

ASHLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Curriculum

Policy

This policy was adopted / updated: September 2025

This policy will be reviewed: September 2026



**Ashley High School**

**Curriculum Policy**

**Introduction/Rationale**

The purpose of this policy is to provide information to share with staff, governors, other professionals, families and other interested stakeholders. The policy incorporates our philosophy, aims and values as well as describing the approach to our curriculum, the content and the specialised approaches required for teaching the pupils at Ashley High School. The curriculum policy also aims to describe the context behind the tailored approach to our curriculum and the reasons why such a bespoke approach is required.

The curriculum policy does not contain the detail and content of our curriculum. This can be found on the school website.

In September 2022 the school introduced a new functional based curriculum tailored to meet the needs of our evolving student population. The development of our curriculum, whilst being led by the Leadership and Management Team is the result of hard work, knowledge, skill and passion of all the staff and professionals that we work with. Staff have worked closely together to develop the curriculum, meaning that there is real ownership and understanding to the route that we are taking.

The school has successfully phased in the new curriculum, which is now fully embedded in Key Stage 3. Implementation of the new curriculum at Key Stage 4 will occur over the next two years. During this period, the school will replace the option to study GCSEs with accredited Functional Skills qualifications in all core subjects.

**Context**

Ashley High School delivers high quality teaching and specialist knowledge of Autism and Social Communication Difficulties for 11 – 19 year olds. Many pupils live in the borough of Halton through a small number come from other boroughs including Liverpool, Knowsley and Warrington. All students have an EHCP and are working below age related expectations

We meet the needs of a wide range of pupils with the following broad area of need:

* Pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties
* Pupils with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASD)

Many of these pupils have additional needs including, but not exclusive to

* Pupils with specific learning difficulties – dyslexia, dyspraxia,
* Vulnerable pupils who, for a range of reasons have failed to thrive in the a mainstream setting.

Due to the complex nature of the pupils that attend Ashley School, it is our responsibility to provide them with the most appropriate curriculum, a tailored approach, to both academic learning and life skills.

**Legislation and Guidance**

This policy reflects the requirements of the [National Curriculum programmes of study](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum), which all maintained schools in England must teach.

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25) and [Equality Act 2010](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/part/6/chapter/1), and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education’s [Governance Handbook](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook).

**Intent**

The school is committed to providing an ambitious, broad and well-planned curriculum which enables pupils to develop core skills alongside knowledge and understanding. The wide range of subjects, learning experiences and accreditation on offer aims to develop pupils both academically and personally, both in the classroom and off-site. We aim to provide an enriched pupil centred curriculum which engages pupils, takes into account the needs of the individual, enables them to thrive, achieve their potential and prepares them for independent living and the world of work.  We place a great emphasis on our pupils having a careers programme in place that ensures that they are well equipped for the future and have the information needed to make realistic and informed decisions about further education, training and employment.

The vision for Ashley High School’s curriculum is “to provide a broad and balanced education through the National Curriculum and accredited qualifications, delivered in a way that focusses on functional skill development necessary for enhanced participation in society as adults. There is a deep focus on practical learning, independent living, life, vocational and employability skills all delivered in a therapeutic learning environment”. This aligns with the overall school vision and the school’s core values.

At Ashley High School, all stakeholders are committed to and are passionate about the learning and progress of all of our young people. Our ambitious and purposeful functional curriculum has the following aims to

* Provide a broad and balanced education for all pupils that’s coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge for skills and future learning and employment
* Provide academic, creative, therapeutic, life and vocational opportunities through engaging and experiential learning
* Support pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
* Support pupils’ physical development and responsibility for their own health, and enable them to be active
* Promote a positive attitude towards learning and develop a strong work ethic
* Ensure equal access to learning for all pupils, with high expectations for every pupil and appropriate levels of challenge and support
* To equip all pupils for their future, securing outcomes and qualifications that will enable all learners to lead successful and fulfilling adult lives

Our curriculum is underpinned by our core values:

* Aim High - To encourage pupils to aim high by supporting them to have high expectations of themselves and providing opportunities for self-discovery, self-belief and self-confidence
* Team Spirit - To foster a sense of team spirit by encouraging pupils to co-operate and work with others in a positive way
* Honesty - To encourage pupils to demonstrate the characteristics of integrity, loyalty and fairness
* Resilience - To support pupils to accept and respond to challenge, make mistakes, learn from mistakes and support others
* Respect - To encourage pupils to show respect and tolerance of others beliefs and values
* Responsibility - To support pupils to take responsibility, accept support, support others and be successful members of the school and wider community

Our curriculum is developmental, but child centred, with recognition that each pupil will have a different pathway. It is a functional curriculum that aims to promote the social inclusion of all pupils and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life as pertinent to their circumstances. As the pupil’s move through the school, the skills they need for living become an integral part of learning. These include

• Communication

• Academic achievement (including Literacy and Numeracy)

• Accreditation and Qualifications

• Mobility

• Independence

• Relationships

• Self-respect, dignity

• Self-esteem, self-confidence

• Self-regulation.

Although the National Curriculum and expectations it holds are taken into account, for the pupils at Ashley, it is equally as important to consider their needs and the skills that will be supportive for the future;

*Content should be determined by the needs of the child rather than cultural values in respect to academic subjects and so it needs to be pupil centred and not subject centred. (Powell and Jordan 1997:25).*

For the pupils at Ashley High School, our curriculum must incorporate the opportunity for pupils develop depth of knowledge and understanding, including generalising skills over time. This is especially important where pupils are studying life skills or targets that fall outside of traditional areas. Ashley High School will ensure that our curriculum and approach to learning always;

• Delivers an adapted National Curriculum and offers a broad and balanced curriculum at a level appropriate to pupil attainment

• Provides stimulating activities and tasks

• Sets challenging, achievable targets for individual pupils

• Develops effective communication skills

• Develops technology skills which engage pupils in the advancing world of technology

• Develops self-confidence and skills towards independent living

• Encourages a caring, respectful attitude towards each other

• Ensures continuity and progression

• Enables access for all pupils

• Use enrichment and extra-curricular activities to enhance the education offered to pupils

• Engages professionals within the community

**Implementation**

***Key Stage 3***

Ashley School is committed to full National Curriculum coverage and its programmes of study. The commitment however, must be consistent with the EHCP which may prioritise particular subjects or key areas of learning. In Key Stage 3, pupils study the following subjects

* English
* Maths
* Science
* ICT
* PE
* Food Technology
* Design Technology
* Preparing for Adulthood (includes full coverage of PSHE and Citizenship NC POS)
* Practical Learning (Includes development of Literacy, Numeracy and Essential Skills)
* Wider World (includes full coverage of History, Geography and MFL NC POS)
* Creative Studies (includes full coverage of Art and Music NC POS)
* Beliefs and Values (includes full coverage of RE NC POS)

***Key Stage 4***

At the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9) and into key stage 4, the curriculum recognises the need for pupils to move towards a higher proportion of life skills and independence. The SEND code of practice recommends that from 14 years old;

“High aspirations about employment, independent living and community participation should be developed through the curriculum and extra-curricular provision. Schools should seek partnerships with employment services, businesses, housing agencies, disability organisations and arts and sports groups, to help children understand what is available to them as they get older, and what it is possible for them to achieve. It can be particularly powerful to meet disabled adults who are successful in their work” (SEND code of practice January 2015)

At **Key Stage 4**, all pupils follow the Core and Foundation curriculum and are placed in the appropriate group for their ability. Pupils access Functional Skills Level 1/2 or Entry Level courses in the following subjects:

* English
* Maths
* Science
* ICT
* Humanities
* Vocational Studies

A range of short course accreditations are also available at Key Stage 4 including Level 1, Entry Level or ASDAN courses, which pupils opt for. They include:

* Animal Care
* Creative Media
* Home Cooking Skills
* Preparing for Work
* Gardening
* Construction
* Independent Living
* Travelling Independently
* Hospitality
* Uniformed Public Services

Key Stage 4 pupils also study Beliefs and Values, PE and Preparing for Adulthood (RSE and Health Education) all of which are non-accredited.

