



**Waterton**  
Academy Trust

# Curriculum Policy

2025 – 2026



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## Hammer Lane Academy Vision and Ethos

Hammer Lane Academy is a setting which seeks to continually develop its students and staff and influence and embody practices and attitudes. At Hammer Lane students and staff work together in a safe and happy environment where there is a culture driven by nurture and a passion to prepare children for the future. It is our belief that every child should have the provision in place which allows them to achieve their full potential. We are aspirational and strive for achievement for all.

We will provide each child with support, nurture, kindness, independence and new experiences to inspire a bright future. We focus on the child as a whole and aim to provide 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 and develops 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 and success. Our curriculum comprises all learning and other experiences that each school plans for its pupils. The national curriculum forms one part of the school curriculum. DFE (2014)

The curriculum model is based on the pupils needs in our provision. It embodies:

- Pupil need at the centre of the curriculum.
- The four key areas of learning underpinning each pupils needs.
- The organisation of the different curriculums 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 learning are taught for all pupils.

## Curriculum implementation

### Curriculum Principles

At Hammer Lane Academy our curriculum is designed to ensure that our children achieve their full potential through access to an ambitious, broad and well-developed curriculum. We aim for our curriculum to express our aim of ambition without limits, this encompasses a curriculum that is tailored to individual need as well as structured through set learning intentions and aims.

We use Cornerstones as one curriculum planning tool to ensure that we are providing the best possible experience to ensure high outcomes for our children. Our decision to purchase Cornerstones is evidence based. We



conducted various research activities and spent time looking at available curriculums and assessed these based on how they aligned with the needs of our children. Cornerstones allows us to ensure we are achieving coverage of key curriculum points, work focused on life skills and that we are delivering a curriculum that engages and motivates our children. We have developed our curriculum offer with Cornerstones to ensure that subject plans are sequential and ensure progression over time. Subject leaders have worked with members of SLT to map out their subject area- identifying the strands of learning and development including key vocabulary to be taught and plotting learning towards the end point – what do we want our children to know.

Life skills are a key part of our work and ensure that each subject area has clearly identified life skills as part of preparation for adulthood as part of the curriculum map.

Learning must be engaging for each pupil, without this, pupils will struggle to be interested, and therefore pupil progress and depth of learning will be limited. Our curriculum, ensures that learning is engaging and will always be appropriate.

The curriculum at Hammer Lane is not just the sequence of learning that we follow, it comprises of;

- The content and structure of the curriculum – what is taught, when and why. Our curriculum is progressive but is also designed as a spiral in order to facilitate regular retrieval and revisiting of key facts. The curriculum is structured around our 'big ideas' which are used to engage, inspire and motivate our children.
- Effective pedagogical delivery- our staff all understand what an effective model for learning is and how this may look for each individual child in our setting. This includes knowing the interests of our children and shaping delivery towards this.
- Understanding child development- we place a high emphasis on a clear and thorough understanding of what a child can do now, what they need in place to attempt next steps of learning and what next steps may look like, including what success looks like in this area. We constantly revisit each child's current point and discuss as a team the steps needed to move forwards.
- Assessment- linked to points above it is crucial that we have regular and accurate assessments of what a child can do so that no time is lost and no learning is missed. We are constantly striving for the next achievement point, the next step and the next marker of progress to ensure that our children are truly achieving.
- Environment- ensuring our environment supports our children and provides the learning experiences, and spaces that they require.
- Visits, visitors, and experiences – a key feature of our curriculum is the experience element of our work. We want to ensure that our children experience the full breadth of curriculum offer and engage in relevant and purposeful experiences with each topic they cover. This may be



visitors to the setting, an experience that our staff provide or visits outside of the setting- linked to curriculum aims and themes.

