

Curriculum Policy

Options Autism school

Brookthorpe Hall School 2026-2027

Review Date July 2027

CURRICULUM

At Brookthorpe Hall we provide an individualised learning approach which is catered to meet the individual needs of each student. Our ambitious curriculum aims to challenge our students by engaging them in learning that is centred around their interests and intended EHCP outcomes. Our intention is to ensure that our students gain the necessary academic and life skills to prepare them for their next steps towards independence, further education or employment. In doing so we aim to provide a curriculum that is designed to combine creative learning opportunities around our core offer of English, Maths, PSHE, Independent Living Skills, Careers, Computing, Humanities, Art, DT, PE, Cooking and Outdoor Education. Enrichment is an extensive part of our curriculum and through this approach we hope to develop a broad level of practical skills, fulfilment, knowledge and improved personal wellbeing.

At Brookthorpe Hall we understand that many of our students have a varied history of challenging school experiences. For this reason, our focus is to help in overcoming the young person's barriers to learning. As we help students begin to identify and overcome their barriers to learning, the intention of the curriculum will focus more on learning the required skills to embed skills key areas.

Our curriculum aims to.

- Provide all students the opportunity to learn and develop their skills to the best of their ability.
- Teach students how to develop into positive, responsible people, who can work and co-operate with others while developing knowledge and skills, so that they achieve their true potential in the wider community.
- Foster a positive attitude towards learning, so that students enjoy coming to school, and acquire a basis for lifelong learning.
- Teach students the basic skills of speaking, listening, literacy, numeracy and computing.
- Promote an enriching environment that allows students to be creative and to develop their own thinking.
- Enable our pupils to become, where possible, independent learners.
- Help pupils understand Britain's values through SMSC; to enable students to be positive citizens in society.
- Encourage students to have an awareness of their own spiritual development, and to understand right from wrong.
- Help students understand the importance of truth and fairness, so that they grow up committed to equal opportunities for all.
- Prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of adult life.
- Encourage students to have respect for themselves, high self-esteem, and to be able to live and work cooperatively with others.

Implementation of this policy: It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to ensure that staff members are aware of and understand this policy and any subsequent revisions.

AIMS OF THE POLICY

1. To support the effective and coherent delivery of a bespoke curriculum to every pupil;
2. To support staff in making professional responses to the needs of their students through recognised approaches based upon best practice for learners having ASD and/or Complex Needs.
3. To provide a framework which rationalises the roles and responsibilities of the education staff and how these interface and cohere with the wider Options Brookthorpe Hall School team.

Brookthorpe Hall School Curriculum Intentions:

The intentions of our curriculum are to:

- Our curriculum aims to provide learning opportunities that broaden and deepen the minds of our young people, allowing students to feel enriched in the skills that prepare them for their next steps and wider community.
- Drive individual progress within learning and wellbeing so that our students experience success.
- Provide a creative range of educational experiences and challenges, supporting learners' ability to build self-esteem, confidence, and self-awareness.
- Develop and encourage skills that help to support their retention and long-term memory
- Develop independence and teamwork skills.
- Support the students in developing healthy choices, lifestyles, and relationships.
- Provide a curriculum which is broad, balanced and relevant in order for students to achieve their full potential.
- Meet the individual learning needs of each pupil as identified in their Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)
- Provide extensive opportunities for students to acquire and develop skills in English and Mathematics.
- Promote intellectual, social, moral, spiritual, cultural and physical skills development
- Provide a safe, therapeutic, caring, and tolerant school community.
- Value and develop self-confidence and responsibility.
- Involve parents/ carers and the broader community in a partnership for education; thus, creating effective partnership working opportunities
- Recognise the importance of fun and positive enjoyment in learning.
- Involve students in decision making about their own learning, school life.
- Prepare young people to participate fully and successfully in further learning and adult life.

