



# Sheiling School Thornbury

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## CURRICULUM POLICY

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### 1. PHILOSOPHY AND CONTEXT

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. 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 inspired by the pedagogical, therapeutic and developmental insights of Rudolf Steiner. Along with an emphasis on 'learning through doing' – which incorporates elements of movement, rhythm, and Occupational Therapy - it also prioritizes the quality of human interaction and relationship to the natural world as key elements in healthy cognitive and emotional development. The child's capacity to think and learn is not seen in isolation but understood in the context of the child's whole being; the intellect as something that must

come into a balance with the life of feelings and the need for activity and physical engagement.

At the Sheiling School we are committed to meeting the individuality of each young person in the firm belief that children learn according to the unique context of their own biographies, needs and abilities. No two learners are identical; as such, teaching becomes a fine art of 'reading' the child and adapting the teaching accordingly. 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 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:

- Provide a broad and balanced education for all pupils that is coherently planned and sequenced towards maximised independence, pupil ambition, the fulfilment of academic potential and practical life skills and knowledge.
- Support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to engender a healthy self-esteem and respect for others.
- Support pupils' physical development and responsibility for their own health, and enable them to be active.
- Promote a positive attitude towards learning in all areas, personal and academic.
- Engender in pupils a healthy curiosity and 'can-do' approach to problem-solving, be it academic, social or vocational.
- Promote equal access to learning for all pupils, with high expectations for every pupil and appropriate levels of challenge and support
- Have the highest expectations of progress in all areas, academic, cultural, and social.
- Equip pupils with the knowledge, cultural capital and life skills they need to succeed in life and maximise the potential for personal fulfilment.
- Develop pupils' independent learning skills and resilience, to equip them for life beyond the Sheiling School, whether that be supported living, further/higher education or employment.

- Promote values of citizenship and empower pupils with the skills to resolve issues arising socially.

This policy reflects the requirements for independent, non-maintained schools to provide a broad and balanced curriculum as per the [Independent School Standards \(2014\)](#). It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2015](#) and [Equality Act 2010](#).

### 3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### 3.1 The governing board

The governing board will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The governing board will also ensure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets
- Proper provision is made for pupils across the range of abilities and needs.
- All courses provided for pupils below the age of 19 that lead to qualifications are approved by the secretary of state
- The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements
- It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- Pupils from year 8 onwards are provided with independent, impartial careers guidance, and that this is appropriately resourced

#### 3.2 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the governing board
- They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements
- The governing board is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- The governing board is advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions
- Proper provision is in place for the full breadth and range of different abilities and needs within the school.

### 3.3 Other staff

Other staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy. A named Assistant Head Teacher or deputy Head Teacher will take responsibility (along with the Head teacher) for the overview of:

- Literacy provision – ensuring that planning is robust and meets the needs of pupils based on formative assessment; ensuring healthy levels of stretch and challenge; ensuring that reading is prioritised across the school, including reading for pleasure; ensuring that each pupil’s Reading Progression Plan is updated regularly and the actions highlighted are included in all Literacy planning; ensuring that teachers are sufficiently skilled to deliver the subject matter effectively (including knowledge of Phonics stages).
- Numeracy provision - ensuring that planning is robust and meets the needs of pupils based on formative assessment; ensuring healthy levels of stretch and challenge; ensuring that Numeracy provision consolidates existing skills as the basis for future learning; ensuring a range of teaching methods are utilised to reflect different learning styles; ensuring that teachers are sufficiently skilled to deliver the subject matter effectively.
- PSHE (incorporating SMSC) – ensuring the planning is robust and meets the needs of the pupils based on formative assessment; ensuring the statutory guidance laid out in the DfE document [RSE and Health Education Guidance \(2019\)](#) is fully met; ensuring attention to fundamental British values.

Class Teachers will be responsible (along with Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher, Assistant Head Teachers and Teaching and Learning Lead) for the delivery of their class curriculum, and for maintaining an overview supported by assessment data. Craft workshop leaders will be responsible for the overview and implementation of the crafts subjects, ensuring where possible that projects are in line with subjects and skill levels established in the classroom.

## 4. ORGANISATION AND PLANNING

### 4.1 Curriculum Organisation

Sheiling School follows an adapted version of the Steiner Waldorf curriculum as outlined in the publication edited by Avison and Rawson: ‘The Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum’. However, the curriculum as it applies to Main Lesson topic work has been extensively revised and adapted to meet the particular needs of Sheiling School pupils and to allow for: additional revision and consolidation of key subject knowledge and skills; a greater focus on citizenship, SMSC and life skills; sufficient time allocated to core concepts and skill sets in keeping with the learning difficulties of the pupils. This adapted version of the Steiner Waldorf curriculum is overseen by the Head Teacher. A ‘model’ version of the medium term planning for each main lesson topic in each year group is planned and provided by the Head Teacher; this is then further adapted for the particular learning needs (as set out in EHCPs) of individual pupils by the Class Teacher in the short term planning. Although as an independent non-maintained special school, Sheiling School is not required

to teach the National Curriculum, nevertheless National Curriculum key skills and learning are covered by the Sheiling School Curriculum.

