

Somerset School
CURRICULUM – TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

Legal Status:

Regulatory Requirements, Part 1, paragraph 2(2) (i) to (x) Quality of Education Provided (curriculum) (teaching) of The Education (Independent School Standards Compliance Record) (England) (Amendment) Regulations.

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.

Availability:

This policy is made available to parents/guardian/carers, carers, staff, pupils and external stakeholders from the school office and website.

Monitoring and Review:

This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Head Teacher as and when necessary. 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.

Signed:

Date: February 2022



Louisa Jessep
Interim Headteacher



John Ivers
Proprietor, Cambian Group

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Core Values Intent

Our curriculum is underpinned by our core values of:

- Academic excellence
- Honesty
- Care
- Responsibility
- Respect
- Leadership
- Resilience
- Work Ethic

Ethos and Vision

At Somerset School we aim to develop a culture of high expectations and achievement for all students where they are encouraged to enjoy learning, progress in their studies and exceed expectations. We assist in developing creative, enquiring minds, encourage academic success, develop social and emotional skills, self- belief and ambition thus empowering individuals so that they can become effective and positive members of society.

- Providing a warm, enjoyable, stimulating and safe environment where every pupil is treated with respect and dignity.
- Supporting pupils in addressing their individual difficulties enabling them to becoming mature, independent and empathetic young adults so they can make a positive contribution to society.
- Ensuring that our pupils’ needs are met through the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum which is differentiated to enable all to reach their full academic potential.
- Developing pupils’ self-worth and encouraging respect for the ideas, attitude, values and feelings of others.
- Providing continual assessment and evaluation to monitor each child’s progress.
- Fostering self-respect, self-discipline and a sense of responsibility and concern for others.
- Enabling pupils to understand and care for the community, environment and world we live in.
- Promoting close partnerships with parents, carers, other professionals, the local people and other organisations.
- Promoting British values and celebrating cultural diversity.

Implementation

The school has developed its curriculum through offering a bespoke timetable that is individualised to the age, aptitudes and needs of our pupils. The curriculum is broad and balanced offering a variety of different subjects, not only does the curriculum support the academic needs of our pupils but it places an emphasis on the students’ welfare and takes a holistic approach to learning.

At Somerset School we offer a broad and balanced curriculum that adheres to each individual student’s targets set out within their EHC Plans. Teachers have carefully implemented a range of topics within their individual curriculums, which not only supports the academic needs of our students, but also offers them the skills that will help them manage themselves within wider society.

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Reading for Pleasure

At Somerset School, we believe that children deserve a rich curriculum which encourages extensive reading of whole books and other kinds of texts. We believe that active encouragement of reading for pleasure is a core part of every child's educational entitlement, whatever their background or attainment because we know that extensive reading and exposure to a wide range of texts make a huge contribution to students' educational achievement. Reading for pleasure focuses on individual choice and reading that is done primarily for enjoyment. Reading is a life skill something we all do every day, it is not just a classroom activity, but is an activity which enhances a child's social development.

At Somerset School, we aim to promote the concepts of reading for 'fun', 'enjoyment' and 'pleasure' and we ensure that we include a range of 'real books' not only in English, but within the whole curriculum as well as the opportunity for sustained reading from a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. At Somerset School, we incorporate this within all of our lessons, we provide a variety of different types of texts for the children to access, including newspapers, magazines and online articles. We have access to the Somerset Libraries, which gives the children access to a wide range of texts to borrow.

We ensure that reading remains on the School Curriculum agenda and our aims are to develop the reading provision at Somerset. Throughout the school the children have supported reading and have the opportunity to read out loud in all the lessons.

Linguistic

This area is concerned with developing pupils' communication skills and increasing their command of language through listening, speaking, reading and writing. These skills are most overtly brought into focus in lessons in English. The teaching of literacy and literary skills is not, however, confined to these subjects, and the policy of the school is that teachers of all subjects will encourage good linguistic and literary standards in all pupils' work. Communication skills are embedded across the whole curriculum.

Mathematical

This area helps pupils to make calculations, to understand and appreciate relationships and patterns in number and space and to develop their capacity to think logically and express themselves clearly. Their knowledge and understanding of mathematics should be developed in a variety of ways, including practical activity, exploration and discussion.

Scientific

This area is concerned with increasing pupils' knowledge and understanding of nature, materials and forces and with developing the skills associated with science as a process of enquiry: for example, observing, forming hypotheses, conducting experiments and recording their findings.

