Curriculum Policy

To be read in conjunction with:

- Assessment Policy
- Accessibility Policy
- Equality of Opportunity Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Careers Education and Guidance Policy
- Marking and Feedback Policy
- SMSC Policy

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Introduction

Smallbrook School is a Day School for boys and girls aged 7 to 18 who exhibit a range of complex needs that may include communication difficulties, social, emotional and mental health needs and pupils who have been diagnosed with autism or demonstrate behaviours associated with autism. Pupils are placed from a wide range of local authorities, and they all have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Before joining our school and because of their behavioural and emotional difficulties and/or associated learning needs many have been unable to access an educational curriculum effectively. The majority of our students have, for many different reasons, had a negative experience of education due to their needs not being fully met or even understood. Our school has an extensive successful track record of reengaging students where others have failed.

Each student has a high level of support with groups of up to five often with TA support. All staff are regularly planning and reviewing how to meet the individual needs of our students, and this is coordinated through our curriculum leaders and pastoral team. Our curriculum gives students access to their most appropriate academic, practical or physical courses. Understanding what an individual's next steps are and using them to set achievable goals and not overwhelm is at the heart of what we do. Through this approach our students make excellent progress towards ambitious academic targets. Our curriculum is designed to ensure that all students experience a high-quality, and inclusive education that enables them to make strong progress academically, socially, and emotionally. Our curriculum structure, planning processes, and quality assurance systems ensure that every student is supported to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Our school site houses an extensive vocational offer, allowing students to specialise in their chosen vocational field.

Many of our students struggle to emotionally regulate themselves. Our staff build strong, positive relationships with our students which put them at ease and enable them to learn. We listen to our students, their parents and carers, and develop individual support plans that lead to them having successful days in school. Our teachers and pastoral team provide support to our students who need extra help through co-regulation and by developing their understanding of how they can self-regulate. Our aim is for them to feel safe to come to school and express how they are feeling; for them to feel heard and understood.

Our curriculum provides opportunities to develop socially through group activities and experiences such as outdoor education, Duke of Edinburgh and a variety of enterprise and community-based projects. We have a student council and friend of Smallbrook group who are involved in organising events and developments for the school site as well as charitable causes.

Our careers program gives students access to employers and further education professionals to help students make informed choices for their next steps and many of our students have work experience placements in key stage four and five. We celebrate equality and diversity and recognise that people are free to make their own choices. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development runs throughout our curriculum, and it is designed to enable our students to build self-belief, become successful and be responsible citizens.

Curriculum Pathways

To ensure the curriculum is fully aligned with the diverse needs, abilities, and future aspirations of our students, Smallbrook School has introduced two distinct curriculum pathways:

Pathway 1 – Preparation for Adulthood

Pathway 1 focuses on next steps and preparation for adulthood. It offers a vocationally focused curriculum that emphasises:

- the development of independence and life skills
- practical learning experiences
- preparation for future education, employment, or training
- functional skills, personal development, and real-world application

This pathway is designed to support students who will benefit from a curriculum that prioritises hands-on learning, self-management, and preparation for adulthood pathways.

Pathway 2 – Academic Qualifications

Pathway 2 provides more of a focus on academic achievement with vocational subjects to compliment this. It supports students to:

- access a broad range of academic subjects
- achieve recognised qualifications
- maximise academic outcomes
- prepare for post-16 academic routes, including college courses and higher-level study

This pathway ensures that students with strong academic potential are appropriately challenged and supported to excel. Both pathways maintain high expectations and ensure equity of opportunity, with personalised intervention and pastoral support available to all students.

Curriculum Intent

At Smallbrook School, our curriculum is designed to inspire curiosity, nurture personal development, and equip every learner with the knowledge, skills, and character they need to thrive in a rapidly changing world. We aim to provide a broad, balanced, and ambitious curriculum that recognises each pupil's unique starting point and empowers them to make sustained progress academically, socially, and emotionally.

Smallbrook school values

We are kind, we are respectful, and our school is where we can feel safe, grow and discover our superpowers

Our curriculum is built around these core values and is designed to ensure that every pupil feels secure, supported, and inspired to achieve their potential.

