



The Parks School

CURRICULUM POLICY

Academic Year 2024/2025

Curriculum Policy

Legal Status:

Regulatory Requirements, Part 1, paragraph 2(2) (i) to (x) Quality of Education Provided (curriculum) (teaching) of The Education (Independent School Standards Compliance Record) (England) (Amendment) Regulations.

Applies to:

- the whole school inclusive of activities outside of the normal school hours;
- all staff (teaching and support staff), the proprietor and volunteers working in the school.

Availability:

- This policy is made available to parents/carers, staff, pupils and other relevant parties upon requests to the Headteacher.

Monitoring and Review:

- This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Headteacher.
- The Proprietor undertakes a formal review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than the beginning of a new academic year, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

The Parks School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils fulfil their potential.

Guiding Principles

At all times adults should be conscious of the need to be aware of the pupils' particular inter-personal difficulties and to work in conjunction with the care staff to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils and staff.

- To respect, value and understand the individual needs of pupils
- To strive to ensure equality of opportunity for all our pupils within the frameworks required by regulation taking account of the National Curriculum as appropriate.
- To prioritise the development of personal, learning and thinking skills and emotional literacy
- To hold high expectations of pupils within realistic challenges for academic achievement
- To foster a secure, safe and stimulating educational environment
- To co-operate and communicate effectively with other involved agencies
- To foster strong working relationships with pupils, parents, care workers, and significant others.
- To take account of the learning difficulties and disabilities, and other barriers to learning of all young people when implementing the curriculum.

Pupils

Our pupils, boys and girls aged between 11 and 16 come from a variety of areas across the United Kingdom and enter the school by referral from their supporting Local Authority. Generally, they will have experienced interruptions in their educational history or will have rejected the concept of 'school' in some cases violently - assaulting other peers and adults or damaging property. Many will therefore be operating at a level well below their peers of comparable age in mainstream settings and a high proportion will have either Statements of Special Educational Need (SEN) or Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC Plans) that include behavioural (SEMH) considerations. A number will have diagnosed medical or mental health needs as a result of experiences earlier in their lives which will have a bearing on the curriculum offer.

Those pupils without SEN statements or EHC Plans present similar problems but for a variety of reasons have not been through the required process. Common reasons for these pupils 'slipping the net' are repeated family moves, a succession of permanent exclusions, long periods of absence, time spent in custody and lack of educational knowledge on the part of carers and organisations.

The Curriculum

We are aware that some of our pupils, had their behaviour been appropriate enough for them to remain in mainstream, or had their personal circumstances been different, would have had the academic potential to achieve examination success. Therefore, all pupils, regardless of age, ability or disability, will have access to an education which is, as far as practicable, within the framework of the National Curriculum. It will be as broad and balanced as is practicable within the constraints of the setting but allowing for detailed or extended study for those pupils capable of benefiting from it.

The curriculum offers a range of opportunities for teaching and learning within the school community which helps the school meet the needs of all its learners. This is achieved through:

- A core curriculum offered to all pupils at the relevant level; with particular regard being paid to interventions that will enable the recovery of lost ground.
- A high focus on Adaptive Teaching to cater for individual needs and aspirations.
- A choice of vocational experiences in Key Stage 4 as appropriate to the needs and preferences of the pupils.
- A commitment to early entry (i.e. in years 9 and 10) into qualifications including entry level and functional skill courses.
- A flexible approach to the timetable in line with the individual needs of the pupils; this may involve for KS3 learners a reshaping of the curriculum under cross-curricular thematic headings; while continuing to meet regulatory requirements for curriculum coverage and where appropriate National Curriculum subject programmes.
- An intensive focus on personal development, which is sensitive to the traumas that young people may have faced.
- An intensive focus on the core skills of literacy and numeracy.

