



# Curriculum Policy

## Secondary

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**Approved by:** Jane Norris

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## **Ripplevale School**

### **Curriculum Policy - Secondary**

***‘Ripplevale School provides a caring, learning environment where our boys make meaningful progress, relative to their individual starting points. Our aim is to encourage them to develop appropriate personal, social and employable skills enabling them to become confident, independent and aspiring young people.’***

#### **Our Aims and Purpose**

Our overall aim is to be an outstanding school and service for children with Autism and Special Educational Needs (SEN). To do this, our main aims are to:

- *Ensure that through our formal and informal curriculum every child is kept safe both at school, at home and online.*
- *Provide a relevant, broad and balanced education for every individual pupil.*
- *Create a culture of achievement, by stimulating a desire to learn, raising aspirations, opening up a wide range of opportunities and working towards external accreditation for all our pupils.*
- *Value and respect individuals, recognising their strengths, encouraging them to develop their interests and abilities, and helping them show positive attitudes towards others.*
- *Be proactive in developing, using and promoting consistent ASD-specific approaches, with a focus on social interaction and communication, and the reduction of anxiety and unnecessary stress.*
- *Promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils within the school within a stimulating yet safe, secure and caring environment.*
- *Invest in the long term quality of life of our children, by preparing them for an independent and purposeful role in society as adults, through explicit teaching of life skills and socially acceptable behaviour and by fostering confidence, self-esteem and a realistic understanding of themselves as people affected by autism or SEN.*
- *Prepare our children for the challenges and opportunities of a complex and technologically advanced society through creative and motivating approaches to teaching and learning.*

We believe that we can achieve these aims because Ripplevale is an inclusive, accessible, friendly and approachable organisation where teamwork is central. We are proud of our successes, whilst remaining committed to self evaluation and professional growth. We believe in cooperation and partnership with families, as well as with others in the local community and further afield, who share our commitment to improving the lives of anyone affected by autism or SEN.

## **Putting our Aims into Practice – The Curriculum**

### ***The Wider Curriculum***

Our aims inform decisions on creating the school curriculum, writing policies, managing pupil behaviour, arranging lunchtime activities, classroom organisation and everything else that affects the pupils' experience of school.

### ***Key Stage 3***

We believe that our pupils benefit from access to the National Curriculum which is differentiated to meet individual needs. In Key Stage 3 we group pupils largely according to their year groups, but there are exceptions where a pupil would benefit from working in a slightly different combination of ages or academic/social skill and whilst we aim to provide age-appropriate learning experiences, some of our planning draws on Programmes of Study from earlier key stages to ensure relevance to the learning needs and prior attainments of our pupils.

All parents will be informed of the class their child will be in in September, allowing them to look at the timetable and the Key Stage 3 schemes of work available on the school website before the term begins.

### ***Key stages 4 and 5***

Depending on the academic strengths of our pupils, they will be timetabled to take a combination of the following qualifications:

#### ***GCSE***

WE follow a range of GCSE courses where students can achieve grades from 1-9 . Currently we offer English Language, English Literature, Maths, Science, History and Statistics.

#### ***Functional Skills***

This course that looks at the 'functional' side of Maths, English or ICT.

This qualification is aimed at students who are likely to achieve a GCSE grade E or below, and help students move towards attaining a GCSE grade 4 in their post-16 education.

#### ***Entry Level 1, 2 or 3***

These qualifications are targeted at different types of learners and are intended to be accessible and relevant for pupils who may struggle to attain above a grade U at GCSE. They are also useful indicators of progress and can give some students a confidence boost before going on to a higher level qualification. The highest Entry Level award is level 3.

## **Gateway**

As of September 2019 we are registered to deliver Gateway qualifications. Gateway is a not for profit awarding organisation offering qualifications, access to H.E. Diplomas, apprenticeships and a very wide range of other subject areas.

We currently follow courses in Catering and Hospitality and Public and Protective Services where learners develop the technical competence that employment demands as well as the soft skills that employers value, which often make the difference at interview stage.

Gateway offer flexible assessment with project based working which suits the needs perfectly of boys at Ripplevale who get particularly anxious around formal examination.

## **BTEC Level 1 – Extended Certificate in Construction**

## **WJEC Level 2 – Constructing the Built Environment**

Ripplevale School is also registered to deliver BTEC Level 1 Extended Certificate in Construction and Level 2 Constructing the Built Environment with WJEC to provide a more hands on approach for students in this subject area. There is no terminal exam in these subject areas so students are all assessed by centre-devised assessments and internally verified within school. Again this is to lessen any potential anxieties that students may experience. By studying the Level 2 course with WJEC at Key Stage 4 our students can progress to the BTEC qualification in Post 16.

## ***Numeracy and Mathematics***

Our teachers strive to incorporate aspects of numeracy and mathematics into every subject area, wherever there is relevancy. We recognise that confidence in numeracy and mathematical skills is a precondition of success across all areas of the national curriculum. Understanding the importance of mathematics is key to success and pupils are therefore taught to apply their mathematical knowledge to problem solving activities wherever possible. Some pupils benefit from additional 1:1 support to develop numeracy skills, which is delivered in our Individual student provision classes.

## ***Language and Literacy***

Developing pupils' ability in listening, speaking, reading and writing is an integral part of the teaching of every subject within the wider curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success and is therefore a high priority for teaching and learning at Ripplevale. The National curriculum in English is taught separately as a subject area, as are literacy classes special reading lessons. We particularly recognise the importance of reading for pleasure and have for additional resources available to parents on the school website. Being able to understand the nuances of the English language is of especially high importance for pupils with autism, which is why we teach a social use of language programme in our PSHE scheme of work and in our intervention classes. Learning accurate spelling, uses of grammar and developing a wider vocabulary are also important aspects to focus on and our intervention programme ensures these needs are met.

