

The TreeHouse School Curriculum

Ambitious about Autism's mission: We stand with autistic children and young people, champion their rights and create opportunities.

Context

TreeHouse School is an autism-specific school, committed to supporting all pupils to achieve their maximum potential whilst having an excellent Quality-of-Life.

All pupils at TreeHouse School have a primary diagnosis of autism and an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that outlines the outcomes to be achieved at the end of each Key Stage. Most pupils also have additional complex needs, such as ADHD, learning difficulties, sensory processing differences, or high levels of anxiety, with the majority working significantly below the levels of their mainstream peers.

TreeHouse pupils present with a wide range of needs, from those who benefit from a highly sensory-based and experiential curriculum to others who can access aspects of the National Curriculum with the appropriate adaptations. Many face barriers to learning including challenges with communication, social interactions, emotional regulation and behaviours of distress. Difficulties with attention, sensory sensitivities and managing levels of anxiety can also impact engagement and access to learning. These needs require teaching to be highly personalised, flexible and responsive to pupils' individual needs. Autistic pupils do not learn in the same way as their peers. They may learn more quickly in some areas whilst finding some skills much more challenging. This is often referred to as a "spiky profile"; this means that we plan teaching and learning with consideration for the individual pupil profile, as well as the outcomes on their EHCP.

The Ambitious Approach

The Ambitious Approach Framework is based upon a person's indisputable rights to be:

- treated with dignity and compassion

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Intent

Our curriculum is designed:

- To prepare pupils for a happy and fulfilling life and, whilst doing so, affording them dignity, respect, and compassion.
- To be flexible and adaptive, with a focus on each pupil's unique strengths and needs.
- To be centred around the quality of life (Wellbeing, Social Participation and Independence) which prioritises the individual needs of each pupil and prepares them for adulthood and meaningful onward destinations.
- To support the holistic development of each pupil, recognising that progress is not solely measured by academic achievement but by personal growth, communication, social participation, independence and wellbeing.
- To support each pupil in reaching their full potential, including achieving academic progress appropriate to their individual needs and abilities.

Implementation

Our Curriculum is implemented:

- Through subjects and experiences which are carefully designed and sequenced to provide pupils with essential, transferable skills for life beyond the classroom.
- Through a combination of tailored teaching strategies and multi-sensory approaches, ensuring that all pupils are supported in their own personal learning journey.
- Through our transdisciplinary team working collaboratively with pupils and their families to ensure the best outcomes for each pupil.
- Through utilising the TEACCH approach, incorporating structured teaching, visual schedules and a low arousal environment with clearly defined spaces to reduce distractions and promote engagement.
- Through offering three different pathways: Pre-formal, Semi-formal and Formal each outlining the strategies, tools, and methods we use to deliver the curriculum and support pupils in accessing it effectively.

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- Through adopting a total communication approach, using tools such as core boards, Makaton, AAC devices, and verbal language to ensure all pupils can effectively communicate.
- Through prioritising wellbeing using Communication, Regulation and Wellbeing passports, which ensure each pupil's emotional and social needs are met as part of their overall development.
- Through a focus on three key areas: My Independence, My Wellbeing and My Communication which are personalised and informed by our bespoke THS curriculum assessment framework, we ensure that learning is meaningful and aligned with individual EHCP outcomes (KS1-4).
- Through a topic cycle aligned with our quality of life aims, we focus on three core topics each year: (Myself and Others, The World Around Me and Exploring the Planet and Beyond) delivered in a personalised way tailored to each class' learning and development and personal interests. This flexible approach supports learning by introducing new concepts, broadening experiences, and enriching language (KS1-4).
- Through termly subject planning, pupils are set individual learning objectives, where appropriate, that align with the Cognition and Learning section of their EHCPs (KS1-4).
- Through OCN-accredited qualifications and a focus on preparation for adulthood pathways (KS5).

Impact

- Our data demonstrates consistent term-on-term progress across pupils' individual target areas, with evidence captured and tracked through Earwig; our assessment platform.
- Term-on-term data shows measurable progress in pupils' engagement with enrichment, wider opportunities, and experiences, evidencing the school's positive impact on their personal development and overall quality of life.
- Pupils make progress against individual EHCP outcomes.
- Pupils are prepared for life beyond TreeHouse and demonstrate curiosity about the wider world, actively participating in and contributing to their communities.
- At KS5, pupils achieve recognised outcomes and leave school with OCN-accredited qualifications that reflect their individual attainment levels. Pupils progress against EHCP targets detailing skills that they have attained during their time at school and areas that they need to develop in their next placement.

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We ensure curriculum impact by:

- Providing high-quality teaching and learning through great subject leadership.
- Providing high-quality teaching and learning with monitoring and reflections from our Trust Based Observations and external reviews of our practice e.g. Challenge Partners.

Being able to evidence that we improve and change practice based on reflection. and research.

The Sixth Form Curriculum

The sixth form curriculum is based on the SEND Preparing for Adulthood outcomes. The Preparing for Adulthood curriculum is designed to meet the needs of individual learners through practical activities that will enable them to increase their Independence and Quality of Life. The programme incorporates individual learning objectives that link to pupils' EHCP outcomes.

There are four pathways that are included in the curriculum:

- Work-Related Learning & Enterprise
- Independent Living
- Friends, Relationships, and Community
- Health and Wellbeing.

The delivery of the Sixth form curriculum is underpinned and accredited by OCN units, awards and certificates. Pupils undertake accreditation in Personal progress, Independence and employability, and Entry to employability, on a three-year rolling programme.

Transition and Preparing for Adulthood

Transition work forms part of the curriculum offer at TreeHouse School to support pupils when change happens. This support is provided by Teachers, Therapists (Occupational therapists and Speech and Language therapists), Positive Behaviour Support specialists (PBSs) and the Specialist Teaching Assistants (STAs). An additional focus is the daily act of transitioning from home to school, or from the classroom to another area in the school, which may also be a challenge to some pupils. Although the Preparing for Adulthood framework is a particular curricular focus in the Sixth form, its foundations begin to be developed as soon as the pupil starts school.

British Values

All schools are expected to uphold British Values and to make the teaching of the values part of their curriculum offer. At TreeHouse School we teach pupils about the five values that are encompassed under the British Values framework:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty

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- Mutual respect
- Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.

TreeHouse School has adapted and broken down these values to make them accessible to all pupils at their own developmental level. The bespoke Quality of Life curriculum ensures that all the areas are addressed.

Cultural capital

At TreeHouse School we develop our pupils’ cultural capital by taking advantage of London’s rich cultural diversity, enabling the pupils to access a wide variety of experiences through community visits and access to the arts, including music, drama, sport, and literature. We celebrate our similarities and differences through cultural and religious celebrations by inviting in visitors, holding festivals and celebratory assemblies. We believe the wider the cultural capital that is experienced, the more opportunity to improve a child or young person’s quality of life.

Equal opportunities and Inclusion

The ethos of the Ambitious Approach is that each child has an equal right to an outstanding education that is tailor-made for them. We carefully review, through our provision maps, the learning activities that facilitate the child achieving their EHCP outcomes and other curricular learning objectives. Community visits and experiences are available to all, whatever their starting point, irrespective of their individual self-regulation needs. This is addressed through robust and rigorous risk assessments that keep everyone safe.

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