

WATHEN GRANGE CURRICULUM POLICY

At Wathen Grange School, we see access to the curriculum as the right of all pupils despite any obstacles their special educational needs may present.

The students who attend Wathen Grange have not succeeded in a mainstream environment. With this in mind we need to provide a curriculum which provides opportunities to improve students' literacy and numeracy skills but which also engages them and provides them with ample opportunities to succeed and feel proud of themselves. The curriculum should be about 'engaging' as opposed to 'entertaining' them. Structure and routine is often missing from many of our students' lives in general and so with a well thought out curriculum, we can provide a structured and safe environment for learning.

Many of our students have difficulties with literacy skills which, in turn, has made access to the curriculum extremely challenging for them. The fear of being seen as failing by themselves and their peers means that many of them have responded to this challenge by actively rejecting the curriculum on offer and becoming defiant and confrontational. Therefore, to effectively address their needs, we aim to make sure that they are offered a sound educational experience where activities are set at a level they can access and then build upon.

In addition to the above there is a proven and inextricable link between poor literacy and numeracy skills and anti-social and offending behaviour. We therefore regard the improvement of basic skills as a priority and the responsibility of all staff, working towards the goal of all children being literate and numerate at the earliest possible opportunity, essentially before they leave the school. The process begins on entry to school when all pupils are tested in literacy and numeracy to establish a baseline from where progress can be measured. This information can then be used to inform individual education plans as each pupil moves through the school. This is reflected in the curriculum structure of the school as set out below.

All classes are taught by teachers alongside an LSA. Many of our students have educationally been on reduced time or no time at all in their (often recent) past and so to attend for a 25 hour week is quite a challenge in itself. Reduced time and/or external placements are used in order to provide our students with as positive an educational experience as possible. In particular, our KS4 students' curriculum is enhanced by College placements, Work Experience and Community placements. It is the hope that some pupils, where appropriate, will be encouraged to have some mainstream experience.

Like others, this school aims to broaden the opportunities for all its pupils in order to help them reach their individual potential. The objective is not equality in the absolute sense of everybody achieving the same, but the removal of what are often referred to as 'barriers' to educational success. We aim to help everyone achieve maximum success and this is reflected in our curriculum through our personalised approach.

Curriculum Structure

The curriculum at Wathen Grange is linked closely to the National Curriculum but is adapted for the specific needs and interests of our students so as to provide relevance, breadth and balance. The curriculum has 4 main strands:

Core (English, Mathematics and Science)

Enrichment/Experiential (including the foundation subjects)

Vocational (Foundation for work, placements and projects)

The AQA Unit Award Scheme is used in many subject areas to allow students from both KS3 and KS4 to achieve accreditation for their work.

Key Stage 3

Maths and English

These subjects follow the QCA syllabus for KS3 adapting the materials to suit the individual needs of our pupils.

Science

Science is taught for one double lesson per week in KS3 and we aim for students to develop their skills of enquiry and practicals.

ICT

ICT is currently used through work in all areas across the curriculum. All subjects utilise ICT and progression is documented centrally.

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship.

This is taught to all students in KS3 and KS4 as it underpins the philosophy of the school. It encompasses citizenship, sex and relationships. We aim for pupils to lead confident, healthy and responsible lives as individuals and members of a community. The promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school is forbidden by law. Political issues are introduced in a number of courses and are presented in a balanced manner.

PE

Active involvement in physical activity brings confidence, awareness and enjoyment for students. Every student is encouraged to join clubs, teams and societies outside school as well as to have a healthy lifestyle. Students are offered the opportunities to engage in other activities such as swimming, kiting and walking.

History, Geography and RE

These subjects are taught under the subject heading of Humanities but all follow the schemes of work adapted from the QCA.

Art

Art is taught as a discrete subject but also as part of experiential activities in the afternoons.

Food

Food is taught as a discrete subject and incorporated into life skills.

Other Opportunities.

Students have had access to several alternative activities which engage them, some of which provide opportunities for accreditation. Individualised programmes are reviewed regularly. Life Skills is delivered throughout all subjects as well as a discrete subject throughout the school curriculum.

Key Stage 4

The KS4 Curriculum allows students to gain qualifications and accreditations. Pupils are also offered, where appropriate, a range of external placements at colleges and projects (local to their homes where possible).

Students are offered Functional Skills Level 1 and 2 in **Mathematics and English** as well as ICT/Computing. Entry Level is available in a number of subjects. Most curriculum areas provide opportunities for students to achieve AQA certificates via the Unit Award Scheme.

PSHE and Citizenship is designed to cover aspects of Work Related Learning and careers.

Work Related Learning is covered through **PSHE, Preparation for Working Life, Foundation for Work**, work experience, college placements, work with outside agencies and across the curriculum in other subject areas.

Science

Science is taught three lessons a week and accredited through the AQA Unit Award Scheme.

ICT

All subject areas utilise ICT in their schemes of work and progression is documented centrally.

Other Opportunities.

Students have had access to several alternative activities which engage them and often provide opportunities for accreditation. Individualised programmes are reviewed regularly. KS4, students also have a 'Focus' lesson each week where they can work on an academic need. ASDAN is not always delivered discretely but can be accredited through the experiential afternoon topics. ASDAN provides students with the opportunity to gain accreditation using a wide range of Key Skills.

Additional Support

We provide individual support for reading and spelling carried out by support staff.

Assessment and tracking

The pupils' curriculum learning targets are set and monitored by each subject teacher through rigorous records of progress. These are available centrally. The data can then be readily accessed for use at annual reviews, parent meetings, annual reports to parents, open evenings and meetings with individual pupils. We monitor progress against National Curriculum Levels on a termly basis in the Core subjects using APP and yearly in the non-core subjects.

As part of our on-going testing and assessing staff record and monitor attainment in lessons and adjust planning accordingly. All pupils are given a reading and spelling test on entry to the school and at least once each year to monitor progress as well as tests to ascertain learning styles.

Reviewed by Rob Maddox 31st January 2018.

Review date: January 2019.