

# Heron Academy Curriculum Policy

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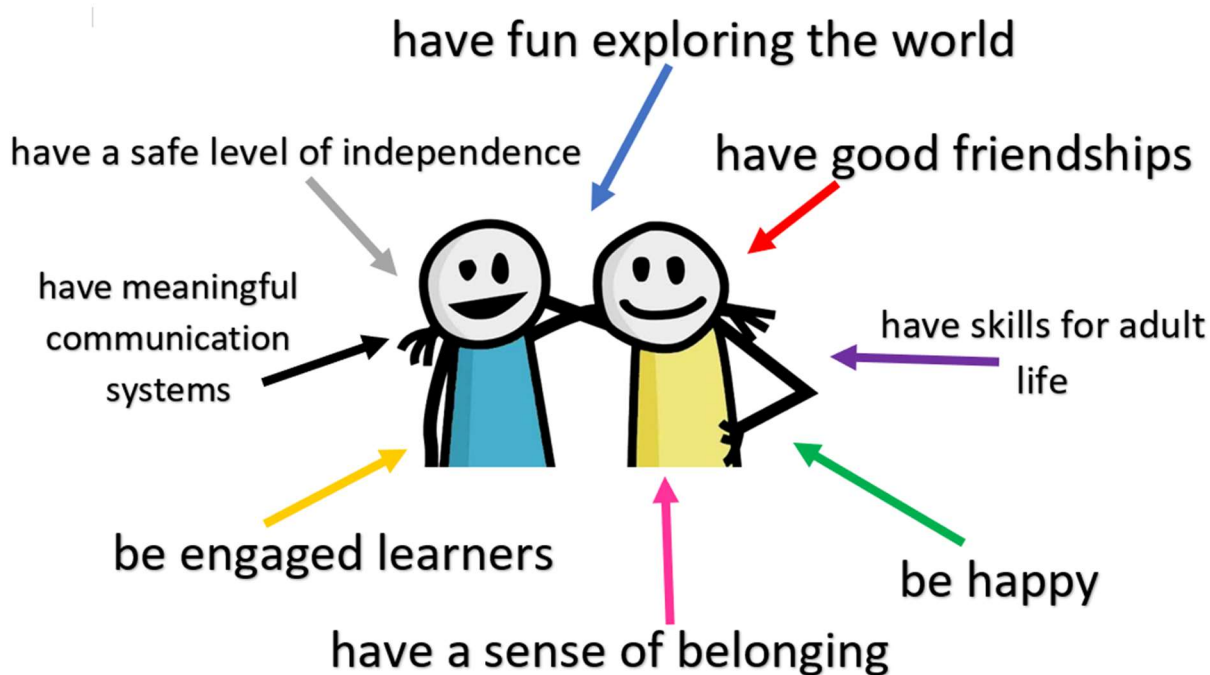
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## Curriculum aim:

The curriculum aims of our Heron Academy tailor shape the way each lesson and learning opportunity is presented. Heron Academy's curriculum enables pupils to be:

- **Engaged:** Pupils who are motivated to participate in learning and are suitably empowered to access what is being taught
- **Communicators:** Pupils who are interacting intentionally with others and/or their immediate environment using whatever mode of communication is relevant to them
- **Problem Solvers:** Pupils who are sufficiently resilient in their attention to experiment and identify a solution to a new learning challenge
- **Independent learners:** Pupils who are able to develop and apply their skills and knowledge autonomously and utilise their pupil voice to shape their educational provision
- **Unique:** Pupils who have very distinctive, idiosyncratic learning styles that are in direct relation to their individual profiles of learning difficulties and disabilities
- **Immersed:** Pupils who are demonstrably responsive to the specialist, personalised provision we provide in respect to their individual circumstances
- **21<sup>st</sup> Century:** Pupils who are able to use modern technology to help overcome some of their difficulties and enhance their potential for learning
- **Acquirers of knowledge:** Pupils who are able to use literacy skills to access information from their environment and express and apply their new-found knowledge

Our curriculum aim is for pupils to:



Equipping pupils with practical independence skills for adult life through engagement, fun and exploration.

