



The Birtenshaw Group

Transforming Lives

Birtenshaw School Merseyside Curriculum Policy

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Rationale:

The Curriculum at Birtenshaw School Merseyside supports the mission statement: '*Transforming Lives*' by giving pupils the opportunity to learn and develop in a supportive and creative environment in which there is a focus on recognising achievement and supporting progression and in which pupils feel safe and are happy. The curriculum is individualised, creative, innovative and flexible allowing for the needs of each pupil to be met. It aims to promote the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of the pupils as well as their intellectual and physical development.

The school is committed to providing a broad and balanced curriculum, based on the National Curriculum for those pupils of compulsory school age, Wilson Stuart P steps and the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is blended with opportunities for pupils to prepare for adulthood by developing functional skills, independence skills and skills for working life as appropriate. Some subjects are taught discretely while others are covered via a thematic creative curriculum approach.

The timetable and Curriculum are reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current legislation and guidance and taking into account best practice within special needs education.

We endeavour to provide opportunities for pupils who are identified as having a gift or talent to develop their skills and abilities in that area.

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The curriculum is planned to provide continuity and progression. It enables pupils to make connections and transfer skills and to think creatively and solve problems. It also develops pupils' capacity to work independently and collaboratively. Birtenshaw School Merseyside actively promotes British values both as part of our ethos and embedded within the school curriculum.

Pupils are grouped by stage rather than age. In addition to the overarching curriculum plan each pupil will follow an individualised timetable providing opportunities for pupils to withdraw from some sessions or parts of sessions to participate in therapy sessions with Occupational Therapist (OT) and Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) staff.

We know that pupils with autistic spectrum conditions are happiest and achieve most when their routine is clear and when their learning opportunities build on their particular skills and talents. To this end, we tailor the curriculum to help pupils make progress in a way that best suits them.

At Birtenshaw School Merseyside we recognise the importance of preparing our pupils for life in modern Britain, therefore our policies reflect this ethos and incorporate fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Aims:

- That pupils make outstanding progress against personal targets
- That pupils acknowledge their achievements and have a sense of pride
- That pupils have opportunities to participate in a range of enrichment activities within and beyond the curriculum via working with professionals within the community for example: sports coaches, musicians, gardeners and so on and by visiting places of interest.
- That pupils develop communication skills including use of symbols, signing and objects of reference
- That pupils develop reading skills through phonics-based reading scheme
- That pupils develop skills for independence
- That pupils use of ICT is encouraged
- That pupils develop a greater awareness of their local community and make a positive contribution
- That pupils learn a range of skills for life beyond school

Curriculum Intent:

The curriculum is created around three distinct pathways. Pupils are placed within one of the three pathways and are able to move between pathways when this is deemed appropriate.

Pathway One:

The focus of this pathway is upon enabling pupils to establish positive interactive relationships with others, to proactively explore the world around them, gaining environmental control skills. The aim of this pathway is to provide opportunities for pupils to access a broad and balanced curriculum which will support them to make choices, communicate effectively and be able to enjoy a high quality of life.

Pupils in this pathway are typically working between P1(i) and P3(ii). There is scope in this pathway for pupils to progress beyond P3(ii) until they are able to move onto Pathway Two.

Pupils on this pathway may always require support from adults in order to live safely, happily and comfortably, however they may be able to complete many areas of their life independently and the curriculum will support this development.

Pupils from Year 9 onwards would then have access to a more streamlined curriculum offer which is designed to develop independence further and develop personal skills so that they can make informed choices and keep themselves safe in line with their abilities.

Teachers use the pupils EHCP outcomes as their starting point and use a topic-based approach to challenge and inspire pupils.

A lot of input from Speech Therapy and Occupational Therapy professionals will ensure pupils are fully supported with comprehensive programmes to develop their individual communication skills and sensory development.

Pathway Two:

The aim of this pathway is to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils whose long-term aspirations are to live semi-independently.

Pupils on this pathway are likely to always have support in their adult life but the ability to do many tasks independently. The pathway will have a focus on building pupils' knowledge and skills in all areas of the curriculum so they can make informed choices at 14 in regards to future education and areas of study. The curriculum topic content allows pupils to access a personalised curriculum, structured around their learning style. Teachers use the pupils EHCP outcomes as their starting point and use a topic-based approach to challenge and inspire pupils.

Pupils in this pathway are typically working between P4 and P8. There is scope in this pathway for pupils to progress beyond P8 until they are able to move onto Pathway Three.

Pupils from Year 9 onwards would then have access to a more streamlined curriculum offer which is designed to prepare pupils for adulthood and develop awareness of cultural capital so they can be productive and contributing members of society. These areas of study will support pupils to meet their long-term aspirations and provide opportunities for them to access employment and develop a range of skills.

A lot of input from Speech Therapy and Occupational Therapy professionals will ensure pupils are fully supported with comprehensive programmes to develop their individual communication skills and sensory development.

