



Melrose Education
SCHOOL



Curriculum Policy

Reviewed by:	Snita Verma, Principal
Date:	1 March 2025
Last reviewed on:	1 September 2024, 1 July 2024
Next review due by:	31 August 2025
Version:	4
Approved by:	Tracey Storey, CEO

CONTENTS

- Curriculum Rationale
- Assessment Framework
- Curriculum planning, teaching, and learning
- Curriculum areas
- Marking and feedback

At Coombswood School, we pride ourselves on providing education that is engaging and innovative. We will always consider the SEMH and SEND needs of our learners and understand that they have not all had the best educational experience previously. We aim to inspire our learners to believe in their full potential, build confidence and resilience, and where appropriate provide a pathway to reintegrate back into mainstream education. Our staff provide motivation, support, and guidance to our learners in every way possible to cater for their educational, social, and emotional needs whilst overall raising their aspirations and personal self-esteem.

The school's restorative culture underpins all aspects of planning including curriculum intent, implementation and assessment, supporting individuals to reach their full potential. Practices ensure that learners are fully supported with diverse opportunities to succeed where they have experienced difficulty or failure in the past; examples of these are our Personal Support plans, personalised intervention sessions: timetabled sessions that facilitate reflection and create opportunities to develop resilience to aid progression and achievement. This enables a virtuous circle of reflection, action, achievement, resilience, and increased confidence promoting engagement and the love of learning.

Our curriculum is underpinned by the ethos and values of our school: **DREAM** – **D**etermination, **R**espect, **E**mpowerment, **A**ppreciation and **M**otivation.

Curriculum Rationale

Intent

Our curriculum is designed to provide a broad and balanced education that meets the diverse needs of our learners, ensuring that they have the opportunity to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. We recognise that our learners may well have faced multiple barriers to learning in previous educational settings. Our vision is to provide a trauma informed, inclusive and nurturing environment where all learners can achieve.

The curriculum is structured to:

- Foster self-esteem, wellbeing, self-confidence, increased cultural capital and a curiosity about the world.
- Deliver a high-quality, engaging education tailored to individual needs.
- Equip learners with the skills, knowledge, and understanding necessary for future independence and success.
- Support emotional regulation and social development alongside academic achievement.
- Offer flexibility to meet learners where they are, ensuring accessibility for those working at lower-than-expected levels.
- Build links between learning at school and life beyond.
- Build critical thinking skills and encourage self-advocacy.
- Embed strong citizenship values, ethics and awareness of personal, community and global safety.

Implementation

Our curriculum covers all areas of learning for independent schools, ensuring a comprehensive and well-rounded education. These areas include:

- Linguistic – Developing communication skills through speaking, listening, reading, and writing.
- Mathematical – Encouraging numerical fluency, problem-solving, and logical reasoning.
- Scientific – Promoting inquiry, investigation, and understanding of the natural world.
- Technological – Enhancing digital literacy and practical skills.
- Human and Social – Exploring history, geography, and spiritual topics.
- Physical – Building a physiological understanding of fitness and encouraging teamwork, strategy, movement, performance, flexibility and healthy lifestyles.
- Aesthetic and Creative – Providing opportunities for self-expression through art, crafts, design, poetry/lyric writing and music recording.

Curriculum Structure

A robust framework ensures that skills and knowledge are mapped out clearly and sequentially. Teachers are encouraged to edit the schemes needed to include more challenging content tailored to their own learners as well as to include more accessible content for learners who may be working at a lower level. Options for specific SEN adaptations are considered in the format of the planning, MTP include a section for teachers to include learners' needs and necessary interventions for each lesson. The curriculum is spiralled, allowing learners to revisit and build upon previous learning.

SMART learning questions are used to guide assessment, written as 'Can you.' statements to track progress. Cross curricula links are noted in the SOW and MTPs to encourage project work across several subjects, for example: Science and Food Tech to look at raising agents.

Core subjects are prioritised:

- Maths and English: Four lessons per week.
- Science: At least two lessons per week.
- All other subjects: One lesson per week.

