

## Curriculum Policy 2017

### 1. Purpose and scope

This policy describes the school curriculum offer at TreeHouse School.

'All children are entitled to an education that enables them to make progress so that they:

- achieve their best
- become confident individuals living fulfilling lives, and
- make a successful transition into adulthood, whether into employment, further or higher education'<sup>1</sup>

### 2. TreeHouse Curriculum Summary

#### ***Appropriate autism education***

Fundamental to our approach to curriculum at TreeHouse is the ability and commitment to adapt teaching to the unique qualities and needs of each pupil. This is informed by knowledge of the strengths and difficulties associated with autism in general.

*Personalised to meet the needs of each pupil*, TreeHouse School provides:

- a rich, relevant, broad and balanced curriculum personalised to meet each pupil's needs
- teaching approaches and interventions supported by research evidence
- teaching approaches and interventions for each learner based on evidence of their progress and learning outcomes
- learning strategies and a teaching environment that are enjoyable
- planned interventions to overcome potential barriers to learning
- opportunities for pupils to be involved in the decision making about their learning including choosing their vocational pathways in the sixth form
- the teaching and learning of functional skills, knowledge and understanding including access to vocational pathways in KS4 and the sixth form
- opportunities for pupils to receive accreditation in KS4 and the Sixth form in vocational areas and Key Skills
- planned opportunities to generalise skills, understanding and knowledge to natural situations and settings (such as the home, the community and a programme of residential educational visits)
- planned opportunities for local community involvement and participation, featuring inclusion in mainstream schools and inclusion projects run at TreeHouse school
- planned and supported vocational placements/work experience or community leisure opportunities (where appropriate) to pupils aged 16-19 years as part of the 16-19 study programmes
- planned and supported community sport and leisure opportunities for all pupils
- preparation for adulthood and a life that is as independent and fulfilled as possible'

TreeHouse uses evidence-based practice to identify the unique strengths, needs, and learning profile of each pupil to personalise the school curriculum to best meets the needs of each pupil, with an appropriate emphasis on developing functional, life-enhancing skills and knowledge; and on teaching appropriate behaviours. Our curriculum has the flexibility to address the individual and very specific needs of each pupil and is characterised by providing learning which is:

- Personalised
- Specialised
- Intensive
- Goal-directed and outcomes focussed
- Guided by pupil performance

<sup>1</sup> Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years. Statutory guidance for organisations who work with and support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. (July 2014 p94)

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And is informed by:

- Evidence -based methods

### 3. Definitions

*Autism:* Each pupil at TreeHouse has a diagnosis of autism or a severe communication disorder. Autism is a complex lifelong neurological condition, most commonly referred to as ASD (autistic spectrum disorder) <sup>2</sup>

*Evidence-based practice:* Evidence-based practice refers to the use of teaching interventions, strategies and support that have research documenting their effectiveness.<sup>3</sup>

*Curriculum:* Each pupil has a **personalised curriculum; which encompasses all the planned and incidental learning opportunities and experiences at school and across the community.**

'TreeHouse provides access to a pupil-centred curriculum that is rich, relevant, broad and balanced overtime. The curriculum provides:

- personalised access to a highly differentiated National Curriculum, that has breadth and balance over time appropriate to meet each individual pupil's needs
- developmentally sequenced learning targets
- an early emphasis on learning to learn, and the enjoyment of learning
- the teaching of functional communication skills with guidance from speech and learning therapists
- maximal teaching and learning opportunities throughout the school day including opportunities for age-appropriate play and leisure interactions both between staff and students and students.

TreeHouse strongly supports innovation in order to increase the effectiveness of its teaching. All innovation in education practice and general autism intervention must have a sound rational basis and be subject to continuous evaluation.

The curriculum is personalised to build the skills that will enable each pupil to enjoy, learn and participate appropriately in the world around them. Each pupil's learning journey through the school curriculum is underpinned by precise data collection gathered through direct observation and close monitoring of their progress. Individual and group lesson plans, are carefully planned by the multi-professional team, with a sharp focus on developing specific cusp behaviours that enable greater access to curriculum and learning.

