Pathways School

Curriculum Policy

Policy Monitoring

Date policy last reviewed: April 2026

Signed by:

Neil Jones	Headteacher	Date:	April 2026
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Date of next review: April 2027

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 functional skill acquisition, while ensuring that learning remains relevant and engaging.

We have developed an innovative model of delivering education that uses the latest evidence-based teaching practices in ABA and PBS to support the overall wellbeing of young people. Our approach is holistic, person-centred and ambitious, individualised through our Pathway2Independence curriculum to meet the needs of each student.

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

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Careers Guidance Policy
- PSHE Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- SEN Policy
- SEN Information Report
- SMSC Policy

4. Intent

The intent of the curriculum at Pathways School is to improve the quality of life for our students, 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.
- Collaborating with parents, professionals, and agencies, with the community and with the students themselves.

Our curriculum aims to provide students experiences in all areas of the Independent School Standards:

Linguistic
Mathematical
Scientific
Creative (Art Music)
Technological (ICT, Food technology, Design Technology)
Human and Social (PSHE, Geography and History, RE, Work Related Learning))
Physical and Aesthetic (PE, Art, Music, Dance, Drama)

These experiences ensure our curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant, differentiated to the needs of each learner through their Individual Learning Plan.

Our curriculum is carefully designed to give pupils the knowledge, skills and cultural capital they need to take advantage of opportunities, responsibilities and experiences in later life. Through a strong emphasis on Preparation for Adulthood, we ensure that all learning is purposeful and directed towards meaningful long-term outcomes, including further education, training, employment, supported living and active participation in the community. Planning across the curriculum is therefore informed not only by students' current needs but also by their future destinations, ensuring a clear and ambitious pathway beyond school.

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 some Makaton or use another augmentative communication system, such as PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System), Proloquo2Go (iPad) or other interactive device. Pathways School support staff on signing training courses. 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: Pathway2Independence (P2I)

Pathways School is founded on the principle that our students have the best chance realise their potential when they engage in a personalised curriculum (a programme) tailored to meet their individual needs within a fully inclusive learning community.

In planning the delivery of the personalised curriculum, or programme, Pathways School constructs Individual Learning Plans (ILP) - see below - which serve as short and medium-term plans for each student. The ILP is informed by our assessments and the student's Education Health and Care Plan which contains the required elements of longer-term planning. The targets for each student's ILP are developed and agreed by a multi-

disciplinary team (MDT), consisting of the Behaviour Analysts, Teacher, OT & SaLT and the student's Key Worker.

We use the Pathway2Independence (P2I) curriculum and assessment tools to support the students' programmes. P2I consists of graduated outcome statements from the Verbal Behaviour Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP), Essentials for Living (EFL), Assessment of functional Living Skills (AFLS) and the National Curriculum. P2I does not compare peers and considers each student separately, allowing the formation of Individual Learning Plans.

The curriculum is built on 3 Intentions: Preparing for Adulthood, Communication & Enrichment and an Academic Curriculum. These intentions, enables the curriculum to be adapted for each student's particular needs. For example, some students may have the learning ability to engage in the Academic Curriculum as well as Preparing for Adulthood, while for others the focus on Preparing for Adulthood and Communication & Enrichment is more appropriate (**see Section 9, Pathways to Learning**, below).

In each curriculum area, the outcome statements are end points which are worked towards throughout the year. This enables our students to achieve increasing independence, agency and self-determination.

Pathway2Independence is organised in the following way:

Intent	Curriculum Area
Preparing for Adulthood	Independent Living
	Employment (Pre-Requisites)
	Employment (Functional)
	Community Inclusion
	Health & Wellbeing
Communication & Enrichment	Communication
	Social Skills
	STEAM
Academic Curriculum	Academic Literacy
	Academic Science
	Academic Maths
	Academic Geography
	Academic History
	Academic ICT

Through P2I, students will have the opportunity to engage in learning experiences including Design and Food Technology, Physical Education, Dance, Drama, Music and Art.

8. Student Programmes: Individual Learning Plans

All students have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and a Programme (an Individual Learning Plan (ILP)) which details short term and medium-term targets.

Depending on need, targets on the ILP can be taken from P2I and discussion with the Multi-disciplinary Team (MDT), these are directly related to the EHCP outcomes for each student.

