



Royal Free Hospital Children's School Curriculum Policy

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Introduction

"A school's curriculum consists of everything that promotes learners' intellectual, personal, social and physical development. As well as lessons and extracurricular activities, it includes approaches to teaching, learning and assessment, the quality of relationships within school, and the values embodied in the way the school operates". (QCA)

The Royal Free Hospital Children's School caters for pupils between the ages of 5 and 16 who are -

The school is currently based across four main sites. We offer education to children who are patients on the paediatric wards at the Royal Free Hospital and within the Royal Free Eating Disorder Service at Queen Mary House. We run two successful alternative provision programmes for children experiencing medical or mental health challenges that mean they are unable to attend mainstream school. The school also manages the medical needs outreach teaching service for the local authority. We recently launched a new online re-engagement programme 'LinkEd Up' - an early intervention designed to tackle emotionally based school avoidance.

We operate within a multidisciplinary framework; working closely with a range of professionals including consultant doctors, mental health professionals, physiotherapists, speech therapists and other agencies.

Aims

We believe every young person has a desire to learn and we aim to rekindle this and enable pupils to become;

- Successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- Confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- Responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society

The school values learners' personal development by making it a focus for learning experiences across the curriculum. It supports work that aims to;

- Provide a secure, welcoming and stimulating environment where education is interpreted in the broadest, multi-disciplinary context.
- Meet pupils' changing medical, psychological and learning needs and minimise disruption to schooling by providing an appropriately challenging curriculum that enables them to enjoy school and go on to realise their potential. To be attuned to their needs and make them feel like they matter.
- Prioritise psychosocial aspects of learning, e.g. establishing positive relationships with teachers, other professionals and peers
- Help pupils rebuild self-confidence and self-esteem to enable them to re-engage with the wider social environment and the world of education. Establish trust and provide building blocks for further progress.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to participate in as broad and balanced curriculum, based on the National Curriculum, as far as is practicable within a hospital school environment
- Offer each pupil an effective and personalised learning programme
- Engage short-stay pupils (especially on the hospital sites) in purposeful and relevant educational activities
- Providing opportunities for the development of pupil voice and leadership
- To celebrate equality and diversity across all areas of the curriculum
- Promote equal opportunities and provide access, as appropriate, to all areas of the curriculum, systems of supported advocacy, and essential life and independence skills
- Accredited learning through recognised schemes and qualifications
- Recognise, celebrate and reward pupils' progress and achievements

Curriculum Procedures

The "General Guidelines" (QCA/DFEE March 2001) states, "It is for schools to determine, and justify, the amount of time allocated to different parts of their curriculum. When doing so, they should take account of" –

- Their own school aims
- The needs of the pupils attending the school

- The requirement to provide a broad and balanced curriculum – which includes the subjects of the National Curriculum and Religious Education
- The National Frameworks for teaching literacy and mathematics
- The needs of the local community

As a school, we also take account of –

- The positive and creative ethos of the school and our commitment to the Arts
- A wide and effective range of teaching strategies, in conjunction with a range of therapies
- The efficient and imaginative management of the curriculum by all staff
- The need to have policies that encompass additional curricular provision
- The need to ensure a consistency in approach across all staff and areas of the school
- The importance of encouraging parents to participate and share in their child’s development and ways in which parents can support their child at home.

The chosen curriculum reflects the policies and priorities agreed by the staff, governors, parents, and other professionals at the school.

- All therapies are considered an integral part of pupils’ education and, where relevant, recovery. Staff and therapists work together to provide a holistic approach to encourage independence, opportunities for greater access to the curriculum, and pupils’ general well being
- Each day school pupil has an Individual Learning Plan which identifies the most effective teaching and learning strategies for individual pupils
- Extra-curricular activities are organised by subject leaders when relevant, e.g. theatre trips for English

The school has also chosen to make additional curricular provision for additional cross-curricular elements, and experiences, beyond the subjects of the National Curriculum:

