

Curriculum Policy	
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Policy content:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Our curriculum approach, aims and ethos ● The quality of education, teaching and assessment ● English, reading and writing ● Mathematics and numeracy ● CGC social sciences ● PSHE/PSHCE and SMSC ● Approach to EYFS ● EAL 	
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Links:	SEND policy Behaviour policy Safeguarding policy

Curriculum Policy

Introduction

Our ultimate aim is that young people leave our school with a strong sense of personal agency. We define this as having a sense of purpose and goals, and the skills and competencies needed to action those goals which include cognitive, physical, social, and emotional. By creating an educational environment that supports learner agency and self-determination we are able to engage all our learners in an inclusive provision, allowing all current achievement levels to develop knowledge, skills and understanding. The underpinning values of The New School are rooted in the belief that developing intrinsic motivation in all aspects of learning and behaviour is key to self-determination, which creates the foundation for psychological health and wellbeing. We focus on building young people's academic competencies, connection, autonomy, and attachment with other young people and staff. As a result, we hope to promote equity and enable young people to thrive in their future lives. Our focus on building young people's competence and mastery of skills; their connection, attachment and relationship with staff and other young people; and creating the conditions that enable their autonomy in setting goals and behaviours, is a powerful means of creating equity and enabling young people to thrive in their future lives.

The curriculum is for most subjects based on the national curriculum, but for social sciences we use a concept based curriculum, allowing key skills and concepts to be built and developed from Reception to Year 11, across the social sciences: history, geography, economics and citizenship, with topics determined by the teacher and class. Our focus is on engagement in learning through learners owning their learning journey and their learning start-points through the use of 'I can' statements and learner-centred classrooms. Our curriculum supports young people to gain depth of knowledge and critical thinking skills in nine key areas – literacy, maths, social sciences, media/ICT, science, art, physical movement, PSHE and religious education. The rest of the curriculum experience of young people at The New School is focused on creating the time and space for the development of personal interest areas such as optional workshops (cooking, weaving, gardening, origami, DT, woodwork) either put on by teachers or other young people; optional subjects (forest school, music, DT, Spanish, choice of sports); and self-directed time (which includes play, work on personal learning goals, engaging in personal projects). The curriculum is underpinned by a relational model and environment that does not use rewards or punishments, instead focusing on transformative justice, building intrinsically motivated principles of care, acceptance of difference, and the skills needed for relationships, social and emotional learning and wellness.

Curriculum aims

Our approach to the implementation and development of our curriculum and teaching and learning is co-created through our sociocratic governance structure, which draws on the unique competencies of our staff team. We have shared principles that underpin our teaching, learning and relational culture that are the foundation for life satisfaction and success in future lives:

- Belief in equity of access and inclusion of all learners in the classroom; and developing the skills needed for self-direction and executive function;
- Creation of the conditions and relational autonomy to support intrinsic motivation, self-regulation and self-direction for learning in the classroom;
- Learning includes cognitive, social and emotional skills and competences. Developing how we think about and reflect on learning, alongside the skills to learn with others, is key to engagement in and mastery of successful learning practices.

- Professional autonomy in teaching practise coupled with a focus on learning inquiry and dialogue, co-creates the approaches that work best to create quality learning in the classroom and the key skills of learning for young people;
- Belief that embracing diversity of thought and healthy challenge from staff and young people is key to creativity and innovation;

Developing learning competence: Teachers aim to make explicit the language of learning to develop learner's self-talk, in order to build the cognitive, social and emotional learning skills needed to engage in curriculum content and to develop personal agency in learning. The teacher's role is to model and grow young people's understanding of learning habits, 'why' and 'how' to learn; to develop and make learning visible, developing young people's learning capacity; and to provide learning content that is delivered in a way that provides scaffold and stretch.

How teaching delivery looks is determined by teacher skill and professionalism to choose the appropriate pedagogy for the outcomes planned for. Planned reflection time, enables mistakes and misconceptions to be identified and celebrated as learning tools, and are used as feedback to develop stretch and challenge for the next learning cycle building self-efficacy and learning skills. Content is planned in combination with the learning skills needed for young people to engage in and 'own' learning.

