

Curriculum Policy

Little Acorns School



Growth Learning Therapies

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Last reviewed on:	November 2025 with Graham Richards	
Next review due by:	November 2026	



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1. Aims

Little Acorns School recognises that all pupils should have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

All pupils need to work at a level which is appropriate to their understanding, relevant to their chronological age and at a rate that suits their individual abilities. Learning and teaching are approached with the focus on the individual needs of the learners. Each pupil has a tailored curriculum based upon their baseline assessment, previous academic outcomes and long-term learning targets. Pupils will be taught in small groups, individually, and when appropriate within the community so that skills are generalised to real life settings and pupils are prepared for life in the wider world. High aspirations are held for all pupils. Our curriculum develops pupils' experiences, knowledge, self-confidence, ability to communicate and independence.

Our curriculum 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
- Enable pupils to develop knowledge, understand concepts and acquire skills, and be able to choose and apply these in relevant situations
- 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
- Ensure equal access to learning for all pupils, with high expectations for every pupil and appropriate levels of challenge and support
- Have a high academic/vocational/technical ambition for all pupils
- To meet the outcomes of each child's EHCP.
- Equip pupils with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life
- Be able to see clear links between different aspects of their learning
- Where able. develop a deep and rich subject knowledge
- Understand the value and purpose of their learning and see its relevance to its past, present and future
- Develop and demonstrate curiosity and creativity
- Be able to self-regulate in readiness for learning
- Demonstrate growth through learning and therapies

2. Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy reflects the requirements for independent schools to provide a broad and balanced curriculum as per the Independent School Standards and the programmes of study we have chosen to follow.

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014](#) and [Equality Act 2010](#).

3. Scope

Pupils at Little Acorns School have a range of needs including Autism Spectrum Conditions, Social and Communication Difficulties, ADHD and Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties. Most have a history of failed educational placements. The young people are characterised by a lack of self-esteem and confidence, a reluctance to trust and a fear of challenge. This means that teachers must be creative and tailor approaches to each young person to build resilience and confidence.

Fundamentally, we understand that we are all individuals. Our approach is not a 'one size fits all' but instead offers a tailored, rich, and stimulating education experience for all our pupils, according to their needs. We recognise that many of our pupils encounter additional challenges in terms of their well-being, learning needs, early experiences of school and anxieties about being in school. Therefore, everything we do is crafted to deliver a bespoke education, carefully nurturing each pupil to ensure that positive outcomes are achieved – and their life chances are improved.

Our curriculum is supported by rigorous planning, and it is clear what end points the curriculum is building towards, and what pupils will need to know and be able to do at those endpoints. We work to securing each



pupil's EHCP outcomes and small step targets. These targets are set within a multi-agency forum and detail the objectives required to have been achieved by the end of the key stage they are working in. We work to this end point with the children's Provision Maps and Personalised Learning Plans, key to the planning of each subject/intervention. We continually build, develop and adapt pupil individual provision plans to outline how we will achieve the targets.

Assessments are ongoing but we formally report on progress to parents/carers three times a year. We are compliant with the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the schedule of the Education (ISS) Regulations 2014.

Classes groups and curriculum content are not categorised simply by year group. Groups are categorised by learning styles, sensory needs and class grouping is completed considering the outcomes of the EHCP's, the stage the child is at and taking into account different personalities within the school.

Developing valuable life skills and skills to develop independence can be very difficult for children and young people who have attachment and/or educational learning difficulties. Specific time is dedicated for pupils to develop these skills in a safe and nurturing environment.

We have an emphasis on the basics of reading, English, 'spelling, punctuation, and grammar' (SPAG), and teaching functional numeracy. We recognise that having a 'functional reading age' (age 8.0years+) is pivotal in enabling our pupils to access a broader and richer curriculum whilst having a reading age of 13.0 years+ is also a requirement to be able to fully access GCSE level qualifications. On entry, many of our pupils have rapidly fallen behind their peers therefore we act quickly to close the gap and work towards accelerated progress. Our intent is for all pupils to read at an age-appropriate level through rigorous and sequential assessments so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught before and retained. These assessments identify barriers to learning and gaps. From this starting point we follow the Read, Write, Inc programme, leading onto a themed project-based literacy and language curriculum when the children have reached this functional level. Pupils are encouraged to adopt a problem-solving mindset and in doing so, build resilience and independence.

Our individualised assessment and teaching of phonics correlate directly with 'Read, Write, Inc' and provides a sharp focus to enable us to sort out any confusions, target gaps in learning and evaluate impact. Barriers to learning are identified in order to implement tailor made programmes with appropriate coverage, content, structure, and sequencing, to unlock the potential of our struggling readers. The texts we use provide opportunities for speaking, listening, and writing and connect closely to pupils' phonics knowledge. Our systems, methods and resources facilitate reciprocal links between reading and writing and ensure all pupils have every opportunity to gain the phonics knowledge and language comprehension necessary to read for meaning and the skills to communicate, giving them the foundations for future learning and better outcomes in life.

We encourage pupils to become independent thinkers allowing them freedom to explore, create and think critically and actively learn. Where possible they will be encouraged to challenge themselves to build their confidence and resilience, given the opportunity to develop the capacity to surprise themselves and others and to become confident and self-assured. We use questioning, praise and encouragement to develop a positive attitude to learning and high self-esteem. They are taught to be observant, investigative, curious, determined, imaginative, adventurous, co-operative and to use reasoning. We have realistic, yet challenging expectations and plan opportunities to extend their knowledge, experiences, and interests, motivating and supporting every pupil to reach their individual potential. All planning is based on each individual pupil to ensure their goals are realistic and achievable. Adult led and child-initiated activities are equally important; adults interact sensitively, encouraging perseverance and practice, reinforcing that we all learn at a different pace and can all learn when things go wrong.

