



ACORN
A Secondary Alternative Provision

Curriculum Policy

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Contents

1. Curriculum aims	3
2. Legislation and guidance	4
3. Roles and responsibilities	4
4. Organisation and planning	5
5. Inclusion	8
6. Monitoring arrangements	8
7. Links with other policies	9



1. Curriculum aims

Our curriculum aims to:

- Provide students with a supportive and understanding environment allowing them to recognise and work towards their potential.
- Provide a broad and balanced education for all students that is well planned and sequenced towards sufficient knowledge for skills, future learning and employment.
- Enable students to develop knowledge, understand concepts and acquire skills, and be able to choose and apply these in relevant situations.
- Support students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Support students' mental health development providing them with an understanding of their own needs and behaviours.
- Promote a positive attitude towards learning.
- To develop student's growth mindset and the ability to embrace a challenge.
- Have an ambition for all students to achieve to the best of their academic ability.
- Equip students with the knowledge and cultural knowledge they need to succeed in life
- Provide subject choices that support students' learning and progression, and enable them to work towards achieving their goals
- To develop skills of communication in which students are free to express themselves.

- These curriculum aims are underpinned by our values:
 - *Ambitious to achieve* - We want to achieve to the best of our academic ability
 - *Courageous* - We build on our strengths and reflect to make good choices
 - *Optimistic* - We have a positive attitude
 - *Respectful* - We treat ourselves, each other and our environment with courtesy and kindness
 - *Never giving up!* - On ourselves, each other or on our future potential

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the requirements for academies to provide a broad and balanced curriculum as per the Academies Act 2010, and the National Curriculum programmes of study which we have chosen to follow.

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014 and Equality Act 2010, and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education's Governance Handbook.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The governing board will also ensure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets
- The school is complying with its funding agreement and teaching a "broad and balanced curriculum" which includes English and maths and enough teaching time is provided for students to cover the requirements of the funding agreement.
- Proper provision is made for students with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs (SEN)
- All courses provided for pupils below the age of 19 that lead to qualifications, such as GCSEs and A-levels, are approved by the secretary of state
- The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements
- It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum.

3.2 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- All required 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 students will be met.
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the governing board.
- They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate.
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements
- The governing board is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum.

- The governing board is advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions.
- Proper provision is in place for students with different abilities and needs, including children with SEN

3.3 Other staff

Other staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.

- The Assistant Headteacher (Curriculum) will ensure that appropriate schemes of learning are in place which reflect the aims of the school outlining subject's intent, implantation and expected impact.

4. Organisation and planning

Key Stage 3

KS3 Students at the Acorn School are entered in an 18-week programme. They have been identified by their mainstream schools as requiring specialist support and guidance they cannot access at their current placement. Students spend 9-10 weeks with us on a full-time basis, 2 weeks part time split between Acorn and student's mainstream then 6 weeks returned to school with regular support from our Outreach Team.

At the Acorn School our INTENTION is to:

- Create a supportive environment which allows students to enjoy education again.
- Support students to develop behaviours, apply strategies and tools to allow them to become effective learners.
- Develop subject specific knowledge, skills and understanding as set out in the National Curriculum.

How is this IMPLEMENTED?

This is achieved by delivering lessons in small groups with a high level of staff support. Students follow the National Curriculum covering academic subjects including English, Maths, Science and Humanities. Students will be assessed at the beginning and end of their placement in the core subjects. Additionally, students study subjects to help develop their life skills and creativity through Food Technology, Resistant Materials, Photography, Sport and Art as well as timetabled sessions to support with understanding themselves and developing strategies to manage their behaviour ready for return to their mainstream placement.

Teachers plan their lessons to ensure students are progressing both their skills and knowledge in lessons. Teachers are able to intervene effectively to close any gaps in skills or knowledge.

As part of our curriculum we focus on a termly theme in the form of a question (timetable below). These questions are explored during Thrive allowing students to apply skills gained in other areas of the curriculum. The questions are specifically addressed on a Friday when the Thrive sessions are linear, allowing representatives from all year groups to collaborate.

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Theme	British Values	Health and Wellbeing	Relationships	Drugs and Alcohol	Finance	Careers and Further Education
Question	How can we demonstrate British Values at Acorn?	How do we make sure we become healthy adults?	What makes a healthy relationship?	Should the laws around drugs and alcohol be changed?	How can I budget for a household?	How do I get where I want to be after I leave school?

Example only – these can be amended annually

What is the intended IMPACT?

The impact of our curriculum is demonstrated when our students are successfully accessing education again in their mainstream setting. This is measured via feedback from schools, students and parents. Students' success and progress is monitored by our Engagement Officers. They successfully apply the skills obtained at the Acorn School for both their academic and behavioural needs and have positive interactions with staff and peers.

