



Esland North Limited - Exec

ED0020B - Curriculum



Introduction

At Esland Bedford school our aspirations are that pupils will leave Esland Bedford school with academic qualifications, social skills and resilience that will stay with them throughout their adult life. Pupil progress in these areas will form the foundation of future success in their employment, their independence and will enable them to become effective members of their local communities. Our curriculum is broad and balanced at Key Stage 3, mirroring the National Curriculum, whilst at Key Stages 4 and 5 our internal offer is supplemented by a range of external providers enabling pupils the opportunity to choose subjects suitable to their interests.

Curriculum Vision

Esland Bedford school seeks to provide pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, based on the National Curriculum programmes of study (where appropriate), that is suitably planned and differentiated to meet the individual needs of pupils. Our responsibility is to ensure we prepare pupils for a fulfilling life as adults. There are three principles underpinning the curriculum at Esland Bedford school:

- An understanding of local, national and global contexts meaning that the curriculum links to current issues in both pupils' immediate and wider worlds.
- A curriculum that is accessible to all pupils regardless of individual starting points. As a school we take pupils on roll at various points of their academic careers following placements of varying degrees of success. Our curriculum is planned and sequenced in a way that enables all pupils to have access regardless of when they join the school.
- A firm belief that our responsibilities lie with the holistic development of each pupil, and that academic outcomes are only part of any pupil's successful journey with us. Each element of the curriculum is planned in a way that helps meet the national Preparing for Adulthood outcomes, helping us to support pupils in living as fulfilling and independent a life as possible.

Throughout their time at Esland Bedford school we encourage pupils to embrace the Esland values: To be Bold; be Kind; be Curious and to have Fun.

Curriculum Aims

Upon leaving education, the majority of pupils attending Esland Bedford School will cease to have significant support from external agencies. Our aim is to ensure our pupils are equipped with the knowledge and skills required to live as fulfilling and independent an adult life as their needs allow. In order to achieve this school will:

- Provide the opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills pupils require to become independent, educated citizens
- Support pupils to achieve the best possible academic and vocational qualifications, whatever their ability
- Ensure pupils have a voice in their learning and future, and ensure that they are able to make their own informed choices
- Provide experiences that expose pupils to a diverse range of cultural experiences that encourage lifelong cultural engagement
- Support pupils to develop and sustain a range of enriching relationships
- Develop critical thinking skills that enable pupils to think about issues and understand a range of varied opinions
- Empower lifelong learners to become employed citizens in their career paths of choice

Curriculum rationale

All pupils attending Esland Bedford school have Education, Health and Care plans (EHCP's) and join school with one, or multiple, diagnoses. Many have also suffered from Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) leading to developmental trauma. Our curriculum and approach aims to develop pupils' understanding of their own needs and equip them over time with the skills to overcome barriers to learning, creating confident, independent learners. A large number of our pupils are affected by anxiety, which may have presented itself in the form of Emotionally Based School Avoidance. High anxiety levels can impact pupils' windows of tolerance, which in turn impacts on their ability to concentrate for extended periods of time. Transition plans for new pupils (see below) are written to gradually expose pupils to school in an effort to reduce school being a trigger for anxiety, whilst our Nurture provision provides a psychologically safe space for pupils to engage with their learning over a prolonged period of time. Additionally, staff receive regular training from the school's clinical team to ensure that strategies are implemented for pupils to support in emotional regulation so that they are able to engage in learning consistently.

When in a high state of anxiety most pupils struggle to communicate their feelings and emotions. As a school we recognise all behaviours as a form of communication. Our curriculum supports pupils in managing anxiety, developing communication skills and equips them with a range of strategies to aid in self-regulation. Communication and social skills also enable pupils to form and maintain positive relationships with staff and other pupils. The curriculum includes weekly timetabled group sessions for all classes with our clinical team that focus on social skill development. Many pupils who attend our school have low self-esteem and low self-efficacy. Poor image of self, impacts on confidence, motivation and resilience.