A therapeutic approach is key to the daily teaching of all the children. All children are offered a therapeutic plan. These help us to ensure that all children can achieve in line with their potential. We address cognitive and emotional development as one cannot make good progress without the other. Little Acorns School provides experiences that help the children to grow in every sense of the word.

At Little Acorns School we also use the THRIVE approach in school to underpin the curriculum. THRIVE is a dynamic, developmental approach to working with children that supports their emotional and social wellbeing. It is based on the latest research in neuroscience, attachment theory and child development, drawing on research into the role of creativity and play in developing emotional resilience. The programme was created



by a multi-agency team, with experience of being teachers, advisers, Ofsted inspectors, social workers, family therapists, foster and adoption specialists across education and care settings. They have drawn together their experience with theories and research to create this rich resource. THRIVE draws on an understanding of six “building blocks” of development and growth that comes online sequentially and remains throughout life.

Our environment and delivery of our curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning.

- **Playing and exploring** – pupils will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’.
- **Active learning** – pupils will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties to allow them the opportunity to enjoy their achievements.
- **Creating and thinking critically** – we encourage and support pupils to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The advisory board

The advisory 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.
- Proper provision is made for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs (SEN)
- It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum.

4.2 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 board.
- They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate
- The school’s procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements.
- The governing board 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 to make informed decisions.
- Proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with SEN.

4.3 Teachers and learning support assistants

- Deliver the curriculum in line with this policy and statutory guidance, seeking advice and support where required.
- Ensure understanding of the national curriculum and relevant subject knowledge.
- Ensure understanding of relevant examination board specifications and examination requirements.

5. Curriculum

Curriculum Intent, Implementation and Impact

“The curriculum is a framework for setting out the aims of a programme of education, including the knowledge and understanding to be gained at each stage (intent); for translating that framework over time into a structure and narrative (implementation) and for evaluating what knowledge and understanding pupils have gained against expectations (impact).”



Our pupils may have a range of learning needs such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs and Communication Difficulties. All our pupils have an Education and Health Care Plan. Some pupils may have missed aspects of their education prior to attending Little Acorns School and so they often begin their education here with attainment levels and skills that are significantly below average for their age.

The aim and values of Little Acorns School are focused on maximising every individuals' potential to develop into a confident, secure, well-adjusted and skilled young person who will make a positive contribution to society and live as independent a life as possible.

At Little Acorns School we strive to deliver a curriculum that is accessible to all our pupils. We aim to offer a balanced, interesting and relevant curriculum which is created around the individual learners. Little Acorns School delivers a bespoke curriculum, which is closely aligned with our pupils' levels of ability, interests and aspirations. It is broad, balanced, and relevant to needs and designed to have integrated clinical and therapeutic support as necessary and a focus on developing resilience and preparing pupils for the next stage in their lives. This specialist curriculum is tailored to our pupils' individual needs and based on a person-centred planning framework. Professionals, parents and the pupil will be pivotal in ensuring individual needs are met.

Learners can begin their journey at Little Acorns School during any time in their education, at any point in the year and are supported through an individualised transition programme. It is important that teachers use this transition time to assess and try and understand the extent of the learner's previous knowledge, skills and understanding both in the core subjects and the wider curriculum. Teachers at Little Acorns School have to be equipped with knowledge of the curriculum in reading, writing and mathematics as well as the wider curriculum subjects due to the academic ability of some of the learners we teach. There are also times when lessons don't follow their planned route due to incidental learning which is equally important to explore. This could be due to gaps in learning or an interest that has been sparked in the individual learner/group, which through further exploration will strengthen the planned learning content. Due to learners often missing gaps in education, teachers planning won't always fully understand the learner's historic educational profile. At times, planned sequencing has to be paused to revisit previous content/skills which the learner is expected to have covered at an earlier stage of their education journey. Daily staff debriefs are important to share knowledge of learner's social, emotional and academic learning. Through these meetings teachers can work closely to support planning and allow the learner to make more rapid progress.

Each pupil has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which sets out long term outcomes within five areas:

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Sensory and Physical
- Independence- Statutory from Year 9.

These EHCP outcomes form the basis of each pupil's personalised learning plan, lesson planning and assessment, and impact on every aspect of each pupils' education.

Yearly targets are written from the EHCP outcomes and are directly linked into medium term planning as well as formative and summative assessment tools.

5.1 Intent

Little Acorns encourages children's GROWTH by teaching them to be Generous, Resilient, Optimistic, Wonderful, Thriving and Honest. We believe in advocating for children's growth academically and emotionally. We focus on teaching children's skills to promote their emotional regulation, so they can lead wonderful and fulfilling lives. Little Acorns children learn to be kind, safe, hard-working and respectful. We support children back into the classroom to access education full time through a bespoke but structured approach. Each child has a personalised learning plan which enable the children to thrive in their learning.



Therapies are embedded into our curriculum to support children in communicating their feelings, supporting mental health and well-being. With an offer of outdoor education and individualised therapeutic support the children grow into respectful members of the community.



At Little Acorns School, our curriculum is carefully designed to support pupils in becoming Kind, Safe, Hard-working, and Respectful members of the school community. These values are embedded throughout our curriculum offer ensuring they are consistently modelled, taught, and reinforced.