A three-year rolling KS3 curriculum labelled A, B, and C instead of 7, 8, and 9 to accommodate learners at varying levels. Lessons will include both secondary and primary level content to cater for all abilities and learning gaps in the class.

KS4 is a two-year rolling curriculum labelled KS4 YA and KS4 YB to accommodate learners joining at different times and working at different levels. The KS4 courses follow GCSE/Functional Skills SOW for Maths and English and Entry level or BTEC SOW for other subjects. At times the subjects will include both GCSE and Functional Skills level content to cater for all levels in the class. At KS4, learners will be entered for the highest possible level of qualifications suitable for their abilities based on assessment led decisions and consideration for their own interests and ambitions.

Each subject has:

- Schemes of Work (SOW) including the sequencing of all topics and outcomes.
- Long-Term Plans (LTP) outlining topic coverage.
- Medium-Term Plans (MTP) with detailed lesson plans for each half-term.

Assessment Framework

Progress is tracked using a BRAG rating system:

Blue – Exceeding target.

Red – Below expected progress.






Amber – Working towards target.

Green – Achieving target.

Teachers assess learning at the end of each lesson using this system, ensuring timely interventions and support where needed. This data is collected to be used to track progress across each curriculum area which contributes to a data drop at the end of each half term.

Learner Stickers:

Lesson Objectives and Success Criteria are shared in every lesson using the proforma below and stuck in exercise books at the start of the lesson. This also provides opportunities for learners to feedback on their progress against individual success criteria and the lesson as a whole.

Learning Outcome:				S / I
Success Criteria:				
Learner voice: I liked it 	I didn't like it 	I loved it 	I seemed to enjoy it 	I didn't seem to enjoy it 

Learning Objective:	Teacher	Learner
Success Criteria		
I understand.	I enjoyed this lesson.	
I needed some help.	This lesson was ok.	
I found this hard.	I didn't like this lesson.	

Impact

The impact of our curriculum is measured through:

- Regular assessment of academic progress using subject knowledge tests a range of different assessments, including phonics assessment, Hachette assessments, age related progression steps, BRAG ratings which link to academic progression steps and SMART learning outcomes and the measurement of progress through the curriculum topics from starting points.
- Improved engagement emotional regulation, tracked through pastoral support and behaviour monitoring.

- Increased confidence and self-esteem, reflected in learners' willingness to participate in lessons and school activities.
- Readiness for further education, training, or employment, supported by targeted interventions and life skills development.
- Holistic progress in social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) development, ensuring that learners leave with the resilience and independence necessary for adult life.
- Progress made towards EHCP outcomes –these targets are linked relevant subjects including the Life Skills and Careers curriculum

By implementing a flexible, structured, and nurturing approach to learning, we provide our learners with the opportunity to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally, preparing them for a successful future.

The school organises class groupings by social and curriculum accessibilities, the ability to interact with the class, and create and maintain flourishing friendships. This is with the aim that each learner placed in a class can access the environment both socially and educationally complemented by an adaptive classroom delivery model.

Through a varied and adaptive curriculum, and the use of adaptive teaching methods, we aim to teach learners how to grow into positive, responsible young people that can not only have a positive impact on our local community but can successfully transition into further education, employment, volunteering, and adulthood. We value the spiritual and moral development of each person, as well as their intellectual and physical growth – the ability to participate positively in society is also at the heart of our planning. The development of social skills is promoted within our curriculum and throughout the school day, where elements such as self-esteem and self-awareness, body language, the way we talk, conversation and assertiveness are explored, modelled, and practised. Experiences in the community give learners the opportunity to practise their skills in external situations with the support and care of our skilled staff team.

Our curriculum promotes achievement and success regardless of starting point to build confidence and engagement. The curriculum is designed to ensure that all learners have the opportunity to fully achieve their potential, and they follow a variety of learning pathways that prepare them for suitable qualifications in KS4, including Entry Level, Functional skills, GCSE and BTEC qualifications.

