

Curriculum Policy	
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1. Context

Ruskin Mill Trust provides students with holistic learning by role modelling positive relationships in the fields of arts, crafts, commerce, agriculture, nutrition, living skills and the environment with pathway support onto further education and careers bespoke to the individual student.

Since 1987, the Trust has developed its unique brand of expertise working with young people with complex behaviour, learning difficulties and disabilities including the autistic spectrum and other conditions. Our provisions offer both day and residential placements and we accept admission applications all year round.

Grace Garden School is a unique and exciting school. Situated in 18 acres of beautiful farmland and gardens, on the edge of Bristol, our Steiner, Ruskin, and Morris-inspired holistic Practical Skills Therapeutic Education curriculum provides the skills, experience and character necessary for young people aged 9 – 16 years old with complex needs to flourish and thrive in modern society. Our school is a place of therapeutic learning and growing which brings together hand, heart and head to support personal development and progression.

2. Our Vision and Values

That each individual has the potential to shape their own future through experiencing meaningful relationships with universe, earth and people.

We value inclusive learning and living activities that integrate practical activity, thinking and our emotions. We value mutual respect and we strive to understand all people's differences and uniqueness.

We value the capacity for re-imagination present in all people, towards positive change and development. We value openness, goodwill, tolerance and treating individuals with dignity and respect.

3. Statement of Intent

At the schools operated by Ruskin Mill Trust, we ensure access to the curriculum areas that are listed in the Independent School Standards (2014). In accordance with this, we undertake to provide a curriculum that meets the needs of each student based on these standards and the contents of the student's Education, Health and Care Plan. All students receive full-time supervised education, in which they experience a curriculum that includes a range of linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human, social, physical, aesthetic and creative aspects appropriate to their age, aptitude and stage of development. All students also receive Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education and those of secondary school age receive impartial careers guidance where applicable. The overriding aim of the curriculum is to achieve the best possible outcomes for students in terms of individual learning, independence, personal growth and development.

4. Curriculum Intent

"The right of all children to the highest quality education is not only a social ideal but a social necessity"

Rudolf Steiner, 1919

At Grace Garden School we believe that all young people are entitled to engage in meaningful learning, which can give them the confidence and skills to participate in their lifelong development and to contribute to their community. It is our duty as educators to identify the barriers they experience and to help them overcome these, re-imagining themselves, fostering their curiosity and realising their potential. Through

effective education, we can help our young people to re-engage not only with learning but also with the wider social community.

Grace Garden School is committed to ensuring our students can flourish in modern Britain by providing a curriculum that will:

- provide a high-quality education that is tailored to individual needs
- ensure every student achieves their potential
- help students to develop positive feelings of self-worth and confidence
- enable students to interact and communicate with a wide range of people
- develop successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- provide a broad, rich and deep curriculum, including a focus on independence skills that is inclusive and accessible to all
- help students to be confident learners who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- help prepare children and young people for the next stages in their life
- encourage students to become responsible citizens who are able to contribute to society
- deliver activities that provide suitable learning challenges, giving every student the opportunity to experience success and achieve as much as possible
- devise individual approaches and interventions, in response to the curriculum, to match student's diverse learning needs, interests and strengths
- teach students to have an awareness of their own spiritual development, understand right from wrong and have an appreciation of British values
- provide a curriculum that is free from partisan political views.

The promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school is strictly prohibited. All staff have a responsibility to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of students they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views. The school's leaders will monitor timetables and schemes of work across the curriculum. Rigorous monitoring of lessons will ensure balance in the presentation of all subject matter.

Four key principles underpin these aims and are embedded in our provision and day-to-day working:

- Respect our students - we are committed to listening to students and respecting their views
- Helping them to achieve self-determination - we support students to make choices and be responsible for decisions around their own lives
- Be included - we support students to engage in the school community
- Helping with relationships and interactions - we help students to engage with different groups and people and support them to make positive relationships and build friendships.

Our curriculum meets the expectations of the independent school standards.

