

**WARGRAVE HOUSE**

**THE AUTISM SPECIALISTS**

**Wargrave House School (KS1-4)**

**Quality of Education:**

**Curriculum Intent Statement**

**2020-21**

**Intent: (What do we want our young people to learn and why?)**

We work collaboratively in order to provide opportunities for all learners to thrive and integrate into our school and the wider community.

We are ambitious for all learners and want them to be:

* **Engaged, inspired and motivated** students who **enjoy** and **contribute to learning**, make **progress** and are **challenged to achieve** above and beyond expectations;
* **Confident individuals** who are able to lead **safe, healthy & fulfilling lives**, making **successful transitions** in to adulthood;
* **Educated, responsible citizens** who share **‘British Values’** and have the cultural capital to make a **positive contribution** to life in **modern Britain.**

“If you’ve met one person with autism, you’ve met one person with autism.”

 Dr. Stephen Shore

**Personalised learning** is central to our philosophy. All of our learners have **unique qualities and needs** and there is a flexible approach to the curriculum as we build a profile of each student’s educational and social & emotional needs, developed through underpinning **Education, Health and Care Plans** (EHCPs). Academic learning is important, but we understand that if a learner’s social and emotional needs are not met then there will be limited progress in meeting wider educational outcomes and a poor quality of life. Our curriculum therefore focuses firstly on creating an environment that allows students to focus on learning by addressing the **core difficulties** that lie at the heart of autism. These include problems with rigid thinking, managing uncertainty and change, social interaction, and understanding and managing emotions. We focus on **developing the key skills** of communication, cognition, independence, physical development and self-help, all transferrable skills that equip children and young people for life beyond the school.

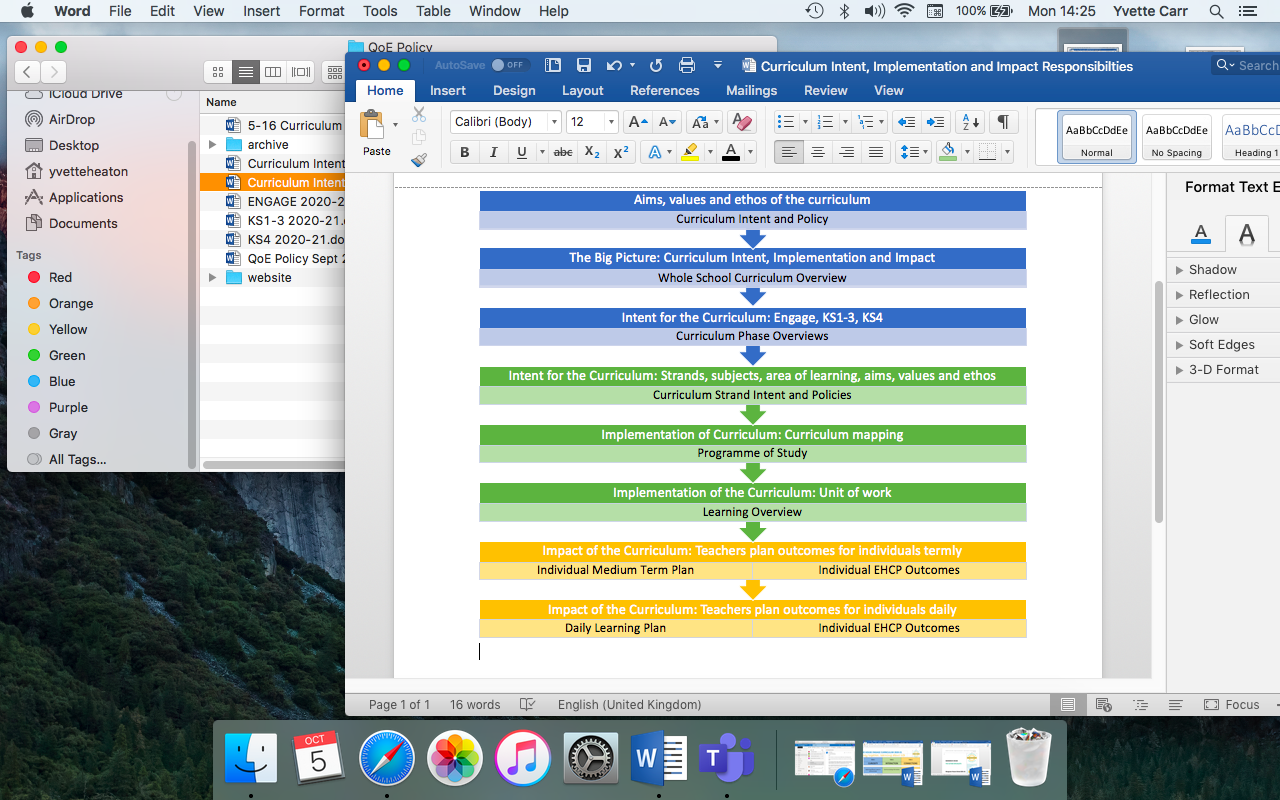
We develop a personalised learning pathway for each learner as we **prepare them for adulthood**. We aim to unlock their potential and to maximise their progress through ensuring that we meet their individual aspirations, employment ambitions, whilst developing independence, and enabling them to be **healthy, happy** and **active** members of society.

Wider key **educational outcomes** linked to **attitudes and attributes, knowledge and understanding** and **transferable skills** and **accreditation/qualifications** are also key to our intent. Learners follow either an adapted National Curriculum or an adapted EQUALS semi-formal curriculum. This can represent simple curriculum modifications for some, through to tailored individual curriculum for others. We place particular emphasis on improved numeracy, literacy and technology skills, which together with EHCP outcomes support learner employability.

**Implementation (How do we organise teaching and learning?)**

The curriculum is an **entire planned personalised learning experience** and we believe that every moment is a learning experience**.** Learners are **grouped by ability and age** and we **organise learning** in to three distinct phases. **ENGAGE: Key Stages 1 to 4** (Explore, Enjoy, Achieve) **RISE: Key Stages 1 & 2** (Reaching Independence through Structured Education) and **BASE: Key Stages 3 & 4** (Building Achievement through Structured Education).

There are **multiple, dynamic** **components** to curriculum implementation. Individual learning pathways are devised following the Wargrave House Curriculum Planning Structure (see below).



EHCP outcomes are addressed first and foremost. These form the first part of Individual Medium Term Plans, with a focus on:

* Communication and Interaction Skills, including SaLT;
* Cognition and Learning Skills, including Literacy, Numeracy and Creative Technology skills;
* Social, Emotional and Mental Health Skills, including Citizenship, Life Skills and SRE;
* Sensory and Physical Skills including PE, Swimming and Rebound and Individual Therapies;
* Independence, Work-related and Vocational Skills including using the community and Life

Skills, options and Employability in KS4.

Learning is planned around and implemented through the **statutory requirements** of an adapted **National Curriculum on a one year curriculum spiral** that allows for regular revisiting and reinforcement of the curriculum content at an age appropriate level. English and Maths are given greatest priority in terms of curriculum time (see below) as the importance of functional literacy and numeracy is fully appreciated. Four periods of English are allocated in RISE to allow the implementation of a systematic synthetic phonics teaching programme (Read Write Inc.). Creative technologies (computing) is also understood to be of vital importance to learners as for many, technology forms a key tool in effective communication.

**Inclusive, differentiated classrooms** are characterised by positive, enthusiastic staff who are skilled in teaching autistic students. A wide range of ‘age appropriate’ learning resources and teaching styles are employed and assessment is used appropriately and is integral to teaching and learning. Teachers employ a ‘Just Right’ challenge and increase or decrease the level of expectation and adjust targets depending on the learner’s needs at any one time.

**Learning outside the classroom** includes educational visits such as to a local mosque and exploring the local community these play an important part of developing skills, allowing learners to see the wider world in a meaningful manner. The Forest Schools approach at Wargrave House is designed to use the natural environment to impact positively on the health and well-being of learners. The experience offers a larger, learning environment outside of the confines of a classroom with natural light and reduced environmental stress factors e.g. bright lights. It is also used as a tool to provide cross-curricular learning links and the opportunity for our young people to experience leading their own learning.

**Communication** is key and supported and developed alongside the therapist team through approaches such as Visual support e.g. PECS, ‘Proloquo2Go’, ‘Talking Mats’ and Makaton. As a specialist Autism provision, there is a whole school and College approach towards the consistent use of intervention. A structured approach, centred on the principles of **TEACCH** (Training and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children) is a key feature of the school. We understand that learners with an autistic spectrum disorder are happiest and achieve most when their **routine** is clear and when their learning opportunities capitalise on their particular skills and talents. To this end, we tailor the curriculum to help learners make progress in a way that best suits them drawing on TEACCH principles.

Whilst individually tailored, the symbols and pictures used to inform learners of daily structure and information are agreed school standards and likewise, the **environment** is structured to provide predictability and consistency throughout school using similar visual cues (such as groupings of tables, individual workstations, layout of dining room, labelling of physical environment). It is apparent from research that children and young people with Autism are highly visual learners. This clear visual structure communicates to them the necessary information to enable them to access learning.

Learners are supported to develop increased levels of positive engagement, improve cognitive and retention skills, social interaction and make positive steps to becoming intentional in their communication. In so doing the curriculum in its widest form has greater impact and outcomes for all.

**Learning** is **personalised** and strives to be responsive to each learner, and build on individual strengths and interests. **Staffing ratios are high** following the standard placement ratio of 1:3 and TSAs are strategically deployed. Some learners receive a higher level of support yet in all situations TSAs strive to facilitate independent learning.

There is **Multi-Professional Collaborative approach** to implementation. Learning Programmes are planned and delivered by the main class teacher who is a qualified teacher skilled in meeting the very specific needs of students with Autism. Each class or individual student is supported by Senior Teaching Support Assistants or Teaching Support Assistants also experienced in meeting the needs of students with Autism. This is further complemented by an integrated therapeutic approach implemented by highly specialised therapists with discipline in speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, music therapy and rebound therapy. Sensory issues are central to the person diagnosed with Autism. Upon joining the school, each new learners’s sensory functioning is assessed through a number of means. Wargrave House School employs a full-time Occupational Therapist and Occupational Therapy Assistant who work with all students throughout the school and residential setting. Intervention may be in the form of class-based work and observation, one-to-one or small group withdrawal. Occupational Therapy aims to develop each young person’s independence and functional performance across a wide range of activities and environments.

Added to this teachers also work alongside the SENCO, FLO, School admission advisor, Careers Advisor and School Nurseto support learners.

The curriculum content selected is that considered to be most appropriate to our learners and the content slimmed to allow time for retention and transference of skills, for example, through repetition, scaffolding and concrete learning experiences as most learners are working below their expected level. Whilst activities and areas of study can readily be located within the framework of the National Curriculum or EQUALS Semi-Formal Curriculum, it is the way that staff relate to learners and the range of interventions makes the learning experience different.

In Key Stage 4 learners will have the opportunity to study accredited learning programmes in a range of subject areas with ASDAN, AQA, Open Awards and DoE. There are also **overarching thematic days** that have a significance for individuals and society and provide relevant learning contexts.

**Assessment for Learning** is an integral part of daily learning planning and is therefore central to classroom practice. There is a focus on what students couldn’t do, what they can now do, and what will they do next? Clear targets, shared with all adults and in ‘student speak’, support sequencing of activities to ensure positive engagement and the development of skills and knowledge and understanding. Self-assessment also supports independence and helps students know how to improve.

The 24-hour curriculum ensures a ‘**Whole School Approach’**. This is achieved through close and daily liaison between evening and day staff. Provision includes a curriculum which focuses on the three core areas of challenge for children and young people with autism, and the development of Independent Living Skills, such as domestic skills; planning, budgeting for, and cooking their own evening meal; and personal hygiene and self-help skills. There are close links here with the Life curriculum within the main school curriculum.

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Accredited learning courses are followed at KS4. These are at a range of levels and subjects and students follow the most appropriate curriculum pathway, according to need, ability and choice with pathways (A, B or C) available for all students regardless of ability. Awarding boards are chosen to ensure progression to KS5 is as seamless as possible. Functional courses are taught because of the difficulties many of our students encounter with, for example, abstract concepts, generalisations and perception. It is essential therefore to prioritise teaching according to functional, contemporary and relevant criteria.

**Impact (What have our young people learnt and how do we know?)**

There are a wide variety of data to identify individual learner progress measures including assessment data, Accreditation, EHCP outcomes and destination data. These are tracked and assessed through varied accountability measures including Quality Assurance and Appraisal, where CPD needs are also identified. Priorities for development are then identified in the School and College improvement plan (SCIP). The Departmental Analysis and Action (DARA) provides a summary of the accountability measures and informs the School Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) and Governor Scrutiny.