread: communication	Falcons	Hawks / Ravens	Owls	Eagles
Same concept, increasing depth	Requesting and responding using symbols, objects of reference, signing or emerging speech, in structured, adult-supported exchanges.	Initiating exchanges independently; sequencing ideas; using vocabulary linked to the term's theme across more than one setting.	Structuring longer exchanges for a purpose; adapting register for audience; using communication to solve problems.	Using communication functionally for adult life — interviews, transactions, workplace and community settings — with self-advocacy.

5. Meeting the Current Ofsted Framework and DfE SEND Guidance

The design set out above is deliberately built to withstand scrutiny against current inspection and statutory expectations, summarised below.

Both Ofsted's inspection framework and the Department for Education's SEND reform programme are in active development or use. This includes: a move away from a single headline effectiveness grade toward separate evaluation of several distinct areas; inclusion of pupils with SEND being treated as a whole-school leadership and curriculum matter running through every area, rather than a single, separate inclusion judgement; continued development of national standards for 'ordinarily available provision', intended to make clear what every mainstream and specialist setting should provide through quality-first teaching before an Education, Health and Care Plan is considered necessary; Local Inclusion Plans and joint Area SEND inspection, through which local areas evidence how education, health and care work together; and a sustained emphasis on Preparation for Adulthood outcomes, attendance, pupil voice, and safeguarding as integral to curriculum delivery rather than standalone requirements.

These points are summarised here to describe the direction the school's design is built to anticipate, not as a confirmed, current statement of either framework's exact wording. Both documents continue to be revised, and the details above — particularly the report-card model and any published ordinarily-available-provision standards — are the most likely to change before this statement is next reviewed. The school's named contact should check the current published Ofsted inspection framework, actual examples from inspections and the current SEND Code of Practice guidance directly before this statement is relied on for an inspection, a statutory review, or any published claim to families or the local authority. Creative Education has not independently re-verified either document against its live, current wording as part of producing this statement.

Framework expectation	How this curriculum responds
A curriculum that is coherently planned and sequenced	Every pathway follows the same concept-based sequence at a different depth, so progression is demonstrable both across a pathway's three years and between pathways, not just year-on-year within one class.
Curriculum builds on what pupils already know and can do	Schemes of work identify the prior depth-level for each concept before introducing the next, so teaching starts from a securely assessed starting point rather than a fixed age expectation.
Inclusion and adaptive teaching for pupils with SEND	The pathway model, the Engagement Model for pre-subject-specific learners, and depth-banded rather than age-banded sequencing are the school's core adaptive teaching strategy.

Framework expectation	How this curriculum responds
Personal development, character and preparation for life	PSHE, RSE, careers/CEIAG and life-skills outcomes are embedded within every scheme, not delivered as a bolt-on subject, and are mapped explicitly to British Values and SMSC.
Preparation for Adulthood (DfE SEND Code of Practice)	The four Preparation for Adulthood outcome areas — employment, independent living, community inclusion and health — are mapped into every pathway from Falcons onward, deepening year on year.
Ambitious outcomes and high expectations for all pupils, including the most complex needs	The depth-based model deliberately avoids a ceiling: every pupil's next step is the next depth of the same concept, so ambition is expressed as growth rather than as a fixed target tied to age or pathway.
Robust, meaningful assessment of progress	Assessment is aligned to AQA unit awards and NCFE baselines and to the Engagement Model where appropriate, giving an evidenced basis for both within-pathway and cross-pathway moves.
Move away from a single headline effectiveness grade, toward evidence reported across several distinct areas	The scheme-of-work template already reports separately against distinct fields — curriculum sequencing, communication and sensory provision, accreditation, personal development, and Preparation for Adulthood — so evidence is already organised by area rather than needing to be reconstructed for a new inspection format.
Inclusion of pupils with SEND treated as a whole-school, cross-cutting matter rather than a single separate judgement	Because the pathway and depth model applies to every pupil rather than sitting alongside the curriculum as a supplementary SEND offer, inclusion evidence is embedded in the curriculum design itself (Sections 2 to 4), not held in a separate SEND provision map produced only on request.
Emerging national standards for 'ordinarily available provision' (quality-first teaching before an EHCP is considered necessary)	Explicit task analysis, a graduated prompt hierarchy, total communication, and depth-banded sequencing are documented as the school's standard teaching approach for every pupil in every scheme of work, giving a ready, evidenced answer to what quality-first teaching looks like at Elmley Dray, independent of any individual pupil's EHCP.
Local Inclusion Plans and joint Area SEND inspection of how education, health and care work together locally	This statement, together with each pathway's schemes of work and assessment plans, is structured to be usable as evidence for a local area's Inclusion Plan or Area SEND inspection, showing the education contribution to the area's overall SEND offer.
Safeguarding integral to everyday curriculum delivery, not a standalone policy	Every PSHE & RSE, SPHERE and Natural World scheme of work names specific safeguarding-sensitive content and the reporting procedure staff must follow before delivery, so safeguarding is built into weekly teaching rather than sitting apart from it.
Attendance and pupil voice	Frequent, tangible accreditation and progress communicated in each pupil's own format (Section 6) are designed to sustain engagement and attendance, and pupils' own view of their achievement is built into how progress is shared, not gathered only through a separate pupil-voice exercise.