Pathway2Independence places emphasis is on functional communication, independence, and self-help skills to work towards the targets of the Programme/ILP. These are discussed at the beginning of the year and in February with the MDT, and progress against targets are reviewed and reported on termly, as well as at each student's Annual Review and in annual reports. It is also essential to emphasize the importance of assessing these targets throughout the year. For this reason, behaviour analysts and teacher regularly review the data collected on My Abakis and the clipboards to determine whether students have achieved the established mastery criteria before the next targets' review meeting. Furthermore, this is a collaborative task, and tutors must also communicate the students' progress to the multidisciplinary team, as sometimes they need to be adapted, updated or replaced.

Ongoing assessment ensures that progress is closely monitored, instructional decisions are data-driven, and timely adjustments can be made to support each student effectively. Targets set are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound).

Reporting on student progress to the Board of Governors and external agencies is enabled through an evaluation of the effectiveness of the students' programmes through MyABAKiS and the P2I assessment tool.

9. Pathways to Learning & Assessment (see Assessment Policy)

Students join us with varying levels of skills previously acquired and with varied learning profiles.

Baseline and ongoing assessments establish learning profiles. We then, develop an appropriate Individual Learning Plan (ILP) based upon the learner's profile. Therefore,

through ongoing assessment, any other student will have adaptations made to their ILP depending on the development of their learning skills.

The main assessment model is P2I which is based on The Engagement Model, EFL, AFLS, VBMAPP and the National Curriculum.

In addition to P2I, we use MyABAKiS and clipboard data, in conjunction with other assessment forms, to plan and record progress towards targets from initial and formative assessment. This ongoing assessment shapes each student's ILP, and tutors record progress on MyABAKiS through discrete trial, natural environment teaching and incidental teaching assessment opportunities. Tutors record targets on the clipboard twice a week in the last trial of the day.

9.1 Emerging, Developing and Secure Learners

Emerging Learners: Ready to Learn

Typically, these students on entry to Pathways will not have developed the skills to learn successfully in a conventional class group set up. Furthermore, students with higher needs will need to first develop the skills to be ready to learn. To benefit from group learning it is essential that students are taught and will have mastered some pre-requisite learner skills.

Emerging learners should have a requesting repertoire of 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.

Emerging and Developing Learner Students, who 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. Curriculum delivery takes a graduated approach, where tasks are broken down into smaller components, and taught systematically, hence building up students' skills in a methodical way.

The curriculum for a student on the Emerging Learner Pathway will be focused on Preparing for Adulthood and Communication & Enrichment. Academic Curriculum subjects will be incorporated into ILPs where appropriate for the students to enable breadth of learning experiences (see Section 9.2, below). This includes a Systematic Synthetic Phonics programme (SSP) Twinkl Phonics with age-appropriate materials where necessary.

The main focus for these Emerging learners is to develop a strong communication system and a preparation for life as an adult. However, this group is also exposed to group sessions, where they learn to sit alongside other peers, to respond to their name and instruction from a leader (e.g. Attention Autism).

Developing Learners: Skills for Life

With improved group learning skills along with stronger skills in learning in 1:1 sessions with their Tutor, Developing Learners can more readily engage with a broader range of themes and subject areas. These subjects will enable the students to continue to develop functional skills, grow more aware of themselves and the world around them, and learn how to function more independently in the community. The aim always to improve the quality of the students' lives.

The curriculum for a student on the Developing Learner Pathway will be focused on Preparing for Adulthood and Communication & Enrichment. There will be some opportunity to engage in the Academic Curriculum, especially PSHE, RSE, Academic Literacy and Maths. Subjects will be incorporated into ILPs where appropriate (see section 9.2, below) for the students to enable breadth of learning experiences.

Secure Learners

Secure Learner Students that have developed effective group working skills access a curriculum made up of Preparing for Adulthood, Communication & Enrichment and the Academic Curriculum.

When a student has demonstrated skills, aptitudes and readiness, we consider ASDAN as an appropriate and flexible option for our post-16 students. It focuses on practical learning, independence, and preparation for adult life rather than purely academic achievement. In the future, we would also offer AQA UAS to those older students who show interest and potential to design and complete their own accredited course.

9.2 Linguistic

The English curriculum covers speaking and listening, reading and writing, and is designed to develop functional communication and independence. We deliver a structured and systematic approach to phonics using **Twinkl Phonics**, which is adapted and personalised to meet the needs of our learners. This ensures a clear progression in the acquisition of early reading skills.

For pupils at earlier developmental stages, significant emphasis is placed on the development of **pre-reading and pre-writing skills**, including attention and listening, symbol recognition, early mark making, fine motor development and the use of signs, symbols and augmentative communication systems. Pupils may use Makaton, PECS, AAC devices and visual supports to access the curriculum and develop meaning-making skills.

