



Maple Hayes Hall  
Specialist School for Dyslexics

## Curriculum Policy

### Aims:

- We will ensure that pupils are not denied access to the curriculum because of their special needs.
- We enable pupils to access a curriculum which prioritises the acquisition of literacy skills and minimises the use of alternative forms of recording which avoid tackling the problem of learning to read and write.
- We will promote a curriculum which will move towards independent and group learning and break from a pattern of dependency upon support and a consequent feeling of isolation.
- We will ensure that pupils encounter work which is intellectually challenging and interesting - but within their capabilities.
- We do not believe that pupils should be under the pressure of learning a Modern Foreign Language, given their literacy difficulties.
- We want to develop in the pupils the social skills and confidence as well as the opportunities to interact with adults and their peers outside the classroom.
- We will ensure that activities are short to keep them within the short attention span of many of our pupils.
- Help pupils acquire the skills of being part of a learning group: Learning strategies to cope with short term memory and auditory short term memory skills. Coping with distractibility and learning to extend their concentration span.
- We aim for pupils to be able to leave Maple Hayes with a range of GCSE and similar other qualifications reflecting their full potential. which will enable them to access apprenticeships, Sixth Form, further and higher education and employment. The GCSEs and other qualifications we offer are listed in the school brochure and we will endeavour to give pupils access to other courses of study as an extra.

### To achieve these:

- We admit pupils in accordance with our admissions policy.
- We teach our pupils in a classroom environment. Activities such as group work and any individual interventions are initiated through a classroom dynamic.
- Should any one-to-one intervention be necessary, it will be short term, targeted and done in a manner which will minimise removal from the curriculum.
- The class size is small (within the overall constraint of a 1:10 or better teacher: pupil ratio) so that pupils may receive individual attention but maintain the skills of being part of a learning group.
- The class size is large enough in order to avoid a “special needs unit” small group dependency.
- The timetable enables access to a broad curriculum which follows the National Curriculum except that MFL is not normally taught.
- The school week consists of 49 half hour periods. Eight of these are dedicated to the school’s specialist literacy provision (see [SEN policy](#) and School Brochure for more information). The remainder of the periods are devoted to a curriculum which is divided amongst the remaining national curriculum subjects in a similar proportion to mainstream schools.
- We do not provide options at the end of Year 9 because:
  - The school conforms to paragraph 2(2)(a) of the Independent School Standards by offering full time supervised education in the prescribed areas of learning throughout the school.
  - Individual programs of learning may be introduced at the headteacher’s discretion
  - Pupils continue to improve in literacy and in the subject areas through years 10 and 11 which makes prediction of a final GCSE grade difficult.



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- and if given the options in year 9 they may well drop a subject which two years later they are able to obtain credible GCSE results.
- Pupil aspirations change markedly as they improve and a broad range of GCSE qualifications give them options for other career or education pathways.
- We aim to have lessons taught by subject specialists who have been trained by ourselves to deal with the pupils' special needs.
- Pupils move around the school in a secondary school model of timetabled subject lessons. This is introduced at Key Stage 2 where there are also timetabled lessons with subject specialists.
- The lesson length is short. Within longer (double or triple) lessons, activities may be broken down to smaller units.
- We move pupils to different classrooms to “reset” attention span.
- We use standardised layout and formats for work to help pupils engage with the work.
- We provide lessons where pupils rehearse skills in order to improve their efficiency.
- Pupils practise activities to gain automaticity.
- We mark work in accordance with a marking policy which rewards the efforts pupils make as well as their attainments. Pupils' work will be marked to emphasise the positives with the aim that as they progress through the school they perceive “red ink” as a constructive part of their learning.
- We develop bespoke texts, computer programs and other materials to address pupil needs.
- There is a variety of extra-curricular activities available which are generally run at lunchtimes (because of the difficulties of arranging after school activities for pupils who share transport or who travel long distances).
- We also run residential courses for pupils in year 8 and in year 9. (See school [visits policy](#).)
- There is also the opportunity to participate in sporting events against other schools.
- There is an allocated session of 40 minutes prep time at the end of each school day - which allows pupils to work within the structure of the school but without being dependent on their subject teacher. In addition, older pupils are required to do further work at home. (See homework policy for further information).
- We maintain links with mainstream schools, Entrust-Ed, LA psychology services.
- We provide impartial careers advice (independent careers advice is an additional provision)

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