

**CITY OF ROCHESTER SCHOOL**  
**Collaborative Curriculum Policy**

*This policy, which applies to the whole school, and upon request a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the School Office. This policy is also publically available on the school website*

In City of Rochester School, the term 'staff' is inclusive of all staff and it also applies to students on placement, contractors, agency staff, volunteers, the Trustees and Board of Trustees

**Legal Status:**

- This is a statutory policy
- Regulatory Requirements, Part 1, paragraph 2(2)(a) to (j) Quality of Education Provided (curriculum) (teaching) of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations currently in force.

**Applies to:**

- all activities undertaken by the school inclusive of extra-curricular activities including those outside of the normal school hours and away from the school site and
- all who, work, volunteer or supply services to our school - that is all staff (teaching and support staff), pupils on placement, the Trustees and volunteers working in the school;

**Related documents:**

- Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) - Educational visits and Off-site Activities policy;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy;
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Personal, Social Health and Economic (PSHEE) Education and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Development;
- Staff Behaviour Policy (Staff Code of Conduct)

**Monitoring and Review:**

- This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Headteacher, being responsible for the day to day organisation of the curriculum, monitoring the weekly lesson plans for all staff, ensuring all planning is appropriately differentiated with relevant, appropriate learning objectives.
- The Headteacher along with the whole school teaching and therapy team review the long-term and medium-term planning and ensure that appropriate targets and strategies are in place. It is intended that the ongoing review and development of the curriculum will support enthusiastic and inspirational teaching. The process of review plays a key role in the continuing professional development of all staff at City of Rochester School.
- The Trustees undertake a formal review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than one year from the date shown below, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so requires. This discussion will be formally documented in writing. Any deficiencies or weaknesses recognised in arrangements or procedures will be remedied immediately and without delay.

Signed:

Date Reviewed: September 2022

Date of Next Review: September 2023

Version No. 4



Alicja Emmett  
Headteacher



Claire Cooper  
Chair of Trustees and Safeguarding Trustee

This policy will be reviewed no later than September 2023, or earlier if changes in legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

**Introduction:** The City of Rochester School curriculum has planned activities that we organise in order to promote learning and personal growth and development. It takes into consideration the National Curriculum. It also includes the 'hidden curriculum', or what the pupils learn from the way they are treated and expected to behave. The curriculum is focused through an experiential offer linked to the National Curriculum and developing independence for Life and Work. We aim to provide a holistic education in a stimulating, happy and caring environment, providing breadth and balance that reflect personal interests. On admission, the pupils present a range of issues and combination of layered needs. Identifying these co-occurring learning difficulties provides informed, specific support and trans-disciplinary strategies to help pupils to participate in classroom activities and in the wider community.

This policy is a statement of good practice covering all aspects of the operation of the school that contribute to the school's positive ethos and the development and maintenance of good behaviour by the pupils. The ethos of the school is based on valuing all members of the school community as individuals in their own right, and treating everyone with courtesy, fairness and respect. This is central to generating the caring and supportive atmosphere which characterises the school and which is integral to promoting the learning and development of the pupils, engendering in young people a love of lifelong learning. Our school curriculum is underpinned by the values of excellence, respect, courage and perseverance central to the ethos of the school.

The curriculum must be seen as the major component of a pupil's education which, together with the pastoral care and the experiential curriculum offered, help pupils to develop a wide range of key and transferable skills so that they leave the school equipped to become a valuable member of society. Our curriculum provides full-time, supervised education for all our pupils (since they are all of compulsory school age) which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education. We tailor the curriculum and subject-matter within it to ensure they are appropriate for the ages, needs and aptitudes of pupils.

Our curriculum is specifically tailored to pupils' needs integrating important life skills. Whilst each subject has its own distinct time within the weekly timetable, the cross-curricular links and follow-through of themes reinforces concepts and provides the generalisation of skills which greatly benefit our pupils. Our cross-curricular approach allows us to deliver a broad, differentiated programme, which also provides short-term or long-term accreditation. This reflects the need for our pupils to quickly become successful and gives us the flexibility for short-term placements when required.

Our pupils have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) within a continuum of Social, Emotional and Mental Health problems (SEMH), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and other forms of SEN. Pupils often arrive traumatised and distressed, been out of education for extended periods of time, and can be subject to sudden changes of placement due to circumstances outside their (and our) control. Some pupils may not be able to cope with a full day and will therefore follow a bespoke programme designed to meet their needs. These pupils will benefit from extension and alternative activities to supplement their sessions, which are provided by the staff. Our aim is always to work towards a full-time curriculum wherever possible. City of Rochester School focusses on developing skills in key areas by: building, developing and embedding: self-confidence, independence, resilience, social and communication skills enabling pupils to participate in wider society. Thus we are clearly focussed on enabling our pupils to become as personally adequate, socially competent and independent as their potential will allow.