- Our curriculum is designed so that it can respond to an individual's needs or abilities and fulfils the requirement of Education, Health Care Plan
- Our curriculum is therapeutic in its design and staff are trained in Practical Skills Therapeutic Education which is delivered by our internationally recognised Hiram Education and Research Team. Staff are also trained in Attachment Disorder, Autistic Spectrum Conditions, Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) and de-escalation. The staff team

and students are supported by a Speech and Language Therapist, and Occupational Therapist and a Clinical psychologist

- Grace Garden School also works collaboratively with local businesses, activity centres, groups and schools to give the students a well-rounded experience and engage with the local community.

5. Curriculum Implementation

As students will be admitted at any point in KS2/3 care is taken to recognise students own previous experience of schooling. On-entry baselines are taken and interests are understood. A personalised transition will be put in place. Over time the balance of therapeutic, practical and academic learning may change. There will be opportunities for learning new knowledge, rehearsal and generalisation. Individual lessons are designed to consider prior knowledge, gaps in learning or misconceptions.

5.1. Planning and Organisation

The learning experiences of each student are carefully planned and structured to ensure continuity and cohesion so that each student is enabled to make the very best progress in the development of their knowledge and skills. Senior leaders and teachers write curriculum plans, schemes of work, medium and short-term plans in collaboration with the wider staff team, including craft tutors, teaching assistants, therapists and residential staff. There is joint planning, assessment and review all driven by the individual student's needs. The curriculum is delivered throughout the day, including through extended activities within the local community, during break times, and within the residence for residential students.

The school aims to provide a curriculum shaped by the method of Practical Skills Therapeutic Education. The teachers approach this task with imagination, enthusiasm, creativity and an understanding of principles and ideas.

We are committed to working with Steiner's developmental insights:

- Each child is a unique individual with his or her own path in life;
- The teachers' aim is to support the emerging human beings in our care in developing inner freedom, with healthy physical and emotional well-being, so as to enable them to make their contribution to society while at the same time unfolding their own human potential;
- All learning mirrors the student's developmental stage, through adaptation and flexibility in the approach to gain understanding of the individual, where children's development is often not commensurate with their chronological age;
- Lesson content is always related to real life practical experiences and understanding, addressing moral issues and challenges within the community through a nurturing and therapeutic approach;
- The students' motivation arises from enthusiasm and self-motivation rather than ambition or fear;
- Education addresses the development of thinking, feeling and the will as equal and integrated partners.

Each student has an Individualised Education Plan which supports the outcomes of their EHC plans and personal aspirations. Senior leaders are responsible for monitoring the planning and delivery of the curriculum. This monitoring is organised into an annual cycle of lesson observations, learning walks and evaluation, which informs training and development, as well as outlining any changes to the curriculum and the planning and provision of resources.

The curriculum can be accessed on different levels according to each student's need, previous experience and level of attainment.

The curriculum and teaching and learning approaches used are designed to reduce barriers to learning and ensure good progress and positive engagement. It is the expectation that all students will access the curriculum and attend lessons in order to fulfil their potential.

5.2. Assessment for and of learning

5.2.1 Curriculum: Summative Assessment

Grace Garden School utilises a variety of materials and guidelines to inform our teacher assessment in order to provide information on attainment both for individual students and for the school. We use academic assessments half-termly to assess student progress in English, Maths, and Science. These assessments support progress and engagement in all other areas of the curriculum.

This data helps us to evaluate our own effectiveness, including the impact of particular programmes and innovations.

Students in Years 10 and 11 also have opportunities to accredit their learning through GCSE, ASDAN or OCN programmes and modules.

At the end of each term, the head of school/ provision leader holds a meeting to review the progress of each student with their class teacher and tutors as appropriate. These meetings ensure that the curriculum is meeting student need and is ambitious in relations to each student's abilities and outcomes.

