**What makes our curriculum different?**

We want all pupils to achieve more than they thought was possible: to succeed when they have all been deemed to fail. To achieve this, we work on our academy being “more than just an education” and build on our motto that “**T**ogether **E**veryone **A**chieves **M**ore”. We provide a broad and balanced curriculum across all key stages that reflects the individual needs of our pupils and provides them with the skills needed to navigate the world when they leave.

As a special school for pupils with SEMH needs, we have pupils who possess a range of abilities, aptitudes and interests. We offer a full range of opportunities for pupils to gain nationally recognised accreditations and broaden experiences through a range of enrichment opportunities.

Our school values are: **Respect, Honesty, Empathy, Determination and Resilience**.

**What does our curriculum look like?**

**Primary**

The **Primary Curriculum** is structured in a way that facilitates an ‘academic’ and ‘personal development’ education. Key Skills such as ‘resilience’, ‘communication’ and ‘self-management’ are embedded into the whole curriculum in a variety of ways. Learning is cross-curricular to ensure that it is meaningful and engaging for the pupils.

English, Maths, PE and Topic are taught daily and take place during the morning sessions (lesson 1, 2, 3 and 4). Targeted interventions are in place to address specific needs such as fine motor skills, spelling, reading, place value and times tables. Therapeutic intervention is key to achieving the primary curriculum aims with many of the pupils receiving support such as 1:1 Art therapy based sessions, Speech and Language Therapy, Play Therapy and ELSA (emotional, literacy support).

Teachers create Topic Webs each term to capture how specific skills across the curriculum link to a set theme/topic. This topic acts as a vehicle for all the learning to take place.

Some examples of topics are:

*-* **Shadows and stones** *- Where did it all begin? How do changes take place?*

*-* **The living world** *- Do parts of the body and plants have different functions? Why?*

*-* **‘Now I sea’***…where does water come from and why is it so important?*

Lesson 5 is where the personal development aspect of the primary curriculum is achieved through a number of enrichment opportunities such as climbing, swimming, drama, horse riding etc. There are also specific sessions Enrichment sessions which the primary pupils access with the secondary pupils each week including: cooking, bike maintenance, arts and crafts and sport. In addition to this, the Primary timetable ensures that there are daily PSHE sessions which occur during assemblies as a whole department and class circle time where various themes such as bullying, resilience respect are discussed as well as personal reflections from the day. Primary pupils also achieve Golden Time as a reward throughout the week which they all look forward to on a Friday.

**The aim of the Primary Curriculum is for pupils to:**

* Be ready to learn and develop a ‘love of learning’
* Have personal learning needs and interests identified
* Work towards meeting age related expectations.

**Year 7**

This year is the ‘transition’ year group which is made up of 2 classes. These classes follow a similar approach to the primary curriculum where closing the gap in attainment and fostering a love of learning is still the focus. Maths and English are taught by the Year 7 class teacher for lesson 1 and 2 as well as afternoon ‘personal development’ sessions for lesson 5. This ensures that the Year 7 pupils are provided with the consistency and stability that they would be familiar with in Key Stage 2.

Lessons 3 and 4 are used as an opportunity for the Year 7 pupils to be fully immersed into the secondary department. It is during these periods that they are taught subjects such as Food Technology, Science, ICT, Music, PE and PSHE.

**The aim of the Year 7 Curriculum is for pupils to:**

* Maintain a primary based approach to learning.
* Transition successfully into secondary education.
* Close the gap in their learning to begin to access the secondary curriculum.

**Year 8**

Year 8 is where pupils begin to establish their ‘flight paths’. Flight paths are a way of communicating progress and getting pupils reflecting on personal interests. It also involves talking about their learning journey which may involve further discussion in PSHE and embedding ‘Careers’ into the curriculum. This allows pupils to begin to explore opportunities beyond school.

The specific needs of the pupils will determine the structure of the two Year 8 classes with one class working towards conventional accreditations such as GCSEs and the other following a more vocational route. The expectations for key subjects such as Maths and English will still be achieved but may be delivered in different ways.