**Values - please also refer to our Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural (SMSC) and Personal, Social, Health, Education and Employment (PSHEE) policies:** Our school curriculum is underpinned by the values that we hold dear at our school. The curriculum is the means by which the school achieves its objectives of educating children in the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need in order to lead fulfilling lives. These are the main values of our school, upon which we have based our curriculum. We:

- value children's uniqueness, listening to the views of individual pupils and promoting respect for diverse cultures;
- value the spiritual and moral development of each pupil, as well as their intellectual and physical growth;
- value the importance of each pupil and organise our curriculum to promote inclusion, co-operation and understanding among all members of our community;
- value the rights enjoyed by each pupil in school; respect each child in our school for who they are;
- treat each other with fairness and honesty; want to enable each pupil to be successful providing equal opportunities for all and will strive to meet the needs of all our pupils;

- value our environment and we want to teach our pupils, through our curriculum, how we should take care of the world, not only for ourselves but also for future generations.

**Organisation and planning:** We adopt a long/medium/short term plan in each subject within each area of the curriculum. All planning at City of Rochester School is informed by Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) outcomes and the Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP). Therefore, the core of teaching and learning targets a process whereby our pupils make progress over time. Disruptive and erratic behaviour is often the result of inadequate planning and colleagues should use planning to anticipate predictable problem areas and have plans to avoid them. There should be an element of risk assessment acknowledged in the process which takes account of the potential for disruption if pupils:

- feel that they do not know what they are doing;
- feel that they cannot achieve work given and
- are self-conscious about questioning.

We appreciate that the needs of our pupils require a range of external validation of their work with the remit of functional skills, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, GCSEs and BTEC. Integral to this process, post 16 will be collaboration with external partners linked to further education. All pupils have access to independent careers advice. Additionally, pupils have access to sensory circuits as is appropriate. Our school follows the practice of distributed leadership (please refer to Organogram). Within this context, the organisational structure enables colleagues to take on responsibility for areas working in a collaborative way, as follows:

- Tracking and assessment along with work scrutiny;
- KS1 and KS2; KS3, KS4 and KS5;
- Pastoral Care (pupil wellbeing and behaviour co-ordinator);
- Co-curricular – Community, Partnerships and External Curriculum Co-ordinator
- Review of individual any support plans – for example Behaviour Support Plans and Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP's)

**Core Subjects:** All pupils will participate in core curriculum of English, Maths, Science, ICT, Art, Music, Design Technology, PSHE, Life Skills, Drama (as part of English or in some cases as a discrete topic), PE, Geography, History, Religious Education, Social Interaction Skills and Autism Awareness and Acceptance. The City of Rochester School has the capacity to be adaptable and flexible. We want our pupils to acquire knowledge and learn new skills, but we realise that, in a community like City of Rochester School, there also needs to be a therapeutic dimension to each day.

**Areas of Experience:** City of Rochester School ensures that the curriculum helps pupils acquire knowledge, skills and understanding in a wide range of key areas:

**Linguistic:** This area is concerned with developing pupils' communication skills and increasing their command of language through listening, speaking (verbally or with visual, physical or technological support), reading and writing. Our children put so much into every aspect of their learning it is our role to ensure that everything they learn is immediately useful to them not just at school but in the world we live. For some pupils we adopt a multi-sensory holistic approach to teaching and learning. Reading is a big focus as well and this is timetabled for pupils daily. The beauty of the City of Rochester School curriculum and the school that we are is the way we are able to implement and adapt a curriculum which is tailored for each individual child.

**Mathematical:** This area helps pupils to make calculations, to understand and appreciate relationships and patterns in number and space and to develop their capacity to think logically and express themselves clearly. Their knowledge and understanding of mathematics should be developed in a variety of ways, including practical activity, exploration and discussion. Our children are encouraged to enjoy number and quantity. In their numeracy lessons our children hone their numeracy skills and abilities with a range of tactile and visual materials as well as investigations and activities. Children are encouraged to handle a variety of stimuli including iPads and computers in order to enhance their learning whether they are visual, tactile, auditory or kinaesthetic learners.

**Scientific:** This area is concerned with increasing pupils' knowledge and understanding of nature, materials and forces and with developing the skills associated with science as a process of enquiry: for example, observing, forming hypotheses, conducting experiments and recording their findings. Our children enjoy and learn from the cause and effect which they see in their

science lessons. It is where they can apply their literacy and numeracy skills to the real world and be supported to notice change as well as to think about what might happen.

