



LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES CURRICULUM POLICY

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The Curriculum Policy has been written and approved by a team with a range of experience, and will be reviewed annually.

Date Created: July 1996

Previous Review Date: September 2023

Next Review Date: September 2024

If you have any questions about this policy or any other aspects of school life at Learning Opportunities, please contact Simon Graydon (Headteacher).

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INTRODUCTION

We aim to provide a cohesive approach to our curriculum with an individual's EHCP at the core. It is designed to provide positive challenges to foster individual achievements and promote

confidence and self-expression. This allows us to show progress of students over time based on their individual starting points.

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the delivery of the curriculum at Learning Opportunities. It should be read in conjunction with the Teaching, Learning & Assessment Policy.

Underpinning this policy is our commitment to provide a broad and balanced curriculum based on the following three statements.

Learning Opportunities Statement of Curriculum Intent

We are committed to providing a curriculum with breadth that allows all of our students to be able to achieve the following:

- Improve their literacy and numeracy skills and use these skills in real life situations.
- Achieve success in examinations at an appropriately challenging level.
- Enjoy learning.
- Experience life outside the classroom, experiencing the real world and natural environment.
- Have the necessary skills and knowledge to transfer to post-16 education, training or employment.

Learning Opportunities Statement of Curriculum Implementation

We are committed to providing:

- Experienced staff who have the necessary subject knowledge to inspire students.
- A curriculum that works progressively towards realistic and aspirational outcomes.
- A safe, well-resourced learning environment.
- An assessment system that informs planning, ensuring students are appropriately challenged.
- A curriculum that covers the statutory components alongside a range of enrichment activities.
- A curriculum that includes opportunities for emotional and behavioural learning.
- A curriculum that focuses on individual strengths, needs and aspirations.

Learning Opportunities Statement of Curriculum Impact

We will ensure:

- All students leave school with at least 1 certificate or qualification.
- All students make progress towards appropriate outcomes.
- All students have obtained a place at an appropriate post-16 provider.

BALANCE OF THE CURRICULUM

We have tailored our curriculum to meet the needs of students who experience barriers to learning to enable them to work towards age and stage related expectations. We achieve this through providing a nurturing and emotionally sensitive learning environment where students can thrive.

Our curriculum is developmental, but student centred, acknowledging that each student will have a different pathway. It encompasses both creative and life skills programs of study that aim to promote the social inclusion of all students and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life as pertinent to their circumstances. As the students move through the school, the skills they need for living become an integral part of learning, alongside the development of academic skills.

Each student has a tailored curriculum based upon their previous academic outcomes, long-term learning targets, EHCP outcomes and any identified special educational needs and or disabilities. Students are taught in small groups and when appropriate individually.

All students within the school have an EHC Plan. In developing our curriculum, we recognise the importance of addressing these needs as well as meeting the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum.

In order to ensure all students are able to meet their EHCP outcomes, we prioritise within the curriculum and deliver strands at the level which is appropriate for the stage of learning the student is at. Compensating for specific learning difficulties is an integral part of this process.

PLANNING & ASSESSMENT

A variety of assessment methods are used to assess students' knowledge, skills and application.

Formative assessment is central to all aspects of planning and assessing progress. Students are taught from their individual starting points at the most appropriate stage of the National Curriculum, and EHCP outcomes and targets are set and monitored from the individual stage the student has reached.

Progress is recorded on Classroom Monitor as ongoing assessment for all subjects which are available within that platform. Depending on the stage of the learning this is tracked using either the Rising Stars Framework or external examination syllabi.

Planning takes the form of a long term plan for each subject which outlines the content of the curriculum across Key Stage 3 or 4, ensuring that a variety of topic based units allows coverage of study. The selection of specific areas may be modified in order to ensure that the curriculum in question is appropriate for the students. Ongoing formative assessment highlights assessment objectives and targets at the appropriate stage, this stage then informs the medium term plans which are prepared in response to ongoing assessments. Aspects of SMSC, Every Child Matters, FBV and Citizenship are noted as they arise through curricular planning.

