

School Curriculum Policy

Date Written: June 2009

Timescale of Review: Annually

Most Recent Review: July 2022

Next Review Due: July 2023

PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

For the purposes of this policy, discrimination means treating people less favourably than others on the grounds of their age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race, ethnic origin, disability, religion or religious beliefs, whether this be direct or indirect by applying a provision, criterion or practice, which disadvantages such persons.

INTRODUCTION

‘The ultimate aim of the curriculum is to enable each student to achieve his or her potential for living as independently as possible, making a positive contribution to the community and achieving economic well-being’

This document outlines the aims of the curriculum at the Amicus School and includes details of how the curriculum is delivered.

Our curriculum places great value in helping all students to make good progress in their academic, social, health and emotional skills and knowledge. Amicus recognise the fundamental importance of raising all student’s self-esteem, improving their attitudes towards learning and developing their view of themselves as competent learners.

Students are placed at the Amicus School due to their social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The majority of the students who are placed at Amicus have a combined placement of care and education for 52 weeks of the year. Whilst they reside at Amicus the students also attend The Amicus School.

The placement of a child at The Amicus Community provides a holistic, integrated approach to their education and care. In order for all students to make the best possible progress, our curriculum planning provides focused teaching within the school day, and then a wide range of additional curricular opportunities within the residential experience for extension, generalisation and practice of this learning. Together this creates a 24-hour curriculum approach.

Amicus also accepts day students and where this is the case, family work takes place to build up collaborative relationships and to help inform the parents/ family members of the work being done with their child and provide strategies and ideas of how this work can be continued in their home life as a continuation.

The overall aims of the Amicus School are to support all students to make progress in their ability to:

1. Build healthy and mutually trusting relationships.
2. Ask for help and make use of it.
3. Involve themselves appropriately in their care and care of the environment.

4. Keep themselves and others safe.
5. Reflect on and communicate feelings rather than act them out.
6. Be able to play.
7. Be a successful learner
8. Improve self-awareness and value achievement.
9. Function appropriately in a group.
10. Make a contribution and become involved in the immediate and wider community.
11. Use and apply learnt skill and knowledge.

INTENT OF THE CURRICULM

- The curriculum at the Amicus School is designed to be engaging, child-centered and holistic, within a safe and nurturing setting.
- We offer a creative, differentiated, and modified National Curriculum which meets the new framework for Ofsted 2019.
- We know teaching and learning begins at each pupils own level and ability and leads to independence.
- Reinforcement of learning is deemed as crucial, and our programme is cyclic, progressive and individualised.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Curriculum is delivered through schemes of Work, using a topic-based approach, which utilises themes as a means of linking learning strands. This is through the Dimensions Curriculum. Core areas of study such as reading skills and spelling may be taught in more formal sessions which are progressive and need regular reinforcement. However, the core skills taught will be applied and reinforced, within topic work. The topics are chosen to be appropriate for the group. The mathematics curriculum is taught using the White Rose Mathematics Series.

The curriculum is enriched through a range of additional activities, such as Forest School, topic-based local community visits, life skills, and work-related learning.

The educational provision we provide at The Amicus School is facilitated through our therapeutic framework and therapeutic input which is engrained in our culture and practices and enables the children to access and engage in their learning and make significant progress from their starting points.

IMPACT

At the Amicus School, we know that emotional well-being is fundamental. Our therapeutic model allows for emotional growth and development and enables the children to begin to recover from their previous traumatic experiences and build more healthy relationships and attachments to others and be able to manage and regulate their feelings in a healthier way.

At our school, we also recognise the importance of physical well-being. We promote regular physical exercise, fresh air, and a healthy balanced diet. We know that exercise has multiple benefits therefore active periods are planned throughout the week. We hope that this healthy approach will be carried forward into later life and the Curriculum model we follow is intended to place our pupils on a path that will encompass qualities that prepare them well for adulthood, working life, being a good citizen, and making a contribution to the community.

The therapeutic approach at Amicus is fundamental to the life of the school. At all times we keep at heart the developmental age of the pupil and their readiness for learning. This comes from their combination of being able to be on task and their emotional response in the learning environment.

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff within The Amicus Community are responsible for offering a broad and balanced curriculum.