**Technological – Information Communication Technology (ICT), Computing and Multimedia Resources:** Technological skills can include the use of ICT; developing, planning and communicating ideas; working with tools, equipment, materials and components to produce good quality products; and evaluating processes and products.

**Human and social:** This area is concerned with people and their environment, and how human action, now and in the past, has influenced events and conditions. RE and PSHE make a strong contribution to this area.

**Physical:** This area aims to develop the pupils' physical control and co-ordination as well as their tactical skills and imaginative responses and to help them to evaluate and improve their performance. Pupils should also acquire knowledge and understanding of the basic principles of fitness and health. All pupils are expected to take part in the school's Physical Education and Games programme which at times includes swimming and Duke of Edinburgh. Pupils can only be excused from PE and Games lessons for medical reasons, for which a note from a parent will suffice, or other reasons agreed with the school.

**Aesthetic and creative:** This area is concerned with the processes of making, composing and inventing. There are aesthetic and creative aspects of all subjects, but some make a particularly strong contribution, including art, music, dance, drama and the study of literature, because they call for personal, imaginative, and often practical responses.

**Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC):** In City of Rochester School we plan and provide effectively in order to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Through the curriculum and co-curriculum, we nurture the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of each pupil as well as their intellectual and physical growth. The school is a non-denominational school where pupils of all faiths and belief systems are encouraged to strive for academic excellence and a spirit of open and shared enquiry, whilst developing their individual potential and qualities of character so they can make a positive contribution to the world. SMSC is integral to all aspects of our curriculum. Pupils are led towards distinguishing right from wrong, to respect the law and towards acting consistently with their beliefs and with a view to the consequences of their own and others' actions.

Through the SMSC and related curricular programmes and in accord with the Prevent Duty, the school also aims to educate pupils about the dangers of extremism and to build resilience amongst them against the dangers of extremist views by promoting fundamental British values. We provide a safe space in which our pupils can discuss and understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremist arguments or views. Any discriminatory or extremist opinions or behaviours are challenged as a matter of routine. For more details on how our school promotes SMSC and prevent extremism, please see our: '*SMSC*' and '*Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation*' Policies.

**PSHE and Citizenship:** Whilst SMSC is integral to all aspects of our curriculum, PSHE education and Religious Studies also make a strong contribution. Pupils are led towards distinguishing right from wrong, respecting the law and towards acting consistently with their beliefs and with a view to the consequences of their own and others' actions. We actively promote fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. We aim for our pupils to understand and appreciate the range of different cultures and faiths in modern democratic Britain. Our PSHE/SMSC curriculum at Primary Level focusses on 6 Core areas – these being: Being Me in My World, Celebrating Differences, Dreams and Goals, Healthy Me, Relationships and Changing Me. At Secondary Level, the 6 core areas as described above apply, with a focus on Resilience, Mental Health Awareness, Emotional Literacy, Social and Employability Skills, British Values and Spiritual Development, Inclusive relationship and sex education.

Although PSHE is as a separate subject, at City of Rochester School we embrace PSHE as an approach which must be evident in every lesson of every day. We help pupils achieve more by ensuring that all pupils are given the opportunity to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being. Our aim is for every child to feel that school is a place they will feel respected, valued and listened to before any learning can begin to take place. This is also the central tenet of our behaviour policy. Each fortnight, a celebration assembly is held which focuses on pupil achievements. Pupils are directly involved in contributing to the assembly.

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**Religious Studies:** Religious Studies is available in the curriculum and is a discrete subject in Years 1-6; and taught alongside Humanities in years 7-9. It is an optional subject in Years 10 and 11 and above.

**Relationships and Sex Education:** The school provides Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in which pupils are encouraged and guided by moral principles and taught to recognise the value of family life. The syllabus for the school's RSE is available to parents. It forms a key part of the Personal, Social and Health and Economic Education (PSHEE) course. In accordance with the law, the biological aspects of human reproduction remain compulsory for all pupils, but parents may withdraw their children from any other part of the sex education provided without giving reasons.

**The Curriculum and Political Education:** Political issues are introduced in a number of courses and are presented in a balanced manner. The school does not allow the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject. We also take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that political issues are brought to the attention of pupils always with a balanced presentation of opposing views. Visiting speakers are vetted in accordance with the school's Safeguarding Policy.

