

BASTON HOUSE SCHOOL



CURRICULUM POLICY

AUTUMN TERM 2010

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Mission Statement:

“Baston House School strives to provide effective specialist education and support to pupils on the autism spectrum and their families, which will allow pupils to achieve their full potential in education and life.”

At Baston House School the curriculum underpins the ethos of the school and strives to provide the context within which pupils with autism are given the opportunity to achieve high standards.

In line with the National Curriculum aims, we would like all children who attend Baston House School to become:

- successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society. (QCA 2007).

Aims:

Pupils and students will receive and develop:

- A firm grasp of basic skills through the teaching of The National Curriculum;
- The stimulus of a broad and balanced curriculum that introduces new ideas and experience to all;
- Respect and consideration for theirs' and others' individuality, sensitivities, particular backgrounds, cultures and religions;
- The confidence that comes when achievement is recognized;
- The benefits of learning and growing in a calm, friendly, stable and structured environment;
- An education which prepares them for successful, inclusive, enjoyable, rich and active lives;
- An education which gives them high expectations for their future;
- A curriculum that builds on a variety of approaches to learning and teaching;
- An education that allows development and expression through creative opportunities;
- An education that uses real experiences as a foundation for learning;
- A curriculum that supports the physical, emotional, moral and spiritual development of the child.

Objectives:

Each pupil/student will be encouraged to:

- Listen attentively.
- Develop an enquiring mind with the confidence to explore through trial and error.
- Learn to communicate effectively.
- Learn to acquire information from various sources and to record findings in various ways – including the use of ICT.
- Understand mathematical ideas.
- Learn to apply numerical skills.
- Understand scientific concepts and theories.
- Gain a basic knowledge and understanding of historical and geographical facts and concepts.
- Acquire the control of tools, ICT equipment and other technology.
- Learn about religions and others' beliefs.
- Appreciate the joys and benefits of physical education and experience a range of sporting activities.
- Use music, drama and art/craft forms as a means of creative expression and enjoyment.
- Learn how to spend their leisure time constructively, imaginatively, independently and co-operatively in formal and less-structured environments.
- Learn self help skills and be made aware of the rewards and dangers of society in preparation for adult life.

Each member of staff will use and develop their skills, knowledge and experiences, with professional rigour, to ensure that each child acquires a level of achievement, against these objectives, that best reflects their individual potential.

Teaching and Learning:

Teaching at Baston House School is the practice carried out by all staff to ensure all students acquire knowledge, skill and understanding as they progress through the curriculum designed to meet their special educational needs. This practice is multi-sensory, language centred and connective. Learning is the process through which the students can develop their knowledge, skill and understanding to the point where they have retained and generalised what has been taught. Teaching and learning is carried out in a context which is relevant and meaningful to all students on the Autism Spectrum to ensure effective learning and appropriate accreditation.

All staff will work in such a way that the learning environment is one which is calm and consistent, visually clear and structured, with clear communication to students about what is expected of them, both as individuals and when in groups. This will ensure maximum information processing throughout each day allowing the students to realise their full potential.

The curriculum design across all age ranges connects each student with the acquisition of knowledge, skill and understanding related to minimising the effects of the Triad of Specific Features (Wing 2010) in Autism. This design makes meaningful connections for students which maximises their potential for success, access and independence.

A Holistic Curriculum:

The curriculum at Baston House School will be holistic and specifically designed to meet the needs of pupils/students on the Autism Spectrum. The curriculum approach consists of three key areas: the core curriculum, enrichment curriculum and specialist curriculum.

The Core Curriculum

The core curriculum focuses upon enabling meaningful access to the National Curriculum, vocational areas, accreditation frameworks and individual learning programmes in a connective manner. The core curriculum is not a 'stand alone' structure and is only effective when supported by a specialist and enrichment curriculum focus. The core curriculum at Baston House School is delivered using a streamed approach.

This approach is flexible and focuses upon meeting students' academic needs in a way that takes account of their social, emotional, and developmental profiles. This ensures that learning is relevant and meaningful and promotes the application of skills in a manner which allows optimum levels of achievement.

Specialist Curriculum

The specialist curriculum structure is a supportive structure that enables students to manage the effects of their needs on the Autism Spectrum as independently and effectively as possible and therefore remove barriers to their learning potential and life success. Examples of specialist curriculum activities may include:

- Access to therapeutic intervention including, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Drama and Movement Therapy, Music Therapy, Counselling.
- Dyslexia support programmes
- IEP targets

- Individualised Behaviour Support Plans
- Anxiety management and relaxation support
- Regular physical activity

Enrichment Curriculum

The enrichment curriculum will be a supportive structure that will promote the development of individual resources and capabilities. It will enable students to apply knowledge, understanding and skill in a manner that enables success in society and facilitates patterns of life-long learning and active citizenship.