At the end of each half term, formal assessments are undertaken in reading, spelling, writing and Mathematics. Progress is updated and analysed by SLT to ensure that every learner is making progress consistent with their learning path. Any identified inconsistency is highlighted, and supportive strategies agreed.

Curriculum Planning, Teaching, and Learning

The long-term plan for the school is reviewed annually in consultation with the tutor team, taking into consideration any global/environmental/technical/policy changes and feedback/reflection from delivery of each subject area. From the long-term plan, bespoke schemes of work are developed, and from these, specific lesson plans and resources produced. Teaching staff customise and personalise planning to meet the needs of their individual cohort of learners. The adaptive approach to planning for teaching and learning is to ensure that all learners receive a broad offer, appropriate to supporting progression and achievement of personal targets, and that the planning itself is, wherever possible, hands on and experiential. This approach also enables teaching staff to maintain a manageable workload and facilitates a positive work/life balance.

The KS3 and KS4 curriculums are planned together to facilitate an offer that supports learners to build upon prior knowledge and close gaps. Within English, Mathematics and Science, the KS3 curriculum prepares learners for their own pathway at KS4 – Entry Level, Functional Skills or GCSE dependent upon ability.

Through a creative curriculum, learners will face the challenge of debate and study that will foster recognition and sympathetic awareness of the beliefs and values of others, improving all learners' awareness of the world in which we live. Where relevant and possible, learners take part in a wide variety of educational visits and field trips to broaden their experience of different locations and situations and glean learning from real life experience. Many of our learners have limited access to opportunities to improve their cultural capital outside school, so this is interwoven throughout the curriculum and within the school ethos.

Curriculum Areas

Please refer to the long-term plans for subject specific areas and content.

English

English is an essential foundation for success in all subjects. Developing the core skills of reading and writing, vocabulary development and spoken language is essential for a learner's chance to progress.

KS3 curriculum aims – to instil the core skills of reading and writing, vocabulary development and spoken language. This aims to compliment previous knowledge and work towards skills needed to succeed at KS4. At KS3, a staged phonics programme and reading a variety of increasingly challenging texts will enable learners at KS4 to access either pathway of Functional Skills English, or GCSE English Language.

The curriculum will support learners to:

- Develop reading skills including using phonics interventions.
- Write accurately and effectively using Standard English and level appropriate spelling and grammar – plan, draft, edit and proof-read.
- Build on their vocabulary and understanding of more complex words.
- Speak and listen confidently and effectively.

KS4 curriculum aims – to expand on and further their knowledge of the key skills covered in KS3 to support learners to:

- Develop reading skills.
- Write accurately, fluently, and effectively at length using Standard English and level appropriate spelling grammar – plan, draft, edit and proof-read.
- Write using an informed personal response.
- Build on their vocabulary from KS3 and use it effectively.
- Speak and listen confidently and effectively using personal opinions and the opinions of others.

Functional Skills English

The Functional Skills qualifications provide a foundation for progression into employment or further technical education and develop skills for everyday life.

A key aim for Functional Skills English is that it enables learners to gain confidence and fluency in their use of English language. It provides the basis for effective communication and understanding across the three subject skill areas: reading, speaking, and listening, and writing. Skills developed during the course include learning to write concisely, with clarity

and meaning. Learners will apply this knowledge to a number of practical writing tasks, such as article and letter writing.

GCSE English Language

GCSE English Language, Edexcel is designed to engage and motivate learners through a choice of contemporary texts, relatable modern themes, and real-world writing tasks. It has been developed with non-neurotypical learners in mind.

It enables learners to:

- read a wide range of texts, fluently and with good understanding.
- read critically, and use knowledge gained from wide reading to inform and improve their own writing.
- write effectively and coherently using Standard English appropriately.
- use grammar correctly, punctuate and spell accurately.
- acquire and apply a wide vocabulary, alongside a knowledge and understanding of grammatical terminology and linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language.
- listen to and understand spoken language, and use spoken Standard English effectively.