**Integrated Therapies:** All pupils, depending on need, have access to Occupational Therapies, Play Therapy, Speech and Language and Counselling. Therapists carry out individual screening assessments to identify a need, and following this, a programme of activities is drawn up to support learning. These programmes are taken forward by teaching and support staff as specified with on-going support from the therapy team. These programmes are reviewed every 6 - 12 weeks by the qualified therapists.

**Experiential Curriculum.** The core day focusses on core subjects in the morning and in the afternoon the focus is on the experiential curriculum and foundation subjects. Not all learning time is classroom based as this enables all pupils to be exposed to a wider variety of activities in broader contexts and thus extending learning experiences. Outdoor learning/experiential learning is a key component of our curriculum and is essential as it gives pupils first-hand experiences of the world – a chance to become immersed in their environment. That opportunity you cannot replicate in the classroom. Whilst each pupil's timetable is carefully planned and activities have set time slots there is flexibility for sessions to be extended if the pupil is benefitting from the experience or reduced if not coping. Over the year there are 6 themed terms. These themes change every year.

**ICT:** The pupils must be able to recognise and adapt to a society which is served by an ever increasing use of ICT. We intend to respond to new developments in technology and implement the use of ICT across the curriculum to pupils of all abilities and ages. Our vision is to create a well resourced environment where pupils are confident and competent in the use of ICT to enhance all aspects of their learning experience. Pupils will have an opportunity to achieve Functional Skills ICT Award in Years 9-11.

**Learning Means the World:** In Primary pupils study a personalised, cohesive 'Learning Means the World' (LMTW) curriculum which is innovative, forward-thinking, and highly relevant. It develops and deepens pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum through a diverse range of themes. Our classes are organised by stage, not age, and the majority of the pupils are curious, hands-on learners. Because of this, we designed a curriculum that is as practical and experiential as possible, in order to cater for the specific needs of our pupils, providing them with a wide range of learning opportunities. We believe the curriculum should be connected in a meaningful way, evidencing clear progression, and should demonstrate a consistent approach throughout school. The LMTW curriculum is underpinned by four highly relevant world issues, known as the four C's as follows:

**Communication:**

The main barrier for all our pupils is communication. They need to be able to make their voices heard, so teaching them how to communicate to different audiences, using a range of methods, is a priority for us across the school. We passionately believe that communication is the key to securing future success, so we want our pupils to see the value of good communication skills. We are committed to developing functional literacy skills, as well as the other more subtle facets of communication, such as understanding body language and features of positive and negative communication. We feel we are best able to develop our pupils' skills in these areas through the strong communication focus in this curriculum model.

## **Culture**

As a school that predominantly represents a white British demographic, we want our pupils to understand the wider world and their place in it. We want to challenge mindsets and help them to become more outward facing. Some of our pupils have expressed a desire to travel when they get older, so it is especially important to prepare and equip them for these future experiences by helping them appreciate and understand cultural similarities and differences.

We actively and explicitly promote cross-cultural respect, tolerance and understanding, linked to British Values and SMSC through our 'Learning Means the World'.

## **Conflict**

As pupils are always going to have to deal with conflict throughout life, we need to equip them with the skills to be able to do this well. As well as possessing good

inter-personal communication skills, they need to learn how to disagree well. They need to react to conflict in a measured and proportionate way, using self-regulation as a conflict resolution tool. Teaching them empathy, self-awareness, and other viewpoints and perspectives is an important part of this.

## **Conservation**

We also feel that, whilst some individuals are eco-aware, many pupils are egocentric and insular, and don't actually apply their 'head knowledge' when it comes to their role as stewards of our planet. We wanted a more structured approach to developing greater awareness and appreciation of local, national and global conservation issues and initiatives, with pupils understanding how they have an important role to play in global sustainability. There are practical implications for us as a school and we are looking to become more proactive in the area of sustainability.

As well as these four core areas, our curriculum also incorporates history-based aspirational Competency Theme Units, which draw inspiration from a range of diverse historical role models like Thomas Barnardo and Ada Lovelace, helping to promote courage, commitment, creativity and a sense of community in our pupils.

**Intended Outcomes for Pupils include:** improvement in relationships with staff and peers, reduced escalation of challenging behaviour leading to critical incidents, increase in school attendance, improvement in the ability to learn, healthy attachment patterns emerging, expectations and promoting achievement.

**Teaching and Learning** (Key aims of the curriculum and co-curriculum, and of teaching and learning): Fundamental to the ethos of City of Rochester School is our aim to provide an active learning environment for limitless minds. Our collaborative approach aims to promote and develop best practice for improving the quality of teaching and learning in our school. The curriculum at each stage of their education at the school aims to promote effective learning across a broad range of academic subjects. This is supplemented by learning experiences beyond the classroom for pupils of all needs and abilities, including those who are more able, those with special educational needs and/or abilities (SEND) and those for whom English is an additional language (EAL).

