OCTAVIA HOUSE
Sector-Leading Therapeutic Schools

What we teach.
Our curriculum policy for all Octavia House Schools

Independent School Standards: paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 5 and 34

This policy must be considered alongside and in addition to:

- our '*What we do*. Our seamless therapeutic approach' policy
- our published curriculum and assessment documents
- curriculum plans
- our Key Stage 4 curriculum booklet.

Last external review	October 2025
Next external review	October 2026
Latest update	January 2026

OUR PUPILS

- Every pupil at Octavia House Schools has an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) for their social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties, most of which are borne out of their adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). A significant proportion of our pupils have additional special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), conduct disorder (CD) and autistic spectrum condition (ASC).

OUR SEAMLESS THERAPEUTIC APPROACH

- As therapeutic schools, therapy is at the heart of everything we do. All colleagues work seamlessly together to teach and proactively support pupils who have endured (and continue to endure) adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), including trauma, toxic stress and associated mental health difficulties. As well as the range of therapies offered to pupils on a pupil-by-pupil basis, therapists work seamlessly in class alongside teachers, deliver small group sessions and workshops and work collaboratively, raising awareness of ACEs and associated needs and to ensure that the full curriculum offer is accessible to all pupils.

- The range of therapies at Octavia House Schools are offered on both a structured and self-referral basis across the school sites to all pupils identified as needing them. They are timetabled flexibly, sensitively and effectively so as to maximise engagement and progress. They are crucial elements of pupils' curricula and not 'bolt-ons' or 'distractions' from 'real lessons'. Counselling, canine therapy, play therapy, dramatherapy, music therapy, art therapy, occupational therapy and speech & language therapy are all available to enable pupils to overcome their complex social, emotional, behavioural and psychological needs.

- The curriculum is carefully adapted to meet class and individual needs and to accommodate the various therapies offered. We have to be extremely flexible in our timetabling, school day timings and use of adult support.

- The curriculum is underpinned by our values-centred curriculum which permeates our assembly programme, our personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme, our daily reflection sessions and the conversations colleagues have with pupils.

WHAT WE TEACH

- We provide an ambitious specialist curriculum, which broadly follows the national curriculum.

- Our therapeutic curriculum model comprises personalised therapy and specialist personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) and spiritual, moral,

social and cultural (SMSC) education. This is complemented by a broad, rich academic curriculum which ensures that all pupils learn linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education, in accordance with 2(2)(a) of the independent school standards.

- In addition to our specialist curriculum, our qualified subject experts teach English, mathematics, science, computing, PSHE (which includes Relationships, sex and health (RSH) education), history, geography, design and technology, art and design, and physical education. These are taught at all key stages.

- We also provide pupils with experience of music and modern foreign languages as an extra-curricular activity, and celebrate modern foreign languages and a range of music, cultures and traditions throughout the academic year.

- Our curriculum maximises use of both curricular and extra-curricular time. A wide range of mandatory extra-curricular clubs are timetabled daily after curriculum time. Curriculum time is therefore protected, and rarely affected by enrichment or reward activities. We actively avoid removing pupils from protected curriculum time for 'interventions'. Where this is necessary, it is carefully timetabled to avoid repetition of the same subject being missed out on.

- All subjects are taught discretely and sequentially but where possible, some subjects are taught through a thematic and connected approach from Key Stages 1–3.

- Our curriculum model enables pupils' learning to be developed sequentially over time, where learning builds on from one learning phase to another. From Key Stages 1–3, using our assessment framework, subjects follow a cyclical and progressive scheme of work, written in age-related expectations and learning phases. At Key Stage 4, subjects and pathways follow specifications at either Entry Level, Functional Skills, NCFE or GCSE level. These ensure that the national curriculum expectations and qualification specifications are covered, and pupils' 'next steps' are identified and taught. It also ensures that pupils are well prepared for Key Stage 4 and post-16.

- Teachers have real flexibility to adapt their planning to meet the needs of the very complex and challenging pupils whom they know and understand very well.

- Our focus is facilitating quality opportunities for pupils to learn and make progress. Long and medium-term curriculum planning overviews are written for each topic, subject and pathway at Key Stages 1–4. These then combine into weekly planning overviews for all subjects, topics and pathways. Weekly overviews are designed to minimise the time spent typing up planning so that

teachers can get dedicate more time to planning and resourcing outstanding lessons. These plans are always available on the school's shared drive in the teachers' planning folder. Pupils' learning is evaluated on a daily basis and planning amended accordingly, so as to plan for real progression.

- Lessons, and the effective use of lesson time, are of paramount importance to the pupils and teachers at OHS. Any resources used within a lesson or any media shown is related to curriculum content: this includes the use of video clips, music or films, which are be age-appropriate, relevant and related to the academic curriculum. Electronic activities that do not further learning, such as games consoles, are not used for educational purposes.