Brookthorpe Hall School curriculum encourages active engagement in learning within first hand, practical contexts in the classroom, in the community and outside. The curriculum is planned and delivered in order to arouse pupil interest and foster engagement and motivation.

Communication and working in partnership with parents and carers is essential to promote effective learning. Parents and Carers currently receive weekly communications which provide an overview of the week, progress that has been made and any challenges their child has encountered. Brookthorpe Hall will be moving to using Class Dojo from November 2026 This app will be used to communicate key information as well as sharing details about children's progress. The app will also be linked to the school's behaviour and rewards policy.

Our bespoke Curriculum Pathways embed the core keys skills required in literacy, mathematics and PSHE. Our aim is to adapt Brookthorpe Hall's curriculum to the learner and their individual needs rather than adapting the learner to the curriculum. This allows us to ensure that no opportunity is missed and they are able to leave Brookthorpe as happy, well-rounded young adults able to navigate their way safely in the community.. Our bespoke curriculum is continually evolving to meet the unique needs of every student through continuous monitoring and evaluation of progress. We follow the four principles that are essential to developing a more inclusive curriculum:

Setting suitable learning challenges;

Responding to learners' diverse needs;

Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment.

Setting students based on ability and individual profiles rather than chronological age.

Staff, as members of a multi-disciplinary team, make use of the whole school environment and the community to provide learners with a curriculum that is motivating, multi-sensory and experience based.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CURRICULUM AT BROOKTHORPE HALL

Our first and most important aim at Brookthorpe Hall School is to develop and nurture positive relationships. To build a secure and trusting environment for our new students they are first placed on our transition pathway. A successful transition will pave the way for a successful school experience. When students are ready to make the step towards a more formal learning model they will be integrated into their class.

Students at Brookthorpe Hall are taught in small groups with a high staff ratio. Staff are experienced and suitably qualified. All teachers have a passion for supporting young people in inclusive education and strive to provide equal opportunities for all. Each group is supported by a familiar and consistent Learning Support Assistants (LSAs)

Teaching at Brookthorpe Hall is pupil centred. Teachers create an environment that adapts to the students and their needs. Our curriculum provides our young people with a level of learning challenge that stretches their cognitive ability, we recognise that every child has the right to an educational experience that promotes challenge, enrichment, and stimulation. Resources are carefully selected to support the needs of the child, promote high quality teaching, and this is reflected in our ambitious curriculum.

To accommodate students' personal preferences and individual needs, teachers work collaboratively and cohesively to adapt our modified curriculum. Student feedback is essential to enhance student participation and address misconceptions within the students learning. This ensures that teaching is responsive and adapted to the students' needs. Teachers regularly check for understanding and make sure that the students are secure in their learning. Where further support is needed, they reshape tasks to aid understanding. They make sure that content is revised and revisited to help students commit learning to long term memory.

Overview of the curriculum intent for English

We currently follow the OFG curriculum for English.

Aims:

- To foster and develop a love of reading and an understanding of the importance of reading for purpose in our everyday lives.
- To use phonics and a range of other strategies to read and spell fluently.
- To be able to effectively communicate, formally and informally.
- To be able to use the reading strategies of comprehension, retrieval and prediction to make sense of text.
- To be able to access a wide variety of material and genres.
- To promote engagement, independence and a love of learning.
- Maximise the individual's potential and develop a level of resilience.
- Offer a wide breadth, balance, relevance, differentiation, progression and continuity that is suited to each learner.
- Address the needs and requirements of each pupil's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- Provide a stimulating and engaging learning environment which promotes effective learning and enables the pupil to experience a sense of enjoyment and achievement throughout their school career.

Reading is prioritised at Brookthorpe Hall School. This starts in the Lower Phase with a sharp focus on phonics and reading comprehension using the DFE accredited Rocket Phonics programme. Upon entry to Brookthorpe Hall School a baseline is carried out which provides teachers with a clear understanding of where children are in terms of phonics, their ability to blend and segment and which phonics phase they are working on. All other students are baselined using the Star Accelerated Reader Programme which will then give each student a reading age. This is a standardised reading age and allows all students to then follow the Accelerated Reader programme at the correct pitch. Students take a reading book home at the appropriate level in order to practise and consolidate key reading skills.

