

Pathways School

Curriculum Policy

Policy Monitoring

This policy was written: 30/08/21

Date agreed and ratified by Board of Trustees: 16/11/21

Date of next review: June 2022

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and following any concerns and/or updates to national/local guidance or procedure.

1. Introduction

Pathways School is founded on the basis that every learner is a unique individual who will achieve to their full potential when they are enabled to engage with a curriculum individually tailored to meet their needs. We focus upon sustainable progress and skill acquisition, while ensuring that learning remains relevant and engaging.

2. Legislation

- Independent School Standards Regulations 2014;
- National Curriculum programmes of study;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014;
- Equality Act 2010.

3. Links to other school policies and practices

- Teaching and Learning Policy;
- Equality and Diversity Policy;
- Assessment Policy;
- Careers Guidance Policy;
- PSHE Policy;
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy;
- SEN Policy;
- SEN Information Report;
- SMCS Policy;
- Schemes of Work and Individual Education Plan.

4. Aims

Pathways School aims to make life fundamentally better for autistic people, their families, and carers.

We will achieve this by:

- Having Consistently high expectations and achievements for every individual;
- Ensuring high quality, inspirational and innovative teaching, and learning;
- Establishing and maintaining a safe, secure, caring, and enjoyable environment in which students can work, learn, thrive, and grow towards independence;
- Ensuring that our curriculum is broad and balanced and personally tailored to each individual student, underpinned by accurate and wide-ranging assessment;
- Including well-structured opportunities to learn skills in an intensive way, and then generalising these into natural environments, developing and extending learning;
- Designing and delivering content that is relevant, functional, and interesting for the learner;
- Offering opportunities for students to be creative and adventurous in their learning;

- Providing situations where students gain first-hand experiences using a wide range of resources;
- Supporting essential therapeutic activities such as speech and language and occupational therapy;
- Using strategies that minimise or alleviate sensory impairments, such as access to the sensory area and the provision of specialist equipment such as sound reducing systems;
- Collaboration with parents, professionals, and agencies, with the community and with the students themselves.

Our curriculum is informed by the Independent School Standards (ISS) curriculum areas: Linguistic, Mathematical, Scientific, Creative, Technological, Human and Social, Physical and Aesthetic.

5. Functional Communication Skills

We place a strong emphasis on developing and enhancing students' communication skills. Our young people are encouraged to use their preferred method of communication, and where possible, we encourage vocal, verbal communication. Individual programmes are aimed at teaching students to express their needs: to interact socially; to develop listener responding, develop the ability to identify people, places, and objects; answer questions and have well developed conversational skills. Children and young people who are unable to express their needs vocally are taught to communicate using sign language or use another augmentative communication system, such as PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System), iPad or other interactive device. Pathways School support staff on signing training courses as we are a signing community. Parents are given information, training, and materials to enable them to use the same communication system in a functional way at home.

6. British Values

Pathways School aims to ensure that our school ethos, curriculum and approaches to teaching and learning reflect and promote British values as defined by the 2011 Prevent Strategy.

The five British Values are:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect
- Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs

We recognise the multicultural, multi-faith nature of the United Kingdom and understand the crucial role that schools play in upholding and promoting these values. We teach all students to understand, appreciate, and respect diversity. By ensuring that we actively promote and reinforce British Values, Pathways School helps to prepare students for the diverse and dynamic community in which they will live and work.

The curriculum promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, and physical development of students, to enable them to make a unique and positive contribution to their community.

7. Personalised Curriculum

Pathways School is founded on the principle that our students achieve to the best of their potential when they engage in a personalised curriculum tailored to meet their individual needs within a fully inclusive learning community.

In planning the delivery of the personalised curriculum, Pathways School constructs Individual Education Plans (IEP) which serve as short and medium-term plans. The IEP is informed by the student's Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which contains the required elements of longer-term planning.

The curriculum we use acknowledges three tracks of cohorts, **Early Learner, Intermediate Learner, and Advanced Learner**.

Initial and ongoing assessment establishes which cohort a student is working within. We select the most appropriate model based upon the individual learner's profile.

Assessments include: the Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills- Revised (ABLLS-R), the Verbal Behaviour- Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP), Promoting Emergence of Advanced Knowledge (PEAK), Assessment of Functional Living Skills (AFLS), Essential for Living (EFL).

7.1 Early Learners and Intermediate Learners

The Verbal Behaviour Milestones Assessment establishes whether a student will learn new skills better individually or in a group. Typically, students on entry to Pathways will not have developed the skills to learn successfully in a conventional class group set up. To benefit from group learning it is essential that students are taught and will have mastered some pre-requisite learner skills.