Kindness – Developing empathy and positive relationships

We create learning experiences that teach pupils to understand others, work collaboratively, and contribute to a supportive school community. Through PSHE, SMSC, pastoral support, and modelling positive interactions, we aim to help pupils develop empathy, compassion, and emotional intelligence.

Respect – Building responsible, confident students

Respect is woven throughout all areas of our curriculum and is closely aligned with the Fundamental British Values: Pupils are taught to value themselves, others, and their environment. Our curriculum encourages respectful communication, responsible behaviour, and appreciation of diversity. High expectations for conduct and learning ensure pupils develop confidence, self-discipline, and a strong sense of belonging.

Feeling Safe – Providing a nurturing and predictable environment

A sense of safety is essential for learning. Our curriculum is structured to provide calm routines, clear boundaries, and positive relationships with trusted adults. We prioritise social and emotional wellbeing, ensuring pupils feel secure enough to engage, participate, and take risks in their learning. AAD, Trauma-informed practice and pastoral support underpin everything we do.

Growing – Supporting academic, social, and emotional progress

At Smallbrook School, we believe in Growing for the Future — supporting every pupil to take their next steps with confidence and preparing them for a successful, independent adulthood. This value focuses on helping pupils understand themselves, set goals, and build the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need for life beyond school through preparation for adult hood, life skills, careers and next steps.

Discovering Our Superpowers – Unlocking strengths, passions, and potential

We believe every child has unique talents — their "superpowers." Our curriculum provides varied and enriching opportunities that allow pupils to explore interests, uncover strengths, and build self-esteem. Through creative subjects, vocational learning, outdoor education, and real-life experiences, we help pupils recognise what makes them special and develop their future ambitions.

At Smallbrook School, our staff use their "superpowers" every day to create a safe, inspiring, and nurturing environment for our pupils. These superpowers shape how we teach, support, and care for every learner.

Curriculum delivery

The delivery of the curriculum is personalised, considering 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.
- Mathematical: Numeracy, with an emphasis on functional and experiential learning.
- Scientific: Biology, Chemistry and Physics; theoretical concepts and practical experiments.
- Technological: Digital Competence.
- Human and Social: PSHE/Citizenship, Geography, History and RE.
- Physical: P.E, Outdoor education and Forest School.
- Aesthetic and Creative: Art, Music, Drama, creative learning
- Therapeutic: sensory play, Forest School. Alongside the taught curriculum, pupils in all key stages engage in a range of experiences to develop their social and emotional skills.

Specialist Staff

The staff team at Smallbrook School are trained in both delivery of the Curriculum, as well as in understanding the specific needs of the pupils in a therapeutic nurturing environment. Staff work closely and in collaboration with multi-disciplinary teams including specialist health practitioners, in particular speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, psychotherapists and mental-health professionals, to provide a unique package of support which offers the best possible outcomes for pupils, both educationally and therapeutically. Smallbrook School has high ambitions and aspirations for all pupils to reach their full potential and to be included in school and society. The school recognizes the importance of helping pupils with their personal development, to develop problem-solving skills to promote their independence both at school and

into adult life. The staff team regularly engage in CPD to explore the benefits of the curriculum, reflect on their practice, and develop cross-curricular links, enabling pupils to make meaningful connections across their learning. Enriching activities are purposefully designed to integrate multiple curriculum subjects, promoting deeper understanding, sustained engagement, and the development of communication, and critical thinking and the application of learning across a range of contexts, directly supporting pupils progress towards their personal and academic goals.

Vocational

Our vocational curriculum provides students with meaningful, practical learning experiences that prepare them for the world of work and for life beyond school. Through a broad range of vocational pathways, pupils develop real-world skills, industry knowledge, and the confidence needed to progress into further education, apprenticeships, and employment. Vocational learning is hands-on, engaging, and tailored to individual strengths and aspirations, enabling students to apply their learning in authentic contexts.

The curriculum supports the development of core employability skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, reliability, and resilience. Pupils gain practical experience through workshops, work-related projects, enterprise activities, and, where appropriate, work placements or community-based opportunities. We work closely with external providers, employers, and training organisations to ensure our offer remains relevant, ambitious, and aligned with industry expectations.