\*\* During implementation of the new functional curriculum and the phasing out of the old curriculum, a small cohort of Year 11 pupils will continue to follow GCSE programmes in Maths, English, Science and History.

***Key Stage 5***

All of the work within Ashley 6th Form is based on the absolute belief that planning and preparing young adults for life beyond Ashley is fundamental. Within our 6th Form, all aspects of the curriculum are based on this ideology, fulfilling the Preparing for Adulthood agenda (PfA) as set out by the DfE. The four key outcomes in relation to preparing young people for adulthood are:

* Employment
* Health
* Independent Living
* Community Participation

At **Key Stage 5** our academic curriculum consists of three core areas:

* English (Entry 2 & 3, Functional Skills Level 1, Level 2 and GCSE Resits)
* Mathematics (Entry 2 & 3, Functional Skills Level 1, Level 2 and GCSE Resits)
* ICT (Entry 2 & 3, Functional Skills Level 1 and Level 2)

Qualifications in all of these areas are essential for future employment and we strive to challenge all of our pupils effectively so that they might achieve to the best of their ability in all three.

A range of accredited vocational qualifications are also available at Key Stage 5 at Entry Level and Level 1, they include:

* Vocational Studies
* Employability

Key Stage 5 pupils also study follow a Preparing for Adulthood Programme that is non-accredited. As part of this programme all pupils will take part in Work Experience.

***Essential Skills***

At Ashley School we intend for every learner to have the opportunity to develop key essential skills. The essential key skills are threaded throughout the curriculum and summarised below

* Speaking
* Listening
* Creativity
* Leadership
* Problem Solving
* Teamwork
* Staying positive
* Aiming High

***Literacy and Numeracy***

Literacy and Reading are a high priority and all pupils participate in a wide range of Literacy activities throughout the school week to develop and refine their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. We encourage and foster an enjoyment of reading by incorporating reading opportunities and wider reading into our day-to-day curriculum. In subject areas, we encourage discussion and provide opportunities for pupils to speak confidently and fluently about subject content, topics and wider issues.

Numeracy activities take place duiring the school week with a particular focus on money, time and multiplication. Opportunities to develop numeracy skills are interleaved into all curriculum areas and students are encouraged to use correct mathematical language, notation, conventions and techniques.

Lower than expected Literacy and Numeracy skills on entry are recognised as a barrier to general curriculum access for some pupils. Where pupils are identified as behind in their progress in Maths and English we offer intervention sessions to quickly improve reading, writing and numeracy skills, Targetted phonics and dyslexia interventions are also in place for pupils that need them. Interventions take place as soon as possible in KS3 to ensure that pupils have the skills needed to access the curriculum.

There is also a strong focus on the development of literacy and numeracy skills through our KS3 Practical Learning curriculum. Development of literacy and numeracy skills in relation to real-life situations and scenarios ensures pupils are better prepared for independent living and employment.

***Independent Living***

Independent Living is taught across the school and provides a foundation for lifelong learning focusing on transferable social and life skills which are essential for living and working in the community. Weekly Preparing for Adulthood/RSE and Health Education lessons help all our pupils develop as individuals in a wider society. Our pupils learn to understand themselves physically, emotionally, socially and sexually and to understand their relationships with others.

***Global Learning, British Values, SMSC***

We feel that it is important that our pupils are supported and actively encouraged to to be curious about the world that they live in at a local, national and global level. Across the curriculum, we actively promote Global Learning, British Values, Thinking Skills and the development of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education (SMSC). Descreet lessons also take place during pastoral time to learn and understand more about the world around them.

