



Melrose Education  
SCHOOL



## Curriculum Policy

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At Coombswood School, we pride ourselves on providing education that is engaging and innovative. Our curriculum is designed to meet the SEMH and SEND needs of our learners and instil the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to be successful and progress to the next stage of their development, whether that is continuing their education, training, or employment.

We are very aware that our learners have not all had the best educational experience previously and therefore focus on a holistic approach at inspiring our learners to believe in their full potential. We are fully aware that our learners have significant gaps in their skills and conceptual knowledge compared to their age expectations and peers. We build their confidence and resilience, and where appropriate provide a pathway to re-integrate 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 raising their aspirations and personal self-esteem overall.

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** – Determination, Respect, Empowerment, Appreciation and Motivation.

### **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. 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

Our curriculum is constantly evolving to suit the needs and interests of our children. A detailed and well-designed long-term plan ensures that skills and knowledge are mapped out clearly and sequentially. This robust vision is then adapted by individual teachers into their midterm plans, customised to suit individual needs of the learners. Teachers edit the schemes to include more challenging content for higher achievers as well as more accessible content for learners who may be working at a lower level. Options for specific SEN adaptations are also incorporated in the planning.

Teachers include an analysis of the diverse needs of their learners in their classes and designs specific strategies or interventions for individual learners. The curriculum is spiraled, allowing learners to revisit and build upon previous learning. Learning questions are used to guide assessment, written as 'Can you.' statements to track progress. Cross curricular links are identified 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 each subject per week.
- Science: at least two lessons per week.
- All other subjects: at least 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 objectives and content bridge learning gaps for all abilities and learners 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 SOWs for other subjects. Depending on the suitability, subjects may also include both GCSE and Functional Skills level content to cater for all abilities 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 and establishing the spiraling/ revisiting of the skills and contents.
- Medium-Term Plans (MTP) with detailed lesson plans for each half-term, customised by teachers to meet individual needs to all learners ensuring highest progress.

### 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
<b>Success Criteria</b>		
<b>I understand.</b>	<b>I enjoyed this lesson.</b>	
<b>I needed some help.</b>	<b>This lesson was ok.</b>	
<b>I found this hard.</b>	<b>I didn't like this lesson.</b>	

### Impact

The impact of our curriculum is measured through:

- Regular assessment of academic progress is done using subject knowledge tests, a range of different assessments (e.g. phonics assessment, White rose end of unit assessments etc.) and BRAG ratings for individual topic/lesson taught.
- Improved engagement and emotional wellbeing are tracked through pastoral support and behavior 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.

Data collection around learners' progress and wellbeing is updated by teachers 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 are put in place.

## **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 neurodivergent 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 will be of value in their immediate as well as 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.

## **RSE**

The RSE curriculum at Coombswood recognises that today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal, and social lives in a positive way.

With this objective in mind our RSE curriculum is taught as 6 strands – “Families”, “Respectful relationships and friendships”, “Online and media”, “Being safe” and “Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health”. Learners will study a wide variety of RSE-based topics that will enrich their cultural capital and help them navigate through complex situations in life.

## **Humanities**

Encompassing RE, History and Geography, these curriculum areas 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.

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

## **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 **Leadership**, **Independence**, **Friendship**, and **Employability**. 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.