

**Outcomes
First
Group.**

CURRICULUM POLICY

**OPTIONS TRENT ACRES SCHOOL AND
TRENT ACRES BROOKFIELD**

Updated 1 September 2024



CONTENTS	PAGE
CONTENTS	Page
1.0 INTRODUCTION	2
2.0 AIMS OF THE POLICY	3
3.0 OPTIONS TRENT ACRES SCHOOL VALUES	5
4.0 ACCREDITATION (IMPACT OF THE CURRICULUM)	7
5.0 OPTIONS TRENT ACRES SCHOOL PRACTICE (IMPLEMENTATION)	8
6.0 TRANSITION	10
7.0 MONITORING & REVIEW	11
8.0 RATIONALE OF CURRICULUM (INTENT)	12
9.0 PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS WITHIN THE CURRICULUM	13
10.0 ANIMALS AT TRENT ACRES AND THE CURRICULUM	13
1.0 INTRODUCTION	

Options Trent Acres School is a specialist, independent day school offering places to pupils aged 5 to 19. Places are offered to pupils who have complex needs including ASC, ADHD. A high number of our pupils may also have experienced early childhood trauma and may present with attachment difficulties.

The school operates across 2 sites within the Staffordshire borough and offers up to 141 across both facilities.

Options Trent Acres School, based in Kings Bromley is set within 12 acres of Staffordshire countryside. The school offers 100 places. The full national curriculum is taught from key stage 1 to key stage 4, adapted to meet the needs of individual pupils. Post-16 pupils can access a range of qualifications, including additional GCSE's and BTEC qualifications and a number of A-Level opportunities (please see Post-16 Policy for further information) The school is also home to a range of farm and domestic animals and reptiles who provide emotional support for pupils as well as curriculum enhancement. Additional opportunities to study animal care, land based studies, equine studies, psychology and engineering are also available to pupils.

Trent Acres - Brookfield is a purpose-built vocational college. We offer up to 41 places for pupils aged 14 to 19, enabling them to study vocational routes into computer gaming and coding, hospitality and barista music production and health and social care. Students will also be able to achieve Functional Skills in English, Mathematics and ICT from Entry Level to Level 2. Many of the staff will work across sites, providing consistency and stability for pupils. The core focus is on application of skills. The salon and bistro are open to visitors on designated dates throughout the year, enabling pupils to gain essential real-life experience.

Pupils may complete all of their learning on one site or attend a blend of both sites, dependant upon their curriculum choices.

Our Curriculum

The curriculum consists of all of the activities designed or encouraged within the school's organisational framework to promote the intellectual, personal, social, physical, therapeutic and cultural development of pupils. It includes the formal programme of lessons and the informal programme of extra-curricular activities. The curriculum is also designed to robustly ensure that pupils gain experiences in the following areas of learning linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative as well as providing opportunities for therapeutic and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) and cultural capital, please refer to the school's SMSC Policy for further detail in this area.

All pupils who arrive at Trent Acres have experienced disruption to their learning. Many have not attended formal education for a considerable time. Pupils often arrive as reluctant readers and writers as well as experiencing emotional barriers to learning. It is essential that pupils are engaged into an ambitious curriculum that inspires them to achieve the best they can. Teaching at Trent Acres School is ambitious for all. Staff are aspirational for all pupils.

The curriculum encompasses all aspects of the national curriculum.

The curriculum at Trent Acres is divided into three strands:

ACHIEVE	This consists of all academic opportunities available within the school. This includes core and all subjects to GCSE and BTEC level. The school also offers Functional Skills and a suite of A-Level qualifications.
ENGAGE	This covers the wide range of vocational opportunities available to all pupils, including land based and equine, hospitality and barista, hair and beauty and many outdoor learning opportunities, Duke of Edinburgh, Art and Cookery
INSPIRE (You, Your Future and Your Choices)	This part of the curriculum underpins all other learning opportunities. Inspire consists of wellbeing, pastoral and life skills elements to re-engage pupils into learning and prepare them for independence. Pupils are immersed in a wide range of opportunities to support their emotional, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

A detailed map of the full curriculum is available upon request.