- Making lunchtimes an opportunity to develop social and independence skills
- Life and Leisure skills including a range of workshops
- Therapeutic interventions such as music, drama and equine therapy (‘Learning through Horses’) and our ‘Thinking Cards’
- Arts, Music and Drama Projects with visiting groups and artists and a ‘Creative Arts Week’
- A ‘Communication Week’ with a focus led by our Speech and Language Therapist
- Curricular visits out of school, e.g. Museums and Galleries and holidays
- A summer activity week
- Post-16 transition support

Meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum

The Education Act (2002) requires that all maintained schools provide a balanced curriculum that –

- Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of learners at the school and within society
- Prepares learners at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

The curriculum should aim to develop and promote –

- Principles for distinguishing between right and wrong
- Appreciation of pupils' own and other's beliefs
- Pupils' integrity and autonomy
- Equal opportunities
- Respect for the environments in which pupils live
- Pupils' self esteem, respect for others and emotional well-being

The curriculum should –

- Encourage and stimulate the best possible progress and attainment, particularly in English, Mathematics, Science and ICT
- Develop pupils' ICT capability through the use of ICT tools to support their learning in all subjects.
- Develop creative and physical skills
- Build on pupils' strengths, interests and experiences
- Ensure entitlement for all learners to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that offers continuity and coherence and secures high standards
- Develop pupils' capacity to learn and work independently and collaboratively
- Induct learners into the essential knowledge, skills and discourse of subject
- Encourage learners to take responsibility for their own health and safety, and appreciate the benefits and risks of the choices they make
- Prepare young people for the world of employment and further and higher education
- Make learners more aware of, and engaged with, their local, national and international communities
- Develop pupils' sense of identity
- Contribute to community cohesion
- Acknowledge, promote and pass on the core knowledge and skills valued by society to the next generation.

The statutory inclusion statement sets out three principles for developing an inclusive curriculum which provides all pupils with relevant and challenging learning. Schools must –

- Set suitable learning challenges
- Respond to pupils' diverse learning needs
- Overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals/groups of pupils including -
 - The gifted and talented
 - Those with learning difficulties and disabilities
 - Children who are learning English as an additional language
 - The different needs of boys and girls
 - Children who are in care
 - Learners with social and emotional difficulties

Curriculum Planning – providing a range of educational experiences

Programmes of Study

As in mainstream schools, teachers aim for pupils to achieve the standard or National Curriculum level appropriate to their age and ability. However, these expectations are qualified by the teacher's initial and continuous assessment of pupils in his/her care. The over-riding expectation is that for all pupils' experience in the classroom, or on the ward, should be purposeful, strengthen current knowledge and, whenever possible, lead to educational progress.

The day offers all pupils a core curriculum of English, Maths and Science. Secondary pupils can also study Art, RS, History to GCSE music whilst Primary pupils are also taught non-core subjects. The use of ICT in all subject areas enhances creativity, extends learning opportunities and sustains a varied and challenging pace of learning. Development of personal, learning and thinking skills is also integral to enhancing learners' knowledge and understanding across the curriculum.

The curriculum for inpatient pupils is negotiated with the pupil and their parents/carers where these are present. On the ward, time arrangements and curriculum content are flexible and determined largely by the pupils' physical and psychological well-being, whether visitors are present and the availability of specialist staff. Due to ward routines and doctors' ward rounds, inpatient pupils may come to the classroom after the start of a lesson, or even mid-session, and they may be taken out of a lesson for treatment and return later. Some pupils will be keen to attend a lesson in the classroom despite being unwell or in pain, whilst others will find the levels of concentration which accompany small group teaching more demanding than their mainstream school experience and consequently tire more easily.

The school has the flexibility to design a curriculum to match the needs of learners, and the local context. This flexibility can be used to help pupils who need additional support, especially with literacy and numeracy, and to provide others with more in-depth study and challenge.

