

# 'What we do' Policy

## Ocean Lodge Independent School



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Reviewed by the proprietor – September 2019

This document outlines simply, efficiently and clearly the key things we do at Ocean Lodge Independent School to ensure our pupils make progress.

Most pupils at Ocean Lodge Independent School have an education, health and care plan for social, emotional and mental health difficulties. A significant proportion of our pupils have additional special educational needs, including (as examples) Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Dyslexia and Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

# 1. Our Curriculum

- Ocean Lodge Independent School offer the full National Curriculum to all pupils which includes English, Mathematics, Science, ICT, PSHCE (which incorporates RSE and Citizenship), History, Humanities Design Technology, Art & Design, Food & Nutrition, Life skills, and PE.
- The curriculum design is strongly differentiated to meet class and individual needs. We are to be extremely flexible in our timetabling, school day timings and use of additional support
- Curriculum planning is based on the national curriculum. All subjects are all taught as foundation subjects termly and these are taught as interactively and kinaesthetically as is possible
- Teachers have the flexibility to adapt their planning to meet the needs of the very complex and challenging pupils whom they know and understand very well. We operate curriculum where each subject has 3 schemes of work, so enable all pupils assess to the curriculum.
- Our focus at Ocean Lodge Independent School is facilitating quality opportunities for pupils to learn and make progress. Teachers produce medium term planning which is combined into detailed weekly plans for all subjects. Clear differentiation in meeting the needs of all individual pupils in the class is shown. These plans are always available on the school's W Drive in teachers' planning files. Pupils' learning is evaluated on a daily basis and planning amended accordingly, so as to plan for real progression
- Regular school trips and workshops are some of the different ways in which we enrich our curriculum to meet the needs of our pupils. Our timetable allows pupils to have regular access to enrichment activities as well as free play (see section 9) in order to ensure that all pupils have equal access to extra-curricular activities and are able to experience a wide range of creative, practical and physical-based activities though Independent Living Skills, and PE.
- Curriculum offer comprises a range of academic and vocational qualifications for Years 10 and 11 from - in line with ability.
- All pupils new to Ocean Lodge Independent School will receive in their first 6 weeks academic assessment and needs assessment. In addition, a parent/carer interview will be held in which we ascertain:
  - a) Whether there have been or are currently any visual or hearing needs. If this is the case, we will support parents in attending necessary appointments
  - b) vital information regarding adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), which will inform subsequent interventions
  - c) Past and present professional involvement and their input with the family.

## 2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Pupils learn in many different ways and our pupils are particularly complex because their emotions tends to have been a barrier to them making the progress they should have made in the past. They generally arrive with a history of poor attendance, placement gaps and a multitude of exclusions from school, and have therefore missed (often hugely significant) periods of education. As a result of this, they also often arrive with us already considering themselves 'to stay with friends in their mainstream school or larger referral unit, stupid' or 'a failure'. This is often compounded by them having not been allowed and feeling negative about being placed in a permanent special school.

Our job as teachers is therefore a significant challenge but one that is faced with enthusiasm and energy. We achieve this in a number of ways:

- We teach using clear learning objectives and success criteria
- We facilitate learning using a diverse range of activities and strategies borne out of in-depth knowledge of our pupils
- Where appropriate, we use starters to check for prior understanding and plenaries to check that our pupils have fully understood the objective of the lesson, and if they haven't, we adapt our plans and spend time with pupils to ensure they do, before moving on
- We plan and teach in reference to pupils' Progress Plans which identify clear learning, wellbeing and behaviour targets
- We teach according to our pupils' preferred learning styles (visual, auditory and kinaesthetic) and forms of intelligence (mathematical/logical, visual/spatial, interpersonal, musical) as best we can
- We ensure the best possible environment for learning by developing a positive atmosphere in which pupils feel safe and that they belong, enjoy learning and being challenged, trust that they can take risks with their learning and know that they can and will succeed
- We ensure that teaching builds on previous learning and that constant praise, engaging learning tasks and positive use of our behaviour system keeps pupils motivated
- We ensure learning tasks are varied and tailored to individuals, and include investigation and problem-solving tasks, ICT and use of interactive whiteboards, debates, role-plays, design and making activities, critical thinking tasks and time for reflecting on our learning. Pupils work in a variety of ways – in groups, pairs, with the whole class or independently, depending on the task and the individual
- We ensure our classrooms are attractive learning environments. We change displays at least once a term, so that the classroom reflects the topics studied by the pupils, and celebrate pupils' learning by displaying their writing, art, photographs of activities

and working walls. All pupils have the opportunity to display their work regularly. We also use displays to scaffold and support learning. We believe that a stimulating yet calm environment sets the climate for learning, and that a stimulating and organised classroom promotes focus and independent use of resources, which results in high-quality learning

