



The Outdoors School

DfE Number: 878/6075

CURRICULUM STATEMENT

Intent

Our curriculum is designed to be accessible to all members of our learning community no matter what barriers have prevented progress and growth prior to joining us. Our aim is to ensure learning is aspirational and drives our learners to be positive members of our local, national and global communities and lifelong learners.

We believe in developing the whole learner not just the academic ability. We use a project-based method allowing the learner to be completely autonomous contributing to a well-rounded education, based on skills for lifelong learning and personal development.

Forest school is a complete educational system in itself and when put into practise in this way it can help learners to access a full curriculum of activities skills and attitudes that provide a grounding for later life.

We aim to deliver the following curriculum areas within the scheme of work: each area having specific and explicit outcomes and assessment points:

- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)
- PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education)
- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Forest School
- Science
- Physical Exercise
- SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health)
- Creative and Artistic

Implementation

We break down the literacy and numeracy into 6 distinct pathways for learners to ensure they are able to work within their ability and still be stretched appropriately. These pathways cover the assessment framework outcomes.

Further areas of curriculum that are met within the project-based learning framework but are not explicitly covered by the assessment framework are Human and Social elements. These are addressed through the following;

- Themed weeks covering British Values and Careers Information and Guidance
- Rural crafts and skills
- Community projects
- Enrichment elements of the curriculum including Build and Grow and Offsite Trips
- Assemblies

Whilst this is not explicitly covered by its own assessment outcomes, it is covered within elements of the Forest School, SEMH and PSHE assessment outcomes.

Subjects are not taught as standalone elements but are part of our immersive project-based learning ethos for delivery. Emphasis is put on being reflective in our learning practises and in the value of the growth mindset. Learners are encouraged to move away from a model of learning that involves success and failure, and to begin to see the experience and the process of learning to be important in their own right. Learners will

have learning journals that can be used autonomously as records of projects, planning tools and notebooks. It is through the use of these learning journals, as well as engagement with the projects that learners progress will be assessed. This allows the project engagement to be the focus for the learners, and the assessment elements to be facilitated and guided by staff without needing learners to meet assessment elements in isolation to the project work.

The nature of each project learners engage with will allow for the learning elements to be accessed by learners through utilising an existing skillset. This ensures self-esteem and a sense of success, whilst also allowing for weaknesses or gaps in knowledge to be targeted without the learner feeling isolated. Learning and development can take place within an overall context of engagement and understanding. Where learners see the point of understanding a set of principles because it makes sense in the context of their project, they are more likely to engage actively with the learning and to retain the knowledge due to it being learned in context.

When a learner joins The Outdoor School's learning community the first 3 years is spent doing the same curriculum, based on SEMH with a focus on social emotional development. During these years we have created a specialised curriculum with a high focus on challenging negative behaviour and supporting identified SEMH needs, allowing learners to develop a sense of self-worth and understand our learning approach and high expectations. Beyond this, learners will move into age specific pathways and transitions that are tailored to their learning needs as shown in the assessment framework and schemes of work.

Fundamentally we believe that, without solving the social emotional baseline issues that learners present with, meaningful learning cannot take place, therefore, this is our main priority for all learners during their first weeks and months within the setting.

All learners will complete the three year SEMH based curriculum, regardless of when they start with us: this will give them the skills, confidence and resilience to tackle the demands of life after KS3.

When they arrive learners will spend their first six weeks getting to know their staff, the environment and their peers as well as receiving a good grounding in Forest School Skills. During this first half term we will also complete baseline assessments in Maths, Literacy and PASS - Pupil Attitudes to Self and School. This latter baseline will help us to personalise our SEMH and PSHE curriculums to meet the needs of the individual.

Each member of our learning community has a specialised person-centred learning pathway incorporating, English, Mathematics, STEM, PSHE, Physical Education, Aesthetic and Creative Education and Humanities elements. Learners take an active part in mapping their own progress and developing their next steps plan. Each element of the curriculum has a specific set of learning pathway outcomes, these are ranked; Experienced, Understood and Mastered for all elements of the curriculum. Each of the elements are RAG (Red, Amber Green) assessed with learner involvement to create a truly person centred, spikey profile that reflects both the successes and the gaps in knowledge for each learner. It also demonstrates clearly the progression made and areas for improvement for each learner.

This system is also used for core SEMH and Forest School principles to reflect the progress in areas linked to social and emotional development as well as curriculum-based outcomes. Therefore, the progression in SEMH and Forest School elements should account for gaps in knowledge or progress across curriculum areas and demonstrate that social emotional progress has been made in order for learners to access the curriculum areas when ready.

The process for learner progression in a given element works like this; the learner has an existing RAG assessment for a set of outcomes that can be used to place a learner in a given pathway for a given session that is generated within their first term at the school (the various curriculum areas can reflect different pathways for a learner in a single session, with a learners being, for instance, in pathway 1 for maths, pathway 4 for literacy, pathway 2 for STEM etc), the aim is to create an aspirational goal by either moving up through the RAG assessment process on the same target (from red to amber to green on the same outcome code) or, where a green assessment has been reached, to move onto another target OR move up through the Experience, Understanding, Mastery stages with a similar target.

This is all done with learner involvement and discussion to help the learner understand the progress made and targets they are working on. Data is recorded every six weeks so that progress, issues, gaps in knowledge etc can be both accurately recorded, and also relayed to all staff working with a given learner. This also allows us to offer extra support where needed in a timely fashion.

This is managed through the learners personal learning plan (PLP) with all outcomes RAG assessed and progress recorded. These personalised learning plans are therefore at the centre of the learning and progression model for the school. There is software accessible to all staff to help record this assessment process and build a profile and record of progress for each learner.

It is especially important for the PLP to be in place given the spikey profiles and disrupted prior learning that is common amongst learners referred to us. Age is by no means a valid indicator of learning and achievement for these young people, so a completely tailored learning profile is the only way to accurately and effectively engage learners in curriculum areas at a suitable level of challenge.

Impact

Learners will work towards inspiring but realistic annual targets that take into account their individual talents and challenges and cover their personal and academic progress. We aim to narrow the gap between our learners' ages and their academic stage during their time with us, simultaneously addressing SEMH needs and equipping our learners with strategies to follow them through life.

Our learners will finish KS3 with a good level of self-confidence, resilience and independence allowing them to progress into KS4 and beyond and to be positive, productive and happy members of our local, national and global communities and lifelong learners.