CURRICULUM AIMS | 23-24

The core purpose and strategic vision for Heron is to ensure that our provision equips pupils with practical independence skills for adult life through engagement, fun and exploration. The academic curriculum, pastoral support, personal development, ethos of nurture, environment, and therapeutic input combine to support this vision. We work together in partnership with pupils, parents, teachers, and experts. Leaders work collaboratively and ensure that the Heron curriculum meets need through:

- A pupil-centred approach which empowers pupils to communicate in whichever way suits them.
- Personalised learning where children can acquire and demonstrate daily living skills and independence.
- Appropriate routines, structures and positivity consistently evident throughout the school.
- Culture and ethos of the school
- Monitoring and analysis
- Early identification of any barriers so that they can be swiftly addressed
- Our approach to exploration and learning in all environments within the school.
- Our in-depth knowledge of pupils as individuals which is demonstrated in EHCP outcomes.
- Supporting staff to develop SEND expertise and pedagogy to best meet the needs of all individuals

## Heron curriculum offer

Pupils study a broad curriculum based on the National Curriculum, enriched with Heron's bespoke curriculum to provide context and develop both personal and life skills and understanding. There is particular emphasis on communication, reading, maths RSHE, PE, the Arts and personal development. A full range of subjects are taught, with specialisms being introduced in KS5 which are matched to reflect cohort interests and strengths. So that pupils can accumulate knowledge and skills as they move through the school, the curriculum is sequenced, building on prior knowledge and skills. Each Key stage has clear intentions which build into the next, as shown in our English and Maths overviews. This means every teacher knows what they are focusing on so there is a clear plan for the pupil which is built on shared understanding.

We promote a love for literacy in every pathway through reading corners in all classes. Our modern library with technology to support reading development and daily love of literacy sessions in all classes. We believe that all pupils at Heron are readers and need the right support to access stories in personalised ways.

**Pathways:** At Heron Academy,

Our curriculum is organised into three pathways which run the entire way through the school, from Yr. 7 to Yr. 14. It is sequential in nature and grows and develops to build on strengths and support the needs of our pupils. The curriculum is thematic and this changes every term to develop context, excitement and creativity, it is the vehicle that means we are able to make sure what we are teaching is relevant and engaging.

The three pathways reflect the strengths and needs of our school and its cohort. Our themes are relevant and interesting. We link them to local and national events. Staff work on skills and knowledge which can be transferred into the immediate environment and beyond.

English

Informal Pathway

KS 3 Intention

My Communication

To explore the environment and develop understanding and their effect within it

KS 4 Intention

My Communication

To begin to have a sense of routine and structure where they can predict and anticipate what is happening next

P16 Intention

Functional Skills

To be proactive in interactions and have a clear likes and dislikes that are informed by exploration and choice

KS 3

Implementation

Little Wandle  
Pre Phonics

Total  
Communication  
Approach

Engagement  
Model

Divergent  
Discovery

KS 4

Implementation

Little Wandle  
Pre Phonics

Total  
Communication  
Approach

Engagement  
Model

Divergent  
Discovery

P16

Implementation

Little Wandle  
Pre Phonics

Total  
Communication  
Approach

Engagement  
Model

Divergent  
Discovery

KS 3 End Point

To be able develop a sense of self and identify and begin to understand that that their actions have an impact on their immediate environment

KS 4 End Point

To develop an understanding of routine and anticipate what is happening next through a multitude of clues and sensory stimulation

P16 End Point

To develop proactive contingency awareness and express their feelings in a consistent and identifiable way

Semi-Formal Pathway

KS 3 Intention

My Communication

To explore AAC and develop communication strategies so they have access to learning

KS 4 Intention

My Communication

To utilise AAC to discover more, learn more and remember more.

P16 Intention

Functional Literacy

To use AAC out in the community and home with confidence, competence and autonomy

KS 3

Implementation

Little Wandle  
Pre Phonics /  
SEND Phonics

Symbols  
Project Core

Convergent  
Discovery

KS 4

Implementation

Little Wandle  
Pre Phonics /  
SEND Phonics

Blanks Level  
Questions

Project Core

Divergent  
Discovery

P16

Implementation

Little Wandle  
Pre Phonics /  
SEND Phonics

Blanks Level  
Questions

Scaffolding

Self  
Determination  
Theory

KS 3 End Point

To be able to have a reliable form of communication that they can take forward with them throughout their time in school and develop fluency and competence with it.