The Headteacher is Responsible for:

- Overall design and monitoring of the curriculum ensuring a broad and balanced provision differentiated for special educational needs.
- Overall monitoring of long, medium and short-term planning and for supporting teachers in generic issues around setting learning objectives, assessment and recording.
- Ensuring that education staff understand the therapeutic nature of our work and support explicit therapeutic interventions.
- Working with class teachers to ensure that resources can be updated and replaced as necessary.
- Leading the school development process, action planning and monitoring of subject progress alongside teachers within the school

- Planning a long-term curriculum framework, alongside teachers, that is topic-based and ensures equal coverage of all curriculum areas
- Monitoring curriculum resources alongside class teachers, replenishing when necessary
- Running inset sessions and staff training as and when required

Class Teachers are Responsible for:

- Keeping in mind therapy times for children and plan accordingly to support these.
- The planning, teaching and assessment of curriculum subjects for their teaching group following agreed timetable and using/developing schemes of work
- Ensuring that learning outcomes and activities are suitably differentiated to meet the needs of all the students in their group and that each child's education has continuity and progression.
- Ensuring TEWs are adequately prepared for lessons and know and understand objectives and activities.
- Ensuring that students and TEWs are aware of expected learning outcomes.
- Ensuring that subjects are delivered effectively, using a range of teaching styles and activities, linked to the varied learning styles of the class to ensure that interest is kept high and learning opportunities are maximised.
- Alerting the Headteacher to any INSET needs.
- Alerting the Headteacher to any gaps in resources.
- Ensuring that effective assessments take place and records of progress are kept up to date.
- Implementing, monitoring and evaluating student's progress through maintaining student assessment files

- Effective marking of student's work with next steps identified and discussed with students
- Ensuring resources are available in the classroom.
- Displaying children's work and stimulus display (and that children's "voices" are represented through display)
- Informing parents/carers/link workers of topics for the term and encouraging their input
- Arranging several outings, a year to compliment topics
- Running school council meetings to make sure children's voices are heard and included in planning

Therapeutic Education Workers are Responsible for:

- Ensuring they are aware of individual children's targets.
- Ensuring they know, and understand, the learning outcomes for individual sessions.
- Supporting children's learning of subjects through careful prompting and praising effort and achievements.
- Giving feedback about progress towards targets to class teachers.
- Alerting the class teacher of any concerns regarding individual child's learning.
- Displaying children's work in consultation with the class teacher.
- Alerting the teacher or Headteacher to any INSET needs.
- Marking children's work against the learning outcomes and objectives and identifying next steps

Parents / Carers / Link Workers are Responsible for:

- Being involved in school events
- Being aware of what their student are learning and why
- Being involved in assessment and planning for their child
- Being involved in homework with their student.

The Children are Responsible for:

- Ensuring they participate fully in sessions
- Ensuring they are aware of their own targets and learning objectives.
- Evaluating their own progress towards targets and discussing next steps

OUR SCHOOL MISSION

The Amicus School sees the pupil's learning as an essential part of their individual development and an inseparable part of the holistic, therapeutic living experience, whether this is within our care or the care of their families/carers.

The Amicus School offers therapeutic education and support for pupils, across the registered age group, embracing complex support needs and working with a trauma-informed approach within our psychoanalytical model.

The Amicus School offers a curriculum that is accessible to pupils who have missed periods of education, including significantly long periods, or who have failed to thrive in an educational setting. This may be due to a range of circumstances that result in them becoming vulnerable and losing direction in their learning. This is often due to their previous traumatic experiences which can create a barrier to learning. For children to be open to learning they have to acknowledge they 'do not know / not knowing and this can be very painful for them and is therefore important this is delivered in a non-threatening way. The School provides nurturing and stimulation for those who may need a sympathetic transition period to engage again with their learning.

At the Amicus School, we know that the pupils may have experienced trauma and are anxious at times and exhibit a range of challenging behaviours relating to their highly complex needs. Our aim is for our pupils to return, if possible, to attend an educational provision appropriate to their needs, once their self-esteem, motivation, and academic achievement are re-established and they have progressed in their emotional development. The nurturing and positive environment maintained at the Amicus School allows a flexible path tailored to the needs of the individual learner. This is dynamic and the pace at which we work, and the pupil progresses is unique to each individual. pupil's social, emotional, and academic growth is fundamental to our therapeutic community. Some aspects of the curriculum may appeal to one pupil more than another and our unique method of working accommodates the individual's interests and strengths – while gently widening their horizons and introducing new learning experiences at every opportunity.