- Regular school trips, visitors, workshops and extra-curricular activities (such as football, swimming, boxing, arts & crafts, cooking, music, languages and visits to local farms, climbing centres, Forest Schools, local museums, libraries and Black Prince Trust Sports Centre, London) are some of the different ways in which we enrich our curriculum to meet the needs of our pupils. We run a timetable of extra-curricular clubs, in order to ensure that all pupils have equal access to extra-curricular activities and are able to experience a wide range of creative, practical and sports-based activities.

- Across Key Stages 1–2, all pupils take part in daily, discrete phonics sessions, where they are grouped according to ability, or guided reading. The school uses relevant writing and reading resources adapted from the synthetic phonics programme Read Write Inc. in order to ensure that achievement in reading and writing is accelerated. Pupils who have completed the RWI programme, access daily guided reading lessons planned and assessed against our reading milestones.

- All parts of the school day, including breakfast and morning exercise, breaktimes, lunchtimes, assembly and extra-curricular activities are seen as opportunities to deliver the curriculum, especially SMSC. There is no 'pupils go out for break or lunch'; breaktimes and lunchtimes have to be structured and community activities (including eating together) are again fundamental elements of our curriculum.

- At Octavia House Schools, the Key Stage 4 curriculum offer includes career pathways. Depending on their abilities and interests, pupils study core subjects leading to functional skills and/or GCSE and NCFE qualifications, as well as one of the following career pathways for which we aspire to provide work experience placements:

  - NCFE Creative Craft (Construction and Art & Design)
  - Pearson GCSE Art and Design
  - NCFE Certificate in Food and Cookery Skills
  - NCFE Certificate in Sport
  - NCFE Interactive Media
  - NCFE Music Technology.

The core curriculum includes:

- GCSEs or Functional Skills in English, mathematics and science
- NCFE award in ICT
- NCFE award in personal and social development
- Entry-level certificate in science and humanities
- Non-accredited PE.

Whether pupils study either the Functional Skills or GCSE pathway is dependent on:

1. pupils' cognitive ability and assessment at the end of Key Stage 3 and baseline assessment at the beginning of Key Stage 4

2. transition discussions between teachers, therapists and leaders

3. transition discussions with the pupil and their family.

All pupils new to Octavia House Schools will receive in their first term a speech and language assessment and an occupational therapy assessment if necessary. In addition, a parent interview will be held in which we ascertain:

1. whether there have been or are currently any visual or hearing needs. If this is the case, we will support parents in attending necessary appointments

2. vital information regarding adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), which will inform subsequent interventions

3. past and present professional involvement and their input with the family.

QUALITY OF CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNING

Pupils learn in many different ways and our pupils are particularly complex because their behaviour tends to have been a barrier to them making the progress and achievement they should have made in the past. They generally arrive with a history of poor attendance, placement gaps and a multitude of exclusions from school, and have therefore missed (often hugely significant) periods of education. As a result of this, they also often arrive with us with low self-esteem and a feeling of failure. This is often compounded by them having not been allowed to stay with friends in their mainstream school or larger referral unit, and feeling negatively about being placed permanently in a special school. Our job as educationalists is therefore a significant challenge but one that is faced with enthusiasm and energy. We achieve this in a number of ways.

- We teach using precise learning objectives with a diverse range of learning tasks and strategies borne out of in-depth knowledge of our pupils.

- Where appropriate, we use 'cold' (pre) tasks to check for prior understanding and plenaries to check that our pupils have fully understood the objective of the lesson, and if they haven't, we adapt our plans and spend time with pupils to ensure they do, before moving on.

- We plan and teach in reference to pupil's assessment trackers and pupils' progress plans which identify pupils' next steps (targets) in learning.

- We ensure the best possible environment for learning by developing a positive atmosphere in which pupils 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 ensure that teaching and curriculum builds on previous learning through a learning sequence and that constant praise, engaging learning tasks and positive use of our behaviour system keeps pupils motivated.

- We ensure learning tasks are varied and tailored to individuals, and include investigation and problem-solving tasks, ICT and use of interactive whiteboards, debates, role-plays, design and making activities, critical thinking tasks and time for reflecting on our learning. Pupils work in a variety of ways – in groups, pairs, with the whole class or independently, depending on the task and the individual.

- We encourage pupils 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. They are involved in setting targets, which they work towards each term, and teachers ensure that pupils' interests and suggestions are incorporated into the curriculum as much as possible.

- Pupils engage in self-assessment throughout lessons and use a traffic light system to enable to communicate to the teacher how far they felt they achieved the learning objective and success criteria in the course of a lesson or task. At Key Stage 4, pupils engage in regular editing and improving tasks, whereby feedback from the teacher is responded to. In this way, pupils can feel in control of their own learning and teachers are able to use this feedback in order to probe thinking or even inform their planning for subsequent lessons.

- We ensure our classrooms are attractive learning environments. We change displays every term so that the classroom reflects the subject themes and current topics and use achievement walls to celebrate pupils' learning and achievement by displaying their writing and mathematics work. We also use learning walls to scaffold and support learning. We believe that a stimulating yet calm environment sets the climate for learning, and that a stimulating and organised classroom promotes focus and independent use of resources, which results in high-quality learning.

