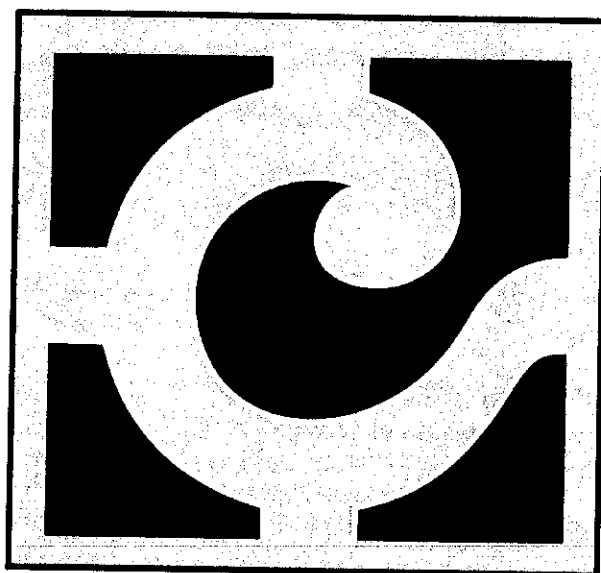


THE COURT SCHOOL

Curriculum Policy (including marking)

Academic Year 2022/23



THE COURT SCHOOL

Approved by Governing Body – 28/06/23

Review – Autumn term '25

Curriculum Policy

We strive to provide an inclusive, creative, flexible approach that is trauma informed, forward thinking and child centred. Our motto is Keep Calm - Keep Learning

The Court School is an LA school that educates pupils with wide range of needs but predominantly provides education and support to pupils with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD). Within its flexible, curriculum framework we provide learning opportunities for all pupils at different stages of their development on an individual basis.

The pupils benefit from a trauma informed, multi-disciplinary approach, using therapist, teaching and teaching assistants working together to support and develop the pupils' learning. Flexibility is also needed to accommodate our learners' individual differences.

We endeavour to help our learners:

- Become ambitious learners, by **maintaining high expectations**,
- Become ethically informed citizens, by **respecting each other's' differences**,
- Become creative contributors, by being **flexible and staying positive**,
- Be healthy and confident, thus ensuring **everyone is safe**.

Curriculum Aims

- To provide a curriculum that is broad, balanced and relevant,
- To ensure the curriculum is flexible, dynamic and purposeful,
- To build on learners' prior experiences, skills and knowledge,
- To ensure planning is personalised to maximise the potential of learners,
- To help our learners stay calm and develop key self-regulatory strategies,
- To highlight the importance of equal opportunities and positive approaches to diversity,

We recognise that many of our pupils have:

- **Difficulties with communication (including social communication)**. Expressive and receptive difficulties that might require symbols or computer technology.
- **Short concentration spans**. Some of our pupils are easily distracted and struggle to concentrate for extended periods of time.
- **Poor fine motor skills**. Needing alternative methods for recording their work e.g. ICT.
- **Difficulties with regulating their behaviour**. This is often linked to poor educational experiences in the past, ACEs, trauma and, in some cases, medical diagnoses.

Our curriculum enables us to realise our vision and offer opportunities to our learners that enable them to break down the barriers that previously affected their ability to learn

J. W.
4.7.20

A Curriculum Policy Statement – The Whole Curriculum

During their time at The Court, learners should achieve across all curriculum areas, particularly literacy, numeracy, and ICT. Life skills are also a focus for us, and important in preparing students for life outside school. Specific life skills include accessing the local community, having an awareness of a healthy lifestyle and diet, being responsible for personal hygiene, having a good understanding of how to manage money and finances, and being aware of household chores (cooking, cleaning, making the bed). Practical skills such as use of tools, ICT, electronics are also valued.

We want our learners to develop a positive work ethic and become responsible adults. We expect our older learners to be role models for younger peers. It is important to build resilience, so that pupils can cope with disappointment, rejection and excitement. We endeavour to help pupils develop an understanding of their own emotions, and those of others in order to thrive in the outside world. Self-regulation, appropriate decision making, control and coping mechanisms should be developed and personalised for all our learners.