- The quality of teaching is monitored through learning walks, lesson observations, workbook and planning scrutiny and feedback to staff with constructive developmental targets
- We believe that parents & carers have a fundamental role to play in helping pupils learn which is why we send home termly progress reports written in accessible language with clear explanations about stepping stones, indicators and expected levels of progress.
- We set homework (including reading books if appropriate), which reinforces the concepts taught during the week in English and mathematics. We help parents & carers to support their child with homework, and suggest ways of involving them in their child's learning, for example with their projects and investigative work experience

### 3. English: Literacy, Reading and Writing (SPAG)

Raising pupils' literacy levels is of fundamental importance to us and our school development plan reflects our emphasis on accelerating pupils' development of reading and writing skills equally. Our pupils have missed out on crucial parts of their education as a result of exclusion, isolation and lack of support. It is up to us to facilitate their accelerated progress in their phonics, reading and writing despite the multiple challenges they face.

With this in mind, we provide:

- Differentiated English sessions for all pupils focus on shared and guided reading and writing, word and sentence level skills and extended writing.
- Regular reading sessions for pupils all pupils, with additional reading through homework
- Pupils have access to a variety of engaging fiction and non-fiction texts in our English classroom. The teaching of writing encompasses a wide range of genres, both fiction and non-fiction, which prepare pupils for later life (for example writing reports, recounts and letters)
- Regular writing tasks are set for homework, which extend and consolidate the learning that has taken place in class
- Achievement of all subjects is celebrated termly
- Reading is given a high profile across all subjects, and cross-curricular opportunities to develop reading skills are planned throughout the week. Strong links are made between reading and subjects such as Science, History and PSHCE.
- We believe that neat, well-formed handwriting and the presentation of written work helps to raise standards. Pupils should take pride and have a sense of ownership in their work. In order to benefit pupils in the areas of both spelling and writing; fine motor skills are also fine-tuned. Handwriting is taught regularly in all subjects, and may be linked with other areas, e.g. spelling, grammar and phonics.

## 4. Mathematics and Numeracy

Pupils arrive with us displaying varying degrees of competency in mathematics and often have huge gaps in their knowledge of basic concepts due to disrupted periods of schooling. Often, pupils have missed out on the early learning experiences necessary to cement key mathematical skills.

With this in mind, we provide:

- Daily, discrete maths lessons which follow the National Curriculum (focusing on mastery of concepts) but take into account each pupil's unique starting points
- Displays in classrooms which support and scaffold pupils' knowledge of maths concepts. Maths prompts on display in classes reflect the current maths unit being taught. Other displays in classes (such as multiplication tables) help to immerse pupils in a number rich environment
- Regular problem-solving activities are planned by teachers in order to provide pupils with the opportunity to apply their maths skills in different contexts, and begin to develop abilities for higher order thinking
- Maths homework tasks and multiplication practice (where appropriate) give pupils the opportunity to consolidate their learning at home

## **5. Personal, Social, Health, Economic & Citizenship Education (PSHCE) and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC) and Sex & Relationships (RSE)**

Developing our pupils' social skills and teaching them about healthy living, preparing them for life in modern Britain and enabling them to make positive life choices is of considerable importance.

SRE :

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at our school are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place.
- Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene.
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy.
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships.
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.

### **5.1 SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT (S)**

- ability to be reflective about themselves
- use of imagination and creativity in their learning
- willingness to reflect on their experiences

### **5.2 MORAL DEVELOPMENT (M)**

- understanding of right and wrong
- respect for the rule of law in modern Britain
- understanding of the consequences of their behaviour and actions

### **5.3 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (S)**

- use of a range of social skills in different contexts
- willingness to participate, cooperating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively
- understanding of & engagement with the fundamental British values of democracy, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

### **5.6 CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (C)**

- understanding and appreciation of the range of different cultures within school, in Essex and in the United Kingdom
- knowledge of Britain's democratic parliamentary system

- positive participation to artistic, sporting and cultural opportunities
- improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity

We do the following:

- Use all lessons on a daily basis as a tool to focus on the social and emotional aspects of learning as well as many of the elements of our PSHCE/values curriculum
- Teach PSH(C)E formally at least once a week, following our own Ocean Lodge Independent School Scheme of Work
  - Developing our confidence and making the most of our abilities, including setting ourselves goals and celebrating achievements
  - Preparing to play an active role as citizens and developing our awareness of the importance of the communities to which we belong
  - Developing a healthy, safer lifestyle and knowing how to stay safe online
  - Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people
- Formally teach a Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) scheme of work to pupils which aims to:
  - Help pupils develop an understanding of the different types of relationships, including family relationships
  - Help pupils to develop skills in forming and maintaining relationships with others, including their peers
  - Teach pupils about the changes to their body that occur during puberty
  - Introduce pupils to reproduction
- Formally teach e-safety to pupils of all ages across the school, according to age and ability. Please see our e-safety policy
- Formally teach PSHCE to all pupils on a regular basis which focuses on:
  - The development of social skills including managing anger and emotions, building relationships, dealing with conflict and making positive choices, including online as part of e-safety education
  - The development of anti-discriminatory understanding including knowledge and understanding of bullying, cyber-bullying, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and religious tolerance
  - Preparation for life in modern Britain and knowledge of Fundamental British Value, including cultural diversity, mutual respect, the rule of law, democracy, right & wrong, consequences and the range of faiths, religions and values in Britain and London
  - Providing opportunities for reflection, thinking, discussion and formal argument
  - Helping our community, supporting charity and helping others
  - Linking with curriculum-wide weekly trips which aim to develop pupils' understanding & experience of the world including artistic, religious, cultural and sporting

- Linking with our community policeman PC Rob Kirk who visits to lead assemblies and PSHCE sessions where applicable
- Personal health and how to stay healthy with specific focus on nutrition and exercise
- The development of the understanding of risk and keeping safe in everyday life
- An understanding of the world of business and consumers through enterprise projects and fundraising for projects and/or charities

Carefully planned and differentiated activities ensure that all pupils begin to view and understand themselves in the context of wider society, in a structured and supportive way.

In addition, our PSHCE curriculum also ensures that pupils have the opportunity to:

- Learn about public institutions and services in England (for example, the royal family, government, national health service, fire service, the police)
- Develop an understanding of the importance of tolerance and equality whilst challenging prejudice and discrimination. We teach specific lessons which promote tolerance of different family structures and recognise that whilst not everyone's families are the same, they should all be respected and valued as part of an inclusive school community

Our provision supports the development of pupils' PSHCE skills in the following ways:

- We provide pupils with a varied curriculum that draws on the expertise of school trips to support their personal, social and health education.
- We hold workshops and sessions on the importance of staying safe and healthy, including visits for the local police.

## **6. Impartial Careers Information, Advice & Guidance**

Careers guidance is a planned aspect of the Independent Living curriculum for all pupils at OLIS, focusing on the range of career opportunities, suitable roles related to skills, qualifications and experiences, goals, next steps and raising aspirations. All pupils also receive a 1:2:1 careers session, where they can carry out CV-writing, application and interview preparations for colleges, apprenticeships and jobs, and support with the applications process itself.

In addition, pupils aged 11 years and over receive impartial careers information, advice and guidance from Southend local authority's careers service.

Pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 have a one-to-one session at least three times per academic year (in each of the full terms) with an external, impartial and suitably qualified careers advisor from Southend local authority's careers service. These sessions focus on post-16 options, CV-writing, application and interview preparations for colleges, apprenticeships and jobs, and support with the applications process itself.

Pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 access regular additional careers experiences. For example, speakers from a range of careers visit to speak to pupils. Pupils can also attend careers fairs and other settings.

Pupils in Years 10 and 11 access work experience placements on a case-by-case basis.

## 7. Assessment and Feedback.

We use an assessment framework, which tracks the progress of pupils in national curriculum subjects.

For each subject, there is an assessment frame organised in strands defined by the National Curriculum. They are arranged across years in order to make progression clear and to put learning into a logical order. Progress is measured by a system of learning 'indicators' and levels

This system of 'indicator' and levels enables us to personalise each pupil's progress. We encourage them to consider their progress a journey, starting at their first indicator (assessed on entry to Ocean Lodge and called their 'starting point indicator', or 'indicator') and progressing through a series of indicators, numbered 1-9 or E1-L2. In this way, we can celebrate progress and success with every pupil, regardless of whether they started with us working at age related expectations or below.