Kind

In English and RWI, pupils learn to listen to one another, work collaboratively, and celebrate each other's progress in reading and writing.

Project-based learning encourages teamwork, turn-taking, and valuing others' contributions, helping pupils to develop empathy and considerations.

PSHE provides structured opportunities for discussing kindness in relationships, emotions, and the wider community.

Safe

Across Maths and English, pupils develop confidence through structured routines, knowing they are in a safe and supportive environment to take risks with their learning.

Computing lessons explicitly teach online safety, ensuring pupils know how to protect themselves and others in digital spaces.

PE and PSHE sessions focus on physical safety, healthy lifestyles, and making safe choices in different contexts.

In project work, pupils are guided to use tools, materials, and equipment responsibly.

Hard-working

Daily English, Maths, and RWI sessions set high expectations, encouraging resilience, perseverance, and pride in achievement.

Pupils learn that practice, effort, and determination lead to progress, with marking and feedback reinforcing the value of sustained hard work.

Project-based learning motivates pupils through meaningful, hands-on activities that challenge them to explore, problem-solve, and present their ideas.

Respectful

All subjects encourage respect for peers, staff, resources, and the learning environment.

Literacy lessons expose pupils to diverse texts, helping them understand and respect different perspectives.



In project-based topics, pupils develop respect for the natural world, history, cultures, and communities.

PE and PSHE provide structured opportunities for developing respect through sportsmanship, teamwork, and discussions around rights and responsibilities.

Through this balanced approach, the curriculum at Little Acorns not only delivers academic learning but also actively supports pupils in living out the school's four core rules, preparing them for learning, life, and future independence.

At Little Acorns School, our curriculum is guided by three key intentions, reflecting our values (GROWTH) and community rules, giving clear examples of how these values and rules shape pupils' lives, relationships, and understanding of the world around them.

Intention 1: Growing Self-Awareness

Our curriculum enables pupils to recognise their own strengths and challenges, building the confidence to be **resilient**, **optimistic**, and **honest** in their learning. Through our curriculum offer, pupils are encouraged to **work hard**, take risks, and reflect on their progress. They develop ambition and personal responsibility, understanding that mistakes are part of learning and growth. By feeling safe to try new things, pupils lay the foundations to become **thriving** and **wonderful** learners who believe in themselves.

Intention 2: Understanding Others

The curriculum fosters empathy, **kindness**, and **respect** for others. Through our curriculum offer, pupils learn to collaborate, listen, and support one another, developing a spirit of **generosity** and teamwork. Literacy introduces diverse voices and perspectives, helping pupils to value difference and celebrate strengths. Across all subjects, pupils are taught that being **kind**, **respectful**, and **safe** creates a community where everyone can succeed. Through shared learning experiences, they develop the skills to build trusting relationships and contribute positively to school and wider community life.

Intention 3: Connecting with the World

Our curriculum provides pupils with the knowledge and skills to engage with their community and the wider world as responsible, **respectful** citizens. Project-based topics, combined with stand-alone Computing, PE, and PSHE, encourage pupils to think about how their actions affect others and the environment. Pupils learn to be **generous**, **honest**, and **resilient** in making choices that keep themselves and others **safe**. Real-life experiences help them see how their learning connects to everyday life, preparing them to **thrive** in society, contribute meaningfully, and approach the future with **optimism**.

5.2 Implementation



At Little Acorns School, our curriculum is carefully structured and sequenced to support effective learning. Planning begins with long term plans (yearly overviews), which outline the progression of learning across the year. From there, medium term plans provide a more detailed breakdown of learning objectives and outcomes, leading to daily lesson planning, which is timetabled and coordinated through Curriculum Maestro.

Our curriculum documents clearly indicate what will be taught and when, taking into account pupils' prior knowledge, opportunities to consolidate and revisit previous learning, and the creation of safe, engaging, and stimulating environments in which new learning can take place. This structured approach ensures that learning is coherent, cumulative, and tailored to the needs of each pupil.

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is delivered through PSHE lessons. Pupils are encouraged and guided by moral principles, including healthy relationships and consent and taught to recognise the value of family life. The role of RSE is to explore, understand and challenge conventional notions of masculinity and femininity, describing sexuality in a positive sense. It provides pupils with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to feel happy and supported in their own sexual identity, and to respect others' sexual identity. Those involved in the delivery of RSE will be committed to securing a safe environment which encourages open discussion of both the positives and dangers of sexual activity.

We recognise that parents have the right to withdraw their children from any or all parts of the school's program of Relationships and Sex Education. We recognise that many of our young people are highly vulnerable. We teach our pupils to keep themselves safe and have a focus each year for every age group on consent and appropriate and inappropriate touch, and how to report any concerns.



SMSC and PSHE are central to all aspects of our curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to respect the law and to act consistently with their own beliefs and with a view to the consequences of their own and others' actions. We enthusiastically promote fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Political issues are introduced in a number of courses and are presented in a balanced manner. The promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school is not allowed.

Religious Education (RE) at Little Acorns School is delivered through celebration days planned throughout the school year. These sessions are closely linked to cultural and religious celebrations, allowing pupils to explore the practices and beliefs of different faiths in an engaging and meaningful way. RE learning is also connected to the Rights Respecting Schools Award, particularly when exploring topics such as rules, rights, and responsibilities, highlighting how different faiths and belief systems follow different sets of rules and guidance.

