



# Sheiling School Thornbury

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## 1. PHILOSOPHY AND CONTEXT

The Sheiling School offers a full range of educational and social experiences to pupils aged 6 to 19 years, with a wide range of special educational and complex learning needs that require a tailored individual approach to education. A significant number of our pupils have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and as a result may have further difficulties with sensory processing, communication and interaction, and social communication.

The School's approach is grounded in the pedagogical, therapeutic and developmental insights of Rudolf Steiner. Along with an emphasis on 'learning through doing', it gives a central place to human relationships and attachments in healthy human development. It is through this emphasis on relationships that we are able to meet the changing needs of children and young people as they develop physically, mentally and emotionally.

At the Sheiling School we are committed to meeting the individuality of each young person, and through this establish a meaningful relationship in order to nurture and support his/her growth and development. We respect each human being and believe that each young person should be enabled to develop to his/her best potential, to grow and to make a contribution to the whole community.

The School offers a broad, balanced and differentiated Curriculum offering Holistic and Therapeutic education that reflect the broad needs of our pupils. Educators, therapists and health professionals work together to support the young person's development and provide an educational and therapeutic environment designed both to support and to offer challenge. Pupils are educated and taught in a variety of settings so they can practice skills in 'real life' situations.

## 2. AIMS

Through an integrated approach of education, care and therapy and a focus on our pupils' academic, physical, emotional and spiritual development, our aim is:

- To enable our pupils to progress academically to their full potential.
- To inspire learners to engage/re-engage in education by providing a safe and nurturing learning environment
- To provide both formal and informal learning opportunities, which encourage pupils to prepare for life beyond school; as individual citizens, as members of a group and as members of the community. Pupils are encouraged to develop self-confidence to learn new skills, to become receptive to new ideas, to build relationships with others and to develop social competence in a range of group activities.
- To develop each pupil's ability to take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.
- To promote each pupil to become active citizens by providing opportunities to allow them to learn how to make a positive contribution to the school, local and world communities.
- To recognise and celebrate achievement across a wide range of activities.
- To encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.
- To maintain and promote the involvement of parents in their child's learning.
- To help prepare pupils for their future life as a young adult by promoting and developing life skills and through involvement in a range of work experience placements and work shadowing experiences

## 3. THE SCHOOL DAY

The importance of rhythm, routines, order of lessons and the role of the class teacher underpin the structure of the School Day and this is consistent across the school.

Time	Structure of School Day
9:10 – 10:30	Main Lesson
10:30 – 11:00	Break
11:00 – 11:50	Second Lesson
11:-50 – 12:45	Lesson
12:45 - 1:45	Lunch and Break
1:45 - 2:45	Afternoon Lesson
2:45 – 2:00	Afternoon Break
3:00 - 3:30	Plenary

Additionally, on a Friday morning there is a short whole school assembly that is a space for the pupils to come together and a teacher to bring a different theme. Themes may include the celebration of festivals and traditions drawn from different cultures, as well as topics such as the environment, topical news stories, national events and personal development.

### **3.1 MAIN LESSON**

The Main Lesson is a central feature of the Steiner Waldorf approach that takes place every morning for the first hour and a half of the school day. The Main Lesson is led by the class teacher and is an opportunity to teach a range of varied skills and content. The main lesson content is taught thematically in half termly blocks (subject themes are taken from the Steiner Waldorf curriculum) that address a range of subject areas: History, Geography, Science, English, Mathematics, and Art. In addition to the subject content, the Main Lesson is also a vehicle to promote emotional literacy, social skills, and physical/rhythmic development.

### **3.2 LITERACY AND NUMERACY**

Literacy and Numeracy skills are taught throughout the school day, both in discrete literacy and numeracy lessons and embedded within cross curricular subjects and real-life learning opportunities. The highly individualized learning environment in the School recognizes the varied needs of learners and uses creative teaching techniques, tailored to natural interests to encourage access to the learning process. Additionally, creative and physical skills are equally valued and developed through a range of activities which include art, textiles, pottery, woodwork and music.

