



CURRICULUM POLICY

2023/2024

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<i>Date of next review</i>	September 2024



Introduction

This document outlines simply and clearly the key things we do at Unified Academy to ensure that our students access a diverse and rich curriculum that enables them to make progress from their individual starting points.

Unified Academy caters for boys aged 9-16 who have social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties. Some students have moderate learning and attachment difficulties which makes it hard for them to build and sustain positive relationships. It also specifically supports students with a variety of learning challenges, including dyslexia/specific learning difficulties, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autistic spectrum condition. All students have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

Intent

Vision and Values

'Supporting each other, achieving together.'

At Unified Academy we will use a highly personalised approach that caters to the different needs and abilities of our students in order to secure the best possible outcomes for them. Our aim is that they develop high aspirations for the future with the skills and knowledge to achieve them so they are able to positively contribute to the wider community.

Unified Academy follows a nurture-based reflective and restorative approach with all students. Together, we have established a fun, safe and caring school that promotes the joy of learning, high personal achievement, respect for individual differences, dignity for all and equal opportunities by eliminating discrimination.

At Unified Academy we are unified in our values to be:



CURIOUS

- We are curious to experience and discover the world around us



RESPECTFUL

- We are respectful of ourselves, each other, and our community



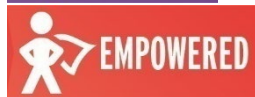
COMPASSIONATE

- We are compassionate of the needs and feelings of others



INSPIRED

- We are inspired to achieve our full potential and see new possibilities

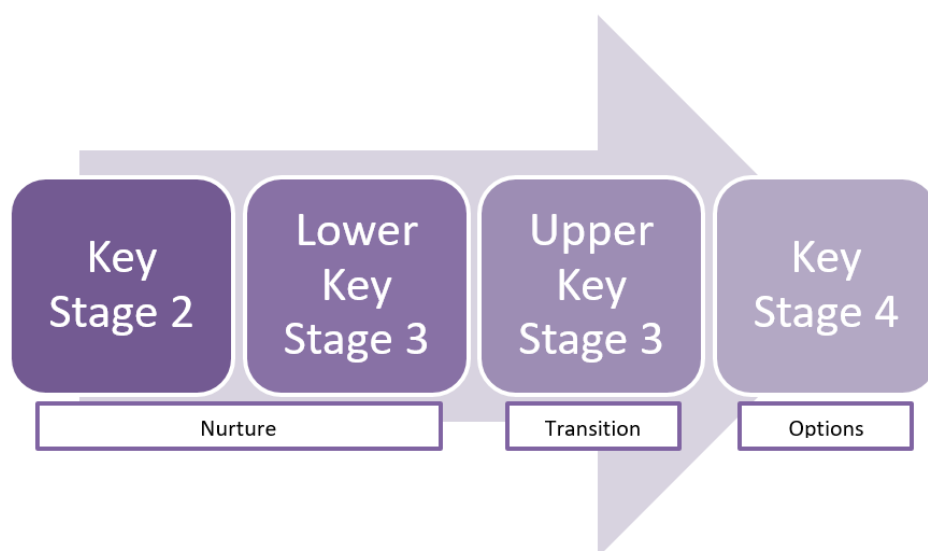


EMPOWERED

- We are empowered to make positive choices so that we can contribute to our community

Implementation

Our Nurture Model



- Unified Academy teaches national curriculum subjects to all students. At KS3 this includes Art, English, Mathematics, PSHE (which incorporates religious education and citizenship), Science, Geography, History, ICT, Physical Education (PE), Food & Nutrition and Personal Development.
- The key stage 4 curriculum offer comprises a range of academic and vocational qualifications (at GCSE, functional skills and entry level) for Years 10 and 11 including:
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - PSHE
 - Art
 - Photography
 - Food and Nutrition
 - PE (core and option)
 - Duke of Edinburgh
 - IT (ELC)
 - Science (ELC)
- There is an additional pathway at KS4 for those students who may benefit from a more 'hands on' approach to education. Duke of Edinburgh (DoE) is part of their curriculum where they have the opportunity to achieve Gold, Silver and Bronze DoE Award as well as AQA Entry Level 1, 2, and 3 certificates. Some students also participate in off-site activities to focus on their personal development, behaviour and attitudes. While on site they focus on achieving Level 1 Functional Skills qualifications in English and Maths.
- The curriculum design is differentiated to meet students' needs, incorporating a range of approaches.
- Our spiral curriculum enables students' learning to be developed sequentially over time, where learning builds from one year/key stage to another. This ensures that students are well prepared for life after Unified Academy.
- Teachers adapt their planning to meet the needs of the very complex and challenging students with whom they have formed trusting relationships, know and

