



# **Curriculum Policy**

June 2023

Review April 2024

## 1. Curriculum intent

Many students arrive at Exceptional Ideas Ltd having missed significant chunks of education and having experienced varying degrees of social isolation. These students' experience of school is, more often than not, a negative one. This is why it is so important to us that their learning and development, both socially and academically, is at the heart of the curriculum at Exceptional Ideas.

We seek to build on their knowledge at Key Stage 2 and 3 as appropriate and take a baseline measure of our students during their induction period. This includes liaison with their previous schools or tutors and the local authority for further information where we have gaps in our information. Our curriculum sets out to equip students with the skills and confidence they need to succeed in life after school.

It is our intention to give opportunities to consolidate knowledge, deepen learning, develop core competencies such as critical and creative thinking. It will also elaborate on how we expect our curriculum to develop students' self-worth, self-confidence, self-belief and care for others and will explain how we prepare them for a happy life as active members of British society.

We strive to support all our students in reaching their aspirations: developing ownership of their learning and personalised curriculum; and enabling them to learn what is relevant and necessary for them to succeed in life.

### **How we intend to deliver the curriculum:**

- **Class based learning:** we encourage all staff to make cross-curricular links where possible within their lessons and use different learning resources to teach core content. We do this through one-to-one teaching and through team teaching where students need extra support or we are sharing good practice.
- **Extra-curricular activities:** we provide extra-curricular activities during the school day as our students are brought in by taxi and these timeframes are set. Therefore we have lunchtime clubs (such as Dungeons and Dragons, trips to parks and similar) to develop social interaction and half termly activities to give structured opportunities for teamwork. We also carry out SMSC/RHSE related Equality and Diversity discussions and activities following an annual calendar.

### **How we involve stakeholders in curriculum planning and delivery:**

We value the input of students, parents and local communities with regards to the planning and delivery of the curriculum. We speak to parents about their child's learning at least twice a year and send a yearly report outlining what they have been learning and what they will be learning in the coming year. We ask students for regular feedback on their learning. We involve parents with at least weekly conversations about how their child is working and any concerns or highlights of their learning and any suggestions regarding concerns about how the curriculum is pitched, especially where we fear that students are coasting.

## 2. Curriculum Aims

At Exceptional Ideas Ltd., our curriculum aims to:

- For those who are not achieving age-related expectations, to narrow the gap and catch up with peers.
- Enable students to develop and be able to use high-quality functional skills including literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.
- Provide a broad and balanced education for all students that is coherently planned and sequenced towards providing students with sufficient knowledge and skill to achieve their future education and employment goals.
- Enable students to develop knowledge, understanding of concepts and to acquire skills.
- Enable students to apply their knowledge, understanding and skills to relevant situations.
- Support students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- To teach students the difference between right and wrong and encourage debate around such discussions considering ethical questions in more depth.
- Support students' physical development and instil responsibility for their own health and wellbeing and enable them to be active.
- To enable creativity in thinking and addressing issues as well as an appreciation of the creative world.
- Promote a positive attitude towards learning.
- Support them to see themselves positively as learners.
- Ensure equal access for all students, with high expectations for every student and appropriate levels of differentiated challenge and support.
- Have high ambitions for all students, where others may not.
- Equip students with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life both during and post education.
- Provide informed and supported subject choices that support an individual student's learning and progression, enabling them to work towards achievable and individualised goals.
- Provide a broad curriculum, whilst prioritising English and maths teaching at a level that enables students to succeed in life.
- Develop students' independent learning skills and resilience, to equip them for life after school.
- Enable our students to have respect for themselves and others and to live and work cooperatively with others.
- Actively promote fundamental British Values
- Teach students about protected characteristics and how we all belong in one of the protected groups.
- Ensure children get the entitlement to sex education and relationships and health education.

Through the aims outlined above, students will benefit by:

- Learning how to lead safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives.
- Understanding that failure is part of the road to success.
- Being rewarded for academic successes.
- Being supported with their next stages in education or training and feeling prepared for life after school.
- Becoming responsible individuals who contribute to community living and the environment.
- Achieving to the best of their ability.
- Acquiring a wealth of knowledge and experience.
- Becoming critical thinkers.
- Finding a sense of belonging to the school and its community.
- Learning how to cooperate with their peers and respect one another, inside and outside the classroom.
- Developing personal moral values, respect for religious values and tolerance of others' beliefs and ways of life.
- Understanding how to keep themselves safe and healthy.
- Understanding about diversity and equality within British society and the wider world.