Pathway Three:

The aim of this pathway is to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils whose long-term aspirations are to go on to study through further education, complete paid or volunteer work and live mostly, if not completely, independently. Pupils on this pathway are capable of completing most tasks without any support from adults.

Pupils in this pathway are typically working from P8 and above into adapted National Curriculum levels.

This pathway will have a focus on building pupils' knowledge and skills in all areas of the curriculum so they can make informed choices at 14 in regards to future education and areas of study. These areas of study will support pupils to meet their long-term aspirations and provide opportunities for them to access employment and develop a range of skills. Pupils who wish to continue their education will leave Birtenshaw School with the qualifications to do so.

Pupils experiencing our formal curriculum (adapted National Curriculum) access the range of topics and personalised formal curriculum opportunities. Adapted National Curriculum subjects for their key stage, modified in the light of their developmental level and special educational needs. Specialist areas are covered both within the adapted National Curriculum subjects and in discrete lessons. Life skills and independence skills will also form a large part of the curriculum. As the term 'formal' implies, there is a high level of structure. Teachers ensure that learning is linked to topics, practical activities and consolidated and applied in practical sessions.

Literacy and Numeracy:

Literacy and Numeracy are taught discretely and consciously reinforced throughout all aspects of the curriculum.

Literacy and Numeracy are taught each morning and form part of the pupils' daily routine.

Pupils' reading skills are developed by the use of phonics teaching and decodable reading schemes which provide a broad resource base of structured age appropriate and engaging texts to support reading and comprehension skills. Within the school Bug Club is the reading scheme that is used. This scheme is based around the Department for Education's Letters and Sounds Document.

Creative Curriculum:

The Creative Curriculum approach provides pupils with the opportunities to cover a range of learning outcomes and develop Personal Learning and Thinking Skills within a topic-based framework. Each topic covers aspects of the Humanities, Expressive Arts and Science and reinforces Literacy and Numeracy skills.

As far as is possible we aim that pupils will develop their skills as:

- Independent Enquirers
- Team Workers
- Effective Participants
- Self-Managers
- Creative Thinkers
- Reflective Learners

Preparing for Adulthood

We see the development of independence skills and Skills for Working Life as vital to our pupils. To that end, there is a community inclusion focus in the timetable which gives pupils the opportunity to be supported in the community to learn skills such as shopping and how to travel on public transport. In addition, skills such as basic cooking are taught and where appropriate work experience.

PSHE, and SMSC

PSHE is a timetabled lesson each week in each class. Some aspects of PSHE and SMSC are covered each day, e.g. in the good morning session the pupils may learn about feelings and emotions.

An annual plan of significant dates in the religious and cultural calendar ensures that there is a focus, through assemblies and PSHE lessons on important cultural and religious festivals and commemorative days.

The development of social and communication skills is also a key part of the PSHE/SMSC curriculum.

Religious Education and Collective Worship

Children of any faith and those of no faith are encouraged to value everyone and their beliefs equally. Shared assembly times focus on celebration and the worth-ship of all of those within the school community and aim

- To show interest in and concern for members of the school community
- To celebrate special occasions together
- To show concern for the daily happenings in school life, the local community and wider world
- To share appreciation of worthwhile activities undertaken by groups within the school
- To reflect upon dimensions of human life, the wonderful, beautiful, joyful, heroic, humorous, tragic, ugly, sorrowful, solemn...

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from Religious Education and/or Collective Worship.

Sex and Relationships Education

Sex and Relationships Education is taught in PSHE lessons and also as a stand-alone lesson where appropriate at a level appropriate to the level of understanding of the young people.

Parents may request that their child is excused from Sex Education.

Enrichment:

The curriculum is enriched by educational trips and visits, local community links and opportunities within the timetable to engage with new experiences for example: music workshops, gardening, educational visits.

Accreditations:

When pupils reach Key Stage Four age we ensure that their learning outcomes are accredited via AQA unit awards and where appropriate entry level qualifications - Functional Skills and BTEC, ASDAN Awards, Arts Award

Responsibilities:

Class teachers are responsible for:

- medium and short term planning
- differentiation to meet the individual needs of pupils
- summative and formative assessment
- using a range of teaching and learning strategies, techniques and resources

- directing the work of Learning Support Assistants
- attending and contributing to training and meetings are requested

Monitoring and Evaluation:

The Head of School will co-ordinate the monitoring cycle. This will include:

- auditing planning
- moderating assessment data
- analysing progress data
- observing lessons
- learning walks
- work scrutinies
- curriculum development and planning
- initiating training/workshop opportunities with specific focus.

Resources:

Resources are allocated in line with the priorities indicated in the School Development Plan.

CPD:

All staff are provided with opportunities for professional development and training in line with the School Development plan and the organisational training needs analysis and strategy. Training needs will be linked to the school's performance management process.

Equal Opportunities:

The school supports the rights of all pupils to equal access and opportunities regardless of age, culture, religion, gender, ability, disability or sexuality. The school promotes an ethos of respect for everyone.