Technological (including Food and Nutrition and ICT)

(ICT) is implemented across all curriculums, these skills can include information on: developing, planning and communicating ideas; working with tools, equipment, materials and components to produce good quality products; and evaluating processes and products. Pupils develop independent living skills within Food technology and have the opportunity to choose this as a GCSE option in KS4.

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Sex and Relationships Education

(Including PSHE, RSE and Health and Social care)

This area is concerned with people and their environment, and how human action, now and in the past, has influenced events and conditions. In our school, our topic based Personal, Social and Health and Economic (PSHE) education alongside our knowledge and understanding of the world makes a strong contribution to this area. Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) has become mandatory within schools since September 2020. Through these subjects, we want to support all young people to be happy, healthy and safe – we want to equip them for adult life and to make a positive contribution to society. In accordance with the law, the biological aspects of human reproduction remain compulsory for all pupils, but parents/guardian/carers may withdraw their pupils from any other part of the sex education provided without giving reasons.

Physical (which is supported by an extensive extra-curricular programme in this area)

This area aims to develop the pupils' physical control and co-ordination as well as their tactical skills and imaginative responses, and to help them to evaluate and improve their performance. Pupils should also acquire knowledge and understanding of the basic principles of fitness and health. Pupils can choose BTEC Sport and Fitness as a KS4 option. All Pupils are expected to take part in the school's Physical Education and Games programme. Pupils can only be excused from PE and Games lessons for medical reasons, for which a note from a parent will suffice, or other reasons agreed with the school.

Aesthetic and creative (including Art, Creative I media, Photography and music therapy) This area is concerned with the processes of making, composing and inventing.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC) and Cultural Capital

This policy statement and the declared values of the school are enhanced by the linked qualities of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development. Somerset School is a non-denominational school where pupils of all faiths and belief systems are encouraged to strive for academic excellence and a spirit of open and shared enquiry, whilst developing their individual potential and qualities of character so they can make a positive contribution to the world. This SMSC policy links and strengthens other policies so that the ideals of the school's ethos and mission statement become a reality for its Pupils. Whilst SMSC is integral to all aspects of our curriculum, PSHE and religious education make a strong contribution. Pupils are led towards distinguishing right from wrong, to respect the law and towards acting consistently with their beliefs and with a view to the consequences of their own and others' actions. We actively promote fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Our school:

- Leads pupils towards becoming confident and positive contributors to their community and effective users of its services and facilities according to their maturity;
- Enables pupils to gain insights into the origins and practices of their own cultures and into those of the wider community;
- Take steps to ensure that the pupils appreciate racial and cultural diversity and avoid and resist racism;
- Ensure that pupils are able to understand and respond to risk, for example risks associated with extremism, new technology, substance misuse, knives and gangs, personal relationships and personal safety;
- Enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence;

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- Take steps to ensure that pupils have respect for others' sexual orientation and gender identity and avoid and resist homophobia;
- Encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute to community life;
- Provide pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England;
- Assist pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions;
- Encourage pupils to respect the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- Precludes the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school.

We also take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that political issues are brought to attention of pupils-

- Whilst they attend the school;
- Whilst they are taking part an extra-curricular activity which are provided or organised by or on behalf of the school;
- In the promotion at the school, including through the distribution of promotional material, of extra-curricular activities taking place at the school or elsewhere;
- Being offered a balanced presentation of opposing views.

Therefore, the understanding and knowledge expected of the pupils in Somerset School as an outcome of our positive approach to SMSC includes:

- An understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process;
- An appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their well-being and safety;
- An understanding that there is a separation of power between the executive and the judiciary, and that while some public bodies such as the police and the army can be held to account through Parliament, others such as the courts maintain independence;
- An understanding that the freedom to hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law;
- An acceptance that people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour;
- An understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination.

We provide positive experiences through planned and coherent opportunities in the curriculum, extra-curricular activities and through interactions with teachers and other adults for our pupils. Our range of artistic, sporting and other cultural opportunities is available to pupils through the curricular and extra-curricular programme, and their participation in these opportunities. We plan our, personal, social and health education and citizenship through curricular areas to help our pupils acquire values and skills to enable them to develop independence and choose their path in life. Somerset School seeks to:

- Develop an ethos and environment which encourages a healthy lifestyle for pupils;
- Use the full capacity and flexibility of the curriculum to help pupils to achieve safe and healthy lifestyles;
- Provide high quality Physical Education and sport, with specialised teachers, to promote physical activity;
- Promote an understanding of the full range of issues and behaviours which impact upon a lifelong health and well-being.