### **3. Curriculum Influences**

At Exceptional Ideas Ltd., our GCSE curriculum begins in Year 10, all GCSE content is informed by the AQA specification for that subject. Any student who has missed large parts of the relevant curriculum may focus on a period of filling gaps in knowledge working up to the GCSE curriculum in order to prepare them for the GCSE curriculum in Year 10. This will be an amalgamation of national curriculum with some early GCSE concepts included.

Prior to this, Year 7, 8 and 9 teaching acts as a pathway to GCSE, sometimes encompassing Entry Level Certificate teaching (based on ELC specifications from AQA), ASDAN (based on ASDAN teaching requirements) or based on the broad outline of the National Curriculum for England and Wales where neither of the above apply.

Years 7, 8 and 9 will largely follow the national curriculum with a nod to gaps in Key Stage 2 coming out of the baseline assessment and assessment data provided from previous providers.

Our curriculum aims to take in social skills, key skills, therapeutic skills, and life skills that will support our students in their life after school. We aim to keep the curriculum broad and balanced and provide differentiation for each individual student based on their own needs, values, and ability.

#### **4. Legal framework:**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 2004
- Education Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2020) 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'
- DfE (2014) 'The national curriculum in England' - This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:
  - Assessment Policy
  - Careers Policy
  - Equal Opportunities Policy
  - PSHE Policy
  - RSE and Health Education Policy
  - SEND Policy
  - SMSC policy

#### **5. Roles and responsibilities**

The Head teacher 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 students will be met.
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and Directors.
- Where appropriate, the individual needs of some students are met by permanent or temporary disapplication from all or part of the standard curriculum.
- Proper provision is in place for children with different abilities and needs, including children with SEND.

The Head teacher in conjunction with the Senior for Curriculum and Deputy Director will ensure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets.
- Enough teaching time is provided for students to cover the curriculum and any statutory requirements.
- Proper provision is made for students with different abilities and needs, including children with SEND.

- All courses provided for students below the age of 19 that lead to qualifications, such as GCSEs are approved by the Secretary of State.
- The school participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum.
- Devising long- and medium-term plans for the curriculum in collaboration with subject leaders, teachers and other members of the SLT.
- Ensuring the curriculum is inclusive and accessible to all.
- Assisting teachers with the planning and implementation of the curriculum, ensuring their workload is manageable.
- Ensuring the curriculum is implemented consistently throughout the school and ensuring any difficulties are addressed and mitigated as soon as possible.
- Keeping up to date with any relevant statutory updates and taking action where required.
- Creating and maintaining an up-to-date curriculum intent statement.
- Updating and maintaining this policy.
- Requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects where appropriate. This is in relation to students dropping subjects or changing their timetable.

The senior for curriculum and senior for teaching and learning are responsible for:

- The overall provision of the curriculum at the school.
- Developing a curriculum that provides students with a range of opportunities and the skills they need to prepare for later life.
- The strategic leadership and management across curriculum areas, developing and implementing plans, policies, targets and practices within the context of the school's aims and policies.
- Managing subject staff within their curriculum areas, providing appropriate support, challenge, advice and information, as necessary.
- Implementing the school's schemes of work.
- Supporting and directing staff for advice on issues relating to the subject or curriculum area.
- Monitoring student progress relating to outcomes and reporting on this to the headteacher.
- Providing efficient resource management across the curriculum with the deputy director and administration department.
- Ensuring the curriculum is inclusive and accessible to all.
- Ensuring there are specialist resources available for students in need so that everyone can have full access to the curriculum.
- The plans and resources provide work in practice, by undertaking observation of teaching staff using them with students in real life we will ensure that the plans are used as a starting point.
- Differentiation away from template plans is considered on a case-by-case basis and is in the best interest of the student in both the short and long term.

- Any ceasing or removal of a subject within a student's curriculum is considered and made considering evidence and not on the basis of supposition.
- Advice is provided to students, their families/carers, and school staff on the optimum choice for subjects to be studied to support individual students in their future aspirations.
- Where a student joins late in their secondary career, advises induction co-ordinators, students and families of any caveats, or warns of potential issues with the commencement of GCSE courses. This is vital to ensure that expectations of students and families are realistic and that their choices are informed.

Teaching staff are responsible for:

- Implementing this policy consistently throughout their practices.
- Devising short-term differentiation that are reflective of the school's curriculum and the EHCP targets for all students.
- Implementing the curriculum in creative ways, appealing to different learning types and keeping students engaged in content.
- Creating alternative plans for the curriculum with the senior for curriculum and the senior for teaching and learning and reporting these plans to the headteacher.
- Creating weekly lesson plans in collaboration with colleagues and sharing these with the SMT where required.
- Collaborating with the headteacher and the deputy director to ensure that the curriculum is inclusive and accessible to all.
- Ensuring academically more able students are given additional, more challenging work to celebrate their talents.
- Celebrating all students' academic achievements.
- Monitoring the progress of all students and reporting on this to the headteacher.
- Working to close the attainment gap between academically more and less able students.