We see teachers as learners too, and we actively develop a culture of asking for peer observations and team-teaching to develop aspects of practice. Specialist teachers (Science, Art and Media/ICT) teach across the school from 4-16, enabling greater depth of subject knowledge, supporting cross-curricular learning and freeing up time for class teachers to collaborate and plan.

Teachers use ongoing formative assessment as a means of progressing learning and to identify gaps in knowledge. The purpose of assessment for learning is to provide learners with evidence of their own learning. Teachers ask questions and give feedback to grow understanding, supporting young people to clarify their thinking, and to enable them to make progress against self or teacher identified goals. Summative assessments are done annually. Teachers may use mini action research cycles to develop ideas within the classroom that support learning, and time is given for reflection as a teaching team to grow understanding and develop best practice. Teachers design processes to capture learner feedback, to include young people in the development of their learning. Our systems for assessment help learners embed and use knowledge fluently, check understanding and inform teaching.

Developing autonomy: Young people build skills of self regulation, executive function and collaboration within the classroom, and gradually take ownership of aspects of their learning and assessment, increasing the accuracy of their learning judgements and perceived next steps. Our aim is for learner-centred classrooms where young people can own their starting points in their learning journey, in order to support self-direction, depth and engagement in learning. We support this through teaching pedagogy, providing content that builds and requires retrieval of prior knowledge, through offering different means of representing and recording information (visual, verbal, written) that supports the development of connections between different knowledge and skills and through sharing of 'I can' statements with young people so they know their start points in a topic or lesson. Within each subject area, there is also a range of ways in which students can develop their own learning to allow them to challenge themselves and gain deeper levels of knowledge and understanding. For example:

- Self-directed learning challenges to extend and challenge, and to scaffold and practise prior knowledge.
- We use a minimum of 20% of the school day as self-directed learning time where young people can follow their own interests, choose optional subjects, play, develop personal projects.
- My learning plans help young people set goals for personal projects and also areas to work on in specific subjects.

- Continuous provision environments enable young people to engage in learning outside of key subject lessons. Subject-specific content can be organised in a number of ways in the classroom to allow young people to gain deeper levels of knowledge and understanding.

Developing relational practice: Developing a relational culture in the classroom, including between teachers and young people, is key so that young people engage in and share responsibility for learning, support each other's development and take more responsibility for their learning. Modelling clear and consistent respectful boundaries is key to a learner centred environment and successful relationships in the classroom. Negotiated boundaries build agency and ownership as teaching without the use of rewards and punishments requires a different approach to support young people's engagement in learning.

We work in multi-age class groups which enables inclusion and offers support to those at different current achievement levels, but it also allows for stretch. Young people with additional needs are supported within lessons, as well as through support from additional adults. Team teaching enables splitting of classes for different topics. Young people may also have small group or 1:1 sessions to support learning and social and emotional development. Groupings are flexible and dynamic to fit the changing needs of our young people and we avoid any kind of streaming in our pedagogy. A young person usually stays with a teacher for a number of years so this allows for strong relational practise and depth of knowledge of the learner, as well as offering a rolling curriculum so content is revisited regularly.

The application of our sociocratic principles allows for learner voice to be heard and develops oracy skills that supplement and reinforce the young peoples' ability to reflect on their learning and to identify areas of interest and areas to develop. Play is fundamental to learning, and time and space is made in the school day both outside and inside classrooms.

Curriculum subjects

We are a small school, but we endeavour to offer a wide curriculum covering the following learning areas:

- Core subjects literacy and oracy - including separate language and literacy at GCSE level
- Maths
- Science
- Social studies including History, Geography, Economics, Civics (Class 1-3) and History and Global Citizenship at GCSE.
- A language option – currently Spanish
- Music
- Art
- Media/ICT
- Design/ Technology
- Sport – Parkour and multisports
- PSHE
- R.E
- Choice based workshops as determined by the teaching staff and young people (e.g. Dungeons and dragons, cooking, drama, art)

English, reading and writing

Literacy teaching in class 1-3 at The New School follows the established Storytelling Schools™ methodology for the teaching of Fiction and Non-Fiction Units. This approach provides every young person an opportunity to develop their skills in oral and written communications in a consistent

creative programme, with a focus on confident and fluent communication.