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We aim for our pupils to understand and appreciate the range of different cultures and faiths in modern democratic Britain. We use our schemes of work and other plans which enable pupils to develop an understanding of public services and institutions and to take their place in modern democratic British society. We provide a range of quality opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility in school, including a school council, and make a positive contribution to the school, local and wider communities.

Preparation for the future

Somerset School provides an appropriate curriculum for preparing pupils for further higher education, career choices and adult life. We aim to provide pupils with insights into the world of work, the range of career opportunities available to them, entry routes and what further training and education they can and/or need to access. It arranges work experience and advice is given concerning further and higher education. All aspects of preparation for the future is implemented individually within the teacher's mid-term planning through intent, implementation and impact.

Impact

From our pupils' very different starting points, all pupils will make good progress academically, emotionally, creatively, socially and physically. Knowledge, understanding and skills will be secured and embedded so that pupils attain highly and are fully prepared for further education and employment.

Essential Skills

Somerset School is committed to providing a curriculum which ensures that all of its pupils acquire and develop skills appropriate to their age and aptitude in the following areas:

Pupil destinations for Somerset School show a continued success in helping to deliver a sustained and excellent curriculum that allows our students to achieve, thrive and aspire.

Alternative provisions

- Project One provides pupils the opportunity to gain experience and qualifications in a wide range of vocational skills, including mechanics, construction and animal care.
- Inspire Southwest, Wings Enabling and Reach support pupils in building their social and emotional skills, through real life scenarios and activities

Organisation and planning

We agree long-term plans whose schemes of work give an annual overview of the content of the curriculum for each key stage to implement cross-curricular links to promote long term memory and engagement. From these plans, the teachers identify curriculum aims appropriate for the year group they teach. The overview policies and plans are updated by each department. They indicate what topics are to be taught in each term and to which groups of pupils. This long-term plan is reviewed on an annual basis. In our medium-term plans, we give clear guidance on the objectives and teaching strategies that are used when teaching each topic. When teaching we focus on motivating the pupils and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, so that they reach the highest level of personal achievement. We use the school curriculum plan to guide our teaching. This sets

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out the aims, objectives and values of the school and details what is to be taught to each individual. These are reviewed annually and may be subject to change.

We base our teaching on our knowledge of the pupils' level of attainment. Teachers make on-going assessments of each pupil's progress and they use this information when planning their lessons. It enables them to consider the abilities of all their pupils. Our prime focus is to develop further the knowledge and skills of the pupils. We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each pupil's level of ability. When planning work for pupils with special educational needs, we give due regard to information and targets contained in the Student Learning Passports (SLP), which are linked to each pupils' Education Healthcare Plan. Teachers modify teaching and learning as appropriate for pupils with disabilities. We value each child as a unique individual, and teachers are familiar with the relevant equal opportunity's legislation covering race, gender and disability. We strive to meet the needs of all our pupils and to ensure that we meet all statutory requirements related to matters of inclusion. We have high expectations of our pupils, and we believe that their work here at Somerset school is of the highest possible standard they can achieve.

The curriculum and members of teaching staff

We appreciate that people learn best in different ways. At our school we provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows pupils to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential. Pupils learn and flourish when they are healthy, protected from harm and authentically engaged and stimulated.

Through our teaching we aim to:

- Enable pupils to become confident, resourceful, enquiring and independent learners;
- Foster pupils' self-esteem and help them build positive relationships with other people;
- Develop pupils' self-respect and encourage pupils to respect the ideas, attitudes, values and feelings of others;
- Show respect for all cultures and, in so doing, to promote positive attitudes towards other people;
- Cater for the needs of individual pupils;
- Personalise learning;
- Enable pupils to understand their community and help them feel valued as part of this community;
- Help pupils grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens;
- Enable achievement and provide challenge appropriate to the ability, interests and needs of each pupil.

Auditing our Curriculum, Teaching and Learning:

We ask ourselves the following questions when auditing our current performance:

How well are we doing?

- How do we compare with similar schools?
- What more should we aim to achieve?
- What must we do to make it happen?
- Self-evaluation and development are a critical part of the school's development and all school staff will input into the development as well as pupils' own feedback.