Our Programme of Study is holistic, therapeutic, and creative. This means that every education plan is individual and due to our rigorous cycle of reviewing and updating, is constantly being adapted to the specific requirements of the pupil.

The Amicus School prides itself on teamwork and our skilled and well-trained staff. The staff work together collaboratively to generate a timetable for the pupils, which is carefully tailored to their EHCP, Educational Psychologist's report, Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy, or any diagnosed or identified areas for development. We take heed of the expert and professional advice available to us, but we are always mindful of working within our accredited therapeutic model. We make careful observations and reflections within the class group and individually so that the emotional needs of the children are addressed appropriately to circumstances and situations which aims to promote a calm atmosphere in lessons and understanding of dynamics and any key anxieties. All assessment information accessed by our school team is used to plan further activities to promote effective learning.

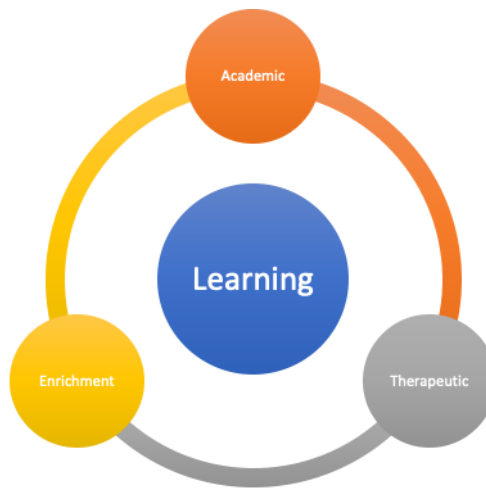
At the Amicus School, we follow a sequential placement process that generates a Transition Programme matched to each individual new pupil. Assessment and Transition may take place over days or weeks and may involve more than one timetable being drawn up as time in school for the pupil increases. It may entail extensive multi-agency work and outreach visits by a range of staff from the school. We progress at the pace of the pupil not at a pace for the school's convenience. We work closely with parents and carers and re-evaluate if the pupil appears anxious or worried and needs more time for adjustment. In our experience, this throughout transition programme leads to a sustainable and successful educational placement.

We always aim to engage the pupils and utilise every teaching and learning window possible. We encourage active learning, where pupils know what they are going to learn, why it is valued, and are given the space to practice and embed their experiences. Talking therapy and discussion are vital to what we do as is communication through play, as our pupils have the opportunity to advance their ability to communicate and understand their feelings. This is effectively promoted through group discussions and playtime where the pupils learn to become part of the group. We encourage self-awareness in our pupils and assist in an exploration of preferred learning styles. We use visual prompts widely, offer sensory experiences extensively, and incorporate auditory and kinesthetic preferences into lesson planning: By knowing our pupils very well, we can provide a safe and secure therapeutic educational provision.

CURRICULUM MODEL

Due to the specific needs of the children placed at The Amicus Community, learning is understood developmentally; our curriculum places a particular focus on approaching learning at the appropriate developmental stage of the students. Teachers, HLTAs, TAs and Senior Leaders identify gaps in student learning, overcoming any prior misconceptions through a broad and balanced curriculum. This enables teachers to scaffold student learning for areas of development and to extend students, mastering areas of strength in both an age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate way.

Our curriculum model is based upon three core elements: academic, therapeutic and enrichment. Each of these areas of learning are integrated through the curriculum as illustrated below:



Our curriculum is designed to engage children who have significant barriers to learning due to social, emotional and mental health difficulties as well as special educational needs. All students follow the national curriculum and the style of teaching and curriculum take account of the range of specific learning needs of our students.

Schemes of work for academic learning are planned covering P levels, and Levels 1 - 5 of the National Curriculum which represents the full range of attainment in the School. The student's education is organised into three different stages, through which they can develop and progress through during their time at the Amicus School. Children are grouped according to their emotional, social and academic needs, and move through the Amicus School at varying time scales.

We plan a curriculum which ensures progression and continuity in learning for both groups and individuals. Students come into the School with varying levels of knowledge, skills and understanding and are often functioning below their chronological age, due to their previous trauma and emotional difficulties. Our curriculum framework reflects this challenge.