KS 4 End Point

To be curious and interested to seek more and offer their opinion in an effective and meaningful way

P16 End Point

To be able communicate using AAC effectively and fluently out in the community so they are heard, understood and listened too.

Formal Pathway

KS 3 Intention

English

To develop functional communication skills that can be used to retain and recall information

KS 4 Intention

English

To express opinions in a consider way by first evaluating and then responding to information in an analytical way

P16 Intention

English

To be imaginative and create their own stories and ideas using language and literacy skills

KS 3 Implementation

Little Wandle  
Phonics SEND

Blanks Level  
Questions

Project Core

Convergent  
Discovery

KS 4

Implementation

Little Wandle  
Phonics SEND

Colourful Semantics

Project Core

Divergent Discovery

P16 Implementation

Little Wandle  
Phonics

Creative Writing  
Sessions

Scaffolding

Divergent Discovery

KS 3 End Point

To recall and retain information accurately and appreciate the context around what they have learnt. To effectively use their AAC to access learning. This is the 'doing' stage of learning

KS 4 End Point

To be able to think and analyse learning content and form opinions of their own which they are able to express accurately and consistently using an effective medium. This is the 'thinking' stage of learning

P16 End Point

To be able to create, express and imagine their own thoughts and opinions. To build off core ideas and make them their own by enhancing them with their thoughts and imagination. This is the 'creating' stage of learning

Maths

Informal Pathway

KS 3 Intention

My Cognition

To explore the immediate environment and develop object permanence

KS 4 Intention

My Cognition

To develop exploratory skills so that they differentiate between different stimuli

P16 Intention

Functional Skills

To develop problem solving and become more intentional in closed loop tasks

KS 3

Implementation

Sensology  
Piaget's 6 stages of play  
Engagement Profiles  
Divergent Discovery

KS 4

Implementation

Sensology  
Piaget's 6 stages of play  
Engagement Profiles  
Divergent Discovery

P16

Implementation

Sensology  
Piaget's 6 stages of play  
Engagement Profiles  
Convergent Discovery

KS 3 End Point

To become curious of the environment and extract information from it.

KS 4 End Point

To develop intentionality and learn access skills which will widen my world

P16 End Point

To problem solve effectively using the skills and knowledge acquired throughout my schooling

Semi-Formal Pathway

KS 3 Intention

My Thinking

To explore quantities and develop the concept of number

KS 4 Intention

My Thinking

To have an understanding of number and shape and become increasingly accurate.

P16 Intention

Functional Maths

To use quantity, shape and measure to request for desirable objects

KS 3

Implementation

Maths Framework  
Piaget's 6 stages of play  
Dots and numerals  
More and less  
Divergent Discovery

KS 4

Implementation

Maths Framework  
Tag and play  
Shape posting and recognition  
Divergent Discovery

P16

Implementation

Maths Framework  
Full and empty  
Number and shape  
Self Determination Theory

KS 3 End Point

To be able to explore effectively and relate dots to quantity and understand the oneness of one

KS 4 End Point

To accurately tag numbers effectively and complete tasks that relate to shape and number with growing independence

P16 End Point

To utilise the knowledge that has been attained to request for desired objects accurately and effectively

Formal Pathway

KS 3 Intention

Maths

To develop functional maths skills that can be used to answer simple questions

KS 4 Intention

Maths

To have a strong understanding of shape and number and use this information to problem solve

P16 Intention

Maths

To use mathematical skills and knowledge to access the community and complete jobs

KS 3 Implementation

Pre-Key stage standards  
Blanks Level  
Questions to develop constructs  
Numicon  
Convergent Discovery

KS 4 Implementation

Pre-Key stage standards  
Practical life skills activities  
Numicon  
Divergent Discovery

P16 Implementation

Pre-Key stage standards  
Real life maths in the world we live in  
Scaffolding  
Divergent Discovery

KS 3 End Point

To tag effectively and use this information to answer simple questions that come up in everyday life.

KS 4 End Point

To be able to problem solve and answer complex questions effectively with growing independence, whether it be shape, measure or number

P16 End Point

To be able to have a good understanding of time and use this to schedule the day and task completion. Have a strong understanding of mathematical concepts such as addition.

We cover all of the areas of the National Curriculum in an appropriate, relatable and engaging way. We believe in stage appropriate teaching, following the interest of the pupil and using it as a vehicle to inspire and engage our pupils in the acquisition of skills and knowledge.