- Teachers receive regular continuing professional development on subject pedagogy from the national curriculum, effective teaching & learning and curriculum development in the form of CPD and subject link meetings.

- Leaders and members of the quality and standards committee monitor the quality of education through our own internal monitoring and evaluation system, learning walks, lesson observations, workbook scrutiny, workbook standardisations and moderations, pupil achievement meetings, pupil and teacher interviews.

- We believe that parents & carers have a fundamental role to play in helping pupils learn which is why we have three family days where families can meet teachers to discuss their child's progress, achievement and pupil progress plans (PPP).

- At Key Stage 4, our pupils in Years 10 and 11 experience a bespoke, 'further-education feel' learning experience. Spending around a third of their time on their 'career pathway', pupils from age 14 begin to experience the world of work and learn skills that will provide aspiration for a productive future rather than being entirely classroom-based working on written qualifications (where possible, their work experience placements are linked to their chosen career pathway). Every learning activity undertaken, however, is accredited – so pupils will be prepared for their next step (training, apprenticeship, employment, further education) with a credible set of qualifications and experience.

- All teaching is unbiased and balanced. Teachers know that they must never promote partisan political views in the teaching of any subject. Where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils, teachers always offer pupils a balanced presentation of opposing views.

- We ensure that our pupils receive a high quality of education even under exceptional circumstances. Where it is necessary to close sites (for reasons such as, but not limited to, polling days or extreme weather), teachers provide online learning to pupils through Google classroom, ensuring – as much as possible – continuity in the quality and consistency of provision.

CURRICULUM SUBJECTS

English, including early reading, reading and writing

Our pupils have missed out on crucial parts of their education as a result of exclusion, isolation and lack of support. It is up to us to facilitate their accelerated achievement in their phonics, reading and writing despite the multiple challenges they face. With this in mind, we provide:

- daily, differentiated English sessions for all pupils focus on shared and guided reading and writing, word and sentence level skills and extended writing.

Teachers are all trained in Talk for Writing techniques which explore both narrative and non-narrative texts, using drama techniques to bring texts and ideas to life

- embedded and explicit teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar in order to provide pupils with the opportunity to develop the basic skills of writing

- daily, discrete phonics sessions using resources adapted from the Read, Write, Inc. synthetic phonics and reading scheme for Key Stages 1 and 2

- additional reading sessions, such as guided reading for pupils in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 (Read, Write Inc. or reading VIPERS (vocabulary, infer, predict, explain, retrieve & sequence) a tool devised by literacy shed based on the National Curriculum) along with a specified, appropriately challenging book from the reading schemes we use (Oxford Reading Tree/Project X). Alongside these, we have a large collection of texts for reluctant older readers.

- Pupils in Key Stages 1 & 2 are grouped for phonics according to their reading ability, in order to ensure that the needs of every pupil are met and that progress in reading and writing is accelerated.

- Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils who have not discontinued phonics will access the Fresh Start programme. An individualised plan will be developed to support continued progression in phonics at the secondary site(s).

- To ensure that **all** teachers have a secure understanding of pupils' phonics knowledge, and can support access to learning across subjects, staff will share information regularly. For example, the reading lead chairs a termly meeting with staff, and during these meetings, individual pupils' phonics progress are reviewed.

- Pupils who need additional one-to-one or group intervention (our lowest 20% of pupils) access this with a teacher.

- Pupils have access to a variety of engaging fiction and non-fiction texts in their classrooms and libraries at our primary and secondary sites. The teaching of writing encompasses a wide range of genres, both fiction and non-fiction, which prepare pupils for later life (for example writing reports, recounts and letters).

- Primary pupils and secondary aged pupils at an early stage of reading take appropriately challenging reading books home (including having access to eBooks online) to read with their family, where appropriate. Parents & carers are encouraged to read as much as possible with their children and to visit libraries.

- Teachers can set weekly literacy tasks for homework which extend and consolidate the learning that has taken place in class.

- Achievement in reading and writing is celebrated, for example, in celebration assemblies using 'special mentions' or 'headteacher awards'.

- Reading is given a high profile across all subjects, and cross-curricular opportunities to develop reading skills are planned throughout the week, including visiting local libraries. Strong links are also made between reading and subjects such as science, history and geography.

- Next steps for reading and writing are set using pupils' assessment trackers, which identify any knowledge and skill gaps. These are communicated verbally and/or in books.

- We believe that neat, well-formed handwriting and the presentation of written work helps to raise standards. Pupils should take pride and have a sense of ownership in their work. Handwriting is taught regularly through short, focused sessions and may be linked with other areas, e.g. spelling, grammar and phonics. We use a recognised handwriting scheme, Nelson Handwriting, to support the development of pupils' handwriting and fine motor skills.

- At Key Stage 4 and depending on their core pathway, pupils in Years 10 and 11 work towards Functional Skills or GCSE qualifications in English.