Our curriculum aims to;

- build upon pupils' prior knowledge and help them to store knowledge in their long term-memory so they make progress by knowing more and remembering more
- make sure that the right components are embedded in long-term memory to ensure pupils are able to perform more complex tasks
- make sure that pupils have the change to 'overlearn' key concepts through repeated recall to secure learning
- contribute to achievement of overall subject goals
- ensure that all pupils, including those who have special educational needs are able to achieve the best possible outcomes

Implementation of this policy: It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to ensure that staff members are aware of and understand this policy and any subsequent revisions.

Compliance: This policy complies with the Independent School Standards Part 1: Quality of Education, paragraph 2(1)(a)

2.0 AIMS OF THE POLICY

1. To support the effective and coherent delivery of a bespoke curriculum to every pupil;
2. To support staff in making professional responses to the needs of their pupils through recognised approaches based upon best practice for learners having ASD and/or Complex Needs;
3. To provide a framework which rationalises the roles and responsibilities of the education staff and how these interface and cohere with the wider Options Trent Acres School team.

Options Trent Acres School Curriculum Intentions:

The intentions of our curriculum are to:

- Provide the breadth, balance, depth and ambition of the National Curriculum in a personalised way, ensuring that pupils acquire the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to prepare them for their next steps.
- Engage all pupils in rich meaningful learning experiences to prepare them for their next steps
- Build on prior knowledge so that pupils know more and remember more
- Drive individual progress within learning and wellbeing;
- Provide a creative range of educational experiences and challenges, supporting learners' ability to grow self-esteem and confidence;
- Develop expert learners through helping them to grasp key components of learning and secure their long-term memory
- Develop independence and team work skills;
- Support the pupils in developing healthy choices, lifestyles and relationships
- Provide a curriculum which is broad, balanced and relevant, provides challenge and high quality learning opportunities, and ensures that all pupils learn and achieve their full potential;
- Meet the individual learning needs of each pupil as identified initially by the Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) and then the Individual Education Plan (for further detail, please refer to the School's SEND Policy)
- Provide extensive opportunities for pupils to acquire and develop skills in Speaking, Listening, Literacy and Numeracy
- Empower students to effect change by developing a positive awareness of self and their inherent potential;
- To build on pupils prior experiences, skills knowledge and understanding
- Provide pupils with the essential knowledge that they need to become educated citizens (cultural capital)
- Promote intellectual, social, moral, spiritual, cultural and physical skills development; (for further detail, please refer to the Colleges SMSC Policy)
- Provide a safe, therapeutic, caring and tolerant school community;
- Value and develop self-confidence and responsibility;
- Involve parents/ carers and the broader community in a partnership for education; thus creating effective partnership working opportunities
- Recognise the importance of fun and positive enjoyment in learning;
- Involve students in decision making about their own learning, school life;
- Prepare young people to participate fully and successfully in further learning and adult life.

Recovery Curriculum

Due to the long lasting impact of Covid-19 and to prepare for other crises that may occur, a recovery curriculum has been developed. The Recovery Curriculum is based on a five-layer approach including Relationships, Community, Transparent Curriculum, Metacognition and Space. The aim of this is to re-engage pupils into formal learning as quickly as possible. We recognise that pupils may also experience personal crises within their own circumstances which may impact heavily on their ability to access learning. For this reason, a personalised recovery curriculum may be appropriate consisting of social, emotional and wellbeing opportunities to raise confidence, self-esteem and resilience so that they are better equipped to cope with challenge and change.

Relationships focuses on rebuilding trusting relationships and letting the children know that we are still here for them. Community focuses on learning about what has happened in the child's community whilst they have been learning at home. There is also a focus on how the school community and how it may look and feel different for the pupils. The Transparent Curriculum focuses on healing the stress and anxiety a child may have had from missing school and helps the child to regain control of their learning.

Metacognition focuses on reskilling pupils to rebuild their confidence as learners as many pupils will have been learning in different ways. Space is focusing on rediscovering ourselves and to enable the pupils to find their voice on learning.

This curriculum will also be applied for children with trauma and those who are unable to access school for any reason over long periods of time.

