

## The six areas of the PLTS framework

### Independent enquirers

**Focus:** Young people process and evaluate information in their investigations, planning what to do and how to go about it. They take informed and well-reasoned decisions, recognising that others have different beliefs and attitudes.

Young people:

- identify questions to answer and problems to resolve
- plan and carry out research, appreciating the consequences of decisions
- explore issues, events or problems from different perspectives
- analyse and evaluate information, judging its relevance and value
- consider the influence of circumstances, beliefs and feelings on decisions and events
- support conclusions, using reasoned arguments and evidence.

### Effective participants

**Focus:** Young people actively engage with issues that affect them and those around them. They play a full part in the life of their school, college, workplace or wider community by taking responsible action to bring improvements for others as well as themselves.

Young people:

- discuss issues of concern, seeking resolution where needed
- present a persuasive case for action
- propose practical ways forward, breaking these down into manageable steps
- identify improvements that would benefit others as well as themselves
- try to influence others, negotiating and balancing diverse views to reach workable solutions
- act as an advocate for views and beliefs that may differ from their own.

### Reflective learners

**Focus:** Young people evaluate their strengths and limitations, setting themselves realistic goals with criteria for success. They monitor their own performance and progress, inviting feedback from others and making changes to further their learning.

Young people:

- assess themselves and others, identifying opportunities and achievements
- set goals with success criteria for their development and work
- review progress, acting on the outcomes
- invite feedback and deal positively with praise, setbacks and criticism
- evaluate experiences and learning to inform future progress
- communicate their learning in relevant ways for different audiences.

### Team workers

**Focus:** Young people work confidently with others, adapting to different contexts and taking responsibility for their own part. They listen to and take account of different views. They form collaborative relationships, resolving issues to reach agreed outcomes.

Young people:

- collaborate with others to work towards common goals
- reach agreements, managing discussions to achieve results
- adapt behaviour to suit different roles and situations, including leadership roles
- show fairness and consideration to others
- take responsibility, showing confidence in themselves and their contribution
- provide constructive support and feedback to others.

### Self managers

**Focus:** Young people organise themselves, showing personal responsibility, initiative, creativity and enterprise with a commitment to learning and self-improvement. They actively embrace change, responding positively to new priorities, coping with challenges and looking for opportunities.

Young people:

- seek out challenges or new responsibilities and show flexibility when priorities change
- work towards goals, showing initiative, commitment and perseverance
- organise time and resources, prioritising actions
- anticipate, take and manage risks
- deal with competing pressures, including personal and work-related demands
- respond positively to change, seeking advice and support when needed
- manage their emotions, and build and maintain relationships.

### Creative thinkers

**Focus:** Young people think creatively by generating and exploring ideas and making original connections. They try different ways to tackle a problem, working with others to find imaginative solutions and outcomes that are of value.

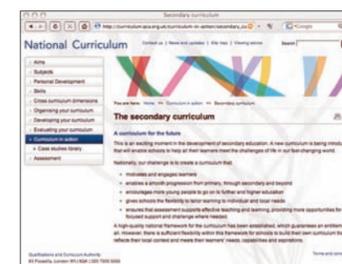
Young people:

- generate ideas and explore possibilities
- ask questions to extend their thinking
- connect their own and others' ideas and experiences in inventive ways
- question their own and others' assumptions
- try out alternatives or new solutions and follow ideas through
- adapt ideas as circumstances change.

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#### Key areas of online support:

- **Aims** – download the 'Aims of the curriculum' PDF
- **A big picture of the curriculum** – view the video clip of Mick Waters (Director of Curriculum) talking through a big picture of the curriculum and download the latest version of the big picture
- **Skills** – download the PLTS framework PDF, access more detailed guidance and explore how each subject relates to PLTS
- **Curriculum in action** – view case studies of how schools have developed PLTS in their curriculum
- **Online tools** to help you embed PLTS in your curriculum.



This leaflet links to further guidance available on the secondary curriculum website ([www.qca.org.uk/curriculum](http://www.qca.org.uk/curriculum)), as well as guidance provided on the CfBT website ([www.newsecondarycurriculum.org](http://www.newsecondarycurriculum.org)).

The new secondary curriculum  
Personal, learning and  
thinking skills

Supporting successful learners,  
confident individuals and  
responsible citizens



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## What are PLTS?

QCA has developed a framework for describing personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that applies to all young people aged 11–19.

The personal, learning and thinking skills framework comprises six groups:

- ▶ independent enquirers
- ▶ creative thinkers
- ▶ reflective learners
- ▶ team workers
- ▶ self-managers
- ▶ effective participants.

These generic skills, together with the functional skills of English, mathematics and ICT, are essential to success in life, learning and work.

They are embedded within the new Diploma qualification so that they form an integral part of teaching and learning.

### Working with the PLTS framework

For each group of PLTS, a focus statement sums up the range of skills and qualities involved. This is accompanied by a set of outcome statements that are indicative of the relevant skills, behaviours and personal qualities. Each group of skills is distinctive and coherent. The groups are also interconnected and learners are likely to encounter skills from several groups in any one learning experience. To develop independence, learners need to apply skills from all six groups in a wide range of contexts.

## What is the purpose of this leaflet?

This leaflet will support schools in planning and implementing PLTS – the qualities and skills needed for success in learning and life.

The guidance is built around the three curriculum questions:

- ▶ What are we trying to achieve?
- ▶ How will we organise the learning?
- ▶ How will we know when we are achieving our aims?