## **4. FACILITIES**

The School has nine classrooms and 3 outdoor shelters. Each class group has a dedicated classroom or outdoor shelter where they meet for morning register and where the majority of lessons take place. In addition, there are several specialist classrooms and facilities to support the following curriculum subjects. They are as follows:

- Handwork workshop
- Pottery workshop
- Woodwork
- Bakery
- Swimming pool

- Movement Hall with a traversing climbing wall
- Gardening and Horticulture facilities
- Horseriding (facilitated off site).

## 5. CURRICULUM AND PLANNING

The Head Teacher has overall responsibility for the Curriculum and is supported by the Assistant Head Teachers, Class Teachers, Specialist Teachers and Workshop Coordinators.

### 5.1. Lesson delivery

All pupils within the School enjoy a personalized learning programme which is designed to address their particular needs. Each pupil has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which includes targets designed to support them in making progress towards the objectives detailed in their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and therapy goals and outcomes. Additionally, each pupil has Individual Learning Outcomes to work towards in each lesson. These learning outcomes are informed by Schemes of Work, teacher assessments and, where relevant, IEP targets. Pupils who show a particular preference toward practical and vocational education are provided with opportunities to learn valuable practical skills. Literacy and numeracy skills are embedded across the curriculum. Each pupil has an individual timetable which details their planned lessons and any therapies they attend.

Generally, pupils are grouped into classes based on chronological age rather than ability. However, sometimes pupils are placed with a slightly different age group if it is decided that, for particular social or academic reasons, this would increase their chances of success.

### 5.2 Classes 1-8

A crucial element of the Steiner approach is the belief that, irrespective of cognitive functioning or degrees of physical difficulty, certain developmental phases are universal. A teenager is a teenager irrespective of physical or cognitive difficulties. Equally, an eight or nine year old child will start to become conscious of the 'world beyond childhood' – intimations of mortality and the challenges that await. The Waldorf Curriculum offers content in the different subject areas that support the child in his or her particular developmental stage, and with whatever challenges might arise. Themes within each subject area are devised according to chronological age to support and stimulate the child's physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual growth.

Before the start of the academic year each Class Teacher will develop a Year Planner for their Class. The Year Planner supports the choice and order of topics for the academic year. Topics chosen from the following subjects presented in the Waldorf Curriculum are taught in Classes 1-9: English, Maths, Science, Design and Technology, Geography and History.

These themes are mainly taught in half termly blocks, during the first session of the school day, which we call the Main Lesson period. These block periods enable the pupils to experience and explore a theme in an integrated way.

### 5.3 Class 9-10

For pupils in Classes 9 and 10 (Key stage 4), the Waldorf curriculum is supplemented by a range of accreditation options suitable for our diverse group of pupils. Pupils study the main lesson topics which are relevant for them, using the accredited courses to supplement and develop their learning. Pupils are also assessed via their accredited courses at this age.

### 5.4 6th Form (16-19)

At the age of sixteen the pupils at the Sheiling School enter the 6th Form. Insofar as it is possible, they leave behind the familiar structure of a Lower School approach and move into a setting that places increasing emphasis, with each successive year, on preparation for adult life and the big transition into adult provision.

Learning pathways in the 6<sup>th</sup> Form are entirely individual and based on the student's abilities, interests and requirements for later life. There is as such no singular curriculum. However, it could be said there is a 'core pathway' that is shared by all, consisting of Enterprise, Work Experience, Independent Living Skills, Arts and Crafts and SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural).

There is a focus on academic accreditation in the 6<sup>th</sup> Form *only when and where it is meaningful for the students' chosen future pathway*. Students following a pathway designed around independence skills and self-help skills, for example, and where academic skills are not a priority for future life, might not access an accredited course. Others, where there is a possibility of future employment (at whatever level) might follow the ASDAN Workright qualification. Where students are achieving academically, and where there is a desire to pursue a more academic path (to pursue a future college course, for example), the 6<sup>th</sup> Form supports that with the following accredited schemes: AQA Entry Level 1, 2, and 3 Certificate (English and Maths); AQA Functional Skills; GCSE Maths and English.

