



Policy No. 9

Curriculum Statement

Our Vision

Acorn School strives to provide a caring, learning environment in which all pupils can develop academically, socially, emotionally and morally to their full potential and in which pupils and staff feel safe, secure and valued.

We are committed to delivering an individual and personalised curriculum, which is based on thorough assessment of a Student's needs and learning style alongside their strengths, interests and areas for development. Pupils are provided with appropriate and challenging pathways to their learning.

We offer an environment where teachers can deliver a creative and innovative curriculum, which is relevant to each individual's learning needs and have consistently high expectations of all pupils.

Introduction

All pupils attending Acorn School have emotional, behavioural and/or social difficulties that have been proven to be unsuccessfully addressed at Mainstream schools. Pupils enrolling at Acorn School will usually;

- Be looked after by Phoenix Learning and Care
- Have been excluded from one or more schools
- Have missed out on long periods of education in a school environment
- Have low self esteem and self confidence in relation to their ability to succeed academically
- Will lack the skills needed to control their own behaviour
- Have low expectations about their future and opportunities out there for them

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that offers pupils a worthwhile programme of study that is carefully matched to their individual abilities and strengths; increasing self esteem and personal development.

Acorn School Aims

The school aims to provide a high quality of education which promotes learning for all our students within a secure and purposeful environment which young people find stimulating, engaging and enjoyable.

To achieve this;

- We encourage and support personal growth and self-reliance in a spirit of co-operation
- A challenging and relevant curriculum is provided
- The school community develops to meet the needs of the pupils

To provide that challenging and relevant curriculum we aim to;

- Develop effective learning skills for each student; recognising that we all learn in different ways, a range of strategies must seek to secure individual potential across all aspects of the curriculum
- Encourage each student to take full advantage of the opportunities provided to develop particular interests and abilities both within and beyond the timetabled school day
- Provide a pastoral curriculum and community dimension to support and enrich all that we seek to achieve
- Develop an appropriate balance of academic and practical work to prepare young people for a rapidly changing and demanding world

Key principles

- Broad and balanced
Using the core skills of numeracy and literacy as a foundation to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all students.
- Matched to the needs of individuals
All students have equal rights of access to each curriculum area; matching teaching to individual needs across the ability range allows provision for all our young persons.
- Variety of teaching approaches
A variety of teaching approaches must actively involve students in their learning and provide a diversity of learning opportunities to stimulate and secure maximum potential.

- Continuity within and across Key Stages
Planned progression within the curriculum and across key stages will ensure continuity of provision for all students.
- Making progress and realising potential
Self-assessment by students, reflecting and recording achievement and areas for improvement, forms the basis of the school's assessment, recording and reporting policy.
- Learning within a school community
Everybody is at a different point in their learning and all have a part to play in contributing to a positive learning environment.

Key Stage 3

All Key Stage 3 students have access to the whole National Curriculum and the school seeks to support students who are able to return to mainstream education. This is supported by an intensive focus on literacy, numeracy and science. Students often have gaps in their knowledge which need to be addressed and they work towards individual AQA awards to encourage progress and success in these areas. During Year 9, in preparation for completing GCSE courses, Students follow Entry Level accredited courses in Maths, English, Science, History and Geography as well as ASDAN programmes and short courses.

Key Stage 4

At Key Stage 4 Students have access to the National curriculum and are offered the opportunity to take part in courses of study leading to examination entry at a range of levels. These courses include Functional Skills courses, a range of GCSE's including core subjects, CoPE and, in some cases, 1 or 2 days a week accessing college courses and work related learning.

Students are involved in the planning of their personalised curriculum with the options of work experience, interviews with Careers South West and College taster days.

There is particular emphasis within both key stages, on ensuring the development of speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy skills. All Students who attend the school have IEP's which provide strategies and targets for each individual. These targets will be both academic and behavioural and support for this is provided either in the classroom or with 1:1 sessions.

To help engage all learners in both Key Stages, practical elements of the curriculum are encouraged, such as Art, Design and Technology, PE and Cookery. The school also encourages Students to become involved in outdoor learning projects that use our natural environment. We offer gardening projects which link closely to many areas of the

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curriculum including science, Design and Technology and speaking and listening skills as well as activities such as shelter making, natural craft and woodwork. Outdoor and sporting activities, ranging from horse riding to assault courses, are also offered which assist in developing self confidence and increasing self image.

The Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development of the Students at Acorn School is at the heart of the school environment and is evident in the teaching of RE/ Cultural Studies, Social Skills, PSHE (including Sex and relationship education), Citizenship and out wide range of extracurricular enrichment activities.

Each Student's emotional and social needs, their need to learn about themselves and their own feelings, relationships and how their behaviour affects others is considered when planning.

Outdoor and Experiential Learning.

Our Outdoor and Experiential learning programme and access to off site and extra-curricular activities will give students the opportunity to explore and learn beyond the classroom. This will allow them to, build their life skills and develop a wide variety of activity specific skills and knowledge. Through the Outdoor learning curriculum and the access to group activities, we aim to provide children with a wide variety of positive experiences that will not only help to build their self-esteem and social skills but also provide them with memories they can cherish for the rest of their lives.

Physical Education

The Physical Education curriculum has a greater focus upon team games and participation across a wide variety of sporting activities. Students will work towards accreditation through the ASDAN Development Programmes and Sports and Fitness award at an appropriate level.

Experiences of life outside school and the care environment are a very important part of the education we offer and we maintain links with outside agencies such as careers advisors, colleges: police and youth services in order to widen the curriculum and provide motivation.

Acorn School believes that it is important that Student's efforts and achievements are recognised and celebrated. All teachers and support staff, along with Student's carers, are encouraged to recognise each Student's achievements and there is a wide range of rewards that are used which help maintain motivation and boost self esteem.