

Whole School Curriculum Statement

Context

As a pupil referral unit we offer an educational provision to young people of secondary school age whose needs have not been met by their mainstream curriculum offer. The individual circumstances of our students vary greatly, but the majority are disadvantaged and suffer from a loss of self-confidence and self-esteem with many running the risk of a reduction in educational achievement.

In order to meet the individual needs of each of our students we offer a number of bespoke provisions ranging from full time, small group teaching, to 1:1 tuition on a part time basis. Each provision type offers its own unique curriculum and rationale. Provision allocation is informed by a number of factors including the records we receive from the student's previous school/s, any available SEN reports or reports from other professionals/ agencies and the outcomes from a bank of high quality baseline assessments conducted on entry into the school. We also take in to consideration the thoughts and feelings of the student and their parents/carers when finalising their provision. Movement between provisions is common and is usually a response to the emerging social, emotional and mental health needs of the students. It is against this backdrop that the curriculum has been carefully crafted and as a team we work tirelessly within this context to help our students develop the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to become responsible, resilient and productive citizens.

Regardless of provision type, our ultimate aim is to ensure all students engage positively with a purposeful curriculum that enables them to secure an appropriate destination to move on to, be it a return to a mainstream setting, moving on to a special school setting, heading off to college or entering the world of apprenticeships and work.

Distinctive features of all provisions

The defining feature that makes our curriculum so unique is the focus we place on the personal development of the young people in our care. As a result of this we have a number of principles that underpin our approach to the taught curriculum

We adopt a 'Growth Mindset' approach to learning and encourage a 'can do' culture in the hope that students grow to enjoy their learning and challenge themselves to aim higher and achieve greater things (C. Dweck, 1985) This features as part of our rewards system.

Given the disadvantaged standing of a majority of our students' we also place great emphasis on wider curriculum experiences, that is, experiences beyond the classroom, including cultural capital related activities and trips. We hope that by providing such opportunities and activities we will help propel them further in their education, careers and social development.

We also focus on supporting our students' social-emotional and mental health needs. This is achieved in a number of ways, including weekly key worker sessions and mentoring opportunities which support students to identify and develop a range of strategies to successfully deal with their social emotional needs and difficulties. Wellbeing activities are also keenly promoted by our own wellbeing team and regularly incorporated in to the taught curriculum. For students struggling to access the curriculum in the context of Quality First Teaching we also offer specialist SEND intervention and support.

As a team we work tirelessly to promote individual resilience given the disadvantaged standing and vulnerable nature of many of our students. In line with Ella woods, 6 Domains of Resilience, we encourage students to develop good friendships and explore their talents and interests by discussing with them their hobbies or things they like to do or are good at. We also encourage them to adopt positive values and to develop a range of social competencies that help improve their ability to interact and communicate with others.

The above operates in tandem with the taught curriculum which has a heavy personal development and literacy bias.

Curriculum Intent

The curriculum is broad and balanced and carefully personalised to meet the individual needs of all students across the key stages. It has been planned and sequenced to allow for the accumulation of knowledge and skills over time and encourages students to make the most of their interests and talents.

The overarching themes of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development (SMSC), British Values, the rights of the child as promoted through the Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA), Careers Information and Guidance, 'Beyond the Curriculum' and wellbeing are incorporated into all subject curriculum planning to support the personal development of our young people. This is further enhanced by subject related enrichment activities and trips in an attempt to address social disadvantage.

Subject leaders are responsible for the content and sequencing of their own curriculum and have full insight in to the field of cognitive science and the need to develop increasingly more complex schema over time. They follow the National Curriculum and identify subject matter that is engaging and most useful given the short stay characteristics of the school. They ensure that this content is taught in a logical progression, to enable students to develop the necessary knowledge and skills from simple to more complex and abstract ideas. Subject plans are sequenced so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught before with the ultimate aim being the transfer of key knowledge and skills to the long term memory. In all subjects it is clear what end points the curriculum is building towards and what pupils need to know and be able to do to reach them. These end points are represented on academic trackers that are differentiated according to ability and shared with students.

As a staff we firmly believe in the work carried out by Hart and Risley (1995), which identifies disadvantaged students as having far smaller word banks and poorer reading abilities than the general student population. This has been identified as one of the main reasons as to why they meet with less success at school/post school level. Subsequently we work hard to expand the vocabulary banks of our students in the hope that this will boost their reading and writing ability and chances of success. Each subject choose a maximum of 12 tier 2 and tier 3 words for each taught topic with the intent being to help students to learn and embed them. In addition the whole school literacy policy is embraced and keenly promoted by all staff in an attempt to improve reading and writing skills. This includes marking for literacy and the promotion of reading and various writing skills/techniques such as persuasive writing. Drop Everything And Read days and 'no pen days' are also used to promote reading and oracy skills. Another salient feature of our intent is the promotion of literacy and numeracy skills in both form time and registration time. 'Newsround' clips and RRSA weekly power points also feature in our wider curriculum during registration time.

