

Curriculum Policy

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1.0 Purpose

This document is a statement of the aims, values and strategies used for the development of the curriculum undertaken within Hardwick House School. The policy aims to take into account diversity of beliefs and needs, and provide equality of opportunity.

Hardwick House School is an independent special school which provides a broad and balanced curriculum for learners in Key Stage 2 through to Post-16 Education, who hold an Education, Health & Care Plan for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Learners at the school represent the full autism spectrum with a wide range of needs and abilities. The nature of learners with autism creates an uneven academic profile both within the individual young person and within the year groups. Additionally, heightened anxiety and school refusal are frequent traits within our learner community, many of whom have experienced lengthy periods out of school and / or had a history of multiple school placements. This presents particular demands to ensure that each learner has the opportunity to achieve their full potential in all areas of the curriculum. Accordingly, Hardwick House School offers a differentiated curriculum that meets the range of different ages, aptitudes, needs and interests of the learners and is permeated with a specialised autism-specific curriculum and delivered within an ethos of empathy, understanding, and structure.

The primary focus of Post-16 Education at the school is to prepare learners for transition into post-school providers and develop the skills for living and working independently in modern day Britain. The Post-16 Education curriculum comprises solely of Level 2 qualifications and is designed to give a balanced and varied programme, predominantly over one year, with a two-year option for those learners with extenuating circumstances. The curriculum is effectively an extended opportunity for learners to complete their Key Stage 4 education.

The curriculum offered to each learner is based upon their individual needs as outlined in their Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). Their individual timetables reflect their personal needs and abilities with opportunities throughout the week to mix with a variety of people in a wide range of situations.

2.0 Scope

The aims of the education provision at Hardwick House School are:

- 1.** Develop a young person's ability to foster positive relationships.
- 2.** To develop a young person's independent life and living skills.
- 3.** To develop a young person's ability to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.
- 4.** To develop a young person's employment prospects.

3.0 Relevant Philosophy

The philosophy of Hardwick House School is to put the needs of its learners first and believe it is the right that learners be treated with dignity and respect, just like any other children. The teaching approach is learner-centred and, although access to the

National Curriculum is in place, we believe its principal focus should be on the special learning difficulties associated with autism.

At Hardwick House School, we believe that young people with Autistic Spectrum disorders should, as far as possible and as appropriate to their needs, be entitled to the same range of opportunities as their contemporaries.

"Children and young people who have a special educational need or disability deserve the same life chances as every other child." Draft legislation on Reform of provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs September 2012

The Dearing Report (1996) also emphasises

"education is about developing the talents, abilities and faculties of young people. It is about developing them as human beings...preparing them for citizenship...as well as the world of work."

4.0 The Policy

4.1 The Curriculum

All learners at Hardwick House School broadly follow the framework of the National Curriculum at a level appropriate to their needs and level of cognitive functioning. However, the school also recognise that in order to meet all the educational needs of the learners, the curriculum offered needs to consist of a great deal more than the National Curriculum. Therefore, the curriculum at Hardwick House School is much broader than the National Curriculum and offers a wide range of organised experiences and activities which have been planned to meet the educational and personal needs of each learner.

Hardwick House School acknowledges that many of the learners who attend the school first need to be equipped with the tools to engage with the learning opportunities on offer and to effectively manage their autism in order to successfully access the curriculum. As such the focus of the curriculum is determined by the priorities for each individual pupil and is based on 2 elements:

- Academic Learning; Based on the National Curriculum and an individual learner's prior attainment, providing general educational and academic learning opportunities across a broad range of subjects.
- Autism Specific Development; based upon the strategies, approaches and therapies, delivered according to the individual and taking into account the EHCP, parent views and the professional views of other outside agencies. Hardwick House School uses the Autism Education Trust's Progression Framework as a tool to identify and track these needs.

The precise balance between these 2 main elements of the curriculum will vary for each learner in response to the need to provide meaningful learning experiences in which the learner can actively participate and from which they can learn. Flexibility within the curriculum is therefore essential in order to ensure it remains relevant for individual learners throughout the different stages of their school careers. The school recognises that not all learners will necessarily experience all elements of the curriculum all of the time.