The deputy director is responsible for:

- Collaborating with the headteacher and teachers to ensure the curriculum is accessible to all.
- Ensuring teaching materials do not discriminate against anyone in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- Carrying out assessments where necessary and ensuring students receive the additional help they need.
- Liaising with the headteacher and external agencies where necessary to ensure students who require additional support receive it.

The Head teacher, in conjunction with the Exams Team and Assessment Team, will ensure that:

- The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements.
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements.

The Head teacher, in conjunction with the Senior for Transition and the Transition Team, will ensure that:

- Students are provided throughout Years 7 and 8 with opportunities to explore careers and aspirations.
- Students are provided from Year 9 onwards with differentiated intensities of impartial careers guidance and exploration and that this is appropriately resourced.
- The curriculum has links between learning and careers within PBL lessons.

The Senior for Curriculum will ensure that:

- The curriculum, including plans, resources and schemes of work match statutory documents detailing, for example, GCSE requirements of study.
- The plans and resources provided work in practice, by undertaking observation of teaching staff using them with students in real life.
- Differentiation away from template plans is considered on a case-by-case basis and is in the best interest of the student in both the short and long term.
- Any ceasing or removal of a subject within a student's curriculum is considered and made considering evidence and not on the basis of supposition.
- Advice is provided to students, their families/carers, and school staff on the optimum choice for subjects to be studied to support individual students in their future aspirations.
- Where a student joins late in their secondary career, advises induction co-ordinators, students and families of any caveats or warns of potential issues with the commencement of GCSE courses. This is vital to ensure that expectations of students and families are realistic and that their choices are informed.

## 6. Organisation and Planning

Our curriculum approach:

**Long-term plans** that deal with the major areas and strands of the national curriculum to be covered across all key stages. (schemes of work)

**Medium-term plans** that deal with the activities within units of work that are set out **termly**. (plans)

**Short-term plans** that are concerned with individual lessons or sessions on a **weekly** and address issues of curriculum differentiation and access for individual students (differentiated plans).

Where possible, teachers will look for links between areas of learning that will support one another and allow students to reinforce their skills from one subject within another.

Lessons will use a range of techniques to appeal to different learning types, e.g. visual, audio and kinaesthetic.

Students with EAL will be given the opportunity to develop their English ability throughout lessons where necessary.

Teachers will plan lessons which are challenging for all students and ensure that there are provisions in place for more academically able students, e.g. completing additional work that is above the academic level of their peers.

All curriculum decisions are individual to the student and are made with the input of multiple members of staff working with that child.

Core subjects are taught weekly at least twice a week in Year 7 increasing to 3 times per week in Year 10 (any deviation from this must be the decision of senior management) – this continues throughout the student's time at the school. Any subjects that are chosen for GCSE at the end of Year 9 are allocated sufficient timetable space to enable the student the opportunity to complete the course and any requirements that come with it.

Reflection is taught weekly for all students, with some accessing increased timetable allocation for this where necessary.

Transition starts in Year 8 and allows the opportunity to explore future aspirations and goals. This is half termly in Year 8, increasing to weekly in Year 9 and beyond.

A range of enrichment days are offered to all students and are used to encourage collaboration and social skills. The enrichment trips will occur once per term, where they will be able to consolidate and extend knowledge from one area of the curriculum and to promote an understanding of the wider world and experiences of others.

Physical activity is encouraged and offered regularly, with students visiting parks etc. at lunch and break time, encouragement of healthy eating and education about keeping healthy in science, food technology, reflection and transition lessons. Physical education also forms part of the curriculum for Y7, 8 & 9, with the opportunity for those in Y10 & 11 to explore physical education as part of a cyclical plan twice a year.

Relationships, sex education and health education (RHSE) are encompassed in a programme of study which is delivered as the equivalent of a full day once every half term. This crosses over into reflection lessons too, where any outstanding misunderstandings or issues are dealt with. This runs from Year 7 through to Year 11, with opportunities for gap-filling throughout.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is encouraged throughout the schools. There is a dedicated group of staff who target students' knowledge and

recognition of varying spiritual, social and cultural events at least weekly throughout the year. Display boards are in place to support this aspect of social life and it is also encompassed within the RHSE curriculum. This includes the British values and recognition of protected characteristics that are inherent in our ethos being discussed and promoted within the day to day running of our schools. We also aim this curriculum towards anti-bullying, celebrating different cultures and protected characteristics. For more information, please see the SMSC Policy.

