

Oakfield House School

Curriculum Policy



Policy Document (2014-2015)

Updated:	December 2014
Review date:	September 2015
Signed by:	

Introduction

Oakfield House School is a Day School for boys and girls aged 5 to 12 who exhibit social, emotional and behavioural difficulties also children with ASC. Pupils are placed from a wide range of local authorities and they all have a statement of Special Educational Need. Before joining our school and as a result of their behavioural, communication and emotional difficulties many have been unable to access an educational curriculum effectively.

At the School we believe that the word 'curriculum' should be interpreted in its widest meaning. It is every planned learning experience the pupils have as a member of the school, both learnt formally within a lesson or informally outside the classroom throughout the whole School day. It is all the planned activities that we organise in order to promote learning, personal growth and development. Teachers and support staff structure these experiences to ensure that they have the most positive effect on the attainment, progress and personal development of all pupils.

The overall aim of the curriculum is to enable all the young people at Oakfield House School to become **Successful Learners, Confident Individuals** and **Responsible Global Citizens**. We aim to achieve this by supporting the following key principles:

Curriculum principles

Commitment to National Curriculum.

While independent school regulations do not require National Curriculum coverage, Oakfield House School is committed to covering the New National Curriculum (incorporating recent statutory changes) wherever possible and its programmes of study. This commitment must however be consistent with any statement of SEN for any young person which may well prioritise particular subjects or key areas of learning.

Pupil entitlement

As a Special Needs School providing for the needs of boys and girls with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, we are committed to the principle that all pupils, regardless of ability, race, cultural background or gender, have a right to the highest quality of education we can provide. This means that we seek to ensure; breadth and balance for all; appropriate levels of expectation and genuine challenge and relevance; continuity and progression in learning.

Addressing Special Educational Needs

As part of the admissions process and after a place has been confirmed a range of data and information is forwarded to education staff prior to the young person arriving. This information will include education, social and medical history, attendance, safeguarding issues and involvement of other agencies. The statement of special educational needs will provide further information relating to current attainment as a minimum in core subjects.

On admission to the school each young person will complete a full baseline assessment. Data from this assessment will be distributed to education staff and will reflect current cognitive ability. Where the statement indicates, or where the generic baseline assessment indicates, there will be further targeted screening, where necessary with specialist support. The baseline data is used to set realistic targets for progress across the curriculum and in relation to the key learning needs of the individual. The targets form a key part of individual plans including education plans, behaviour plans, positive handling plans and individual risk assessments.

A priority will be to catch up and fill any gaps in learning and to effectively meet the key additional needs of the pupils. A further priority will be placed on developing numeracy and literacy skills through intervention programmes including Toe by Toe and 'Catch Up' Literacy and Numeracy and 'Units of Sound' reading programme. A specific focussed approach to developing literacy skills will include all pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 accessing a structured reading development scheme and a structured weekly spelling scheme. Teaching Assistants will lead on developing pupils reading skills through planned 1:1 reading support sessions. There will also be a key focus on promoting key features of learning to learn.

Additional intervention is offered at all stages through group and one to one therapeutic support, according to specific individual needs, and also through a close working partnership between home and school. We have access to a range of Therapeutic Support including Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Play Therapy, Psychology, Mental Health Specialists and Counselling. To take account of the differences and range of cognitive ability, preferred learning styles and learning needs all staff at Oakfield House School will adapt tasks, provide a range of resources, develop extension work, provide for a variety of learning styles and environments, set individual goals, provide different levels of support and offer a variety of ways for learners to demonstrate knowledge and understanding. A thorough knowledge and understanding of each learner's stated needs and IEP targets is also crucial. At Oakfield House we are committed to meeting the needs of each child as they are expressed in the Statement of Educational Need.

Access

It is the School's responsibility to find ways of ensuring that all pupils are engaged in their learning, motivated and enabled to succeed. The curriculum, in every area, recognises the strengths of each pupil based on a variety of baseline assessments. All pupils are given an equal opportunity to participate. The school provides great flexibility and a readiness to adapt strategies for teaching, learning and participation. The School has developed a range of courses, programmes of study and teaching methods which are differentiated and tailored to the wide range of needs, abilities, interests and aspirations of our pupils. It also means that many features of the curriculum are common to all pupils. No student is denied access to any part of the curriculum on grounds of ability.

Breadth

All pupils are given a wide range of learning experiences covering different areas of skills and knowledge. A variety of learning activities are offered to try to ensure that pupils of different aptitudes, attributes and skills have opportunities for success. These are regularly reviewed.