In keeping with the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum, the Sheiling School Curriculum has a thematic core established in daily Main Lessons. The theme of Main Lesson is extended, where possible, across the curriculum core subjects. Equally, the Main Lesson theme will aim to embed a range of foundation subjects, such as History, Geography, Art, Computing and IT, and Citizenship, as well as elements of the core subjects.

Given the particular difficulties and abilities of Sheiling School pupils (which include demand avoidant behaviour), there is an expectation that education staff will be adaptive and creative around lesson delivery, and utilise the full range of resources (including the outdoors) to ensure pupils can access and maximise learning. Equally, a focus on arts and crafts reflects the recognition that the ability to learn and engage – perhaps especially in pupils with SEN – depends upon a healthy and harmonious emotional life, which requires a broad range of expressive possibilities.

## **4.2 Curriculum Rationale**

At Sheiling School we recognise that every aspect of teaching and learning constitutes curricular provision, and that every interaction is an opportunity for teaching and learning. As such, we consider the curriculum to include far more than just the subject matter explored in lessons. We divide the curriculum rationale into three parts: the ‘what’ (the subject matter or skills to be taught), the ‘why’ (the reasons for teaching that subject or those skills at that particular moment in the pupil’s educational journey), and the ‘how’ (the means by which subject or skills are delivered). Each takes its part in a broadly holistic approach that puts the needs of the individual child squarely at the centre.

This holistic approach is referred to as the Sheiling School 3D Curriculum. It is informed by a model of child development proposed by Rudolf Steiner, a crucial element of which is the belief that, irrespective of cognitive functioning or degrees of physical or emotional challenge, 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 Steiner 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. The notion of three 7 year phases of development (0 – 7yrs, 7 – 14yrs, 14 – 21yrs) informs our approach at each level, with pupils in phase 2 focussing on experiential learning, observation, stories, imagination, and the arts; and pupils in phase 3 taking on a more traditionally academic approach where experience and observation is brought in line with key theories, abstract concepts, reasoned discussion and personal research.

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. Specific topics reflecting the following subjects are taught in Classes 1-9: English, Maths, Science, Design and Technology, Geography, History and SMSC. These subjects 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.

For information on the teaching of Literacy, Numeracy and IT, please see the relevant policies.

The curriculum for the 6<sup>th</sup> Form has a very different character. See section 5.2

### 4.3 Planning

Long Term Planning for each class group is established before the beginning of the academic year based on the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum. Year plans covering the Main Lesson topics are submitted to the Head Teacher to ensure essential subject areas are covered and allotted sufficient time. On average, a Main Lesson topic will be allowed 6-7 weeks. Literacy planning is individualised and ongoing, based on Reading Progression Plans and the Literacy Policy. Numeracy planning is also ongoing, drawn largely from the National Curriculum continuum as laid out in the BSquared software, or else from curricular requirements of the relevant qualification scheme.

Medium Term Planning for Main Lesson subjects is provided, in ‘model’ form, by the Head Teacher. This is to ensure: adequate coverage of key topic areas and key skills; an appropriate level of challenge and stretch; coverage of relevant National Curriculum goals; horizontal curriculum coherence across the school; vertical curriculum coherence and continuity. Literacy and Numeracy medium term plans are overseen by named leads (Assistant Headteachers and Deputy Head).

Short Term Planning is provided by Class Teachers. A weekly plan breaks down the areas specified in the medium term plan into manageable daily lessons and activities. It also specifies individual learning objectives related to the topic plan, and to the Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) and Individual Education Plan (IEP) for each pupil.

### 4.4 Curriculum Overview – Main Lesson Topics

<b>Class 1</b>	Fairy Stories					
<b>Class 2</b>	Stories of the Saints	Fables	American Indian Stories			
<b>Class 3</b>	Old Testament Stories	Measurement	Shelter Building	Farming	Food and Clothing	
<b>Class 4</b>	Norse Myths/Ancient Stories	Local History and Geography	Human and Animal	Language		
<b>Class 5</b>	Ancient India and Persia	Zoology – Birds,	Mesopotamia and Egypt	Botany	Ancient Greece	Geography of the UK

Pinnacle of Childhood		Carnivores and Herbivores				
<b>Class 6</b>	Economics	The Romans	World Geography – Oceans, Deserts, Green Belts	Geology (rocks, volcanos) Zoology – Mammals, Fish, Insects	1. Optics and Acoustics (Sound, Light and Heat)	Magnetism and Electricity
<b>Class 7</b>	Force and Friction  Electricity (electrodynamics)	Wonder, Wish Surprise	Astronomy  Chemistry - combustion	Nutrition, Digestion and Healthy Living	The Age of Exploration and The Renaissance	Mechanics – Levers and Pulleys
<b>Class 8</b>	The Industrial revolution	Electricity	Meteorology and Thermodynamics	The Skeleton and Muscular System Structure of the Eye	Shakespeare Poetry - Epic and Dramatic	Organic Chemistry – fats proteins carbohydrates
<b>Class 9</b> Polarities	Chemistry – States of Matter and Transformation	The Human Being From Birth To Death	A Shakespeare Play	Physics – Inventions – steam engine light bulb etc.	Geography – tectonic plates, geomorphology, glaciers	World War 2
<b>Class 10</b> Harmony	Chemistry – nitrogen and carbon cycles Physics – mechanics, Newton’s 3 laws	The Making of Modern Britain Citizenship – Politics and Government in relation to the individual	20 <sup>th</sup> Century History- Communism and Capitalism, The Cold War, Globalisation,	Knowledge for Life – bills, renting, budgeting, bank accounts, getting help etc.	Geography and Life Science - the organs and their functions compared with whole earth processes Genetics	Physics – X Rays, Computer Technology, the Internet, nuclear energy