There is also the option of pursuing slightly broader, less academically challenging courses such as "Moving On" accredited curriculum by Equals. This involves 3 main areas of study: "World Studies", "Life Skills" and "Vocational Studies". The Class Teacher selects which units from these areas of study should be covered each year. Units can be accredited separately. Alongside this pupils undertake Moving On units in Functional Skills (English, Maths, ICT). Alternatively, for students working at National Curriculum levels (pre- 2014 National Curriculum) there is the option of the ASDAN certificate of Personal Effectiveness or the ASDAN Bronze programme. These have proven successful with students who have struggled with examination assessed courses. Alongside this they can take or re-take Entry Level Certificate (coursework based) or Functional Skills (exam based) qualifications in English and Maths.

## 6 OUTDOOR PROVISION

The Outdoor Provision offers a therapeutic intervention to vulnerable children and young people who may be experiencing difficulties in settling into formal schooling which is traditionally oriented towards an indoor and desk-based timetable. Learning need not take

place solely within educational buildings as the outdoor environment has immense potential for learning too. We are extremely fortunate to have such a rich rural environment on our doorstep to support our pupils' learning experiences.

The Outdoor Provision may be suitable for a pupil to follow for the entirety of their school career, or it may only be suitable or necessary for a shorter intervention to give the individual pupil a different sense of what 'school' is. The latter especially applies to those pupils who arrive from placements that have broken down, or where there has been a very negative experience of schooling. Children and young people who have been out of school for long periods of time or who find it difficult to adapt to a classroom setting due to sensory, anxiety and behaviour difficulties are offered outdoor space and learning opportunities that contribute to developing resilience. Small groups of pupils have sessions with a high staff ratio to ensure every pupil has the support they need to learn, work and play freely and safely.

Outdoor learning provides fresh settings for children and young people to demonstrate what they know and can do and therefore for assessing their knowledge and skills. Assessment of learning in different outdoor contexts can provide opportunities to vary levels of challenge appropriate to individuals' needs and abilities.

## **7 CRAFT**

We have a strong commitment to the experience and development of craft skills and activities (design and technology) such as pottery, woodwork, handwork and bakery. For our 6<sup>th</sup> Form we aim for these activities to have some relation to vocational or pre-vocational skills, with routine, preparation, productivity and, when appropriate, an end product as part of the learning experience. For the younger pupils the projects and lesson content are as much as possible linked to the crafts in the Waldorf Curriculum.

It is the Craft Workshop Leaders' responsibility to plan the teaching of the AQA units relevant to the pupils in their group. A detailed Scheme of Work is designed with links to each unit. The Scheme of Work has a clear outline of targets with clear Learning Objectives, Activities, Resources and expected (differentiated) learning outcomes, including IEP targets where appropriate.

The unit content for each unit is all set out in the AQA Unit Master file. Examples of Schemes of Work with differentiated learning outcomes can be found on Dropbox.

## **8 CURRICULUM BREADTH AND BALANCE: EDUCATION, ARTISTIC EXPERIENCES AND THERAPY**

In addition to the subjects described above, much emphasis is given to creative activities such as Eurythmy, Speech & Language Therapy, sensory development and integration, and outdoor work. Many pupils with learning difficulties or ASD will have personal priority needs which are central to their learning and quality of life. Some pupils will have therapeutic needs and require a specific sensory and therapeutic approach. Provision for these needs is an essential element of the curriculum and should be planned for and taken into account.

The balance of the curriculum reflects our pupils' needs. Due to complex learning difficulties, some pupils are at very early stages of development as learners. They require a higher proportion of time to be allocated to physical development, personal and social development, language and communication, and sensory integration and stimulation. Other pupils exhibit severe challenging behaviour and may have arrived with a negative experience of school. They may require a higher proportion of physical work or more flexible approaches to academic learning.