Relevance

Planning takes into account the need for differentiation and pupils' varying experiences of family, community and culture. The school promotes a commitment to learning and personal development. The school aims to provide increasing opportunities to use new technologies when and where appropriate. The school takes advantage of the local area, particularly the rural environment. An awareness of its aesthetic qualities and the importance of preserving and caring for it are central values that we aim to promote. We look to offer a range of wider community opportunities including close working partnership with local schools and other appropriate resources. Its richness and variety are resources for the curriculum of which we make full use.

Coherence

The school plans different areas of the defined curriculum, in terms of planned learning experiences, to complement and reinforce each other. The greatest steps in learning take place when pupils are able to recognise the connections between one area of knowledge and another.

Continuity, Pace and Progression

Close attention is given to ensuring that a pupil's education builds on previous learning. Staff teams use high levels of communication to help plan progression through the school. The curriculum has been set up to reflect the 2 Key Stages based broadly on chronological age, but

with an element of flexibility in order to address individual levels of attainment. However it is our view that teaching must match cognitive ability regardless of learning stage. It is therefore teacher's responsibility to ensure that all work is appropriately differentiated and that all allow appropriate time for consolidation of new skills learned.

Expectations of staff

Staff at Oakfield House School are expected actively to promote and seek to secure the curriculum aims named above and, in particular to:

- have high expectations of pupils;
- employ a variety of appropriate teaching and learning methods;
- ensure that, wherever possible, pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to access to the curriculum and given every opportunity to succeed;
- deliver programmes of study which build upon pupils' previous experiences, providing progression and continuity, and which conform to the requirements of the New National Curriculum;
- provide work which meets pupils' needs and aspirations, which offers depth and challenge, and which motivates and inspires them;
- involve the learner in the process of learning, by discussing work, giving regular feedback
- through assessment and marking, negotiating targets and encouraging pupils to evaluate their own achievements;
- develop pupils' skills to become independent learners;
- encourage, reward and value achievement and effort, both formally and informally, through praise in the learning environment;
- work in partnership with other staff, parents/carers and the wider community to achieve shared goals;
- keep parents/carers regularly and fully informed about the progress and achievements of the pupils

Curriculum Structure

Structure of the School Day

The school operates a 30 period week. There are 6 periods per day, 4 in the morning, 2 in the afternoon, each of which lasts for 45 minutes. The final 2 periods on a Friday are used to support the School's extended curriculum by offering a range of activities both on and off site.

Key Stage 1 and 2 Curriculum

The curriculum at Key Stage 2 will enable re-engagement through following the National Curriculum (incorporating recent changes). There will be a key focus on developing core skills and a prioritisation on personal development through delivery of aspects of Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) both through delivery of daily timetabled lessons and routines and also through timetable circle time lessons. Pupil's social needs are also taken into consideration along with any other aspects that are deemed important and these are addressed through delivery of weekly timetabled Speech and Language Therapy lessons.

The Curriculum is introduced and developed following all areas of the National Curriculum and incorporates all core subjects and follows the KS1 (where applicable), KS2 and KS3 (where applicable) National Curriculum objectives to ensure all areas are covered. These are placed into the 2 Year, Long Term Plan, which is continually updated. Discrete intervention to support learning in numeracy and literacy will focus on pupils being able to catch up and fill in gaps in learning.

All subjects are based on the National Curriculum programmes of study and topic areas which are created and planned around the term's topic. Modern Foreign Language is delivered through Super Learning Days to cover new statutory curriculum requirements. All short term plans are differentiated for each class and within each class so that every student's needs are catered for. These are being created so that plans will be available on a 2-year cycle (2 Year, Long Term Plan) to ensure that no student repeats any area of the curriculum during Key Stage 1 and 2.

Short term lesson plans are produced by each teacher from these medium term plans.