Overview of curriculum pathways

Semi-Formal Pathway:

Pupils who are better suited to vocational qualifications and who may need additional academic support. Includes appropriate English but focus is on engagement with learning in a narrower selection of options linked to employability. Timetable follows a college/FE design with space for therapy. May include alternative provision off-site.

Formal Pathway:

Pupils who are capable of formal academic qualifications and who are likely to go on to further education and the workplace. Timetable is an adapted version of mainstream, with space for therapy, enrichment and exploration of possible career options (e.g. technology)

Overview of the qualifications we offer for English.

Edexcel Functional Skills English

This is a practical English qualification designed to help learners develop the reading, writing, speaking, listening and communication skills they need for everyday life, education and employment.

We offer Functional Skills English Entry Level 1, 2, 3 and Level 1 and 2 as part of the semi-formal and formal pathways. Exams can be taken at any point in upper phase, when students are ready.

Overview

The qualification focuses on using English effectively in real-life situations rather than simply studying English theory. Learners work with practical texts and situations, such as:

- Reading and understanding information
- Writing emails, letters, reports and other documents
- Speaking clearly and appropriately
- Listening and responding effectively
- Adapting communication for different audiences and purposes

- Using spelling, punctuation and grammar accurately

Aims

The main aims are to enable learners to:

1. **Communicate confidently** in a range of personal, social, educational and workplace situations.
2. **Read and understand** different types of texts and identify key information, ideas and opinions.
3. **Write clearly and accurately**, using appropriate vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
4. **Speak and listen effectively**, taking part in discussions and responding appropriately.
5. **Adapt language and communication** to suit different audiences, purposes and contexts.
6. **Develop independence and employability**, giving learners practical English skills they can use in everyday life and work.
7. **Build confidence** in using English for further study and progression.
8. **AQA GCSE English Language**

We offer AQA English Language for GCSE. The exam will be taken when students are in Year 11.

Overview

The **AQA GCSE English Language (8700)** specification aims to develop students' ability to read, understand and analyse a wide range of texts, while also enabling them to communicate clearly and effectively in writing.

The course is assessed through **two written examination papers**:

- **Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing**
 - Section A: Reading – an unseen fiction extract
 - Section B: Writing – creative writing
- **Paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives**
 - Section A: Reading – two non-fiction/literary non-fiction texts
 - Section B: Writing – a viewpoint/persuasive writing task

Both papers are **1 hour 45 minutes** and are worth **80 marks**, giving a total of **160 marks**.

Key Aims

Students should develop the ability to:

1. **Read and understand**
 - Retrieve and interpret information.
 - Identify explicit and implicit meanings.
 - Summarise ideas and information.
 - Compare ideas and perspectives across texts.
2. **Analyse language**
 - Identify and explore writers' use of vocabulary, imagery and linguistic techniques.
 - Explain the effects of specific word choices.
 - Analyse how language contributes to meaning and effect.
3. **Analyse structure**



- Explore how texts are organised.
- Understand the impact of openings, endings, shifts in focus, contrasts and narrative viewpoints.
- Explain how structural choices engage the reader.

4. **Evaluate texts**

- Make informed judgements about a writer's choices.
- Support ideas with relevant textual evidence.
- Consider how effectively a writer achieves a particular purpose or effect.

5. **Compare texts**

- Identify similarities and differences between texts.
- Compare writers' ideas, perspectives and methods.
- Use evidence to support comparative responses.

6. **Write accurately and effectively**

- Communicate clearly for different purposes and audiences.
- Use appropriate vocabulary, sentence structures and paragraphing.
- Organise ideas logically and coherently.
- Use accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.