Information and communication technology is available to every pupil who benefits from technological aids such as communication aids. Some pupils have use of an iPad to help them follow a visual timetable or communicate their needs. All Speech and Language Therapy at the Sheiling School is planned and directed by the Sheiling School's Speech and Language Therapist, who assesses each student individually and provides clear interventions and communication programmes. These are thoroughly embedded into activities across the pupil's day, with further guidance and support (for both staff and students) provided by the Therapeutic Support Assistant. Supported Communication (Signalong, PECs etc) is widely used in the 6<sup>th</sup> Form, although again, according to need.

As with SLT, the degree of direct OT support for each student will differ according to need and the specifications of the Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), but our Occupational Therapist (who is additionally qualified in Sensory Integration) provides clear OT support for all of our students, with individual programmes designed around careful observation and assessment. It is a part of our therapeutic and pedagogic philosophy that meaningful craft-based activity is an opportunity for practising and consolidating OT exercises and techniques; as such, and with the support of our Therapeutic Support Assistant (OT), occupational therapy is effectively embedded into a significant part of the pupil's day.

Pupils may also require periods of individual therapeutic input such as Eurythmy Therapy, Form drawing, Art therapy and Rhythmical massage.

Throughout the day and week, pupils benefit from consistent and familiar rhythms to help them to make sense of, and gain confidence in, their learning environment. The day is 'structured' with verses, songs, movement activities and pauses for play and rest.

Each pupil has access to their class group curriculum, although for some there can be variations in the balance of subjects - or in some cases an individual timetable - in order to meet their specific needs. The curriculum should be a medium to facilitate pupils learning and development rather than a rigid structure that they must comply with.

## **9 PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH AND ECONOMICS (PSHE) AND SEX AND REALATIONSHIP EDUCATION; SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

Sex and Relationship education forms part of the PSHE curriculum and is timetabled for Key stage 3, 4 and post 16 pupils. Sex and Relationship education is delivered according to individual pupil's abilities and emotional development and class groups may be divided into smaller groups where appropriate.

All curriculum areas have a contribution to make to the child's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All adults will model and promote expected behaviour, treating all people as unique and valuable individuals and showing respect for pupils and their specific needs. Pupils should learn to differentiate between right and wrong insofar as their actions affect other people. They will be encouraged to value themselves and others. Pupils should understand the need for rules and the need to abide by rules for the good of everyone. School and classroom rules should reflect, reiterate, promote and reward acceptable behaviour and provide opportunities to celebrate pupils' work and achievements.

All curriculum areas should seek to use illustrations and examples drawn from as wide a range of cultural contexts as possible. This will be reflected in teacher's planning and purchasing decisions. The festivals and seasons of the year are celebrated together as much as possible by the whole school, with preparation done in houses and classes.

Class performances or whole school plays are performed for staff as well as parents and end of term festivals. This gives pupils the opportunity to perform in front of an audience. Faculty assemblies on Fridays also allow class groups to come together in a broader community. Often pupils are invited to contribute by preparing something in advance which is linked to the theme of the assembly.

Many of our pupils have difficulty relating to the concept of time and dealing with change. During the course of the year and through the seasons we experience many changes in our environment. By marking these changes and celebrating the festivals we help give the children a structure and meaning to the rhythm in time. By exploring festivals of other cultures and communities, the pupils develop a sense of cultural diversity.

## **10 IEP, ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION**

All Pupils at the Sheiling School have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The IEP sets out how we will ensure that a pupil makes progress, drawn from the outcomes outlined in their Education, Health and Care Plan. Having one central plan like this (IEP) allows professionals from across the school, including in the residential houses, to contribute to the pupils' development. IEPs are also shared with parents/carers. This is particularly helpful for our pupils, many of whom need repetition and regular reinforcement of approach in order to learn, and a range of contexts in which to consolidate their learning.

