



MacIntyre Academies Venture Academy

Curriculum Policy

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Curriculum Policy

The Intent of our Curriculum

At Venture Academy we offer a curriculum that meets both the needs and aspirations of our children and young people. We do this within the current statutory framework and do not disapply the expectations of the national curriculum. However, how we deliver our curriculum may look very different to other schools. We make curriculum provision for pupils aged 9-16 (key stages 2-4).

What educational regulations and legislation affect the school?

Venture Academy follow the National Curriculum in order to ensure that our pupils are not disadvantaged when they leave school for college, training or employment. This means that our pupils cover programmes of study that are comparable to those of pupils in mainstream schools. We are bound by the SEND code of practice in our approach to adapting the curriculum to meet the send needs of learners.

The implementation of our curriculum

What does the school's curriculum include?

The school provides full-time education through fully qualified teachers for pupils of compulsory school age. We use subject matter that is appropriate to the ages and aptitude of the pupils, including those with additional special educational needs. Primary aged pupils (those in Columbus class) learn in the main with 1 teacher across most subjects in order to have an experience on a par with their mainstream peers and to give them a sense of consistency and nurture. This also means that this group move around the building less than their secondary aged peers. In all other classes there is an expectation that subject specialists lead the majority of learning, particularly in core subjects and that pupils have a greater experience of moving between lessons and to specialist learning environments on or off site.

Linguistic:

We teach linguistic skills, knowledge and understanding primarily through English and our use of Speech and Language Support and Guidance. The aim is to develop pupils' communication skills and increase their command of language through listening, speaking, and reading and writing. Further, we aim to extend English into GCSE and other externally accredited examinations, and to help pupils of lower ability to understand the written and spoken word effectively as they move into employment or college.

Naturally, English skills are employed across the curriculum in a wide variety of other subjects, but to help pupils understand how language is used socially and address elements within some pupil's EHCP, where for example pupils might have a Speech and Language diagnosis, or a social communication difficulty, those pupils have access to individual or small group Speech and Language Therapy. The school uses the services of an external Dyslexia specialist who assesses pupils for dyslexia or difficulties with literacy in general and advises the school and it's staff.

Mathematical:

Lessons in Mathematics are designed to help pupils make calculations; understand and appreciate relationships and patterns in number and space; and to develop their capacity to

think logically and express themselves clearly with number and abstract calculations. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematics is developed in a variety of ways, including practical activity, problem solving, exploration, and discussion. Mathematical skills are also reinforced, extended and developed in more concrete, practical ways through other areas of the curriculum in subject such as PE, Science and Food Technology.

Scientific:

Science lessons focus on increasing pupils' knowledge and understanding of nature, materials and forces. We also develop the skills associated with investigating science as a process of enquiry, for example, observing, forming hypotheses, conducting experiments and recording findings. Areas of science in other subjects are also reinforced in PSHE, Relationship & Sex Education, PE, Food Technology and Design Technology.

Creative and Technical

Food Technology is an important part of the curriculum, helping pupils learn how to develop, plan and prepare food. The process of working safely with household kitchen tools, equipment and materials to produce good quality products through a process of evaluation also forms a vital part of Food Technology.

Pupils learn about Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as both a discrete subject (Computing) and it is integrated across the curriculum. To support the subject, we have a resourced IT room, class hardware 'banks' and all classrooms have an interactive whiteboard.

We provide art lessons in all years and pupils can also be referred for Art Therapy if this is an outlet that supports their emotional wellbeing. We offer music through our visiting teachers of guitar and drumming.

The school has a comprehensive range of software available for pupils, including specialist programmes to support literacy and numeracy, online learning packages, AAC support through Widgits and other subject specific software to support teaching and learning throughout the curriculum up to and including GCSE.

Human and Social:

This area of the curriculum focuses on people, cultures and their environment, and how human action has influenced events and conditions. In our school, these issues are mainly covered by 'Topic' in Columbus class and 'World Studies' for our other groups incorporating Geography, History and Religious Studies.

Other areas of human and social interaction, including intra and inter-personal interaction, are dealt with in PSHE, prospects and Tutor time. This element in particular is supported through the Holistic Curriculum, which covers both taught elements of delivery and other facilitated opportunities such as therapeutic support and work with the pastoral team. This plays a key role in developing pupils' understanding of the social impact they have on themselves and other people.

Venture Academy recognises the importance of equality. As such, we promote equality both through the formal school day curriculum, and the Holistic curriculum. This supports and reinforces learning and helps pupils connect information and experiences.

The nature of the special needs of our pupils means that they can make themselves vulnerable to many of the issues identified in the “Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 20”. This means that we need to make pupils aware of a range of safeguarding matters, for example around the matters such as Sexual Exploitation and Radicalisation, in order to help them better protect themselves now and in the future. To achieve this, we focus on these matters through PSHE, where appropriate visiting speakers, links with our local community police team and through some key topics across the curriculum

Similarly, we look to promote British values with all of our pupils, focusing on:

- Democracy.
- The rule of law.
- Individual liberty.
- Mutual respect.
- Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs

Again, this work is achieved through assemblies, visiting speakers, special whole school awareness days, visiting theatre groups and, more formally, through PSHE lessons and our SMSC programme which underpins much of what we do all of the time.