We give emphasis in our curriculum to the development of:

- Numeracy Skills with all children being introduced to Numicon: Breaking Barriers Scheme (unless they are more able whereby White Rose Math's Schemes of work are utilised as a springboard for planning)
- Numeracy skills for KS3 and KS4 will follow White Rose Maths. AQA Entry and level certificates and alongside GCSE Pathway.
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health, including SRE (see individual policy)
- Physical Skills including PE, swimming, individual therapies, using the community and Life Skills. This also includes daily sensory circuits and activities.
- Outdoor Learning and connecting to the environment.
- SMSC- including the fundamental British Values.
- AQA Unit Awards
- Academic Progress
- Topic work is based on the likes/dislikes and interests of the children, whilst ensuring coverage of the National Curriculum where appropriate.
- Therapeutic Interventions such as play therapy.
- Visual signs and symbols are used throughout the school with all the children and utilised where possible within the curriculum. We also use now and next or task boards.

By implementing a differentiated and modified national curriculum, with a broad range of qualification levels and a bespoke and intentional personal development programme, it is intended that Little Acorns School will:

- Allow all pupils to make progress from their individual starting points.
- Increase the communication skills and styles of all pupils.
- Cater for the specific needs and learning difficulties of individual pupils as described in their EHCPs, by providing teaching and learning opportunities at an appropriate level based on informed baselines.
- Engage pupils' interests in personal development.
- Create a positive learning environment where pupils can feel safe.
- Allow pupils to interact and learn from each other and from the environment around them.
- Allow all pupils to reach their full potential and achieve their own personal success and independence.
- Give pupils opportunities to develop their key skills and practice them in the real world
- Prepare our learners for their next stage in education, employment and life
- Promote independent choices around learning and independent study through AQA Awards

5.2a Primary Curriculum

In Key Stages 1 and 2, Little Acorns School uses the Cornerstones Curriculum as a guiding framework, carefully adapted to meet the individual needs of our pupils. This provides a clear structure for planning and supports staff in tracking progress against National Curriculum skills and knowledge, while retaining the flexibility to personalise learning and ensure it is meaningful and engaging for every child.

What is the Cornerstones Curriculum?



The Cornerstones Curriculum is a creative and thematic approach to learning. It is based on a child-centred pedagogy called The Four Cornerstones and is delivered through Imaginative Learning Projects (ILPs) and Knowledge Rich Projects (KRPs), which provide a rich menu of exciting and motivating learning activities that make creative links between all aspects of children's learning. We believe children learn better when they are encouraged to use their imagination and apply their learning to engaging contexts. Our curriculum provides many learning challenges throughout the academic year that require children to solve problems, apply themselves creatively and express their knowledge and understanding effectively. Cornerstones is used at a stage that suits the children's needs; this may not be a direct correlation to the children's chronological age. Due to the needs of our children, and the fact that many have missed chunks of their education through non-attendance in previous settings, it is important to find those gaps.

Our curriculum is delivered through overarching Curriculum Maestro projects, which offer a thematic focus and serve as the foundation for planning. These projects enable staff to integrate and adapt wider curriculum subjects to suit individual needs, promoting engagement, fostering a love of learning, and supporting pupils to make accelerated progress from their starting points.

The result is a broad and balanced curriculum that blends core subjects with opportunities to develop functional, independence, and everyday life skills. While some subjects are taught discretely, the Curriculum Maestro projects encourage cross-curricular learning, helping pupils to make meaningful connections and apply their knowledge and skills in a range of contexts.

Literacy

In Key Stages 1 and 2, each Curriculum Maestro project incorporates a suggested literacy curriculum that is carefully designed to map directly to the relevant areas of the National Curriculum. This ensures that every reading and writing activity meets national expectations while remaining meaningful and engaging within the context of the thematic project. By integrating literacy with the overarching curriculum projects, pupils develop essential reading, writing, and communication skills in a purposeful way, applying them across a range of subjects and real-world contexts.

Read Write Inc. (RWI) is also accessed by a number of pupils alongside their literacy curriculum to support early reading and phonics development. RWI is a structured, systematic phonics programme that helps children decode words, build fluency, and develop early comprehension skills. Daily RWI sessions provide targeted support for pupils who need additional scaffolding to access reading and writing confidently.

Reading is embedded within the Curriculum Maestro literacy topics. Classes are provided with suggested texts and reading lists to explore within their literacy sessions, ensuring that reading activities are meaningful and linked to the overarching thematic projects. Pupils are also supported through Read Write Inc. (RWI), which provides a structured approach to phonics and early reading using a wide range of texts to develop decoding, fluency, and comprehension skills.

Reading and writing levels are identified using Oxford Owl assessments, which inform individual reading plans and ensure that pupils are accessing texts appropriate to their current skills. Our intent is for all pupils to make strong progress in reading, achieving as close to age-appropriate levels as possible, through rigorous, sequential lessons and ongoing assessment.

To support vocabulary acquisition across the school, Word Aware is used as a whole-school approach. This method focuses on explicitly teaching and reinforcing key words in context, enabling pupils to understand and use them effectively across the curriculum.

The Word Aware approach includes three levels of vocabulary:

- Anchor words – essential everyday words that pupils need to know to participate in daily communication (e.g., common verbs, nouns, or adjectives).
- Goldilocks words – words that are “just right” for expanding pupils’ vocabulary within the curriculum; these are accessible but slightly challenging to extend understanding.
- Step-On words – more advanced or subject-specific words that extend pupils’ vocabulary further and allow for deeper comprehension and use in context.