## ***Target Setting and Attainment***

Assessment is at the heart of teaching and learning. We believe that assessment should be fair, honest, ambitious, appropriate and consistent. We are committed to improving standards of achievement for all our pupils. We set ambitious targets for each individual's future attainment and use our own internal systems for measuring progress including Classroom Monitor. This system provides us with the key skills within different stages of learning. Teachers assess pupil skills within these stages and use the outcomes of assessments to summarise attainment for their class groups. They then use this data to plan the learning for every pupil to ensure they succeed. Progress data is analysed by teachers and leaders with the aim that all pupils are meeting or exceeding expectations.

### ***PSHE***

We want our pupils to develop as happy, safe and confident individuals, who respect others and who want to look after themselves. We deliver a structured programme of PSHE for our pupils including RE, on-line safety and relationships through the school. Our pupils have a trusting relationship with staff which allows pupils to talk privately about personal issues when and where such concerns arise. We recognise the increased need that our pupils have within PSHE and dedicate a substantial amount of time to teaching and learning within this area from KS1 through to our post-16 provision.

### ***Spiritual, Moral, Cultural and Social (SMSC) Education***

Our approach with Religious Education is non-denominational and covers Christianity and other major world religions. We are sensitive to the range of beliefs among members of staff and pupils and their families. Our teachers take account of their duties under equal opportunities legislation that covers race, disability, sex, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

We actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. These concepts are explored during RE and PSHE lessons and are also addressed whenever there is relevancy during other subjects. Assemblies, trips and visitors provide opportunities to celebrate individual achievement and diversity as well as a forum for discussing respect and tolerance regardless of background. The school council meetings provide a forum for pupils to express their views and play an active role in the school development. We aim to ensure that our children become valuable and fully rounded members of society who understand the importance of respect and leave school fully prepared for life in modern Britain.

### ***Off-site Visits and Activities***

We supplement work in the classroom with a variety of visits and activities out of the school environment. Pupils have the opportunity to study the local environment and use facilities in the community. This provides a way of linking real life, meaningful and concrete experiences with more abstract concepts that are explored within classroom lessons. Visits have included Dover Castle, Imperial War Museum, War and Peace show, Canterbury Cathedral and local areas of historical interest. We have also organised residential trips to Kingsdown. This enables our pupils to experience independence beyond their home environment and incorporates a wide range of life skills such as cooking, organising resources and managing themselves.

A focus on developing independent living skills is vital for our pupils to ensure they are equipped for life beyond Ripplevale. Real-life experiences, such as shopping, journeys

on public transport, and using leisure facilities form part of our curriculum. To prepare for future employability opportunities, our older pupils also have access to work experience out of school.

Sports fixtures and tournaments within the local consortium take place within the wider community and form an important part of our school curriculum. It embraces our school ethos and incorporates not only aspects of PE but the wider nature of our curriculum such as notions of fair play, team work and respect of others.

### ***On-line safety***

Being aware of how to be safe when interacting with the wide range of ICT resources available to the school is an entitlement of all members of our school community. Students are taught as part of their curriculum about how to recognise and avoid danger when using ICT resources. Staff work to prevent any member of Ripplevale becoming the victim of online exploitation and/or cyber-bullying. Information and resources to use at home are available on our website.

## **Working with Parents to Monitor and Review Progress**

### ***Annual Statement Reviews and EHCP reviews***

Annual Statement Review (ASR) meetings are held once a year, and involve considering the pupil's statement of educational need and the provision that is in place to meet these needs. In line with current government legislation, we are currently in the process of converting individual Statements into Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) or reviewing existing EHCPs. This process ensures that each and every pupil receives an appropriate curriculum with the support and additional interventions necessary to make meaningful progress. It provides a forum for all stakeholders to come together; the pupil, parents/carers, school staff and external professionals that may be involved with the education and health of the individual such as Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Psychologists, Specialist Teachers and School Nurses. Priorities for pupils are identified by setting aspirational goals. These long-term goals can then be worked towards by setting smaller targets within medium term outcomes. Outcomes form the basis of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) that are worked on within school as part each child's provision plan.

These plans are reviewed three times a year ; the annual review is held during the school day, and three parents evenings in December, April and June. Information regarding these dates are on our website.

### ***Reports***

Reports detailing attainments within each subject area are provided to parents 3 times a year. Teachers have high expectations for every pupil and set targets that are deliberately ambitious. Each report gives a predicted target and a measure of how well the pupil is achieving the target, along with a measure of behaviour and effort during lessons. These provide parents/carers with an overview of pupil performance that highlights areas of success as well as areas that need further support and suggested tasks for home.

### ***School/home liaison***

An effective home-school partnership is essential for maximising pupil potential. The school operates an "open door policy" whereby we welcome parents and carers in to the school for constructive dialogues with Teachers, members of our Senior Leadership

Team and with our Education and Family Liaison Officer. Our pupils have a home/school contact book for sharing daily information between home and school. School staff and parents/carers contact each other through regular phone calls and emails as necessary, sometimes on a daily basis. These measures foster an open, trusting relationship between pupil, home and school.

### ***Homework***

Although we do not routinely provide homework for every pupil (as this can be a cause of stress and anxiety for pupils with Autism), we ask pupils to complete some tasks at home where appropriate to individual needs and abilities, and these are outlined in the school reports. Pupils are encouraged to share any interests such as poetry, story writing or art work that they choose to do at home. Where there is a clear benefit to learners, we can provide more formal and personalised homework by agreement. Sometimes our older students or parents/carers request specific homework activities to revise what they have learned in preparation for exams. Staff will aim to provide activities that are motivating and manageable, and will make a genuine contribution to progress.