

Kestrel House School Curriculum Policy

Introduction

Kestrel House School is an independent day special school for pupils aged 4-16 years with Autistic Spectrum/Communication Disorders.

ASD or autism is a very complex condition arising from a neurological impairment which usually requires a multi professional diagnosis. All pupils experience difficulties within the three key areas of social interaction, communication and restricted repetitive behaviours. A number of pupils also have sensory processing difficulties which can impact on their behaviour and on their capacity to learn. In addition, the pupils who attend Kestrel House School have a wide range of cognitive ability, from SLD through to levels which are considered to be the norm given the pupil's chronological age. This range of ability has been recognised within the curriculum on offer in the school.

Within each Key Stage, the school aims to provide meaningful learning experiences in which the pupils can actively engage and participate and from which they can learn. Flexibility within the curriculum is therefore essential in order to ensure it remains appropriate for meeting the individual needs of all pupils throughout the different stages of their school careers.

Aims of the Curriculum

At Kestrel House School, we give every child equality of opportunity by providing a pupil centred, broad, balanced and relevant curriculum designed to meet their individual needs. In doing so our aim is to:

- Maximise each pupil's potential to be as independent as possible in adult life
- Provide opportunities for all pupils to engage, learn, progress and achieve
- Promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils
- Prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life
- Enable pupils to take their rightful place in the community in which they live

Objectives of the curriculum

The main objectives for the curriculum at Kestrel House School are to:

- Enable each pupil to overcome or better cope with the challenges posed by having an autistic spectrum condition, including the development of communication and social skills.
- Support each pupil in the self-management of any atypical behaviour they may exhibit.
- Provide each pupil with an individualised education pathway that addresses their specific needs.
- Build on the strengths and address the needs of each pupil.
- Provide a fully inclusive environment which offers all pupils access to the cultural and educational experiences on offer throughout the school and wider community.

- Assist each pupil to develop the thinking skills that will enable them to learn independently and be an active participant in their own learning experiences.
- Enable each pupil to develop a positive self-image.

These aim and objectives are achieved by:

- Providing stimulating learning opportunities which are intrinsically motivating wherever possible and give the pupils 'something worth communicating about'.
- Ensuring there is a safe, caring and friendly learning environment
- Valuing and respecting others, their thoughts and ideas
- Utilising early intervention whenever possible
- Engaging pupils in 'real life' educational experiences
- Facilitating multi-disciplinary working

Curriculum Structure

The curriculum at Kestrel House School is viewed as a range of organised experiences and activities designed to meet **all** the educational needs of each pupil and is delivered within an autism friendly learning environment (red in the curriculum diagram) It is therefore much broader than the NC /academic curriculum alone.

There are therefore 3 main elements to the curriculum:

ASD Specialist curriculum (orange, yellow and green on the curriculum diagram)

The ASD specialist curriculum is accessed by all pupils and is intrinsic in everything we do. It provides an autism friendly learning environment which supports the development of each pupils' capacity to learn by addressing their needs in relation to them having an autistic spectrum disorder. It includes opportunities for pupils to develop their communication skills, social skills (including appropriate behaviour), emotional regulation skills and functional life skills. By addressing these key areas the ASD specialist curriculum enables pupils to access the NC/ academic curriculum that it on offer. It uses an eclectic methodology - The Kestrel House Approach, which includes the following specialised strategies:

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| * Visual strategies | * SCERTS |
| * Intensive interaction | * Communication sessions |
| * Social skills development | * Turn taking & sharing |
| * TEACCH principles | * Individual teaching |
| * Individual speech therapy programmes | * Discrete trial training |
| * 5 P support plans (working with me) | * Role play |
| * Social stories | * PECS |
| * Comic strip conversations | * Occupational Therapy |
| * Speech & Language Therapy | * Motivation/reinforces |
| * Play skills development | * Personalised curriculum |

This element of the curriculum is, at all times, supported by the Speech and Language Therapist who plans with teachers; the Occupational Therapist who plays a crucial role in developing pupils' in their 'readiness' for learning and the Educational Psychologist who supports, gives advice and works in collaboration with staff in all areas, particularly on behavioural issues which may prevent or hinder learning. Progress within this element

of the curriculum is assessed and monitored through each pupils' Individual Education Plan (IEP) and where appropriate 'therapeutic' assessment tools used by members of the multi-disciplinary team.

The NC /Academic curriculum (blue on the curriculum diagram)

Within the NC /academic curriculum the school follows national guidelines and provides a range of learning opportunities within the areas of: linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative.

The majority of pupils are working between level P4 and NC level 2. As such they access a curriculum based on the '**EQUALS**' Schemes of Work for all subjects. The schemes of work have been mapped out in key stage rotations to ensure breadth and balance of coverage for pupils as they progress through the school. On occasions the schemes may be modified or schemes of work from a lower key stage may be used to better meet the needs of the pupils. Relevant activities are developed and delivered by each teacher for Music and Art.

Progress within this element of the curriculum is assessed and monitored through the BSquared assessment tool.

For pupils who fall within the Early Years Foundation Stage, the EYFS curriculum is accessed through the **ASD Specialist Curriculum** and through the '**EQUALS**' schemes of work. Both have been cross referenced to the EYFS 7 key areas of learning and development to ensure relevant coverage. Progress of Early Years pupils is assessed using the BSquared 'Early Steps' assessment tool.

The Extended Curriculum (purple on the curriculum diagram)

Those pupils in KS 1 and 2 who are working beyond NC level 2 in some or all curriculum areas are able to access an extended curriculum for those subjects through topics found within the **International Primary Curriculum** alongside PSHE, PE and targeted Literacy and Numeracy work and their progress through these will be mapped out individually. The National Curriculum subjects provide the learning context in which pupils can focus on developing their skills.

Pupils in KS 3 who are working beyond NC level 2 in some or all curriculum areas are provided with a '**bespoke**' extended curriculum for those specific subjects. The content of this curriculum more closely reflects that which would be found within a mainstream school and, where appropriate supports re-integration to a mainstream environment.

Pupils within KS 4 who are working beyond NC level 2 in some or all curriculum areas are able to access accredited courses at an appropriate level.

At KS 2-4, pupils also access ASDAN New Horizon and Transition Challenge programmes to develop life skills as well as the AQA Unit Award achievement scheme.

The school recognises that the complex needs of some pupils means that they may not experience all aspects of the curriculum all of the time and that the precise balance between the 3 elements of the curriculum will vary in response to the individual needs of each pupil at any given time in their school career.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

Specialist Curriculum

Teaching and Learning

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Age appropriateness Policy

Curriculum Diagram

Policy written September 2012

Latest review January 2017

Next review February 2018

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