Cross curricular links are viewed as an important aspect of curriculum planning and teachers are passionately working to improve this feature especially given the short stay nature of the school and the difficulties faced when trying to secure the vertical sequencing of knowledge and skills as seen in mainstream settings. We believe in the strength of cross curricular links when trying to embed learning to the long term memory and to enable students to appreciate how knowledge, concepts and skills can be shared across subjects. All these links can be observed on the Medium Term overview.

This is the overriding intent of all sites however the curriculum content/model may vary slightly according to the specific needs of the students in that group.

Curriculum Implementation – pedagogy and assessment

Excellent subject knowledge is encouraged and all teachers including non-specialists are encouraged to attend courses and receive coaching by both in house staff and external providers. Subject teams and staff as a whole are encouraged to work collaboratively to support curriculum delivery.

Our instructional approach to teaching and learning fully embraces the pedagogy advanced by Rosenshine in his work on the 10 principles of Instruction. This is because it represents a highly accessible bridge between research in the field of cognitive science and classroom practice. It also focuses on the use of a recognisable set of ideas that skilled teachers can finely demonstrate and finally research has shown that his theory and its advocated practices get the best results in the classroom as it offers guidance on how students' learn complex tasks.

The 10 principles; Start the lesson with a review of previous learning, present the new material using small steps, ask questions, provide models, guide student practice, check for student understanding, obtain a high success rate, provide scaffolds for difficult tasks, independent practice and weekly and monthly reviews, provide all teaches with a simple Bible of instruction. When grouped into 4 strands it becomes even more powerful and easy to follow.

Strand 1: Sequencing, concepts and modelling – present new material using small steps, provide models, provide scaffolds for difficult tasks.

Strand 2: Questioning – ask questions, check understanding

Strand 3: Stages of Practice – guide student practice, obtain high success rates, independent practice (I, We, You)

Strand 4: Reviewing material – daily review and monthly review.

In line with Rosenshine's principles all staff fully appreciate that learning is far more successful when students are clearly shown what to do and how to do it as this is how the human brain learns most effectively.

All teachers have a shared understanding of this approach to teaching and learning and a shared belief that if fully embraced then success will follow. In particular there is an appreciation of the need to embed learning in order to allow new learning to take place effectively. To this end each student has a retrieval book in each subject that acts as a place where practice leads to the embedding of knowledge and skills and ultimately the securing of end points.

Teachers also understand the Cognitive Load Theory and how the brain learns and stores knowledge, and the link between the huge capacity of the long term memory and the smaller working memory (Sweller, 1990s). They fully appreciate the limitations of the working memory and the need to build schema and embed these to the long term memory in readiness for new learning to be attached.

In addition to Rosenshine's principles teachers also use the teaching and learning strategies advocated on each student's Individual Education Plan in an attempt to maximise progress and outcomes for each student.

Assessment

Teachers fully appreciate the importance of assessment as an integral part of the implementation process and to this end we have introduced the use of base line assessments at the start of units to help teachers to identify gaps, and even strengths; and impact assessments at the end of topics to enable staff to see what has been successfully learned and in which areas students' require more practice through retrieval work. Differentiated academic trackers are used by all teachers and contain the end points for each of the topics being taught. These are used by teachers' and students' to measure the degree of mastery/fluency in each of the identified areas that make up the tracker. Data capture points occur 4 times a year because of the transitory nature of the students and allow us to measure progress and levels of attainment across the sub groups.

Formative and summative assessment is used frequently by all staff in an attempt to interrupt forgetting and embed learning. Teachers are familiar with the Ebbinghaus Forgetting Curve and the role that frequent quizzing and interleaving can play in the embedding of learning (Roeder and Karpicke 2006)

The delivery of the curriculum is quality assured by subject leaders and SLT through the quality assurance programme of lesson visits, work scrutiny exercises, subject reviews and student and parent voice. During these exercises close scrutiny is paid to assessing whether the needs of all students especially the disadvantaged and those with SEN are being met.

Curriculum Impact

The impact of our curriculum is measured not only the academic progress of our students' but also by their personal development in terms of gains in cultural capital and improved levels of resilience and social emotional literacy. Ultimately we aim to secure positive outcomes for all, especially our disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEN. Quality assurance exercises along with the voice of all stakeholders' and data analysis outcomes, including gains in reading age and social emotional literacy are used to assess the success of the curriculum. If necessary, changes to the curriculum content, its sequencing and methods of implementation, including the timing and frequency of retrieval practice and interleaving may have to be amended. As pupils are being prepared for their next stage of education, training or employment, any data linked to these transition phases is also used to help assess the success of the curriculum.