Students should have a requesting repertoire of at least 20 strong requests; be able to follow simple instructions readily; be able to do basic imitations; be able to receptively identify and label their favourite things and common objects and pictures; be able to look to the instructor for instruction and be able to tolerate delayed reinforcement. They should also be able to sit in a small group for at least 5 minutes without disruptive behaviour and be able to wait without touching stimuli.

Early Learners and Intermediate Learners access elements of the national curriculum as appropriate, documented in Individual Education Plans.

Early Learner and Intermediate Learner Students that are mainly taught in 1:1 sessions benefit from a distinctive teaching methodology, based on the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA). Teaching focuses on creating a positive and motivating environment, by ensuring that children experience a high level of success in their learning. Where appropriate for students, curriculum delivery is of a 'small steps' approach, where

tasks are broken down into smaller components, and taught systematically, hence building up students' skills in a methodical way.

7.2 Advanced Learners

Advanced Learner Students that have developed effective group working skills access a curriculum made up of, English, Mathematics, Science, Computing, Food Technology, Personal Social and Health Education, Physical Education, Music and Art.

The English Curriculum covers speaking and listening, reading, and writing. We aim to ensure that English/Literacy skills are used in as many functional contexts as possible. For Advanced Learners the English curriculum is delivered mainly in group sessions and is maintained within student's 1:1 session throughout the whole school. Groups are taught using the Read Write Inc. (RWI) programme (as well as Cued Articulation for signers), which is an English phonics programme, linked to the National Curriculum. Students who have completed the RWI phonics programme, move onto the RWI comprehension programme.

The mathematics curriculum covers using and applying numbers, shapes, space, and measures. We aim to ensure that mathematical skills are used in as many functional contexts as possible. The mathematics curriculum is delivered mainly in group sessions and is maintained within students' 1:1 session throughout the whole school. Groups are taught using the Number Worlds programme.

The Science curriculum is carefully structured, using the requirements of the National Curriculum as an overall basis for planning. The curriculum is taught over a two-year period and divided into a variety of half termly topics such as light, humans and forces. Students access learning in a group setting once a week in addition to the learning opportunities provided across each school day. Groups are arranged by age range and are based on science and group work ability.

Computing is taught through both individual and group teaching. All students have an allocated computing target on their IEP which they work towards throughout the school year. This is a skill that is functionally the most appropriate for each individual student and may be a cross curricula target, such as manding (requesting) for items using a high tech Alternative Augmentative Communication (AAC) application, such as Proloquo2go. Computing targets may be taken from the school's assessment tools or from the National Curriculum.

8. Individual Education Plans

All students have an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Typically targets on the IEP are taken from the National Curriculum (NC), Essential for Living (EFL) Curriculum, Verbal Behaviour Milestones Assessment and Placement Programme (VBMAPP) and ASDAN and these are directly related to the EHCP outcomes for each student.

Emphasis is on functional communication, independence, and self-help skills. IEPs are discussed termly with parents/carers, and progress against targets are reviewed and reported on termly, as well as at each student's Annual Review and in annual reports.

Targets set on IEPs are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound). The targets for IEPs are updated termly, however, the student's curriculum will not be limited to only these targets. Reporting on student progress to the Board of Trustees and external agencies is completed through the IEPs. Reporting progress is related to the percentage of target completion against each EHCP area.

9. National Curriculum

Pathways School embraces the National Curriculum as we are passionate about inclusion and promoting the right of our students to enjoy all the opportunities afforded to young people in education. Therefore, students where relevant to their needs, have access to the full range of subjects in the National Curriculum. For Early and Intermediate Learners, the range of subjects, including the Humanities, Religious Education, Music and Art, is covered through topic or themed activities.

9.1 PSHE and SMSC

Personal, social, health and economic development (PSHE) alongside Spiritual Moral Social and Cultural (SMSC) learning are fundamental for children and young adults with SEN and we aim to make these integral to everything we do within our school. We promote our students' spiritual, health, social and cultural development and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of life.

PSHE areas involve:

- An understanding of self;
- Developing personal autonomy;
- Developing confidence;
- Building relationships between people;
- Knowledge and understanding of the world around;
- An understanding of appropriate behaviour;
- A sensitivity to the needs of others;
- Taking responsibility for one's own actions;
- An awareness of and respect for the variety of belief, language, and culture in society.

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is part of the PSHE curriculum and is accessed appropriate to age, needs and developmental levels. At all times RSE teaching stresses social, ethical and health issues. Prior to formal sex education lessons, parents will be informed and may visit the school to discuss relevant issues.

Pathways School is not affiliated to any religion or denomination. The school's Religious Education is of a broad and balanced nature and all religions are respected and valued. We aim to recognise and celebrate special holidays and festivals in all religions. A parent or carer has the right to withdraw a child from religious education. This can be done by writing to the Headteacher.