Reading and phonics intervention is informed in the first instance through the analysis of reading and spelling age testing, both single word spelling and Group Reading Tests which assess comprehension and understanding. Some students may respond more successfully to other approaches, such as whole word recognition and sight reading. For many, a combination of the two approaches is appropriate. Reading and spelling progress is monitored both through the English assessments and through regular reading and spelling tests.

DELIVERY OF THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Taught interventions make up a crucial aspect of our curriculum to support students with gaps, or to boost or extend skills.

In Key Stage 3 students are grouped according to age and academic and social ability. Within these differentiated groups lessons are further differentiated according to individual ability. Where appropriate students will be taught within a primary based model where 1 teacher will teach a range of National Curriculum subjects.

At Key Stage 4 lessons are usually delivered to classes of students grouped according to year group. Within each year group one class will predominantly follow a lifeskills and Entry Level curriculum whilst those who are able will be prepared for Functional Skills or GCSE level qualifications. Where appropriate, students will cross between classes to access areas where they demonstrate a particular strength or where they require additional support.

Staff are generally qualified teachers and whilst not always subject specialists they are experienced in imparting information and skills to students with behavioural and learning difficulties in a stimulating, constructive and professional manner.

We aim to create a relaxed, friendly, informal and open classroom atmosphere. This is only possible where the foundations of positive relationships, high expectations of performance, and hard work have been established. Formal and informal methods of teaching are used as appropriate by all staff.

ALLOCATION OF CURRICULUM TIME

At Key Stage 3

At Key Stage 3 students follow a curriculum closely allied to the National Curriculum.

During the year all students will have opportunities to access learning in:

English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Computing, Design & Technology (includes Food Technology & resistant Materials), Art & Design, Physical Education, MFL, Religious Education, PSHE / Careers and Forest School.

Key Stage 4

At Key Stage 4 the students generally follow one of two learning pathways.

- The first is the academic pathway. Students study a core curriculum of English, Mathematics, Science, Computing, Art and Design, FT and PE. The intention is that this pathway will lead to functional skills or GCSE qualifications in at least 4 subjects. In addition, they might access an accredited lifeskills programme.
- The second is a life skills pathway. Students focus on further developing their basic literacy and numeracy skills, supported through a comprehensive Life Skills programme. The intention is that this pathway will lead to Entry Level Certificates in the core subjects.

Students continue to follow the requirements of the National Curriculum, whilst embarking on public examination courses leading to GCSE / Entry Level / Functional Skills and other qualifications.

Through Life Skills and / or specific careers lessons, all students at Key Stage 4 also participate in Careers and Enterprise Education. This includes either block or extended work experience placements and involvement in school based community events.

In addition, where appropriate, students access school / college link courses either for a carousel of taster courses or to follow a specific course in which they have shown a particular interest.

Educational Visits

The purpose of Educational Visits is to address aspects of social, emotional and social interaction, and to encourage and support language and communication opportunities. We also ensure that key skills objectives from the relevant curricula are addressed at the appropriate stage for the abilities and needs of the students. These objectives are chosen to be realistic yet challenging and are recorded within our progress monitoring system for these subjects.

Careers Education

Preparing students for their next step is an important element of life at Learning Opportunities.

During Key Stage 3 students receive careers education and guidance through PSHE.

Key Stage 4 students also receive careers education through their PSHE lessons. In addition to these school based lessons and external independent careers advice via CXK or similar, students have the opportunity to visit local colleges and participate in a range of link courses. Where possible, students also have the opportunity to participate in work experience during the year.

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) & Health Education

Whilst education of students in sexual matters is primarily the right and duty of parents / carers, we recognise that as a school staff have an important complementary and supporting role. Aspects of Sex Education, and related health education issues, are dealt with as specific topics within Science, Religious Education, Physical Education, RSE (Relationships and sex education) & Health Education programmes at a level appropriate to the age and understanding of the students.