The curriculum is highly personalised and designed to give our pupils the individual skills they will need to have successful futures. There is a whole school, termly focus but the curriculum looks very different depending on the learners in the different classes.

The whole curriculum is delivered, and experiences facilitated with approaches that work for each learner with a focus on positive engagement and FUN. Basic academic and life skills are introduced and developed, offering opportunities within and across all of the Areas of Learning and Experience. The curriculum encompasses the concepts in all of the statements of What Matters and provides appropriate progression in accord with the principles of progression. It also aligns to the mandatory requirements of teaching Welsh, English and Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE). The mandatory elements of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) and the cross curricular skills of literacy, numeracy and digital competence will be embedded throughout the curriculum.

Each AoLE has equal importance but the focus is always on positive engagement and wellbeing. Most of our learners' struggle with expressing and understanding their emotions so there is a strong emphasis on co-regulation and self-regulation and teaching strategies to help them understand basic neuroscience/sensory systems, e.g. Dan Siegal's hand model of the brain.

We offer hands on, practical, experiential learning that is relevant to the individuals and the local area.

Outdoor learning and experiences are an extremely important for our learners as often, the pressure and confinement of a classroom environment can heighten anxiety levels and cause unnecessary stress so we make the most of the outdoors and bring the outdoors in.

Our curriculum is and will continue to be very flexible, fun but also challenging. It continues to be adapted to meet the individual needs of the learners/classes and the emphasis is always on what **each particular child** needs to help them develop and succeed.

Teaching and Learning

To help our pupils foster positive attitudes to learning, sessions are usually shorter in time and end with a variety of continuous provision led by the pupils' interests. Teachers are encouraged to use a flexible, creative approach to developing skills throughout the school day.

The school day usually starts with a fun activity designed to develop social skills such as a game or discussion and pupils are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour and actions at certain times throughout their day.

After each break teachers will engage the pupils with a short activity to re-focus before facilitating learning experiences tailored towards pupil interests.

Literacy and Numeracy

Literacy and Numeracy are taught discreetly during morning sessions and reinforced throughout the school day using a cross curricular approach. Teachers use Taith 360 to track curriculum coverage and assess pupils' progress in these areas and combined with the LNF, are able to set realistic targets.

Wellbeing

The wellbeing of our pupils is a priority here at The Court School. Each class are encouraged to facilitate wellbeing sessions and activities that help pupils understand what makes them feel calm and help them self-regulate when feeling distressed. Teachers use Taith 360 to track pupil wellbeing, this information is used to target additional intervention and support.

Pupils are encouraged to choose physical activities at break times and weekly Health & Wellbeing sessions form part of the weekly timetables. The school works closely with the Schools' Community Police Officer to deliver sessions on a variety of personal and social issues and the wellbeing scheme of work explains appropriate relationship and sexuality education.

Pupils are encouraged to find safe places and take time-out to calm when feeling anxious or distressed. There are several usable, alternative teaching spaces around the school and in particular, in the teaching block corridor. These include; the Rainbow Room, the Cwtch, and the Chill Out Room.

Most classes have a breakout space within the class and all classes have a safe outdoor space for pupils to use to self-regulate and are encouraged to reintegrate within the class when they feel comfortable and are ready to learn.

ELSA and Trauma Informed Schools trained staff offer support and therapy to regulate and calm distressed learners who find spending time in a class challenging. The Deputy Head teachers manage these areas on a full-time basis allowing class teachers and staff to provide suitable support within the classrooms to enable the learners to achieve.

Digital Competence

ICT skills are taught discreetly during timetabled lessons using the 'Computing Unlocked' scheme of work as a reference tool and starting point. The skills are then developed and consolidated during cross curricular activities using the DCF as a planning tool.

At the Court School we want all of our learners to have access to the most current methods of teaching and technologies to support them in all aspects of their development. Every learner has opportunities to develop skills using cutting edge technology to enable them to access a modern, current and relevant curriculum that suits our pupils' needs and aspirations.