Our curriculum is developed to present information in small steps, providing multiple opportunities for pupils to experience success. Staff work collaboratively in the classroom to support pupils in overcoming barriers to learning rather than removing them which aids in the development of self-confidence and independence.

At Esland Bedford School we strongly believe that there is no limit to how much our pupils can achieve academically once their basic physiological needs, their need for safety, for security and a sense of belonging are met. We are aware that, because of the nature of our pupils, these basic needs supersede the need for academic achievement. It is within our pupils' interest that we develop a curriculum that will empower their academic success by embedding opportunities and experiences that will build confidence, build resilience, make pupils feel safe, secure and feel a sense of belonging. Only then will our pupils be able to meet our high academic expectations where they are expected to develop problem solving skills, thinking skills, reasoning, enquiry and evaluative skills. Key skills that are essential to enable them to lead fulfilling, independent lives as adults. We know that in order for our pupils to achieve academically, the curriculum must rely on strong pastoral support, a very robust reward system to boost motivation and a relaxed, friendly environment that makes pupils feel safe and secure.

Our Curriculum

At all Key Stages our curriculum is differentiated to meet the individual needs of pupils. On entry pupils undertake baseline assessments in English and Maths, the results of which are used to map a learning pathway through their time at school.

Key Stage 2/Nurture curriculum

Provision for pupils of Key Stage 2 age, alongside some Key Stage pupils who are not able to access a formal education offer, is via our standalone Nurture base. Based on Nurture principles, the curriculum is provided in a low demand, semi-formal environment where the focus is on developing a sense of psychological safety in pupils, and therefore encouraging engagement in learning. Alongside standalone Literacy, Numeracy and PSHE lessons the curriculum is delivered via topic based, active learning. The curriculum design ensures provision covers the same subjects as the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum.

Once at Key Stage 3 age, groups of pupils are supported in transitioning across to the main school building to follow the school's formal curriculum.

Alongside our Nurture base, where needs of individual pupils necessitate it, similar provision can be established for pupils of Key Stage 4 age.

Key Stage 3 curriculum

Core curriculum

- English
- Maths
- Science

Personal Development Curriculum

- PSHE
- RE
- Clinical
- PE
- Learning Outside the Classroom

Extended Curriculum

- Food & cookery
- ICT
- Geography
- History
- Art

Key Stage 4 curriculum

At the end of Key Stage 3 all pupils undertake CAT4 testing and end of Key Stage 4 target grades are set, ensuring all pupils are able to access qualifications for the subjects below at an appropriate level.

Core curriculum

- English
- Maths
- Science

Personal Development Curriculum

- PSHE
- PE
- Kings Trust
- Clinical

Options Curriculum (example subjects)

- Food & Cookery
- ICT
- Art
- Childcare
- Textiles

- Media Studies

Key Stage 5 curriculum

Our Key Stage 5 provision exists to support pupils not yet ready to transition to college or other specialist providers. As such, curriculum provision is an extended Key Stage 4 offer (via a combination of re-sits where applicable, additional options subjects and the ASDAN Independence qualification) supplemented by additional therapeutic and pastoral support to develop a clear, supported transition into college.

Enrichment

As pupils at Esland Bedford School rely on school transport to attend, we are unable to provide extra-curricular activities in a traditional manner. Two lessons are set aside on Friday afternoons for Enrichment, where pupils are able to access a range of activities that may sit outside of the formal curriculum. Engagement is reviewed by staff against holistic outcomes.

Alternative Provision

The needs of our pupils mean that some may not be ready to access five full time days in school. Where pupils have alternative provision in place on entry this will be maintained whilst they transition into school.

For pupils on roll, a range of alternative provision offers are provided as necessary via Esland school staff. Where alternative provision exists on a pupil's timetable it is time bound, has clear targets linked to their EHCP which are reviewed throughout, and has outcomes linked to National Curriculum subjects through all learning activities.

