



Waterton
Academy Trust

Curriculum Policy

2025 – 2026



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Hammer Lane Academy Vision and Ethos

Hammer Lane Academy seeks to continually develop its students and staff, embedding practices and attitudes that promote safety, happiness and nurture. We prepare children for the future by ensuring they have provision in place to achieve their full potential. We are aspirational, striving for achievement for all.

We provide each child with support, nurture, kindness, independence and new experiences to inspire a bright future. We focus on the whole child and aim to deliver a holistic curriculum that encompasses a wide variety of key social and life skills.

Our Curriculum Intent

We believe in a broad and balanced curriculum which is aspirational and strives for achievement for all. Our aims are that our curriculum fosters lifelong learning, builds interests, is expressive and creative, and encourages togetherness in the school and wider community. It is centred around the child's happiness – the most important aspect of our curriculum. This is built on positive relationships, independence, coping skills and achievement.

Our curriculum is based on the needs of pupils within our provision. It embodies:

- Pupil need at the centre of the curriculum
- Four key areas of learning underpinning each pupil's needs
- Organisation of different curricula suited to need
- Elements of learning that may be included in each pupil's personalised curriculum, dependent on interests, strengths, needs and areas of development
- Core strands of the curriculum that are taught for all pupils

Curriculum Implementation

At Hammer Lane Academy our curriculum is designed to ensure that children achieve their full potential through access to an ambitious, broad and well-developed curriculum. Our curriculum expresses our aim of ambition without limits – tailored to individual needs as well as structured through clear learning intentions and aims.

We have developed our curriculum offer through our long-term and medium-term plans (LTP/MTP), ensuring coverage of key curriculum points, life skills, and a motivating and engaging learning experience. Subject leaders have mapped their subject areas – identifying strands of learning, key vocabulary and progression pathways towards end points – so that pupils know more and remember more over time.

Life skills are a key part of our work, ensuring that each subject area includes clear preparation-for-adulthood skills as part of the curriculum map.

Learning must be engaging for each pupil; without this, pupil progress and depth



of learning will be limited. Our curriculum ensures learning is always appropriate and motivating.

The curriculum at Hammer Lane comprises:

- Content and structure – what is taught, when and why
- Effective pedagogical delivery
- Understanding child development
- Assessment
- Environment
- Visits, visitors and experiences

Delivery of Semi-Formal and Formal Learning

We deliver the curriculum through themes and topics planned in our long- and medium-term planning, matched to the knowledge, skills and understanding of each class. Our classes are organised based on the needs of the children rather than chronological age to ensure the best fit. Teachers adapt lesson plans and delivery to meet individual and group needs, ensuring progression while allowing for personalised learning.

Staff know our children well, ensuring curriculum delivery is responsive to each child's needs at that point in time. Our curriculum is an umbrella structure with the children as the starting point. Staff make confident decisions about developmental hierarchies linked to a thorough understanding of child development.

This approach reflects a spiral of inquiry, modelling adaptive teaching and an adaptive curriculum. Teachers are forensic in their assessment approach to inform flexible teaching and learning, noticing what children are learning, how they are responding and how engaged they are in order to shape effective teaching and learning experiences.

Through these approaches, staff make knowledge accessible – they know the children, the subject and how to bring it alive. Staff meet need at the point of that need, not where they think it should be.

Delivery of our Pre-Formal Curriculum

We recognise that some learners need a holistic, multi-sensory and pre-formal curriculum, which we deliver through the Cherry Garden Framework. A topic-based approach ensures a broad range of opportunities and experiences adapted to reflect pupils' interests and next steps. This ensures breadth and depth of learning for all pupils, regardless of which pathway they are following.

Cherry Garden Child-Centred Curriculum aims to be:

- Motivating and engaging
- Relevant
- Challenging



- Personalised

Cherry Garden promotes respect for each pupil as an individual, emphasising the four core development areas of communication, personal, physical and cognitive (thinking) skills. Targets derived from EHCP outcomes, interests, motivations and needs are integrated into curriculum areas to meet individual needs.

We implement a play-based curriculum which is developmentally appropriate to our pupils' needs. We facilitate learning through adult-supported play and adult-directed activities with a focus on exploration and creativity. Our enabling environment reflects pupils' needs, backgrounds and prior life experiences to ensure relevant, functional and meaningful learning.

Some pupils may need a greater focus on structured learning alongside play-based learning; this is implemented as part of their bespoke curriculum.

Individualised Pathways

Each child has an individual curriculum based on their EHCP outcomes. Activities are personalised and delivered on a 1:1 basis or in small groups as appropriate, ensuring daily access to tailored provision and progress towards agreed outcomes.

The Role of the Teacher

- Plan and teach the curriculum, adapting to meet the needs of all learners
- Include personalised elements of learning to meet individual needs
- Use themes and projects to enhance and enrich learning
- Plan pupil-led activities to increase interest and motivation
- Ensure depth and breadth of the curriculum through engaging activities
- Provide opportunities for pupils to practise and generalise learning
- Ensure the environment reflects the needs of learners and supports outcomes

Curriculum Impact

We triangulate evidence and data from a number of sources throughout the school year to gauge the impact of our curriculum. These include:

- Peer-to-peer observations
- Pupil Progress Meetings reviewing EHCP targets
- Environment walks and learning walks
- Pupil voice
- Staff CPD and its impact on teaching and learning
- Regular reviews of the curriculum and its development
- Scrutiny of planning documents
- Observations of children using Tapestry

Document Detail



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