

AREA BASED
CURRICULUM



PROJECT TOOLS

RSA AREA BASED CURRICULUM

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Criteria for projects

AREA BASED CURRICULUM **PROJECT TOOL #1**

Introduction

This document sets out the broad criteria that define an RSA Area Based Curriculum project. These criteria are drawn from the Principles for Action as laid out in the publication *The RSA Area Based Curriculum: Engaging the Local* (RSA, 2010). These criteria should form the basis for planning and evaluating Area Based Curriculum projects.

More detailed information about how the RSA Area Based Curriculum is working in practice, and to see our research reports on the project, please visit www.thersa.org/action-research-centre/education/practical-projects/area-based-curriculum, or contact education@rsa.org.uk.

These criteria are not intended to be prescriptive and say very little or nothing about what any given Area Based Curriculum project should contain in terms of content, who Community Partners should be, or how the projects should be constructed. They are, however, intentionally challenging around ensuring that all projects take seriously the questions of who gets involved with curriculum, where learning happens, and what content is included.

Criteria vary between those that *must* be fulfilled for the project to count as an Area Based Curriculum project, and those that *should* be considered and fulfilled wherever possible.

Basic criteria

Every Area Based Curriculum project must at least satisfy the basic requirements of an educational programme:

- Educational – the purpose must be for students to learn, progress, and achieve;
- Engaging – they must seek to engage all students regardless of ability or background;
- Evaluative – projects must be monitored, reflected upon and evaluated throughout.

Area Based Curriculum criteria

In addition, Area Based Curriculum projects must address the following three questions about the development and enactment of curriculum:

- who gets involved, and who do students come into contact with;
- what is valued by and taught within the curriculum;
- and where does learning happen?

The specific criteria pertaining to these three dimensions are outlined below.

Who

- Projects must be co-designed and co-developed by a school or other educational institution in partnership with a Community Partner or Partners (defined as any organisation, group or individual based in the same local area as the school and not a school).
- Partnerships between schools and Community Partners must fulfil the criteria laid out in the RSA Area Based Curriculum Partnership Charter (see separate document for details).
- Projects must be enacted in partnership with Community Partners, and include sustained contact between the Community Partner and the students involved.
- The enactment of projects must involve both visits from the Community Partner to the school and where possible of the students to the Community Partner premises or other locations in the local area.
- Community Partners should where possible be drawn at least in part from groups least often engaged or heard in the formal education sector, including parents not previously involved in school.
- Partners or others involved in the projects should reflect the diversity of the area in question, with regard to at least one of: ethnic, religious, language, age, rural-urban or socio economic factors.
- Students must be engaged as partners in curriculum development, and there must be an insistence on ensuring the involvement of those young people least engaged in school.
- Teachers must take responsibility for ensuring that any statutory curriculum requirements are fulfilled while engaging in Area Based Curriculum projects.

What

- Area Based Curriculum projects must be designed to address the specific history, socio-economic context, needs and resources of the locality in question, and be driven by students, schools and communities in the local area, not by external agenda.
- Projects should reflect on and where possible map the resources, opportunities and expertise already held within an area, and the 'lived worlds' of the young people in the area, using these as a starting point for curriculum development.
- Projects must take a critical approach to the relationship between the local, national and global dimensions of learning, focussing on the links between these, and encourage criticality in young people to ensure they are able to access and to shape their multiple identities and worlds.

- Projects must ensure that requirements of national entitlement to knowledge and progression are carefully considered for all students, whether within or without a statutory framework such as the National Curriculum.

Where

- Projects should map the locations and geographical known worlds of students, as well as their attitudes and feelings towards those places.
- Projects must include opportunities for children to visit places they are familiar with, and to explore how they might learn something new from those places.
- Projects must include opportunities for children to visit new places in their locality.

Partnership Agreement

AREA BASED CURRICULUM **PROJECT TOOL #2**

Introduction

This document establishes:

- The criteria that Area Based Curriculum partnerships must meet;
- the respective responsibilities and roles of schools or other educational institutions, and their Community Partners;
- and agreed terms of partnership regarding confidentiality, good faith and conditions of exit.

This document should be signed by all parties and a copy lodged with the RSA.