The primary aim of the curriculum that is offered at Oakfield House is to maximise the development of each individual, to become **Successful Learners, Confident Individuals and Responsible Global Citizens**. Personal development therefore is identified as the key in all areas of the school. The two areas of Education and Therapy work together in supporting the individual needs of each pupil. Personal and social development is at the centre of a therapeutic community in all settings. In all that the school offers the key is to provide for the support and challenge that meet individual interests and aspirations. In terms of delivery, the key features of personal and social development are covered in the Key Stage 1 and 2 curriculum through elements of the SEAL programme and through the Speech and Language Therapy lessons. The School strives to ensure that young people leave equipped with the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes to cope with life in the wider world. In particular to establish positive relationships and to be able to live safe and healthy lifestyles.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development

Spiritual Development is promoted in a variety of ways. Whole School assembly delivery regularly includes religious content and themes. Timetabled Religious Education content in the KS1 and KS2 Curriculum actively encourages pupils to examine the nature of religion, its beliefs and practices. Visits to local areas and places of worship including local churches, Synagogue and the local Buddhist temple support spiritual development and understanding further. Pupils are encouraged to discuss and reflect on questions of meaning and truth such as the origins of the universe, good and evil, life after death, beliefs about God and humanity and values such as justice, honesty and truth. Pupils consider important concepts and experiences such as love, trust, forgiveness, obedience and sacrifice.

Considering how religions and beliefs regard the value and purpose of human beings, the importance of the environment and the significance of emotions such as love, anger, joy, jealousy, happiness and pain. Positive dialogue is encouraged for pupils to share their own ideas and views on religious and spiritual issues.

Pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their own attitudes and values, in both Religious Education and other lessons. Pupils are also encouraged to reflect upon their own attitudes and values in a range of lessons. In some subjects, notably Art, Music, English, History, Geography and Outdoor Learning pupils explore their feelings and responses to wider issues and beliefs. Many lessons and extra- curricular experiences allow pupils to develop a sense of awe and wonder and to reflect upon inner feelings and ask questions about meaning and purpose.

Moral Development is promoted through the close support work from class teachers (including praise, points and rewards and target setting); in certain subject areas such as RE, History, English and Citizenship, through consistent application of the School's code of conduct and classroom expectations and by positive reinforcement of good behaviour. The ethos and practices of the school encourage pupils to learn to distinguish between right and wrong. We seek to promote positive relationships throughout the school community and genuine tolerance and understanding of all cultures. In addition, the assembly programme addresses many moral, ethical, environmental and social issues.

Pupils are encouraged to value themselves and others and to explore the influence of family, friends and other sources on moral choices. A key priority relating to student moral development is based on all students being provided with regular opportunities to reflect on the importance of rights and responsibilities and to develop a sense of conscience, a key element to reinforce this has been the part played by the majority of students in working towards and achieving 'Eco School' status and also through the school PSHE programme.

Social Development and social education is an integral part of the philosophy and ethos of the school. Across the whole curriculum, we aim to develop pupils' knowledge, values, personal and social skills to help them benefit from their school experience and prepare them to take their place as responsible citizens in society. Many aspects of the school and its work contribute to personal and social education, the ways in which members of the school community behave towards one

another, the links between the school and the wider community, our many extracurricular activities such as sport, music and a wide range of trips and activities out of school. Social Development is promoted through many opportunities for pupils to work together, in a variety of situations, both within and beyond lessons. Pupils have extensive opportunities to take responsibility through activities such as School Council, participation in the whole school Outdoor Learning Programme, work in support of charities, and assisting at School functions and charity events.

Cultural Development is encouraged both within lessons and through a very wide variety of extra-curricular activities such as music and dance, regular library and theatre visits, museum, zoo and sea-life centre visits, events such as Super Learning days and visits from Health, Police and Fire officers to support and compliment the educational curriculum. Planned visits from speakers, people from different religious backgrounds and faith groups also help to reinforce pupils cultural awareness and understanding. Different European cultures and lifestyles are explored in the Super Learning Days. Pupils also take part in a wide range of Education visits and trips. The range of cultures represented in the school is valued and celebrated and national and international religious festivals are recognized. Cultural diversity from a national and international perspective is explored through a range of cross-curricular opportunities including planned in-depth geography based studies of other countries and their cultures, study of poetry and fictional literature from different cultures, the PSHE programme and links with other schools - national and international.

Out of School/Off Site Experiences

Planned, structured experiences for learners outside of the classroom and school environment add to each individual's overall learning experience. Intrinsic to these opportunities will be a thoughtful focus on personal development and are considered to be a very important area of the whole school curriculum. Examples of these additional learning experiences include; Outdoor Educational trips and also Curriculum related visits and activities.

Outdoor Learning

It is our belief at Oakfield House School that, when learning outside the classroom, our pupils attain higher levels of knowledge and skills, improve their physical health and increase their motor abilities, socialise and interact in new and different ways with their peers and adults, show improved attention and enhanced self-concept, self-esteem and mental health and change their environmental behaviours and their values and attitudes. The outdoors can provide space and freedom for a type of learning that is difficult to replicate indoors. All students have the right to experience the unique and special nature of being outdoors.