6. Achievement and Self-Esteem

Achievement is built into the design rather than treated as a separate wellbeing add-on. Because every pupil's next step is the next depth of a concept they have already partly mastered, success is achievable and visible for

every pupil, at every pathway, every term — not reserved for those closest to age-related expectations. Specific features that support this include:

- Schemes of work include tiered success criteria, so a pupil's achievement is measured against their own starting point and next depth, not a single fixed standard for the class.
- AQA Unit Award accreditation is available from an early stage across pathways, giving pupils frequent, tangible, certificated recognition of achievement rather than a single distant qualification.
- Arts Award is threaded across all pathways and years, giving a further accredited, celebratory route to recognise achievement outside traditional subject assessment.
- Progress is communicated to pupils in the language and format appropriate to their pathway — symbols, visual trackers, certificates or written feedback — so pupils themselves can see and take pride in their own progress.
- The three-year cycle of themes gives every pupil the experience of returning to and visibly exceeding their own earlier work, which is a powerful, concrete driver of self-esteem for pupils who may otherwise rarely see their own progress reflected back to them.

7. PSHE, RSE, SPHERE, Careers Education and Life Skills

PSHE, RSE, careers education and information, advice and guidance (CEIAG), and life skills are not delivered as a single bolt-on subject. They are mapped into every scheme of work across every subject and pathway, alongside British Values and SMSC, so that personal development is present in every week's teaching rather than confined to a weekly slot. This is deliberate: for pupils who need overlearning and multiple contexts to generalise a skill, a single weekly PSHE lesson is not sufficient for outcomes such as safety, relationships, or self-advocacy to become secure and transferable.

- RSE content is sequenced by pathway depth and age-appropriateness, building from body awareness, safety and relationships in the earlier pathways to consent, healthy relationships and rights and responsibilities in Owls and Eagles.
- Careers education and CEIAG begin well before the statutory secondary requirement, with age- and pathway-appropriate exposure to the world of work introduced from Ravens onward, building toward explicit work-related learning, employer links and Preparation for Adulthood planning in Owls and Eagles.
- Life skills — money, independent travel, self-care, home management, digital safety — are mapped as a golden thread with the same depth-based progression model as academic concepts, so they are taught as explicitly and rigorously as any other subject.
- The four Preparation for Adulthood outcome areas (employment, independent living, community inclusion, and health) are referenced from the earliest pathway, not introduced only at Key Stage 4, in line with the DfE SEND Code of Practice.

8. Communication Opportunities Across the Curriculum

Communication is treated as both a subject in its own right and a golden thread running through every other subject, because for many pupils at Elmley Dray, communication is the single greatest barrier to accessing and demonstrating learning in any area. Every scheme of work identifies specific communication opportunities alongside its subject content, using the pupil's own communication system — objects of reference, symbols, signing, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), or spoken language — rather than assuming a single mode across the school.

- Communication opportunities are planned into every subject, not only into English or designated speech-and-language sessions.
- Sensory opportunities are planned alongside communication opportunities in every scheme, recognising that for pupils in the earlier pathways, sensory engagement is frequently the route into communication and learning.
- The communication thread follows the same depth-based progression as every other concept: from requesting and responding, through initiating and sequencing, to structuring communication for a specific purpose and audience.

9. How This Comes Together

In practice, this design is delivered through: a master scheme-of-work template that carries the same core fields — WALT, success criteria, communication and sensory opportunities, accreditation mapping, PSHE/RSE/CEIAG/British Values/SMSC mapping, and Preparation for Adulthood outcomes — into every subject and pathway; a whole-school curriculum intent, implementation and impact framework; and quality assurance that checks, for every scheme, that the concept being taught is a genuine deeper iteration of what the pupil has already met, whether that pupil has progressed within a pathway or across one.

The result is a curriculum where every pupil's pathway is a considered placement rather than a fixed ceiling, where progression is real and evidenced in both directions, and where achievement, self-esteem, communication and preparation for adult life are built into the fabric of every subject rather than delivered separately from it.