3.0 OPTIONS TRENT ACRES SCHOOL VALUES

The Options Trent Acres School curriculum encourages active engagement in learning within first hand, practical contexts in the classroom, in the community and in the great outdoors. The school follows the National Curriculum programmes of Study to ensure that the whole entitlement is fulfilled. This is planned and delivered in order to arouse pupil interest and foster engagement and motivation. The book-based curriculum operates throughout all key stages within the English curriculum with additional relevant pathways being developed through key stage 4 and 5 leading to valuable experiences and qualifications. Communication and working in partnership with parents and carers is essential to promote effective learning. Parents and Carers have access to Class Dojo. This app is used to communicate key information as well as sharing details about children's progress. The app is also linked to the school's behaviour and rewards policy. Each pupil's pathway is personalised to meet their needs and is underpinned by our core values which actively promote Fundamental British Values.

- Everyone Should be listened to (Democracy)
- Keep everyone safe by following the rules and making the right choices (Rule of Law)
- Be Proud of who you are (Individual Liberty)
- Value each other and your surroundings (Mutual Respect)
- Be Patient, Kind and Understanding to everyone (Tolerance)

Thinking Skills

These complement the six Key Skills and are also embedded in each learner's curriculum offer. For our learners, the development of thinking skills involves:

- Sensory awareness and perception;
- Early cognition skills such as remembering, sequencing, anticipating, choosing and matching.

Bespoke Curriculum Pathways reflect aspects of the National Curriculum and are linked to the continuous monitoring and evaluation of progress. We follow the three principles that are essential to developing a more inclusive curriculum:

Setting suitable learning challenges;
Responding to learners diverse needs;
Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment.

Staff, as members of a multi-disciplinary team, make use of the whole school environment and the community to provide learners with a curriculum that is motivating, multi-sensory and experience based.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CURRICULUM AT OPTIONS TRENT ACRES

Pupils at Trent Acres are taught in small groups with a high staff ratio. Staff are experienced and suitably qualified. Teachers of core subjects are qualified, they teach across the whole cohort. Each group is supported by a consistent teaching assistant who remains with the group for continuity and to support positive relationships.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. There are opportunities for teachers to upskill and work with colleagues from other schools across the organisation to support their professional development. Core subjects are delivered by qualified teachers with subjects specialisms. Assessment is used well to help pupils embed new knowledge fully or check understanding and inform next steps.

Teaching at Trent Acres is child centred. Teachers create an environment that focused on the pupils and their needs. Resources that support learning are appropriate to the needs of the child, high quality and reflect the ambitious curriculum.

Planning is overseen by subject leads. The curriculum plans are designed to make sure that pupils know more and remember more.

Learning is delivered in delivered in low-sensory environments. Pupils learn at their own personalised workstations that they have helped to configure with staff support.

Teachers communicate clearly, in line with pupils' personal preferences and individual needs. They present their subjects well and check that pupils understand regularly. They provide direct feedback and address misconceptions. This ensures that teaching is responsive and adapted to pupils' needs.

Teachers regularly check for understanding and make sure that pupils are secure in their learning. Where further support is needed, they reshape tasks to aid understanding. They make sure that content is revised and revisited to help pupils commit learning to long term memory.

Reading is prioritised. This starts in primary with a sharp focus on phonics. Phonics are often repeated throughout the key stages to help pupils to segment and blend words and match sounds to the books they are reading. A high proportion of pupils arrive at Trent Acres as reluctant readers. They have not experienced reading for pleasure as routine and dislike reading aloud. There is a clear fear of failure around reading. The school uses two standardised schemes alongside guided reading and a book based curriculum in English to promote reading and develop confidence and fluency.

The use of visual cues, schedules and timetables helps pupils to understand their learning and where they are in their school day.

Teacher use 'now and next' prompts to make sure pupils are prepared for their learning throughout the school day.

The school also operates Acorn Digital Learning as an online classroom offer for pupils who are unable to access the physical learning environment. Further details available upon request.