### **Delivery of Semi-Formal and Formal Learning**

- We deliver the curriculum at Hammer Lane through the themes contained in the Cornerstones Planning Package. We match the unit to the knowledge, skills and understanding of each class. Our classes are organised based on need of the children rather than chronological age to ensure that we have a clear and accurate fit. Our teachers use the Cornerstones lesson units and plans as a base and then adapt the lesson, and delivery of this lesson to meet the individual and group needs of their classes. This ensures that cycles of learning are planned to ensure progression but the design of this allows us to create personalised learning for our children.
- A key consideration that we take into account is to ensure that our staff know our children well. This ensures that the curriculum for the class, and individual children is tailored towards their expressed need rather than the inferred need. We do not assume what we think we know; we always ensure that our work is pitched accurately through regular assessment to ensure next steps are accurate and that our lesson delivery is responsive to our children and the exact point in time learning.
- Our curriculum needs to have 'flex' in it, it is an umbrella structure with the children as the starting point and staff need to make confident decisions about the developmental hierarchies that we want to follow- linked to a thorough understanding of child development. The pace is determined by child's needs but there is a shared understanding that time is not wasted. This is a careful balance and relies on a clear understanding of our children as individuals and the point in time that they are accessing as well as the shared goal and end point.
- We describe this approach as a spiral of inquiry which resembles specific modelling of the graduated approach incorporating adaptive teaching and an adaptive curriculum. Our teachers need to be forensic in their approach to assessment in order to inform flexible teaching and learning. A key factor in this is noticing what our children are learning, how they are responding and how engaged they are in order to shape effective teaching and learning experiences.
- Through these approaches we aim to make the knowledge accessible- our staff know our children, they know the subject well and their role is to bring this alive to our children, make it accessible in order to make it achievable. We ensure that presence in the moment is valued and that our staff meet need at the point of that need, not where they think it should be. This is a specific approach and one that requires all staff to be absorbed in their tasks and activities with a child to fully understand the learning that is taking place.

### **Delivery of our Pre-Formal Curriculum**

We recognise that some of our learners have a need for a holistic, multi-sensory and preformal curriculum which we deliver through the Cherry Garden





Framework. A topic-based approach ensures a broad range of opportunities and experiences. These topics are then adapted to reflect the pupil's interests and next steps. They also ensure breadth and depth of learning for all pupils, regardless of which pathway they are following or may remain on.

Cherry Garden Child Centred Curriculum aims to be:

1. MOTIVATING and ENGAGING – pupils learn when they are interested, stimulated and engaged.
2. RELEVANT- functional learning relevant to the learning levels of the pupils, taking into account their prior knowledge and experiences.
3. CHALLENGING – Suitably high and realistic expectations are held by everyone in the team. Differentiated learning is evident that ensures holistic progress for all pupils.
4. PERSONALISED goals are to be central to all aspects of provision and link closely to long term outcomes in the pupil's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Cherry Garden is a child centred play-based curriculum 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 as well as the pupil's current interests, motivations and needs, are integrated into these curriculum areas to meet the needs of the individual pupils.

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 the pupils' needs, backgrounds and prior life experiences in order to facilitate relevant, functional and meaningful learning. We highly value learning through play, which enables our pupils to develop their confidence, problem solving skills and become active learners. This supports their life long development, in line with research.

We do acknowledge that some pupils may need more focus on structured learning opportunities alongside play based learning, and this is implemented as part of their bespoke curriculum.

## Individualised pathways

In addition to the curriculum detailed above, each child has an individual curriculum that is based on their EHCP and outcomes identified within this. As EHCPs are individual to each child some of the activities that are planned around the outcomes are personalised and delivered on a 1:1 basis. There are some activities that children complete in small groups but this is always led by the provision needed and outcomes. This ensures that on a daily basis children are accessing activities that are tailored to their individual provision ensuring progress towards agreed outcomes.

## The Role of the Teacher



- To plan and teach the curriculum, including any adaptations to meet the needs of all learners • To plan focussed opportunities for teaching and learning of these areas, through a rich array of experiences, using the aspiration and achievement for all approach to planning.
- Include elements of learning that are personalised to meet the needs of each individual learner.
- Use themes and projects to enhance and enrich pupils learning of the key areas.
- Plan pupil led activities to increase interest and motivation.
- Ensure that depth and breadth of the curriculum are planned for through engaging activities. • Allow the pupils time and opportunities to practise and generalise their learning across other areas.

Give pupils space and opportunities to self-discover learning.

- Ensure the learning environment meets the expectations of the school policy, reflects the needs of learners, and supports their 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 to discuss progress that has been made towards EHCP targets
- Environment walks and Learning walks
- Pupil Voice
- Continual Professional Development programmes in line with the School Development
- Priorities and the impact this has on teaching and learning.
- Regular reviews of the curriculum and its development as it embeds in the first year
- Scrutiny of planning documents
- Observations of children using Tapestry

Document Detail			
Document Name:		Reading Policy	
Version:		1	
Chief Officer Signature:			
Effective From:		01/09/2025	
Approved by:			
Approval Meeting Reference:		01/09/2025	
Next Review Date:		01/09/2026	
Version Control			
Version	Date	Author	Change/Reference
1	01/09/2025	Laura Thresh	Version 1 produced



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