The teaching of both fiction and non-fiction units follows a consistent sequence across the whole school so that teachers and young people become familiar with the learning approach. Each unit is taught using elements from the following sequence: Tell, Deepen, Write, Recycle, Create.

Inclusion: The story focus of this method allows the whole class to work together on the same story, irrespective of current achievement level or particular learning needs. Everyone listens to the story and learns to retell it in a suitable way for their skills and needs. Many of the drama and creative exercises in the deepening are also inclusive in a similar way, involving retelling of whole stories or story fragments in a safe and supportive context. After that, the learning sequences are easily differentiated by next learning step.

Reading

We use Sounds Write as our phonics and reading scheme across the school, and this is taught in discrete phonics sessions, with sessions grouped by current reading ability. This is supported by teacher guided reading sessions, and young people are given appropriately challenging books from the reading scheme. Additionally we have dyslexia-friendly books and books suitable for reluctant older readers.

Next steps for reading and writing are determined through formative assessment and through young people having visibility of their whole reading learning journey, and determining their start point, and next steps.

Young people have access to a variety of engaging fiction and non-fiction texts in their classrooms, and in the library, and books are sent home so young people can read with their family.

Maths

Our approach to maths is based on the aims of the National Curriculum – to develop fluency, to reason mathematically and to solve problems. Our aim is not to simply show young people methods to repeat. We believe in engaging young people in rich, open, visual and creative tasks that need intuition and thinking skills. In this way, young people can choose methods that are useful for the activity, and when they need to learn new methods, these are taught within the activity. This enables deeper learning and engagement, and builds connections between ideas. We use a project based approach to maths teaching with the whole school working on the same overarching project aim, and then the tasks are scaffolded down. This enables scaffold, stretch and challenge across multiage classrooms, and also enables shared resources and teaching practice.

We draw heavily on YouCubed.org and NRICH maths for problem solving maths tasks and teacher training, and we also use some of White Rose maths curriculum and we use an online programme - MathsWatch to supplement class based learning.

Data literacy: Maths for the 21st century requires the ability to work with, understand and use data. We need to be able to separate fact from fiction and make complex decisions, analysing and interpreting data.

Inclusion: When maths is seen as a subject where there is only one right answer, with one correct methodology to use, only a small number of young people are successful. When we open maths up and teachers work to recognise and value all the ways of being mathematical including forming hypotheses, problem solving, communicating, reasoning, drawing, modelling, making connections,

and using multiple representations, many more young people are successful. Open maths is more equitable and leads to higher achievement; memorisation leads to poor mathematicians. Research shows that when young people are given the freedom to think in ways that make sense to them, learning differences are no longer a barrier to mathematical achievement.

Common Ground Collaborative Projects

We teach social sciences (history, geography, economics and civics) through our CGC concept based curriculum. Young people are supported to unpack key concepts and learning goals, and develop a project end goal (e.g. presentation, model etc)

Each project follows a set learning process – Connect (unpack the question, identify the resources); Construct (plan our strategy, construct an understanding); Contribute (check our understanding, communicate our understanding).

It is a concept based curriculum that builds year on year, extending the concepts and building depth of knowledge. Formative assessment for the project includes a young person centred self-assessment, and a teacher assessed rubric (apprentice, developing, confident, expert).

PSHE and Religious Education

Our curriculum and approach to PSHE education aims to equip young people with the skills they need to make empowered decisions about their futures, relationships, careers, and wellbeing. Our approach is to offer frameworks for young people to understand and make their own personal decisions about the topics outlined below, and to understand them purposefully in their lives. By offering young people the tools to reflect on their personal, social, health, and economic decisions, combined with the information they will need to understand their context and options, we aim to empower young people to make choices that will support their wellbeing. Relational work and personal development is interwoven across our TNS's approach and curriculum, and PSHE education is ingrained in our work through the links below.

