

The Corner School: Curriculum Policy

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- This policy is written in accordance with all legal requirements and best practice
- **Equal Opportunities:** This policy will never discriminate directly or indirectly against the 9 protected characteristics. Equality of opportunity should be provided for all employees in accordance with the Equality Act (2010). Individuals are invited to provide information about any equality or diversity issues that may be relevant. UP may consider making adjustments to this policy in appropriate circumstances when feasible and in keeping with organisational needs.
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- **Policy Status:** This policy is not a contractual term of employment, and it may be varied by UP at any time

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1. Introduction

The Corner School is a small independent primary school in inner London, specialising in providing education for children with Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. Our curriculum is designed to meet the complex needs of our students, with a strong therapeutic focus that supports their emotional, social and academic development. We aim to create a nurturing and safe environment where every child can thrive, academically, socially and emotionally, by supporting and developing their SEMH needs in a holistic and individualised manner.

This policy outlines the principles, structure and objectives of the curriculum, in alignment with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the National Curriculum, meeting the statutory requirements set forth by Ofsted and other relevant governing bodies.

2. School Aims

At The Corner School, we strive to achieve the following aims through our curriculum:

- **Inclusive Education:** Provide a broad, balanced, and relevant education for all pupils, considering their individual needs and strengths. Pupils at The Corner School will have access to a highly personalised curriculum that takes into account the National Curriculum as well as being relevant to individual needs. In addition, we focus on the core difficulties for children with social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH). These may include challenges with communication, managing uncertainty and change, anxiety, developmental trauma, social interaction, as well as understanding and managing emotions.
- **Therapeutic Focus:** Integrate therapeutic practices into daily learning to support emotional regulation, social skills and resilience, supporting pupils with their readiness for learning and their ability to engage with their education.
- **Academic Achievement:** Promote the academic development of each child through personalised learning that builds confidence and progress from their individual starting points.
- **Social and Emotional Growth:** Equip pupils with the skills needed to understand and manage emotions, build and maintain positive relationships with self, others and the curriculum as well as navigate the challenges of daily life.
- **Preparation for Life:** Prepare children for future learning including the next stage of education and adult life in Modern Britain by fostering independence, critical thinking, developing life skills and a sense of responsibility.

Our curriculum involves academic learning as a priority, but it is essential to focus on the children's core difficulties rather than just working around them, so that we can provide support for the social and emotional development of children with SEMH that will enable the pupils to be regulated enough to be able to access the curriculum.

3. Delivering Measurable Outcomes

Our aim is to deliver measurable outcomes that demonstrate, over time:

- Improved self-regulation (managing own emotions and behaviour)
- Increased ability to make and sustain meaningful and healthy reciprocal relationships
- Improvement in coping with uncertainty and change (decreasing anxiety)
- Increased independence
- Academic progress

4. Legislation

This policy reflects the requirements of the National Curriculum programmes of study. It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014 (revised 2020) and Equality Act 2010.

5. Curriculum Structure and Organisation

Our curriculum is designed to be flexible and responsive to the needs of our pupils while adhering to the requirements of the National Curriculum. The structure follows a fluid approach, allowing for pace adjustments and chunking according to the individual learning needs and emotional development of each pupil.

We use a combination of discrete subject teaching and therapeutic interventions to create a holistic learning environment.

Curriculum Structure

- **EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage):** In EYFS, the curriculum focuses on the seven areas of learning outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework:
 - **Prime Areas:** Communication and Language, Physical Development, Personal, Social and Emotional Development.
 - **Specific Areas:** Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, Expressive Arts and Design. The learning is play-based and experiential, with a strong emphasis on developing communication skills, emotional regulation and social interaction.
- **Key Stage 1 (Years 1-2) and Key Stage 2 (Years 3-6):** In these stages, the curriculum covers the core subjects (English, Mathematics, Science) and a broad range of foundation subjects (History, Geography, Art, Design and Technology, PSHE, RE and Physical Education).
 - **Approach:** The curriculum is taught with flexibility, adapting the pace and content to match the children's development. Where needed, subjects **are** delivered through project-based learning, allowing for a more integrated approach.
 - **Small Class Sizes:** Classes typically have 2-4 adults present ensuring that each pupil receives the support they need to engage with the work and make **progress**.

6. Curriculum Delivery

Lessons are structured to provide pupils with the opportunity to work independently and collaboratively, with a focus on developing basic skills such as reading, writing, speaking and listening and maths as well as building confidence and self-regulation skills.

