



The Forum School

Whole School Curriculum Policy -Teaching and Learning

Legal Status: Regulatory Requirements, Part 1, paragraph 2 and parts of paragraph and 4, Quality of Education Provided (curriculum) (teaching), and aspects of Part 2, Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development, of The Education (Independent School Standards Compliance Record) (England) (Amendment) Regulations.

Policy Review by:	David Horton
Ratified by:	Melissa McCarthy
Date implemented	September 2026

Applies to:

- The whole school inclusive of activities outside of the normal school hours.
- All staff (teaching and support staff), the proprietor and volunteers working in the school.

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Related Documents:

- SEND Policy and Informative Report
- Positive Behaviour Policy

Availability:

This policy is made available to parents/guardian/carers, carers, staff and students from the school office and website

Monitoring and Review:

This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Principal.

The Regional Lead for Education, in their capacity for school governance, acting on behalf of the Proprietor, undertakes a formal review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than three years from the date shown below, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

In fulfilling the Cambian mission statement:

To actively enable each and every one of the people in our care to achieve their potential best

Curriculum Policy Aims:

The policy outlines the whole school approach to the curriculum design. It maps the curriculum rationale, overall intent, implementation and Impact. It also shows how personal development is delivered across the curriculum

The Forum School provides:

- A caring, holistic approach to the education and care of our young people, with as curriculum providing opportunities across the working day.
- A curriculum that addresses the very special needs of our learners, a curriculum that is Autism specific and that promotes individualised approaches to learning.
- A skilled staff team who are empathetic to the needs of the students and are trained to a high standard.
- A Therapeutic environment and facilities that maximise opportunities for young people to learn and make progress.
- A multidisciplinary approach to working where every professional around the young person is fully involved and working together to secure best possible outcomes.

The Forum School Values:

Respect

Kindness

Creativity

- Respect - understanding and valuing other's feelings, rights, and traditions.
- Kindness - a core value that emphasises being friendly, generous, and considerate towards others. **It involves actions that reflect affection, gentleness, warmth, concern, and care.**
- Creativity - the ability to think outside the box and come up with new and innovative ideas. It involves using imagination to solve problems, express oneself, and explore new possibilities.

1. Purpose

The purpose of the curriculum at The Forum School is to prepare each young person for the greatest possible independence, participation and fulfilment in adult life.

The school supports young people with a wide range of needs, abilities, communication profiles and developmental levels. Consequently, the curriculum is highly individualised. It is informed by each young person's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), their strengths and needs, their interests and aspirations, and their stage of development.

The curriculum aims to develop the communication, regulation, knowledge, skills and independence that young people need to participate successfully in life beyond school. Appropriate academic ambition is maintained alongside the development of functional, social and practical skills.

The school recognises that successful learning for many of its young people depends upon feeling safe, understood and appropriately regulated. The curriculum therefore balances consistency, structure and individual support with opportunities to develop resilience, flexibility and increasing independence.

2. Curriculum Principles

The curriculum at The Forum School is based upon the following principles:

- Every young person is entitled to an ambitious curriculum appropriate to their individual needs and abilities.
- EHCP outcomes are an important starting point for identifying individual priorities and planning learning.
- Curriculum provision should support preparation for adulthood and the greatest achievable level of independence.
- Communication is fundamental to learning and participation and is developed throughout the curriculum.
- Literacy, including phonics where appropriate, and mathematical understanding are important elements of the curriculum.
- Academic learning should be appropriately challenging and should not be limited by assumptions arising from a young person's diagnosis or previous attainment.
- Learning takes place throughout the school day and across the school environment, not solely within conventional classroom lessons.
- Practical experience, outdoor learning and engagement with the wider environment are important elements of learning.
- Young people should have opportunities for their achievements to be recognised and, where appropriate, externally accredited.
- Curriculum provision should remain responsive as young people's needs, abilities, interests and aspirations develop.

3. Curriculum Breadth

The curriculum is not organised into fixed pathways. The relative emphasis placed upon different areas of learning varies according to the needs, abilities and developmental stage of each young person.