5.2.2 Curriculum: Formative Assessment (assessment for learning)

Grace Garden School uses a system of targets, objectives, and outcomes to help us build up a more detailed picture of the progress of each student. Due to the complexity of their learning needs and their uneven developmental and communication profiles, students often do not follow linear pathways of development, and flexible and ambitious progress metrics enable staff to assess learning in relation to individual need. Targets and regular planning helps us to track their progress and ensure that we continue to stretch students whilst remembering to continue providing opportunities for students to revisit aspects they have yet to achieve securely. Targets and progress are formally reviewed on a half-termly basis in order to ensure that the curriculum is meeting the needs of the students and that all students are making excellent progress. Students are encouraged to reflect on their own learning and review progress, and take part in planning their future outcomes.

Staff use this information to develop Individual Learning Plans and set termly targets in English, maths, and science. Targets are made very specific to the individual student, enabling us to measure the incremental steps of progress, our students' horizontal progress and ability to generalise learning across contexts. Teachers work with Senior Leaders to ensure that students are making good progress in a wide and deep curriculum. Staff teams work to collect a range of evidence in learning journals and accreditation files, including carefully annotated photographs, video footage and witness statements, so that we can demonstrate the progress students make with confidence to parents, trustees, other professionals from the placing Local Authority and to Education Ofsted teams, who we also work closely with to inform outcomes.

Students' Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) outcomes also inform the target setting process, ensuring that the targets set in ILPs support students to work towards the areas of identified need in their EHCPs.

Formative assessment is tracked through progress books in each subject area and in daily activity logs, enabling the adjustment of curriculum based on students' changing needs.

5.3. Daily Rhythm

The school day begins at 9am, with a handover from families and residential staff. The day is divided into three main sessions. Class teachers plan lessons and activities in line with the seasons, learning objectives, and needs of the students. Teachers and students are given freedom to organise their lessons and activities within this framework. There is a morning break, and the school provides lunch for each student and staff member. Students and staff eat together in the dining room.

During the day, sessions are not limited to the classroom, and students will access the different learning areas of the site, such as the farm, garden, and craft workshops. In addition, therapists will hold sessions that are both embedded in the classroom and in a one to one format outside of the classroom. Teachers, farmers, craftspeople, therapists, care staff, leaders, and the student together plan a student's learning journey.

Students also attend sessions with tutors, who use their practical skillsets to enable students to interact and develop more thoroughly their practical skills in land and craft-based sessions.

Subject areas such as maths and English are not necessarily delivered in prescribed subject sessions, but are instead interwoven and braided throughout the curriculum. This allows greater flexibility and impact and enables students to join learning from different areas, including transferrable skills such as building relationships or completing tasks.

Successful learning requires reflection, and sessions are structured around the hands-heart-head approach in which students do, feel, and then reflect. This is mirrored in the daily structure and teachers allot specific times and spaces for practical and reflective learning.

The school day ends at 3pm with a handover to families and residential staff.

5.4. Key features of the practical skills therapeutic curriculum (PSTE)

PSTE adopts a "descent into matter" approach that allows the student to experience processes from beginning to end (for example the production of food from seed to table). This enables each student to become part of the school environment as well as the wider community and society as a whole. In addition, it helps students experience the processes that connect them with the earth and the universe.

The inclusion of land work in the curriculum promotes the development of physical, emotional and reflective capacities and has a positive impact on the mental wellbeing as a whole.

Joint projects and activities allow for development of social skills through problem solving and teamwork.

The residential setting provides an environment of acceptance, rhythm, warmth, nourishment, trust, constancy, culture and enjoyable recreational experiences with others. Day and residential experiences will complement and enhance each other through effective planning between teaching, therapy and care staff.

The curriculum supports each student's transition into the next stage of learning including work experience and the practical application of literacy and numeracy, as well as many of the transferrable skills acquired.

5.5. Key features of the additional therapeutic curriculum

Therapy forms an integral part of the individual bespoke curriculum package of each student and is delivered both embedded in the foundation sessions and activities and in additional therapeutic sessions.