Teaching these words follows the Select, Teach, Activate, Review (STAR) framework:

- Select – identify which Anchor, Goldilocks, or Step-On words to teach.
- Teach – explicitly introduce the word, explain its meaning, and provide context.



- Activate – give pupils opportunities to use the word in speech and writing, applying it in meaningful contexts.
- Review – revisit and reinforce the words regularly to ensure long-term retention and effective use across the curriculum.

By combining structured word levels with the STAR framework, pupils systematically develop both functional vocabulary for everyday use and enriched vocabulary for academic and cross-curricular learning.

Mathematics

In Maths, children follow the White Rose Maths scheme from Reception to Year 6. This scheme provides a coherent, progressive curriculum that develops fluency, reasoning, and problem-solving skills. The core mathematical areas covered across the primary years include:

Number and Place Value – understanding numbers, counting, and the number system.

Calculation – addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division strategies.

Fractions, Decimals, and Percentages – recognising, comparing, and calculating with fractions and decimals.

Measurement – length, mass, volume, time, and money.

Geometry and Shape – properties of shapes, position, direction, and angles.

Statistics and Data Handling – collecting, presenting, and interpreting data.

Ratio and Proportion (later years) – understanding relationships between numbers.

Daily maths sessions build on prior learning and ensure progression, with opportunities for practical, problem-solving, and reasoning tasks. This structure ensures children develop a strong foundation in number and mathematical understanding while building confidence in applying skills across different contexts.

Rationale

Linking literacy to Curriculum Maestro projects provides meaningful context for reading and writing, encouraging pupils to engage with texts and writing tasks relevant to their learning.

RWI phonics intervention ensures that pupils who require additional support develop early reading skills in a structured, systematic way.

Word Aware develops vocabulary knowledge and use across the curriculum, supporting comprehension and expression.

White Rose Maths provides a structured, coherent framework that ensures progression from Reception to Year 6, supporting fluency, reasoning, and problem-solving.

This approach ensures that reading, writing, and maths are delivered daily, are connected to pupils' interests and projects, and provide both targeted intervention and broad curriculum coverage, allowing every pupil to make progress from their individual starting point.

Science

At Little Acorns School, science learning in Years 1–6 is delivered through discrete sessions that sit within the context of each overarching Curriculum Maestro project theme. This ensures that pupils receive explicit, focused teaching of scientific knowledge and skills while also making meaningful links to wider learning.

For example, within the project 'Enchanted Woodland', pupils take part in dedicated science lessons to study plants, animals, and habitats, while the wider project theme enriches learning through literacy, art, and geography. This allows children to explore scientific concepts in an engaging, story-like context, while ensuring that all National Curriculum skills and knowledge are explicitly taught and assessed.

This approach ensures:

- National Curriculum coverage – Knowledge and skills are delivered systematically.



- Depth and progression – Scientific enquiry skills (observing, predicting, experimenting, recording, and evaluating) are taught progressively across the key stages.
- Meaningful connections – Pupils see how science links with other subjects and real-life contexts, enhancing engagement and understanding.
- Reinforcement of learning – By embedding science within project themes, concepts are revisited in multiple ways, supporting retention and application.

The result is a science curriculum that is both rigorous and inspiring, providing pupils with the tools to think scientifically while nurturing curiosity and enthusiasm for discovery.

Physical Education

At Little Acorns School, we believe that Physical Education (PE) is essential for the physical, social, and emotional development of our pupils. PE promotes health and wellbeing, encourages teamwork and cooperation, and develops confidence, resilience, and self-discipline. Our PE curriculum is inclusive and accessible to all learners, with differentiation to meet individual needs.

We use **Twinkl Move** as our core scheme of work, ensuring lessons are progressive, engaging, and aligned with the National Curriculum.

The PE curriculum aims to enable pupils to:

- Develop competence in a broad range of physical activities.
- Engage in competitive sports and activities, in both team and individual contexts.
- Understand the importance of physical activity for a healthy lifestyle.
- Develop personal and social skills, including teamwork, communication, and fair play.
- Demonstrate creativity, confidence, and resilience through movement.

PE is delivered across the school using a half-termly approach. Each half term focuses on a different topic or skill set, based on the Twinkl Move scheme. Lessons are designed to progress from basic movement skills to more complex games and activities.

- Pupils' progress is monitored through Twinkl Move lesson observations and skill checklists.
- Assessment focuses on skill development, participation, teamwork, and understanding of rules.
- Differentiation ensures all pupils can access the PE curriculum and achieve personal success.

Computing

At Little Acorns School, Computing is an essential part of our curriculum, enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, and understanding to use technology safely, creatively, and effectively. Computing supports learning across the curriculum and equips pupils with skills necessary for the digital world.

We use **Switched On Computing** as our core scheme of work, supplemented with Maestro-themed project activities to embed computing skills within broader curriculum contexts.

The Computing curriculum aims to enable pupils to:

- Understand and apply fundamental principles of computer science, including algorithms and programming.
- Use technology purposefully to create, store, manipulate, and retrieve digital content.
- Develop digital literacy, including safe and responsible use of technology.
- Solve problems, reason logically, and think computationally.
- Transfer computing skills across curriculum subjects, particularly through Maestro-themed projects.

Pupils are assessed through Switched On Computing lesson outcomes, digital portfolios, and project-based outputs.

Assessment focuses on computational thinking, problem solving, creativity, and safe technology use.

PSHE

At Little Acorns School, Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education enables pupils to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives. PSHE supports emotional wellbeing, social development, and prepares pupils for life in modern society.