For some young people, communication, engagement, regulation, personal development and independence will form a substantial part of their programme. Other young people may access a greater proportion of subject-based academic learning. In practice, most young people's programmes contain a combination of academic, functional, practical and developmental learning.

Curriculum provision may include:

- Communication, language and literacy, including phonics and the development of functional communication.
- Mathematical development, including practical and functional applications of mathematics.
- Personal, social and emotional development.
- Independence and life skills.
- Preparation for adulthood.
- Physical development, health and wellbeing.
- Understanding the world, including appropriate elements of science, humanities and wider knowledge.
- Creative learning, including art, craft and other creative activities.
- Outdoor learning and Forest School.
- Learning through the school's wider environment and resources, including opportunities associated with animals, riding and practical activities.
- Careers, employability and vocational learning where appropriate.
- Subject-based academic learning, including aspects of the National Curriculum where these are appropriate to the young person's ability, needs and intended outcomes.

These areas are not intended to operate as separate curriculum pathways or to prescribe an identical programme for every young person. Teachers determine the appropriate balance according to individual need and educational priorities.

4. Individualisation And EHCP Outcomes

All young people at The Forum School have an EHCP.

EHCP outcomes provide an important basis for identifying priorities for learning. Teachers consider these alongside their developing knowledge of the young person, including their existing skills, communication, interests, barriers to learning and level of independence.

Following admission, staff use the young person's initial period at the school to develop a detailed understanding of their strengths and needs across different settings. Existing information and EHCP outcomes are considered alongside what staff observe in practice. This helps the school to ensure that provision and learning priorities remain appropriate.

Individual outcomes may be broken down into smaller, achievable learning steps so that young people can make meaningful progress towards longer-term goals.

The curriculum is not, however, limited to the outcomes specified within an EHCP. Young people should also encounter new knowledge, experiences and opportunities which broaden their understanding, develop their interests and raise their aspirations.

5. Teaching and Curriculum Implementation

Teachers are responsible for the education and learning of the young people within their class.

Planning may be shared between members of the class team, with individuals taking responsibility for particular subjects or areas of learning. The teacher retains oversight of the overall programme and ensures that learning is appropriate to the needs of individual young people.

Teaching is adapted according to the young person's communication, understanding, engagement, sensory needs, regulation and prior learning.

Staff recognise that the capacity of a young person to engage with learning may vary. Teaching therefore requires professional judgement and responsiveness while retaining clear educational purpose and appropriate ambition.

Learning may take place through direct teaching, practical activity, individual or group work, structured experiences, outdoor learning and activities within the wider school environment.

Where appropriate, knowledge and skills are revisited and practised in different contexts so that young people have opportunities to retain, generalise and apply their learning.

6. Communication, Literacy and Mathematics

The development of effective communication is a priority across the school.

Communication approaches are adapted to the needs of individual young people and are supported throughout the curriculum and school day.

Literacy teaching is similarly individualised. Phonics is used where appropriate as part of the school's approach to developing reading and literacy. Young people are supported to develop reading, writing and functional literacy at an appropriate level.

Mathematical learning includes the development of number and mathematical understanding alongside opportunities to apply mathematics in practical situations and everyday life.

Where young people are able to engage with more advanced academic learning, teaching should provide appropriate challenge and progression.

7. Independence and Preparation for Adulthood

Preparation for adulthood is central to the curriculum at The Forum School.

The school seeks to enable each young person to achieve the greatest level of independence that is realistically possible for them.

Learning may therefore include:

- Personal care and self-management.
- Communication and self-advocacy.
- Managing routines and everyday tasks.
- Cooking and food preparation.
- Travel and accessing the community.
- Money and practical mathematics.
- Relationships and social understanding.
- Health and wellbeing.
- Employability and workplace skills.
- Making choices and expressing preferences.
- Developing interests and meaningful use of leisure time.
- Understanding and participating in the wider community.

The nature and level of this learning will vary significantly between young people.

The school recognises that preparation for adulthood involves both supporting young people's current needs and helping them progressively develop the skills to manage change, uncertainty and increasing independence.

