



Curriculum Policy

Date of Policy: September 2024

Next Review Due: September 2026

Approved by: Clare Whalley, Katie Sweeney, Ella Colley

Curriculum Policy | Your Ideas School

Context

The school curriculum comprises 'all learning and other experiences that each school plans for its students' (National Curriculum 2.2). Therefore, when the curriculum is discussed here, it refers to all of the rich and varied experiences that our school offers.

At Your Ideas School, we ensure access to the curriculum areas that are listed in the Independent School Standards (2014). We provide children with a curriculum that meets the needs of each child, based on these standards and their individual Education, Health and Care Plans.

Your Ideas is a school that supports children with social and emotional difficulties such as anxiety and school refusal, resulting from developmental trauma and adverse childhood experiences, as well as differences in communication and learning. Children who join our school are often experiencing significant school anxiety, low self-esteem and are disengaged from education. They are likely to have experienced failed school placements, low attendance and disruption before coming to us. As a result, children come to Your Ideas School with varying levels of knowledge, skills and understanding and many will not be working at the national average level for their age. We provide them with an education that is tailored to their individual needs and interests, enabling them to build trust, gain confidence, and to re-engage with and progress their learning. We want children to experience both academic and personal success.

Curriculum Aims

Our curriculum approach considers the challenges that children face and thus is developmental, rather than chronological. Students are assessed on entry to our school in a range of ways, to build a picture of their emotional development as well as their academic ability. This includes gathering assessment information from previous school settings, parent/carer meetings, Education Health Care Plans and any other multi-agency reports. The curriculum is then designed for each individual child, taking into account their academic and SEMH development, their EHCP and their areas of interest. Children's personal and social development is considered central to everything that we do, with the aim of helping to create well-rounded and happy children.

It will be our priority to ensure that children feel psychologically and physically safe first, in order to learn. We will prioritise social, emotional, mental wellbeing as the first essential building block in a child's learning journey. This will lay the foundation for children to engage in learning at a level and pace that is appropriate to their developmental stage, rather than their chronological age. We aim for children to build trusting relationships with their learning mentors/teachers, to become confident, curious, inquisitive learners.

Staff will adopt the Thrive approach, with the aim of helping children to feel safe, become more emotionally resilient and be better placed to engage with life and learning. We want children to feel safe, supported and ready to learn.

Upon entry to our school, children engage with learning in a gradual, phased way, as indicated below. The phases are flexible and children can move between phases as and when required, for emotional and/or academic reasons.

Transition Phase - This is a settling period, where children are gradually integrated into the school. The main aim is for children to feel safe and secure in their learning environment. During this phase, staff work closely with learners to gain an understanding of their emotional needs and a sense of where the learner is academically.

Phase 1 - The focus during this phase is on emotional, social education. Building relationships and trust is prioritised. Children will engage in PSHE, play, spontaneous learning opportunities and other developmentally appropriate activities and adapted learning activities. Learning is based around themes and therapeutic activities are the main focus, rather than academic outcomes. Learning is chunked, with regular breaks.

Phase 2 - In this phase, children are beginning to access learning and this is mostly child-led. Teaching is based on the child's developmental ability and more formal learning is highly scaffolded by staff. Learning is discrete in Maths, English and PSHE and the rest of the curriculum is delivered around themes and topics.

Phase 3 - In this phase, children are accessing the National Curriculum at a level appropriate to their academic ability. PSHE and social, emotional development remain key aspects of provision.

Your Ideas offers a curriculum that:

- Is relevant and appropriate to our individual children
- Is engaging and motivating
- Sparks curiosity, wonder and awe
- Prioritises emotional support and development
- Is sufficient in breadth, balance, coherence and relevance
- Is adapted to meet the needs of individuals
- Allows for continuity and progression
- Allows children to gain the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to live fulfilling lives
- Helps children to learn how to communicate their thoughts, knowledge and feelings
- Promotes independence so that children can problem solve and navigate a range of situations
- Provides opportunity for all children to experience success and for this to be celebrated

- Promotes children's emotional wellbeing, spiritual, moral, cultural and social development
- Teaches children about how to keep themselves safe

Curriculum Delivery

Children are taught on a 1:1, 1:2 or very small group basis, depending on the activity and the individual child's needs based on their EHCP. English and Maths are taught as a priority, with a strong emphasis on children becoming literate and numerate. The school curriculum ensures that the seven broad areas of learning (linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative) are taught throughout the academic year. A range of subjects are taught through a topic-based, cross-curricular approach, including history, geography, science and art. PE can be delivered on a 1-1 or small group basis, depending on the needs of children. Alongside the formal curriculum, the school can offer a range of therapeutic services by commissioning the services of external providers e.g. Speech and Language Therapy, Lego Therapy, Play Therapy, Occupational Therapy and counselling.

The school day begins with breakfast and a settling activity, such as cards or tabletop games. This is so that children can settle into the learning environment. Sensory circuits are also incorporated into the day for those children that require them.

Our curriculum includes the use of commercial schemes of work and websites, such as The Literacy Tree, White Rose Maths and Kapow, which can be adapted for use with pupils. The curriculum plans set out the topics that are covered across the year. Planning is informed by EHCP action plans, teacher assessments and Thrive assessments.

As a result of time out of school, and other factors, learners may not be working at the academic standard expected of their chronological age when they start at Your Ideas School. Therefore, pupils' rate of progress is measured against their starting point, rather than age-related expectations.