We deliver PSHE through a combination of the **PSHE Association Scheme of Work** and Maestro-themed projects, embedding learning within engaging, cross-curricular contexts. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is incorporated appropriately across the key stages in line with statutory guidance.

The PSHE curriculum aims to enable pupils to:

- Develop self-awareness, confidence, and responsibility.
- Understand and manage emotions, make informed decisions, and build resilience.
- Learn about healthy relationships, including friendships, family, and RSE.
- Make safe and informed choices regarding physical and mental health.
- Understand rights, responsibilities, and respect for diversity and the environment.
- Apply skills and knowledge across curriculum subjects through project-based learning.

Pupils' PSHE learning is assessed through reflections, discussions, and project outputs.

Assessment focuses on knowledge acquisition, personal skills, attitudes, and application of learning in real-life contexts.

Progression is mapped through PSHE Association learning objectives, ensuring development from year to year.

Wider Curriculum

At Little Acorns School, our wider curriculum subjects are taught within the context of overarching Curriculum Maestro projects across the year. Each project is carefully planned to provide meaningful cross-curricular links, ensuring that pupils experience a broad and balanced education.

While some projects may place greater emphasis on a particular subject driver such as science, history, or geography, this is balanced across the academic year so that all subject areas are valued, revisited, and explored in depth. This ensures that every pupil has the opportunity to engage with their strengths and interests, while also being encouraged to grow in areas they may find more challenging.

By delivering the wider curriculum through projects, pupils:

- Experience learning in engaging, real-world contexts that make subjects more purposeful.
- Develop a sense of coherence and connection between subjects, applying knowledge and skills across different areas of learning.
- Are provided with a balanced offer, where all subjects are represented over the year, ensuring breadth as well as depth.
- Are given equitable opportunities to excel, as projects enable a wide range of skills (creative, practical, analytical, and physical) to be nurtured and showcased.
- Benefit from a curriculum that reflects their individual needs, interests, and talents, helping them to achieve personal success and celebrate achievement in multiple ways.

5.2b Secondary Curriculum

In Key Stage 3, pupils will follow programmes of study which deliver the skills and knowledge identified in the National Curriculum. The curriculum will embrace all areas of academic learning at a level that is related to individual educational needs and provides suitable levels of challenge. Opportunities to develop pupil's personal, social and health awareness and understanding will be embedded across all curriculum areas and delivered extensively through our personal development programmes and PSHE programme, including Challenger Troop CiC and the Princes Trust Employability Programme.

Studies in key stage 4 support pupils to attain a range of relevant qualifications so that they can and do progress to the next stage of their education or pathway. For some, this may be onto courses that lead to higher-level qualifications and into employment or apprenticeship. Little Acorns School will provide opportunities for young people to stay within an educational setting post 16 which supports and meets their educational, emotional and mental health needs, where they can continue to sit appropriate qualifications based on their entry points, such as Entry Level Certificates, Vocational or GCSE qualification and other related qualifications. Through our continued personal development programmes, we support our young people to help gain independence and life skills where appropriate. We will support young people through individual pathways to enable them successfully to navigate to the next stage of their education or employment.



Qualifications offered meet a range of abilities in a variety of subject areas. The school has a strong belief in the value of Entry Level, and vocational educational programmes and provides access to suitable courses and accreditation. Vocational studies can include opportunities for pupils to attend college and work placements, with support from staff.

Staffing & Structures

Teachers at Little Acorns School are expected to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum and therefore require a sound knowledge of the different subject areas. Staff are supported in developing this expertise through ongoing continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities within the school community. Regular feedback and monitoring from the Senior Leadership Team ensures high-quality teaching and supports the continuous development of staff practice.

Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) play a vital role, providing consistent support within the classroom. LSAs are strategically placed within the setting according to their individual skills and in alignment with pupil need, ensuring that every learner receives tailored support to maximise progress.

Class groupings at Little Acorns School are determined based on consultation documents, baseline assessments, risk assessments, and the pupils' Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs). If a change of class is considered necessary after this initial placement, the decision is made collaboratively through discussions between the Quality of Education Lead, SENCO, class teachers, parents/carers, and the Head Teacher as part of the ongoing transition review process, ensuring that each pupil is placed in the most suitable environment to support their learning and development.

The timetable and curriculum are reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current legislation, adherence to best practice in special educational needs provision, and responsiveness to the evolving needs of our pupils.


Baseline Assessment

All new pupils at Little Acorns School undertake a baseline assessment in core subjects, as well as assessments to determine their reading and writing age, upon entry. This information is used to identify the most appropriate class placement and ensure that the curriculum project best aligned to their needs is selected.



KS1/2	
Core Subjects	Additional Subjects
<p>English Mathematics</p> <p>Science Humanities (History, Geography) Religious Education Design Technology including Art and food technology Physical Education PSHE/RSE</p> <p>Music Computing</p> <p><i>*Taught within the overarching curriculum maestro themed project.</i></p>	<p>THRIVE Forest School</p>
KS3	
Core Subjects	Additional Subjects
<p>English Mathematics Science</p> <p>Humanities (History, Geography) Religious Education Food and Nutrition Design Technology including Art Physical Education PSHE/RSE</p> <p>Music</p> <p>Careers Computing</p>	<p>THRIVE Forest School</p> <p>Challenger Troop CiC</p> <p>Life Skills (including Prince's Trust)</p>



KS4		
Core Subjects	Optional Subjects	Additional Subjects
 English Mathematics Science ICT Careers PSHE / RSE	Food Preparation and Nutrition* Hospitality and Catering* Design Technology including Art (The Arts Award and GCSE) Physical Education (Short Course)* Religious Education (Short Course)* Music* Health and Social Care* Drama*	THRIVE AQA Awards Life Skills (including Prince's Trust)

6. Impact

At Little Acorns School, assessment takes place in every lesson to ensure teachers/ HTLAs and LSAs can plan the next steps in learning for each child. Staff check progress against learning objectives and key skills, offering immediate feedback so pupils can make progress within lessons and over time. Individual progress is carefully tracked and shared with parents and carers through reports and parent meetings.