Mathematics

Pupils arrive with us displaying varying degrees of competency in mathematics and often have huge gaps in their knowledge of basic concepts due to disrupted periods of schooling. With this in mind, we provide:

- daily, discrete maths lessons which follow our internal schemes of work, based on the national curriculum aims, (focusing on mastery of concepts) but consider each pupil's unique starting points

- high quality, practical resources which help maths to 'come alive' for our pupils. Teachers strive to present each new skill within a practical context that has relevance for our pupils. For example, measuring may be taught through the medium of cooking and food technology or probability may be taught in the context of a favourite football team's predicted performance

- Numicon which is used with pupils in order to help develop a secure number concept and support the acquisition of early maths skills. Counting, ordering, addition and subtraction are all taught using this multisensory resource, which also supports our pupils who have different sensory needs

- displays in classrooms which support and scaffold pupils' knowledge of maths concepts. Mathematics prompts on learning walls in classes reflect the

current maths unit being taught. Other displays in classes (such as multiplication tables) help to immerse pupils in a number rich environment

- regular problem-solving activities are planned by teachers in order to provide pupils with the opportunity to apply their maths skills in different contexts, and begin to develop abilities for higher order thinking

- weekly core skills activities are planned by teachers in order to provide pupils with the opportunity to develop calculation strategies and place value and number knowledge

- mathematics homework tasks give pupils the opportunity to consolidate their learning at home using different tools, such as MyMaths and Times Table Rockstars

- a variety of interactive resources to help pupils to learn and cement complex maths concepts. Online teaching tools, such as MyMaths, are used, where appropriate, to offer pupils the opportunity to master mathematical skills

- At Key Stage 4 and depending on their core pathway, pupils in Years 10 and 11 work towards Functional Skills or GCSE qualifications in mathematics

Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and spiritual, moral, social & cultural (SMSC) development

- Our PSHE and SMSC education is designed to support pupils' social, emotional, behavioural and educational development. Both teachers and therapists 'work as one' to facilitate the holistic development of pupils, including their emotional and mental wellbeing. Because of this, pupils can learn and play effectively.

- Developing our pupils' social skills and teaching them about healthy living, preparing them for life in modern Britain and enabling them to make positive life choices is of considerable importance.

- One weekly formal lesson of PSHE education is not enough in a school setting such as ours, which is why we have an embedded values-centred curriculum, regular whole school or classroom values-based assemblies and family lunchtimes. We also carefully connect PSHE education and pupils' SMSC development across the curriculum, with both teachers and therapists, playing an active role in this.

- As well as offering all pupils therapy and fulfilling the objectives in our tailored schemes of work at all key stages, we aim to develop all pupils':

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT (S)

- ability to be reflective about themselves

- use of imagination and creativity in their learning
- willingness to reflect on their experiences.

MORAL DEVELOPMENT (M)

- understanding of right and wrong
- respect for the rule of law in modern Britain
- understanding of the consequences of their behaviour and actions.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (S)

- use of a range of social skills in different contexts
- willingness to participate, cooperating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively
- understanding of & engagement with the fundamental British values of democracy, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (C)

- understanding and appreciation of the range of different cultures, faiths within school, in London and in the United Kingdom
- knowledge of Britain's democratic parliamentary system
- positive participation to artistic, sporting and cultural opportunities
- improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity.

We teach values across the school year as part of a values-centred curriculum:

- form the basis for daily, weekly and termly assemblies
- form the basis for learning conversations around the school
- contribute to the planning and content of discrete PSHE education lessons
- link closely with British values.

We provide reflection time on a daily basis as a tool to focus on the social and emotional aspects of learning as well as many of the elements of our PSHE education/values curriculum.

We teach PSHE education formally at least three times per week across the key stages, with lessons including discrete SMSC lessons and discrete careers sessions at Key Stages 3–4. The lessons follow adapted national statutory guidance, including our whole-school values curriculum which focuses on:

- developing our confidence and making the most of our abilities, including setting ourselves goals and celebrating achievements
- preparing to play an active role as citizens and developing our awareness of the importance of the communities to which we belong
- developing a healthy, safe lifestyle and knowing how to stay safe online

- developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people
- we formally teach online safety to pupils of all ages across our schools, according to age and ability. Please also see our online safety policy.

We formally teach PSHE education to all pupils on a very regular basis which focuses on the following areas:

- the development of social skills including managing anger and emotions, building relationships, dealing with conflict and making positive choices, including online as part of e-safety education

- the development of anti-discriminatory understanding including knowledge and understanding of bullying, cyber-bullying, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and religious tolerance

- preparation for life in modern Britain and knowledge of fundamental British value, including cultural diversity, mutual respect, the rule of law including marriage and forced marriage, democracy, right & wrong, consequences and the range of faiths, religions, values in Britain including the protected characteristics

- providing opportunities for reflection, thinking, discussion and formal argument

- helping our community, supporting charities, and helping others

- linking with curriculum-wide trips which aim to develop pupils' understanding and experience of the world including artistic, religious, cultural and sport

- linking with our community police officers who visit regularly to lead assemblies and PSHE education sessions

- personal health and how to stay healthy with specific focus on nutrition and exercise

- the development of the understanding of risk and keeping safe in everyday life, including online, and knowledge about and preventing knife crime and first-aid training

- an understanding of the world of business and consumers through enterprise projects and fundraising for projects and/or charities.