Turning the curve provision™

Alongside the curriculum offered in school, Esland Bedford school also provides bespoke education provision for a small number of young people resident in Esland homes that are unable to access a full-time school setting. This can be due to a number, or combination of, factors including: disengagement with school resulting in insignificant periods of missed education (which could be due to mental or physical ill health, absence or exclusion), being new into care, recent or historic trauma, high levels of emotional distress, a mistrust of adults or unmet special educational needs. Provision is bespoke to the individual needs and interests of each young person, and is co-produced with them, with the aim of re-engagement with education with a view to young people transitioning into a more formal educational environment.

A base offer of 1:1 tutoring in English, Maths and PSHE is supplemented by a selection of ASDAN short courses. Where appropriate young people may also attend alternative provisions to further encourage their interests and to develop social skills. Clinical and pastoral staff provide additional support via direct work with the young person and indirectly in liaison with care staff. Where young people are not already in receipt of an EHCP, school staff will support the needs assessment and application process.

Following an initial 12 week review, progress is reviewed every 8 weeks with a view to assessing suitability for a full time education placement, either at Esland Bedford School or at another appropriate provision.

Transition

Pupils join the school at different stages of their academic careers and may have had periods of time where they have been unable to access school. Esland Bedford School provides a separate, quiet transition room away from the main teaching area of the school to help support phased starts to school as required. Pupils requiring more extended transitions will receive an adapted curriculum tailored towards building confidence, easing anxiety and developing positive relationships with staff and peers. Transition arrangements are written in consultation with pupils, their parents/carers and the Local Authority, are time bound and are reviewed weekly

Delivering the curriculum

Small group teaching

Class sizes are limited to five pupils per class, with a class teacher and teaching assistant overseeing delivery. Small groups allow for an environment where pupils feel safe and comfortable and staff are able to provide regular feedback and support. The school building has a number of breakout spaces enabling pupils to work away from their group if they are feeling overwhelmed.

Knowledge of staff

The school aims to recruit qualified teaching staff with knowledge and experience of working with pupils of similar needs. Where staff are unqualified, the school recruits staff with degrees in their subject specialism with a view to providing school based initial teacher training in order to become qualified teachers. The school provides a weekly CPD calendar that includes both pedagogical and clinical sessions. Teaching assistants are offered access to apprenticeship training programs or are recruited as graduates with clinical degrees. Teaching assistants with clinical degrees are provided with regular clinical supervision by the school's clinical team in order to support pupils with therapeutic strategies.

Curriculum planning

Teaching staff are responsible for producing schemes of work that cover the content taught for each group over a school year, and are intended to provide an overview of how learning is sequenced. These are supplemented by medium term plans, half termly planning that breaks down each unit of work by objective and outcome. Included within each medium term plan are SMSC, British Values, Literacy and Numeracy outcomes.

Lesson delivery

The experiences of school that pupils have had prior to joining Esland Bedford School mean that there can be gaps in learning and understanding that staff need to address to support good progress. Lessons are chunked to aid in concentration and engagement, and to ensure opportunities to regularly address misconceptions. Teachers are aware of each pupils sensory and communication needs and clear strategies are put in place to support with differentiation to meet these needs. Likewise teachers are flexible in how pupils access the set work – some pupils may work on the floor or on beanbags, others may stand or move around the room. Laptops and assistive devices are available to pupils to further aid in them accessing the curriculum. Staff work collaboratively within the classroom to support learning. Both members of staff will work with all pupils in the classroom and will seek to encourage independent work wherever possible. The school aims to develop independent learners and understands that this comes when pupils are supported in overcoming barriers to learning rather than having those barriers removed entirely.

Marking and feedback

Small groups and high staff to pupil ratios enables for regular, high quality verbal feedback to be shared with pupils. Identifying and addressing misconceptions in near to real time enables pupils to correct and improve their work. Books are marked fortnightly, this marking supplements the feedback provided in lessons. Progress over time is assessed using both formative and summative approaches and is outlined in the school's assessment and feedback policy.