Physical:

Through Physical Education, we aim to develop pupils' physical control and co-ordination, as well as their tactical skills and imaginative responses. As with all curriculum areas, the process of evaluating presentation and performance is key to teaching and learning. Pupils are also expected to learn about the basic principles of fitness and health, meaning that pupils develop an understanding in the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle by finding a sport/s they can pursue either as a leisure activity or at a competitive level. In addition to PE and sport, the school delivers Forest Schools lessons to all year groups in order to support them to develop their independence skills, social skills and team work skills.

How does the school ensure that its curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced?

The breadth and balance of the curriculum is dictated by guidelines from the Department of Education. The Department sets out the clear, full and statutory entitlement to learning for all pupils, which means that a balance must be maintained in order to achieve full coverage of all of the elements of the curriculum. We provide adequate teaching hours across the week in all key stages to meet curriculum expectations.

Does the school provide a range of options at Key Stage 4?

The school provides a range of externally accredited qualifications as options at either GCSE or Entry Level and will be introducing the Princes Trust Achieve Programme from September 2021 bridging key stages 3 and 4. The amount of choice depends on the number of pupils in the year group, however there are a range of compulsory subjects including English, Maths, Science, world studies, PE and PSHE, including Relationship and Sex Education. Other options that may be offered include: ICT, Art, Sports Leadership Award, Food and Land Based Learning.

Access to work-related learning

We want every pupil to go on to a college placement, internship or regular employment after they leave the school. To this end, we have our own independent careers and college advisor who works with each pupil in Years 9, 10 and 11. The advisor also liaises with Further Education Colleges in each pupil's local area in order to facilitate a smooth transition from school to college as pupils move on. As part of this the advisor is invited to attend annual reviews for all pupils in these year groups to identify what they would like to do after leaving our school.

Work experience is part of the curriculum for pupils in Year 10 and 11, who will have a least one week's work experience in the key stage. In the year 2020-21 this has been significantly impacted by COVID 19.

The impact of our curriculum

How will the school monitor and evaluate the work set for the pupils?

The work of all pupils is differentiated where necessary. This encourages success and allows pupils to achieve in every area of the curriculum. Work is marked at regular intervals in line with the marking and feedback policy. When work is marked, comments and feedback are given to each child in a way that is critical yet supportive. The aim is to help pupils to see what they need to do to make further progress. The school has recently invested in SOLAR for schools in order to track impact data for all year groups.

Additionally, we monitor the progress of pupils against their expected EHCP outcomes through monitoring their IEPs and reviewing these formally in the Annual Review process.

We communicate termly to families about pupil performance across the curriculum in either a 1-page format (Autumn and Spring) or a long format report in the summer term.

Attendance and incident data is reviewed regularly and at times could indicate the need to review the timetable or curriculum offer of an individual or group.

How does the school maintain high curriculum standards?

Venture Academy employs qualified teachers, wherever possible to deliver specialist lessons. To maintain their subject knowledge teachers receive in-service training. In-service training also focuses on helping teachers and Classroom Assistants to address some of the extra difficulties that our pupils face, such as Dyslexia, Speech and Language, Autism, and social, emotional and mental health difficulties, including those that are the result of ACE's and/or trauma. This approach helps teachers to adapt their plans and delivery methods, and to effectively identify appropriate levels of support through classroom assistants, IT support, specialist therapists, or other physical resources. Venture Academy employs a team of teaching assistants and higher level teaching assistants who support our pupils as individuals and within groups.

Venture Academy only uses nationally recognised examinations, such as those identified above. It also clearly sets pupils a level of expectation, and ensures that they are not disadvantaged in any way by attending a special school. This means that when pupils have the same experience as their friends and family at home, they are less likely to feel

marginalized or disadvantaged. In order to decrease anxiety and stress, Pupils taking examinations are given mock exams so that they can realistic experience of what is to come. It also means that they can then discuss strategies to help them cope and be more successful. We also ensure that where necessary we apply for concessions for pupils who may require adaptations to the exams procedures in order to ensure success.

How is teaching and learning monitored and evaluated throughout the school?

A range of methods are used to monitor teaching and learning in the school. For example, teachers are observed on a number of occasions through the year by the leadership team, Senior Teachers and where appropriate LAB members and/or external stakeholders.

'Book looks' are carried out termly in order for leaders and managers to triangulate the content of pupils work books, with the learning plans, pupil targets and the quality of teaching observed on observations and learning walks.

In addition, we assess all pupil's attainment and progress by using a range of data, including attainment in relation to National Curriculum guidance or course criteria, marking of pupil's work, target-setting information, teacher observations, formative and summative assessments, pupils' work and how they record their work.

Finally, we assess each pupil at the end of each Programme of Study. This data and information is used to make changes and improve teaching and learning. These evaluations and assessments also allow us to measure rates of attainment and progress from the pupil's initial baseline assessment which took place soon after admission. The data is used in a similar way to measure the progress of individual year groups, attainment by gender, the comparative attainment of LAC children, attainment in relation to ethnic diversity, and attainment by subject.