Carefully planned and differentiated activities ensure that all pupils begin to view and understand themselves in the context of wider society, in a structured and supportive way.

In addition, our PSHE education curriculum also ensures that pupils have the opportunity to:

- contribute to our community through activities, such as raising money for local charities and national causes

- learn about public institutions and services in England (for example, the royal family, government, national health service, fire service, the police)

- develop an understanding of the importance of tolerance and equality whilst challenging prejudice and discrimination. We teach specific lessons which promote tolerance of different family structures and recognise that whilst not everyone's families are the same, they should all be respected and valued as part of an inclusive school community

- use morning time (breakfast and exercise), breaks (time for healthy snacks & water), lunchtimes (family style service in each class) and extra-curricular time to learn and practise personal skills including turn-taking, sharing and making positive and healthy choices

- access workshops and sessions on the importance of staying safe and healthy, for example workshops on knife crime and the dangers of knife crime, drug and alcohol awareness which explore the dangers surrounding tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs, and basic first aid.

An accredited NCFE award in personal and social development reflects a more formal approach to PSHE education at Key Stage 4.

For Relationships, sex and health (RSH) education and, please see our separate Healthy Living policy.

FUNDAMENTAL BRITISH VALUES STRATEGY

At Octavia House Schools, fundamental British values are taught explicitly and embedded across the curriculum and wider school day. In line with our therapeutic and values-centred approach, pupils are supported to understand and apply democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

These values are delivered through PSHE education, SMSC development, our values curriculum which is featured in weekly assemblies, reflection sessions, therapeutic work, classroom practice and enrichment opportunities. They are also promoted through structured social times, including breakfast, breaktimes, lunchtimes and extra-curricular activities. More specifically:

Democracy is developed through opportunities for pupils to express views, participate in discussion and contribute to decision-making during lessons, pupil voice meetings, ECO meetings, and form time. Pupils also learn about public institutions and the democratic system in England through lessons, trips and visiting speakers.

The rule of law is reinforced through clear expectations, consistent routines and explicit teaching about rules, consequences and right and wrong, supported by the PSHE and humanities curriculum, and external input, such as safer schools officers.

Individual liberty is supported through helping pupils to make informed choices, understand risk, develop independence and regulate their behaviour (through co-regulation), underpinned by therapeutic practice and careers advice.

Mutual respect is promoted through daily interactions, the values-centred curriculum and explicit teaching around relationships, cooperation and conflict resolution. Staff always demonstrate how we respectfully put relationships at the heart of what we do.

Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs is developed through PSHE, SMSC, assemblies, curriculum content and wider experiences. Pupils are taught about different cultures, faiths, family structures and protected characteristics, and are supported to challenge discrimination.

While all colleagues actively promote fundamental British values through their daily practice, **Heads of School** have strategic oversight of this area. They work closely with site SMSC leads, PSHE teachers, the PSHE lead, therapists and lead therapists to ensure a coherent and consistent approach across each site. This includes drawing on pupil voice, therapeutic insight and curriculum monitoring to review impact, identify themes and inform ongoing development of provision, learning walks, lesson observations, work scrutiny and pupil voice.

REGULAR, IMPARTIAL CAREERS INFORMATION, ADVICE & GUIDANCE

- Careers guidance is a planned aspect of the PSHE education curriculum for all pupils, focusing on the range of career opportunities, suitable roles related to skills, qualifications and experiences, goals, next steps and raising aspirations – which links to our values-centred curriculum. Pupils at Key Stage 4 also study careers-focused units as part of our accredited study of personal and social development, including a unit on setting goals.

- Secondary-aged pupils receive impartial careers information, advice and guidance from an external, impartial commissioned provider, Directions. It is an especial focus for all Key Stage 4 pupils.

- Pupils at Key Stage 3, access careers advice three times a year from external, impartial and suitably qualified careers advisors.

- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have one-to-ones three times per academic year with external, impartial and suitably qualified careers advisors. These sessions focus on post-16 options, CV-writing, application and interview preparations for

colleges, apprenticeships and jobs, and support with the applications process itself.

- At Octavia House Schools, heads of school at Key Stage 4 have the additional responsibility for preparing pupils for 'life after school'. S/he liaises closely with external agencies, including our externally commissioned careers advisor.

- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 access regular additional careers experiences. For example, speakers from a range of careers visit to speak to pupils. Pupils may also attend careers fairs at universities and other settings.
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 access work experience placements on a case-by-case basis

Science

- Our science curriculum provides the foundations for understanding the world through the disciplines of biology, chemistry and physics.