- understand well.
- Our focus is facilitating quality opportunities for students to learn and make progress. Teachers produce curriculum overviews which are carefully planned to build from one term to the next. Clear differentiation in meeting the needs of all individual students in the class is shown. These plans are available on the school's shared drive and in teachers' planning files. Students' learning is evaluated regularly and activities amended accordingly, so as to plan for real progression.
- All parts of the school day, including breakfast, break times and lunchtimes are utilised to the full to deliver the curriculum, including SMSC through the PSHE programme. Well-Being is facilitated in tutor and personal development sessions.

Therapeutic interventions

The range of therapeutic interventions on offer, include:

- Speech & language therapy (SaLT)
- Canine assisted learning therapy (CAL)
- Emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA)
- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- Healing Together
- Drum/Music intervention
- Therapeutic Art intervention

Who can access therapeutic interventions?

All of our students may benefit from having some form of therapeutic intervention. At Unified Academy, we tailor each student's therapeutic programme so that it meets their individual needs.

The support can be accessed as and when it is required: on a day-to-day basis or through regular one-to-one or group sessions.

How can therapeutic interventions help?

Students who have endured (and continue to endure) adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), toxic stress and/or associated mental health difficulties are likely to have high cortisol (stress) levels and low self-esteem.

Therapeutic interventions work to:

- provide students with an opportunity to express and reflect on their thoughts, feelings and experiences in a safe environment
- build a positive therapeutic relationship with the therapist, which raises self-esteem and can alter negative attachment strategies
- enhance a student's emotional well-being and encourages creative problem solving
- improve self-esteem, confidence and self-worth
- help to develop student's emotional vocabulary, encouraging and enabling them to identify and name their emotions
- help students to develop effective strategies to manage their behaviour and their ability to self-regulate their emotions
- help to remove barriers to learning and facilitate better engagement with the curriculum.

Teaching and learning

Students learn in many different ways. Many of our students have particularly complex needs. This often manifests itself in poor behaviour and becomes a barrier to them making progress. Students arrive with a history of poor attendance, placement gaps and a multitude of exclusions, and have therefore missed significant periods of education. As a result of this, they often arrive with very low self-esteem and consider themselves a failure.

Our job as staff is therefore a significant challenge, but one that is faced with enthusiasm and energy. We achieve this in a number of ways:

- We aim to deliver personalised learning so tasks are differentiated in order to ensure that each student is supported and challenged to achieve their potential
- Cognitive abilities tests (CAT4) are completed with all students to help their teachers understand how each individual student learns and what their academic potential could be
- We plan and teach in reference to our assessment outcomes, curriculum plans and individual students' learning goals
- We teach according to our students' preferred learning styles (visual, auditory and kinaesthetic) and forms of intelligence (mathematical/logical, visual/spatial, interpersonal, musical) as best we can
- We ensure the best possible environment for learning by developing a positive atmosphere in which students feel safe and that they belong, enjoy learning and being challenged, trust that they can take risks with their learning and know that they can and will succeed
- We use a positive behaviour approach through our reward and recognition system (E-Praise) in order to encourage student motivation in lessons
- We encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved as far as possible in reviewing the way in which they learn, and to reflect on how they learn best – what helps them learn, and what makes it difficult.
- All classes are assigned additional support through teaching assistants. Depending on the needs of the students they may work with targeted individuals, small groups or in a general supportive role in the classroom environment. While they may be used to help a student to regulate their emotions or take time out, their focus is primarily one of supporting learning
- We ensure that our classrooms are student friendly learning environments. We change displays regularly so that the classroom reflects the subject themes and current topics being studied by the students. All students have the opportunity to display their work. We believe that a stimulating, yet calm environment sets the climate for learning, and that an organised classroom promotes focus and independent use of resources, which results in high-quality learning.
- Spiritual Moral Social and Cultural (SMSC), Fundamental British Values (FBV), literacy and Numeracy links are explicitly referenced in the schemes of work for all subjects across the curriculum.
- Leaders and governors monitor the quality of education through learning walks, lesson observations, workbook scrutiny, workbook moderations, student progress meetings, student, teacher and parent interviews and feedback to staff with constructive developmental targets.