Mathematics

Functional Skills Maths

A key aim for Functional Skills mathematics is that it enables learners to gain confidence and fluency in, and a positive attitude towards, mathematics. Learners will convey their confidence in using mathematics when they can demonstrate a sound grasp of mathematical knowledge and skills and apply it to solve mathematical problems. It develops behaviours such as persistence, resilience and logical thinking as learners apply mathematical tools and approaches.

The Functional Skills qualifications provide a foundation for progression into employment or further technical education and develop skills for everyday life.

The content will introduce learners to new areas of life and work so that they are exposed to concepts and problems which, while not of immediate concern, may be of value in later life. It enables learners to develop an appreciation of the role played by mathematics in the world of work and in life.

GCSE Maths

It encourages learners to develop confidence in, and a positive attitude towards, mathematics and to recognise the importance of mathematics in their own lives and to society. It also provides a strong mathematical foundation for learners who go on to study mathematics at a higher-level post-16.

This planning enables learners to:

- develop fluent knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts.
- acquire, select, and apply mathematical techniques to solve problems.
- reason mathematically, make deductions and inferences and draw conclusions.
- comprehend, interpret, and communicate mathematical information in a variety of forms appropriate to the information and context.

The problem solving at the heart of mathematics learning, helps learners tackle everyday mathematical problems whilst studying and after obtaining the qualification. It encourages

the teaching of links between different areas of the curriculum by targeting questions that cover the content from different subject areas within mathematics.

ICT/Digital Functional Skills

At KS3, ICT develops the learners' knowledge, skills and understanding with a key focus on the development of effective communication skills and encourages them to demonstrate their skills in using ICT systems, finding, and selecting information, developing, presenting, and communicating information in a range of contexts and for various purposes. There is a specific focus on using ICT, social media and digital devices safely.

At KS4 planning is cross-referenced and complemented by the Digital Functional Skills subject content where ICT planning provides learners with a solid understanding of the five content themes of using devices and handling information, creating, editing, communicating, transacting and being safe and responsible online.

Science

At KS3 Coombswood School's Science offer is broad and varied and reflects the interests and capabilities of the learner cohort. Learners can access a wide variety of Science curriculum topics ranging from cellular development to space and the solar system. All the topics are relevant to the learner's understanding of scientific theory, evidence, analysis, and comprehension. In addition, there are multiple practical investigations to encourage scientific thought and engagement.

At KS4 Entry Level and GCSE courses enable all learners to continue their learning journey in Science and achieve a qualification. The application of their knowledge to real-world and contemporary issues is a focus of their learning in order to make Science relevant and engaging.

PSHE/RSE

The aim of our PSHE offer is to educate and support individuals to lead safe and healthy lives, make informed choices regarding social and personal issues and develop the necessary skills to manage their next step, lives, and aspirations to become responsible and productive members of society. The planning is mapped to the DfE's statutory RSE guidance and we are members of the PSHE Association.

Throughout the year we celebrate our cultural diversity through exploring religious festivals and celebrations.

RE

The RE curriculum at Coombswood recognises and celebrates our diverse local area. Learners will study a wide variety of RE-based topics, including the key concepts of major religions found in the UK, how the design and use of religious buildings reflects the needs and beliefs of their users, the main religious founders of faiths, religious art and its use in celebrations and prayer, and the importance of tolerance and respect. There are many opportunities to engage with artifacts and visit local religious buildings to expand learners' cultural understanding.

Human and Social

Encompassing both History and Geography, these curriculums help learners to understand their world in the context of people and places, resources, and environments across the globe, and gain a solid knowledge around key historical events, locally and internationally that have effected changes in society over time.

Life Skills and Careers

Our Life Skills and Careers programme aims to empower learners by fostering leadership, independence, and positive relationships while equipping them with employability skills. The programme supports personal development, helping learners to overcome barriers, set meaningful future goals, and build resilience. Embedded within the course are opportunities for career exploration and development, ensuring alignment with the Gatsby Benchmarks, and preparing learners for life beyond school.