Within each level, there are 3 levels of indicators (steps towards the level):

**Step 1 (runway)** – when a pupil displays some of the knowledge and skills within that level

**Step 2 (Take off)** – when a pupil displays most of the skills and knowledge within that level

**Step 3 (Flying)** – when a pupil consistently displays the skills and knowledge within that indicator and is beginning to display some of the skills and knowledge within the next level

### 7.1 Baseline

- Pupils often arrive at Ocean Lodge Independent School with a very mixed assessment profile, some come with a lot of assessment data, some with very little or none at all that is relevant or up-to-date. It is very often unreliable data (for a multitude of reasons)
- We assess pupils over their first term with us and assign them a starting point indicator (SPI) for every subject.
- We immediately begin gathering evidence of work across the curriculum (recorded on each pupil's assessment framework for each subject) in order to track the pupil's progress and to provide personalised learning tasks and developmental targets that support academic progress
- During their first weeks at Ocean Lodge be pupils will be baselined using the BKSB diagnostic tool (if applicable to the pupil) to determine their starting points and to set meaningful English and mathematics targets using the GCSE 9-1 scale and functional skills grading criteria (if applicable). For all other subjects, pupils will be baselined using a range of assessments in their chosen qualification areas (the grading for which will depend on the qualification e.g. levels of progress towards a pass, merit and distinction in BTEC qualifications).

## 7.2 Assessment indicators framework

- We use our framework of learning indicators and levels to track the progress and attainment of every pupil in each subject. This assessment system has been designed by teachers at Ocean Lodge in order to capture the holistic progress pupils make with us.
- Evidence is gathered through observations of pupils, samples of work, informal assessments, workbooks, written tasks and practical tasks.
- Pupils produce a range of evidence for assessment including their workbooks, folders of paper-based work, scrapbooks, photographs, recorded commentaries from their teachers as a result of observation, saved computing work and special pieces of writing.
- Teachers record pupils' stepping indicator levels on our central progress tracker every term. Progress within indicators is broken down into the three levels of competency (or 'steps toward the level'), either run way (R), Take off (T) or Flying (F)
- All pupils are targeted to make at least 1 whole level of progress over the academic year in all subjects. For pupils working within the stepping stones, it is expected that they make at least two steps of progress (e.g. from runway to flying) over an academic year with us. This is reflected on their progress plans and progress reports home.
- Our teachers collaborate with each other to moderate pupils' work and levels.

## 8. Mentoring

- We offer mentoring sessions to all pupils, either as set sessions or as and when it is required

### 8.1 How can mentoring help?

Pupils who have endured (and continue to endure) adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), toxic stress and/or associated mental health difficulties will likely have high cortisol (stress) levels and low self-esteem.

Mentoring works to:

- Provides the pupil with an opportunity to express and reflect on their thoughts, feelings and experiences in a safe environment
- Allows the pupil to build a positive therapeutic relationship with the mentor, which raises self-esteem and can alter negative attachment strategies
- Enhances a pupil's emotional well-being and encourages creative problem solving
- Improves self-esteem, confidence and self-worth
- Helps to develop the pupil's emotional vocabulary, encouraging and enabling them to identify and name their emotions
- Helps develop strategies to manage their behaviour and their ability to regulate their emotions
- Helps to remove barriers to learning and facilitate better engagement with the curriculum

### 8.2 Supporting families

Our team supports families in a targeted and robust way. The head teacher meets parents/guardians when their child joins our schools to gain a picture of family life, the needs of the pupil and family and how we can best support them. We are also able to act as a strong link between the family and social care, EWHS and paediatric care, and facilitate regular meetings and/or conversations in which we can support strategies in the home.

### 8.3 Confidentiality

Typically, mentors ensure that all sessions are kept confidential to maintain trust within the therapeutic relationship and to create a space that feels safe to explore sensitive and meaningful aspects of the pupil's life. A mentor would break confidentiality when they become concerned of a safeguarding risk.

## 9. Importance of play

Play is essential to development because it contributes to the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children. Play also offers an ideal opportunity for parents/teachers/professionals to engage fully with their children. Despite the benefits derived from play for both children and parents, time for free play has been noticeably reduced for some children. A variety of factors that have reduced play, including a hurried

lifestyle, changes in family structure, and increased attention to academics and enrichment activities at the expense of free child-centered play. At Ocean Lodge, we consider how best to ensure that play is unutilised as we seek the balance in children's lives to create the optimal developmental milieu. Whilst we do not have a 'playground at OLIS, we have access to parks, and tennis courts as well as the beach, just a short walk away. Added to this is access to the local scout activity centre, where we can engage in indoor and outdoor activities, just a ten minute drive away.