

### Philosophy and purpose

This policy reflects the school values and philosophy in relation to Curriculum and School Organisation. It sets out a framework within which teaching and non-teaching staff can operate, outlines procedures for planning, teaching and learning, monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum and gives guidance on practice within school

The aims of the curriculum are:

- To address the individual needs of all pupils by providing access and participation in a broad, balanced, relevant and age appropriate curriculum, including access to the National Curriculum with due regard to equal opportunities.
- To recognise and value each pupil as an individual and develop each pupil's level of personal independence and achievement.
- To provide equality of opportunity irrespective of gender, race, need or religion, as outlined in the policy document entitled 'Equal opportunities'.
- To promote the moral, spiritual, cultural, intellectual and physical development of pupils and of society.
- To prepare pupils to function as independently as possible in the community and provide opportunities to prepare pupils for adult life.
- To work in partnership with parents, involving them in their child's education and welcoming their involvement in the daily life of the school
- To provide an environment which is safe and secure
- To promote opportunities for inclusion within and outside school and recognise that inclusion is a two way process.

These principles are consistent with our school philosophy and permeate our approach to the curriculum and the daily life of the school.

### Rationale

The process of determining the range of curriculum experiences for all pupils of Acorns School reflects the aims and ethos of the school along with:

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- a) the statutory curricular requirements, that is the National Curriculum subjects, Religious Education, and PIVATS assessment in line with government recommendations of 2 P levels of progress within the key stage;
- b) the range of statutory policies which may lead to additional curricular provision, such as Sex and Relationship Education;
- c) areas which the school has chosen to develop alongside the National Curriculum, such as personal, social and health education, Circle time, sensory education, community links and enhanced communication opportunities through signing and voice output communication aids.

## School Organisation

### Structure

Acorns is a school for pupils aged between 2-11 years with generic learning difficulties, often with complex medical needs

The school structure reflects three departments; Early Years with nursery and reception aged children. Key stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Children learn in small class groups which are organised by age (as far as is practicable). There is one Early Years class, 2 Key Stage 1 class, 1 cross Key stage 1 -2 and four KS 2 classes arranged as lower KS2 and Upper KS2

Seedlings	- nursery, reception, Year 1
Saplings	- years 1, 2
Cedar	- years 2.3,
Elm	- year 3, 4
Willow	- year 4, 5
Ash	- year 4, 5
Pine	- year 5, 6
Oak	- year 6

### **Identifying teaching time**

The school day is organized mainly into 45 minutes teaching periods, but there is flexibility for the teachers to deliver learning experiences in a variety of conditions to suit the needs of the pupils. For example, for young children in the nursery class, two contrasting activities of up to 15 minutes duration may be more appropriate.

Children in the Early Years class are below statutory school age and some pupils attend on a part-time basis only. Therefore, their curriculum experiences reflect their age, developmental readiness and individual needs. The curriculum content and methodology for these children are outlined in the Early Years policy.

Children in years 1-6, aged 5-11, follow their curriculum entitlement, Numeracy and Literacy Strategies, and core and foundation subjects of the National Curriculum, Religious Education and Personal, Social and Health Education. For the majority of their timetable pupils remain with their class teacher.

### **Wider Curriculum**

Throughout school, the emphasis is placed firmly upon maximising opportunities for every pupil so that each receives their entitlement to the National Curriculum and aspects of the wider curriculum e.g. national initiatives Numeracy and Literacy, which reflects their individual needs.

In order to reflect the diversity of needs of pupils throughout school, additional areas of learning are offered. For high dependency students, sensory education and hydrotherapy sessions may be included in a pupil's timetable. Some pupils may attend a local primary school for inclusive learning opportunities with mainstream pupils; others may pursue work-simulated activities on the school premises.

The wider curriculum at Acorns School comprises:

- Sensory education
- Splash sessions in a hydrotherapy pool
- Inclusion with mainstream schools

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- Inclusion with other GLD Primary schools
- Community links
- SEAL
- Learning for leisure - outward bound courses, bowling, cinema, theatre, restaurant visits
- Aesthetic and creative experiences - performers, artists, shows musicians
- Residential school visits

Throughout the curriculum an emphasis is placed on the underlying moral and spiritual values common to the great religions of the world, together with the promotion of positive and caring attitudes. Collective worship in the form of school assemblies provides the opportunity for the school to gather together and share experiences, emphasising the school as a 'family' or community and promoting the pupils self image and a sense of belonging. Assemblies are cross-curricular based on SEAL and provide an opportunity to develop the multi-sensory nature of our school curriculum so that pupils with widely varying needs can participate at a meaningful level.