By providing clear pathways and personalised guidance, our vocational curriculum empowers students to make informed choices about their future. It equips them with the technical skills, confidence, and professional behaviours needed to take their next steps successfully and to thrive in adulthood.

Therapeutic

Additional intervention is offered at all stages through group and one to one therapeutic support, according to specific individual needs, and through a close working partnership between home and school. We have access to a range of Therapeutic Support including Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Psychotherapy The team also has a Therapy assistant to support them. To take account of the differences and range of cognitive ability, preferred learning styles and learning needs, all staff will adapt tasks, provide a range of resources, develop extension work, provide for a variety of learning styles and environments, set individual goals, provide different levels of support and offer a variety of ways for students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding. A thorough knowledge and understanding of each learner's needs and EHCP plans help students to access their education.

Physical

Our Physical Education and Outdoor Education curriculum is designed to promote healthy, active lifestyles while developing students' physical skills, confidence, and resilience. Through a broad range of sporting activities, outdoor challenges, and practical learning experiences, pupils are encouraged to take part, persevere, and enjoy being physically active. We aim to instil lifelong habits of fitness and wellbeing, helping students understand the importance of physical health, teamwork, and personal responsibility.

Careers

Smallbrook School offers a rich and structured careers programme that begins in primary. Careers education is embedded across the curriculum and linked to individual pathways, ensuring students develop clear aspirations, understand potential future destinations, and are well prepared for post-16 opportunities. Our careers provision aims to support the holistic development of every student by promoting self-awareness, confidence, and respect for others. We provide meaningful learning opportunities that lead to continuous improvement and recognise all forms of achievement. Through a supportive environment where pupils feel valued and enjoy their learning, we help them develop the skills and knowledge needed for their current and future roles in society.

We encourage students to become positive contributors to their community and provide opportunities to explore and appreciate a range of cultures within the wider world. Our careers programme supports an understanding of racial and cultural diversity and actively works to prevent discrimination. By doing so, we prepare pupils to make informed, aspirational choices and to thrive in their next steps.

Curriculum Implementation

Key Stage	Curriculum Offer
Key Stage 2	**Reading/ Phonics** In Key Stage 2, phonics is taught through dedicated daily lessons following the Read Write Inc. programme, ensuring consistent and structured support for pupils who need it. Students read books carefully matched to their reading ability, with regular assessments in place to monitor progress and determine when they are ready to move up a reading level. **Oracy** Key Stage 2 continues to focus on speaking and listening within English lessons, providing students with greater opportunities to develop their oracy skills. **Curriculum** Phonics, English, Maths, Science, Geography, History (this is shown through Topic lessons), Religious Education, PSHE, RSE, Physical Education, Art and DT. **Careers** The aim of careers in primary education is to encourage students to explore the world of work, finding out who they can be and what they can do. With students beginning to develop an awareness of the world of work and jobs around them from as young as age 3, beginning to rule out careers decisions based on gender stereotypes by the age of 7 and by social class by the age of 9, it is important to help to develop their skills and understanding from the early years to support them to be ambitious and aim high. **Therapeutic** Students with identified needs—either through their EHCPs or through observations made by staff—can access support from our highly trained ELSA and clinical teams, who work to help remove any barriers to learning across the curriculum. Many of the Key Stage 2 staff are Ask, Accept and Develop (AAD) aware, ensuring they are equipped to support students with a deep understanding of individual needs and behaviours. Each morning, class teachers have dedicated time to check in on pupils' wellbeing, helping both staff and students feel prepared for the day ahead. These wellbeing checks continue throughout the day, with class teachers offering regular opportunities for emotional support. Pastoral care is embedded into daily practice and delivered through Trauma-Informed Practice (TIP) strategies, creating a safe, responsive, and nurturing environment for every child. **Transition** During the final term of Key Stage 2, a structured transition process is in place to support pupils as they move into Key Stage 3. Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 teachers work closely together to share key information, strategies, and insights that ensure continuity of support. This includes opportunities for team teaching, reviewing pupils' workbooks, and collaboratively planning to meet individual needs. This joined-up approach helps create a smoother and more reassuring transition for each child. For those joining the Key Stage 2 department throughout the academic year, personalised timetables are put in place to ease anxiety and help them settle in. This is supported by the Family Liaison Officer, Key Stage 2 Lead, Pastoral Lead, and the class teacher, ensuring a nurturing and well-supported introduction to their new learning environment. **Forest School** Students in Key Stage 2 access Forest School for at least half a day each week, providing valuable opportunities for hands-on, outdoor learning. Led by our experienced Forest School Lead, sessions are engaging and child-led, designed to promote independence, strong oracy, and a wide range of developmental skills. Teachers thoughtfully adapt their planning to incorporate Forest School into subjects such as English and Topic, ensuring that learning is immersive, meaningful, and connected to the natural world. This approach not only supports academic progress but also nurtures confidence, creativity, and a sense of well-being in every child.
Key Stage 3	**Reading** Reading is assessed using the Accelerated Reader STAR Reading Assessment, termly for all pupils. Pupils will achieve a reading age. If our pupils are significantly under-achieving in their reading assessment against chronological age, we are able to identify them for interventions as appropriate. This is monitored closely by the Head of English, as well as the phonic and reading coordinator. Daily school reading time has always been an important part of our routine, traditionally focused on books. However, to make reading accessible and engaging for all students, we have broadened our