The school offers additional therapeutic sessions in speech and language therapy, eurhythmmy (movement therapy developed out of anthroposophical insights), music, colour light, rhythmical massage and occupational therapy in line with individual student needs

5.6. Structure of the curriculum

Grace Garden School's curriculum covers all major subject areas. Citizenship and Personal, Social and Health Education are present as an integral part of the general social life in the school and within many lessons in each particular class. This is because the school seeks to make the question of human values the central element of the curriculum. Respect for the individual within the group is an attitude underpinning and interlinking every aspect of the curriculum. The class is a model community and in this environment, the teacher helps the children to build group cohesion and social awareness. Each class teacher's ongoing commitment to self-development and to the relationship with their class is very important because it brings a depth of knowledge, continuity and trust, which enriches and adds warmth to the delivery of the curriculum.

Students who have barriers in this area are supported through the specific educational areas for development as part of their EHCP outcomes, termly targets linked to these outcomes, and session goals linked to these targets.

All subject areas listed in the Independent School Standards are delivered as much as possible in a practical way, enabling the student to experience the content of the subject before abstracting this knowledge into a concept and generalising this learning to other areas. This means that a maths lesson may be delivered through cooking, or literacy through learning to feed the animals. Both lower and higher levels of learning in these areas are delivered as much as possible in this practical manner and staff are trained to look continuously for learning opportunities in the daily activities of the functioning of the school.

Crafts such as green woodwork, textiles, pottery and work in the farm or garden afford the teaching teams with numerous opportunities to embed learning in this practical context. The cycle of festivals anchors this learning in the seasons and process of gathering and celebrating as a community.

5.7. From *Being* to *Contribution*

Though each student's journey is unique, Grace Garden School's PSTE curriculum enables all students to journey from simply being present in the community to the ability and willingness to contribute to the community. Within this journey are a multitude of resources and activities in which a student can engage. The broad outline of each stage is:

- Be: feeling safe and supported, being present, reflection
- Play: engaging, moving, interacting, having fun
- Explore: enquiring, adventuring, taking risks
- Create: becoming skilled, working with material, using tools
- Contribute: stepping in to community, working, belonging

This format is mirrored in the configuration of the site as students are guided to venture from the secure space of the classroom out into the wider world of the garden, forest, farm, and community, meeting and overcoming challenges and learning along the way.

5.8. Post 16 pathways

Students work with staff and an independent careers advisor to plan their individualised post-16 provision.

The aim of the Trust is to support students growing into adulthood and raising their aspirations by placing an emphasis on them developing independence knowledge and skills to prepare them for life in the wider community.

5.9. Accreditation

In addition to their foundation curriculum, students will follow an individual accreditation pathway depending on their individual learning needs.

A range of accreditation is offered; typically, for each student there will be a mixture of vocational qualifications, functional skills, PSHE and independent careers advice in addition to the holistic offer that helps to develop the emotional and social skills of each individual student.

5.10. Special Educational Needs

Ruskin Mill Trust specialises in providing education to children and young people who have severe and complex needs, communication and interaction difficulties and social and emotional and mental health needs. Ruskin Mill Trust aims to enable all children and young people to develop their skills and abilities. The Trust seeks to ensure access to the curriculum through differentiated approaches, therapeutic strategies and personalised programmes that take into account the needs of individual students' and their strengths.

Differentiation is implemented by various methods in lessons in all subjects:

- Individualised learning plans that enable staff to support, stretch, and challenge each student;
- Each lesson having a multi-sensory approach with visual, aural and kinaesthetic components;
- Keeping a rhythmic and balanced lesson;
- Ensuring a variety of activities – from listening to doing;
- Ensuring a child-centred approach i.e. responding to each child as an individual;
- Allowing freedom of response to a lesson so that students can produce very different work to reflect what they have learned;
- Ensuring there are tasks ranging from simple to complex, to allow for different abilities;
- Use a range of questioning techniques, such as an open-ended questions to develop self-enquiry;
- Sometimes explaining first and demonstrating afterwards, or demonstrating first and explaining afterwards – allows for different learning preferences;
- Scaffolding work so that students are set targets dependent on their developmental journey
- Encouraging the more able to help their peers;
- Using reflection, both at the end of the lesson and at the beginning of the next, to anchor information;
- The braiding of multiple pieces of learning in each session, such as combining literacy and relationships or maths and aesthetic and creative learning
- Encouraging discussion, exchange of news and reworking with others.