The Core Curriculum

The regulations of the Independent School Standard require the pupils that attend The Parks School to receive experiences in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education. Therefore, all pupils will have access wherever possible and where age appropriate to the following subject areas taught either as discrete subjects or as part of a thematic approach: English, Mathematics, Science, ICT, Technology, Humanities, PE, Art, PSHEE and range of Outdoor Educational and Adventurous Activities.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupil is addressed through all subjects, with a strong contribution from PSHE and religious education.

Personal and social development

While coherent, planned and progressive programs are in operation within the taught curriculum throughout Years 7 – 11 and address these aims, we recognise that successful personal and social development depends not only on a planned series of lessons but also upon a wider curriculum, which includes:

- Constructive relationships with education and care staff
- Appropriate daily routines in school and the home
- Assemblies and tutorials
- Visitors to the school and educational visits
- Cross-curricular learning in other subjects of the curriculum
- The provision of RE and careers education (see separate policies)
- Constructive approaches to behavior management which enable the learner to interact constructively with peers and staff.

Pupils in Year 9 and above receive Careers Education and Guidance and input from an independent careers advisor. Additional careers education is provided by aspects of the Citizenship and PSHCE courses as well as specific topic work. Pupils will access Work Based Related Learning wherever possible.

Preparation for end of Key Stage Assessments and public examinations will be available as appropriate to the needs of individual pupils.

Literacy and Numeracy

For many of the children and young people these aspects of learning represent the most significant barriers to learning. Some have learning difficulties, some have lost ground through having missed education, many react negatively to lessons in which reading, writing and basic number work play a part.

For all of them, progress in literacy and numeracy is essential, in that they play a part in all aspects of the curriculum, and is closely allied to thinking and learning skills. Because of this literacy and numeracy is the highest of priorities within the curriculum

Rationale

We aim to provide a supportive, stimulating, secure and supportive environment where children and young people are encouraged to express themselves and where their contributions are valued. We will provide for basic skills development of pupils and will develop their ability to think, explore, recognise and communicate their ideas. We will at the same time take into account how we support literacy and numeracy difficulties when

planning, so that we can provide access to learning experiences across the curriculum that are matched to ability and interest, whatever the level of the pupil

Principles

1. Literacy and numeracy is a right for all pupils and a central part of preparation for adult life.
2. There is a responsibility upon all teachers and support staff to develop basic skills and to approach its development consistently.
3. We will prioritise the development of literacy across all areas of the curriculum
4. We will consider the literacy and numeracy demands of all lessons, tasks, and resources, ensure that they are matched to pupils' attainment.
5. We will make literacy support a key feature of differentiation in all subjects.
6. We will carry out baseline testing on entry to the school and subsequently to ensure accurate assessment of need.
7. We will use assessment tools, (Fresh Start, GL Assessments) to assess the pupil's chronological reading and writing ages and to identify any cognitive problems that are barriers to learning on a termly basis.
8. We will take specialist advice from speech and language therapists where barriers in this area are identified by statement.
9. We will ensure that all staff have accurate information about the literacy levels of pupils they teach, about how best to support them, and about their targets for development.
10. We recognise that language is central to pupils' sense of identity, belonging and growth; and in turn to raising pupils' own expectations of achievement, improving pupils' confidence and self-expression;

Key stage 3 curriculum structure

In Key Stage 3 we prefer our pupils to complete National Curriculum subjects and where possible complete accredited courses. These may include: AQA unit award scheme, Entry Level Certificates or fast track GCSE.

Key stage 4 curriculum structure

In Key Stage 4 we prefer our pupils to complete externally accredited courses. This may include: Vocational Qualifications, Functional Skills Qualifications, AQA Unit Award Scheme, Entry Level Certificates or GCSE.

Key Stage 4 pupils are encouraged to participate in both academic and vocational studies depending on the needs of each pupil. Specific choices will be dependent on the needs and interests of pupils. The school will access the extensive vocational schemes offered by external education providers; this will include NVQ qualifications.