**Learning and Pastoral Care:** The Pupil Wellbeing Coordinators, staff working on the Careers Guidance Programme and the Deputy Head provide advice to children and their parents about the progress of pupils in their studies, decisions about subject choices for GCSE and A Level and higher education courses and careers. Pupils are supported in their preparation for formal examinations at various stages of their education. They receive specific support in Study Skills that includes guidance on revision technique, making notes, examination technique and management of stress. Pupils are encouraged to learn about their own academic strengths and weaknesses and effective ways of approaching learning, so that they themselves become able to identify and deploy suitable methods across different tasks.

**Careers Guidance:** We instigate Careers Advice throughout the key stages and provide opportunities for pupils to understand the world of work and the promotion of their economic wellbeing. There are talks from professionals in various fields as well as visits to places of employment and manufacture. Through visiting speakers, pupils receive motivational and inspirational guidance that will help them in their current and future endeavours. These are a few of the ways in which pupils are prepared for the future beyond City of Rochester School. The programme includes delivery of independent careers advice sessions, visits from local employers, work experience placements, CV writing, preparation for interview. Our programme covers all of the mandatory Gatsby Benchmarks.

**Disapplication:** City of Rochester School responds to individual needs by modifying the curriculum programmes. A decision to disapply a student from a core subject will be made after discussion with parents. It will allow for a pupil:

- to participate in extended work-related learning;
- with individual strengths to emphasise a particular curriculum area; and
- making significantly less progress than other pupils of his/her age to consolidate his/her learning and progress across the curriculum.

**Teaching:** Effective teaching is vital to progression for every pupil. Alternative skills will enable pupils to have a wider repertoire of positive behaviours and behaviours which can replace those which are a serious challenge and restrict opportunities to learn and enjoy life in wider society. Teachers will:

- make sure teaching is relevant to the assessed level of progress across all areas of learning;
- offer a wide range of teaching styles and approaches to cater for individual needs;
- identify meaningful and functional personal learning objectives for pupils based on their identified needs in their Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP's) and based on what they need to achieve to progress successfully into adulthood;
- have high expectations of all pupils;
- provide differentiated resources that take into consideration the needs of individual pupils;
- provide activities that extend pupils and promote self-confidence and independence and
- plan and deliver a wide range of activities linked to the natural world and technology.

We ensure that the teaching at City of Rochester School:

- enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
- fosters in pupils the application of intellectual, physical or creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
- involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
- shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
- demonstrates appropriate knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
- effectively utilises classroom resources of an adequate quality, quantity and range;
- demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress;
- utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly;
- divides pupils by ability within the differentiated subject areas and adapts to meet their varying needs;
- uses planning, monitoring and evaluation that is systematic, collaborative and linked to the City of Rochester School development/improvement plan;
- adopts a variety of styles with lessons that contain opportunities for frequent changes of focus or for pupils to engage in practical work wherever possible in the expectation that our pupils will not be able to sustain long periods of concentration;
- provides support via the staff team in any learning environment, aided by a Behaviour Support Plan and Risk Assessments, which outline individual considerations regarding strategies to deal with challenging behaviour and
- commits to inspiring, motivating and enriching the learning opportunities for its pupils within both the curriculum and co-curriculum.

The curriculum in our school is designed to provide access and opportunity for all children who attend the school. In consultation with parents and all staff we adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of individual children on a term-by-term and day-by-day basis. Flight Paths are created for each child are subject to regular discussion by the staff team. These documents

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detail the individual needs of the child and the rationale for their bespoke curriculum. In addition, over the academic year, there are 3 Pupil Progress Reviews carried out with staff, therapists, external stakeholders (if appropriate) and with parents. The following is integral to this process:

- The school aims to make the curriculum accessible to all pupils
- Every lesson is created to stimulate children's mastery motivational drive. This is required for our children to not just carry out activities for external reward but for their own personal growth, development and enjoyment.
- We teach our children to enjoy every step of their learning and achievements which may not be intrinsic due to the nature of their special educational needs.
- We aim to provide a challenging and stimulating curriculum which encourages an enthusiasm for learning, intellectual curiosity and creativity.
- Our balanced and broadly-based curriculum promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural and physical development of our pupils, prepares them for the opportunities and responsibilities of life.
- We cater for the curriculum and subject-matter within it to ensure they are appropriate for the ages, needs and aptitudes of pupils.
- Pupils are given opportunities to acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy and all subjects.
- Our school's curriculum is designed to promote learning, personal growth and development so all pupils receive a programme of personal, social and health education.
- It includes not only the formal requirements of the City of Rochester School Curriculum but also the various extra-curricular activities that the school organises in order to enrich the children's experience.
- We aim to teach children how to grow into positive and responsible people. They are encouraged to work and co-operate with others while at the same time developing their knowledge and skills, in order to achieve their true potential.
- We value the breadth of the curriculum that we provide.
- We aim to foster creativity in our children and to help them become independent learners.
- Above all, we believe in making learning fun and accessible.