Each differentiation method is systematic, simple and inclusive. Each child is helped to contribute in his or her own way to the creation of the whole picture. However, we all recognise that many children in the context of their normal lessons will need an individual approach in particular areas of work and therefore teaching assistants will work alongside the teachers in the classrooms.

5.11. Extended learning

The formally delivered curriculum is interwoven with practical activities and trips into the community, as well as particular activities tailored to meet students' changing needs. These may include culture immersion days, health, ecological or religious/spiritual activities. The aim of such events is to broaden student's experience as well as giving them an opportunity to apply their skills in varied situations.

5.12. Staffing and resources

The school team consists of senior leaders, administrative team, teaching staff, craft tutors, teaching assistants, therapy team, human resources, admissions, health and safety, maintenance, catering and housekeeping team, and the data team.

The residential team consists of the head of care, house managers, and residential support workers.

The connections between the school and residential provisions work together to ensure consistency of approach and cooperation is embedded as part of the culture.

5.13. Working with parents/carers

We encourage parents/carers to attend Statutory Annual Reviews/EHCP meetings. Parents/carers are provided with updates on progress in the termly report that comments on all areas of the curriculum and includes learning targets for the term ahead. Schools also hold Parents Evenings/Days and training opportunities, including safeguarding, to give an opportunity for dialogue between students, parents/carers, education staff and care staff and for parents to understand and discuss the curriculum, safeguarding and support.

6. Impact and Review

Ruskin Mill Trust will review the curriculum annually to ensure it meets the needs of all students.

The impact of our Curriculum will be threefold:

Through the Method of Practical Skills Therapeutic Education and our Biodynamic environment we will help our students flourish and engage with their developmental, sensory and therapeutic needs.

Through our bespoke Curriculum our students will have the opportunities to develop their literacy, numeracy and creativity, to gain appropriate qualifications.

Through our PSHRE, Equalities & Diversity and Preparation for Adulthood curriculum we will provide our students with the Personal Development and Behaviour & Attitudes needed to thrive in Modern Britain.

We provide students with holistic learning by role modelling positive relationships in the fields of arts, crafts, commerce, agriculture, nutrition, living skills and the environment.

By immersing students within the productive aspect of our curriculum, students learn to care for their own well-being and development and overcome their barriers to learning. This is so students learn to recognise their capabilities and positively contribute to society, which is continuously celebrated through cultural events and arts festivals for staff, students and the wider community.

This approach is embedded within a research and training culture up to Master's level, delivered through The Field Centre providing opportunities for all staff and the wider community.

7. Research Base

Because of external and internal research on the pedagogic value of land-work including food growing and craft, rooted in natural materials, the unique education offer of Ruskin Mill Trust has been defined by the term Practical Skills Therapeutic Education (PSTE). PSTE is used as a both method and vehicle for

delivering curriculum and a framework to provide a robust education for learners. The Trust, through the Hiram Education and Research Team, has a dedicated team of local coordinators who work to develop continually our staff in all statutory, mandatory and in the key area of methods training as part of their practice. Furthermore, we have a designated research facility, the Field Centre, where a space for living research is held. Through operational training combining living research and human developmental themes, PSTE methods create a pragmatic, student centred education for students at Grace Garden School. Through the aforementioned action research, we develop the transformative educational method for our not only learners and staff, but also members of the wider community through courses available to the public, as well as cultural events.

File Path:	
Dissemination (who will receive the policy):	Senior Managers, teaching staff, therapy staff, support staff and residential staff, parents/ carers and local authority placing teams, available on website
Associated Training Requirements:	Training in RMT's method of PSTE, assessment and recording training

[LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS](#)