Experiential Learning

Offsite activities and visits from local members of the community help to enrich our pupils' learning experiences. Pupils at the Court School can learn about life in their locality and the wider world by accessing facilities and locations in Cardiff and surrounding areas. For example, we give groups of pupils the opportunity to experience residential trips every term at Storey Arms in Brecon.

Religious Education

Religious education is delivered using a pupil friendly approach. The 'World Faiths Today' series of books are used as a starting point. Topics include:

- Festivals;
- Sources of authority;
- Ways of caring for others and the world;
- Special food.

(Different faiths are referred to including; Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism and Sikhism).

Welsh as a second language

Welsh as a second language is timetabled accordingly and is used incidentally by school staff throughout the course of the day. Class teachers generally use resources provided on Hwb as the starting points for learning.

Curriculum Access

Due to the diverse and complex needs of our pupils we continually need to provide additional support in order for them to access to curriculum. With this in mind, we endeavour to maintain the conditions most likely to facilitate learning for all of our pupils through:

- The provision of appropriate information technology resources – computers, relevant software, iPads;
- Our commitment to essential therapeutic and restorative activities;
- Our commitment to collaboration with parents, professionals and agencies, with the community and with the pupils themselves.

Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE)

The learning experiences/ activities which are detailed in our school curriculum and accompanying schemes of work were shaped by staff members and other stakeholders during a lengthy and comprehensive design process. The curriculum is tailor-made and personal to the existing cohort and is ever changeable and flexible. We use the content in the new areas of learning experiences from Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 and the Cornerstones Curriculum to supplement relevant learning experiences.

The activities have been developed in detail to allow for continuity and progression as well as to provide age appropriate experiences for our pupils working at the earliest levels of the Curriculum across the entire age range.

In line with the recent direction from the Welsh Government, teachers are encouraged to be flexible, creative and use local resources to plan exciting, authentic and meaningful learning experiences.

Our curriculum plans present a carefully considered view of the relevance, breadth and depth of study appropriate to the current school population, with all teachers providing individually targeted activities and experiences for all pupils in their class.

Curriculum Management & Organisation

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for the curriculum at the Court School. The Senior Leadership and Management Team have responsibility for the planning process and the day-to-day implementation of the curriculum.

All teachers have co-ordinator responsibilities (AoLE) which include assessing resources and monitoring the learning, which is supported by the Senior Leadership and Management Team.

Wherever possible staff are allocated responsibilities which match their qualifications and expertise, although this is not always practicable.

The curriculum in all classes is delivered through topics and imaginative learning plans, using the Court School Curriculum as a starting point which references progression steps and what matter statements from the Welsh government guidance. Cross-curricular opportunities are sought but the learning objectives for the individual subjects are not neglected. A variety of teaching and learning methods are employed in the delivery of the curriculum, including individual 1:1 sessions, group work and whole class teaching. The curriculum is broad and balanced with each AoLE being of equal importance.

Assessment, Progression, Recording and Reporting

We believe assessment and progression are fundamental to ensuring we are providing our pupils with a rich and balanced curriculum that suits their individual needs. Progression is measured against academic achievement and other factors important in our sector. This information is captured in 'learner profiles' / Taith 360. These include:

- Attitude to learning
- Attendance
- Positive handling
- Serious incidents
- Wellbeing

Our school curriculum is underpinned by the mandatory principles of progression, which describe what it means for learners to progress and we have systems in place to inform progress in different areas. Vehicles such as Cornerstones and Big Maths that supplement our curriculum have progressive skills that ensure all learners have the opportunities to make progress. We use a variety of evidence-informed assessment strategies to enable each individual learner to make progress, both academically, socially and emotionally at an appropriate pace. We ensure our processes identify learners who require further support, alternative provision or intervention.

Assessment, recording and reporting are considered to be an integral part of the curriculum. All aspects of this work are regularly monitored by members of the Senior Leadership and Management Team.

Marking procedure

Our whole school policy for marking relates to the ethos of the school and the aims and objectives we seek to achieve in all curriculum areas.

Each child's development requires our understanding of their needs. To ensure this ongoing development and to ensure that each child realises their full potential, all marking must be a productive and personalised action for the on-going development of the child as a learner.