7. **Develop a personal writing style**

- Write creatively and imaginatively.
- Use description, narration and deliberate structural choices.
- Adapt tone, register and vocabulary to suit the task, audience and purpose.

Maths Curriculum: Intent, Implementation and Impact

(SEN Setting – Autism)

Intent –

At our school – the mathematics curriculum is designed to meet the complex needs of students with Autism. Our philosophy centres on **teaching for enjoyment, confidence and mastery**, ensuring that all students can experience success in mathematics regardless of their starting point.

We believe that mathematics should be **accessible, meaningful and empowering**. Our curriculum prioritises the development of **essential mathematical knowledge, problem-solving skills, independence and resilience**, while supporting the individual learning profiles of our students.

Our cohort is divided into **Lower and Upper phases**, with a curriculum that is carefully sequenced to ensure continuity and progression.

In the **Lower phase**, the curriculum is derived from the National Curriculum success criteria. However, the content has been **carefully scrutinised and adapted** so that students are not overwhelmed by the breadth and pace expected in mainstream settings. Topics have been selected to focus on **core mathematical understanding and practical life skills**, ensuring students gain the foundations required to transition successfully into the secondary phase.

In the **Upper phase**, the curriculum focuses on preparing our students for **recognised qualifications and future pathways**. Students follow the **Pearson Edexcel Functional Skills pathway**, beginning at **Entry Level 1** and progressing through to **Level 2**. Once students successfully achieve **Functional Skills Level 2**, they can move on to **GCSE Mathematics** where appropriate.

Across both phases, the curriculum is designed to:

- Build **confidence and positive attitudes towards mathematics**.
- Develop **mathematical fluency and reasoning**.
- Promote **independence and problem-solving**.
- Support students in applying mathematics to **real-life situations**.
- Prepare students for **Further Education, Employment and Adult Life**.

Our bespoke curriculum ensures that **the needs of our students always come first**, while also empowering staff to deliver high quality and engaging mathematics teaching.

Implementation –

Mathematics teaching in our school is structured to ensure that learning is **engaging, accessible and responsive to the needs of students with Autism**.

Teachers deliver lessons that prioritise **clarity, structure and repetition**, while allowing flexibility to respond to individual learning needs. Learning is supported through a range of approaches including:

- **Small class sizes and high staff-to-student ratios**, with skilled teachers and learning support assistants (LSAs).
- **Adapted teaching strategies** to support communication, attention and emotional regulation.
- **Visual supports, concrete resources and practical activities** to aid understanding.
- **Scaffolded learning and step-by-step instruction**.
- **Opportunities for overlearning and mastery**.
- **Real-life contextual learning** to make mathematics meaningful and relevant (a lot of cross-curricular links).

In the **Lower phase**, teaching focuses on building **strong mathematical foundations**, including number sense, basic operations, measurement and problem-solving. The reduced curriculum breadth allows students to **develop secure understanding without unnecessary cognitive overload**, which is particularly important for students with Autism.

In the **Upper phase**, learning becomes increasingly focused on **Functional Skills and GCSE preparation**, ensuring students develop practical mathematics that can be applied in everyday life. Teaching emphasises:

- Functional problem-solving.
- Numeracy for independent living.
- Exam technique and confidence.
- Gradual progression through qualification levels.

Staff are encouraged to be **innovative and responsive**, adapting lessons to maintain engagement and motivation. Our teachers and LSAs work collaboratively to ensure students receive the **individual support they require to succeed**.

The curriculum structure empowers staff to deliver **high-quality mathematics teaching while meeting the complex needs of our learners**.

Impact –

The impact of our mathematics curriculum is reflected in students who:

- Develop **confidence and enjoyment in mathematics**.
- Make **clear progress from their individual starting points**.
- Build **resilience and independence in problem-solving**.
- Gain **recognised qualifications** through Functional Skills and GCSE pathways.
- Acquire **practical mathematical skills** that support everyday life and future opportunities.