The areas in the scheme of work are collated from the National Curriculum for PSHE and the curriculum areas outlined by the PSHE association. These curriculum areas have been cross referenced with the rest of our school curriculum, and each area is linked with an area of the children's learning. PSHE education is carried out through our RSE schemes of work (Spring Fever and School of Sexuality Education), our Pastoral Circles Framework, our Careers Curriculum, our ICT and Science schemes of work, and through class projects. PSHE education is thus intentionally woven into the curriculum across each year so that young people develop a practical understanding of the topics below and their applications. Each scheme of work is linked in the areas attached. Teachers are responsible for picking up PSHE areas highlighted in orange on our PSHE scheme of work, not otherwise covered across the curriculum.

We are increasingly learning about cases of child sexual exploitation that involve younger children, particularly in the online sphere. In order to support this we build in effective, age-appropriate education, which sensitively supports younger children on these issues and which forms part of a planned programme of study across key stages. Our PSHE lessons are a route for educating children and young people about the risks of child sexual exploitation and other forms of harm. This is done within the wider programme of work on sexuality and sexual development, choice and consent, healthy relationships, harmful social norms and abusive behaviours and online safety (covered through our RSE programme). Our work aims to engage both boys and girls and address both risk of perpetration and risk of victimisation (and the potential for overlap). We also deliver our child sexual exploitation messages in a safe non-judgmental environment, by staff who are confident discussing the issues and able to

challenge unhelpful perceptions.

Relationship and sex education (RSE)

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. RSE involves a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

- We believe relationships and sex education is important for our pupils and our school because we believe in the power of voice and choice which is bound up in a deeper aspect of consent. We also believe in developing a sense of agency in children and understanding their biological make up can help them make better choices about their body.
- We view the partnership of home and school as vital in supporting healthy social and cultural development as outlined above.

We ensure RSE is inclusive and meets the needs of all our pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

We ensure RSE fosters gender equality and LGBT+ equality. These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after children or young carers).

Relationships education focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships including:

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe

Parent rights

- Parents will be informed about the policy through an email sent out at the beginning of the term when RSE will take place.
- The policy will be available to parents online and attached to the letter informing them when the programme will begin.
- We are committed to working with parents and carers by having an open dialogue about RSE programmes.
- We work closely with parents to ensure that they are fully aware of what is being taught and provide additional resources and support through sharing online resources and continuing to make time to discuss any concerns.
- As part of our whole school approach to RSE, parent Information sessions and opportunities for discussion can begin in the parent circle.
- Parents to view the materials and resources used will be at the end of the term prior to the programme beginning or the first week of the term when the programme begins.

Religious education (RE)/ SMSC/ British values:

At The New School we believe in demonstrating mutual respect and tolerance for other people's beliefs and values. Understanding other beliefs and values is key to better understanding ourselves and the best way we can challenge needed to promote social justice and positive wellbeing for all. RE works on a 2 or 3 year rotation cycle. Each topic has some key questions as a guidance for what individual sessions could cover. It is up to the teachers as to what order and how they incorporate that into learning.

Approach to assessment

*'We need to let students into the secret, allowing them to become insiders of the assessment process. We need to make provision for them to become members of the guild of people who can make consistently sound judgments and know why those judgments are justifiable'.
Royce Sadler 1998*

Formative tracking is our primary assessment tool. The approach to formative tracking is adapted to different classes and subjects where necessary but all classes use progression grids across subjects. Formative assessment is completed by teachers and specialists throughout the academic year.

Formative tracking is used by teachers to ensure individual young people are making progress, to inform planning and next steps as well as to identify where additional support is needed. It is a requirement that formative tracking for each young person is a shared document that can be used to inform the practice of different roles within the school.

Teachers also ask young people to complete summative assessment once a term where young people are asked to do an extended task in a subject either individually or in a group. This may be a written piece, a maths puzzle, or a science experiment. The teacher will then give written or verbal feedback on their task and give the young person ideas of what they could do to improve their learning.

