

Curriculum Policy



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1. Overview

Mission statement: At Horizon, our ambition and focus are to enable the young people we care for to fulfil their potential and achieve the brightest futures. This vision is shared with all the Horizon's compassionate colleagues whose collaborative efforts to care for, nurture, educate and support young people is truly inspiring. I am honoured to be a part of the horizon family who can be depended on to provide therapeutic care support and education for individuals to flourish and grow. Amanda Cunningham CEO.

Vision: At Bright Minds Creative Academy, we aim to create a safe and fair learning space for students to achieve their best, empowering them to successfully work towards their future goals, achieving socially and academically.

We develop young people into respectful independent adults in a culturally diverse Britain, who can build valued relationships that positively contribute to the wider community.

School Ethos: We believe that our school will nurture all individuals in their journey to achieve their full and unique potential. We are committed to developing an inclusive, welcoming, safe, and stimulating learning environment that will enable our pupils to be happy and become responsible, community-aware citizens and lifelong learners.

Bright Minds Creative Academy is a specialist provision for pupils aged 11 years to 19 years with Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs.

Values: Belong, Respect, Shine

2. Curriculum Intent

Our curriculum focuses on holistic development and is tailored to meet our students' diverse needs. It is designed to inspire a lifelong love of learning and curiosity; whilst simultaneously developing essential life skills that encourage our students to become independent and confident young adults. We aim to help our students achieve their full potential academically, socially and emotionally; whilst striving to create an inclusive community that belongs to us all.



The students at Bright Minds Creative Academy come to us at differing times in their educational journey -some having missed school for weeks, months or even years. Many, therefore, join significant gaps in their education and bring with them different personal challenges. Our curriculum is designed to meet their diverse needs and to promote resilience, self-regulation, and independence. The high expectations we have of every student are at the core of the learning we offer, but we also build flexibility into the curriculum which allows teaching staff to tailor learning to the individual through a wide range of learning opportunities.

The aims of our curriculum are for pupils to:

- a) believe that they belong in school/education;
- b) develop high levels of self-esteem and confidence through mindful PSHE teaching and therapeutic input;
- c) fill gaps in their knowledge with targeted catch-up sessions;
- d) become confident readers who can enjoy and discuss a range of texts;
- e) be able to manipulate number with confidence to solve problems;
- f) develop their knowledge and skills across the curriculum to the best of their ability;
- g) gain first-hand knowledge of the wider world
- h) embed both the four core values of Horizon (Compassionate, Inspiring, Dependable and Collaborative) and British Values.

The result of our approach is a learning environment where our pupils can gain access to a broad range of high quality, bite-sized learning which both has the flexibility to provide for each individual and builds from one day/week/month/year to the next so that they become lifelong learners who make a positive contribution to society.

At each stage of our curriculum intent, the aim is to equip our pupils with skills for their next stage of education and for life.

The curriculum is broad, balanced, and relevant; it allows pupils time to explore, deepen understanding and embed skills for life. There is an emphasis on connectivity between subjects, so the pupils develop their understanding holistically and make the connection between what they are learning in class and the wider world. Within the wider curriculum each pupil will have individualised, adaptive programmes of studies to meet their individual need: this includes academic and social learning.

3. Curriculum Implementation

The curriculum is implemented using a range of complimentary child-centered strategies that maintain and nurture young peoples' interests, ideas, and aspirations. Wherever possible, the curriculum provides ample opportunities to celebrate and reward young peoples' achievements, both big and small, across the school community and beyond.

The emphasis is always to provide an accessible curriculum that enables pupils of all ages to develop behaviours for learning and skills for independence.

Baseline and Assessments

Teachers use a range of Assessments to baseline and monitor pupils' progress. In Maths we use BSKB and the Basic Number Screening Test. In English, we use the Salford Reading Test. We also use mock Functional Skills English and Maths qualifications to baseline students. For students working below Entry Level 1 In English, we use Abigail Steel Phonics as part of our baseline assessment. Teachers complete termly summative assessment for each subject area to track progress.