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Amicus School models its creative curriculum on the National Curriculum. However, the specific needs of the children mean in some situation's children may require fewer subject areas to enable them to focus on core subjects. Such decisions are made through discussion and agreement with the transdisciplinary team, families/carers and most importantly the student themselves. Further information about specific and targeted information programmes can be found within the school SEN policy.

Teaching & Learning within the Amicus School

Within the Amicus School we believe teaching and learning should enable students to enjoy and achieve to the best of their ability. This should make learning a positive experience, inspiring curiosity and a desire to learn. A range of strategies are employed to facilitate our vision; these strategies are outlined in the Amicus School Teaching & Learning policy. These include strategies

such as focused 1:1 activities, play & exploration, creative arts, learning carousels, ICT and external visits.

Topic Based Approach

Much of our curriculum is implemented through a topic-based approach to ensure learning is linked and meaningful. We have devised a 2-year topic plan to ensure equal curriculum coverage without yearly repetition. Topics typically last one-half term and are planned for through medium-term topic webs. The topics are in line with the National Curriculum so that all our students receive a broad and balanced curriculum and their statutory entitlement. Their interests and needs are taken into account when planning a topic for the term.

Within Key Stage 2 topic-based learning is integrating across all areas of the curriculum, providing a focus for core subjects and foundation subjects. Students also have one topic session every day. At Key Stage 3 and 4 topics are integrated into curriculum areas. Although lessons are taught more discretely cross-curricular links are planned for through the selection of appropriate units which form part of the overall theme.

Maths and English

These core subjects are taught every morning. English planning is linked to the topic where appropriate and relevant. Students who are gifted, talented or excel in particular curriculum areas will be identified and their needs catered for through individual differentiation and extension activities. We work with parents/carers/key workers to support extension activities which can be undertaken within the home environment. Literacy and numeracy links are also embedded across the curriculum, with teachers planning for these opportunities within their medium-term planning for each curricular area.

PSHE

In addition to the specific style and delivery of the curriculum there is a strong emphasis on PSHE. In addition to PSHE based on topics, breakfasts, playtimes and lunch times are adult led focusing explicitly on student social skills. There is allocated time in the beginning and end of each school day as well as in break and lunch times to come together as a group to reflect on experiences and review how the day has progressed and the student's feelings and responses. We call this 'Wellbeing Sessions'

This assists in the emotional development of the students which in turn enables them to feel 'held in mind' and assists in them continuing and engaging with their school day and for staff to be aware of the child's preoccupations and state of mind.

In these spaces there is often a quiet time when we all get together, and the students are encouraged to express their opinions and views and be able to listen to each other and share experiences. The review and reflection time built in at the end of lessons and during playtime for some student is also part of this (see Behaviour Policy).

Science

Within KS2 Science is taught through topic sessions to ensure relevance and continuity for younger students. At KS3 and 4 Science is taught in specific sessions, focused on the development of practical science skills.

Computing

ICT and Computing is taught in a cross curricular way. It is used in maths and literacy lessons as well as in Schemes of Work for Science and foundation subjects. There are also specific Computing sessions to teach particular skills.

Physical Education

PE is taught in daily exercise sessions, encouraging students to be physically active. Specific sessions are also taught following a planned scheme of work which incorporates weekly focused sessions and swimming. Students attend swimming lesson weekly.

When they progress in their swimming ability and confidence in the water, they can then move on to more advanced lessons in different water sports; such as canoeing. Our aim is for students to engage in sport and physical activity which is engaging and prepares them for an active and healthy lifestyle.

Sex & Relationships Education

This subject is taught to students at an age and developmentally appropriate stage. Most SRE lessons are taught on a 1:1 basis due to the acute special educational needs of the students within Amicus, taking into account their personal early experiences.

Humanities, Art & Design, Design & Technology, Performing Arts, RE

These are taught in a cross-curricular way during topic sessions at KS2. At Key Stage 3 and 4 these are taught through individual lessons.

External College Provision

To complement and extend the broad and balanced curriculum we offer within The Amicus School, Key Stage 4 and 5 students have the option to attend local partner colleges. This option is offered to enable students the opportunity to undertake a more varied vocational programme, for which the local college setting is more able to support. This opportunity also supports student integration back to mainstream education, the ultimate aim and goal of the Amicus School curriculum.

Exemplar programmes include Performing Arts, Animal Care, Vehicle Maintenance, Construction and Engineering. It is essential that these programmes meet the high standards we set for teaching and learning within The Amicus School, therefore close collaboration is maintained with our partner institution Chichester College.