## Delivery of curriculum experiences

### Role of the Curriculum Co-ordinator

The teachers role within the Acorns school is a complex and demanding one given the range of needs and abilities of our pupils, the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum, National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, the age of the pupils and the teaching methodologies which reflect class teaching for the majority of the timetable in the Primary Department. In addition, all teachers have responsibility for one or more curriculum area(s) where their role is to co-ordinate, plan, monitor, evaluate and assist colleagues in the delivery of their subject throughout the school.

### Multi-disciplinary team

Acorns School is served by professionals from a wide range of services. These include a full-time school nurse and nursing assistant, who we share with the High School on the same campus. They play a vital role in the health and welfare of pupils and staff. On a part-time basis, the specialist services of physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech and language therapists also play a key role within the school. Advisors for hearing and visually impaired pupils attend school regularly assessing pupils and offering

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advice to staff. All visiting professionals are considered as part of our multi-disciplinary team working together to improve the learning opportunities of all our pupils and their parents. Arrangements are agreed amongst all members of the team to determine timetables, working locations, via withdrawal of pupils for individual therapy sessions, or through therapists and school staff working alongside each other in classrooms to the benefit of groups of pupils.

### **Establishing curriculum coverage and progression**

There are three broad levels of planning, long, medium and short-term. A differentiated approach within planning ensures that the needs of individual pupils are met.

At Acorns school staff deliver the National Curriculum as discreet subjects which is sufficiently flexible to ensure progression in pupils' learning.

Through this exciting approach we are able to meet the individual learning needs of all pupils, developing their knowledge understanding, skills and attitudes necessary for their self fulfillment and development as active and responsible citizens.

Alongside the Main Theme for the term mini themes are integrated to include special events and areas that we prioritise as important for our pupils.

The Core subjects, Literacy, Numeracy and RE, PE, PSHEE and SMSC are taught discreetly.

Each year we include special theme days or weeks to cover specific areas of the curriculum, see curriculum mapping.

### **Long term planning**

#### **Schemes of Work**

Schemes of Work are being developed for all subjects and where relevant, relate to the content as outlines in the National Curriculum Documentation. Curriculum co-ordinators have the main responsibility for preparing and developing programmes of work through Schemes of Work for each key stage, which are presented to colleagues for discussion and amendment. The Schemes of Work, using QCA documents, determine what, and when, we teach learning experiences across the 2 key stages to show breadth, balance, continuity, progression and differentiation of curriculum experiences. The framework for delivering the Scheme of Work throughout the key stage is further broken down into mapping plans, which denote which

aspects of the Schemes of Work are to be the focus for each class, to ensure effective progression and coverage of the Schemes of Work.

### **Medium term planning**

#### **Units of Work**

The purpose of medium-term planning is to determine detailed sequences of Units of Work selected from the key stages Schemes of Work. Units of Work identify aims, learning outcomes, key vocabulary, specific learning experiences, methods of teaching these experiences, assessment opportunities linked to learning outcomes and resource requirements. The duration of these units varies from approximately half-termly or termly plans.

### **Short term planning**

Daily planning sheets and lesson plans determine what pupils are taught in specific lessons, based upon coverage of Units of Work. At this stage we differentiate the content for individuals taking account of their individual needs and in particular their Individual Education Plans and Subject Targets. By identifying specific learning outcomes for individual pupils within the same activity, we are able to work towards the specific targets set on the IEP/Subject Targets, evaluate the progress made towards those targets and report on achievement on Annual Review or via Annual Reports accordingly.

The need for differentiated resources will be identified. How available staff within the group are deployed should be described in weekly/daily planning. Pupil responses and progress towards achieving learning outcomes will be identified at this stage. The use of a standardised format for planning facilitates effective planning/assessment/recording/reporting and continuity throughout school. Supply teachers should be able to locate the planning easily.

### **Monitoring and Evaluating the Curriculum**

Monitoring and evaluating curricular strengths and weaknesses to ensure and maintain high standards in the quality of teaching and learning is a vital part of the curriculum development processes. It is a process that is the responsibility of all staff, but it is seen as a major facet of sound management of the school and thus it is directed from a senior management level.

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The School Curriculum Co-ordinator can sample pupil's work and teacher recording methods by working alongside teachers in class to review standards of pupil achievement. The Headteacher and Deputy monitor and evaluate teaching and learning on a termly basis.

Throughout the curriculum development process, all staff at Acorns School are mindful of the following:

- Are the standards of achievement in each subject appropriate to the skills and abilities of all pupils?
- Is there a range of high quality learning experiences?
- Is the standard of teaching of the highest quality?

Opportunities for subject co-ordinators to monitor and evaluate their subject are indicated in the subject development plan, which is updated annually to feed into the School Development Plan (Spring Term). The Units of Work and lesson plans need to be evaluated for effectiveness. The process of monitoring and evaluation involves staff consultation, INSET opportunities for subject co-ordinators and the provision of time to allow for this.

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