SMSC & British Values

Bright Minds Creative Academy has a strong commitment to the personal and social development of all pupils. The school's vision and values, put together by all the staff, supports spiritual, moral, social, and cultural characteristics in all pupils. SMSC and British Values are embedded across our whole school curriculum as well as through are bi-weekly assemblies.

What is SMSC - Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development?

Here is a summary to explain SMSC - it is personalised for all our students at Bright Minds Creative Academy.

Spiritual development is when we:

Explore beliefs and experience; respect faiths, feelings, and values; enjoy learning about oneself, others, and the surrounding world; use imagination and creativity; reflect.

Moral development is when we:

Recognise right and wrong; respect the law; understand consequences; investigate moral and ethical issues; offer reasoned views.

Social development is when we:

Use a range of social skills; participate in the local community; appreciate diverse viewpoints; participate, volunteer, and cooperate; resolve conflict; engage with the 'British values' of democracy, the rule of law, liberty, respect, and tolerance.

Cultural development is when we:

Appreciate cultural influences; appreciate the role of Britain's parliamentary system; participate in culture opportunities; understand, accept, respect, and celebrate diversity.

In our school pupil's SMSC development is seen for example in:

- Taking part in a range of activities regarding social skills
- Developing an awareness and respect for diversity



- Developing and appreciation of theatre
- Developing an understanding of right and wrong.
- Developing the communication skills to make choices about likes/dislikes in school then in wider community visits.
- Taking part in sporting opportunities.
- Taking part in cultural opportunities.
- Taking part in artistic opportunities.

SMSC is embedded throughout the curriculum at Bright Minds Creative Academy. This integrated approach ensures that aspects of SMSC are considered in all subject areas. The senior leadership team audits SMSC and the management team monitor it across school.

SMSC, PSHE and RSE

At Bright Minds Creative Academy, we aim to both 'plug the gaps' and provide life-enhancing experiences to help our young people catch up and excel. Social, moral, spiritual, and cultural development, alongside personal, social, health education are key parts of our overall curriculum offer. For many of our young people, they have not had the rich opportunities to develop these skill sets, nor understand the importance of them in being successful members of society. We provide a range of learning opportunities including hands-on activities, enrichment, offsite visits, educational trips, theme days, and celebration events to name a few. These provide the building blocks our pupils need to understand both who they are, and their place in the world, and have the values, skills, and personal attributes to succeed.

PHSE / RSE is an integral part of the curriculum to support pupils to live well rounded, happy, safe, and successful lives. PHSE and RSE will be taught as both discreetly, through Jigsaw, and embedded into all elements of school life.

The PHSE Curriculum is a whole school approach that covers:

- Being Me in my World (including rights and responsibilities)
- Celebrating Differences (equality and diversity)
- Dreams and Goals (understanding the emotions of aspirations)
- Healthy Me (including both physical and online safety)
- Relationships (building positive ones); and
- Changing me (both transitional changes and SRE).

Prohibition of Partisan Political Views and Legal duties applicable to all schools.

This means schools:

- must prohibit the promotion of partisan political views

- should take steps to ensure the balanced presentation of opposing views on political issues when they are brought to the attention of pupils.

(DfE Guidance- Political impartiality in schools- 17 February 2022)

Teaching about political issues

“Schools will need to teach about political issues in many areas of the curriculum. When planning this, teachers should consider how to ensure teaching aligns with schools’ duties on political impartiality.

Balance in Teaching

Schools should also consider how:

- meaningful political balance across the whole curriculum and during pupils’ time at school can be achieved
- to ensure pupils are taught about a diverse range of views and ideas.

(DfE Guidance- Political impartiality in schools- 17 February 2022)

‘Legal duties on political impartiality should not impede methods of teaching that involve pupils adopting and arguing in favour, or against, partisan political views, such as mock and parallel elections or debates, hustings events or visits from local candidates or political party representatives. Teachers should seek to manage these activities to ensure that all pupils receive a balanced account of the political issues being covered.’