Formal Curriculum

When children are ready, they will receive daily lessons in Maths and English, alongside weekly lessons in PSHE, PE, Tech, Aesthetic and Creative, Science/Topic. Our formal curriculum is based around the National Curriculum. We have a planning bank in place for Years 1 to 6 (KS1, Lower KS2 and Upper KS2). We adapt planning to meet the individual needs of our pupils, taking into account pupils' EHCPs, their current academic attainment and their personal interests. Flexibility in our approach to curriculum content and delivery is central to our school ethos and is essential for promoting the emotional wellbeing and academic success of our children.

Informal Curriculum

The informal curriculum plays an important role in the overall provision delivered. Everyday life skills and activities offer rich opportunities for incidental learning. Pupils' interactions with staff are also part of the school's 'hidden' curriculum. Adult-pupil interactions throughout the day offer opportunities for social and emotional learning, co-regulation and reflection, problem-solving and relationship-building.

Curriculum Flexibility

Our school aims to promote awe, wonder and curiosity. In order to do this, we allow for flexibility in our curriculum, whilst still offering a broad and balanced curriculum.

- The curriculum offers an academic guide; however, we allow for flexibility and the ability to change and adapt.
- Teachers may adapt the planned sequence of learning to follow questions raised by the children (child-led learning).
- Teachers may adapt planning based on children's interests, where this will promote engagement and enjoyment of learning.
- We encourage spontaneous learning through curiosity. We want children to be inquisitive, engaged and excited by learning. This can mean that certain topic areas may receive less allocated time. However, children will receive a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Teachers will not rush through curriculum content in order to ensure full coverage . Instead, they will encourage mindfulness in the learning, allowing for questioning and immersion. This may mean that not everything in the planned sequence gets taught. This will be documented in the curriculum coverage folder.

Curriculum Areas

English

The English curriculum will be delivered based on a book-based approach. Texts will be chosen according to topics and the interests of the children. Elements of the **Literacy Tree** scheme will be used where appropriate.

Reading

Reading will be a priority for all pupils. To support this aim, all staff will be trained to teach a recognised phonics programme, **Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised**. We intend that children will read to an adult and listen to stories every day. There will also be a strong focus on children reading 'real' books, books for pleasure, newspapers, comics, non-fiction texts, and not just decodable scheme books. This can be through shared reading, audio books and adults

reading to pupils. We want children to enjoy reading and be enthusiastic about it. We will equip children with the tools to become fluent, independent readers using elements of the '**Flexible Phonics**' approach.

Maths

We will employ a variety of approaches to teach numeracy and build confidence with mathematical operations and principles. Teachers will use the **White Rose Maths** scheme of work to meet the needs of learners.

Science

Science will be delivered based on the **Kapow science scheme**. Our aim is that children develop an interest and curiosity in science, gain experience of working scientifically and build on their scientific knowledge and vocabulary. When planning provision, staff will also consider the individual interests of pupils, where this will be of benefit to motivation, engagement and enjoyment.

Human and Social

Our curriculum includes a variety of History and Geography topics from the **Kapow** primary schemes of work. Where appropriate, subjects will be taught in a thematic, cross-curricular way to deepen and extend learning. When planning provision, staff will consider the individual interests of pupils, where this will be of benefit to motivation, engagement and enjoyment.

Aesthetic and Creative

Children will be encouraged to develop their individual creative interests. Children will have the opportunity to cook and bake in our school kitchen, explore a variety of arts and craft materials and construction tools. Elements of the Art and Design **Kapow** Primary scheme of work may also be used where appropriate.

ICT

Children will be taught ICT using the **Kapow** scheme of work. Children will also have the opportunity to extend and deepen their learning through the use of ICT across the curriculum, and learning about online safety.

PSHE and RSE

PSHE education incorporates personal, social, health and economic education and relationships education (RSE). A scheme of work is in place which combines PSHE/RSE and

associated content. We use the **Kapow** primary scheme of work. We will adapt the curriculum from our planning bank to meet the needs of individual learners and consider their emotional maturity and developmental profile.

Physical Education (P.E)

The facilities on the premises allow for some P.E lessons to take place indoors in our Sports Hall, such as fitness, badminton, tennis, yoga and multi skills. **PE Planning** will be used to help plan engaging PE lessons across the curriculum. We will also use local external spaces to deliver aspects of our P.E provision .e.g. swimming at 'The Coach House' in Studley, Warwickshire. Alongside dedicated P.E lessons, children will have the opportunity for physical exercise in other curriculum areas and enrichment activities, for example Mindfulness Walks, Forest School visits and indoor climbing.

Thrive Provision

The school will adopt the **Thrive** approach as a whole school approach. Children will be supported with appropriate activities to support their right-time development, as well as small group and 1-1 reparative work for children who are identified as having gaps in their social, emotional development.

Educational Trips

Your Ideas pupils will have the opportunity to go on trips, for academic education and for positive social, emotional experiences. The curriculum covered in these visits may cover both academic and emotional objectives. Examples of academic objectives that might be met on trips include measuring and data collection, learning about wildlife and physical exercise. Examples of emotional benefits of trips and visits include relieving stress, building self-esteem, positive experiences and promoting independence.

Useful Links:

<https://www.thriveapproach.com/about-thrive/about-us>

<https://literacytree.com>

<https://www.kapowprimary.com>

<https://whiteroseeducation.com/resources/maths/primary>

<https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/about-us/>

Flexible Phonics: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1362291>