Key Stage 4

Key Stage 4 students are with us for their remaining duration of their school career. Students may begin at Acorn any time from the end of the year 9 to their end of year 11 examinations.

At the Acorn School our INTENTION is to:

- Create a supportive environment which allows students to access education and allows them to flourish, reach and even exceed their potential.
- Provide strategies, tools and specific support to develop concentration, perseverance and an enjoyment of learning to allow students to become effective learners.
- Develop subject specific knowledge, skills and understanding to prepare students for their end of Key Stage 4 examinations and beyond.

- To support students to understand themselves, develop social skills and understand the society around them.

How is this IMPLEMENTED?

Our Key Stage 4 Core Curriculum allows students to access GCSE Mathematics*, GCSE English Language* and English Literature*, GCSE Science (Double Award)*

Vocational Offer 2023-24

Adjustments have been made to different qualifications which are more accessible to our students

- ABC Award Level 1 Certificate in Motor Vehicle Studies
- AQA Food Preparation and Nutrition*
- BTEC Introductory Health and Social Care
- BTEC Introductory Hospitality and Tourism
- NCFE Level 1 Award in Photography

These courses are chosen with students and the needs of our mainstream partner schools in mind; these courses are of interest to our students and their likely routes into further education and employment. Courses with * also meet Progress 8 criteria.

All subject planning is to ensure learning is continuous, relevant and accessible to our students. Our intention is to ensure knowledge and skills gained are used across the while curriculum and not simply applied in stand-alone subjects. Students are actively encouraged to apply these skills when they participate in our termly themes via investigations or projects carried out during Thrive.

All subjects are delivered with differentiation as necessary. Mainstream schools provide us with students EA8 data as well as their most recent graded assessments. This information is used to identify student's current ability and end of KS4 potential. Teaching staff are then able to apply this information in their planning, ensuring work is accessible to all students and provides more able students the opportunity to be pushed. Teachers are able to provide students with immediate feedback and correct any misunderstandings to ensure future learning has a solid foundation.

Our staff team are experienced in working with young people who have struggled to access education in a traditional setting. Staff members encourage positive behaviour and engagement by modelling it themselves. Although we have high expectations of our students we also endeavour to be understanding of outside influences that may impact our students and we are accommodating to these.

What is the intended IMPACT?

The final impact of our work at the Acorn School is to ensure our students are prepared for examinations and beyond. Opportunities for students to experience exam settings are vital and ensure success ready for their formal examinations. All Acorn students sit their GCSE examinations

at Acorn. Examination results for dual registered students will be recorded on their mainstream's performance tables.

RSE

Relationships & Sex Education and Health Education is taught in line with Government requirements as outlined in Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education with specific thought towards particular needs and vulnerabilities of students. It is taught to all students.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is included in our planned curriculum.

British Values

The school teaches fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for and the tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith. These values are reflected in our own values of kindness, respect, making informed choices and aiming to achieve our best.

Careers

We are committed to meeting the Gatsby Benchmark for careers education liaising with mainstream career advisors.

Career education, information, advice and guidance is provided on a 1:1 basis to students as well as through the curriculum.

We offer all KS4 students the opportunity to gain experiences of workplaces through work experience.

Emotional Literacy

Due to complex needs of some of our students, all students are given the opportunity to attend regular 1:1 sessions with our counsellors to develop pupils' understanding of themselves and peers.

Planning expectations

All subject teachers are expected to create long term plans for the subject they teach. Teachers are expected to provide medium term planning which clearly shows links to previous learning, links to future learning and SMSC. Teachers are expected to undertake their own short-term planning.

Resources

All classrooms have access to a PC/laptop. Most classrooms have an interactive whiteboard.

The school has laptops for students to use in class.

There are vocational classrooms including a fully equipped cooking room and a Mechanical Engineering workshop.

5. Inclusion

Teachers set high, achievable expectations for all students. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

- More able students
- Students with low prior attainment
- Students from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Students with SEN
- Students with English as an additional language (EAL)

Teachers will plan lessons so that students with SEN and/or disabilities can study every National Curriculum subject, wherever possible, and ensure that there are no barriers to every student achieving.

Teachers will also take account of the needs of students whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help students to develop their English, and to support students to take part in all subjects.

Further information can be found in our statement of equality information and objectives, and in our SEN policy and information report.

6. Monitoring arrangements

The Head teacher and Assistant Headteacher (Curriculum) will co-ordinate the monitoring cycle. This will include:

- Learning walks
- Work scrutiny
- Curriculum planning and development
- Initiating training with a specific focus

7. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Assessment policy
- SEN policy and information report

➤ Marking and feedback policy

➤ Teaching standards

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Chair, Finance and General Purposes
Committee

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Headteacher