Careers Days occur half termly where students are encouraged to explore and experience different aspects of working life. Transition and aspiration are dedicated lessons from Year 8. Work experience is promoted and supported in Year 10, with students supported to source and undertake work experience either supported or unsupported. Specific opportunities for careers research and consideration / awareness are included in the cyclical plans for Years 9, 10 and 11 to increase opportunities for careers knowledge to be expanded in later school years.

### **Supporting curriculum delivery**

At Exceptional Ideas Ltd we have designed our curriculum with students' learning at the centre. We recognise that a curriculum has to be broad and balanced, and that it must offer students opportunities to grow as individuals as well as learners.

Through a combination of learning techniques, we aim to ensure students enjoy learning and feel prepared for life after school. We also intend to offer our students new and exciting experiences through extra-curricular activities that are designed to build resilience, confidence, and self-esteem.

We recognise that students should be challenged in their schooling, learning from failures, and celebrating successes. We intend for our curriculum to be empowering, enabling students to develop their interpersonal skills, creativity, and independence.

We have carefully considered aspects of school life that feed into the curriculum and made decisions based on our experience of working with the students we support over the last ten years. Examples of aspects that have been adjusted are:

- The structure of the day: We have chosen to adapt our school day so that students undertake five lessons of 45 minutes each, with a minimum of 10 minutes break after arriving at school, a 30-minute morning break, a 60 minute lunch and socialisation break and a 15 minute cool down / consolidation / reflection time at the end of the day.  
Research suggests that students who study for 45 minutes will achieve the same level of learning as those who study for 60. As such, to minimise our students' loss of concentration and interest, and to support positive learning behaviours in the classroom, we have chosen to offer an increased number of shorter lessons.
- Each student will have 15 minutes at the end of the day to decompress – this could be a time where students take time to reflect on what they have learned

that day, what positives they achieved, what they could do differently – this will be differentiated to each student as always, and will be led by them, promoting independence and ownership of their day

- Throughout their time at Exceptional Ideas, students will follow a full curriculum (as per the table below), ensuring that their learning is rich and rounded; incorporating humanities, arts and technology throughout and allowing them to keep open pathways that otherwise would be closed to them, whilst allowing staff to ensure that vital aspects of RHSE, SMSC, RS and similar are delivered in cross-curricular, exciting ways. By having consistency in the timetable, it enables staff and students us to identify gaps in learning and allow for routine and regulation for the students to achieve higher outcomes.
- Years 7, 8 and 9 students will have a 45-minute session at the end of each day timetabled for consolidation. Research shows that learning reserves are strongest for most students in the morning, and that whilst a good meal can replenish some of those reserves, the further the day progresses, the less able students are to learn new things. As such, we have allowed 45 minutes as the last lesson of the day (between 2:00 – 2:45pm) to allow for this. This means the lessons prior to this can be spent learning new concepts, whilst this time can be used for practice and consolidation of ideas already learnt.
- By Years 10 and 11, students will reduce the amount of consolidation time naturally, to allow for the increased pressures of exam learning (if they are taking GCSE subjects, otherwise this timetable can be negotiated to suit their learning needs best), however, these consolidation sessions will transform into 'study' – two 45 minute sessions each week that can be used for independent study, coursework completion, the revisiting of ideas or concepts that the student has struggled with or any other alternative the student and mentor feel necessary. For some students, this will be independent study and for others supported – the option is available to the students. This will encourage students to begin to manage their time and learn independent study skills necessary for later in life.
- To support the development of literacy in our students, we utilise a program called Lexia at least three times a week for all students. The program analyses student's attainment and works automatically to address any gaps in knowledge. This program is used for a minimum of 3 x 15 minute sessions weekly. Once students have completed the initial assessment, they are encouraged to work through the assigned online activities and staff keep a check on their progress; considering extension tasks suggested by the program (to be delivered face to face) as well as specifically suggested face to face lessons to help students bridge gaps that Lexia online is not successfully covering.
- Mathletics is used for at least 2 x 15 minute sessions weekly by all students to support the development and gap filling of their numeracy skills. This aims to support the mathematics curriculum by encouraging fluency and automaticity, particularly in number. Maths teachers will consider each student

independently and set a group of homework tasks for the half term, either related to the topic the student is studying in their maths lessons or aimed at gap filling and supporting automaticity. These are then worked through by the student at the beginning of 1 maths lesson each week, and at the beginning of 1 consolidation session each week. Mathematics is also included on all KS3 and KS4 maths plans encouraging students to become familiar with the program.