We want all young people to be engaged with learning and to recognise the value and importance of education in their lives. The advice provided in this leaflet will help you to raise standards, so that all learners can meet the challenges of life in our fast-changing world.

## What are we trying to achieve?

The aims of the curriculum are that young people should become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. The development of PLTS is an essential part of meeting these aims. PLTS have considerable impact on young people's ability to enter work and adult life as confident and capable individuals who can make a positive contribution to society.

For PLTS to be effective it is essential that schools and colleges personalise the way they work with them, in order to best meet the needs of their learners and broader communities.

Take time to consider the six areas of the PLTS framework. Consider how these relate to your learners. Keep the following questions in mind during your planning:

- ▶ What can your learners do already?
- ▶ What do your learners need to know, understand and be able to do?
- ▶ What skills and personal qualities do you want them to develop?
- ▶ How can you build on previous learning?
- ▶ How will this contribute to future skills development?

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Go to the **Aims** section and download the 'Aims of the curriculum' PDF. Compare these with what you are trying to achieve for your learners through PLTS.

Go to **Skills** and then **PLTS**. Use the online tool ('View PLTS in the curriculum') to explore how each subject relates to PLTS.

Go to the **Subjects** section and follow the links to your subject. Consider each importance statement in relation to the PLTS framework.

Go to the **Developing your curriculum** section and then 'Introduction to activities'. Navigate to 'Q1: What are we trying to achieve?' and finally 'Summary'. Download resource sheet F to record what your learners are like now and what you would like them to achieve as a result of developing PLTS.

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## How will we organise the learning?

Once you are clear about what you want to achieve, you can make decisions about the best ways to organise learning. A curriculum with maximum impact uses coherent themes to link learners' experiences across the school. Schools need to determine what learning opportunities, events and experiences are necessary to ensure that PLTS are developed according to their school's specific aims. Opportunities need to be created where these skills are explicitly taught or articulated, practiced in different contexts, and reinforced over an extended period of time, so that young people can reflect on the development of their PLTS.

Careful planning is necessary to ensure that PLTS are successfully integrated. Across the curriculum, young people should have the opportunity to:

- ▶ plan and complete tasks in real settings or environments, sometimes outside the classroom
- ▶ participate fully in the daily life of the school and discuss concerns, developing creative ideas and actions to address issues in their school and wider community
- ▶ take on new responsibilities and work flexibly as situations change, organising their own time and resources
- ▶ think and reflect on what they are doing and what they want to find out
- ▶ work in groups, taking on roles and responsibilities, sharing and refining ideas, evaluating each other's work, and questioning the assumptions behind particular ideas
- ▶ communicate in a variety of ways and present their ideas to a range of others, for example their class, teachers, a school assembly, or people outside school.

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Before you plan your curriculum you need to establish how effective you are currently are at developing PLTS skills.

Go to the **Skills** section and follow the links to **PLTS** and **Guidance**. Here you can view two filmed case studies of schools planning for PLTS across the curriculum.

Go to **Organising your curriculum** and then 'Principles of curriculum design'. Click on 'see Mick Waters' in the 'What is a curriculum?' section to view a video clip explaining the big picture of the curriculum. In light of this, consider how the learning experience you are planning provides opportunities for the development of PLTS.

Go to **Developing your curriculum**, then 'Introduction to activities' and 'How do we organise learning?' In the 'Turning vision into reality' section, download resource sheet C. This will help you reflect on your current curriculum, and on how you might organise resources and teaching and assessment approaches to better meet your aims.

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## How will we know when we are achieving our aims?

You will only be able to evaluate the impact of PLTS if you have been clear about both expectations and learning outcomes from the start.

To evaluate the impact effectively, you will need to establish what skills learners already possess. During the experience, observe and collect evidence of success from a wide range of sources appropriate to the context. It is essential that you develop a clear understanding of how your learners will develop their skills and competencies in relation to particular learning experiences. Learners will need to consider how they can apply existing skills to new and unfamiliar areas, and how they will develop these skills. Remember to consider various perspectives when evaluating a young person's progress. In addition to teachers, ask peers to assess each other and seek the opinions of parents and guardians.

Consider what learner progression in PLTS might look like:

- ▶ Identify examples of young people demonstrating particular skills.
- ▶ How did they improve and how did you know?
- ▶ Are they able to use existing skills and competencies in new areas?

Gather evidence of what learners achieve in the six PLTS areas. Consider:

- ▶ How will you gather evidence and share it with others in ways which are effective and manageable?
- ▶ Who is this evidence for?
- ▶ How can you ensure the evidence informs and impacts on learning?

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To find examples of how schools have considered these questions, go to the **Skills** section of the website and follow the link to **PLTS**. Use the 'View PLTS in the curriculum' sidebar to navigate to a particular subject.

Use the advice in the **Evaluating your curriculum** section. Click on 'how well you

are achieving your aims' and 'view the whole page' for further information. Resource sheet E (in the 'timely information' section) and resource sheet F (in the 'summary' section) will support you in evaluating the impact of PLTS on your learners.

### Support for the Diploma

PLTS are essential to achieving the aims of the Diploma. Go to [www.qca.org.uk/diploma](http://www.qca.org.uk/diploma) and follow the links to 'Delivering the Diploma' and then 'Recording PLTS in Diplomas'. Download the guidance document on this webpage. This provides guidelines on recording PLTS in teaching and learning for those involved in planning and delivering Diploma programmes.

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