OPTIONS TRENT ACRES SCHOOL & 'SPELL'

Where appropriate to the needs of the child, we use the principles of the National Autistic Society (NAS) SPELL approach in order to maximise access to the whole curriculum by prioritising:

Structure: through using principles from TEACCH to organise the environment, use of personal schedules and systematic strategies to work

Positive: approaches and expectations through sensitive but persistent intervention based upon thorough individual assessment, including Intensive Interaction

Empathy: based upon respect for personal experience to inform what motivates and what may frighten, preoccupy or distress individual learners

Low arousal: based upon individual sensory profiles and the use of PRICE for the positive management of potentially challenging behaviour

Links: through a thematic approach to the curriculum and a multi-disciplinary team-work approach across the service and with families and/or significant other
Pupils are taught in small groups in a low arousal environment.

4.0 ACCREDITATION (IMPACT OF THE CURRICULUM)

The curriculum at Options Trent Acres is aspirational, taking into account the breath, balance and depth of the National Curriculum from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 4. We believe that as this is an entitlement, all pupils should have access to this content regardless of where they are educated. Given that a high proportion of our pupils have missed a lot of schooling, they arrive with gaps in learning. This means that some pupils in Key Stage 1 will benefit from access to the components of an EYFS curriculum. This is carefully planned and linked to each individual's learning journey.

External Accreditation is personalised and is described on each learner's Person Centered Plan (PCP). Pupils' PCP documents show that progress well towards their EHC aims and outcomes.

At Key Stage 2 PSHE is accredited using Asdan Certificate of Personal Effectiveness Framework (CoPE).

At Key Stage 3 Pupils have the opportunity to complete accredited ASDAN qualifications in Animal Care, Food Technology, Hair and Beauty and Sports and Fitness as well as Entry Level ICT.

Pupils at Key Stage 4 have access to a range of GCSE qualifications including English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities and Art with additional opportunities available through BTEC routes including Land Based and Equine, PE, PSHE and Food Technology. Functional Skills is an additional pathway students can access to ensure employability up to Level 2 in Mathematics, English and ICT. Pupils also have the opportunity to start a DoE award starting with the Bronze award. Key Stage 4 pupils may also access opportunities at Options Trent Acres – Brookfield where they can study vocational courses in Hospitality and Barista, Computer Gaming, Hair and Beauty and Health and Social Care.

Post 16 students, across both of the school sites, have the individualised opportunity to retake any previous GCSE's as well as access to work-related learning opportunities and A Levels in English, Mathematics, Chemistry, Biology and Art. ASDAN is also offered Post 16 and Functional Skills up to Level 2 in Mathematics, English and ICT. The DoE award is also offered where learning and development can be taken up to the Gold Award. Students also have the opportunity to engage in courses at local colleges with staff support from school where needed.

Transition from Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 and 2

EYFS	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Communication & Language	English	English
Personal, Social, Emotional Development	Mathematics	Mathematics
Physical Development	Science	Science
Literacy	Art and Design	Art and Design
Mathematics	Computing	Computing
Understanding the World	Design and Technology	Design and Technology
Expressive Arts and Design	Geography	Geography
	History	History
	Music	Languages
	PE	Music
	PSHE	PE
	RE	PSHE
		RE

5.0 OPTIONS TRENT ACRES SCHOOL PRACTICE (IMPLEMENTATION)

Teachers and tutors have the responsibility for the leadership of subject areas, which includes:

- Reviewing and updating relevant subject policies and action plans annually;
- Writing, reviewing and updating long and medium term plans for their subject areas;
- Managing resources for their subject;
- Managing the assessment information for their subject.

Core subjects are delivered by subject specialists in English, mathematics and science.

Teachers are pastoral leads for their respective groups and have pastoral responsibility for those groups and the individual learners in them, which includes:

- Writing and disseminating pupils' half-termly educational reports;
- Attending and leading parent/carer half-termly conferences
- Writing annual Action Plans for their group and contributing to the school SEF
- Designing the group's curriculum maps;
- Planning for and resourcing differentiated learning spaces;

- Managing their group's staff team, including TAs and any care staff allocated to learners;
- Writing reports, such as LAC reports, PEPs, half-termly progress reports and annual end of year reports;
- Managing their pastoral group's assessment information;
- Writing and assessing their group's IEPs;
- Contributing to their pupils' PCP's;
- Taking a lead for managing the behaviour and emotional needs for pupils in their group.
- Maintaining regular communication with parents via Class Dojo.