### **An example of the content of a Year 7/8 timetable**

<b>Lesson number</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
1	Maths	History	Art	Design and Technology	Geography
2	Religious studies	Maths	English	Art	Citizenship
3	Computer science	Reflection	P.E.	Food tech	Music
4	Combined science	Food Technology	Reflection	English	Combined science
5	Consolidation	Consolidation	Consolidation	Consolidation	Consolidation

### **An example of the content of a Year 9 timetable**

<b>Lesson number</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
1	Maths	PE	GEOGRAPHY	History	DT
2	RS	Maths	English	FT	Music
3	FT	Reflection	Art	CS	Art
4	Science	Citizenship	Transition	English	science
5	Consolidation	Consolidation	Consolidation	Consolidation	Consolidation

### **An example of the content of a year 10/11 timetable**

<b>Lesson number</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
1	English	Chosen science	Option 1	Maths	Option 2
2	Maths	English	Chosen science	Option 2*	Option 3
3	Option 1*	Option 3	English	Chosen science	Maths
4	Option 3*	Option 1	Option 2	Reflection	Transition
5	Humanities	Arts	Technology	Study**	Study**

\* Students will be offered the option to choose specific subjects to specialise in at the beginning of Year 10 which they intend to carry through, potentially to GCSE level.

Exceptional Ideas Ltd. schools have a vast bank of resources catering for different learning styles, abilities, and teaching styles. There is also a dedicated senior member of staff who visits schools to support teaching and learning (Kelly Carter). This member of staff engages in team teaching, observations and initiates steering groups (or supports them where they already exist) which target specific blocks to education and learning based on data, observation, and teamwork.

The Senior for Curriculum monitors effectiveness of lesson plans through speaking with staff, visiting schools and observing lessons. This enables development of the curriculum in line with the needs of students and the events occurring within their lives.

The therapeutic input at school is planned and delivered alongside the 'educational' curriculum so that it supports it and improves the student's access to all areas of learning.

Data is collected for each student which tracks progression and achievement in each curriculum area; this is monitored for inaccuracies or errors and is used in monitoring the ability of an individual student to access their differentiated curriculum.

## **7. Inclusion**

Teaching staff set high expectations for all students. They will use appropriate assessment, both observational and standardised, to set ambitious, yet achievable targets (short, medium, and long term) and plan challenging work for all students. This encompasses students who are more able, those with low prior attainment, from disadvantaged backgrounds, those with SEN and those with EAL.

Teaching staff prepare and differentiate their lessons so that all students can study the widest curriculum they can manage and work hard to ensure that there are no barriers to achievement or engagement. Teaching staff have regular brainstorm events within their schools considering these barriers and targeting attempts to break them down.

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

Further information on the above can be found in our Equality Statement and EAL Policy.

### **Equal opportunities:**

There are nine protected characteristics within the Equality Act 2010, these are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity

Race  
Religion or belief  
Sex  
Sexual orientation

These characteristics are explicitly taught and discussed during targeted social time activities and are assessed through the ten weekly risk assessment to determine whether they are in need of further input.

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

Senior staff monitor the way in which subjects are taught and resources are used throughout the schools by:

- Regular audits of exercise books in each subject. These are a quality control exercise, focussed on clear recording of evidence of understanding, as well as a comparison with data to ensure consistency, and a second check of the rating of a student's understanding.
- Team teaching is carried out at least once a term, with senior staff working jointly with mentors to provide support, suggestions for improvement and to target any difficulties raised or observed.
- Teaching observations are carried out by senior staff at least termly, with feedback provided and recorded to teaching staff on improvements required, and development plans implemented where this is necessary.
- Operational sweeps are carried out by the school's Operational Senior or Deputy to ensure lesson structure and company ethos is present within each lesson – this is a less intrusive and more on the spot observation and takes in a more general overview than a team teach or observation.
- Therapeutic sweeps are carried out by the school's Therapeutic Lead, to ensure that lessons are conducted in a therapeutic manner and there are no concerns over students' therapeutic wellbeing within lessons.
- Data review is conducted daily by a member of the Admin Team, where it is checked that lesson outcomes have been recorded properly, to enable safe use of data for forward planning with students in mind.
- The Senior for Curriculum makes decisions about the efficacy of repeating lesson objectives for different students, in line with the subject teacher, to ensure that the best opportunity for curriculum coverage is balanced with the need to ensure solid foundations in understanding.