Members of staff ensure that clear and appropriate learning objectives are embedded in lesson delivery, and that pupils are working towards learning outcomes that will further their knowledge and understanding. Teachers ensure that an appropriate level and standard of homework is regularly set and marked (Jan 2020) so that learning outcomes may be consolidated and the needs of individual pupils identified and met.

**Communication with Parents and Carers and their contribution:** Parents and carers are actively encouraged to become closely involved in the audit of policy and programmes devised for their children. We both appreciate and understand the fundamental role they play in supporting the work of the teaching staff, support staff and therapists. Understanding how staff at City of Rochester School apply strategies and techniques helps to develop a consistent approach towards a child's learning, development and behaviour. We do all that we can to inform parents and guardians about what and how their children are learning by:

- holding parents' evenings to explain our school strategies;
- forging links through our Pupil Wellbeing Coordinators
- providing information which is accessible to parents concerning each subject their child studies;
- uploading Curriculum Policies and Course Overviews to the school website;
- sending regular reports to parents and carers in which we explain the progress made by each child and indicate how the child can improve further;
- inviting parents/carers to contribute towards Pupil Progress Reviews;
- explaining to parents and guardians how they can support their pupils with homework;
- being available for parent consultations through our open-door policy.

We believe that parents and guardians have a responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies. We would like parents and guardians to:

- ensure that their child has the best attendance and punctuality record possible;
- do their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school;
- inform school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect a child's performance or behaviour at school and
- promote a positive attitude towards school, staff and learning in general



**The Hidden Curriculum:** This is the progress that can be instigated and reinforced through the way the pupils are treated and are expected to behave. This is reinforced by the 'consistent modelling of expected standards and language, which strongly promotes the development of good behaviour and manners amongst the pupil. We realise that although academic success is important and provides a goal for our children, success is so much more than academic skills. A child's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is the core of who they are and as such must be woven through the school day and embedded in the 'hidden curriculum'.

**Staffing:**

- Our links with social care professionals and other agencies also provide routes for specialist support where appropriate.
- All staff receive annual performance appraisals, with interim reviews which contribute to the identification of individual training needs. In addition to this, all staff receive a comprehensive statutory training package.
- Staff are encouraged to seek support and guidance from the management team at any time.

**Effectiveness and deployment of staff:**

- A strong team ethos is considered a vital component of a successful school and to this end, the core staff team work closely together.
- A regular cycle of shared planning, meeting, discussion, training and evaluation ensures that there is effective teamwork amongst all staff.
- Professional development opportunities are recognised and negotiated with all staff through the performance management cycle, which is managed by the Deputy Headteacher and in consultation with the Trustees.
- All staff (and pupils) are encouraged to share skills, interests and resources to make school as positive an experience as possible.

**Staff review and development:**

- Staff identify and negotiate areas of interest in addition to arranged training for professional development through supervision.
- Staff are also encouraged to identify processes for self-evaluation and review of development needs.
- Staff also work collaboratively to identify areas of development, both for the school and personally through regular weekly and end of term planning and meeting sessions.

**Assessment:**

- For KS1 – KS3, Assessments are carried out at the beginning and end of the year in Spelling, using Vernon Graded Word Spelling Test, in Writing using The Oxford Writing Criterion Scale, in Maths using Hodder Education Access Mathematics Tests and in Reading using Hodder Education Access Reading Tests.
- For KS4 and KS5, six-weekly assessments are carried out in English and Maths, (Science to follow), using Functional Skills Assessment Papers.
- An analysis is carried out following assessments, identifying gaps in learning, which are addressed through classroom teaching.
- Teacher assessment of the curriculum is tracked and monitored using SIMs primary.

**Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support (SCERTS):** SCERTS is an evidence-based framework with the aim of alleviating some of the core difficulties associated with autism spectrum conditions. It is an inclusive model which allows the incorporation of many good practice, evidence-based interventions that are widely used. SCERTS is a strong advocate of collaborative working with parents and carers, providing a holistic view of the person whom everybody is supporting. SCERTS can be used in parallel with the National Curriculum as an assessment tool which highlights strengths and needs and is a means of monitoring progress of core features of autism where the National Curriculum may not. In addition, the Autism Education Trust Progression Framework is used to measure pupil progress in the following areas:

- Social communication and interaction,
- Social imagination/flexibility,
- Sensory processing,
- Emotional understanding,
- Learning and Independence and community participation.

**Standards of attainment and progress:** Baseline assessments after six weeks allow the City of Rochester School to adjust levels of support needed and identify appropriate accreditation with pupil agreement. Considered assessment takes place in all subjects. The school carries out data analysis regularly throughout each year and uses the data provided to find out how well pupils in our school are achieving, compared with pupils of similar abilities in similar schools.

We analyse the data to help answer the following questions:

- Do pupils perform better in some subjects than others?
- Are there significant differences between boys' and girls' performances?
- How well are the more able pupils doing, and do enough pupils achieve the higher levels?
- Can we identify any groups of pupils who may be underperforming?
- Are pupils Able, Gifted and Talented Programme performing at or above their expected levels?
- How comparable are our expectations and estimates with pupils' final results?

In turn, this analysis enables the school to identify: (i) ways in which the progress of individual pupils may be promoted further; and (ii) overall improvements to the strategies for teaching and learning. All staff are aware that, in order to judge the pace and progression of learning, regular and frequent checks on a pupil's knowledge, understanding and skills are required. Given the profile of our pupils, to ensure person-centred practice, we adjust our approach to assessment to avoid undue stress or conflict.

**Self-evaluation:** The City of Rochester School is committed to a process of continual self-evaluation using the Self Evaluation Framework for independent schools (Ofsted) and by working in partnership with all relevant stakeholders. We actively gather the views of all staff through self-assessment workshops on matters including the curriculum. We also collate the views of pupils and parents/carers about the quality of the curriculum provided by the City of Rochester School. A model of self-evaluation is in place to support us in our collection of valuable data. This provides a clear and workable framework to allow the Trustees and the Senior Leadership Team to identify areas for development within the curriculum and areas of strength. Using the information gathered a improvement plan is developed.

**Academic Enrichment:** The school caters for those pupils that are Able or Gifted through a programme of academic enrichment which operates in accordance with the school's philosophy of celebrating every individual. The majority of provision for high attaining pupils takes place in the classroom and is done in an inclusive manner whereby all pupils may benefit from the inclusion of particularly challenging and stretching material. High attaining pupils are catered for as individuals by teachers who know them well and who have strong subject expertise. All pupils are invited to attend regular talks and events, both in and outside school, that allow them to explore ideas and concepts beyond the curriculum. A bespoke programme of enrichment is offered throughout the key stages, placing an emphasis on active learning.

**Equality Impact Assessment:** This document forms part of City of Rochester School's commitment to create a positive culture of respect for all staff and service users. The intention is to identify, remove or minimise discriminatory practice in relation to the protected characteristics, as well as to promote positive practice and value the diversity of all individuals and communities. As part of its development this document and its impact on equality has been analysed and no detriment identified. Our school believes that all children need to make good progress in these skill areas in order to develop to their true potential. The curriculum has been carefully designed to allow for time and opportunities to address pupils' often complex needs for the time that they are with us; also, to prepare them for the time when they will leave.

**English as an Additional Language (EAL):** We are committed to providing pupils with the support and teaching who require English as an additional language. To this end there is a policy in place and established practices implemented by the school, which includes a clear EAL list with detailed information on each child that is available to all teachers.

**Accommodation and Facilities:** The learning bases are well maintained, of a good quality and attractively and appropriately furnished. They are situated in an urban location. The buildings provide a small, nurturing and comfortable environment, with relevant learning resources available. Any Health and Safety issues identified by staff are addressed by the Finance Manager, Pupil Wellbeing Coordinators, the Deputy Head and the Headteacher.

**Organisation and use of resources and space:** The staff team work together to plan how best to use resources and space within planning meetings in addition to the planned timetable, schemes of work and session plans. We are aware of the need for flexibility and our learning bases and resources allow for changes to arrangements to support individual or group learning opportunities, which may be necessary throughout the school day. Our high staff to pupil ratio facilitates flexibility and all staff make full use of all available space and resources where necessary. Textbooks, stationery, ICT resources and other equipment are clearly displayed and available. The whole staff team are responsible for maintaining a supply of resources and for displaying and updating pupils' work in an attractive manner.

