



<b>Headstart School Curriculum 2022/24 Policy</b>	
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### **Rationale**

Headstart is an Independent Special School designed to give young people the opportunity to learn and make progress both academically and personally. We believe it is important that our students follow a broad, balanced and exciting curriculum and one that is relevant to their needs and abilities. The curriculum provided at Headstart School is part of the range of strategies that we use to help prepare students for developing independence and a life outside of school; such a focus is clearly linked to them becoming well informed and active citizens in a multi-cultural and diverse society.

We aim to support student development in:

- Academic subjects
- Social skills
- Vocational skills
- Skills related to growing independently

### **Curriculum Overview**

Across our curriculum we aim to address disadvantage and provide equal opportunity. We use a progression model and have clear transition points for students in their learning that enables them to build and develop concepts that leads to lifelong learning. We aim for our students to develop a rich web of knowledge alongside core skills that are relevant to their needs.

### **Primary/KS3**

Across our Primary provision and in some parts of KS3 we have planned our own broad and balanced curriculum adapted from the Inspire Curriculum to ensure coverage and progression in an interesting and engaging way. The curriculum has been further developed to suit the complex needs of our students and in lessons there is clear differentiation in place to support individuality and personalisation.

There is a real focus on what students will 'know and do' and we use our unique context to support learning and engagement across all Key Stages.

National Curriculum subjects of English, Mathematics, Science, Computing, Humanities, Religious Education, PSHE, Citizenship, Art and Design, Music and Sport are all offered at Key Stage Two and Three and take into account the Programmes of Study for each subject. Opportunities are also offered within the curriculum to study other cultures and SMSC forms a key focus throughout a students' daily life at Headstart.

### **KS4 Curriculum**

The KS4 curriculum aims to build on previous learning and offers a range of subjects that are familiar to students. Alongside this is a rich and varied options programme that uses our unique environment to support engagement and interest. There is a core Programme of English, Maths, Science, RE, PE, Careers and PSHE and Citizenship taught at varying levels to suit student needs and this is delivered at varying levels of accreditation from Entry Level through to GCSE.

Our options programme at KS4 offers a range of academic subjects such as History, Geography, Art and Design and English Literature for example alongside a rich vocational programme including Horse care, Equine Studies, Construction, Land-based Studies, Music and Creative Media Technology.



## **Curriculum Enrichment and Enhancement**

### **Vocational Learning**

We have found that many young people who have previously encountered problems at school are often motivated by a vocationally based day. Thus, the curriculum offered to students includes work related learning which incorporates Agriculture/Horticulture, Equine Studies, Small Animal and Pet Care, Painting and Decorating and Construction, Art and Design, Video Production, Graphic Design, Digital Photography, Catering, Woodwork and Life-skills.

### **Land Based and Equine Studies**

Students have the opportunity to work outdoors and interact with nature. This can be a small part of their curriculum or can be a basis for a sensory need, offer therapeutic input and teach the students empathy and the need for boundaries and structure when working interacting with the animals. Students of all ages can take horse riding lessons, adopt a rabbit or feed the chickens. This has proven to be a popular area of our curriculum where most students thrive in the calm of the outdoors and the communication with animals.

### **Sport and Outdoor Learning**

Sport is a key part of our weekly timetable offering badminton, table tennis, football, gymnastics, rounders, swimming and trampoline skills. Promoting team building, social interaction and the raising of self-esteem is key. We also have various outdoor activities and trips. These include swimming, indoor football, volleyball, hiking, camping, dry-skiing, orienteering, and fishing.

### **Forest School**

Learning in the outdoors helps to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of nature. Forest School uses our unique environment to help develop independent learning skills, build self-esteem and confidence and encourage social communication. Students are encouraged to continue learning these skills at college or in an organised apprenticeship.

### **Post 16 Provision and Links to the Curriculum**

Post 16 Students are taught at the Oakfield Site and this forms a unique and stable environment for study, where a dedicated team of staff are able to deliver a rich range of subjects to meet student interests and chosen vocational pathways. We can therefore provide both a vocational or more academic route for our students, or indeed a mixed pathway if that is required.