### 4. Curriculum Aims

The Education Act (2002, 2011)<sup>4</sup> requires that all maintained schools provide a balanced and broadly based curriculum that:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of learners at the school and within society, *and*
- prepares learners at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

To those ends, TreeHouse curriculum is designed to be personalised to build the skills, knowledge and understanding that will enable all pupils to be:

- Successful learners: *who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve;*

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<sup>2</sup> For more detailed information see

[http://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/about\\_autism/what\\_is\\_autism.cfm](http://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/about_autism/what_is_autism.cfm)

<sup>3</sup> Strain, P.S. & Dunlap, G. (N.D.). Retrieved December 2006, from [www.challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/](http://www.challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/)

<sup>4</sup> Education Act (2002) Chapter 32

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- Confident individuals: *who are able to lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives with appropriate autonomy and independence and;*
- Participative citizens: *who meaningfully participate in their communities*

Our ultimate aim is that our pupils enjoy, learn from, and participate appropriately in the world around them whilst at school and ultimately as an autonomous adult empowered through their education to lead a full and enjoyable life.

## 5. Curriculum Content

This school curriculum diagram gives an overview of subject coverage in each Key Stage and how it informs the Positive Behaviour Support Framework and is underpinned by Applied Behavioural Analysis.

### 5.1 Core Curriculum areas:

A pupil's personalised curriculum places an emphasis on addressing the core characteristics and challenges associated with autism by offering a comprehensive educational programme designed to promote social communication, language, literacy, problem solving and self-management of behaviour and emotions. This approach is developmental.

Given the needs of children with a diagnosis of autism, TreeHouse has identified the following as its 'Core curriculum'.

- English and Literacy (with an emphasis on Expressive and Receptive Communication)
- Mathematics and Numeracy
- Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) *including Sex and Relationship Education (SRE)*
- *Physical Education*

Pupils are encouraged to use Information Communication Technology as a learning tool across the curriculum, including the use of augmentative and alternative communication aids.

The Core Curriculum subject statements are broad descriptions of the content of each curriculum area. Pupils attend designated sessions in core curriculum subjects (see curriculum diagram) and extend and apply these skills through cross-curricular learning and incidental learning opportunities throughout the day.

The Core Curriculum areas form the integral underpinning of each pupil's personalised curriculum from 5 – 19 years of age. For pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage core curriculum areas are drawn from the Early Years framework, with an emphasis on 'Learning to Learn' skills: TreeHouse School Early Years Foundation Stage statement for further information). Greater emphasis is placed on developing relevant and functional life-skills for pupils of secondary school age (11 – 19 years) and on developing vocational, work-related learning skills for pupils aged 14-19 years of age (see PSHCE & SRE Policy)

### 5.2 Foundation / Wider Curriculum areas:

Pupils' entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum, including the National Curriculum, is also provided through access to wider curriculum subjects.

### 5.3 The Primary Curriculum:

In addition to core curriculum subjects primary aged pupils have access to cross-curricular teaching through topic sessions, as well as access to discrete wider curriculum sessions such as P.E., Music, Science and Art. Primary pupils also have opportunities to develop their social and play skills during exploratory play and social skill sessions planned with Allied Health professionals.

### 5.4 KS3 Curriculum:

In addition to core curriculum subjects pupils in KS3 have access to discrete wider curriculum sessions such as P.E., Music, Science, Art and Humanities. KS3 pupils also have opportunities to

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develop physical, sensory, social and citizenship skills during sessions planned in conjunction with speech and language and occupational therapists.

### 5.3 KS4 Curriculum:

The Key Stage 4 curriculum, Years 1 and 2 is based on the Pathways to Independence. The topics include; community access, enterprise, meal preparation, healthy living, work related learning as well as the core English, Maths and Humanities.