4.2 The School Day

The school day is planned to be slightly shorter than mainstream schools, avoiding or reducing times of the day that could be busy and stressful. The school start and finish times are:

Monday-Thursday

Breakfast and settling in	9:00 – 9.15am
Registration	9.15 – 9.30am
Morning Sessions	9:30 – 12:45pm
Lunchtime	12:45 – 1:30pm
Afternoon Sessions	1:30 – 3:00pm

Friday

Registration / Breakfast	9:00- 9:15am
Morning Session	9:15 - 12:30pm
Lunchtime	12:30 - 1:00pm
Afternoon Enrichment	1:00 - 2:00pm

4.3 The Curriculum Provision

Key Stage 2: Years 5 and 6

The Key Stage 2 curriculum is organised into discreet subject areas for English, maths, ICT, PE, design technology, cooking and Social Communication. In addition, learners follow a termly topic unit. The topic units are cross-curricular in their nature. Recent topics include The Victorians and Space and Spies.

Key Stage 2 has a strong emphasis on building social communication skills and reducing anxieties. There is a weekly stand-alone Social Communication lesson delivered in collaboration with the Speech and Language Therapist and weekly yoga sessions delivered in collaboration with the Occupational Therapist. Learners also have a weekly Community Skills lesson and in addition, Social Communication and PSHCEE is incorporated into the outdoor learning curriculum where learners spend two mornings per week with the Outdoor Learning tutor. These sessions are broadly based around the Forest School model.

Key Stage 3: Years 7, 8, 9

Our curriculum gives learners experience in the following areas of learning: linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative. Learners have subject specific lessons in English, maths, science, ICT, Spanish, Design Technology, PE, Social Communication and PSHCEE.

In addition, all learners within Key Stage 3 have timetabled lessons for the Wider Key Skills and are working towards the ASDAN Level 1 and 2 qualifications. Wider Key Skills are skills that are commonly needed for success in a range of activities in education and training, work and life in general. They are:

- Working with Others
- Improving Own Learning and Performance
- Problem Solving

Staff design termly Wider Key Skills projects that will be of interest and motivation to the learners. Recent projects have included; First Aid, Cycle Maintenance, designing the school pond, landscaping an area of the school and healthy eating and cooking.

Key Stage 4: Years 10 and 11

Learners continue to follow the curriculum experience of Key Stage 3, whilst embarking on the opportunity to access accreditation from Entry Level up to GCSE and Level 2 qualifications in all subjects. It is intended that every learner in Key Stage 4 and 5 will leave Hardwick House School with a minimum of 5 qualifications, including a qualification in English and Maths. Whilst we hope that the majority of learners will be working towards GCSE, it may not always be appropriate. As such, some learners will be working towards Entry Level Certificates or Functional English and maths, whilst some learners will be dual entered for both Functional and GCSE examinations.

Post-16: for learners who are biologically Year 12 or higher.

Post 16 learners are offered a variety of activities within the various areas of the curriculum to enable them to make real choices about future activities. However, the common thread of the learner's Personal Education Plan targets and the Key skills provide a consistent focus in all areas of work. The areas of the Post 16 curriculum include, but aren't solely restricted to, the following Level 2 courses: English, Maths and Science GCSE, Core PE, Level 2 ICT, Design Technology, PSHCEE, Travel Training and an option choice. Current option choices include BTEC Construction, BTEC Animal Care and GCSE Physics.

Where appropriate and support with future transitions, learners are able to attend courses at local FE colleges supported by staff from Hardwick House School.

The Head of School will ensure that:

- All statutory elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives, which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met. This will include how the subject will be taught and assessed, the use of language (reading, writing, speaking and listening), and the use of information and communications technology.
- The amount of time provided for teaching the curriculum is adequate.
- Where appropriate, the individual needs of learners' requiring therapy/ies, and/or medical support or interventions are met and the curriculum adapted to meet these needs.
- The procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements, and learners and their parents/carers receive information to show how much progress the pupils are making, how they compare with national expectations, and what is required to help them improve.
- The Head of School is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum.
- It is the responsibility of the Head of School to ensure that reference is made to this policy in other associate policies, and, where changes are made to this policy, all other school policies and procedures are checked/amended.
- Other staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.

4.4 Curriculum Enrichment

All learners at Hardwick House School have access to many curriculum enriching activities. These activities are offered at regular intervals throughout the term as appropriate and also as a regular weekly timetabled activity on a Friday afternoon. Enrichment activities include additional sporting activities such as rock climbing and roller skating, along with additional opportunities for work placements, cooking and development of independent learning skills. Learners choose an enrichment activity for each half-term of the year.

4.5 Statement regarding the English Baccalaureate (EBacc)

The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is a performance measure, not a qualification. It is not compulsory, but Ofsted will take it into account when inspecting a school. The measure shows where learners have secured a C grade GCSE or above across a core of academic subjects at Key Stage 4.

