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*This statement serves as a synopsis of the rich and varied content, application, and impact of the curriculum that Yarrow Heights School offers.*

*Our curriculum will continue to develop so that it meets the wide range of needs of the SEMH pupils admitted to Yarrow Heights School.*

This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its students and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. In particular it should be read in conjunction with the policies covering equality and diversity, Health and Safety, safeguarding and child protection.

All of these policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to enable and evidence the work that the whole school is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core values.

While this current policy document may be referred to elsewhere in Yarrow Heights School documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

## Table of Contents

Section	Content	Page
1	Curriculum Vision & Ethos	3
2	Curriculum Intent	3
3	The Enhanced Curriculum	4
4	Curriculum Implementation	5
5	Curriculum Impact	6

## 1. Curriculum Vision & Ethos

At Yarrow Heights School our ethos is based on care, growing the children's resilience, and developing \*cultural capital. Within a nurturing environment, we strive to promote positive mental health and well-being, to cultivate self-awareness, realise personal potential and achievement and ignite a passion for lifelong learning.

Many of our pupils have had difficult childhood experiences. We encourage emotional and sensory regulation, often by over-learning, to build confidence, kindness and resilience to help the children to connect to and respond appropriately to their peers, the environment and beyond. This allows children to consider the cause and effect of their behaviour and recognise the impact they make on their immediate environment and others, including their peers.

We have adopted the national curriculum as our base for an exciting, broad, interactive and engaging curriculum. The school's curriculum will be coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment. All aspects of the curriculum, teaching and learning are underpinned by high quality and readily available resources and technology.

The curriculum will be developed to be ambitious and meet the needs of our SEND pupils, expanding their knowledge, skills and abilities to apply what they know and can do, with increasing fluency and independence.

Our curriculum focus ensures that children are offered a wide breadth of learning experiences which are challenging, real life and meaningful. This approach enriches learning and life experiences for all pupils. We will further enrich our curriculum through a variety of, learning outside of the classroom, cross-curricular links and stimulating and inspiring outdoor educational experiences. We make purposeful use of our local environment to provide an opportunity to meet unique interests and talents to ensure that all our children are at the centre of a broad, balanced, and varied learning experiences.

\* Cultural capital - The study of society, including relationships, social interactions and culture. To develop knowledge, skills and behaviours, so that they accumulate over time through many different experiences and opportunities.

## 2. Curriculum Intent

**"The extent to which a school demonstrates a rich and varied curriculum, one which is not simply focused on teaching to the tests or achieving good exam results".**

The Yarrow Heights programme of study offers:

- ✓ A curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils, that sets high expectations of real, purposeful outcomes; inspired by SEN research, technology and innovative teaching.
- ✓ A curriculum that ensures all pupils achieve accreditation in English and Maths as a minimum and offers a broad range of accredited subject pathways.
- ✓ A curriculum that blends therapeutic interventions with learning, inside and outside of the classroom.

- ✓ A curriculum that offers enrichment by building on pupils' interests, which nurtures exciting opportunities and aspirations.
- ✓ A curriculum that engenders pride, resilience and aspiration for every pupil, preparing them to lead safe, independent lives and to be active members of their community.
- ✓ The curriculum construction is designed to give all of our pupils:
  - ✓ the knowledge, social skills and cultural capital they need to succeed in life so that our pupils develop the essential skills in reading, writing, oracy and numeracy.
  - ✓ a full and rounded entitlement to learning to foster pupils' creativity and develop essential skills, including independent learning skills that transfer to a desire for lifelong learning.
  - ✓ the opportunity to develop a healthy, balanced and safe lifestyle underpinned by an understanding of community cohesion and the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and acceptance of those with different faiths and beliefs and guidance relating to relationships and sexual health.

### **3. The Enhanced Curriculum**

The foundation of the school's curriculum will be built upon the national curriculum and enhanced in the following ways.

#### **3.1 Whole School Reading**

Reading is prioritised to allow pupils to access the full curriculum offer. A rigorous and sequential approach to the reading curriculum develops pupils' fluency, confidence and enjoyment in reading. At all stages, reading attainment is assessed and gaps are addressed quickly and effectively for all pupils. Reading books connect closely to the phonics knowledge pupils are taught when they are learning to read.