Teachers complete individual medium-term plans for each pupil so we can tailor our approach and ensure progress for all via PLIMs. There is also one whole class termly plan which is based on the theme which demonstrates how we can make our learning exciting and engaging. Each pathway has a 'Curriculum Guide' which supports staff in implementation and understanding of what and how we teach.

### **Informal**

This pathway is focused on developing intentionality, an understanding of cause and effect and expanding the pupils beyond the immediate. We are teaching the pupil that they can effect and influence the learning environment through communication and action. We use the Engagement Model to tailor our curriculum offer to each individual by focusing on how the pupil gathers and shares information. We use PLIMS to monitor skill and knowledge acquisition, but without the tailoring and formative assessment of the Engagement Model we would be unable to know how to engage them in their learning. Lessons are around 30-40 minutes in length and are non-subject specific. This gives the pupils the amount of time required to immerse themselves in their learning.

### **Semi-formal**

This pathway is life skilled based and is focused on developing pupils' skills and knowledge and widening their sphere of influence. We are teaching the pupil how to become self-reliant through effective communication, application of problem-solving skills and an abstract knowledge base. We use the English and Maths Assessment to monitor and plot what skills and knowledge we can focus on next while tracking the impact of our curriculum effectively through a wide range of PLIMs which change termly and are MAPP assessed. Sessions are 20-30 minutes and non-subject specific. This gives the pupils a real now and next experience, where pupils can focus for intense periods of learning before moving on seamlessly to another activity, developing flexible study skills.

### **Formal**

The formal pathway is aligned much closer to a more traditional national curriculum approach. Discrete subject lessons give the pupils opportunities to study in depth and tailor their curriculums to their individual strengths and interests. The curriculum is by its very nature more formalised and follows a more traditional lesson structure. The national curriculum standards and pre-key standards are used as guides for the teachers to track where their pupils are in their educational journey alongside their tailored PLIMs. Sessions are typically between 20-40 minutes depending on the session and are subject specific.

### **Post-16**

In Post-16 The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and Marks award were introduced in 2023-2024, seek to further enhance personal development and provide more pupil leadership and volunteering opportunities.

Pupils' understanding of personal safety and healthy relationships is developed through age appropriate relationships and sex education and the RSHE curriculum which is taught consistently and at age/developmentally-appropriate levels across the school. So-safe has

been adopted throughout the school to support the delivery of this aspect of the curriculum. Playtimes and lunchtimes are used as ideal learning opportunities for children to develop positive relationships, show their respect and appreciation of difference, and develop social communication and interaction skills.

We aim to develop pupils' understanding of how to keep physically healthy, eat healthily and maintain an active lifestyle. We provide opportunities for pupils to be active during the school day, including through the use of The Daily Mile, access to bike-riding, wheels for well-being, organised lunchtime activities and clubs. Heron's curriculum also places strong emphasis on independence and self-advocacy skills. Opportunities to enhance Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development are embedded.

Special Arts and sports weeks and themed days further enrich and broaden our offer, providing opportunities to try something new and develop new skills and interests. These special events are also geared towards stretching pupils' talents and interests. Practical, artistic, technical, physical, creative and therapeutic opportunities and support all contribute to the whole. Themes have been chosen to be accessible, relevant to all and rich in cultural opportunities flavoured with a range of other languages.

Heron's ethos reflects the school- and British values, equality, diversity and inclusion. Assemblies and certificates celebrate the values that every individual works towards on a termly basis. Pupils respect differences and this is reinforced by whole school cultural events and RE days e.g. black history month celebrations, religious festivals and Down Syndrome Day.

Each of the termly themes run throughout the school, providing commonality across all pathways. The progression of skills within each theme is designed to be spiral, with pupils being given opportunities to revisit and build upon prior learning. This and bridging classes enable pupils who are working at a different level to their peers to easily access work at the level correct for them- dipping into the work being undertaken in two pathways as appropriate, but still sharing the same overarching theme.

Detailed curriculum overviews for all pathways are available on here. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and is adapted to match changes in cohort need and complexity, year-on-year. Within their phase, pupils are grouped by stage not age.

The curriculum is enhanced through educational visits which take place for all pupils.

