Birtenshaw School Bolton
Curriculum Policy

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Rationale:

The Curriculum at Birtenshaw School 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 to ensure that ALL pupils, no matter their starting points, backgrounds and individual needs, are afforded the same ambitious curriculum and an equal chance to succeed.

The school is committed to providing a broad and balanced curriculum, based on the National Curriculum for those pupils of compulsory school age and the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is blended with opportunities for pupils to develop functional skills, independence skills and skills for working life as appropriate in line with the 16-19 Curriculum. Some subjects are taught discretely while others are covered via a creative curriculum approach.

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 by tailoring curriculums to meet the needs and aspirations for all pupils.

The curriculum is planned to provide continuity, progression and develop understanding through sequential learning, repetition and formative assessment. 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.

Most pupils at Birtenshaw School have complex needs. In addition to the academic curriculum, their individualised timetables provide opportunities for pupils to withdraw from some lessons to participate in therapy sessions with Occupational Therapist (OT) and Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) staff. This ensures pupils are prepared, settled and motivated to access their learning fully.

We know that autistic people 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.

Aims:

- Pupils are able to develop a deeper understanding of the world and their learning by accessing a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Pupils are able to build on existing knowledge through sequential learning
- Pupils are supported by Teachers and Learning Support Assistants who are confident in their own knowledge and expertise
- Pupils are assessed and encouraged to self-assess so that learning leads to progress which is relevant for each individual pupil.
- Pupils are able to learn in a calm, purposeful environment.
- Pupils have clear expectations and are supported to self-regulate and manage their own behaviours where appropriate.
- Pupils understand their own rights and responsibilities as educated citizens within society.
- Pupils are supported in their career choices and have opportunities to access a wide range of further education, employment, supported employment, work placements and careers.
- Pupils are supported to be accountable for their own learning, where appropriate, and are acknowledged for their achievements and reaching their goals.
- Pupil's communication development and understanding underpins all activities and lessons in school
- Pupil's classroom learning is reinforced through community, enrichment activities to embed learning in real life situations.

- Pupils are able to contribute to their community and act as positive and respected citizens.
- Pupils spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development at the school and of society is promoted to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life

Curriculum Intent

The purpose of the curriculum at Birtenshaw is to ensure that all pupils, no matter their starting points, backgrounds and individual needs, access a broad and balanced curriculum which prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

The curriculum compliments and reinforces the long-term aspirations and targets set in each pupils Education, Health and Care Plan and is designed to build on existing knowledge and skills so that pupils meet their end goals.

The mission at Birtenshaw school is to ***transform the lives*** of pupils by offering a bespoke, ***personalised curriculum*** that puts pupils EHCP long term aspirations at the heart of their learning to ensure every child leaves Birtenshaw with the ***knowledge and skills they need to succeed***. We believe that every child can achieve their ***best outcomes*** from their individual starting points by following an ***ambitious curriculum*** with a focus ***on breaking down learning barriers*** through development of communication skills, behavioural support and therapeutic input. Personal development, social interaction and cultural capital equips pupils with key knowledge and skills in order to become successful, valued members of their community.

The acquisition of knowledge and skills

The curriculum is designed to cumulatively build the knowledge, cultural capital and skills pupils need in order to be successful in their lives beyond Birtenshaw.

All pupils have an Education Heath and Care Plan with Autism being the most common diagnosis, followed by ADHD. At Birtenshaw we have identified additional barriers to learning that can inhibit pupil's ability to acquire knowledge and skills:

- Sensory processing needs
- Limited parental support
- English as an Additional Language
- Speech and Language / Communication Difficulties
- Previous exclusion from school / previous failed placement
- Significant time away from education
- Being a Looked After Child
- Poor attendance
- Complex Health Needs

In order to overcome these barriers, our first and ultimate priority is that pupils feel safe in school. We do not place any unnecessary stresses such as school uniforms, school bells, unnecessary transitions and busy, overcrowded corridors. Pupils enter a quiet, calm and clutter free building following a carefully planned transition contributed by parents, carers, professionals and therapists. To support pupils feeling of safety it is imperative that pupils access a range of therapeutic assessments and interventions so that they are in a calm, relaxed state before we introduced any learning demands.