Reading

As part of Unified Academy's drive to develop a whole school approach to teaching students to read, we have adopted universal, targeted and specialist pathways.

- **Universal**

Renaissance including Star Reader assessments, myON digital library and accelerated reader quizzes are accessible for all students. Students will be given regular opportunity for reading and comprehension quizzes during drop everything and read sessions in tutor time and within English lessons. Students pick a book at their own level and read it at their own pace. When finished, each student takes a short accelerated reader quiz on the computer. Students can read school books of their choice or online texts provided through the 'myON' digital library. Alongside this programme, students will also take termly STAR reading assessments. The programme is aimed at managing and monitoring student's independent reading practice in order to promote a culture of reading through choice.

- **Targeted**

That Reading Thing is accessible for all students who have a knowledge of letter sounds and who need 1-1 support to progress. Students who have a reading age 2-5 years behind chronological age as tested using Star Reader or identified as having at least mild/moderate dyslexia according to the GL assessment dyslexia screener will follow this programme. This is a targeted programme that should be delivered on a 1:1 basis for a minimum of 1 hour a week for 6 weeks.

- **Specialist**

The Phonological Awareness Programme (PAT) is aimed at students with Specific reading difficulty, non-reader. Student's with a reading age of 5+ years behind their chronological age, those identified as having at least severe dyslexia according to the GL Dyslexia Screener, having less than 50 sight words and those who are unable to recognise letter sounds or syllables will follow this programme. This programme should be delivered 4 times a week for an ongoing period of time.

Alternative Learning Provision (ALP)

At Unified Academy, alternative learning provision (ALP) is arranged so that every student, who for whatever reason cannot access the in-school provision, has access to a purposeful and appropriate programme of learning. The ALP offer is arranged using a range of providers who are experienced and suitably qualified to facilitate alternative learning for our students. Our ALP programme is planned to ensure that it meets the needs of students and enables them to

re-engage with learning in an alternative setting. All students receive a good education, regardless of their circumstances or the settings in which they find themselves. Provision offered will differ from student to student; however, there are some common elements we aim to achieve, including:

- academic focus, particularly in English and mathematics – with appropriate accreditation and qualifications
- vocational settings to encourage future employment aspirations
- specific personal, social, emotional and well-being needs are met alongside academic needs
- improved student motivation and self-confidence, attendance and engagement with learning

Personal Development

At Unified Academy, we offer a personal development curriculum which sees all students access a variety of extra-curricular activities in the format of bite sized tasters, facilitated by external and internal practitioners. Our students cannot access after-school clubs and activities due to their home settings being spread across a wide geographical area and the need to use individual taxis to get them safely to and from school. With this in mind, we have created a personal development curriculum that enables all students to choose, explore and experience new activities. Sessions are planned to include a broad range of activities focusing on student's cognitive, creative, digital, physical, social and cultural development.



These new experiences enable them to develop skills and knowledge in subjects and activities that would not normally be found on a traditional curriculum and work towards AQA Award units of accreditation.

Impact

The impact of our curriculum is measured and evidenced in both formative and summative forms of assessment. Students are assessed every half term using skills indicator sheets based on the skills and knowledge studied each half term. They are given a baseline provided by teachers on the topic that is being taught within their curriculum maps. Students are then assessed at the end of every half term to monitor progress and gaps that students need support with.

Teachers mark KS3 students work using Educator (a taxonomy scale). In KS4 teachers mark students work and assessments in line with subject specific specifications. All assessments are recorded on Arbor half termly.

Overall, each individual student is closely monitored by all staff, whether this is in the form of subject based criteria, therapy reports, annual reviews, intervention progress, or just the verbal discussions which form part of everyday life at Unified Academy.

How are we ensuring our aims are achieved:

- Context sheets
- Skills Indicator Sheets
- Weekly CPD session/Staff Training
- Progress reporting
- Ongoing assessment process
- Individualized therapy sessions
- Termly academic reports
- Annual reviews of EHCP targets
- Half-termly Teacher Evaluation Schedule
- Data drop
- Regular meeting and phone calls with parents to discuss progress

The effectiveness of our curriculum will be measured by how well our students develop knowledge and skills across the curriculum and, ultimately, how well they achieve. This may be reflected in results from national tests but also, in some cases, by the personal progress made by an individual.

If every student has become the very best they can possibly be, and they are well prepared for the next stage of their lives by the time they leave Unified Academy, we will be confident our curriculum has been fit for purpose.