A range of early interventions to support personal development are offered through the pastoral team and these include;

Therapeutic drama
Access to Benji, the dog mentor
SaLT and OT interventions, social skills, Lego therapy etc
Therapeutic support re diagnosis (1:1 or group)
Wellbeing plans
Communication and Interaction
Independence
Resilience
Rebound
Music Hydro therapy
Hydro therapy
Sensory diets
Sensory circuits



## Interventions to support academic progress:

- **Phonics**, a method of learning to read. It involves matching the sounds of spoken English with individual letters or groups of letters.
- **Blanks Questions and levels of understanding**. This is a bank of structured sets of questions, used to develop children's understanding of what they are reading. Questions and prompts are taken from the level appropriate to the child and help their comprehension.
- **Attention Autism**, to support language development for less able pupils through developing focus and looking from left to right for information
- **Project Core**, this communication system develops pupils core vocabulary as opposed to tagging. It utilises words which are most commonly heard and said in the environment to develop accessible meaning and accuracy of communication
- **Communicate-In-Print**, symbols-supported resources for printing visuals and learning support for use in class and learning environments.
- **Colourful Semantics**, a system for colour coding words in sentences according to their role.
- **Schematic play**, a system which identifies play schemas and uses this information to extend learning opportunities and develop a wider range of skills, knowledge and access to the curriculum
- **Intensive Interaction**, an approach to teaching communication skills to those who are still at early stages of development.
- **Functional Words**, prioritising words of practical use in the immediate and wider world to support greater independence.

## Roles and responsibilities

### The academy boards

The academy board will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The academy board will also ensure that:

A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets

The school is complying with its funding agreement and teaching a "broad and balanced curriculum" which includes English, maths, science and (subject to providing the right to withdraw) religious education, and enough teaching time is provided for pupils to cover the requirements of the funding agreement

Proper provision is made for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs (SEN)

### Headteacher

The headteacher 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 pupils will be met

The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the academy board

### Other staff

Other staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.

The Deputy Headteacher is responsible for continue to evolve the curriculum offer and keep it in line with the best SEN guidance, for example the Engagement Model 2020.

## **SEND Provision** ([refer also to the SEN Information report](#))

This policy reflects the requirements for academies to provide a broad and balanced curriculum as per the [Academies Act 2010](#) and it reflects the schools responsibility to comply with our funding agreement and articles of association.

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014](#) and [Equality Act 2010](#), and refers to curriculum-related expectations of academy boards set out in the Department for Education's [Governance Handbook](#).

**Transitions** in, out, and through the school. The academic and pastoral teams work closely with pupils and their families to ensure that the transition into secondary is as smooth as possible. The transition from KS4 to Post-16 which is supported by year 11 pupils being introduced to the Post-16 accreditation in the summer term. This gives them an introduction into the new assessment as well as an introduction to the community/ outward facing approach in Post-16. The transition from Post-16 to external Post-19 provisions is supported by college staff visits to the school, transition visits to the placements in the summer term and Heron facilitating parent links to the colleges.

**Partnerships** with children, parents and families, professionals, therapists, EITS, CAMHS, LSEAT, L.B. Lambeth, Virtual schools (for LAC), referrals to other agencies e.g. EP, NHS. We link up other experts and agencies across the school where needed to ensure that matters improve for children and that the professional network around each child is strong.

## **Impact**

We ensure the curriculum meets the needs of the cohort through:

- Outcome data analysis.
- Destinations data analysis.
- PLIMS analysis and next steps
- Value added data analysis e.g. Annual Review Actions analysis, star awards and incident reports.
- Formative and summative assessment analysis (classroom monitoring & teacher judgements).
- Observational data.
- EHCP target tracking and data analysis.
- Pupil voice – agreed an area to think about – Engagement Model is a great one for informal, semi will be the challenge
- Parent voice.

- Partnerships & Partnerships & another agency feedback.
- Learning walks.
- Deep dives/theme weeks.
- Video coaching and observations
- Accelerations offered.
- Governor challenge.
- Work scrutinise. – Agreed this is the area we need to think about
- LSEAT termly quality assurance meetings
- Leadership action plans accountability and review.

## Linked policies and related documents

Assessment Recording and Reporting Policy

Reading Policy

Maths Calculation Policy

Detailed Curriculum overviews by phase

RSHE Policy

SEN Information report

Careers Policy