Differentiation

Despite the relatively small class groups and high levels of learning support there is inevitably a wide range of ability in these class groups. In addition, it is well documented that pupils who display social, emotional and behavioural difficulties have a wide range of preferred learning styles: some work well in small groups or in pairs while others prefer to work individually; some perform best in long-term projects while others like defined tasks; some respond well to oral work, while others prefer written work; some find written communication difficult but work effectively on a computer.

To take account of these differences and the range of ability in any class, all staff at Oakfield House School have a responsibility, when planning work, to meet the needs of all pupils. This will involve, at different times, adapting tasks, providing different resources, developing extension work, providing a variety of learning styles and environments, setting individual goals, giving different levels of support, and offering a variety of ways to demonstrate knowledge and understanding. A thorough knowledge and understanding of each learner's statemented/HCP needs, current NC level and sub level (or other chosen method of identifying stage of pupil learning and understanding), preferred learning styles and IEP targets is also crucial and these are recorded and communicated through the individual pupil profiles.

The Learning Environment

The school is aware that a lively, purposeful and structured learning environment is essential in promoting high standards and good working practices. Displays of pupils' work, stimulus materials

and appropriate resources are very important in setting standards, raising expectations and also play a key role in effective behavior management. All departments, class teachers and tutors are expected to manage their display areas effectively and to contribute to displays in public areas of the school. The structure and organisation of the classroom is also an important factor in developing effective working methods and a positive ethos. Whilst this is left to individual teachers and departments, it is expected that classrooms are orderly environments where pupils can work effectively, comfortably and most importantly of all – safely. It is crucial that adequate resources are provided and are accessible, and that pupils treat classrooms, workshops and any other learning environments with respect.

Schemes of Work and Lesson Planning

Each class teacher is required to have schemes of work for all of its subjects related, where appropriate, to the national. These schemes of work are followed by all teaching and support staff and their delivery monitored by Head of School. Schemes of work set out how the content of the course is structured, so that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are developed progressively, and how the teaching is organised. These schemes of work are supported by assessment strategies and methods for ensuring standardisation of expectation and assessment. (See additional **assessment policy**) It is accepted that teachers plan individual lessons, or sequences of lessons, in different ways and to this end the school does not prescribe a single method for short-term or long-term planning. It simply expects that such planning takes place, in sufficient detail to ensure that pupils achieve high standards and can achieve their potential and that the key planning requirements including specific learning objectives, planned activities and tasks and effective use of resources are considered as the bare minimum.

Equality of Opportunity All teachers are aware of and plan accordingly to the Whole School **Equality of Opportunity policy**. They also should actively promote quality of opportunity in the curricular work of the subject. As a School we regularly explore the range of opportunities available to ensure that all curriculum area engage pupils by showing respect for their cultural and personal identities. Teaching staff will also be expected to devise appropriate teaching programmes for any learner who requires additional support in order to successfully access the curriculum.

Gifted Pupils

A small number of pupils display special talents, skills, expertise and understanding in particular areas. These include both high levels of ability in subject disciplines and in activities beyond the curriculum - sporting prowess or musical ability, for example. It is the responsibility of all staff to identify such pupils, to encourage their interests and to make appropriate provision for them. Such provision includes planning classroom-based work which genuinely stretches such pupils, and additional challenges and experiences offered through clubs, interest and support groups, and opportunities to participate in external groups, societies, teams and organisations. Opportunities to celebrate such success include commendations in school assembly, letters of acknowledgement sent to parents and carers and records held in pupils records of achievement.

Information and Communication Technology

At Oakfield House School we believe that the development of capability in the safe use of ICT is an essential requirement of the pupils' education and that they have an entitlement to IT resources and teaching of the highest possible quality (**see E SAFETY policy**). The development of ICT at the School is guided by the following principles:

- all pupils have an entitlement to the use of ICT throughout all Key Stages. They are expected to develop both understanding and practical expertise. Pupils develop their skills through specific teaching in ICT/Computing lessons, and as a result of the use of ICT in subject areas. All pupils will be taught how to use the internet safely and will be expected to follow the schools safety guidelines
- ICT resources are planned and deployed within the context of Oakfield House School as a therapeutic community. We seek to ensure that resources of the highest quality, and of an appropriate type are provided to meet the needs of all users.

- staff are encouraged to make full use of opportunities for professional development in ICT. Practical workshops are to be held on a regular basis as part of the school-based INSET programme, and there are also opportunities to attend external courses.