The senior leadership team regularly reviews our curriculum offer by looking at pupils' work, gathering pupil voice, and supporting staff with constructive feedback. Strengths are celebrated, while areas for improvement are addressed through coaching and professional development. Each term, a collaborative meeting takes place with the Executive Headteacher, Alison Neal, to review pupil progress and curriculum development. The impact of the curriculum is evaluated, with progress measured against EHCP outcomes, short-term targets within personalised learning plans, and progress trends tracked closely within each pupil's developmental level.

Our curriculum is underpinned by Curriculum Maestro projects, which provide the starting point for teachers, HLTAs and LSAs to plan engaging learning experiences around a given topic. While these projects form the framework, staff have the freedom to adapt delivery to meet the individual needs, interests, and abilities of their pupils. This ensures a personalised approach that maintains consistency across the school while allowing flexibility and creativity in the classroom.

Our curriculum is designed to spark enjoyment, build confidence, and promote positive attitudes to learning and behaviour. Pupils feel secure in trying new ideas and are encouraged to collaborate with others as well as work independently. They develop curiosity, resilience, and a readiness to embrace challenge, which motivates them to achieve their very best.

We are committed to helping pupils develop into thoughtful and responsible members of society. They are encouraged to respect and value others, demonstrate tolerance and understanding of different cultures, faiths, and backgrounds, and actively contribute to the school community and the wider world.

The impact of our curriculum is measured through:

- Observation of lessons with a specific focus
- Staff Development meetings between all staff
- Achievement and progress data
- Attendance figures
- Behaviour and incident records
- Stakeholder feedback
- Pupil voice
- Progress towards EHCP and PEP targets
- Qualifications achieved



- Regular scrutiny of workbooks
- Termly or annual amendment of curriculum structure dependent on the individual needs of pupils
- Regular updates of the individual children's Provision Map.

“At Little Acorns School, we aim for every child to leave as a confident, independent, and compassionate young person. They will understand themselves, value and respect others, and be curious about the world around them. Equipped with strong life skills, knowledge, and the school's values, they will be prepared to take on future learning, contribute positively to their communities, and approach life with ambition and resilience.”

Intention 1: Growing Self-Awareness

Pupils develop a positive self-image and strong well-being, showing confidence, resilience, and engagement in their learning. They take pride in themselves, their achievements, and their contributions to the school environment, demonstrating the Little Acorns values of **Hard-working, Honest, Safe, and Kind**. Pupils make steady progress in knowledge, skills, and understanding, retaining and applying learning across a variety of contexts. Over time, they require less support, showing increasing independence, **optimism**, and accuracy in their work, becoming **thriving** and **wonderful learners**.

Intention 2: Understanding Others

Pupils actively participate in their learning and engage positively with peers and staff. They understand fairness, inclusion, and empathy, demonstrating **Kind** and **Respectful** behaviours in all interactions. Pupils model Little Acorns' values by being **Generous, Honest, and Thriving**, supporting and celebrating the achievements of others. They contribute positively to school and wider community life, showing responsibility and understanding the impact of their actions on those around them.

Intention 3: Connecting with the World

Pupils engage enthusiastically with the curriculum and can confidently discuss their learning experiences. They apply knowledge, skills, and independence across a range of environments, demonstrating curiosity, responsibility, and respect. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of learning and life, carrying the Little Acorns values with them. They show resilience, optimism, and a commitment to being **Hard-working, Safe, and Respectful** citizens, thriving as confident, capable, and responsible young people.

7. Inclusion and Third-Party Providers

Inclusion

At Little Acorns School, the curriculum is adapted for individual learners to meet their specific needs, while ensuring that all pupils have the right to a broad, balanced, and relevant education that provides continuity and progression. We recognise each child's strengths, needs, and interests, and use this understanding to build on their abilities, promoting achievement and success.

Pupils' strengths and needs are identified through the Annual Review Process, and the provision and learning opportunities are planned and adapted accordingly. Each learner has an individualised Provision Map, which is regularly updated to reflect their current needs. Support staff, teaching staff, carers, social workers, and parents (where appropriate) are fully involved in and informed of the outcomes of these plans.

We recognise that many pupils arrive at Little Acorns School having experienced turbulence in their previous schooling. Our approach prioritises engagement and understanding of each pupil, enabling the curriculum to be well-matched, carefully sequenced, and accessible so that learners can fully participate in lessons. We adapt the curriculum to meet the individual, rather than expecting the individual to adapt to the curriculum.

Teachers set high expectations for all pupils and use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging learning opportunities for all groups, including:

- More able pupils
- Pupils with low prior attainment
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Pupils with SEN
- Pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN)
- Pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Pupils who have a social worker



- Pupils who are, or have previously been, looked-after

Lessons are carefully planned so that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities can access a curriculum with links to the National Curriculum wherever possible, ensuring that there are no barriers to achievement. Teachers also consider the needs of pupils whose first language is not English, providing opportunities to develop their language skills and enabling them to participate fully across all subjects.