The curriculum model is integrated and includes all routines of the school day, such as transition time, lunchtime, snack time, leisure time. These are an integral part of the curriculum for students with autism and complex needs. The curriculum at Options Trent Acres is integrated. All aspects of therapy including speech and language (SALT) and art therapy are woven into pupils' individualised timetables.

The nature of autism and complex needs means that it is likely a student with English as an Additional Language would have additional difficulty in communicating effectively and therefore a greater proportion of time would be spent concentrating on this skill area.

Students take part in activities in the local community, acting as consumers within shopping and café experiences and accessing local transport. Links with local businesses are established to support work experiences when applicable. We work closely with colleagues within Options in order to share good practice and discuss curriculum issues. In addition, we liaise with local schools and/or authorities in order to develop networks and to facilitate inclusion.

Learning experiences (IMPLEMENTATION)

The delivery of the curriculum is personalised, taking into account previous gaps in learning and the need to revisit key concepts. It has an emphasis on experiential and sensory learning across the curriculum. It references the National Curriculum and includes the following learning experiences:

- Linguistic (English): with an emphasis on communication integrated throughout the curriculum; Spanish is available at Key stage 1 and 2
- Mathematical: Numeracy, with an emphasis on functional and experiential learning;
- Scientific Biology, Chemistry and Physics; theoretical concepts and practical experiments;
- Technological: (Digital Competence, Computer Gaming, Coding)
- Human and Social: (PSHE; Citizenship, Geography, History, RE, Health and Social Care)
- Physical: P.E. and outdoor education
- Aesthetic and Creative (Art, Music, Hair & Beauty, Hospitality and Barista)
- Therapeutic: sensory, play, Outdoor Education, Horticulture, Equine and Land Based

Alongside the taught curriculum pupils in all key stages, engage in a range of experiences to develop their social and emotional skills. We also consider our surroundings and feel that the children learn well in our outdoor spaces. We incorporate subjects that include outdoor learning including land-based and animal care. We also take lessons outside which can help the sensory aspects of a child's learning style.

Learning is structured into 30 - 45 minute lessons. Core lessons are delivered during the morning sessions and practical and vocational lessons take place during the afternoon. Pupils are taught in small groups with a minimum of two staff dependent upon learner needs. The timetable at Options Trent Acres – Brookfield differs to enable longer time on chosen vocational routes.

Allocation of teaching time

All Key Stages have a 6-hour school day, with the amount of time spent on learning experiences determined for each learner according to their personalised curriculum map. Breaks and lunchtimes are allocated according to learners' personal needs, with a PSHE focus. Each day also includes transition time during the day. It is accepted that, due to the nature of our students, an allocation of time will need to be made for transitions and will be flexibly responsive to their needs at any one time. It is also important to emphasise that the timetable sequence structures the day, not the time on the clock.

Personalised adaptations are made to all pupils timetables to meet their individual needs. Where appropriate, the following changes may be made:

- Sensory experiences
- Physical experiences
- Environmental changes
- Additional staffing
- Additional clinical input
- Specialist resources

In order to support learning for all students with autism, emphasis is placed on PSHE across the curriculum and within the 'hidden curriculum'. Sex and Relationships targets are built into the PSHE and the Science curriculum as a matter of course. Any additional Sex Education required, and education about alcohol and drug misuse, are addressed whenever appropriate within the respective pastoral groups.

Pupils can also access a range of personalised PSHE workshops on a one to one or small group basis. Please see PSHE policy for additional information.

6.0 TRANSITION

Transition is used to describe the period of time between the ages of 14 and 25 when young people are supported in making decisions about their future. The school is fully supported by Staffordshire Entrust who provide pupils with impartial careers guidance that is presented in an impartial manner and enables pupils to make informed choices about a broad range of career options and helps them to fulfil their potential. We will also liaise with post-16 professionals within home authorities for pupils who are placed residentially out of borough.