Our Key Stage 4 Curriculum – Main Site

On entry students are interviewed in terms of their aspirations and future career intentions, this along with their current academic standing, is then used to identify the most appropriate Learning Pathway for them as an individual; Academic, Vocational or Combination. The curriculum they follow will be

balanced, accessible and relevant in an attempt to help each and every student to reach their potential. We also provide our students with the most up to date information, advice and guidance on post 16 opportunities in the local area, in an attempt to help secure meaningful destinations for them upon leaving School. This is done jointly by school and our Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) tutor.

Our KS4 Core curriculum offer

- **Maths:** 5 lessons a week (GCSE and functional Skills are both options- dependent on ability and needs)
- **English:** 5 lessons a week (GCSE and Functional skills are both options – dependent on ability and needs)
- **Science:** 4 lessons on the weekly timetable (A single science, namely Biology or Chemistry is offered at GCSE level or units linked to WJEC's Learning Pathways – dependent on ability)

Our KS4 Foundation curriculum

- **BTEC Personal Development:** 2 lessons per week
- **PE or Cultural Enrichment** – 2 lessons a week
- **PSHCE** – 3 lessons a week (This includes PSHE, Citizenship, Careers and incorporates aspects of religion and RSE)

Furthermore, students select up to 2 of the following courses, each course occupying 3 lessons a week.

- **GCSE Half- Course PE**
- **GCSE Religious Studies**
- **GCSE History**
- **BTEC Construction**
- **BTEC Health and Social Care**
- **BTEC Home Cooking**
- **BTEC Looking after Children**
- **BTEC Outdoor Education**

Alternatively, they choose to study either GCSE Citizenship or Art for 6 periods a week.

In addition, all students have **1 form period** a week where reading and literacy skills are the focus.

Information, Advice and Guidance: This is available throughout the academic year to all KS4 students. We go to great lengths to help our students to find the right post 16 destinations and stay in touch with all our leavers for the whole of their first year in post 16, tracking their progress and supporting them when needed.

Our Key stage 3 Curriculum

We have two KS3 Groups, Pendle, and Winter, each with very different needs. As such the curriculum intent and content varies slightly at KS3.

The Pendle curriculum is designed to support students' with their return to a mainstream setting and as such follows a largely mainstream curriculum with an additional focus on addressing the reasons why they are no longer in their previous school. The curriculum prepares pupils for reintegration to a mainstream school or other appropriate educational centre

KS3 Pendle Curriculum Offer

Our students in Pendle study a broad and varied curriculum,

- **Maths – 5 lessons**
- **English – 5 lessons**
- **Science – 4 lessons**
- **Humanities - 2**
- **Art - 1**
- **PSHCE – 3 lessons a week (This includes PSHE, Citizenship, Careers and incorporates aspects of religion and RSE)**
- **Design & Technology - 1**
- **Physical Education/Outdoor Education/Forest schools – 6**
- **Form time - 1**

KS3 Winter Curriculum Offer

The Winter curriculum has been created to meet the needs of students who have developmental concerns and high anxiety levels. These students often require daily routines in a safe classroom environment where a focus on building positive relationships amid praise and positivity is central to school life. Many of these students go onto receive an EHCP and move on to a special school setting.

- **Maths – 4 lessons**
- **English – 4 lessons**
- **PSHCE – 3 lessons a week (This includes PSHE, Citizenship, Careers and incorporates aspects of religion and RSE)**
- **Design & Technology – 1 lesson**
- **Forest Schools – 6 lessons**

- Form Time – 1 lesson

The remainder of Winter's timetable is devoted to the development of personal, social, and emotional skills through a Project Based Approach to Learning, underpinned by the principles of Nurture. It incorporates elements of science and the humanities with Art being central to its delivery. PIVATS and Personal Development Skills provide the framework for assessment for this component of the Winter curriculum.

Our Alternative Provision Offer at The Heys

A very small number of our students struggle to engage with their allocated provision and find themselves receiving a bespoke provision that is more suited to their needs and involves them meeting daily as a small group at The Heys. This is always intended to be a temporary time-limited (usually 4-6 weeks) provision that is reviewed with students, parents/carers and staff regularly. English, maths and science, plus BTEC Personal Development form the backbone of this offer along with targeted intervention to help remove the barriers that are stopping the student from being able to access their primary provision. In some instances students may find themselves accessing this provision for a longer period of time as a result of their inability to make the expected goals. Nurture principles and personal development are a priority focus in this setting.