**A strong sense of community is established at the learning bases through:**

- a clear primary focus on our pupils and on understanding and meeting their needs, which is evident in the design and decoration of the learning bases, the curriculum and the behaviour of our staff towards pupils;
- a strong staff team, who are carefully selected, and who receive regular guidance and training, which has an emphasis on team building and mutual support;
- staff looking for opportunities to praise and celebrate pupils' efforts and achievements in work and behaviour in the most appropriate manner for each pupil. We communicate and share efforts and accomplishments with parents/carers and
- the staff being encouraged and supported to foster a positive, approachable and calm atmosphere in the learning bases at all times.

**Individual Subject Spaces:** Part of our approach to curriculum delivery is using different spaces around the school for different areas of the curriculum – for example Art, DT, Music and the Library. Individual spaces focus a child on the idea of a particular area of the curriculum and highlights the expectations of the activities associated with each subject and space. However, due to the complex needs of our pupils, for some subjects they remain in their tutor room/base which in turn breeds comfort through familiarity.

**Meeting Pupils' Needs:** Tasks and activities are planned with reference to pupil needs and interests. The challenge is to re-engage disaffected and insecure pupils in education and therefore we have to choose approaches and resources within curriculum areas which will appeal to them and encourage them to persevere with studies even when it becomes challenging for them. To achieve this, we have a robust admissions process allowing us to collect as much information on each pupil as possible, giving us time to get to know them in more detail through staged entry into the service. Pupil Progress meetings are held where pupils are not achieving as expected or where there is a concern about a particular pupil.

Our pupils need a structured and consistent environment, but within that there must be recognised and planned opportunities for pupils to have some choices within sessions and to take increased responsibility for their own learning. Regular, systematic monitoring and recording allow us to build on the original pupil's profile and to act accordingly to address emerging and changing learning needs. Some pupils have individual timetables dependent on their needs.

**The Wider Community:** Learning in our school extends beyond the classroom door into our local and wider community. We take every opportunity to encourage children to apply the knowledge gained in school to real world situations. Such activities as horse riding, swimming and music lessons are included within our curriculum. We provide a range of quality opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility in school and make a positive contribution to the school, local and wider communities. After clubs will also be run to support a wider curriculum.

We acknowledge that we are able to create a unique setting for our children and accommodate and modify their environment for them but for us it is crucial that we are preparing them for the 'real world' and that all that they put effort into learning and doing at school should be transferable.

**Special Focus Days/Weeks:** The City of Rochester School has a calendar of special focus days and weeks (see the school's Equality and Diversity Calendar) where the whole school concentrates on particular learning opportunities. For example:

- Science week - including visits to the Science Museum in London;
- Book Week - inviting poets and authors to work with pupils; attending drama events and readings
- Anti-bullying week - to promote self-respect and respect for others; role play
- Black History week - giving emphasis to significant figures and events in the UK and internationally

**Learning beyond the classroom - educational visits and off-site activities:** We embrace children as individuals, as members of a family and members of a community. We acknowledge that the skills and abilities we teach are only useful if they are applicable and benefit our children outside school. Our curriculum offers a series of educational excursions that deepen the pupils' understanding of the world around them. Trips extend pupils' knowledge of past and present. As the children move up the School they have the opportunity for educational visits further afield. Our experience is that pupils forge strong bonds of friendship during the trips, and their respect for one another grows as a result of sharing the experiences.

**Independence for Work and Life:** The ultimate goal for pupils at City of Rochester School is to enable them to develop independence for work and life. This means a range of academic and practical activities that are valuable for their own sake but also of value to employers. Pupils will learn to take care of themselves through the PSHEE curriculum; learn about basic food hygiene and food preparation. We aim to develop through the curriculum and wider educational programmes an enthusiasm and love for learning, intellectual curiosity, resilience and creativity, as well as encouraging their well-being and their personal growth and development. By the time they leave the school, pupils will be equipped to deal with the challenges of further and higher education and the demands and responsibilities in their wider adult lives. PE and sport are important for developing health and fitness and both collaborative and competitive spirit. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme is designed for young people to leave their comfort zones and have new experiences that develop resilience and the ability to tackle adversity.

A Careers guidance programme for pupils means taking ownership of their futures and work experience organised within our framework will give pupils opportunities to show employers what they can do and the difference they can make as reliable and skilled employees.

Being part of and contributing to the local wider community is important for all pupils and helps the school in its mission. Pupils will engage with local community activities such as scouts and guides, visiting nursing homes and volunteering at primary schools. The purpose is for them to learn how to communicate with a cross-section of society and to develop their life skills further. Developing empathy, self-respect, respect for others, teamwork are all an essential part of participating in the world around us.