- **Curriculum Flexibility:** The curriculum is fluid to respond to the social and emotional needs of our pupils as well as the developmental stage and pace of each child. For example:
 - Children may spend more time on foundational literacy or numeracy skills when necessary.
 - Social and emotional development is interwoven into the academic subjects, ensuring children feel supported and ready to learn.

- **Therapeutic Support:** In addition to the National Curriculum, we offer bespoke therapeutic support tailored to the individual needs of each child. This may include Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Psychotherapy, social skills development and emotional regulation programmes.
- **Small Classes and Individualised Learning:** Pupils are taught in small groups to ensure that each child receives the appropriate level of support and challenge. Teachers and support staff work closely with each pupil to monitor progress, adapt learning strategies and offer targeted interventions where necessary.
- **Curriculum for Personal Growth:** RSHE (Relationships, Sex and Health Education), PSHE (Personal, Social, Health Education) including Spiritual Moral Social and Cultural (SMSC), British Values and mindfulness sessions are key components of our curriculum, designed to foster self-awareness, emotional literacy and resilience.

7. Curriculum Approach

The primary curriculum is currently delivered in one of two ways; the National Curriculum subjects are taught explicitly, or the subjects are taught through a blended learning approach combining both topics as well as key skills. English and Maths are taught to all pupils as individual subjects in addition to being addressed through other curriculum areas.

- Teachers have flexibility to adapt their planning to meet the needs of the very complex and challenging pupils who they know and understand very well. Our focus is facilitating quality opportunities for pupils to learn and make progress.
- Key Stage 1 & 2 pupils take part in daily, discrete phonics sessions. The school uses relevant writing and reading resources adapted from the synthetic phonics programme Read Write Inc. in order to ensure that achievement in reading and writing is accelerated.
- The curriculum map sets out the range of topics and subjects taught over the year and how they are incorporated into individual subjects.
- Assessment and progress are tracked and monitored on a regular basis to ensure that the pupils are making progress and where this seems to be limited a review will take place.
- The Headteacher and Inclusion Lead monitor lesson planning which ensures pupils will have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and subsequently experience all areas of learning.
- Work scrutiny and lesson observations will be carried out by the Head Teacher and Inclusion Lead on a regular basis to monitor effective teaching and learning as well as ensure consistency in marking and feedback to pupils.

8. Inclusion and Differentiation

We are committed to ensuring that all children have equal access to the curriculum, with appropriate adaptations made to meet their individual needs. Our staff are skilled in using differentiation strategies to provide suitable challenges and support for pupils with varying levels of ability and SEMH needs and staff are ambitious that all pupils achieve their potential.

Support for SEMH Needs: Recognising the specific challenges faced by students with SEMH needs, our curriculum integrates trauma-informed practices, positive behaviour management and a focus on building self-esteem.

9. Assessment and Monitoring

Regular assessment is integral to ensuring that all pupils are making progress. Teachers use a range of formative and summative assessments to evaluate both academic achievement and emotional development.

Assessment Approach

At The Corner School we do not undertake Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) as these do not reflect the developmental stage of our pupils.

- **Formative Assessment:** Teachers use continuous formative assessments to monitor pupils' learning on a day-to-day basis. These assessments include:
 - Observations during lessons and play.
 - Questioning and discussions to assess understanding.
 - Feedback provided to pupils on their work and behaviour.
 - Adjustments to teaching and learning strategies based on formative assessments.
- **Summative Assessment:** Termly assessments in Mathematics, Reading and Writing. Each pupil working at a Key Stage 2 level undertake PIRA and PUMA assessment termly, these are accessed based on their academic level rather than their chronological age. For example, a child in Year 4 may be accessing a Year 3 test. The test results are analysed and reviewed in combination with teacher assessments to track progress, identify any gaps in knowledge or skills, which allow for targeted interventions and used to inform teacher's planning, teaching and learning.
- **Progress Monitoring:** Progress is tracked against individual starting points and EHCP outcomes (targets). Termly meetings between teachers and the Senior Leadership Team ensure that progress is evaluated holistically, with appropriate adjustments made to ensure continued development.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

The Corner School Education Committee:

- **Monitor Curriculum Effectiveness:** Ensure the curriculum aligns with the school's aims and objectives, particularly in supporting the SEMH needs of pupils.
- **Ensure Compliance with Statutory Requirements:** Ensure the school complies with national regulations and guidelines, including the National Curriculum, SEND Code of Practice and safeguarding policies.
- **Provide Strategic Oversight:** Ensure that the school provides adequate resources for effective curriculum delivery, including appropriate professional development for staff.
- **Ensure a Therapeutic Focus:** Ensure the integration of therapeutic practices into the curriculum, supporting pupils' SEMH needs and ensuring holistic support.
- **Evaluate and Support Funding Decisions:** Review and ensure sufficient resources are allocated for small class sizes, therapeutic interventions and support staff.