Examples of specialist curriculum activities may include:

- Programmes that focus on emotional literacy
- Life Skills programmes
- Work related learning
- Involvement within the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.
- Sex, relationship and drug related education
- Mainstream participation/inclusion programmes
- Social skills programmes
- Citizenship programmes
- School Council
- Healthy eating programmes
- PSHE focus activities



Curriculum Planning:

Teachers will develop the curriculum through the use of the following and other working documents:

- National Curriculum
- QCA Schemes of Work
- Equals Schemes of Work
- AstraZeneca (Science)
- Exam Board Specifications
- Curriculum structure documents
- Differentiated Performance Criteria
- Progression Guidance (2009-10)
- Individual pupil progress folders

Because communication is key to addressing the Triad of Specific Features (Wing 2010) in Autism, Speech and Language Therapy is pivotal to the effectiveness of the curriculum design. Therefore the following structures and practice will be in place.

- Communication Policy
- Individual student Speech and Language Assessments
- Individual and group communication targets
- Delivery of Speech and Language Therapy both individually and in groups
- Social communication groups
- Role play of social situations
- Annual Review Speech and Language Therapy Reports
- Speech and Language Therapists will work as part of curriculum planning teams

Each class will use visual strategies, such as visual timetables produced through use of Boardmaker, in order to support the students in identifying the sequence, focus and intended learning objectives within each lesson. This will enable the students to know what is expected of them, discuss the relevance of what is being learned, and identify and celebrate achievement within the sessions.

Teachers will start their planning by looking at established schemes of work and exam specifications depending on their phase. They will adapt these planning documents into a termly breakdown of weekly planning.

Invisible Planning

This is the planning that teachers do in their own notebooks and files based on the evaluations and assessments they are continually making. We recognize that this forms a considerable area of teachers work and, as such, is often based on mental recollections or jottings and cannot always be officially recorded.

IEPs – Individual Educational Plans

These are highly significant in planning for and ensuring pupils' development. IEP targets for skill areas that are 'additional and different' to whole-class provision will be written termly. At the end of an academic year, consultation between the outgoing and incoming teachers will be undertaken, to ensure that transition is smooth and that workable targets for the new year are set. Parents will be regularly consulted and informed about their child's targets and progress will be discussed at parents' consultation events and at a pupils' Annual Review of their Statement of Special Educational Needs.

Resources

The school recognizes that quality education needs quality resources and there is a commitment to provide a breadth of exciting, suitable, up to date resources in all subjects. Subject Leaders will be given an annual budget, (amounts will vary from year to year), with which to update resources. They will be responsible for accounting for this expenditure. Resources will be shared amongst classes and specialist resources will be located in various resource areas.

An effective curriculum across the key stages:

'A school's curriculum should help its children become the very best that they can be'. QCA Feb 2010.

Across the different key stages, the curriculum will be developed to provide a wealth of opportunities to design engaging, challenging and coherent learning experiences that will improve progression and achievement for all children who have needs on the Autism Spectrum. Subject teaching and cross-curricular studies are considered to be complementary and will act together to benefit children's learning. Some of the most effective learning occurs when connections are made between subjects. While the school will set out the curriculum in traditional areas of learning, planning will be focused on making many of these connections more explicit and manageable. This approach will support pupils with Autism, as they do not necessarily learn incidentally and make the intuitive connections that other children make. All students will work at their own level through individualised teaching strategies and differentiated lessons, based on the expectations of the National Curriculum.

Primary - Key Stage 1 and 2

Baston House School will offer access to the National Curriculum for all pupils aged from three and a half to eleven years. Access to the National Curriculum will be tailored to the individual needs of the pupil and supported through a communication-centred environment. Classes will be taught the core and non core foundation subjects.

- Literacy (English)
- Numeracy (Maths)
- Humanities (Geography, History and Religious Education)
- PSHE
- Science
- MFL
- Art
- Design technology
- ICT
- Music
- Drama
- Physical Education

The primary model of class based teaching provides a high level of security and structure and is beneficial to pupils who find it difficult to manage change of teacher/classroom. A project-based/cross-curricular delivery enables clear connections to be made between the different subject areas covered.

Our strong emphasis on visual supports and displays will create a purposeful learning environment and computer programmes such as Boardmaker will support this. Every class will have a visual timetable, outlining the structure of each lesson. Pupils will usually have an individually tailored reward system. Other structured approaches to communication and understanding will also be used. These may include: Social Stories, Picture Exchange Communication System, aspects of TEACCH and signing such as Makaton.