	approach. Reading is not limited to books alone developing a love for reading often comes from finding a personal purpose or connection. During reading time, students are encouraged to explore different formats such as listening to audiobooks, reading subtitles on an appropriate show, or playing reading-focused games like Boggle or Cluedo. Across all lessons, staff are encouraged to create opportunities for students to read in subtle, supportive ways that build confidence. **Oracy: Voice 21 and Curriculum Enhancement** Voice 21 strengthens our SEMH curriculum by placing high-quality talk at the centre of learning. Structured speaking and listening routines help pupils develop confidence, emotional regulation, and positive social interaction. Oracy supports inclusion by giving every learner a voice and providing accessible ways to share understanding. It also deepens learning across subjects by helping pupils process ideas, build vocabulary, and communicate clearly. Through Voice 21, we equip pupils with essential life skills that improve engagement, relationships, and long-term outcomes **National curriculum** English, maths, Science, PSHE/RSE/ Humanities, PE, Computing, Music, Art, D and T **Functional skills** English, maths, digital functional skills **Vocational** Drama, Barbering, Hair and Beauty, Land based studies, Construction, Health and Fitness, Catering, Digital media, Motor Vehicle, E sports **ASDAN** Short courses, Living independently, COPE **Other qualifications** Duke of Edinburgh, AQA Unit awards, careers **Enrichment** Trips, school council, expressive arts, community project, skill up **Physical** Physical Education, swimming, cycling, walking, climbing, abseiling, skiing, canoeing, paddle boarding, gorge walking. Duke of Edinburgh Award (Bronze). **Transition** During the final term of Key Stage 3, we host our annual Careers Event, giving students the opportunity to explore future pathways and gain valuable insight into life beyond school. Representatives from local colleges—including Shropshire, Telford, Wrexham, and Crewe—alongside local employers and business owners, visit the school to share information about courses, careers, and progression routes linked to our vocational and practical subjects. This event broadens students' understanding of what is available to them and supports informed decision-making. During our options afternoon, students learn more about each subject in greater depth and have the chance to discuss courses directly with staff. They then select one or 2 two options to study in Key Stage 4. For those who are uncertain, we encourage them to try a range of subjects and talk through their interests and strengths with tutors. This personalised approach ensures every student chooses options that they enjoy, feel confident in, and are motivated to pursue.