The Relationship and Sex Education programme draws on the expertise of external professionals. Sex Education is presented in the context of a loving, caring, human relationship.

FUNDAMENTAL BRITISH VALUES & THE CURRICULUM

As a school we have a duty to 'actively promote' the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

These areas are promoted across a range of subjects and 'celebration days', and visits during the year. Coverage of the areas of FBV in subjects is monitored through its inclusion on medium term plans for each subject. Students are encouraged to have an understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination across the whole school curriculum and particularly in PSHE.

SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS AND REPORTS (Refer to relevant policies)

Termly reports created using Classroom Monitor are sent to parents / carers and the placing authority. In addition, comprehensive reports are provided for each Annual EHCP Review and at the End of Year.

PASTORAL CARE SUPPORTING THE CURRICULUM

Throughout Learning Opportunities there is a supportive pastoral care system, involving all staff, which helps students settle into the routines of the school and monitor their progress through the school. It is generally a member of the SLT who contacts parents / carers when concerns are raised about a student's welfare or progress, and this is supported by weekly communication by form tutors.

QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING (Refer to the Teaching, Learning & Assessment Policy)

It is the responsibility of all staff to plan their teaching in accordance with schemes of work and school policies. All lessons are structured and have a clear objective that is shared with students. Varied approaches to teaching and learning provide access for students with a range of learning styles and work is provided at a level and pace that offers challenge appropriate to their abilities. Every effort is made to engage and motivate students and to promote enjoyment of the learning process.

MANAGEMENT

The curriculum is organised by the Headteacher who has overall responsibility to provide professional leadership and management for the development of the curriculum, to secure high quality teaching, to ensure the effective use of resources and to improve standards of learning and achievement for all students. This includes ensuring that:

- Statutory requirements of the NC are met.
- Schemes of work are in place and reviewed at regular intervals.
- Policies in line with those of the school are maintained.
- Delivery of cross-curricular themes are interwoven within the curriculum.
- Delivery of cross-curricular skills are promoted.
- Assessment requirements are maintained and outcomes used to inform planning and target setting.
- Student progress is monitored
- Teacher performance is monitored

The Assistant Head works closely with the Head teacher to monitor the curriculum delivery, quality of teaching & learning, and progress within the curriculum.

As a school we aim to use staff expertise to the full. Subject teachers work together with colleagues and share responsibility for their subject across the school. This process is supported by the Assistant Head Teacher.

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

The proprietor acknowledges their duty to provide equipment and resources which will enable the study and use of ICT / Computing where detailed within statutory requirements of the NC. Learning Opportunities is committed to the use of ICT to support learning.

All staff have a responsibility to develop the use of ICT in support of learning activities within their own curriculum areas.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

We believe that the curriculum should constantly be evaluated for its effectiveness for our current cohorts of students. Therefore, regular reviews of the curriculum are undertaken and where necessary updates are made.

This policy will be monitored by the Head Teacher, who will report on implementation, progress and recommend any changes.

Evaluation of the curriculum will be measured against a range of indicators, which include whole school and individual student indicators:

Whole school indicators

- Ofsted inspections
- Examination results
- Destinations of school leavers
- Parent / carer and student's questionnaires
- Student council meetings
- Individual student progress
- External validation

COMPLAINTS

Any parent/carer or external agency who is concerned about the content, balance or structure of the school's curriculum is most welcome to discuss the matter with the Head Teacher. If there is a significant complaint that cannot be resolved they may raise this in accordance with Learning Opportunities Complaints policy / procedure. Details of which can be found on our website www.learningopps.org

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Learning Opportunities offers the curriculum equally to all students regardless of gender, sexuality, cultural background, race or religion. Within its current resources, the school attempts to discriminate positively on behalf of all students to compensate for any educational problems that are due to specific learning or medical difficulties, or social attitudes as a result of being in a specialist provision.

In accordance with the statutory requirements the school aims to make the curriculum accessible to all students as far as is reasonably practicable.