Teachers ensure they give effective feedback via our feedback policy which includes either written or verbal feedback, allowing young people to evaluate their progress whilst in the process of completing an activity, refine their work based on feedback and then evaluate their achievement when they've finished; or as a result of a summative style piece that they have chosen to complete.

Early Years

Introduction

As with the main curriculum policy, our approach to the Early Years also reflects our belief that education should support and develop young people's sense of agency in learning. The outcomes that we focus on encompass the development of basic skills and competencies, social and emotional learning, and physical and mental health, but ultimately enable every young person to develop a sense of purpose in their lives and a long-term outcome of personal wellbeing. The roots of wellbeing start in the early years and so laying a solid foundation is crucial.

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2021 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and covers young people in our Reception year.

Aims

- **Contribution and growth:** To recognise each young person as a unique individual, who makes meaning in different ways and is interested in different things. To celebrate the diversity that exists within every group of young people who starts our school who have different pre-dispositions, strengths and capacities, perceptions and experience of the world
- **Fulfilment:** To support deep connection to the natural environment that young children have an innate empathy for, and nurture an environmental understanding and attitudes for future lives; to support the development of the physical and spiritual
- **Interdependence:** To support the inbuilt drive to play, explore, and find ways of expressing a unique identity and potential in a diverse group of young people doing the same
- **Security:** To support social and emotional wellbeing and the development of healthy relationships through explicit skills teaching, consistent respectful boundaries, and supportive guidance to resolve conflicts using principles of restorative justice
- **Relationships:** To offer nurturing, respectful, consistent adult relationships that enable a sense of belonging and a sense of connection
- **Engagement:** To develop a rich age-appropriate environment that supports young people to actively engage with, shape, and follow their interests, motivations and natural play urges

Curriculum structure

- Our Class 1 is comprised of Reception and Year 1 age children (age 4-6 year olds).
- Our key focus during these two years is on supporting the development of resilience and happy young people. We have a richly resourced age-appropriate self-directed learning environment. Young people take part in short skills sessions or lessons – phonics, maths, literacy, group reading, singing; they may also develop a project based on personal or group interest, but the focus is on deep immersive play.
- Young people are introduced to the My Learning Plan that they will use further up the school and will be encouraged to identify their interests, an idea of a goal they might like to work towards and areas where they may need more help or skills e.g. joining in a game that is already in progress. They will also be encouraged to reflect on their My Learning Plans but in an age-appropriate, flexible way that acknowledges that it is perfectly normal to change our minds and pursue different agendas. The My Learning Plan will be developed in collaboration with the class teacher and the parent/carers termly.
- Developing a strong relationship with young people’s families is a high priority at The New School. Teachers find ways to meet with parents, talk to them about their young person, establish clear communication channels (translating where necessary) and ensure they are a key part of their young person’s learning.
- Our teaching model supports the development of collaborative group work that develops a respect for diversity and inclusion, as well as ensuring culturally relevant teaching that addresses stereotype and bias.

Curriculum content

- The curriculum outlined in the 2021 statutory framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance includes 7 areas of learning and development that are interconnected. The first three areas are considered the prime areas of development and this is where we place our focus.
 - Communication and language
 - Physical development
 - Personal, social and emotional development

The other four specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

These areas on the whole integrate into a natural play based environment of which young people are the primary drivers. However, teachers also take into account the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each young person in the class and use this to plan age appropriate resources and projects that respond to each young person's emerging needs.

See above for the approach to reading and phonics across the school utilising discrete phonics teaching and a synthetic phonics programme - Sounds Write.

Assessment

- Just as with our main assessment policy the focus is on formative assessment which relies heavily on teacher observations and photographs to identify young people's interests, learning styles and potential next steps in their learning. These observations shape planning for the classroom environment.
- At the end of the year teachers fill in the EYFS assessment profile for each young person who is Reception age, to meet statutory regulation. This profile reflects ongoing observations, written evidence through the My Learning Plans, and through discussion with the young person. This profile is shared with the parent if they so wish, with a recognition that young people learn and develop in different ways and at different times.