- Science at Key Stages 1–3 covers the national curriculum aims and content and all science programmes of study. Programmes of study are repeated annually and are sequenced carefully to enable pupils to build on prior knowledge and skills.

- We teach science at least once a week across all key stages. Our science specialists teach all science lessons at secondary whilst at primary, class teachers teach science with expert support from the subject specialists.

Computing

- Our computing curriculum equips pupils for the digital world. Pupils are taught the principles of information and computation, how digital systems work, and how to put this knowledge to use through programming. Building on this knowledge and understanding, pupils use information technology to create programs, systems and a range of content. Computing also ensures that pupils become digitally literate, and learn how to use modern technology and the internet safely and effectively. All pupils are also taught about the importance of online safety once a year, every year, paying active regard to KCSIE's 4Cs: content, contact, conduct and commerce. Computing at Key Stages 1–3 prepares pupils well for Key Stage 4 study, including NCFE IT User Skills and those pupils who wish to study NCFE Interactive Media.

- Computing at Key Stages 1–3 covers the national curriculum aims and content. Curriculum content is repeated annually and builds on prior knowledge and skills.

- At Key Stages 1–3, we teach computing once a week. Our computing specialist teaches computing across all key stages and supports other teachers of computing.

- All pupils have access to Chromebooks and iPads. At Key Stage 4, computing is facilitated in a modern multi-media suite (including a modern recording studio at our Kennington school).

Physical Education (PE)

- Our PE curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to become physically confident in a way that supports their health and fitness. Opportunities to compete in sport and other activities build character and help to embed values such as fairness and respect. PE at Key Stages 1–3 prepares pupils well for Key Stage 4 and for those pupils wishing to study NCFE Sport.

- PE at Key Stages 1–3 covers the national curriculum aims and content. Curriculum content is repeated annually through different sports and builds on prior knowledge and skills.

- At Key Stages 1–3, PE is taught twice a week by our PE specialists, some of who teach across all key stages.

Art, design and technology

- Our creative curriculum equips pupils with the knowledge and skills to experiment, invent and create their own works of art, craft and design. Pupils are also able to use practical skills, creativity and imagination, to design and make works and products that solve real and relevant problems. Art, design and technology at Key Stages 1–3 prepares pupils well for those pupils wishing to study creative craft: construction or art and design at Key Stage 4.

- Art, design and technology at Key Stages 1–3 covers the national curriculum aims and content for art and design and design and technology. Curriculum content is repeated annually and projects build on prior knowledge and skills.

- We teach art, design and technology once a week across Key Stages 1–3. Our art, design and technology specialist teaches art, design and technology lessons at secondary whilst at primary, class teachers teach art, design and technology with expert support from the subject specialist.

- Pupils at secondary are also taught in our specialist craft workshops.

Cooking and catering

- At Key Stages 1–3, pupils are taught how to cook and learn about nutrition and healthy eating. Learning how to cook is a crucial life skill that enables pupils to feed themselves and others now and in later life. We instil a love of cooking in pupils across Key Stages 1–3, preparing those wishing to study our NCFE catering courses at Key Stage 4.

- Cooking and nutrition at Key Stages 1–3 covers the national curriculum aims and content within design and technology. Curriculum content is repeated annually and food dishes and themes build on prior knowledge and skills.

- At Key Stages 1–2, we teach cooking and nutrition for a term, once a year, every year, and at Key Stage 3, pupils have access to our professional kitchens on a carousel as part of their design and technology curriculum. Class teachers teach cooking and nutrition at Key Stages 1–2 and our expert chefs teach catering to all secondary-aged pupils. They provide pupils with professional experience of learning and working in our industrial kitchen, including involving pupils in the preparation of healthy, hot lunches.

Humanities

- Our humanities curriculum is divided into two strands: history and geography.

- Our schools' values, incorporating British values, are also covered through geography and history topics, such as the history of democracy in Britain and the rules and laws through our 'Crime and Punishment' topic.

- Humanities at Key Stages 1–3 covers the national curriculum aims and content. Curriculum content is repeated annually for geography, and both subjects are sequenced carefully to enable pupils to build on prior knowledge and skills. Our history curriculum is ordered chronologically through time.

- At Key Stages 1–3, we teach humanities as weekly, separate geography and history lessons. Our humanities specialists teach all of humanities at secondary and at primary, class teachers teach humanities with expert support from our subject specialists.

HOW CURRICULUM SUBJECTS ARE MONITORED

- Leaders oversee the monitoring of the overall quality of education across our schools. Subjects are monitored through learning walks, lesson observations, workbook scrutiny, workbook moderations and pupil and teacher discussions.

- All subjects are externally scrutinised by members of the quality and standards committee as part of our annual quality checks. These focus on the expertise of subject specialists, the sequencing of curriculum plans, the quality and regularity of professional development for teachers and the pupils' learning experience.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- For English, mathematics, PSHE education, humanities, art, design & technology and science our subject specialists, along with relevant leaders and learning leads, coordinate CPD subject link meetings across all key stages throughout the year including training days.