(DfE Guidance- Political impartiality in schools- 17 February 2022)

‘When teaching about sensitive political issues relating to discrimination, teachers should still be mindful to avoid promoting partisan political views or presenting contested theories as fact. A distinction should be drawn between the shared principle that discrimination and prejudice are wrong, and partisan political views that go beyond this or advocate political reform.’

(DfE Guidance- Political impartiality in schools- 17 February 2022)

‘Where schools wish to teach about specific campaigning organisations, such as some of those associated with the Black Lives Matter movement, they should be aware that this may cover partisan political views.....Schools should ensure this content is taught appropriately taking steps to offer pupils a balanced account of opposing views on these points. Partisan political views must not be promoted to pupils, including by encouraging pupils to support campaign groups advocating such views.

‘Schools should continue to take steps to tackle racist and discriminatory attitudes or incidents - and condemn racism within the school and wider society. Challenging intolerant,



racist or discriminatory views where these are shared at school should be seen as part of schools' wider anti-bullying and safeguarding duties.'

(DfE Guidance- Political impartiality in schools- 17 February 2022)

Impact

To reflect further on the impact of all our work on SMSC:

- We engage management team, families, and community
- Hear our student voice
- Observe staff and pupil interactions
- Support Social Behaviour
- Complete learning walks reflecting on resources and practices.

All students are taught the four British values of:

- Democracy
- The Rule of Law
- Individual Liberty
- Mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs or those with no faiths.

These British values are introduced through assemblies, SMSC and PSHE lessons. According to the Department of Education guidance, "actively promoting the values means challenging opinions or behaviours in school that are contrary to British values.

Attempts to promote systems that undermine British values would be completely at odds with schools' duty to provide SMSC.

Through teaching British Values, we provide our students with

- an understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process
- an appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their wellbeing and safety
- an understanding that there is a separation of power between the executive and the judiciary, and that while some public bodies such as the police and the army can be held to account through Parliament, others such as the courts maintain independence
- an understanding that the freedom to choose and hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law

- an acceptance that other people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) will be accepted and tolerated, and will not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour
- an understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination.

Relationship-First approach

Our young people achieve their full potential through the strong, caring relationships they develop with staff. Our trusting, high-need, high-support model provides the foundation on which our young people build the confidence to thrive. Positive relationships help dismantle barriers to learning and promote self-belief and aspiration. All our staff are committed to creating a safe, caring, home-from-home environment where young people are confident to take risks, undertake new challenges, and be the best they can be.

Main Pathway

For our core curriculum, pupils ready for formal subject led learning will follow planning driven by the National Curriculum. Each pupil in the school has EHCP provision plans with outcomes and targets, which are addressed and embedded into teacher planning within lessons through our rewards system.

The steps that we take to implement each aim of our curriculum are set out below.

A) Belonging in Education

Our pupils are with us because they have found it difficult/impossible to remain within a mainstream educational setting. It may not be clear, in each case, what effect this journey has had on their idea of where they fit within an educational setting. We therefore take several steps to help the children feel that they do belong both at our school and in education on a more general level.

We use the ECHP document for each child as the starting point for how we help them learn best. We use recommendations in this document to create individual targets and incentive strategies that help each child to understand what they need to improve to best achieve their potential.

We use a nurture-based approach to both learning and behaviour alongside training on de-escalation and safer physical interventions from Sherwood. Our school days are slightly shorter than a mainstream school to encourage attendance and remove the risk of dysregulation towards the end of a long school day. We also teach shorter, more active lessons to maximise the time children are engaged in hands on learning activities, as opposed to listening to teachers talk. These sessions are, however, introduced and modelled to give our pupils the best chance to succeed. Pupils are also enabled through

our high adult to pupil ratio (3:5) within class, which allows the pupils to have frequent access to help and support, should they need it.

Where applicable, we use visual timetables/prompts, social stories, and physical resources to help our children access their learning.

In addition, we actively foster and model a 'can do' attitude and encourage everyone to embrace the challenge in their learning. We promote responsibility on the part of everyone in our school for the consequences of their actions. Essentially, we encourage the children to have a go at new things and to not make excuses!