8. Outdoor, Practical and Experiential Learning

The school benefits from an extensive environment which provides opportunities for learning beyond the classroom.

Outdoor learning, Forest School, interaction with animals, riding and practical activities can provide meaningful contexts in which young people develop communication, confidence, independence, physical skills, problem solving and wider knowledge.

These experiences form part of the wider curriculum and are used where they contribute meaningfully to the needs and learning of individual young people.

Practical and experiential learning complements rather than replaces appropriate academic learning.

9. Accreditation and Recognition of Achievement

The school seeks opportunities for young people's learning and achievements to receive meaningful recognition.

AQA Unit Award Scheme is used extensively across the school. Unit Awards enable young people to receive formal recognition for successfully completing clearly defined units of learning across a wide range of academic, practical and personal development areas.

Completed Unit Awards contribute to an individual record of achievement and provide young people with tangible evidence of their learning and success.

Where appropriate to the individual young person, the school may also provide access to other forms of accreditation or qualification.

The selection of accreditation should be driven by the needs, abilities and future aspirations of the young person rather than by the qualification itself.

10. Assessment and Review

Assessment at The Forum School is continuous and proportionate to the individual young person and the nature of their learning.

Teachers use their professional knowledge of young people together with a range of evidence which may include:

- Observation of learning and engagement.
- Completed work.
- Demonstration of skills in practical situations.
- Progress towards individual and EHCP-related outcomes.
- AQA Unit Awards and other externally recognised achievement.
- Records of learning and achievement.
- Information from other professionals working with the young person.

Assessment should help staff to understand what a young person can do, identify progress and determine appropriate next steps.

Learning Journeys are used within the school as one means of recording examples of learning and achievement. These may include photographs, observations and other evidence relating to individual progress.

Progress and outcomes are also considered through relevant statutory and school review processes. For residential young people this includes the school's Person-Centred Review arrangements.

The school recognises the importance of continuing to develop consistency in the way progress is assessed, recorded and reviewed across the provision.

11. Working with families and other professionals

The needs of young people at The Forum School frequently cross educational, care and therapeutic boundaries.

Education staff therefore work with families, residential care colleagues and other professionals to develop a shared understanding of the young person's needs, progress and priorities.

Information from these different perspectives contributes to curriculum planning and the review of individual outcomes.

Wherever possible and appropriate, young people should also be supported to contribute their own views, preferences and aspirations.

12. Roles and Responsibilities

The Head of Education has overall responsibility for the quality and development of curriculum provision within the school, but this is managed day-to-day by the Assistant Head (Teaching & Learning) who oversees planning, monitoring and whole-school timetabling.

Teachers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that young people receive appropriate and purposeful learning.
- Planning and coordinating the curriculum within their class.
- Ensuring that learning is appropriately individualised.
- Maintaining appropriate academic ambition.
- Monitoring young people's progress and identifying next steps.
- Coordinating the contribution of other members of the class team to curriculum delivery.

Teaching assistants and other members of the education team contribute to planning and delivery under the direction and oversight of teachers and provide important observations and evidence about young people's learning and progress.

The wider multidisciplinary team contributes specialist knowledge and advice where this is relevant to a young person's access to learning and curriculum provision.

13. Curriculum Monitoring and Development

The curriculum is monitored and developed by the Assistant Head (Teaching & Learning), with the Head of Education retaining strategic oversight.

This includes consideration of:

- The appropriateness and breadth of curriculum provision.
- The quality of teaching and learning.
- Progress towards individual outcomes.
- Young people's engagement with learning.
- Achievement and accreditation.
- Preparation for adulthood and independence.
- The effectiveness of curriculum planning and assessment arrangements.

The school is committed to continuing development of greater consistency in curriculum planning, assessment and the recording of progress while retaining the individualisation necessary to meet the diverse needs of its young people.

Curriculum development will be informed by the needs and outcomes of young people, professional reflection, statutory requirements and the school's continuing evaluation of its provision.

14. Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually to ensure that it accurately reflects curriculum practice at The Forum School and the continuing development of the school's provision.