The subjects included in the EBacc are:

- English
- mathematics
- history or geography
- the sciences
- a language

The ethos at Hardwick House School is to provide the most appropriate curriculum for each individual learner. In Year 9, learners, parents and staff meet to discuss and agree the subject choices for Key Stage 4. There are no demands made on the individual to select courses to fulfill the EBacc criteria, simply the emphasis is on what is right and in the best interests of the individual learner.

4.6 Taking account of the Individual

Prior to admitting all learners, the school has informative discussions with the learner, their family, and where appropriate, their prior school and key worker from the Autism Outreach team. At this point, the child's Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) and One-Page Profile are also reviewed and the aptitudes, needs and interests of the learner are ascertained. For Post-16 learners, this meeting also includes discussion regarding the curriculum needs for the individual, taking into account any previous examination outcomes and future aspirations and career plans. At this meeting, learners in Key Stage 4 and Post-16 are asked for their Option Subject choice. The option subjects are reviewed regularly according to learner interest and staffing availability.

Upon admission to the school, prior academic attainment data is obtained via past school records and the DfE's Key to Success secure website. This data is circulated to teaching staff to aid planning. It is acknowledged that learners coming into Hardwick House School often have significant gaps and periods of missing education. As a result of this, target setting solely on the results of the Key Stage 2 SAT tests is not a reliable measure and therefore the learners undergo a series of baseline assessments within their first half term in the school to ascertain their current level. These assessments are spread throughout the first half term to minimize anxieties; the learners who are new to the school have frequently been out of education for in excess of a year, and often several years; to have their first few days at the school dominated by assessment is contrary to their needs driven by their ASD diagnosis. In addition to baseline testing for academic subjects, learners are also assessed for any social, emotional and behavioural issues through a Boxall Profile and for communication needs through the Children's

Communication Checklist Version 2, completed by the Speech and Language Therapist.

All learners within the school have an Autism Education Trust (AET) Progression Framework. The Progression Framework does not replace other specialist assessments that may accompany specific approaches or interventions that might be used with learners on the autism spectrum. Nor does it replace National Curriculum academic progress information. The content aims to address the skills and understanding that learners may find difficult as a consequence of their autism but also to recognise and build on the learners' strengths and interests and to improve their overall well-being. The AET Progression Framework also aims to alert practitioners to the fact that additional support may be needed in these areas. The Progression Framework is updated for each learner on a termly basis.

Information gathered through these assessments are collated into an individual Learner Profile that is circulated to staff. This includes suggested teaching strategies and approaches so as to aid staff in their strategic planning to meet individuals identified needs, aptitudes and interests. In addition to the Learner Profile, staff use common formats to write yearly Course Overviews detailing planned routes of learning with assessment opportunities, termly Medium-Term Plans and individual Lesson Plans. The Medium-Term Plan and Lesson Plan format ensure that learner's individual needs, aptitudes, prior attainments and interests are taken into account and that activities, resources and support are put in place to allow each learner to make the progress that they are capable of. Throughout the academic year, planning is adapted on a regular basis to take into account the individual and whole group needs of the learners.

4.7 Monitoring and Assessment

At Hardwick House School we assess all learners regularly, plan the approaches and strategies that will work best for them, and then deliver them and monitor progress. We are systematic and thorough, and above all, we work in partnership with parents and other agencies to create the best education for them as an individual.

We regularly assess pupils and monitor their progress closely, contacting parents when appropriate.

- October – Baseline assessments and monitoring of progress of learners in all subjects. Parents' meetings available by request
- December – mocks and tests given to learners
- Late December – interim report and Parents' Evening
- March – interim report and Parents' Evening
- May/June – external tests and exams for those in Year 6 and Key Stages 4 and 5. □ June / July – final report home to parents and Parents' Evening

At the end of each half term, Key Assessments are completed in all areas. These Key Assessments are stored within individual learner assessment folders held centrally. Key Assessments can take several forms; formal exam or test papers, a piece of extended writing, a photographic record, a witness statement, or a photocopy of a piece of work completed in an exercise book. The Key Assessment demonstrates current levels of achievement.

Each time progress is monitored, it is discussed with learners, staff and parents.

4.8 Equal Opportunities

All work carried out in the school seeks to comply fully with the Hardwick House School Equal Opportunities Policy, in particular:

- That all learners should have equal access to learning opportunities, activities, resources and experiences regardless of race, language, religion, culture, disability, gender, sexual orientation or class.
- That resources, activities, opportunities and experiences should reflect all the above and avoid stereotyping of any group and as much as possible.

5.0 Related Documentation

- PSHCEE Education Policy
- Post-16 Education Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy