

Magdalen Court School

Belong Believe Achieve



# **Magdalen Court School**

## **Curriculum Policy**

**This policy was adopted by the Trustees November 2021**

**Review Date November 2022**



## **Contents**

1. Vision and Ethos
2. Aims
3. Legislation and guidance
4. Roles and responsibilities
5. Organisation and planning
6. Inclusion
7. Monitoring arrangements
8. Links with other policies

### **1.Vision and Ethos**

At Magdalen Court School we believe that learning should be enjoyable and engaging. We also believe that learning should prepare our pupils for all aspects of life.

Our inclusive school caters for a range of children with very mixed abilities from a wide variety of backgrounds. We foster a culture of tolerance, respect and kindness, encouraging our pupils to celebrate their uniqueness.

Our motto is:

**“ Belong, believe and achieve”**

*MCS has an inclusive policy underpinned by the belief that every child has a right to have a safe and happy childhood, whilst being educated and helped to achieve their own unique potential.*

*The school feels it can offer children with SEN a safe space to achieve their own academic and holistic potential. By promoting a sense of belonging, with an atmosphere of kindness and tolerance, the school has a very good success rate with many children, who are often anxious or traumatised by their previous school experiences and early life.*



*With a high staff to pupil ratio, appropriate training, specialist learning support, small school atmosphere, therapeutic input, and a comprehensive physical activity programme, we cater for all pupils who may find the current accepted academic model is not a good fit.*

*We offer a bespoke curriculum with several routes through to qualifications and readiness for adulthood. We have a hybrid of primary and secondary models to give the security of a familiar face teaching many of their lessons, with the subject specialists needed for academic support at a secondary level.*

*We aspire to ensure that all pupils feel that the curriculum is relevant to them, that it is accessible to them and that it encourages them to feel that they belong not only to the school community but also the wider community.*

*Our curriculum is growing and adapting continuously. Our curriculum review is centred around the 3I's; Intent, Implementation and Impact, in order to assess its effectiveness and deliver all subjects in the way which best suits our cohort.*

## **2. Aims**

The overriding aim of the curriculum is to enable each learner to achieve their potential for living as independently as possible, making a positive contribution to the community and achieving economic well-being.

### **More specifically our curriculum aims to:**

***Provide a broad and balanced education for all pupils;*** we do this by offering a variety of subjects at Key Stage 3 to begin working towards Entry Level qualifications in the core subjects and try others before taking a qualification.

***Enable pupils to develop knowledge, understand concepts and acquire skills, and be able to choose and apply these in relevant situations.*** We use pre and post learning to reinforce the concepts and correct use of subject-specific language.

***Support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;*** we achieve this by using a current and comprehensive approach to PSHE, RSE and other Social-Emotional subjects. This is enhanced by social skills support and targeted interventions.

***Support pupils' physical development and responsibility for their own health, and enable them to be active.*** We have a full and varied PE programme including the options to work towards Junior Sports Leader and BTEC qualifications. This is further supported by our focus on motor skills and an excellent Outdoor Education programme.



**Promote a positive attitude towards learning.** Teaching and Learning happen in a variety of formats to make them engaging and accessible. Staff model both our school ethos and passion for their subjects.

**Ensure equal access to learning,** with high expectations for every pupil and appropriate levels of challenge and support

**Provide subject options which support pupils' learning and progression, and enable them to work towards achieving their goals.** We help our pupils to develop independent learning skills, life skills and resilience, to equip them for further/higher education and employment.

### **3. Legislation and guidance**

#### **This policy**

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014](#) and [Equality Act 2010](#) Check

### **4. Roles and responsibilities**

#### **The Board of Trustees**

The trustees will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

#### **The Board of Trustees will also ensure that:**

*A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets*

*The school is teaching a "broad and balanced curriculum" which includes English, maths, and science, and enough teaching time is provided for pupils to cover the subjects*

*Proper provision is made for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs (SEN)*

*All courses provided for pupils below the age of 19 that lead to qualifications, such as GCSEs and A-levels, are approved by the secretary of state*

*The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements*

*It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum*

*It fulfils its role in processes to disapply pupils from all or part of the Curriculum, where appropriate, and in any subsequent appeals*

#### **Headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

*All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met.*



*The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the trustees*

*They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate*

*The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements.*

*The trustees are fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum.*

*The trustees are advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions*

## **Curriculum Leader**

The Curriculum leader, in collaboration with the Headteacher, Trustees and other staff, will monitor and adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of the cohort. They will ensure a consistent approach across the whole school that fulfils the academic needs of each individual child, whilst supporting their social and emotional growth.

## **4. Other staff**

All staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy, disruptions to learning are minimised and that the environment is conducive to learning.

## **Nurture**

**Providing a safe and nurturing environment is the responsibility of every staff member. However, our Nurture practitioners provide specialist care, support and intervention for pupils who find a full class timetable challenging.**

## **Interventions**

Intervention staff enhance our curriculum offer with targeted interventions to support pupils either in class, or a separate room in small groups or 1:1 as necessary. Their role is to enable and reinforce learning by working collaboratively with other staff.

## **5. Organisation and planning**

The ultimate aim of the curriculum is to enable each learner to achieve his or her potential for living as independently as possible, making a positive contribution to the community and achieving economic well-being.



Students are encouraged to focus on gaining knowledge and understanding to help develop the skills they need to be successful and independent learners. They are given tools, strategies and opportunities to support themselves as they grow as individuals.

The curriculum is nurturing and fosters exploration. We adopt a holistic approach which is child-centred. Our bespoke approach to the curriculum means the children can grow as individuals whilst learning essential skills. Great emphasis is placed on developing a healthy growth mindset.

The curriculum is coherent and offers the pupils clear pathways through the Key Stages to success. Each child is supported in their SEMH growth and are provided with a wide variety of subjects to enable them to explore their academic and practical abilities. At the end of Key Stage 3 we refine the pathways delivered to find the best qualification pathways for each individual.

In Key Stage 4 a challenging and differentiated curriculum is available to all children.

*This includes a range of GCSE subjects, BTECs, Entry levels and vocational qualifications including: Maths, English, Science, Spanish, Art, History, Geography, PE and many more.*

*The school encourages pupils from 14 yrs to engage in the Duke of Edinburgh Award, which provides them with wonderful opportunities and many transferable skills.*

Throughout their time at MCS, pupils have a comprehensive programme of Life Skills and Careers lessons, preparing them for later life. They learn how to be safe, how to cook and how to manage money, in addition to learning about specific careers from experts in those fields.

## **We have subject policies for all subjects and through our teaching we aim to:**

*support our pupils to develop self confidence, skills and abilities in order to enable each child to be able to reach their own unique potential*

*encourage the children to build positive relationships with others through respect, tolerance and valuing difference within the school and the wider community*

*to become responsible global citizens by encouraging positive attitudes towards the diverse range of cultures*

*to encourage learning through interest, curiosity and independent thinking to become passionate and resourceful lifelong learners*

## **Effective learning**



We feel that effective learning takes place when:

*Pupil self-esteem is high*

*When the environment is secure, stable and stimulating*

*Learning is active, collaborative and challenging*

*Children find learning enjoyable*

*Independent learning is facilitated and encouraged*

*There are opportunities to transfer skills, knowledge and understanding to other contexts*

*Questioning, reflexion, resourcefulness and resilience are encouraged*

*Success criteria are explicit and models are provided*

*Pupil understanding means that they are able to self-assess and know what they need to do to improve*

## **Effective Teaching**

All our teachers reflect regularly on their personal strengths and weaknesses and share ideas, strategies, successes and challenges willingly with their colleagues. We encourage teachers from their NQT year onwards to keep improving by making time to observe how other colleagues teach and be willing to try new approaches. The quality of teaching is monitored by senior leaders through work sampling, pupil interview and lesson observations.

We plan professional development opportunities (both whole staff and individual) according to the teachers' identified needs, supporting them to develop their skills and continually improve their practice. Staff who work with SEN pupils are trained to understand the conditions they work with. The entire staff are also expected to attend whole day inset training around understanding specific conditions and behaviour intervention strategies.

There are detailed Child Profiles and Individual Education Plans to aid the staff to better support the SEN children. These are drawn from Education, Health and Care Plans as well as professional assessments, reports and staff observation. Due to the small school size all the staff work closely as a team and come to know the children well. They collaborate in updating the Pupil Profiles and IEP's and setting targets which are reviewed and updated before the start of each new term.



## **Outdoor learning: a curriculum which is authentic and based on the child's actual world**

Magdalen Court School has a high percentage of children with SEN. The school is aware that many children develop, change and mature at a different pace. Many of the pupils have different learning styles to that of the current accepted academic route and can suffer self-esteem and confidence issues as a result.

The school has an Adventure Programme along with PE and cookery to aid a healthy lifestyle.

The Adventure Programme includes the Duke of Edinburgh Award in Bronze, Silver and Gold.

Other activities include walking on Dartmoor, forest school, mountain biking, kayaking and visits to Outdoor Pursuits Centres and much more.

Each Key Stage spends an afternoon per week engaging in the programme as well as sports lessons; all of which are compulsory.

The school believes that targeted physical activity:

*fosters independence, team building and communication*

*encourages children to improve their social skills*

*improves fitness and helps avoid conditions such as obesity, diabetes and heart problems. Current research has found that 1:3 school children are obese*

*improves self-esteem and aids good mental health*

*improves self-confidence in those who struggle to learn academically and feel at a disadvantage in some more academic classes*

*improves coordination and core muscle strength - especially for those pupils who have a diagnosis of Dyspraxia and other related conditions*



*Aids learning albeit in an alternative environment*

## **Learning outside the classroom**

Our small classes make off-site trips to facilitate learning outside the classroom.

Integral to our curriculum is a wide range of opportunities and educational experiences that extend beyond the classroom door. Whole learning days are booked in various outdoor locations where the children are taught different ways of understanding and exploring the world around them. This has the added benefit of helping the children to stay fit. For some children sport's intervention programmes are offered as part of a sensory programme.

## **Relationship and Sex Education**

This aspect of education is paramount to the safety of our students, particularly as some of our children are very vulnerable. We aim to equip our young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which will help protect their health, wellbeing and dignity. We also aim to help them develop respectful social and sexual relationships.

As part of our PSHE programme we look at different types of relationships. This includes working/professional relationships and also personal and intimate relationships. We also learn about sensitive issues such as FGM and child sexual exploitation.

In Biology lessons the students learn about the mechanics of reproduction whilst also looking at sexual development and self-image.

In line with the 2020 update to government guidance, we promote equality and diversity by teaching about the rights, emotions and family units of all sexualities and genders. This helps build acceptance of their peers and may give clarification to those struggling with their own identity or feelings.

## **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are integral themes throughout the curriculum. We aim to teach our pupils how to disseminate good from bad information in order to eliminate bias and extremism in all aspects of life. We encourage our pupils through independent thinking, research and debate to achieve balance in viewpoints, opinions and understanding.

We are committed to promoting respect, tolerance and accepting of others' differences to create harmony within our community, which in turn will enable our pupils to become caring and thoughtful individuals within the wider community.



In conjunction with SMSC Magdalen Court School teaches and supports British Values through education and positive modelling by the staff on a holistic basis. The themes of British Values are constantly reiterated through the school's core ethos and values and are an integral part of school life.

The school aims to give the pupils an understanding that:

*As citizens of the United Kingdom they can take part and influence the democratic process.*

*that all citizens have the right to their own religious belief and observances, and this value is enshrined in the rule of law*

*mutual respect and tolerance of others and the intrinsic meaning that engrains British Values is a vital attribute of all citizens in the United Kingdom*

*recognising and refusing to tolerate discrimination in any form needs to be a conscious attitude on the part of all those who work and attend the school*

*individual liberty is a right of all citizens*

*The pupils run a student council which teaches an understanding of the democratic process*

*By inviting representatives of community services such as the police and fire services the students can be taught about the process of law and the part such services play in our wider community*

*That through lessons such as PSHE pupils learn to distinguish right from wrong and understand the importance of civil and criminal law*

*The school has a wide range of children from many backgrounds including other cultures, varied economic backgrounds and a large percentage of SEN pupils*

## **Careers Guidance**

We have a strong element of careers input through our PSHE curriculum.

All year 10 and 11 students follow an English course 'Next steps' which looks at different career pathways.

There is a strong element of life skills to enable pupils to transition successfully to adulthood, via job placements or a third level education route. AQA Preparation for Work

Careers South West will be employed to give careers advice to pupils from Year 10.



## **Short, medium and long-term planning expectations**

Our curriculum is in a period of change and it is part of our 3-year strategic plan to improve the offer and available facilities further to give pupils a greater range of educational pathways.

A long term curriculum overview is produced by Senior Leadership, from which medium term plans are created.

Short term plans reflect the particular needs of the children and are drawn from Education, Health and Care Plans, Individual Education Plans, Pupil Profiles, assessments and reports. These are often supported by professional opinions and advice from multi-agency collaboration to ensure the best outcomes for the child.

## **Resources available to support the curriculum**

We aim to provide a range of appropriate resources although this is subject to financial restraints.

Each department and Key Stage has an allocated budget to support effective delivery of the curriculum.

We use Accelerated Reader to support systematic reading throughout the school, several programmes to support our Maths, and Sounds Write to support progress in spelling.

We have a wide range of reading materials to further support this.

## **6. Inclusion and Differentiation**

The curriculum in Magdalen Court School will provide support to children with additional needs and will use Education, Health and Care Plans, Individual Education Plans, Pupil Profiles, assessments and reports to create appropriate individualised timetables. Due to the small school size all the staff work closely as a team and come to know the children well. They collaborate in updating the Pupil Profiles, IEP's and setting targets; which are reviewed and updated by the second week of each new term.

In response to the increasing number of parents who feel that their children do not easily fit into the current accepted academic model, along with the high ratio of children with EHC Plans who are placed by Devon County Council MCS has improved/enlarged upon the curriculum to offer our pupils a variety of different ways of learning. We have recently added Agriculture to our list of subjects to reflect the interest of the number of children here who come from a farming background.

For some of our students accessing learning is very challenging and we therefore provide a bespoke, personalised curriculum. This will often build on the student's interests and aptitudes. It may also involve off site visits and projects. For some of our students developing life skills is an important part of their personal development and forms a large part of their planned curriculum.



*Teachers set high expectations for all pupils. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:*

*More able pupils*

*Pupils with low prior attainment*

*Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds*

*Pupils with SEN*

*Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)*

Teachers will plan lessons so that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities can study every National Curriculum subject at least until the end of Key stage 3 wherever possible, and ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.

In order to provide all pupils with relevant and appropriate work at each stage by:

*setting suitable learning challenges*

*responding to pupils' diverse needs*

*endeavoring to overcome potential barriers to learning*

*Teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, and to support pupils to take part in all subjects.*

*Further information can be found in our statement of equality information and objectives, and in our SEN policy.*

## **7. Monitoring arrangements**

The curriculum leader will monitor the way their subject is taught throughout the school by using a range of methods, including:

*learning walks*

*lesson observations*

*book scrutinies*

*pupil interviews*

*The curriculum leader has responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed.*

*This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head Teacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Board of Trustees.*



## **8. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

Assessment policy

Marking policy

Homework policy

Non-examination assessment policy

SEN policy and information report

Equality information and objectives

# Magdalen Court School

Belong Believe Achieve