9.2 Physical Education

The Physical Education curriculum engages students in a range of sports and activities; and ensures that each student:

- better understands and recognises their strengths;
- is challenged to try new things;
- develops and broadens key skills for life e.g., turn taking, following rules, hand-eye coordination, listening to instructions, interacting with others, self-help skills etc.

All students are encouraged to take an active role in all aspects of PE and student participation is key. Throughout the school day we focus on promoting healthy lifestyles and this is strengthened through the PE curriculum.

Activities that are available:

- Swimming;
- Yoga;
- Ball games;
- Multisport;
- Trampolining;
- Horse Riding;
- Gym (Post 16);
- Individual and group sessions with the Occupational Therapist.

9.3 Food Technology

Students access Food Technology sessions that are linked to the theme for the half term. Within these sessions a range of functional skills are developed and practised including cooking skills, health and safety and food hygiene. During these sessions students are also encouraged to explore different tastes, try out new varieties of food, recipes, and ways of preparing food.

9.4 Music and Art

Music is an opportunity for skill acquisition as well as individual and group enjoyment. Many students enjoy performing musically although we recognise that others may find this an aversive experience and therefore opportunities are planned carefully. We regularly welcome guest performing arts companies who run workshops for our students, and we enjoy visits to the cinema and theatre.

The Art curriculum at Pathways School is designed to engage, inspire, and provide opportunities for learners to express themselves creatively. All “art” projects, activities and work meet our four key aims:

- Enable students to produce creative work, exploring ideas, materials and recording experiences;
- Have opportunities to work in both 2D and 3D;
- Use art of other artists to influence their work;

- Explore art in other cultures.

Each academic year the art curriculum follows three different themes. These may include such themes as 'Celebration', 'Natural Forms' and culturally based ones such as 'African art'.

Within the themes, students are expected to engage in a wide range of art mediums, including paint, collage, photography, and work in both 2D and 3D. Students record, document, and keep their work safe in sketchbooks and class galleries.

9.5 Work related learning

Work-related learning can be defined as a planned activity that uses the context of work to develop knowledge, skills, and understanding around employment. Work-related learning occurs through work simulations and mock interviews, work experience or enterprise activities, and through vocational contexts in subjects. Our aim is to enable young people to develop career awareness and employability skills. Furthermore, we provide the opportunity to 'learn by doing' and encourage positive attitudes to lifelong learning.

Our students can have difficulty carrying out everyday tasks independently and successfully. Our occupational therapy support aims to improve the ability to perform such tasks, helping students to take part in schoolwork, self-care, leisure, and playing with peers. It takes into consideration all aspects of a student's daily life, including their abilities, experiences and hopes, their environment, and the importance of a particular task or activity in their life. Our behaviour analysts and occupational therapist assess each student's strengths and difficulties, and then devise individual learning plans that cover areas such as fine motor activities, movement breaks, and sensory regulation activities.

10. Sixth Form

Students in the Sixth Form continue to follow a highly personalised curriculum. They work on Individualised Study Programmes, which see them achieve against the four pathways highlighted in our preparing for adulthood curriculum.

Employment Independent Living Community Access Health

Each study programme consists of:

- Personal, Social and Health Education, which includes relationships and sex education;
- Functional English, with an emphasis on expressive and receptive communication;
- Functional maths: numbers, money, time, and shapes;
- Information and communications technology;
- Work-related learning, which includes opportunities for work experience at school and in the community, along with termly enterprise projects.

Increasingly, the emphasis is on learning and applying skills in the community, including supported community placements, work experience on a local allotment or membership of a sports club.

Students' achievements, where appropriate, are externally recognised through nationally accredited awards and qualifications such as: AQA, OCN London Awards and Certificates in Personal Progress, Independent Living Skills and Using Employability Skills, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, and a range of other subject-specific award schemes

11. Teaching and Learning

Teaching at Pathways School is centred on the individual student, meaning that each element of whole school and classroom practice is designed with an understanding of how individual students with autism learn best. We believe that key principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis should underpin our teaching. These include high levels of student reinforcement leading to high levels of student motivation and learning.

Changes in the curriculum, teaching strategy, environment or individual programs are driven by data analysis and assessments. Most teaching involves breaking complex skills down into simpler steps and rewarding the achievement of each of those steps. We believe all of the 'teachers' in a student's life need to work in close partnership, delivering outstanding teaching to enable each student to achieve their best possible outcomes. At Pathways School this partnership includes parents, teachers, behaviour analysts, speech and language therapists, and occupational therapists.

11.1. Our 5 Key Principles of Teaching and Learning

At Pathways we believe students learn best when:

- a. learning activities are well planned, ensuring progress in the short, medium, and long term;
- b. teaching and learning activities enthuse, engage, and motivate students to learn, and foster their curiosity and enthusiasm for learning;
- c. assessment informs teaching so that there is provision for support, generalisation, and extension of learning for each student, at each level of attainment;
- d. the learning environment is ordered; the atmosphere is motivating and students feel safe;
- e. there are strong links between home and school, and the importance of parental involvement in their daughter/son's learning is recognised, valued, and developed.