- All teachers who teach reading and writing access external periodic Read Write Inc. and Talk for Writing training, as well as regular in-house training from learning leads.

- Our specialist teachers access CPD through external training providers and collaborate and link with each other across sites (schools) and key stages. Where subjects are taught by non-specialists, for example PSHE education at primary, our learning lead will lead on subject link meetings and CPD for non-specialists.

ASSESSMENT

At OHS, all pupils have an EHCP for their SEMH needs. As a result, it is likely that their learning journey has been disrupted due to a variety of factors including the need to learn self-regulation and anxiety-induced absence anxiety. To counter this, the curriculum content and assessment model is based on our internal schemes of work but differentiated based on pupil need. Over the years, we have collected ample data from our pupils allowing us to generate our own set of assessment parameters based on national curriculum expectations.

Learning phases

Pupils at OHS are largely in mixed-year classes and are grouped into three learning phases:

- **Phase 1**: Chronological age expectations of 6 and 7 years olds.

- **Phase 2**: Chronological age expectations of 8, 9, 10 and 11 years olds.

- **Phase 3**: Chronological age expectations of 12, 13 and 14 years olds.

To assess pupil progress within these phases, we use our own assessment framework; this system enables us to personalise each pupil's achievement. We encourage pupils and their families to consider progress a journey through the learning phases. In this way, we celebrate achievement and success with every pupil, regardless of whether they are working at age-related expectations or below.

Pupil progress and assessment

- Throughout the year, pupils produce a range of evidence for assessment including their workbooks, photographs and recorded commentaries from their teachers.

- In order to ascertain pupil progress, three times a year, teachers assess steps of progress in all subjects using pupils' individual assessment trackers.

- Teachers collaborate after each data entry to moderate internally.

- We avoid using terms that can be perceived negatively as we value and celebrate pupils' progress. Therefore, progress made by pupils will be categorised as 'off track', 'on track' and 'exceeding'.

- Pupils progress is measured from their individual starting points and using teacher judgement, who know their pupils exceptionally well.

Follow-up

- Following analysis at pupil progress meetings, leaders and teachers will be made aware of the list of pupils who are 'off track' in their learning.

- Teachers, under the guidance of learning leads and leaders, are expected to plan follow-up support for pupils including, but not limited to, more conscious universal class provision; in-lesson differentiated support; target group teaching (such as specific phonics groups); withdrawal from lessons for work with specialists; precision teach; and specific subject 'intervention groups.'

Examinations

Examinations at Key Stage 4 are conducted throughout the year at various points:

TERM	ASSESSMENT
1 (October)	Functional Skills practice
2 (December)	**Functional Skills examinations**
3 (February)	Functional Skills practice
4 (April)	**Functional Skills examinations**
5 (May/June) National	**Y11 GCSE examinations**
	Functional Skills practice
6 (July)	**Functional Skills examinations for Y9, Y10 & resits for Y11**

Identifying pupils' starting points (baseline)

- Pupils often arrive at Octavia House Schools with a very mixed assessment profile, some come with a lot of assessment data, some with very little or none at all that is relevant or up-to-date. It is very often unreliable data (for a multitude of reasons).

- We assess pupils over their first terms with us and assign them a starting point milestone (SPM) for core subjects and foundation curriculum subjects. The SPM is recorded in the first assessment point after class teachers and learning leads have had chance to robustly assess pupils after the pupils join. These starting point milestones are moderated by leaders.

- We immediately begin gathering evidence of work across the curriculum in order to track the pupil's achievement and to provide personalised learning tasks and developmental targets that support academic achievement.

- During their transition term and first term at Key Stage 4, pupils in Years 10 and 11 will be baselined using summative and formative assessments to determine their starting points and to set meaningful English and mathematics targets using the GCSE 9-1 scale and Functional Skills grading criteria. For all other subjects, pupils will be baselined using a range of assessments in their chosen qualification areas (the grading for which will depend on the qualification e.g. levels of progress towards a pass, merit and distinction in NCFE qualifications). However, our SEMH tracking continues through to the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11) – new pupils joining in Year 10 will, therefore, be baselined using these milestone grids as at all other school sites. These are always moderated with oversight from leaders.

Marking pupils' work

- Marking and feedback is the *dialogue* that takes place between teacher and learner, in order to ensure that learning objectives are met and that pupils are secure in their knowledge. At Octavia House Schools, this is mainly in the form of oral feedback.

- The process of marking and offering feedback is positive and marked in a positive colour (green).

- At Key Stages 1–3, pupils' work is corrected on a daily basis and teachers annotate work to indicate the level of support given to the pupil, using a consistent code ('I' for independent work, 'AA' for adult assisted work).

- At Key Stage 1–3, pupils participate in self-assessment of their work through a simple 'red, amber, green' traffic light system, which they mark in their

books at the end of each lesson. At Key Stage 4, pupils engage in regular editing and improving tasks, set by the subject teacher.