To ensure this consistency in high standards for our students The Amicus School only offers external placements to settings judged as Good or Outstanding. Further documentation outlining this process is contained within our Quality Assurance Policy.

THERAPEUTIC DEVELOPMENT

The Amicus School is part of our children's therapeutic community, The Amicus Community. This means therapeutic work is integrated throughout the school day, embedded throughout interactions and learning activities. Many other children's homes or education may only focus on the behavioural aspects of the child's presentation, where as our model is accredited as 'therapeutic', where there is constant thinking around the structure of the day and the child's needs and reasons for their behaviour (- believing behaviour is a communication) which often stem from their earlier, often traumatic experiences.

For the effective practical application of our therapeutic thinking it is important that the core of it is rooted in the culture and day to day practice of the school. It is not intended as an extra that can occasionally be used and then withdrawn but as part of the day to day living interactions between Teachers, Therapeutic Education Practitioners and the children. It is in the interplay of these central relationships during the daily activities and routines, and within the environment and therapeutic milieu that the bulk of the 'therapy' is carried out. The gradual building up of these experiences within a carefully considered, planned and structured environment and the thinking around them can accumulate into a profound therapeutic experience, an experience that hopefully can produce genuine and long-term change.

Amicus' therapeutic model follows a psychoanalytic and group relations theory base following therapeutic community core principles and standards which is integrated into our work and practices.

One of the main tasks of the organisation is to help create an environment that can keep this therapeutic endeavour real and alive and always with the knowledge that it can become easily lost in the day to day struggles of working with vulnerable and traumatised children.. At times even just managing to maintain some sense of order in the face of impending chaos and personally surviving the children's often attacking, destructive and disturbing behaviours can seem a huge enough task in itself. To maintain the adult ability to think and keep both the children and the therapeutic task in mind, cannot happen through goodwill alone but by attempting to create a genuinely integrated, task orientated and holding environment.

In addition to this children have their own therapeutic packages which may include:

- Pre-therapy work
- Creative Arts Psychotherapy
- Music Therapy
- Pets as Therapy – Literacy Reading Dog.
- Psycho-analytic Psychotherapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech therapy
- Classroom group work with a specialist staff member
- Family work
- Parent/carer Work
- Parent/carer & Child Work
- Supported use of the sensory room space
- Emotional Literacy sessions

Further information about the therapeutic provision within Amicus is detailed within the School Behaviour Policy.

CURRICULUM ENRICHMENT

Children placed at The Amicus Community benefit greatly from activities, which enrich the curriculum. As mentioned previously, Amicus is looking offer an internal Forest School programme which we feel will be very beneficial in terms of the children's learning. Amicus tries to include educational trips and visits for the children relating to the topics they are studying that term. We use external visitors and providers where this is may be beneficial for the knowledge and contribution they make to the student's learning and also social, emotional and behavioural skills.

Our curriculum enrichment programme incorporates a range of different opportunities for students to extend their learning and practise their skills in a new environment.

Curriculum enrichment activities include a wide range of different areas of the curriculum, particularly around the provision of SMSC and the development of British Values.

Spiritual Enrichment

These experiences centre around the development of students' spiritual awareness, giving them a broader experience of the curriculum. Examples of this include religious celebrations (such as Christmas, Divali, Passover) and visits to religious places of worship. Further examples of spiritual enrichment activities include 'awe and wonder' visits such as trips to the planetarium, the sea life centre or walks on the Sussex Downs.

Moral Enrichment

These experiences incorporate a sense of moral awareness for our students, giving opportunities for them to demonstrate their emotional literacy. Examples include conservation work, such as litter picking or cleaning an area for wildlife, and charity events, such as bake sales or sponsored activities.

Social Enrichment

These focus on the development of social skills and incorporate life skills activities where students would be expected to engage in social interactions. External examples include cafés, restaurants, supermarkets, busy shopping areas and markets. Internal examples would include welcoming visitors to the site for events.

Cultural Enrichment

These focus on the development of cultural understanding, developing an awareness of life beyond Amicus. Examples include trips to villages, towns and cities to explore local culture. Further examples include trips to museums, galleries, musical performances and sporting events such as the World Cup or the Olympics. Internal examples would include celebrating cultural events such as Burns night or Chinese New Year.