These vocational opportunities will allow the Year 8 pupils to learn and develop key skills through activities such as bike maintenance, horticulture and construction. This is another example of how ‘resilience’, ‘communication’ and ‘self-management’ can be embedded into the curriculum. It is only through an exposure to a variety of learning opportunities that the pupils will be able to make successful and informed decisions as they approach Key Stage 4.

Secondary year groups have a set tutor who potentially stays with them until the end of Year 11. Year 8 pupils benefit from having daily tutor time to help build positive relationships and facilitate valuable PSHE and team building opportunities. This also supports a smooth transition from Year 7 and Primary where they would have spent considerable time with their class teacher.

**The aim of the Year 8 Curriculum is for pupils to:**

* Meet the expectations of the secondary curriculum.
* Be exposed to further learning opportunities, vocations and develop a range of skills.
* Begin to establish their ‘flight paths’.

**Year 9**

In Year 9, the core curriculum takes firm shape with Maths, English, ICT and Science accreditations being undertaken at an Entry Level. This allows all pupils to build up the determination and resilience needed to complete the linear exams required at the end of year 11.

Foundation subjects such as Art, Food Studies, and Music are developed within an enrichment programme designed to engage and motivate pupils to ‘think for themselves’ and take some ownership of their education. PSHE/Careers builds up a range of ‘hands on’ experiences working within our local community to include workshops from visiting speakers, visits to local employers and volunteering opportunities. Our options evening will include visiting representatives from local training providers and colleges.

Year 9 pupils will begin embarking on the Prince’s Trust Achieve programme which will be embedded within the curriculum allowing pupils to explore:

* *Personal and social development:* By working in small groups, you'll be able to meet new people and make new friends
* *Life skills:* Through fun and interactive sessions, you'll learn how to manage money, be healthy and stay safe
* *Active citizenship:* You'll work as part of a team to make a difference to your local community
* *Enterprise project:* This is a Dragons' Den style challenge. Ready to put your entrepreneurial skills to the test?
* *Preparation for work:* Create a tip-top CV, practice for future interviews and explore your skills and talents

**The aim of the Year 9 Curriculum is for pupils to:**

* Begin to develop some of the skills needed for KS4 examinations
* Build up a practical approach to learning in order to unlock potential
* Make final choices around specific subjects to be studied within KS4

**Year 10**

In Year 10, pupils start on their final part of their educational journey. Pupils remain in mixed ability classes and work is differentiated in order to match individual needs and abilities. Ongoing literacy and numeracy assessments maintain the level of support that each pupil requires and forms their ‘normal way of working’ which in turn informs the level of support a pupil is allocated when completing national examinations. English and Maths are taught in stages in order to allow pupils to undertake both Functional skill exams as well as GCSEs.

In order to support the anxieties around completing examinations, staff take the time to practise using past papers and hold Mock exams to give pupils the confidence and the knowledge that they can achieve. Interwoven amidst the academic qualifications required by the government, we mix in an enrichment programme designed to build up key interests, vocational skills and challenges. These can include bike maintenance, photography and film making as well as sporting opportunities.

**The aim of the Year 10 Curriculum is for pupils to:**

* Build up a portfolio of accreditations within English and Maths (including early entry)
* Begin to take responsibility and ownership of their education
* Lay the learning foundations for the range of examination subjects studied.

**Year 11**

By the time our pupils reach Year 11, some of them may well have been with us for a significant amount of time. A key area within the Year 11 curriculum is ensuring that all pupils have guidance around transition and their destinations beyond Wandle Valley Academy. Careers/PSHE support this through arranging visits to local employers and training providers. We host a ‘Careers Week’ which includes a careers open morning which has historically welcomed 30+ local employers and training providers who offer informal interviews and provide further information to our pupils. Time is also spend holding mock interviews with external professionals as well as one to one support at initial visits and learning support interviews at prospective colleges as required.

Mock exams are carried out to simulate the scenario pupils face in the summer of Year 11 and to familiarise themselves with the rules and regulations around national examinations. Revision of skills, knowledge and the application of relevant exam technique forms the core of the year 11 curriculum.

**The aim of the Year 11 Curriculum is for pupils to:**

* Support pupils with their post 16 placements
* Develop ‘exam technique’ and revision skills
* Build up ‘capital currency’ to enable aspirational choices and opportunities post 16