### 5.5 Sixth Form Curriculum:

Students in the Sixth Form continue to access key skills and daily living skills sessions as part of their personalised study programme and timetabled sessions. Pupils in the Sixth Form access a highly personalised curriculum based on their preferences, strengths and areas to develop. This curriculum consists of increased access to 3 chosen vocational or leisure pathways and increased community access including work placements as appropriate.

In line with QCA guidance<sup>5</sup>, the following strategies have been used for managing the time allocations and the different components of each pupil's personalised curriculum:

- giving significant time to those parts of the curriculum which are priorities for our pupils *by identifying areas that are part of TreeHouse 'Core curriculum'*
- varying the frequency of parts of the curriculum, *for example, a higher proportion of time each day is allocated to TreeHouse core curriculum areas including Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) including Sex and Relationship Education (SRE); English Basic Skills (with an emphasis on expressive and receptive Communication); Mathematics Basic Skills;; weekly time is allocated to other important areas of the curriculum such as PE, Science and vocational learning.*
- identifying skills which require regular and frequent practice and teaching *and ensuring that these are written as 'Individual Lesson Plans' so that a pupil has many opportunities to learn and generalise these skills*
- teaching some wider curriculum subjects in rotating blocks, *for example, history may be a lead focus in topic work in one term and geography in the following term*
- teaching some parts of a subject in depth and treating other material with a lighter touch, *for example, an emphasis on recognising personal and family history for pupils with complex needs rather than a comparison between their own lives and those of people in the Middle Ages*
- recognising out-of-class time as contributing to aspects of learning that are important for pupils with learning difficulties, *for example, planning, recording and monitoring pupils' progress with feeding*
- linking parts of some subjects in themes, *for example, 'topic' units of work that bring together a range of different subjects so that learning is contextual*

Decisions about target setting and teaching methods are continually reviewed through termly 'Teaching and Learning' meetings. These take account of the pupils' individual needs, drawing on their Statement of Special Education Need (or Education Health and Care Plan), the outcomes of their annual review and the priorities identified in their IEP. (Please refer to Teaching and Learning policy)

The overarching rationale behind decisions relating to curriculum breadth and balance is further explained by a characteristic profile of the curriculum at each Key Stage (overleaf).

<sup>5</sup> General Guidance: Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties, QCA 2009

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Phase	EYFS	Key Stages 1 & 2	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4	Key Stage 5 / 6 <sup>th</sup> Form
Approx age	0 – 5 years	5 – 11 years	11 – 14 years	14 – 16 years	16 – 19 years
<b>Core Curriculum</b>	<p>Intensive teaching of 'Learning to Learn skills'</p> <p>Overcoming potential barriers to learning.</p>	<p>Ongoing teaching and maintenance of 'Learning to Learn skills'; 'catch-up' skills and knowledge.</p> <p>Overcoming potential barriers to learning</p>	<p>Ongoing teaching and maintenance of 'Learning to Learn skills'; 'catch-up' skills and knowledge</p> <p>Overcoming potential barriers to learning and promoting behaviours for meaningful community participation.</p> <p>Identify areas of personal interests and strengths to inform planning of 14 – 19 curriculum, and transitions to adult life.</p>	<p>Ongoing teaching and maintenance of 'Learning to Learn skills'; 'catch-up' skills and knowledge</p> <p>Overcoming potential barriers to learning and meaningful community participation</p> <p>Introduction of work-related learning and vocational and leisure interests.</p> <p>Preparation for adult life, with access to suitable externally accredited courses (e.g. Transition Challenge)</p>	<p>Ongoing teaching and maintenance of 'Learning to Learn skills'; 'catch-up' skills and knowledge</p> <p>Overcoming potential barriers to learning and meaningful community participation</p> <p>Preparation for adulthood include a focus on outcomes for Employment, Education and Training, Independent Living, Community Inclusion and Health , with access to suitable externally accredited courses (e.g. Towards Independence) and qualifications</p> <p>'Real work' experience</p>