Reading development goes beyond phonics to include **comprehension, vocabulary and functional reading skills**. Pupils are taught to understand, interpret and respond to texts in ways that are meaningful to their daily lives, including recognising signs, symbols, instructions and social cues. As pupils progress, they develop wider reading skills, including understanding narrative, sequencing, inference and applying reading to real-life contexts.

9.3 Mathematical

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 for Secure Learners is delivered mainly in group sessions and is maintained

9.4 Scientific

The Science Curriculum is thought using hands-on, sensory and visually structured methods which align with how many of these learners access and understand the world.

We currently use experiments, sensory items, visual instructions, sensory stories and Attention Autism to introduce scientific knowledge, such as temperature, seasonal changes, Living Things, textures, etc.

9.5 Creative

Music and Art make up the Creative Curriculum.

The Art curriculum at Pathways School is designed to engage, inspire, and provide opportunities for learners to express themselves creatively. 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 is ended with our themed Art Exhibition.

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.

9.6 Technological

Computing is taught mainly through individual teaching. All students have an allocated computing target on their ILP and/or direct contact with technologic devices. This is a skill that is functionally the most appropriate for each individual student and may be across

curricular target, such as manding (requesting) for items using a high tech Alternative Augmentative Communication (AAC) application, such as Proloquo2Go.

Food Technology and Design Technology help develop a range of functional and work-related skills including cooking skills, health and safety and food hygiene. Students are also encouraged to explore different tastes, try out new varieties of food, recipes, and ways of preparing food.

9.7 Human and Social

Human and Social components of the curriculum are Geography, History, Religious Education, Work Related Learning and Personal Social Health and Economic Education. 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 emphasize the need for these to be 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
- Self-care
- 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 use the Equals scheme of work, and 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.

Work-related learning is covered in the Employment (Pre-requisites) and Employment (Functional) strand from P2I. Our aim is to enable young people to develop career awareness and employability skills.

9.8 Physical and Aesthetic

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.

Dance and Drama enable students to express themselves and to explore how both disciplines have contributed to our culture as well as using it as a tool to explore other topics such as citizenship and history.

10. Accreditation

ASDAN is invaluable as it can form important pathways for our students to receive recognition for their achievements. This scheme provides a wide range of resources which are relevant, differentiated and functional making accreditation accessible to all students regardless of their ability. Furthermore, through allowing amendments and writing our own units, we can expand and customise units to our student's individual learning interests and needs. Some Secure Learners could additionally achieve AQA Entry Level Certification.

The curriculum is explicitly designed to support pupils' long-term destinations. Through the Preparation for Adulthood strand, pupils develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for their next phase of education and adult life. This includes pathways into further education, vocational training, employment (including supported employment), independent or supported living, and meaningful community participation. Accreditation routes such as ASDAN and AQA are selected to align with these outcomes and provide recognition of relevant, functional achievements.

11. Planning for topics

In the weekly planning we prioritise communication, vocabulary development, independence and real-life application to ensure knowledge is both accessible and purposeful. Learning is delivered through carefully structured half-termly topics; however, these topics do not drive the curriculum progression. Instead, they provide meaningful and motivating contexts through which **sequenced knowledge and skills** are explicitly taught and systematically developed over time.

Each academic year our curriculum is structured around six sequenced half-term topics. We are currently working on: *Healthy Eating, Sports, Sounds, Technology, Local Community* and *People Who Help Us.* These themes provide meaningful contexts through which all subjects are coherently planned and interconnected. These themes have been chosen to be meaningful, concrete and relevant to young adults with autism, supporting engagement, communication and understanding of the world. Within each topic, Literacy skills are explicitly developed through functional reading, writing opportunities, communication and subject-specific vocabulary. Numeracy is embedded through real-life problem solving, measurement, shapes, patterns, money skills and numbers. Scientific knowledge is taught progressively, with opportunities for observation, investigation, some prediction and evaluation woven naturally into each topic.

Curriculum progression is mapped through the Pathway2Independence (P2I) framework and supported by MyABAKiS assessment tracking. These tools ensure that learning is broken down into small, measurable steps and that pupils build cumulatively on prior knowledge. This enables staff to clearly demonstrate that, term by term and year by year, pupils are developing new knowledge and skills rather than repeating previous learning. While topics may recur or share themes, the intended learning outcomes increase in complexity, independence and application.

We consider Attention Autism approach, by Gina Davies, particularly important for our students because it develops the foundational skills that underpins all the learning, especially attention, shared focus and communication.

Our goal is that over time, pupils show improved generalisation of skills beyond the classroom, supporting preparation for adulthood and meaningful participation in their local community. Progress is measured through small-step assessment, individual targets and evidence of skill transfer across different environments.