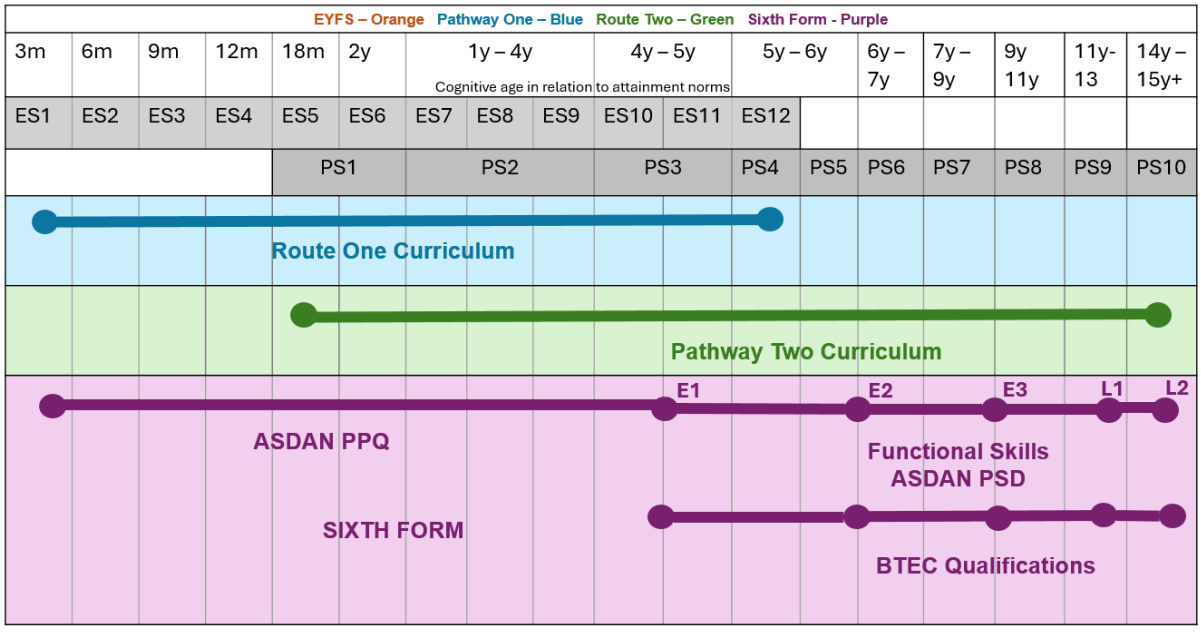
Before lessons start many pupils access the sensory spaces around school such as the ball pool, sensory integration, rebound therapy and hydrotherapy. Some pupils have a shower or bath and are supported to manage their own personal care as part of their morning routine.

Once pupils are in a calm, relaxed state and feel safe and happy they are introduced to their learning.

The curriculum is split into three areas;

- Route One
- Route Two
- Sixth Form

The diagram on the next page shows the breadth of the curriculum across the three areas.



Route One - The Route One curriculum provides a holistic approach to learning, led by pupils' EHCP outcomes and long-term aspirations, whilst also meeting pupils sensory and physical needs.

Pupils working within Route One have significant barriers to learning such as; little to no spoken communication, complex sensory processing disorders, physical health needs, severe learning disability (SLD) and are working significantly below their age expected level both academically and personally. Pupils working within Route One need intensive support from adults around them in order to make progress within lessons and activities, keep safe and to meet all of their personal and self-help needs. Such as toileting, feeding, communication, structure and behaviour management.

Route One provides pupils with the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills they need to build effective strategies around behaviour, structure and routine, resilience and their understanding of the wider world through an ambitious, pupil centred and supportive package. The curriculum provides pupils with the opportunity to learn new skills in a range of settings, gain confidence in their independence and self-help skills and develop social skills which enable them to initiate positive interactions and engage in society as outlined in their individual EHCP outcomes and long-term aspirations. Route One has an over-arching focus of communication, supporting pupils to develop a successful and effective way to communicate their needs. Pupils are given the knowledge and skills to be able to communicate to a variety of people around them and gain their own voice to support their independence and preparation for adulthood, with the over-sight and support of the Speech and Language Therapist.

As pupils in Route One gain the knowledge and skills to progress they can move into the Route 2 curriculum, accessing a broad and balanced curriculum.

The Route One curriculum supports pupils working within Key stages 2, 3 and 4.

The four areas of the Route One curriculum are;

- Cognition and Learning
- Sensory and Physical
- Social, Emotional and mental Health
- Personal development

Route Two – The mission of the Route Two curriculum is to introduce pupils to an ambitious, integrated, broad and balanced curriculum where they are able to connect the dots in their learning and gain the essential knowledge needed to be educated citizens. EHCP outcomes and ILP targets will shape the curriculum to identify and meet the needs of individual pupils within Birtenshaw School who have a variety of barriers to learning. Many pupils at Birtenshaw have had multiple failed placements and are diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Conditions, Learning disability and complex, social, emotional and mental health issues. A wide range of topic-based learning immerses children in progressive knowledge and skills, in a secure, caring and supportive environment, with opportunities to apply their learning in real life, practical applications within their community.

By identifying pupil's individual needs and utilising a combination of educational and therapeutic approaches; all pupils should be able to play a full, active and equal part in all lessons and enrichment opportunities. The Route Two curriculum is aimed at pupils within Key stages 2, 3 and 4 working within the National Curriculum Year 1 to 6.