In Somerset School, the most important role of teaching is to promote learning in order to raise pupils' achievement. For us, teaching includes lesson planning, the implementation of plans, as well as marking, assessment and feedback. It also includes support and intervention strategies. In assessing the quality of the teaching in our school, we take account of the evidence of pupils' learning, achievements and progress over time. When evaluating the

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quality of teaching in our school, we consider how successful the teaching is in promoting the learning, progress and personal development for every pupil by:

- Extending the previous knowledge, skills and understanding of all pupils in a range of lessons and activities over time;
- Enabling pupils to develop skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics.
- Enthusing, engaging and motivating pupils to learn;
- Using assessment and feedback to support learning and to help pupils know how to improve their work;
- Differentiating teaching, by setting suitably challenging activities and providing support for pupils of different abilities, including the most able and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, so that they can all learn well and make progress;
- Enabling pupils to apply intellectual, physical or creative efforts and develop the skills to learn for themselves and setting high expectations;
- Setting appropriate homework;
- Using well-judged and effective teaching methods, deploying appropriate resources, managing class time and drawing on good subject knowledge and expertise to encourage pupils to make good progress;
- Managing instances of poor or disruptive behaviour.

Behaviour that undermines the happy environment that is such a hallmark of Somerset School life, such as bullying, peer on peer abuse, insensitivity, discrimination, bad language or acts of intolerance, will not be accepted.

When evaluating the quality of the curriculum, we consider:

- The impact of the curriculum on pupils' academic and personal development and in preparing them for the opportunities, choices, responsibilities and experiences of adult life;
- The contribution of the curriculum to the school's particular ethos and aims and the impact on pupils' academic and personal development and well-being;
- How well curriculum planning is supported by appropriate schemes of work, builds systematically upon pupils' prior experience and plans for progression;
- The extent to which the curriculum is enriched by extra-curricular opportunities and through collaboration with other schools and organisations, including, for example, to provide appropriate careers guidance for our senior pupils and the views of our pupils, parents/guardian/carers and staff.

We design our curriculum to ensure that it is broad, well balanced and covers all the required areas of learning. We modify our curriculum and teaching to meet the needs of individuals and groups of pupils including our gifted and talented and disabled pupils or those with a special educational need. When evaluating the quality of the curriculum, we consider:

- The impact of the curriculum on pupils' academic and personal development and in preparing them for the opportunities, choices, responsibilities and experiences of adult life;
- The contribution of the curriculum to the school's particular ethos and aims and the impact on pupils' academic and personal development and well-being;
- How well curriculum planning is supported by appropriate schemes of work, builds systematically upon pupils' prior experience and plans for progression;

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- The extent to which the curriculum is enriched by extra-curricular opportunities and through collaboration with other schools and organisations, including, for example, to provide appropriate careers guidance for our senior pupils;
- The views of our pupils, parents/guardian/carers and staff.

Effective Teaching - Expectations of Staff

Staff are expected to actively promote the curriculum aims by:

- Having high expectation of pupils;
- Employing a variety of learning and teaching methods;
- Ensuring that pupils are enabled to access the curriculum and given opportunities to be successful;
- Delivering lessons which build upon previous experience, providing continuity and progression;
- Providing learning opportunities which offer depth and challenge and motivate and inspire children;
- Involving children in the process of learning, by discussing work, giving regular formative feedback through discussion, assessment and marking, negotiating targets and encouraging children to evaluate their personal achievements;
- Developing pupils' skills to become independent learners;
- Encouraging, reward and value achievement and effort, both formally and informally, through praise in the learning environment;
- Working in partnership with children, staff and parents/guardian/carers to achieve shared goals;
- Keeping parents/guardian/carers /carers regularly and fully informed about the progress and achievements of their children through reports and parent's evenings.

The Headteacher and Assistant Heads carry out work book scrutiny, whereby books are checked for consistency of marking in line with our marking policy and being up to date. Planning appraisals are carried out by the Assistant Head - Curriculum who checks that planning is up to date and evaluated. The criteria that we use has been agreed by all teachers and is part of our teaching and learning policy. The teacher and the observer follow the observation with a discussion. The observer notes the strengths and areas for development, and gives a copy of this information to the teacher. The Head Teacher uses the information gained from this monitoring process to help identify common development points which can be addressed in the school's training programme for continuing professional development.