The school uses B-Squared software Connecting Steps for on-going assessment and evaluation of pupils' achievement. We continue to assess pupils' progress using the attainment targets from the previous National Curriculum (pre- 2014) for those pupils who have reached academic progress above P-levels. The software is also used as a formative tool to plan IEP targets as well as planning of learning outcomes in lesson plans. At the end of each half term the Class Teacher and Assistant Teacher evaluate the IEP and identify which targets have been achieved, which need to be modified and which need to continue. If a target has not been achieved within a half term it would be expected the Teacher would question the approach and choice of target. This information is then added to Connecting Steps so that up to date data is kept online (and is backed up for us by B Squared).

At Sheiling School, we measure and assess progress in pupils' personal development, behaviour and wellbeing using a bespoke system, known as The Ariadne Assessment Framework: An assessment tool for the development of independence in thought and action. The framework covers nine areas of personal development; Being safe, Choices and Behaviour, Communication, Education and learning, Feelings, confidence and self-esteem, Friends and relationships, Living skills, Physical health and self-care, and Sensory difficulties.

We use a 'basket of indicators' to judge how well our pupils are progressing in their learning, skills and development. Principally we look at 4 key areas of progress, as relevant to the strengths and difficulties of our pupils:

- Academic progress: Literacy and Numeracy (using B Squared's Connecting Steps)
- Progress in their social, emotional and personal develop skills (Using our bespoke Ariadne Framework)
- Communication Skills (Signalong monitoring sheets/SALT plans and reviews)
- Motor skills and independence skills (monitored by the Occupational Therapist, Eurythmy therapist and Class team)

We acknowledge that progress for our pupils is much wider than academic progress alone. Before each pupil's Annual Review a written report is prepared and sent to parents/carers, associated professionals and the Local Authority. This report monitors and assesses all aspects of the pupil's development for the past year.

**Individual** pupil progress is discussed between teachers and a member of Education Leadership Team in Progress Meetings (once per term). For more information about how we set targets, assess pupils' progress and use this information, please see the Assessing Pupil Progress Policy.

The Speech and Language Therapist and Occupational Therapist assess new pupils within their first three months at the Sheiling School. From this assessment individualized programmes are completed, shared with teachers and LSAs, and overseen by the Occupational Therapist and Speech and Language Therapist in regular observations.

We aim to offer a broad range of courses and qualifications to meet the requirements of our diverse range of pupils. Our pupils are working between the start of the (old) Performance Scales and National Curriculum level 5. For pupils aged 14 and above we offer the Equals Moving On curriculum for pupils working in the P levels and ASDAN Certificate of Personal Effectiveness or ASDAN Bronze award for those working at National Curriculum levels. We also offer Entry Level Certificates (1,2,and 3) in English and Maths, or Equals Moving On curriculum units in Functional Skills. For the more academically able, we offer Functional Skills Level 1 and 2 in English and Maths or GCSE English and Mathematics.

ASDAN Workright is available in the 6<sup>th</sup> Form to accredit and cultivate vocational skills. More information about each qualification can be found in the relevant section of the Accreditation File

## 12. LEARNING OUTCOMES AND TEACHING METHODS/APPROACHES

Pupils at the Sheiling School are presented with learning experiences, which will:

- Enable them to make sense of and experience coherence in their own lives and in the wider world.
- Enable them to develop their academic learning
- Enable them to develop their communication and language skills
- Promote self-image and self-esteem.
- Encourage a caring attitude towards others.
- Encourage active participation, interaction and enjoyment.
- Allow for making choices and decisions
- Stimulate and develop an interest in the world and artistic and spiritual experiences.
- Develop exploration and problem solving skills
- Make good use of the skills they have acquired, to develop further
- Encourage initiative, autonomy and independence.

Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to:

- Work individually, in pairs, small groups, whole class, and whole school
- Transfer skills learned from one context to another
- Benefit from available staff expertise
- Access a wide range of facilities and resources and aids for learning
- Experience differentiated teaching approaches to match age, abilities, attainment, interests and experience of the pupils.

This is done through:

- Extra support (1:1 staffing, aids, etc).
- Activities and tasks that are relevant and age appropriate
- Focus on practical, sensory based presentation of curriculum areas
- High expectation of learning outcomes
- Taking into account that pupils will respond and participate in different ways.

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>By</b>
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