Headteacher and Inclusion Lead:

- **Curriculum Leadership:** Oversee the planning, implementation and evaluation of the curriculum, ensuring it is tailored to meet the individual needs of pupils with SEMH needs.

- **Quality Assurance:** Regularly monitor teaching quality through observations, work scrutiny and reviewing assessments to ensure high standards of delivery.
- **Staff Development:** Ensure teachers and support staff receive ongoing professional development to meet the needs of pupils, particularly in integrating therapeutic approaches into their practice.
- **Ensure Adequate Support:** Allocate resources to ensure small class sizes (2-4 adults per class), and ensure staffing levels are sufficient to meet pupils' needs.

Teachers:

- **Curriculum Delivery:** Deliver the curriculum with an emphasis on academic learning (Literacy, Numeracy, and other subjects) as well as social and emotional development.
- **Differentiation:** Tailor lessons to meet the varying needs of pupils, ensuring all pupils are challenged appropriately while receiving the support needed to succeed.
- **Formative Assessment:** Regularly assess pupils' learning through observations, questioning and assessments to identify strengths and areas of improvement. Use these assessments to inform planning and adjust teaching strategies.
- **Summative Assessment:** Conduct termly summative assessments in Mathematics, Writing and Reading to evaluate progress and guide future planning.
- **Behaviour and SEMH Support:** Integrate SEMH strategies within lessons, using positive behaviour reinforcement and therapeutic approaches to support emotional regulation.
- **Collaboration with Support Staff:** Work closely with support staff to ensure pupils receive the necessary interventions and adjustments to help them complete tasks and make progress.
- **Record Keeping:** Maintain accurate records of pupils' progress, using teacher judgement and data to guide personalised learning plans.

Support Staff:

- **Supporting Teachers:** Assist teachers in delivering lessons and providing one-on-one or small group support, ensuring pupils with SEMH needs receive tailored interventions.
- **Behaviour Management:** Support the implementation of behaviour management strategies, helping pupils to regulate their emotions and actions in the classroom.
- **Progress Monitoring:** Assist in monitoring pupil progress, providing feedback to teachers about individual needs, challenges and achievements.
- **Adaptive Learning:** Help adapt lessons to suit the needs of pupils, ensuring they can engage with the content, whether through differentiated activities, physical supports, or alternative resources.
- **Emotional Support:** Provide additional emotional support, creating a safe and nurturing classroom environment where pupils feel secure and able to learn.

Therapeutic Team (OT, SaLT, Psychotherapist):

- **Collaboration with Teachers:** Work closely with teaching staff to integrate therapeutic techniques into the curriculum and classroom management strategies, ensuring that emotional and social needs are addressed alongside academic progress.

- **Individualised Support Plans:** Develop and implement individualised support plans (e.g., Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, and Educational Therapy), tailored to meet the SEMH and learning needs of each pupil.
- **Intervention Delivery:** Provide specific therapeutic interventions aimed at improving sensory processing, communication skills, emotional regulation, and social skills.
- **Regular Monitoring and Reporting:** Assess the effectiveness of interventions through regular monitoring and feedback to both teachers and parents, adjusting strategies as necessary.
- **Staff Training:** Provide training and support to teachers and support staff on how to incorporate therapeutic approaches into their daily teaching practices and how to recognise signs that a child may require additional therapeutic support.

11. Links with Other Policies

This curriculum policy is linked to the following school policies:

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| • SEND Policy | • Safeguarding Policy |
| • Behaviour Policy | • Equality and Diversity Statement |

12. Conclusion

At The Corner School, our curriculum is designed to nurture the academic, emotional and social growth of pupils with SEMH needs. By offering a personalised, therapeutic curriculum that addresses both academic and emotional development, we aim to provide every child with the skills and confidence to succeed in school and beyond.

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains aligned with the needs of our pupils, statutory guidelines and best practices in education and therapy.