Teachers will be able to:

- Personalise the curriculum, designing their own subject curriculum to meet individual needs and engage all learners
- Provide focused support and greater challenge where needed, helping to ensure that all learners have the opportunity to make progress and achieve, particularly in the key areas of English and Mathematics
- Design coherent learning experiences that are relevant and meaningful to learners by making connections between subjects, events and activities
- Use the curriculum to support a set of skills rather than as an end in itself
- Use a variety of teaching and learning approaches to engage and motivate learners, and to maximise impact on learning. For example, approaches that are learning rather than content focused, and projects rather than discrete, one-off lessons
- Use ICT to help pupils manage their own learning, such as through a virtual learning environment

Secondary pupils studying GCSE non-core subjects are taught 1-1 or in small groups. The school is a registered Examinations Centre, which enables pupils with, for example, school phobia or medical conditions to sit up to 5 GCSEs that they may not otherwise have had the opportunity of taking. Many of these pupils are then able to progress on to 6th Form or Level 3 College courses.

Long-term planning

Secondary Subject Leaders write or adapt schemes of work (SOW) based on the National Curriculum, published QCA schemes/National Strategies and/or examination syllabi. As appropriate, schemes of work are referenced to the development of literacy, numeracy, ICT and PSHE skills.

Medium-term planning

From the schemes of work, Secondary Subject Leaders compile modules of study for each half-term, taking into consideration -

- The delivery of as broad and balanced a curriculum as possible to day pupils and any inpatients attending the classroom
- Day pupils' personal and curriculum targets
- The curriculum being followed by a dual-roll day pupil's mainstream school
- The anticipated length of each day pupil's placement at the school
- The irregular attendance of some pupils and the need for a 'catch-up' curriculum for pupils who have missed schooling
- A teaching group with pupils in more than one Key Stage and/or year group
- Whole school initiatives or cross-curricular themes (e.g. multi-cultural celebrations)
- Time constraints for attaining accreditation (e.g. Year 11 pupils who may join the school with only two or three terms to complete a course that is usually taught over two years)
- The coverage of essential content in examination subjects and the requirements of tests or examination syllabi
- Opportunities to link into local initiatives (e.g. local Arts Centre projects such as Camden Spark).

The most effective curriculum planning will enable a module in one subject area to complement modules in other subject areas.

Short-term planning

On a day-to-day basis, the school provides class-based group teaching, opportunities for KS4 self-supported study and one-to-one tuition, which includes time with their Personal Tutor. Lesson planning makes reference to context, cross-curricular links, resources, learning objectives, differentiation – bearing in mind the needs of day pupils and any inpatients attending the classroom that day, activities, and learning outcomes. Each day, teachers will decide the most effective and efficient use of pupil and teacher time for all pupils being taught in the classroom. The decision will be affected by the –

- Arrival time of inpatient pupils to the classroom, and their perceived needs
- Range of medical and support needs in the group
- Availability of differentiated resources and a teaching assistant, to support the group
- Handover information supplied by school or any other relevant agency

Short-stay inpatients, in particular KS4 pupils, may bring or be sent work from their mainstream school and staff will monitor them on a self-supported study basis.

Ward teaching

Lessons on the wards are negotiated with the pupil and their parents, and determined by the child's specific medical and emotional needs and prior learning experiences. The school believes in the principle of 'beneficial stimulus'. We believe that enjoyable and challenging learning activities in a small supportive setting help promote psychological wellbeing, which could play an important role in a child's recovery. However, we acknowledge there are times when children in hospital need to put school work to one side and focus on recuperation

Ward teachers will use their professional judgement to determine the content of lessons which, as appropriate, will be adapted from the mainstream curriculum. As with classroom planning, ward lessons will be personalised and have specific learning objectives such as psycho-social, pastoral, leisure, skills-

based or National Curriculum related. Differentiated materials may be created in response to a particular need. The length of a lesson is flexible, depending on the pupil's medical and psychological needs.

For short-stay primary pupils, teachers usually focus on literacy, numeracy or practical activities, with I.C.T. support. Short-stay secondary pupils are encouraged to focus on a core or foundation subject, or are assisted with any work they have brought from their mainstream school.

Opportunities to engage in creative and practical activities are particularly important for pupils in isolation, though health and safety factors can sometimes limit the range of activities undertaken.

Pupils with MLD or PMLD are provided with appropriate learning opportunities supported by the use of the sensory trolley and a wide variety of sensory stimulus where appropriate.