11.2 Skills focussed

Skills are taught both explicitly (for example, in group teaching or one on one) and implicitly through natural environment teaching. If a student is not currently working at a level where they will benefit from group work then they will have individual targets on their IEP, which will be taught individually by the student's teacher. They will also be taught the skills needed for them to access group teaching in the future. The skill of being independent and able to learn within a small group is also emphasised using group work. Each student's progression and the appropriate model for meeting their needs is identified through a person-centred planning process. Decisions are driven by the students EHCP which should reflect what is important to the individual and the family concerned. Targets are regularly reviewed at termly meetings and through statutory annual reviews.

A student's personalised curriculum also includes incidental learning opportunities, both through regular routines within school and through introducing new learning opportunities.

11.3 Events

Events create opportunities for students to rehearse skills, learn curriculum content, generalise mastered skills into different contexts and/or develop their personal characteristics. Events include the Christmas Show, Sports Day, Healthy Eating events, Red Nose Day, visitors, reverse inclusion, vocational placements and residential.

11.4 Contexts

Learning does not have to take place at a desk, indeed much of the best learning occurs beyond the classroom. At Pathways we plan for learning to take place and be generalised at internal and external locations across the school, in the community, locally or further afield, on regular trips and on irregular educational visits.

11.5 Generalisation across people

In supporting students in recognising the purpose of a skill and being able to apply the skill appropriately, it is important that they have opportunities to employ their skills with a variety of people.

We believe that the quality of the student's experience is largely determined by the quality of interaction between individuals and the staff who support them and therefore we commit significant investment to the expertise of our practitioners. Our skilled teachers, behaviour analysts and therapists work closely together to provide specialist, integrated and appropriate teaching, learning and support. Building a positive rapport between each student and teacher underpins the success of any educational programme, and a student's motivation to learn.

11.6 Progression to less restrictive ratios of support

Although our students require the educational support of a 1:1 ratio, there are many planned and incidental opportunities to work with others throughout each day. Learning environments that encourage appropriate relationships to be fostered are carefully planned to give each pupil the best learning potential. Whilst being mindful of a student's academic year and chronological age, Pathways designs classes and teaching groups with peer groups in mind.

11.7 Home Learning

Research indicates that children diagnosed with autism make optimum educational gains where intervention is consistent between different environments. We aim to work closely with parents to enable them to continue teaching their child, to manage any behaviours that challenge learning and participation and to generalise their mastered skills to the home and community environments.

11.8 Teaching and Learning Environment

Students learn well when the environment in which they find themselves is well ordered and well managed, where there is discipline and clarity about expectations. Environments will vary depending on the curriculum content or the characteristics that are being developed. Environments change from being the classroom, a 'quiet space', school corridors, school halls, the community, the home or play equipment in the school grounds.

Our building is equipped with specialist teaching areas and we believe that learning opportunities can take place in all environments, teaching is planned in outside spaces and in the community, for example at local tennis courts, parks, and swimming pools. Space is used flexibly throughout the school.

11.9 Teaching Staff

Qualified and Unqualified Teachers, Behaviour Analysts, the Headteacher, therapists and support staff all have a role to play as teachers at Pathways School. Most staff are graduates, with many additionally having post-graduate qualifications. We run a training programme, using the Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) Competency Framework. The framework is divided into seven main areas:

- Autism;
- Providing high quality education, care, and support environments;
- Functional, contextual, and skills-based assessment;
- Procedures for skills teaching;
- Developing and implementing a Behaviour Support Plan (BSP);
- Reducing behaviours that challenge; and
- Professionalism.



All staff in the school receive a thorough induction training, including an Introduction to Autism, Introduction to PBS, Curriculum training and practical training on our approaches to teaching and learning. Appropriate training and opportunities for professional development are on-going for staff in all roles. There is a robust cycle of performance management which allows all staff to set targets and review and evaluate their practice.

12. Time Allocation

The school day for students starts at 9.00am in the morning and finishes at 3.30pm in the afternoon. There is one hour allocated for lunch and 15-minute breaks in the morning and the afternoon. Lunch and Breaks are important opportunities for learning, particularly for generalising skills.

The impact of the personal needs of students are recognised and recorded e.g., moving from place to place, transport, effects of medication, management of seizures, time it may take for a student to respond etc.

Routines which address personal needs are viewed as learning opportunities within the whole curriculum. Any routine such as toileting and mealtimes is recognised as a teaching opportunity and in the context of high-quality interaction will not be rushed.

	Name	Signature	Date
Chair of Trustees	Saima Ali		16/11/21
Headteacher	David Haswell		16/11/21

Review Date	June 2022
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