Each student has a Transition Plan in place following their 14+ Review, which is then monitored and updated on at least an Annual basis as part of the Annual Education Review Process. Transition Targets are set as part of the learner's IEP as appropriate. School provides learners with careers guidance through PHSE and CoPE suitable to their needs. We provide students with appropriate opportunities to engage in:

- Work-related experiences on site;
- Gradual supported external placements;
- Experiences at local colleges and alternative educational provisions;
- Community activities.

If for any reason, pupils are unable to access learning on the school site, remote careers support is made available through virtual careers meetings.

Post-16 Curriculum

Post 16 opportunities differ across both sites. At the Kings Bromley we offer a broad and balanced curriculum enhanced with work-based learning. Some of our students focus on achieving formal qualifications such as GCSE's or Functional Skills in Maths and English. We also offer A-Levels in Maths, History, Chemistry, Biology and English.

Options Trent Acres – Brookfield enables pupils to study a range of vocational qualifications that help the

students to integrate into society and help them to develop their social skills. We have considered the career paths and choices through consultation with our pupils. Through careful careers advice we have reviewed the the curriculum accordingly.

Volunteering is a key aspect to our Post-16 Curriculum and strong links are being formed with our local community in order to ensure the children are given the experiences they need to progress in their chosen career.

Trent Acres School has links with a number of Further Education Providers to enable students to access courses with full support from school staff if needed.

7.0 MONITORING & REVIEW

The Head teacher together with all education staff carry out a systematic monitoring and evaluation of the School's curriculum, including termly moderation of Medium term Planning (please see Planning, Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy). This ensures clear priorities for development are identified and sufficient information is gathered for a curriculum review. Subject leaders support their areas across the school through feeding into shared curriculum planning and review meetings and supporting the implementation of programmes of study through sharing of ideas and ensuring appropriate resources are in place. Local quality assurance procedures factor in frequent curriculum audits.

The curriculum is reviewed as part of governance and through checklists completed at school level and ratified by the Regional Director.

8.0 RATIONALE OF CURRICULUM (INTENT)

The curriculum at Options Trent Acres is designed to help pupils become good learners					
Engaged Learners Pupils who apply their knowledge, understanding and skills in functional ways and who are self-motivated.	Healthy Learners Pupils who enjoy good standards of mental, emotional and physical wellbeing and lead fulfilled lives.	Responsible Learners Pupils who are self-determined and empowered to engage positively with society and become good citizens.	Successful Learners Pupils who achieve well and make good progress across a broad curriculum from their individual starting points.		
These principles help our pupils to...					
Be socially included, enjoy friendships and live as independently as possible	Look after themselves and be healthy	Keep themselves safe and help others to keep safe from harm	Be engaged in positive activity and play an active role in society	Have good self-esteem, ambition, and the means to influence decisions affecting their lives	
Our curriculum promotes learning in the following areas...					
Skills Learning to minimise barriers to learning and wellbeing. Helping pupils to engage in the learning process and acquire the skills necessary to enhance their social experiences and participation in society.	Knowledge & Understanding Learning to provide pupils with a broad and balanced knowledge of the world so that they can better understand the processes around everyday living. They have the opportunity to gain qualifications to help them fulfil their potential.	Attitude & Attributes Developing a positive work ethic to enable pupils to grow personally, and enhance their sense of responsibility and accountability and value interpersonal relationships and cope with unpredictable life events.			
The whole school provision supports effective learning through...					
Environment A nurture based, sensory aware, pupil-centred ethos with an environment that is safe and enriching with many opportunities to promote therapeutic wellbeing.	Staff Team A highly skilled and dedicated, multi-disciplinary team with a range of professional qualifications and experience across many sectors.	Learning Learning is appropriately balanced and well planned to meet the individual needs of pupils. Learning is well linked to pupils' individual interests and aspirations.	Teaching Lessons are well planned and incorporate creative and personalised learning. Teachers implement individual pupil targets and pupils are actively involved in their learning.	Assessment Assessment is continuous, formative, summative and evidence based across all areas of learning.	Enrichment A weekly rolling programme of events and whole school activities to promote holistic development. Pupils enjoy visits, engage with external speakers and in workshops to learn about how to keep safe and healthy.