We ensure that:

- marking happens while the learning phase is in progress, there and then. This could be in the form of verbal feedback, or even written
- whenever possible, marking and feedback involves the pupil directly, there and then, or after completion while the work is still fresh in the pupil's mind
- ticks are used where work is correct, and dots where errors have been made. Other symbols may be used once their meaning has been explained (see the marking schemes below)
- if a comment is made, they are appropriate to the age and ability of the pupil and focus on the most significant strength and weakness for improvement, at any one time
- wherever possible, teachers establish direct links between oral or written praise and the class or school rewards systems
- when self or peer assessment has been undertaken (i.e. pupils may mark their own or another pupil's work) the teacher always reviews this marking
- spelling and grammar are only marked if it forms part of the lesson's objective, if it's an area of spelling or grammar the pupil should absolutely know, or if it's an area related to one of their targets on their progress plan. Otherwise, if every spelling is circled and identified as 'wrong', the pupil is likely to be demotivated every time they receive feedback. A recommendation of a maximum of three different spellings, which are highlighted using a green highlighter, is deemed suitable if absolutely necessary.

Key stage 4

- At Key Stage 4, marking is bespoke for the subject being taught and specialists' professionalism takes priority - a catering and hospitality teacher is rightly likely to take a different approach to an English teacher. However, there is consistency in so much that feedback to pupils must be high-quality, regular and accurately recorded in books, folders, or electronically. All colleagues are as responsible for pupils' rapid achievement in all their chosen and core subjects and in emotional wellbeing as at all other school sites.

Marking schemes

A copy of the marking schemes (see English and mathematics (Key Stage 1–4) below) and PSD/Science (Key Stage 4 only) must be stuck on the inside cover of both workbooks. This allows pupils an opportunity to regularly familiarise themselves

with the marking scheme.

What does my Mathematics feedback mean?

What does my English feedback mean?

HOMEWORK

Pupils receive extended learning tasks in core subjects, such as work set on Google Classroom or other digital platforms like MyMaths, which they are encouraged to complete on a weekly basis.

In addition, we also ask that families:

- read with their child as often as possible (hearing children read as well as reading to them are both really helpful)
- support their child with extended learning tasks by providing, wherever

possible, online access and a quiet space to work.

Pupils who consistently complete their homework are rewarded as part of the schools' behaviour system.

PUPILS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL)

- English is best learnt through the curriculum and pupils with EAL should be encouraged to play a full part in all learning opportunities. Pupils with EAL make the best progress within a whole-school context, where pupils are educated with their peers

- We support pupils with EAL through planning differentiated tasks during lessons, offering focused vocabulary support and also provide targeted literacy support on a 1:1 basis if this is appropriate. In addition, we ensure that our classrooms are vocabulary rich and that classroom displays reflect and support the current learning topics in order to reinforce new vocabulary.

- Pupils with EAL are supported through the use of Flash Academy, which provides structured language development across reading, writing, speaking and listening. The platform is used to assess pupils' English proficiency, deliver personalised learning pathways and track progress over time, enabling targeted support and informed teaching.

Assessment

Pupils' EAL levels are assessed through the Flash Academy portal. Based on their individual proficiency levels, pupils are provided with personalised learning plans. They progress through the EAL proficiency levels (A: New to English; B: Early Acquisition; C: Developing Competence; D: Competent; E: Fluent).

Teaching and learning

Teachers can help pupils learning English as an additional language in a variety of ways:

- by planning differentiated work for pupils with EAL if necessary

- by setting appropriate expectations; encouraging pupils to contribute and give more than one-word answers

- by monitoring progress carefully and ensuring that pupils with EAL are set appropriate and challenging learning objectives

- recognising that pupils with EAL may need more time to process answers

- ensuring that there are effective opportunities for talking, and that talking is used to support writing

- encouraging pupils to transfer their knowledge, skills and understanding of one language to another.

Access and support

- All pupils will follow the full school curriculum
- Pupils with EAL may be supported by an additional professional in the classroom, such as a SaLT or another qualified teacher
- Only where absolutely necessary, withdrawal support may take place.

Beginner pupils with EAL

It takes 1–2 years to become fluent in everyday spoken English, but 5–7 years to develop proficiency in formal, written English. We aim for all pupils with EAL to:

- immediately feel part of our school community
- develop language in context
- experience their full curriculum entitlement.

Additional support in class and some small group literacy teaching will be beneficial in the early stages, although pupils should not necessarily be withdrawn from mathematics or practical subjects where they can usually make good progress whatever their language level in English. In order to further support beginner pupils with EAL, we:

- provide a classroom rich in oral experiences
- enable pupils to draw on their existing knowledge of other language/s
- encourage and use bilingual support from other pupils and teachers, where available
- use translated materials and bilingual dictionaries
- use visual support of all kinds (diagrams, maps, charts, pictures)
- develop card sorting, sequencing and matching activities.