"Standards are raised only by changes which are put into direct effect by teachers and pupils in classrooms. There is a body of firm evidence that formative assessment is an essential feature of classroom work and the development of it can raise standards."

(Inside the Black Box - Dylan Williams and Paul Black)

Why do we mark children's work?

Marking is an integral part of the assessment process and has a huge impact on pupil progress. It serves to:

1. Give positive feedback and encouragement.
2. Praise success, acknowledge and reward hard work and effort.
3. Provide evidence of the child's understanding and enable misconceptions and gaps in learning to be identified. This then informs planning and the pupils' next steps.
4. Standardise marking procedures throughout the school.
5. Show that staff have reviewed the work.
6. Help to inform parents/carers and all interested parties of individual progress.

Key Principles

Our policy is underpinned by some key principles:

1. Marking is carried out on a regular basis and where possible with the pupil.
2. Marking is always linked to the learning objective and will reflect the extent to which it has been achieved.
3. Marking is accompanied by verbal support, positive body language, a sign.
4. Where Verbal Feedback is given this is noted at the end of a piece of work (VF).
5. Constructive marking and feedback show that a pupil's work is valued and provides opportunities for praise.
6. Strengths and areas for development are identified - next step.
7. Where possible pupils are encouraged to own their own learning and support each other through the use of self and peer assessment.
8. Marking and feedback is flexible and individual.

How these principles are translated into practice:

1. Marking is a way of giving positive affirmation, praising success and rewarding the efforts of a child. Staff may use ticks and if appropriate, stickers etc.
2. Marking will be done in green.
3. Teaching Assistants and supply teachers should initial work they mark to indicate who has marked the piece of work. (Teaching assistant marking is noted by the class teacher and the assessments are incorporated into the planning process.)
4. Work is marked in relation to the learning objective LO. The extent to which a pupil has been supported is indicated.
5. Next steps of learning are identified.

Monitoring

The Assessment Coordinator is responsible with the Headteacher and SLT for ensuring that this is consistently implemented across the school by all staff, including teaching assistants. Together they are also responsible for carrying out an annual review of these procedures and for making sure that all new staff/ supply staff are made aware of the procedures.

Assessment using Taith 360 informs the teaching and learning process so that tasks can be attached to the individuals' needs and abilities. Assessment is mostly formative however some summative data is used to measure academic progress and value added.

Records are kept of a child's progress, not only as a matter of reference, but also to inform teachers' future planning.

Where relevant, pupils are encouraged to review their own achievements and discuss progress/successes and future learning objectives.

Teachers complete individual Learner Profiles for each pupil that enables pupil progress to be tracked term by term, year by year.

Staff will:

- Provide a baseline view of pupils' strengths and areas for development as a starting point in planning for individual pupil priorities and class priorities by using Taith 360 tracking package and Boxall wellbeing assessment package;
- Develop individual development plans showing termly goal and progress using targets provided by Taith 360 and Boxall;
- Identify termly targets and priorities for individual pupil's learning to be pursued across the whole curriculum;
- Generate information that can be used to:
 1. Define new short-term targets
 2. Review and evaluate curriculum plans and policy
 3. Report achievement
 4. Define whole school targets

Review & Evaluation

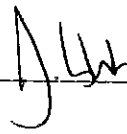
Our planning process is subject to ongoing scrutiny. The following questions help to focus our review and evaluation:

- Are individual pupils' needs being met?
- Does planning ensure continuity for individual pupils over the time and across the whole curriculum?
- Are the curriculum requirements being met?
- Is there progression across the years?
- How do the AoLE's relate to each other?
- Is there balanced coverage of all areas of the curriculum?
- Are there adequate opportunities for practical work and problem solving?
- The activities relevant to the pupils' needs.

Pupil Groupings

At the Court School we take time and consideration when completing class groupings. We consider relationships between staff and other pupils and also think about suitable environments for each individual learner. Our flexible approach means that we review the dynamics within the classes throughout the year and make changes when necessary for the benefit of all learners.

Signature of Chair of Governing Body:

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Date:

6.7.23