Safeguarding

- Our safeguarding procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

Inclusion

Special educational needs

Our curriculum is designed to be inclusive of all learning needs. We use a holistic approach to support individual learning needs. Please see our SEND policy for more information.

English as an additional language

At The New School, we believe all young people need to feel safe, valued and respected in order to learn and develop a sense of agency. For children learning English as an additional language, we appreciate language is central to identity, so home languages are recognised and valued. Children come from a variety of backgrounds and we recognise multilingualism as a strength and actively encourage positive responses to this; negative stereotyping is avoided at all times. We aim:

- To ensure that we meet the full range of needs of those children who are learning English as an additional language. This is in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010
- To welcome and value the cultural, linguistic and educational experiences that pupils with EAL bring to The New School Community
- To help EAL pupils to become confident and fluent in speaking and listening, reading and writing in English in order to be able to meet their personal goals.
- To encourage and enable parental support in supporting young people's learning and self-direction.
- To be able to assess the skills and needs of pupils with EAL and to give supportive, inclusive provision throughout the School.

High achieving and low achieving pupils

At The New School we believe in a fully inclusive curriculum that sees the uniqueness of all young people on their own trajectory of learning and progress. Some young people may be at a current level of achievement that is higher than their peers, whilst others, for various reasons, may be at a lower level of achievement. Reasons may include: Summer born children, those living with a high-level of deprivation, or those who simply achieve developmental milestones at a different time to their peers. As such we do not define young people as 'more' or 'less' able.

All young people will be individually monitored so that teachers know where they are in their learning, where they need to go next and how to support them to get there. We focus on progress from each young person's starting point. The nature of the mixed ability teaching practice at The New School means that class work has a low barrier to entry, but allows for depth, extension, and challenge according to interest, prior knowledge and current achievement level. Equally there is space in the school day for young people to follow their own interests, to engage in their own projects, or to engage in teacher collaborative projects and presentations, meaning there are further opportunities for challenge and extension, as well as young people engaging in developing personal interests. The close relationship that is able to form between the teacher and the young person due to the small classes allows for the needs of all young people to be identified clearly, discussed and communicated through the termly My Learning Plan meeting.

Where a young person who is achieving highly is also identified as having SEND then provision will be made for them as outlined above.

Careers and future direction

Our aim is for young people to leave The New School with a sense of agency - the ability to set goals, act with a sense of purpose, and have the skills and competencies needed to action those goals. Our accountability and outcomes framework specifically evaluates this and it is our belief that supporting young people to develop a clear sense of purpose and self-directed executive function skills throughout

their education, creates lifelong learners who are clear about their interests and engagement in learning, and are able to fully articulate the direction they wish to take in the future.

At The New School we follow the 2014 Gatsby benchmarks for good careers guidance. This policy is underpinned by Sections 42A and 45A of the Education Act 1997, and has due regard to the DfE's statutory guidance, 'Careers guidance and access for education and training providers', which was last updated in July 2021.

The main aims of careers provision at The New School are to:

- Prepare pupils for life post-education.
- Develop an understanding of different career paths and challenge stereotypes.
- Develop an understanding of the differences between school and work.
- Support young people to achieve their future goals
- Offer targeted support for disadvantaged young people

Monitoring and evaluation

The co-Headteachers are responsible for monitoring the curriculum and its implementation. This policy is reviewed annually and is signed off by the co-Headteachers and the board of trustees. Each teacher is responsible for monitoring progress and supporting every young person in their class. Teachers are subject to assessment, observation and feedback on their teaching and the learning that is happening within the class and this forms part of the performance development review.

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Privacy Statement

Who we are: The New School is the Data Controller.

Why do we need your data: Your and your young person's details are required by the school to facilitate your young person's admission to the school.

What is the lawful basis for processing this data: This information is necessary for the school's legitimate interests.

Who will this data be shared with: We will only share your data with third parties if we are legally obliged to do so.

How long will we keep your data: we will hold your data for as long as we have a lawful basis to process your data.