## 5. LESSON DELIVERY (CLASSES 1-8)

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), along with therapy goals and outcomes. Additionally, each pupil has Individual Learning Outcomes to work towards in each lesson. These learning outcomes are informed by Medium Term Lesson Planning, 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.

### 5.1 Classes 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 (where applicable) assessed via their accredited courses at this age.

### 5.2 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 on preparation for adult life.

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 are presented with a range of activities around independence and self-help skills, as well as vocational skills and work experience. 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 with the following accredited schemes: AQA Entry Level 1, 2, and 3 Certificate (English and Maths); AQA Functional Skills; GCSE Maths and English.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Form Curriculum is explored more fully in the Sixth Form Handbook.



## 6 THERAPIES AND THE CURRICULUM

In addition to the subjects described above, much emphasis is given to creative activities such as Eurythmy, Speech & Language Therapy, Occupational 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, historically, 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 across the school.

As with SLT, the degree of 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, Drama 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.

## **7 SMSC**

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 those rules for the good of everyone. School and classroom rules should reflect, reiterate, promote and reward acceptable behavior and fundamental British values, and provide opportunities to celebrate pupils' work and achievements.

The school recognises and celebrates a variety of festivals from a range of world faiths, and actively celebrates cultural diversity.

## **8 SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS GUIDANCE**

Sex and Relationships education forms part of the PSHE curriculum and is taught in accordance with the statutory guidance (20190). Sex and Relationship education is delivered according to individual pupil's abilities, emotional development, and needs arising, and class groups may be divided into smaller groups where appropriate. Where particular issues arise in this area, the direction of study is guided by an experienced developmental psychologist, who also trains staff groups to deliver Sex and Relationships education and who sometimes leads 1-1 interventions.

## **9 CAREERS GUIDANCE**

Careers guidance is offered from the age of 14. Pupils have regular meetings with an external independent careers guidance officer, who ascertains their personal strengths and interests and helps them understand the range of options available to them in the future.

## **10 MONITORING AND SUPPORT**

Main Lesson Curriculum delivery is monitored and supported by regular Faculty Meetings, which are led by a member of the Education Leadership Team (ELT). This also includes the possibility of Teachers who have previously taught the topic lesson sharing resources and skills.

Progress data is compiled from a range of sources for each individual pupil, with context detail available to explain anomalies. This data is compiled by the Deputy Head Teacher and fed back to Teachers in Class Progress Meetings. Progress is then reviewed with individual

pupils in Pupil Progress Meetings. These meetings are also an opportunity to look ahead to forthcoming transitions, with a strong emphasis on pupil voice.

## **11. EXPECTATIONS AND CURRICULUM ACCESS**

It is expected that all pupils access the curriculum irrespective of individual difficulties. However, given that a great number of our pupils struggle with any kind of formal or group learning, the nature of that access will vary. In every case it is the goal that the pupil will access group learning wherever possible, and all efforts will be made towards this end. Where pupils are not ready for this, arrangements are made to deliver the curriculum in smaller group settings or 1:1 under the guidance of a Learning Mentor. Often this will include the use of outdoor lessons where subject content is carefully adapted.

## **12. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS**

Governors monitor curriculum provision through: regular Governor's reports from the Head Teacher followed through in Governors' Meetings once per half term; visits to classrooms and conversation with Teachers; focus sessions on particular aspects of teaching and learning; learning walks/ class observations.

The Principal monitors the curriculum provision through: regular updates and discussions with the Head Teacher; quality assuring all documents produced by the Head Teacher relating to the curriculum; discussions around collated progress data and specific pupil progress data.

The Head Teacher and ELT monitor the curriculum provision through: twice half-termly learning walks focussing on rotating curriculum aspects; book and progress file scrutinies; formal classroom observations; Faculty Meeting curriculum focus; quality assurance of short term planning.

Teachers have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed.

This policy will be reviewed every twelve months by the Head Teacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the full governing board including the Principal.

## **13. IEP, ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION**

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 development 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.

All Pupils at 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.

Where it is deemed appropriate (it has not proved so for all pupils), 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 support 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.

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 Assessment Policy.

#### **14. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES**

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Assessment Policy
- Literacy Policy
- Numeracy Policy
- SMSC Policy
- IT Policy
- 6<sup>th</sup> Form Handbook