Secondary - Key Stage 3

During Key Stage 3 teachers will aim to ensure that a sound basis is developed for all pupils with different profiles of ability and performance in different areas, across the KS3 National Curriculum. Pupils will have a class base and a form teacher and will start getting used to subject teachers visiting their classrooms to give lessons. Lessons will be planned using the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum as a starting point; all lessons will be highly differentiated according to the abilities of the particular group of students. This approach will prepare the pupils for the coming years of gaining qualifications and accreditation; it will also develop an in depth knowledge of each pupil's 'spiky profile' of ability, so that the school is well placed to develop strengths while also catering for a variety of needs. The students in Key stage 3 will be given many opportunities to practice what they learn in the school setting in the world outside school. This will be achieved through involvement with the immediate community around school, educational visits across a wider area, use of local sports facilities and involvement with peers in other local schools.

The continued focus on visual and kinaesthetic teaching and learning approaches will ensure that students' strengths are capitalised upon.

The specialist curriculum at Baston House School will address the main areas of difficulty experienced by children on the Autism Spectrum effectively alongside the pupils' academic achievements. Our approach is based upon a therapeutic communication-focused environment with structured and focused teaching to ensure constant progress in all areas – social and emotional, cognitive, behavioural and physical.

Key Stage 4 / Key Stage 5

In key stage 4 and 5, teaching will be structured and focused to cover the National Curriculum, taking into account individual difference, ability and interests in learning. Besides the core areas of learning (English, Maths, Science, ICT) students will be offered options in a wider range of subjects and skills at different levels. These may include History, Geography, Art, Music, Performing Arts, Horticulture and Food Technology. PSHE will be taught through life skills, citizenship and work related learning schemes. PE will be taught to all pupils as a foundation for keeping fit and healthy as well as an important option for leisure activities outside school life.

Once again, the continued use of visual and kinaesthetic teaching and learning strategies will ensure that students' strengths are capitalised upon.

The curriculum will be developed to make learning more related to skills required for a better quality of life for pupils who have Autism and specifically promotes the learning of literacy, numeracy, ICT and life skills throughout the curriculum. The school will work with a variety of exam boards and will develop to include accreditation such as ASDAN, GCSE, Entry Level qualifications, Functional Skills, certificates/awards/diplomas in life and vocational skills. Pupils will be able to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and after school clubs.

The students in key stages 4 and 5 will be given many opportunities to practice what they learn in the school setting and in the world outside school. This will be achieved through involvement with the immediate community around school, structured work experience locally, use of local sports facilities and involvement with mainstream peers in a local schools and colleges. If students reach a specific level of ability in dealing with mainstream situations, they will have the opportunity to re-integrate and study at a local college.

Education Dimensions & Cross Curricular Themes

Equal Opportunities

We will actively promote, through our teaching, both discreetly, and in direct ways, the rights of all individuals to receive the optimum of opportunity in all facets of school life. This is an integral part of the school's ethos and practices. We aim to promote acceptable values and attitudes in this area for all our pupils.

Multi-Cultural Education

We believe in affirming and respecting the diverse cultures represented within our own school environment and in society as a whole. We aim for our pupils to become aware of differing cultures, tolerant of other view points and heritages and be able to join and share the delights of our diverse population from an informed position.

Citizenship

We believe that the school has a role to play in developing responsible attitudes towards society. We will actively promote the common tenets of good citizenship through assemblies and within class lessons. The ethos and practices of the school will combine to establish this as a feature of daily interaction between pupils, staff and friends of the school.

We aim for our pupils to be motivated to join in with positive citizenship practices.

Careers Education / Environmental and Economic Understanding

The approach to these strands will be essentially cross curricular in the primary phase; they can be taught discreetly or explicitly, in a classroom setting. The aim of these themes will be to give our pupils a rounded sense of life's opportunities and expectations at this early stage.

Role of Parents & Wider Community

Parents and the wider community are welcomed into the school. Parents are a valuable resource to the school and their knowledge of their children is central to planning in school. Parents may have their own expertise that can help provide stimulus to a topic or lesson. We aim to involve the local community in the curriculum through assemblies, using guest speakers and by visits to local areas, as a further concrete aid to learning.

Professional Support

Professional colleagues will have a significant role to play in the curriculum of our children and may include:

Speech and Language Therapists
Occupational Therapists
Arts Therapists
Educational/Clinical Psychologists
Social Services and Key Workers
Local Authority colleagues
Health Workers
CAMHS teams
Respite Services

We recognize the contribution these professionals can make in providing key knowledge and expertise in helping paint a rounded picture of the children we educate and the way in which we can overcome challenges some children have in accessing their learning. The school will work in collaboration and with open communication to facilitate a team of professionals dedicated to achieving success for our pupils.

Health & Safety

(See Health & Safety Policy)

A central aim of this policy is to ensure working, learning and play conditions are safe and secure at all times, including outside trips and school journeys. We realize that successful learning cannot take place without a safe environment.

Policy Written: for Autumn 2010

Signed.....

Review date: Autumn 2011