At Coombswood School we deliver this programme weekly, providing a structured yet flexible curriculum tailored to meet the diverse needs of all learners. Through engaging, practical activities and discussions, learners will explore topics related to **L**eadership, **I**ndependence, **F**riendship, and **E**mployability. Career guidance and encounters with employers and employees will feature prominently, ensuring CIEAG integration and real-world relevance. The programme encourages active participation and self-reflection, building confidence and life skills in a supportive environment.

The impact of this Life Skills and Careers programme demonstrates increased self-awareness, improved interpersonal skills, and enhanced employability prospects. Learners will have a clearer understanding of their career aspirations and pathways, supported by experiences aligned with the Gatsby Benchmarks. This holistic approach ensures that learners leave with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to navigate their personal and professional lives successfully.

PE

Physical education includes developing confidence and competence in a wide range of individual, paired and team activities, to promote physical health and wellbeing, positive mental health, teamwork, and problem-solving skills. All activities are planned and supported to ensure all learners can participate in activities. Where appropriate, learners make use of local leisure and sporting facilities, and all learners have the opportunity for swimming lessons.

Creative Art and Design Technology

The aesthetic and creative arts curriculum will give learners experiential involvement with different art media including, drawing, painting, printing, collage, sculpture, and photography. Learners will study a variety of artists with a different focus, embedding historical, geographical, cultural, personal, and social development. This provides knowledge and skills to support progression into further education and adulthood to develop a lifelong love of the creative arts and potential careers within the sector of art. In KS4, learners may choose to engage in further study leading to accreditation.

Cookery

At KS3, learners learn the basics of cooking via a half termly focus including seasonal, cultural, environmental and health themes. Being able to cook for oneself is a major step towards independence as a young adult and as well as practising essential culinary skills, learners will also study the basics of food safety and hygiene. The curriculum is planned to promote links with other curriculum areas including Science, PE and PSHE.

At KS4, Cookery forms part of the Life Skills provision and learners have the opportunity to achieve accreditation via a suitable qualification.

Interventions

There are a number of interventions that staff are trained in, including Emotional Coaching, Lego Therapy and learners can seek support from Mental Health First Aiders who can be made available. Learners do have access to a number of staff, including 'safe faces' and quiet working areas.

Marking and Feedback Policy

Marking should provide meaningful, accessible and constructive feedback to every learner, focusing on success and improvement needs against lesson objectives and success criteria, enabling learners to become reflective and helping them close the gap between current and desired performance.

The marking policy should be seen as part of the cycle of effective assessment which includes using learning objectives, success criteria, adaptive teaching, quality questioning and meaningful feedback both oral and written.

Marking is most effective when it is:

- Simple.
- Appropriate to age and ability.
- Helps learners know what they have done well against learning objectives and success criteria.
- Clearly shows how to improve.
- Supports self-assessment.
- Timely for learners to act on feedback.

The aim of the school policy is to ensure that learners are encouraged to value feedback, and to know that it is addressed to them individually and specifically tailored to help them learn, improve, and achieve.

To help achieve this aim, the marking policy will be applied consistently across all the school sites and all subjects.

The objective of the policy is to raise learner achievement and confidence and accelerate rates of progress.

The judgement on the effectiveness of the marking policy rests on the impact that marking and feedback have on learners' progress. The following points are considered as indicators of effective marking and feedback:

- learners showed that they understood the purpose of the marking or feedback was individually tailored to their needs to help them develop academically.
- teachers' handwriting is easy to read, and all spelling, grammar and punctuation is correct.
- marking recognises successes against the learning objective and success criteria, and helps learners understand what they have done well.
- teachers provide constructive feedback to learners so that they can identify and understand how they can improve their learning.
- action points for improvement are given, specifically relate to instances in the marked work and give opportunities for learners to close the gap to have a positive impact on their learning and understanding.
- teachers use assessment to check on how well their teaching is achieving the learning objectives and adapt their teaching and support accordingly.
- learners will be able to articulate what they need to do to progress.