Direct observation **must** be supplemented by a range of other evidence to enable inspectors to evaluate the impact that teaching has had on pupils' learning. Such additional evidence should include:

- Observing some lessons jointly with senior staff before discussing them also with the teacher who has been observed;
- Discussing with pupils the work they have done and their experience of teaching and learning over longer periods;
- Discussing teaching and learning with staff;
- Taking account of the views of pupils, parents/guardian/carers and carers, staff and placing authorities, where appropriate;
- Taking account of the school's own evaluations of the quality of teaching and its impact on learning and scrutinising the standard of pupils' work;

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- How well and how frequently the marking and assessment are used to help pupils to improve their learning;
- The level of challenge provided.

When planning work for pupils with special educational needs, we give due regard to information and targets contained in the pupils' Education Health Care Plans (EHC Plans). Teachers modify teaching and learning as appropriate for all pupils. We value each child as a unique individual, and teachers are familiar with the relevant equal opportunities' legislation covering race, gender and disability. We strive to meet the needs of all our pupils, and to ensure that we meet all statutory requirements related to matters of inclusion. We have high expectations of our pupils, and we believe that their work here at Somerset School is of the highest possible standard. Our lessons have clear learning objectives. Our lesson plans contain information about the tasks to be set, the resources needed, and the way we assess the pupils' work. We evaluate all lessons so that we can modify and improve our teaching in the future

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

We are committed to providing Pupils with the necessary support and teaching who require English as an additional language. To this end there is a policy in place and established practices implemented by the school.

Learning outside the classroom - Educational visits/off-site activities

Integral to our curriculum is a wide range of educational experiences that extend beyond the classroom door. Somerset School curriculum offers a series of educational journeys that deepen the pupils' understanding of the world around them. Trips extend pupils' knowledge of past and present. Our experience is that pupils forge strong bonds of friendship during the trips, and their respect for one another grows as a result of sharing the experiences.

Careers guidance -

Pupils at Somerset School are supported in their preparation for formal examinations at various stages of their education. Pupils are encouraged to learn about their own academic strengths and weaknesses and the type of learning method that best suits them as an individual. Whilst we do not specifically instigate careers advice until Year 10, we provide opportunities for pupils to understand the world of work and the promotion of their economic wellbeing.

Communication with Parents/Guardian/Carers

We believe that parents/guardian/carers and guardians have a fundamental role to play in helping pupils to learn. We do all we can to inform parents/guardian/carers and guardians about what and how their children are learning by:

- Holding meetings with parents/guardian/carers to review their child's progress and agree support strategies, if appropriate;
- Sending school information to parents/guardian/carers;
- Sending reports to parents/guardian/carers in which we explain the progress made by each child and indicate
- Being available - we have an open-door policy;
- Strong lines of communication with parents/guardian/carers through pupils' tutors.

We believe that parents/guardian/carers have the responsibility to support their pupils and the school in implementing school policies. We would like parents/guardian/carers to:

- Ensure that their child has the best attendance and punctuality record possible;

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- Do their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school;
- Inform school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect a child’s performance or behaviour at school;
- Promote a positive attitude towards school, staff and learning in general.

Concerns and complaints

Parents/guardian/carers who have concerns about any aspect of the curriculum should discuss these with the Headteacher. The School has a Complaints Procedure in place, which is on the website or available from reception at the school.

Subjects Offered at Somerset School

Pupils follow a broad curriculum at all ‘Key Stages’, which include the core subjects of English, Maths, Science and PSHE, alongside Physical Education, Humanities, ICT, music as therapy, Thrive, Art and further options at Key Stage 4 (see below).

Key Stage 4 (14-16 years, Yrs. 10 & 11)

Pupils at Key Stage 4 follow a diverse range of subjects. These include GCSE, where appropriate. We are very conscious that young people with special needs are often not extended to achieve their potential. In our school, we are determined that every opportunity will be available for children to make progress.

The list below is a basic overview of what the school will offer its Key Stage 4 pupils:

- English Language GCSE and/or Functional Skills;
- Maths GCSE and/or Functional Skills;
- Science GCSE or Entry Level;
- Creative I media GCSE;
- Photography GCSE;
- Art and Design GCSE;
- Food and Nutrition GCSE
- BTEC Sport
- ASDAN – Certificate or Award in Personal Effectiveness

Key Stage 5

Pupils will be given a wider based curriculum focusing on their progress towards independence and preparing them for their future career and further education.

Links with local alternative training providers will be made through the school and part of pupil’s timetables will involve PSHE and visiting follow on provision.

This Policy will be reviewed annually.

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