B) Building self-esteem

In addition to providing engaging and adaptable access to the national curriculum subjects, we place additional focus on: (i) creating a calm and nurturing environment; (ii) teaching and providing access to practical life skills; and (iii) giving a high priority to the citizenship and safeguarding themes in the Jigsaw PHSE curriculum. Our school-wide focus on PSHE sessions starts with whole school assemblies and is built on through three timetabled PSHE sessions per week. These sessions are mostly practical and/or discussion based to ensure that children remain engaged without having the additional cognitive load of e.g. having to write/ record their thoughts.

We use a team of therapists who specialise in areas including OT, SaLT, play, movement, and art therapy to help the pupils work through any past or present traumas or barriers that could have an impact on their ability to make the most of their education.

These focus areas are of the utmost importance for the children/pupils at Bright Minds Creative Academy to ensure they can access their learning and make the most appropriate choices when not with us.

C) Filling gaps with catch up sessions

Prior to joining our school, many of our pupils will have missed large amounts of their statutory education. We cannot change this fact. We can identify any key gaps in that education (by both in-class, baseline assessment, teacher assessment and termly assessment) and then help the pupils fill them.

We consider each pupil's EHCP to ascertain whether specific targets have previously been identified. We continuously assess pupils within their planned lessons and, to the extent that we find gaps in knowledge that cannot be dealt with in that lesson, we work with them in discrete 1-2-1 or small group sessions to try and fill those gaps in knowledge. These sessions may be delivered by teaching assistants and could involve children from other classes.

D) Becoming confident readers

In all phases, pupils will have time devoted to reading at least once a week. We have a school Literacy Lead who oversees and tracks reading progress. We use Abigail Steel Phonics to ensure that every child is given a strong set of building blocks upon which to foster a long-term love of reading. Pupils will also be encouraged to choose reading material that interests them - fiction and non-fiction books, magazines, newspaper, blogs etc. The school has dedicated reading areas and libraries to support with developing enjoyment and a love of reading. Additional reading activities will feature throughout the school year as challenges, competitions, and awards. Older pupils will be encouraged to read with younger pupils where possible.

E) Creating confident mathematicians

To ensure that all children are confident at manipulating number we deliver mathematics and numeracy lessons. We make every effort to ensure the sessions are as clear and practical as possible to build key mathematical skills. We also encourage our children to use these skills to solve problems - some of which are open ended - to promote flexible application of their skills.

As mentioned above, if a child is not making expected progress from these lessons, we will work with them in catch up sessions to ensure pupils have a clear understanding of numerical concepts and build key fluency skills such as number recognition, number bonds, times tables and using the four operations.

F) Develop their knowledge and skills across the curriculum to the best of their ability

We offer a broad and balanced curriculum with accredited courses up to Level 2 in English, Maths, Science, Art, Digital Skills, Food Technology and History. We believe in giving all our pupils the opportunity to gain qualifications to prepare them for their journey to Post 16 transition.

G) Exploring the wider world

We believe that doing and seeing a variety of new things is an extremely important part of building fundamental skills for learning and life such as resilience and perseverance, as well as social and emotional skills. Trips outside of our school setting are an extremely valuable way to build up these skills. On these trips, pupil will be given access to a range of activities and situations in which to interact with the community, learn and practise new skills and become more competent in travelling from one place to another.

H) Embedding both our core values and British Values

Everything we do in school enables us to embed our core values. We always model compassion and actively teach it during PSHE lessons. We inspire children with well-pitched, interesting teaching and access to a range of different external trips. We, the staff, are dependable: we apply our school rules with consistency and fairness - and we always

make it known that, while actions may have outcomes for a pupil, they will never affect how we feel or act towards that pupil going forward. Finally, we work collaboratively daily as a staff by sharing and discussing our observations about both our pupils and our teaching during our end of day meeting. In the classroom, we also encourage collaborative working as much as possible with a view to helping our children build on the skills, they already possess to flourish within a team.

British Values in our school are interwoven through the entire curriculum. This is delivered through academic lessons, assemblies, our Student Council meetings and cultural events and external workshops.