Every member of staff is responsible and accountable for correcting and developing English language skills across all subjects.

Writing, Speaking & Listening & Reading

Writing – We Encourage:

- Correct grammar
- Correct punctuation
- Planning of written work
- Correct sentence structures
- Using the correct tense (past, present, future)
- Correct subject-verb agreement e.g., verb 'to be' = I am, it is, you are, we are, they are, etc.

Speaking and Listening – We Encourage:

- Speaking formally (how, when, and where)
- Speaking informally (how, when, and where)
- Speaking in a group
- Listening to others' opinions without interrupting
- Contributing appropriately to a discussion
- Asking questions based on information presented
- Answering questions with a thought-out response
- Presenting independently (this could be in the form of 'show and tell')

Reading – We Encourage:

- Use of phonics to support reading development
- Reading aloud
- Reading independently
- Being read to by staff
- Strategies to deal with difficult words
- Making sense of whole texts
- Summarising texts in their own words
- Developing opinions of texts
- Extending vocabulary

Marking Guidance

How Will We Evidence The Marking?

Work is marked using the **Marking Codes** sheet provided. Each learner will have access to the marking codes through classroom displays/handouts.

We will mark positive achievements and areas for development in **green** ink. Corrections by learners will be added (purple pen). Yellow highlighter used where required.

How Will We Show Improvement Of Learners' Work?

Learners will be given the opportunity to correct any mistakes or improve work, that have been highlighted by the teacher/tutor, using a "Purple Pen of Progress"

- Evidence over time throughout learners' exercise books or folders
- Completion of targeted work/task setting during lessons or interventions

Assessment and Feedback

How will we evidence, regularly assess, and provide feedback on learners' work?

Learners' work will be regularly assessed in many different formats to ensure appropriate progress and feedback is given to ensure all learners achieve their full potential. Assessment will be in different forms:

- Verbal and written daily feedback through exercise books or folders
- Live marking - teachers' movement around the classroom to routinely, systematically check learners' understanding of work in relation to the lesson objective and success

criteria, and the opportunities for 'in the moment' feedback that this provides. The teacher should circulate around the room as learners are working to:

- provide verbal feedback or make notes to correct misconceptions and/or guide learners on next steps.
- check that all tasks are completed.
- check that the quality of work is of the required standard.

Additional Strategies We Will Utilise, Where Appropriate:

- Self-assessment to encourage active learner involvement in assessing own strengths and steps needed to achieve lesson objectives, success criteria and progress.
- Peer assessment to develop understanding of what is required to be successful and how to make judgements that are fair and accurate.
- Online resources to engage learners in an alternative form of learning that provides instant and visual feedback.
- Tailored intervention to bridge the gap.

Marking and Feedback Codes

Mark Scheme

Marking Symbol	Explanation
Green highlighter	Positive feedback of good work
Yellow highlighter	Incorrect information
Yellow highlighter	Incorrect spelling
^	Omission – give more detail
√	Correct answer
√√	Correction or improvement from verbal feedback
//	New paragraph

Feedback Scheme

The use of WWW, EBI acronyms etc. commonly used in schools require learners to engage in multi-step processing streams to interpret and understand. This can be confusing for learners who have processing difficulties, are literal thinkers or for whom literacy is still a barrier to learning. EBI can also be interpreted as “never good enough” by some learners who have previously had negative educational experiences. Colour coding (yellow or green highlighting) will therefore be used as a visual prompt which requires minimal processing to understand.

We will further give personalised written feedback to learners specific to the piece of work assessed through:

- **Green highlighter** – What went well... detailing positive feedback on the work completed.
- **Yellow highlighter** – Even better if ... detailing developmental feedback so learners are clear on how they can improve.
- **Extend and challenge** – work or tasks that enable learners to develop or experience work at a more advanced level, building resilience and confidence.
- **Subject specific marking codes** – In KS4 as per exam boards' marking criteria.