The main aim for post 16 students is to offer a range of student-centred learning opportunities through a carefully planned curriculum. We aim to promote independence and self-sufficiency within a structured environment whilst focusing on key skills learnt in the students' previous stage of education. The curriculum is individually tailored and differentiated to reflect and meet the needs of the student.

### **World of Work**

There is a real focus on the world of work, where students will also have an opportunity to take part in work experience. The important transition towards adulthood and independence is carefully managed and transition plans form an important part of this work.

### **Vocational Pathfinder**



Vocational education at Headstart School is training that offers work related and practical experience in particular occupational fields, such as agriculture, equine studies, home economics, horticulture, construction and creative media technology.

Subjects will include:

- Maths (Including GCSE, Functional Skills and Entry Level)
- English (Including GCSE, Functional Skills and Entry Level)
- PE,
- PSHE and Citizenship
- Careers
- Work Related Learning (WRL)
- Work Experience and Volunteering (WEX)

### **Option Subjects**

Students are able to choose from a wide range of practical, theoretical and vocational subjects all of which are detailed in the school's option booklet. These may include...Land based Studies, Construction, Creative Media Technology, Music, Horse Care, to name but a few.

### **Enrichment**

As part of the Post 16 Curriculum students will also have the opportunity to take part in a range of activities that support overall development and which may open up lifelong interests and engagement, these include:

- Physical Education, Sport and Health
- Recreation opportunities as part of the enrichment program.
- Health Education as part of PSHE and Sport courses.
- Careers, PSHE and British Values
- Weekly sessions and opportunities to take part in events and trips and ongoing opportunity to discuss issues raised from studying aspects of British Values.
- Work opportunities and careers development

### **Curriculum Development and Review**

We are constantly asking ourselves what is taught as part of our curriculum and why?

We frequently review our curriculum for the benefit of our students and this is done collaboratively amongst the staff; the core work for review takes place in regular departmental meetings where the impact of the work is evaluated and new ideas and learning activities shared amongst the team of staff. The curriculum is overseen by a member of the Senior Leadership Team and they take points for discussion and development to the wider SLT. Curriculum forms a standing agenda item on all SLT meetings.

### **Literacy and Numeracy**

Emphasis is put on encouraging and furthering literacy and numeracy skills through individualised programmes. Our Speech and Language Therapist assesses our students thoroughly and personalises individual programmes for each student.

As part of our commitment to improving reading, Headstart follows the Read, Write, Inc Program.



'Read Write Inc.' produced by Ruth Miskin, is a method of learning centred around letter sounds and phonics, blending them together to read and write words and using these learnt sounds in their reading and writing. All students, who are not fluent readers, will follow a phonic programme which will create fluent, enthusiastic readers, confident speakers and willing writers.

At the core of the programme we deliver a lively and vigorous teaching of synthetic phonics. Students learn the 44 common sounds in the English language and how to sound-blend words for reading (decoding) at the same time as developing handwriting skills and spelling (encoding). The students have the pleasure of reading exciting storybooks which is matched to their level – so that they have early success in reading.

The students follow a structured programme of reading and writing activities in small groups. All staff at Headstart School have been trained in the delivery of this programme.

The students are assessed and grouped according to their ability. They will work with a Teacher or teaching assistant on the RWI programme. At the end of each term, the students will be assessed again and put into new groups to continue to make progress.

#### **Further Developing Reading, Writing, Maths and Oracy**

Some students will need a little bit of extra help with their reading, writing and Maths and this is something we can help with. The dedicated staff at Headstart will help students to make progress both in lessons and in the wider day to day development of their abilities. We use Lexia to support students with their literacy and students are tested regularly on their ability in reading, writing and spelling.

Throughout the curriculum we also encourage the development of oracy skills so that students can articulate their thoughts and ideas in a coherent manner, this is further developed in class by encouraging students to answer questions, take part in discussion and through social talk with other students. Students have access to weekly Votes for Schools lessons which cover the issues that are affecting young people. Students discuss a range of topics which include elements of SMSC, British Values, Prevent, Wellbeing, sustainable development and the UN Rights of the Child.