Area Based Curriculum Partnership Criteria

Partnerships must:

1. be between one or more schools or other education institution, and one or more Community Partners (defined as any organisation, group or individual based in the same local area as the school and not a school);
2. be collaborative relationships in which all partners are contributing to a shared output, outcome or objective;
3. establish shared objectives for students impacted by the proposed work;
4. establish individual organisational objectives for the work undertaken together which are shared with the partnership;
5. decide and implement evaluation plans to understand whether individual and joint objectives are met, and share these plans with the RSA.

Partnerships must not:

- be based primarily on a commercial exchange or arrangement (although payment for specific services is permissible).

Each partner must:

- act in the best interests of the students involved with the project at all times;

- be accountable to one another and to the students involved for the outcomes of the work done in partnership;
- respect confidentiality of all partners, the RSA and Citizen Power;
- give one month of notice to the partner and the RSA if unable to continue with the planned work.

Schools are responsible for:

- the custody and well being of students at all times;
- ensuring that students receive high quality educational provision in keeping with statutory frameworks;
- all safe-guarding, risk assessment and other compliance procedures normally required for activities carried out with students;
- ensuring that staff are available to meet commitments to partners;
- all necessary permissions from school leadership, parents and governing bodies are in place.

Partners are responsible for:

- being able to meet commitments planned provision and activities;
- ensuring that their premises are safe and secure for students to visit where applicable;
- ensuring that all individuals that will be working with students are suitably briefed and prepared as to the purposes of the activities in question.

Peterborough Curriculum: Scoping sessions agenda

AREA BASED CURRICULUM **PROJECT TOOL #3**

Introduction

Scoping sessions are held once a school and a potential partner have identified that they may want to work with one another on an Area Based Curriculum project. They will last an hour and a half, and will be divided into five parts:

- **learn:** for each partner and school to give an account of what they hope to achieve by getting involved, and what they think their organisation can offer as well as what the local area can offer
- **brainstorm:** to expand thinking on what it might be possible to do together, what subjects or skills might be involved, what other partners could be brought in, what locations used
- **define:** identify the key idea or ideas (if any) that are most worth exploring further and what additional input or thinking will be required to confirm these
- **plan:** decide next steps, key milestones, assign tasks necessary for moving the project forward
- **reflect:** have participants views on what they want to achieve or what they can offer changed?

Agenda

Learn (30 mins)

1. Why are we here? What do we each hope to achieve?
2. What does the local area contain in terms of resources for learning? What is the overall context of the locality?
3. What are the challenges that we should be addressing in the local area?
4. What do we each think we can offer to projects in terms of:
 - expertise
 - resource
 - ideas
 - or other?
5. Anything new or surprising in what has just been said?

Brainstorm (30 mins)

1. What might we do together?

Prompts:

What

- What are the Peterborough-specific issues the project should address for learners or for ourselves?
- How do these relate to the National Curriculum/national entitlements to knowledge?
- What do we want students to understand about their locality, their nationality, and how they relate?
- What subjects could we touch on? What are the obvious ones? What about less obvious ones?
- What skills/aptitudes could we address?

Who

- What do we know about the children involved? Results of the mapping?
- Who from the partner organisation could be involved?
- How will the project reflect diversity in Peterborough? What other people or groups might we need or want to get involved:
 - ethnic
 - religious
 - language
 - age
 - rural-urban
 - socio economic
 - other?

Where

- What do we know about the student's geographical awareness?
- What opportunities are there for learning at the partner's site itself?
- What opportunities are there to link in other locations around the city?

Define (15 minutes)

2. Can we pull any of this into the beginnings of a project idea, or do we need more time?
3. What else do we need to know, and who else do we need to involve?

Plan (15 minutes)

1. Deadlines and milestones for moving forwards
2. Who will do what to move things forward?
3. Reporting to who when done/if problems?
4. When will the partnership next meet?

Reflect (can be done by email if no time in face to face session)

5. Have your objectives for getting involved changed? If so, in what ways?
6. Has your view of what you think you can offer changed? If so, in what ways? What is different?

The RSA: an enlightenment organisation committed to finding innovative practical solutions to today's social challenges. Through its ideas, research and 27,000-strong Fellowship it seeks to understand and enhance human capability so we can close the gap between today's reality and people's hopes for a better world.



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