Students demonstrate increasing ability to **apply mathematical knowledge in meaningful contexts**, supporting preparation for adulthood, further education and employment.

Our supportive learning environment ensures that students feel **safe to take risks in their learning**, enabling them to grow both personally and academically.

Through our bespoke curriculum, high-quality teaching and strong staff support, students are able to **experience success in mathematics and develop skills that will benefit them beyond school.**

Overview of curriculum offer

Acorns	Lower Phase	Upper Phase
Communication & Language	English	English
Personal, Social, Emotional Development	Mathematics	Mathematics
Physical Development	Science	Science
Literacy	Art	Art
Mathematics	Design and Technology	Design and Technology
Understanding the World	History	History
Expressive Arts and Design	Geography	Geography
Learning through Play	PE	PE
	PSHE RSE	PSHE RSE
	Careers	Careers
	Cookery	Cookery
	Independent Living Skills	Independent Living Skills

BROOKTHORPE HALL SCHOOL PRACTICE

Our teachers promise to deliver a curriculum that is all together challenging, inspiring and adapted to meet the individual's needs. To assure this our teachers are committed to:

- Reviewing and updating relevant subject policies and action plans annually.
- Writing, reviewing and updating long and medium-term plans for their subject areas;
- Managing resources for their subject.
- Managing the assessment information for each individual within their subject area.

Core subjects are delivered by subject specialists in English, mathematics, and science.

Teachers have responsibility for their individual classes and the individual learners in them, which includes:

- Writing and disseminating pupils' termly educational reports;
- Attending and leading parent/carer termly meetings
- Designing the group's curriculum maps.
- Planning for and resourcing adapted learning spaces.
- Managing their group's staff team, including LSAs and any other support staff allocated to learners.
- Writing reports - termly progress reports, annual end of year reports, reports for annual reviews
- Managing the pastoral needs of their class and sharing assessment information.
- Writing and assessing PLGS, reward charts
- Contributing to their pupils' behaviour support plans (PBSPs)
- Taking a lead for managing the behaviour and emotional needs for students in their group.
- Maintaining regular communication with parents via weekly communications/Class Dojo.

Our curriculum model is integrated and includes all routines of the school day, such as transition time, lunchtime, snack time, leisure time. These are an integral part of the curriculum for students with autism and complex needs. The curriculum at Brookthorpe Hall is holistic and all aspects of therapy including speech and language (SALT) and OT are woven into students' individualised timetables.

At Brookthorpe Hall we appreciate that the nature of autism and complex needs is not exclusive and that there may be other additional needs that accompany a young person's profile. Our curriculum offer encompasses the needs of those students with additional needs such as EAL, trauma related experiences as well as a number of associated profiles for example ADHD, PDA, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and sensory processing needs.

Learning Experiences

The delivery of the curriculum is personalised, considering previous gaps in learning and the need to revisit key concepts. It has an emphasis on experiential and sensory learning across the curriculum. At Brookthorpe Hall we recognise the National Curriculum and modify it aims. Our curriculum includes the following learning experiences:

- Linguistic (English): with an emphasis on communication integrated throughout the curriculum.
- Mathematical: Numeracy, with an emphasis on functional and experiential learning.
- Scientific: Biology, Chemistry and Physics; theoretical concepts and practical experiments.
- Technological: Digital Competence
- Human and Social: PSHE; Citizenship, Geography, History
- Physical: P.E. and outdoor education
- Aesthetic and Creative (Art, DT)
- Therapeutic: sensory, play, Outdoor Education, Horticulture, Equine and Land Based

Alongside the taught curriculum, students in all key stages engage in a range of experiences to develop their social and emotional skills. Lessons are adapted to meet the sensory needs of our students.

At Brookthorpe Hall we understand the demands that learning places on a young person and as a result our lessons are delivered in 30-45 minute intervals. To anticipate learning fatigue we ensure our core lessons are delivered during the morning sessions and practical and vocational lessons take place during the afternoon. Students are taught in small groups with a minimum of two staff dependent upon learner needs.