#### **3.2. Bespoke Learning**

To ensure an ambitious, connected curriculum that has high expectations of our pupils, we promote a love for learning through the use of a range of teaching styles that include the personalised needs of each pupil. Cognition and learning develop through our themed and topic-based curriculum (ie. Learning Journeys in Primary) supported by child-centred plans to adapt ways of learning to build knowledge, skills and understanding. This at times requires flexibility to accommodate the many and varied complex needs and the associated mental health concerns that need to be supported throughout the school day.

#### **3.3. IT and Technology in Learning and Teaching**

Key to this objective is our IT curriculum which will underpin engagement and versatility of delivery to promote the pupils' growth in computing capability; an essential skill for life which enables our learners to participate more readily in a rapidly changing world. Using the internet and email, for example, gives them rapid access to ideas and experiences from a wide range of people, communities, and cultures. As a school which embraces technology, it is our conviction that the integrated use of a range of hardware and education-based software enriches pupil engagement and supports the improvement of quality of teaching and learning processes and vital communication between pupils, parents, and teachers.

#### **3.4. Life Skills**

We aim for all our pupils to develop functional skills for living so each of them are able to lead a fulfilling and relatively independent life. We recognise that for young people with autism and associated conditions, every experience may provide a learning experience. Our approach to teaching functional skills and life skills is at the core of our curriculum where our framework can be taught within the programmes of study and the schemes of work.

Input from the speech and language therapist, occupational therapist and therapy team supports the delivery of the life skills curriculum through personal programmes. Areas such as functional life skills and communication are very weighted towards support from therapists.

Our curriculum includes ample opportunity to develop life skills through the experience of daily activities both on and off site. Furthermore, there is a key life skill focus in each topic or area taught and these are integrated across the day in addition to discrete sessions. There is a strong emphasis on working in partnership with families, the wider community to ensure the teaching of life and social skills spans across the pupil's day including before, during and after school.

### **3.5. Team Around the Child and the Family**

Our outward facing, multi-agency approach at Yarrow Heights School includes pupil and parent voice, integrated therapeutic support such as support for mental health, occupational therapy, play therapy and speech and language interventions, supported by our dedicated family liaison and pastoral teams. This approach will help to enhance both the learning and social experiences of pupils to the benefit of all. Working closely with the adults in the child's life, the school's curriculum will be adapted for each child, reflecting their background, their needs, their interests and their social experiences, so that we consider not only what, but also how the pupils will learn, whilst promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural and physical qualities of all children and their wider communities.

### **3.6. Bespoke Outdoor Adventure & Enrichment**

Planned enrichment activities supplement the school's curriculum and contribute to the development of pupils' personal, social and emotional wellbeing. These include opportunities such as Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme, Sports Leaders and Forest Schools. The aim is to improve group cohesion and individual resilience and boost self-esteem, confidence and social skills. Societal practices and developing social interactions will be key elements of the enrichment programme.

## **4. Curriculum Implementation**

*'If our pupils can't learn the way we teach, then we teach the way they learn'.*

At Yarrow Heights School, the personalised curriculum and range of approaches and learning styles will have a focus on effective communication to enhance social and emotional health.

Adapted planning will take into account emotional regulation interventions that need to be included in order to promote a love for learning, leading to academic and social progress. Physical and sensory needs are also taken into consideration and we will look for discrete ways in which children can learn skills alongside their acquisition of knowledge, ensuring that both are developed.

Prior learning will be understood through effective assessment and frequent opportunities for pupils to rehearse learnt knowledge and skills. Our approach means that many skills are reinforced as a result of cross-curricular teaching in the context of many other subjects, including the Enrichment curriculum.

We aim for a depth of learning and breadth of coverage, where excellent staff subject knowledge links components of knowledge to broader, conceptual learning. Opportunities to practise skills and knowledge are built into the curriculum to secure a deep understanding of what pupils have been taught and to integrate new knowledge into larger concepts.

Curriculum planning will lead to a layering of knowledge and concepts delivered in a range of styles so that all pupils can make progress. Staff systematically check pupil's understanding to identify gaps in learning and misconceptions. This provides clear feedback for ways forward so that the pupil to makes progress. Clearly set out success criteria are used effectively to gain intended learning outcomes and elicit valuable pupil self-assessment.