Progress is assessed formatively through teacher observation and recorded on the pupil's Learner Record on the school's SIMS at the end of the session (see also Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy)

Homework

All day pupils are encouraged to do homework recorded in planners and reviewed at the end of every day. However, for some pupils this may, at particular times, not be desirable. Inpatient pupils may be provided with a computer, or other items, on loan in the evening or over the weekend. Homework is optional for short-stay pupils.

Personalised learning

Personalised learning encompasses curriculum entitlement and pupil voice, effective teaching and learning and a positive school environment where pupils feel secure and can flourish as individuals. Clear boundaries are combined with praise for all pupils, and their achievements are displayed in the classroom and corridor.

Children generally come into the hospital as short-stay Gastro or Plastics patients (1 – 5 days) but occasionally there are children who stay longer (1 week to several months). As the school roll changes daily, so do the educational and emotional needs of its pupils. Teachers will be aware that a pupil's attainment may be impeded by the fact that they are learning in an unfamiliar environment and in circumstances where they may not be emotionally, psychologically or physically at their best. Teachers are sensitive to the changing needs of inpatient pupils and may feel it desirable to modify their original learning intentions in order to promote the participation of e.g. a reluctant learner. All teachers try to ensure that each teaching session on the wards offers an appropriately stimulating activity, which offers a sense of achievement and may contribute to a child's recovery.

Using a flexible curriculum and a personalised approach to teaching and learning, the school is able to cater for a wide range of learning needs including gifted and talented pupils, children with English as an additional language, children with profound, severe or moderate learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders, and visual and hearing impairment. If a child has an EHC Plan, their school is contacted and a request is made for this plan and their targets to be faxed or e-mailed. Advice would be sought regarding appropriate provision for any long-stay pupil who needed technological aids, or adapted equipment, to communicate or access the curriculum.

Where a pupil's individual needs are such that they require one-to-one supervision or support in the classroom, the class teacher will liaise with the Headteacher or a ward teacher for additional support. Where individual needs are known in advance, arrangements can be put in place during the Morning Briefing.

We believe learners should be actively involved in their own education and placed at the centre of their own education, health and care planning. Pupils produce their own online 'Wiki-sites' to outline the kind of support they expect to receive and setting targets for their own personal development and academic achievement. Pupils are encouraged to contribute to whole-school life; their views of their school experience are sought regularly through a student voice programme. Giving pupils a voice and motivating them to take decisions about how they manage their learning; through guidance and increased choices, will enable them to take more responsibility for their own education as well as teach them to think independently. All Day School pupils have regular one-to-one meetings with their Personal Tutor to discuss their targets and achievements.

Personal Tutors liaise regularly with pupils' mainstream schools (Head of Year and/or subject teachers) to ensure curricular continuity, which enables pupils to re-integrate having studied relevant units of work and made relatively similar progress to their peers.

Role of the Subject Leader

- To ensure teachers and support staff understand, agree with and follow the School's policy in their curriculum subject
- To review their subject's policy statement every 2 years
- To develop and regularly review SOW for their curriculum subject, taking into account the wide range of pupils' needs and abilities
- To write develop a Subject Improvement Plan each year and be responsible for managing their subject's curriculum budget
- To provide and update subject resources for pupils and teachers, and advise on their effective use
- To support colleagues requiring help in developing their curriculum area
- To effectively monitor delivery of their subject to ensure consistency of approach, continuity and progression
- To advise on assessment, recording and reporting.
- To organise regular curriculum meetings
- To attend relevant inset courses and to encourage other staff to go on inset courses
- To liaise with other schools, LA advisors, and the LA SEN Strategy Manager

All teachers have a responsibility to –

- Prepare differentiated lesson plans and materials
- Ensure Teaching Assistants understand the contents of a scheme of work/lesson plan and are given clear guidance about the objectives of an activity, how to approach it and the intended outcomes
- Make classroom resources accessible so that pupils can collect their own materials, where appropriate
- Have high expectations and respond flexibly to the needs of pupils
- Provide a stimulating/calm environment, as appropriate
- Be aware of equality issues

Equal Opportunities

The National Curriculum secures for all pupils, irrespective of social background, culture, race, gender, differences in ability and disabilities, an entitlement to a number of areas of learning and the development of the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes necessary for them to become active, responsible and self-fulfilled citizens.