Alongside the core curriculum, pupils will also engage in complementary personal development programme. These extra curriculum topics include:

- Enrichment
- Life Skills
- Food Technology
- Pony Riding
- Birtenshaw Gym
- Cooking Skills

Sixth Form - The mission at Birtenshaw Sixth Form is to empower pupils to live fulfilling lives as productive members of society within their own community. Pupils accessing Birtenshaw Sixth Form have significant barriers to learning, most have a diagnosis of Autism or Learning Disability and associated communication and social difficulties. All pupils have an Education Health and Care Plan and it is these Long-Term Aspirations within the EHCP plans that defines the curriculum on offer within the Sixth Form provision for each individual pupil.

We believe that pupil's success is defined by the opportunities that we provide; facilitated through a welcoming and safe environment, experienced and dedicated staff and a bespoke, tailored curriculum designed to engage, inspire and motivate pupils to reach their maximum potential. The curriculum develops pupils existing knowledge and provides opportunities for this knowledge to be skilfully applied in various ways to help prepare pupils for their adulthood pathway as defined in their EHCP.

The continued focus on English, Maths, ICT and Communication ensures pupils continue to develop their basic skills in a functional and purposeful way to help equip them with the knowledge they need to excel in their individual destinations. Cultural capital equips pupils with key knowledge and skills in order to become successful, valued members of their community.

The curriculum is uniquely individualised to each pupil through a distinct; designed around their EHCP long term aspirations. In addition to these individual curriculums, all pupils will study Functional Maths and English, Communication and Information Technology as well as core subjects in line with the Preparation for Adulthood outcomes.

Progress is assessed against the EHCP Long Term Aspirations which are broken down into smaller SMART targets as outlined in pupils Individual Learning Plans.

Whilst pupils may follow an accredited programme of study such as BTEC Workskills or ASDAN PSD, it is important to understand that for some pupils, accreditation is not the end goal but a by-product of the knowledge and skills pupils develop through their tailored curriculum that is designed to prepare them for life after Birtenshaw Sixth Form.

The EHCP Long Term Aspirations will shape their individual timetables and depending on their individual PFA pathways they will opt to study a selection of Units within the ASDAN PSD and BTEC Work Skills Level 1 qualifications and PSHE and RSE schemes of work.

Literacy and Numeracy:

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

Pupils working at Entry 1 Functional Skills and above follow a curriculum which combines discrete, cross curricular learning as well as specific modules and mock exams to support them to achieve these qualifications. Pupils working at Entry 3 and above are taught by subject specialist teachers in smaller, mixed groups.

Pupils' reading skills are developed through the use of the phonics reading scheme Read Write Inc., which provides a structured, age-appropriate and engaging programme to support reading accuracy, fluency and comprehension skills.

For pupils who are confident, independent readers, Sparx Reader is used to further develop reading fluency, comprehension and vocabulary. The programme provides personalised reading practice, regular comprehension questions and motivational rewards, encouraging pupils to read widely and consistently while enabling staff to monitor progress and engagement.

The library is well stocked, and specific themed books are purchased each term to complement the term's topic, promoting a love of reading and supporting the wider curriculum. Reading is taught daily across all class groups.

Pupils working within Route One and Sixth Form Three engage in Functional Literacy and Numeracy – developing their skills and knowledge in practical, functional basic skills. Pupils spend a significant fraction of their timetable developing these skills in the local community.

Understanding the wider world:

These topics provides pupils with the opportunities to cover a range of learning outcomes and develop Personal Learning and Thinking Skills within a topic-based framework.

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

Each topic covers aspects of the Humanities and Science and reinforces Literacy and Numeracy skills.

PSHE, RSE and SMSC

See; Birtenshaw School Bolton PSHE and RSE Policy

PSHE is a timetabled session every day with each day having a difference focus.

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.

The Department for Education introduced compulsory Relationships Education for primary pupils and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) for secondary pupils from September 2020.

The RSE curriculum has been updated in line with these changes and has been shared with all parents are carers.

Relationships and Sex Education is taught in many different ways including through PSHE lessons, one to one sessions and within Science at a level appropriate to the understanding of pupils.

We liaise closely with partner organisations and the Learning Disability Nursing Team for specialist individual input and support.

Religious Education and Collective Worship

Religious Education themes and topics are covered via Creative Curriculum Lessons as well as through assemblies and PSHE.

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.

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: Pony Riding, music workshops, gardening, educational visits.

Accreditations:

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 Teaching Assistants
- attending and contributing to training and meetings are requested

Monitoring and Evaluation:

The Head of School and Deputy Headteacher's 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 and through consultation with professionals in relation to pupil premium.

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.