***Careers***

Our **Careers Programme** is introduced in Year 7 and builds significantly through Year 8 to Year 13. We make every effort to support all of our pupils into a positive destination that utilises their skills and interests. We do this through a rigorous careers programme with the involvement of local employers. Our overall aim is to support our pupils in making well informed and realistic career decisions for the future. We do this by providing:

* A comprehensive careers programme from Year 7 onwards
* Individual careers guidance for pupils in Year 9 and above
* Access to up to date careers information
* Links with local employers.

***School Value Days***

School value days are dedicated to teaching and promoting Ashley core values. Value days have different themes and are adapted to respond to local and national challenges. They aim to develop pupil character, mindset, confidence and support them in making positive life choices.

***Extra-curricular***

Extra- curricular activities are extensive and provide enrichment opportunities where learning and teaching can take place in a variety of ways both within and beyond the classroom. Forest School activities, residential trips, community projects, themed weeks and after school clubs are some examples when pupils are able to develop their social skills and learn to to become more active citizens within the school community and beyond.

We are proud of our curriculum at Ashley High and are continually reviewing and updating to give our pupils the best possible learning experiences in order that they achieve their full potential and are well prepared for adulthood and working life.

**Impact**

At Ashley High School pupils are assessed during every lesson, which enables our teachers to plan the next steps for each child. Teachers assess against the learning outcomes and provide live feedback which enables each pupil to make progress within the lesson and overtime. Individual progress is tracked and reported to parents and carers at parents evening, through annual reviews and on termly reports.

Ashley High School uses rigorous triangulated monitoring throughout the year to gauge the impact of the curriculum design. Senior Leaders and Subject Leaders monitor individual subjects: reviewing learning, evaluating pupil voice, providing individual feedback to move practice forward, celebrating positives and highlighting areas of development that through coaching and continued professional development are developed and strengthened. The impact of the curriculum is reviewed termly and progress is measured against end of year outcomes for individual pupils.

We will measure the impact of the curriculum through;

* Pupil progress and accreditation data
* Destination data
* EHCP outcomes
* SALT outcomes
* Attendance
* Pupil questionnaires
* Pupil voice
* Parent questionnaires
* Lesson observations / learning walks
* Quality Assurance - Work sampling and moderating
* Meetings with subject co-ordinators
* Curriculum reviews
* Documentation audits

**Roles and Responsibilities**

***The governing body***

The governing board will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation. The governing board will also ensure that:

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

• Enough teaching time is provided for pupils to cover the National Curriculum and other statutory requirements

• The school is teaching a "broad and balanced curriculum" which includes English, maths, science and (subject to providing the right to withdraw) religious education, and enough teaching time is provided

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

• The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements • It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum

• It fulfils its role in processes to disapply pupils from all or part of the National Curriculum, where appropriate, and in any subsequent appeals

• Pupils from year 9 onwards are provided with independent, impartial careers guidance, and that this is appropriately resourced

***Headteacher***

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

• All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met

• The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the governing body

• Where appropriate, the individual needs of some pupils are met by permanent or temporary disapplication from all or part of the National Curriculum

• They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate

• The school’s procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements

• The governing body is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum

• The governing board is advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions

• Proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with SEN

***Other staff***

Other staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy. The Deputy Headteacher has responsibility for the implementation of the curriculum across the school. Because we believe in a collaborative approach, teachers will take on a subject co-ordinator role. This may be because they have particular expertise in this area or a special interest. They are not however subject leaders and are not responsible for other teacher’s performance and pupil outcomes.

Class teachers are responsible for:

• Termly planning

• Differentiation to meet individual needs of pupils

• Using a range of teaching and learning strategies, techniques and resources

• Attending training as appropriate

• Assessment for learning

**Links to other policies**

This policy links to the following policies and procedures

* Assessment policy
* SEN policy and information report
* CEIAG Policy
* Equality information and objectives
* Preparing for Adulthood outcomes
* Teaching and Learning
* Safeguarding

This policy will be reviewed every yearbythe Curriculum Leader. At every review, the policy will be shared with the full governing board.

**This policy was reviewed: September 2025**

**Next review: September 2026**