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<b>Wider Curriculum</b>	Early Years Framework	<p>Continued use of Early Years framework learning for a few pupils.</p> <p>Generalisation of mastered skills to access greater curriculum breadth e.g. within differentiated TreeHouse topic work, PE &amp; music lessons</p> <p>Development of social and play skills</p>	<p>Generalisation of mastered skills to learn through greater curriculum breadth e.g. through wider curriculum sessions, educational visits and a programme of residential trips</p> <p>Development of social and citizenship skills</p>	<p>Use of mastered skills to learn through greater curriculum breadth e.g. through wider curriculum sessions, educational visits and a programme of residential trips, enterprise, meal preparation, healthy living and work related learning .</p>	<p>Opportunities to further develop skills in areas of personal interest e.g. Horticulture, Landscaping, Performing Arts, Retail and Enterprise, Creative Arts through chosen Vocational &amp; Leisure Pathways including community-based learning opportunities</p>
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## 6. Curriculum Planning

The planning of a pupil's personalised curriculum starts first with identifying their developmental and learning needs. We use the following assessment tools:

- Clinical observation and assessment;
- Functional Analytic assessments of behaviours;
- Assessments conducted by Speech and Language Therapists;
- Assessments conducted by Occupational Therapists;
- P-Levels or Early Learning Goals.
- Assessment of IQ/Cognitive assessment
- Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales
- Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLSS)
- Verbal Behaviour Milestones Assessment and Placement Programme (a language and social skills assessment programme for children with autism and other developmental disabilities) to track and determine progress.

Pupils, parents and/or carer insights and priorities are also identified and inform decision making. Stretching targets are set in agreement with pupils and their families each term in order to support each pupil to reach their personal goals and achieve the best possible outcomes in the wider areas of personal and social development. The key processes, key concepts and contexts necessary to address these needs and priorities are then planned, in addition to strategies designed to remove barriers to learning, such as interfering behaviours associated with their autism. (See Assessment for Learning Policy for further details of the monitoring and evaluation of each pupil's progress through their curriculum targets).

The National Curriculum Inclusion Statement<sup>6</sup> stipulates that teachers should modify, as necessary, the National Curriculum programmes of study to provide all pupils with relevant and appropriately challenging work at each key stage by:

- 'setting suitable learning challenges
- responding to pupils' learning needs and overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils'
- Differentiation by 'Age and Stage'

## 7. Trans disciplinary input

Trans disciplinary input into all decision-making underpins pupil progress through collaborative assessments, curriculum planning, teaching, instruction and interventions, and is encouraged and expected at all levels and stages of decision making.

Our trans disciplinary and multi-agency approach and our commitment to working in partnership with parents are fundamental to how we support and nurture every pupil in reaching their full potential and in ensuring they have the best possible life-chances.

## 8. Outcomes

All pupils at TreeHouse School have a Statement of Special Educational Need or an Education Health and Care Plan. EHC Plans (EHP) must specify the outcomes sought for the child or young person to be well prepared for adulthood, including wider outcomes such as positive social relationships and emotional resilience or stability. 'Outcomes should always enable children and young people to move towards the long term aspirations of employment or higher education, independent living and community participation. An outcome can be defined as the benefit or difference made to individual as a result of an intervention – in other words, what it is that the young person will be able to do as a result of the intervention that they cannot do now and by when this will be achieved.'<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years (2015)

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‘Outcomes will usually set out what needs to be achieved by the end of a phase or stage of education in order to enable the child or young person to progress successfully to the next phase or stage. An outcome for a child of secondary school age might be, for example, to make sufficient progress or achieve a qualification to enable him or her to attend a specific course at college.’<sup>8</sup>The effectiveness of our provision and the education which our pupils receive is monitored continuously through observations of pupils, data analysis and their progress towards achieving the outcomes agreed in their ECHP.

**9. Curriculum review and policy review**

In our determination to realise the aims and outcomes of this Curriculum Policy, we are committed to continuous review and improvement of teaching and learning. Each pupil’s personalised curriculum will continue to evolve in alignment with their individual needs and learning priorities; in consultation and partnership with parents; and with close involvement from all professionals working for the best interests of each pupil both now and in planning for the future. The Curriculum Policy is subject to annual review.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid p.163

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