The content of the curriculum draws on the human and material resources of the school and community. We are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity by examining factors that might inhibit pupils' achievement, and have an ongoing commitment to review the content of our curriculum for gender, race, disability, religious and class bias. Underachievement can be attributed to pre-conceived expectations and attitudes of teachers, as well as to teaching styles and the content of the curriculum. We recognise that -

- Teachers need to monitor that all pupils are treated equally in class and receive an equal share of attention
- The content of subjects should be monitored to ensure their accessibility to both boys and girls
- Books and other resources need to be monitored for race, religion, disability and gender bias.
- Teachers must have the highest expectations of all pupils.
- Community languages should be acknowledged and the high achievement of bi-lingual pupils promoted
- Learning materials and resources should positively reflect gender, religious and cultural backgrounds, and images of disabled persons
- Displays reflect the full range of pupils' abilities and achievements

Monitoring the Curriculum

The Local Authority and School Improvement Partner

The school has an allocated CPP (Camden Professional Partner) who works with the Headteacher to support and challenge improvement; evaluating performance, identifying priorities and planning for change.

The Governing Body

The Pastoral and Curriculum Committee (PAC) of the Governing Body meet termly and is kept informed of curriculum issues through the Headteacher's report. Governors also have a number of key allocated responsibilities (SEN, Achievement for All, Creative Arts etc) and visit at least annually, reporting back to the Governing Body as appropriate.

Leadership Team

The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher monitor curriculum development, curriculum coverage and individual pupil progress through a Monitoring and Evaluation Schedule that includes;

- Learner Records on the school's MIS (SIMS)
- Attainment Reports
- Learner Plans
- Work Sampling

- Termly meetings with subject leaders to monitor the implementation of Subject Improvement Plans, including the development of schemes of work and assessment strategies, and discussion of pupil progress
- Learning Walks
- Lesson Study
- Pupil Voice
- Annual class observations of each teacher for Performance Management

Subject Leaders

Progress on Subject Improvement Plans, which relate to Performance Management objectives and the School Improvement Plan (SIP), are reviewed on a bi-annual basis and contribute to whole school review.

Personal Tutors

Personal Tutors monitor the progress of their designated pupils, in particular targets relating to their personal development. These include the termly completion of LAMS (Looking at Myself and School), a detailed Pupil Profile and a Case Study.

Morning Briefings and Staff meetings

Morning briefings provide an additional opportunity to monitor curriculum provision for -

- Newly admitted pupils
- Pupils taught on the ward the previous day
- Day pupils
- Pupils under the CAMHS E.D Service
- Pupils under the Outreach Teaching Service

Staff meetings provide opportunities to discuss whole school curriculum issues –

- Pupil progress
- Curriculum development and/or administration
- Continuity and progression of schemes of work, moderation for sampling
- The development of assessment strategies
- Current home environment and how this may impact on pupil progress
- Any relevant intervention from outside agencies

Assessment and Evaluation

When a pupil first attends the school, pupils undergo baseline testing to assess and evaluate the pupil's ability, levels of attainment and needs. The planning that results from this may be altered if it proves inaccurate; i.e. the pupil is functioning at a higher or lower level than first assumed.

Pupils are formally assessed at six points during the year (See separate Assessment, Recording and Reporting policy.)

The school also takes into account any specific diagnosis and intervention be it medical or psychological.

Resources

The school sets aside directed time each term to review resources. Subject Leaders are allocated a budget for their curriculum area. Staff are responsible for the labelling and storage of their curriculum resources.

The LA IT support supervises all computer and audio-visual hardware, ensuring that Health and Safety checks are carried out at required intervals and that equipment is functioning properly. The school maintains an inventory which is updated when new items are purchased or faulty items are discarded. For pupils in protective isolation, materials are regularly selected from newly developed modules, laminated and stored in plastic wallets. Portable white boards, for writing, are also available for protective isolation use.

See separate policies for –

- National Curriculum subjects
- Assessment, Recording and Reporting
- Teaching and Learning
- Admissions
- Equalities Policy

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