Allocation of teaching time

Both phases have a 6-hour school day, with the amount of time spent on learning experiences determined for each learner according to their personalised curriculum map. Breaks and lunchtimes are allocated according to learners' personal needs, with a PSHE focus. Each day also includes transition time during the day. It is accepted that, due to the nature of our students, an allocation of time will need to be made for transitions and will be flexibly responsive to their needs at any one time. It is also important to emphasise that the timetable sequence structures the day, not the time on the clock. If a need arises our teachers are flexible in their approach to teaching and timings are managed based around the needs of the individuals in the class. This can include the need for sensory breaks, sensory readjustments or pastoral intervention.

Personalised adaptations are made to all students' timetables to meet their individual needs. Where appropriate, the following changes may be made:

- Sensory experiences
- Physical experiences
- Environmental changes
- Additional staffing
- Additional clinical input
- Specialist resources

To support learning for all students with autism, emphasis is placed on PSHE across the whole curriculum. PSHE is woven into all aspects of learning. In addition RSE is taught to all students appropriate to age and stage of development. RSE information workshops are offered to parents each year and a letter sent out detailing an overview of the course and explaining the 'opt out' part of the process.
group basis.

MONITORING & REVIEW

The Head Teacher together with SLT and curriculum leaders carry out a systematic monitoring and evaluation of the school's curriculum, outlined in the QA schedule. Subject leaders support their areas across the school through feeding into shared curriculum planning and review meetings and supporting the implementation of programmes of study through sharing of ideas and ensuring appropriate resources are in place. Local quality assurance procedures factor in frequent curriculum audits.

The curriculum is reviewed as part of governance and through checklists completed at school level and ratified by the Regional Director.

The curriculum at Brookthorpe Hall is designed to help pupils become good learners			
Engaged Learners Pupils who apply their knowledge, understanding and skills in functional ways and who are self-motivated.	Healthy Learners Pupils who enjoy good standards of mental, emotional and physical wellbeing and lead fulfilled lives.	Responsible Learners Pupils who are self-determined and empowered to engage positively with society and become good citizens.	Successful Learners Pupils who achieve well and make good progress across a broad curriculum from their individual starting points.
These principles help our pupils to...			



Be socially included, enjoy friendships and live as independently as possible	Look after themselves and be healthy	Keep themselves safe and help others to keep safe from harm	Be engaged in positive activity and play an active role in society	Have good self-esteem, ambition, and the means to influence decisions affecting their lives
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Our curriculum promotes learning in the following areas...

Skills Learning to minimise barriers to learning and wellbeing. Helping pupils to engage in the learning process and acquire the skills necessary to enhance their social experiences and participation in society.	Knowledge & Understanding Learning to provide pupils with a broad and balanced knowledge of the world so that they can better understand the processes around everyday living. They have the opportunity to gain qualifications to help them fulfil their potential.	Attitude & Attributes Developing a positive work ethic to enable pupils to grow personally, and enhance their sense of responsibility and accountability and value inter-personal relationships and cope with unpredictable life events.
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The whole school provision supports effective learning through...

Environment A nurture based, sensory aware, pupil centred ethos with an environment that is safe and enriching with many opportunities to promote therapeutic wellbeing.	Staff Team A highly skilled and dedicated, multi-disciplinary team with a range of professional qualifications and experience across many sectors.	Learning Learning is appropriately balanced and well planned to meet the individual needs of pupils. Learning is well linked to pupils individual interests and aspirations	Teaching Lessons are well planned and incorporate creative and personalised learning. Teachers implement individual pupil targets and pupils are actively involved in their learning	Assessment Assessment is continuous, formative, summative and evidence based across all areas of learning.	Enrichment A weekly rolling programme of events and whole school activities to promote holistic development. Pupils enjoy visits, engage with external speakers and in workshops to learn about how to keep safe and healthy
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