Additionally, individual SALT and OT targets are embedded throughout planning and learning opportunities to support communication, sensory regulation, independence and functional skill development, with direct SALT input also informing Attention Autism sessions.

12. Curriculum progression

Although topics change annually, the progression of knowledge and skills across all subject areas is deliberately sequenced and mapped over time. The curriculum ensures that pupils revisit key concepts in increasingly sophisticated ways, building on prior learning and deepening understanding. Progression is tracked through P2I and MyABAKiS, which provide clear evidence of small-step learning over time and ensure that pupils are not repeating content but extending and applying their knowledge in new contexts.

Literacy, Numeracy and Science form the foundation of our curriculum and are taught progressively to ensure secure skill development. Given the needs of our pupils with autism, we prioritise communication, functional mathematics and scientific understanding as key tools for independence and preparation for adulthood.

On the other hand, there are other subjects and programs such as Attention Autism, RSE and ASDAN that are highly relevant for our students.

- RSE is a safeguarding priority for our pupils due to the difficulties they experience with social communication and interpreting social cues, taking language literally and statically being more vulnerable to exploitation.
- ASDAN supports preparation for adulthood by developing practical life skills, independence and resilience in structured, achievable stages.
- Attention Autism develops joint attention, listening skills, turn-taking, shared enjoyment and communication; skills needed to access Literacy, Numeracy and Science.

Specialist Music Teacher and therapists, such as OT and SaLT contribute to the implementation of subjects, such as Arts and PE. This cross-curricular delivery strengthens generalisation — a key area of development for our learners — while maintaining clear subject progression in our core areas.

12.1. Literacy

Our literacy progression is not dependent on the topic. We have a clearly mapped progression of reading, writing, for students 11-19 years old. The topics provide context, but the skills build cumulatively regardless of content.

For example, pupils move from:

- Making a choice of writing tool and make marks
- To imitate circular and horizontal lines
- To be able to trace/ overwrite shapes
- To be able to write 5 lower-case letters
- To be able to use spacing between words
- To be able to write simple, coherent narratives about personal experiences
- To purposeful functional writing

Even when themes change, the expected writing outcomes increase in complexity, independence and audience awareness.

Although themes change annually, the progression of:

- Phonics knowledge
- Sentence structure
- Grammar expectations
- Comprehension skills
- Vocabulary development

is mapped long-term by following Pathways 2 Independence curriculum. Pupils revisit similar *types* of writing (e.g., instructions), but the cognitive demand increases each year based on their EHCP and long-term targets.

For our learners, repetition of structure supports confidence, but the level of independence and depth increases.

We adapt Literacy, by prioritising:

- Explicit vocabulary teaching
- Visual supports and modelling
- Structured sentence frameworks
- Reduced cognitive overload

We move pupils from supported communication to increasing independence, including use of AAC where appropriate. Progress is measured not only in written output but in spontaneous communication and generalisation.

12.2. Numeracy

Numeracy is taught as a structured, progressive subject following a clearly mapped small-step sequence from Pathways 2 Independence. The topics provide real-life application opportunities, but the progression of mathematical concepts remains consistent.

For example:

- Number fluency builds year on year
- Calculation methods develop from concrete to pictorial to abstract
- Data handling moves from sorting objects to interpreting graphs
- Measurement progresses from direct comparison to standard units

The topics contextualises Numeracy but does not drive its progression. Each topic provides planned opportunities to apply mathematical skills in meaningful contexts, such as:

- To show awareness of changes in shape, position or quantity
- Sorting or matching objects or pictures by recognising similarities
- Measuring and counting ingredients
- Exploring time and money in community-based learning

This supports generalisation ensuring maths is functional and transferable. Impact is seen through:

- Increased fluency and confidence
- Reduced reliance on prompts
- Ability to apply skills in new contexts

12.3. Science

Science is mapped progressively against our small-step curriculum targets, ensuring clear development of:

- Substantive knowledge (e.g., materials, forces, living things)
- Disciplinary knowledge (working scientifically skills)

Topics provide a context for learning, but the progression of scientific concepts is planned long-term and builds cumulatively.

For example:

- To be able to explore environments
- To be able to describe seasonal changes
- To know that the shape of some solids can be changed
- To be able to describe the function of human digestive system

We use:

- Practical, hands-on investigation
- Structured routines for experiments
- Explicit modelling of enquiry language
- Visual sequencing of investigation steps

Repetition strengthens procedural understanding, while cognitive demand increases over time. Therefore, progress is demonstrated through increased independence, more accurate scientific language and improved ability to explain findings.