Curriculum Implementation

The secondary curriculum is organised on a subject based model with a combination of primary and secondary teaching models to best support our students. We use a systematic approach to monitoring, evaluation and review through learning walks, subject reviews and book looks. This process is supported by staff appraisal.

Work Experience

Work Experience programmes form an important and integral part of the Key Stage 4 curriculum. Careful planning takes place to ensure that each pupil accesses a suitable placement that progressively extends their abilities and independence. Pupils have regular meetings with an external Careers Advisor working to the Gatsby Benchmarks. Preparation for work experience starts at the beginning of year 10. Pupils undertake a one-week work placement in year 11.

Travel Training

Learning to travel independently and extending general independence skills in the wider community is a crucial element of the Key Stage 4 programme. Many pupils achieve independent travel status and can use public transport by the end of Key Stage 4, however for some pupils, travel training is ongoing and continues to form an important feature of the pupils post 16 individual action plans.

Curriculum Delivery Model: Wave Pathways

Pupils who come to Bright Minds Creative Academy will come presenting with many complex needs. These will range from Trauma, Attachment, SEMH and ASD. Many of these needs will make learning hard for pupils and will have to be addressed in part before formal academic learning can take place, due to this Bright Minds Creative Academy utilise a Wave Pathway to support and allow engagement. Pupils are provided with a purposeful, fun, and engaging learning environment where we encourage pupils to develop their independence and collaborative skills. Learning is focused on Communication, Cognition, Technology, Physical skills, and Personal, social, emotional well-being. Learning will be



creative and experiential; pupils will be working towards differentiated outcomes appropriate to their individual needs.

Delivery Model

Our model includes pathways that prepare pupils to learn by ensuring their clinical/therapeutic needs, social and emotional needs and academic needs are met. Our aim is to ensure that each pathway forms a transition into formal academic learning whilst continuing to develop therapeutic strategies and social and emotional skills that allow the pupil to move successfully into adulthood. Pupils are assessed when they join Bright Minds to see which wave they need to begin working on. The targets they are working towards to progress to the next wave is recorded on their ICP documents.

Engagement

To prepare pupils who are unable to access education we will develop an individual's timetable that will include some time spent learning in a variety of environments that meets the individual needs of the pupil this can include; one-to-one tuition, offsite experiential learning, outdoor education and planned and delivered enrichment sessions. By providing a programme of engagement and adapted curriculum, we allow the development of basic cognitive skills that enable access to targeted clinical therapies and education. This is time to build relationships and develop trust allowing the first steps for pupils to engage with us and develop the confidence needed to thrive within education.

Introduction of therapeutic interventions

Pupils who attend Bright Minds Creative Academy will often arrive with complex needs that require the support of a full therapeutic programme. Therefore, an individual timetable is planned and implemented in conjunction with the therapies team. With an increased ability to follow school systems, engagement in therapeutic process is more successful and meaningful. This will enable staff and pupils to utilise the trusting relationship built to help repair past relational trauma, develop cognitive skills, engage in focused therapies and behavioural programmes. Therapeutic interventions underpin the ability to learn and support the academic process. At Bright Minds Creative Academy, we weave a therapeutic model throughout education. This is facilitated by trained members of staff via Lego Therapy, Play Work, Drawing and Talking and by qualified and professionally registered therapists who facilitate Occupational Therapy, Speech Language Therapy, Educational Psychology and Play and Creative Art Therapy.

Enrichment

The Enrichment Programme is designed to aid all pupils develop confidence, life skill and emotional literacy. This is run alongside the development of the therapeutic programme. (see above). Through providing purposeful, fun, and engaging learning environment where we encourage pupils to develop their independence and collaborative skills. We start use informal learning to enable the development of study skills, whilst addressing issues such

as trauma, attachment, and behavioural issues the ability to learn grows. We therefore underpin these new skills by focussing on communication, cognition, technology, physical, social, and emotional skills.

Academic Programme

This includes entry level, functional skills, and GCSEs, including core subjects. Pupils will continue to develop their cognitive skills and social skills through embedding all learning across the teaching timetable.