British Values Enrichment

Trips and enrichment activities centered around British Values focus on the development of the core values of citizenship within the United Kingdom. Internal examples include celebrations of events such as St George's Day, regular student council meetings, mock elections and involvement in current affairs. External examples include visits to British landmarks such as Buckingham Palace or Parliament or visits to our local council services such as the courts or the fire station.

Wider Enrichment Activities

Although many of the examples listed above are specifically linked to one area of enrichment there are clearly overlaps here and multiple links can be made both within the enrichment curriculum and the wider academic curriculum.

Further enrichment activities include:

- Fire Break
- First Aid
- Volunteer Work
- Forest School
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ADDITIONAL CURRICULAR INTERVENTIONS

At Amicus we recognise the importance of raising a child's self-esteem, improving their attitude to learning and developing their self-confidence. All the children have integrated therapeutic placement plans that include aims and outcomes for education, care and social and self-care skills and relationships.

These therapeutic placement plans are reviewed and assessed at least termly with children and parents/carers and their social workers and are fed into by their LAC Reviews and PEPs. Input and information from external professionals involved with the child, such as Educational Psychologist, LAC Nurse, Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist and Child Psychotherapists is sought to contribute to the childrens' care/education plans.

Mathematics and English are taught each day at the school. For children who require additional support with reading and writing, we have a 15 minute catch up session in the mornings where they receive 1:1 support using a programme such as 'Toe by Toe'. By raising the children's reading and writing skills, they are enabled to fully access the curriculum which helps to maximise their potential and readiness for learning and confidence.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 31, recognises the child's right to play. The functions of play are to:

- Experience fun and joy
- Develop personality and sense of self
- Develop creativity and imagination
- Develop problem-solving skills
- Manage emotions
- Learn relationships and social skills
- Form a basis for language, thinking and reasoning

Play is fun and requires active engagement from the child. Many of the children within Amicus have had little or no access to play at an age-appropriate level and this is evident within their development and level of trauma experienced.

Play is a key feature within the Amicus curriculum, providing a platform to explore academic and therapeutic work from a secure base. This work also enriches the learning experience by providing a concrete, practical activity for the student to learn. Play is carefully considered and planned for by teachers to ensure that it supports the development of the child and provides a vehicle for learning.

PROCESS FOR MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH THE POLICY

The Headteacher and teachers monitor the teaching and learning of subjects within The Amicus Community as detailed within the Teaching & Learning Policy.

Assessment of the Curriculum

The curriculum is assessed as detailed within the Assessment, Reporting and child Feedback policy. Children's folders contain all assessed work.

- Progress is reported to Parents/Carers/Key Workers, Headteacher through Annual Reviews and termly reports.
- All children are assessed during the first 6 - 10 weeks in the form of Baseline Assessments
- Assessment For Learning is an ongoing central tenet to learning and teaching within The Amicus School
- Learning journey books with photos/ post-it notes/ samples of work to provide evidence of progress, particularly self-initiated activities (significant moments)

Signed by Headteacher: L. Watney

Date: July 2022

Policy Reviews

Date of Review	Information on Updates	Reviewed By
September 2015	Creation of new policy document.	Rebecca Newton
May 2016	Update of the policy, with minor amendments.	Rebecca Newton
May 2017	Significant updates reflecting adaption of Primary thematic curriculum model.	Tom Milson
November 2017	Minor updates (wording and KS3 planned changes in appendix)	Tom Milson
Jan 2021	Policy Review & Update – minor changes	Nicky Young

July 2022	Changed Student to Children. Added details about therapeutic model and theory base. Jo titles and creative curriculum. Added info on Intent, Implementation and Impact as well as details of the School Mission Statement	R. Newton

APPENDIX

Topic Overview – KS2

	Year A		Year B	
	Topic	Focus	Topic	Focus
Autumn 1	It's Shocking	Science	The Stories People Tell	Literacy & History

	Year A		Year B	
	Topic	Focus	Topic	Focus
Autumn 2	Scavengers and Settlers	History	Treasure	Geography & History
Spring 1	Active Planet	Geography	How humans work	Science
Spring 2	Do you live around here?	Geography	Let's plant it	Science
Summer 1	Our World	Science	Young Entrepreneurs & Digital gamers	Citizenship & ICT
Summer 2	Land, Sea and Sky	Science	Material World	Science