Effective questioning techniques develop higher order thinking skills and support the retention of knowledge and understanding, as staff strive to offer as many recall and application activities as possible. We regularly refer to current research and use the new findings to update our own practice and improve our skills to support our pupils and their varying needs.

We will use a variety of interventions to support emotional literacy skills with regular sessions timetabled to nurture positive mental health so that learning can continue successfully. We will have excellent home/school links and specialist roles such as our Family Liaison Lead who helps to support all aspects of family life through regular 1:1 support and through our parents' meetings where help and advice is given as needs arise.

We actively take into account the health and well-being of pupils and their families and staff make an extra effort to include families in decisions that affect their children. Staff will seek and take advice from families and outside agencies to see how best to support our children, so that we can have the best outcomes for their futures and nurture their progress. We actively support our pupils to develop the skills for lifelong healthy relationships and a healthy lifestyle.

We take every opportunity to enrich the curriculum with outside providers, trips and visits, celebration days, whole school themed weeks and Enrichment opportunities. This gives context to learning and also shows our pupils that education is relevant, fun and worthwhile.

## **5. Curriculum Impact**

We live in an ever-changing world and it is our aim to ensure that our pupils are ready to face these challenges and succeed in whatever they do. The intention of the multi-faceted curriculum is for children to make excellent progress during their time at Yarrow Heights School, academically, socially and personally, transforming their lives and giving them hope for the future.

At our school, we learn together that there are different pathways to success and develop perseverance by overcoming barriers. This is reflected across all curriculum areas where pupils' work throughout the curriculum is of good quality. We understand that 'getting stuck' means that personal development and learning is taking place and this is just part of the journey to success. Yarrow Heights School will teach our children that failure is a part of the learning process which ensures that deep rooted learning can eventually be applied.

Through our ambitious curriculum we aim for every child to enjoy learning and gain knowledge, skills and attributes which will enable them to lead happy, fulfilling and successful lives in the future. Pupils develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum and, as a result, achieve well. This will be reflected in results from national tests and examinations that meet government expectations, or in the qualifications obtained (our first external assessments will be in 2024).

Subject leaders will regularly share data about their subjects with children, parents and staff, celebrating the many examples of progress and success as a result of the effort undertaken by our pupils, staff and family support. Thorough scrutiny of subject data, pupil outcomes and behavioural development means staff can plan further interventions as needed, with the quality

of teaching regularly monitored through collaborative learning walks, books scrutiny and lesson observations.

Furthermore, senior leaders, subject leads and teachers will use information gained from assessment to evaluate their effectiveness of their curriculum designs. This means that if patterns of slow progress emerge within a particular subject, staff will first look to adjusting the intent or implementation of their curricula to address the issue.

At Yarrow Heights School we will regularly undertake pupil, parent and staff surveys in order to monitor and improve our practice at all times, to develop pupils who thrive during their time at school and to encourage meaningful, happy and fulfilling futures for all.

The impact of our curriculum will be:

- ✓ Pupils are ready for the next stage of education, employment or training.
- ✓ Pupils read widely and often, with fluency and comprehension appropriate to their age.
- ✓ Pupils are able to apply mathematical knowledge, concepts and procedures appropriately for their age.
- ✓ There are high levels of accountability, knowing what is implemented and learned.
- ✓ There are clear methods to check what pupils know, can do and understand so that the right work is taught/informs teaching (assessment).
- ✓ Teacher subject knowledge is consistently strong across the school, phase, key stage, and department.
- ✓ Pupils' personal development is well supported through PSHE lessons and our enriched curriculum to develop essential skills, enabling them to successfully prepare for adulthood.
- ✓ Senior leaders check implementation of the curriculum.

Leaders ensure that all groups of pupils can access the curriculum well. In our primary department, leaders understand all the component strands of the national

## **6. Review of implementation**

The implementation of this Policy is reviewed annually by the school's Senior Leadership Team in consultation with staff and a report is made to the Governance Body.

The school may submit to Cavendish Education proposals for amendments to this Policy.