Activities to supplement classroom learning

All activities that are planned and implemented by staff will aim to make an impact directly and indirectly towards academic and EHCP targets. Offsite visits will be planned in collaboration with the pupils. Visit aims will vary from increasing the daily physical activity of pupils to experiencing new and interesting environments, increasing, and understanding of local history and community. Pupils will be taught how to research a variety of recipes that can be prepared in the kitchen area. They can develop their literacy and numeracy skills by costing and sourcing activities and resources. Pupil's knowledge of health and safety and culinary skills can be advanced by preparing and producing a range of meals. Other areas of learning can be discretely taught to pupils, such as basic biological concepts, when experiencing the farms, zoos, and local gardens the team, in collaboration with the pupils, will set daily and weekly targets. Reward activities will be offered frequently to reinforce progress and positive behaviour. Pupils will participate in a variety of collaborative activities that will target social development. For example, board games will be played in small groups to teach pupils how to take turns, to show patience, to communicate with adults and peers and to experience winning and losing. Pupils will participate in different forms of physical activity during their school day. This will help to promote a positive mental and physical wellbeing, whilst encouraging a life-long enjoyment of physical activity. Examples of daily physical activity may include walking to local shop, completing a daily mile challenge, participating in sports for enjoyment and experiencing local parks. The local amenities are varied and of high quality.

4. Curriculum Impact

At Bright Minds Creative Academy there are a range of measures used to evaluate the impact of the curriculum across all our learning pathways.

These include:

- Termly progress measures using formative and summative assessment (see Assessment Policy)
- Half termly Pupil Progress Review Meetings
- Senior Leaders/Curriculum leader work scrutiny.

- Monitoring of pupil well-being and engagement using classroom-based assessment and wellbeing sessions.
- Monitoring the impact of Social, Emotional and Mental Health Interventions.
- Termly monitoring of EHCP provision plan targets through the use of ICP's and the reward system.
- Reviewing pupil behaviour plans to assess the impact of strategies and interventions.
- Reviewing attendance data.
- Pupil surveys.
- Parent surveys.
- Parental feedback at EHCP reviews - Section A form.
- Observation of pupil engagement during drop-ins, lessons observations and learning walks.
- Assessing the impact of transitions through pupil well-being at the start of the new academic year or following a change in class.
- Destination data and follow up calls to pupils, parents, and carers to ensure transition to college, apprenticeship or employment has been successful.
- Feedback from other agencies such as Social Care, CAMHS, Virtual School.
- Reviewing the impact of Safeguarding referrals and parent/carer support and engagement.

Horizon Education and Care provide full governance through Independent SIP Visits, Director Monitoring Visits (Monthly) and Managing Director Visit (Termly) the reports generated monitor the effectiveness of our school curriculum. The SLT of Horizon Care, along with the Head Teacher are responsible for curriculum monitoring and take responsibility for different subjects and areas of the curriculum holding subject leaders and school leadership team to account.

5. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the headteacher annually. At each review, the policy will be approved by the Managing Director of Education.

Appendix 1: Ready to progress criteria for the Wave Pathway

Wave	Ready to Progress criteria
1. Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows enjoyment of being in school • Good attendance during engagement phase (90%+) • Has formed at least 2 positive relationships with members of staff • Has formed at least one positive relationship with a peer • Individual Risk Assessment and PBS plan in place with parent/carer input
2. Therapeutic	<p>Criteria from above in addition to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has attended and engaged with therapy sessions offered by therapists or school staff • Is beginning to apply the strategies learnt through therapy sessions to engage more in school sessions • Has developed positive relationships with therapists and a wider range of staff members
3. Enrichment	<p>Criteria from above in addition to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is engaging daily in lessons in areas of interest e.g. PE, Food technology, PSHE • Is engaging in other lessons across the week that are outside the student's specific areas of interest • Is starting to work independently in lessons for short periods of time • Is completing most of the learning activities set by the tutor/teacher
4. Academic Programme	<p>Criteria from above in addition to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is able to regularly engage in English, Maths and Science lessons and complete learning activities set in these lessons with some adult support