Key Stage 4/5	**Reading** At KS4, pupils' Functional Skills reading levels are assessed using BKSB. This diagnostic tool enables staff to identify pupils' strengths and areas for development, ensuring that reading interventions are targeted and tailored to individual needs. Regular assessment allows progress to be tracked over time and informs planning to support pupils in achieving their Functional Skills qualifications. **GCSEs** English Language, English Literature, Maths, Science, History, Geography, In addition, we continue to provide RSE and PSHE. **Practical/Vocational** Level 1 BTEC certificate or diploma in: Drama, Barbering, Hair and Beauty, Art, Music, Land based studies, Construction, Health and Fitness, Catering, Digital media, Motor Vehicle, E sports **Physical** Physical Education, swimming, cycling, walking, climbing, abseiling, skiing, canoeing, paddle boarding, gorge walking, Bush Craft. **Careers BTEC Level 1 Work Skills Qualification** Building on their skills and knowledge acquired during key stage 3 where employability skills have been embedded throughout the curriculum topics and then have completed the KS3 Careers Curriculum's modules from OFG. Students will continue to engage in a variety of tasks which support the BTEC learning outcomes to enable them to complete the BTEC workbook which will meet all criteria set out to achieve the planned learning outcomes for this academic year. Students will engage in dynamic and educational discussions and activities to provide opportunities to develop and understand their place within society and the working labour force. Students will also be encouraged to explore their aspirations and how they can pursue further education, training or employment at the end of the time at the school. **Therapeutic** Students who have identified needs on their EHCPs or have needs identified by staff can access our ELSAs or therapy team to help them overcome any barriers to accessing any part of the curriculum. We have a tutor check in for the first 10 minutes of the morning and at the end of lunch time which allows students the opportunity to reflect. Exam support sessions are offered during exam periods. **Transition** During the last term of Key Stage 4 or when students are due to leave, we will arrange supported visits to colleges and placements in the area they will be living. Some students are suitable for apprenticeships, some have gone onto college to complete A-Levels, some have gone to colleges to continue their chosen vocational pathway. Building on their skills and knowledge acquired during key stage 3 where employability skills have been embedded throughout the curriculum topics and then have completed the KS3 Careers Curriculum's modules from OFG. Students will continue to engage in a variety of tasks which support the BTEC learning outcomes to enable them to complete the BTEC workbook which will meet all criteria set out to achieve the planned learning outcomes for this academic year. Students will engage in dynamic and educational discussions and activities to provide opportunities to develop and understand their place within society and the working labour force. Students will also be encouraged to explore their aspirations and how they can pursue further education, training or employment at the end of the time at the school.

Curriculum Impact

The impact of our curriculum at Smallbrook School is seen in the holistic progress our pupils make—academically, socially, emotionally, and in readiness for their next steps. Many of our students join us having experienced disrupted education, low confidence, or significant barriers to learning. Through a personalised, nurturing, and highly structured curriculum, we enable them to re-engage, rebuild, and succeed.

Academic Progress

Pupils make strong progress from their individual starting points due to targeted teaching, high-quality interventions, and clear curriculum pathways.

Regular assessment and review ensure pupils gain appropriate qualifications—ranging from Functional Skills and ASDAN awards to vocational certificates and GCSEs—aligned with their ability and aspirations.

Gaps in learning are closed through tailored support, high-quality reading provision, and consistent literacy and numeracy development across the curriculum.

Personal Development and Wellbeing

Pupils develop improved emotional regulation, self-belief, and resilience through trauma-informed practice, therapeutic support, and strong relationships with staff.

Our values—kindness, respect, safety, growth and discovering superpowers—are reflected in pupils' behaviour, relationships, and confidence.

Pupils demonstrate increased independence, communication skills, and social awareness, contributing positively to the school community.

Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Outcomes

Pupils feel safe, understood, and valued, which leads to improved attendance, engagement, and readiness to learn.

Therapeutic interventions help pupils remove barriers to learning and develop strategies that support long-term emotional wellbeing.

Oracy and Voice 21 approaches build confidence, self-expression, and emotional literacy.

Preparation for Adulthood

Pupils leave us with a clear understanding of their next steps, supported by high-quality careers education starting in primary and continuing through Key Stages 3–5.

Vocational learning provides real-world experience, employability skills, and pathways into apprenticeships, FE courses, and employment.

Students develop independence, life skills, and confidence through practical learning, outdoor education, community projects, and work experience.

Long-Term Destinations

Most pupils transition successfully into further education, training, apprenticeships, or employment.

Our curriculum ensures pupils acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to thrive beyond school and become confident, responsible young adults.

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