9.0 PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS WITHIN THE CURRICULUM



Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's identity defined by the Equality Act 2010. The 'protection' relates to protection from discrimination.

At Options Trent Acres School it is important that all children gain an understanding of the world they are growing up in, and learn how to live alongside, and show respect for, a diverse range of people.

Within our curriculum we make sure that diversity is promoted and celebrated.

At Options Trent Acres School all pupils are valued as individuals and supported to achieve their potential across all areas of the curriculum. Pupils are supported to reach the expectations for their age through carefully planned lessons that meet their individual and special educational needs. We strive to support all pupils to be the best they can be. The curriculum will remain as broad as possible for as long as possible.

At Options Trent Acres School we recognise and respect and celebrate differences. This is reflected in our core values:

- Everyone should be listened to (Democracy)
- Keep everyone safe by following the rules and making the right choices (Rule of Law)
- Be Proud of who you are (Individual Liberty)
- Value each other and your surroundings (Mutual Respect)
- Be Patient, Kind and Understanding to everyone (Tolerance)

Resources in use across all curriculum areas represent all ages, disabilities, races, genders, cultures and beliefs.

At Options Trent Acres School we foster positive attitudes and relationships both inside and outside school. We play an active part in our community and work closely with parents and carers who are invited into school at regular opportunities to share in learning experiences and celebrate achievements.

At Options Trent Acres School we follow the principles of Safer Recruitment and observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development, offering equal opportunities for all. Our staff are appointed regardless of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

At Options Trent Acres School we aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that may already exist. No child should be disadvantaged. Curriculum opportunities are planned to show positive role models who have overcome barriers in order to achieve. This could include celebrating athletes who have triumphed over barriers and inequalities and celebrating the work and achievements of individuals from a range of different backgrounds, ages, ethnicities and genders who have achieved great successes.

10.0 ANIMALS AT TRENT ACRES AND THE CURRICULUM

Animals are a large part of life at Trent Acres. The horses, donkeys, goats, sheep, chickens, geese,

ducks and reptiles form a significant part of learning.

Extensive research has proven that animals can have a positive impact on how well pupils can access learning as well as academic achievement. The animals provide a calming influence, this is helpful when pupils are overwhelmed, anxious or dysregulated. In time, this improves self-esteem, self-confidence and social skills. Animals also help pupils to learn about responsibility as well as learning important life lessons about loss. The inclusion of animals also promotes good attendance as pupils forge positive links and take responsibility of looking after them seriously.

POSITIVE IMPACT OF ANIMALS

Behaviour

Animals at Trent Acres contribute towards improved behaviour. Research shows that pupils develop strong links and empathy with animals. This in turn helps them to understand how others may be feeling. Research also shows that aggressive and violent incidents decrease by 55% in settings here animals are present. When feeling anxious or dysregulated, pupils have full access to the groups and animals, this helps them to calm and refocus. Horses are known for being gentle, loving creatures. They bring about a calmness that those struggling with mental health sometimes struggle with. Through the process of taking care of and riding our horses, pupils will form a bond.

Attendance

Animals have a positive impact on pupil attendance. Pupils make connections with the animals and for this reason their attendance and participation increases. They are aware of the needs of animals and where they are involved directly in the care of them, this improves engagement.

Education

Pupils read to the animals. Willow – The School Dog has a set timetable and attends a number of classes to support with pupil engagement, preparing pupils for learning through calmness. Rabbits and guinea pigs also feature heavily in the classroom and learning environments to help with calming pupils and helping them to refocus on their learning. Pupils access horse riding sessions and animal care sessions leading towards BTEC qualifications. They learn about habitats, feeding, looking after and caring for sick animals and are able to apply these skills in practical terms.

Social Development

Due to the vastness of the school grounds and the needs of the animals, pupils work in groups to support and care for the animals. This requires working as a team and communicating to make sure all tasks are completed appropriately.

This policy is reviewed annually
September 2024