Further information can be found in our Statement of Equality Information and Objectives and in our SEN Policy and Information Report.

Third Party Providers

Little Acorns School may engage qualified external professionals to enhance our curriculum and provide pupils with high quality, specialist experiences. This includes interventions delivered by qualified therapists, such as sand therapy, art therapy, and DT therapy, which support pupils' social, emotional, and sensory development.

The involvement of these specialists is carefully planned to complement our curriculum and personalised learning plans. Staff work closely with therapists to ensure that sessions align with individual pupil targets and developmental needs, providing opportunities for pupils to practise new skills within their everyday learning. Depending on the needs of each cohort, other specialist providers may also be brought in, ensuring that all pupils benefit from a broad range of enriching experiences that support their progress, engagement, and overall wellbeing.

8. Curriculum Transition

The school prides itself on providing effective and vital support for pupils as they make transitions through the various stages in their education. We carefully manage the transition of our pupils throughout the school and in preparing pupils for further education. Detailed assessment and planning allow the full team of professionals to ensure that all support is cohesive and leads to the fulfilment of each individual's targets. Pupils and their parents/guardian/carers are provided with advice about the transition process and included in discussion prior to decisions being made about next steps. Part of the preparation for transitioning into adulthood will include support with travel training and transitioning into buildings and organisations that house a larger number of young people as well as accessing opportunities (including work experience) within the community.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This Policy will be reviewed annually by the Head teacher and SLT members.

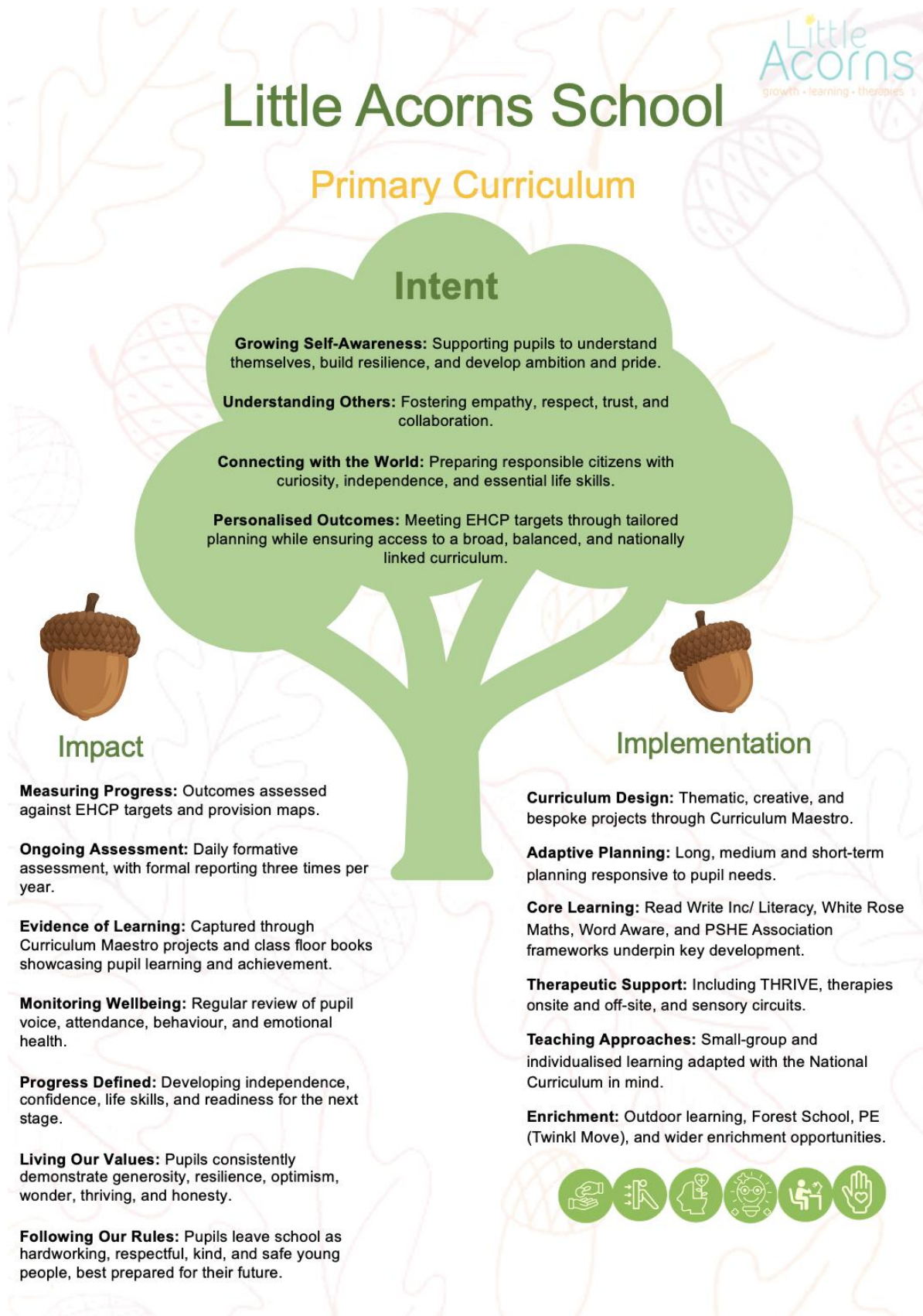
10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Assessment policy
- SEN policy and information report
- Equality information and objectives
- RSE Policy



Appendix 1: Little Acorns School- The Three I's Classroom Visual



Appendix 2: Little Acorns School- The Three I's Pupil Friendly Visual

