



UNICORN SCHOOL

CURRICULUM & EDUCATION POLICY

This policy applies to all children at Unicorn School including those in the EYFS.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Staff Member: Head of Teaching and Learning

Last Reviewed:	January 2026
To be Approved by Governors:	
Next Review:	January 2027

CURRICULUM & EDUCATION POLICY

This policy applies to all children at Unicorn School including those in the EYFS.

The Curriculum & Education Policy should be read alongside the school's Assessment, Tracking and Reporting Policy, SEND Policy and the Able, Gifted and Talented Policy.

Aims

The Unicorn School's curriculum follows statutory requirements and is underpinned by the National Curriculum. The School provides an education enabling pupils to become confident, capable and enthusiastic learners and explorers, both in school and out. This will enable them to face difficulty and uncertainty calmly, confidently and creatively.

The School aims to:

- provide full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education
- provide pupils below compulsory school age with a programme of activities which is appropriate to their educational needs in relation to personal, social, emotional and physical development and communication and language skills (see section on EYFS).
- cater for the unique qualities in each and every child through its broad curriculum and rich learning experience
- foster pupils' creativity and develop essential skills, which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic, and creative education
- ensure pupils acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy
- provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and make progress, and develop as rounded individuals from Nursery to Year 6 by ensuring that the subject matter is appropriate for the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including the education requirements of pupils with an EHC plan
- provide personal, social, health and economic education which reflects our school's aims and ethos
- encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act (a) (It is unlawful for a school to discriminate against a pupil or prospective pupil by treating them less favourably because of their: sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity.)

- promote high standards in teaching and learning to provide opportunities for all children to learn and make progress
- inspire pupils to make a commitment to life-long learning ensuring adequate preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life
- provide effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

Teachers at Unicorn School are required to:

- enable pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
- foster in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
- deliver well planned lessons using effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
- show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensure that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
- demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
- utilise effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;
- demonstrate that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress;
- utilise effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly;
- promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- ensure that they do not discriminate against pupils contrary to Part 6 of the Equality Act 2010. Paragraph 4:

Equal Opportunities

As a non-selective school for children in EYFS through to Year 6, Unicorn operates an equal opportunities policy and seeks to promote community cohesion. The School recognises and promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Our PSHE curriculum explicitly references and gives age-appropriate coverage to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010, ensuring pupils understand and respect these differences.

Teaching and curriculum materials do not promote partisan political views. Where political issues arise, pupils are offered a balanced ('fair and dispassionate') presentation of opposing views [in line with ISSR Part 2 and Part 1 requirements].

Disabilities

In accordance with the statutory requirements, the School aims to make the curriculum accessible to all pupils, including pupils for whom English is an additional language, as far as is reasonably practicable. (*Please see our Accessibility Plan*)

British Values

Teaching will promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. This is done through a variety of activities including but not restricted to: School Council; assemblies; PSHE, RSE and Current Affairs (Y5 & Y6) lessons; Pupil Parliament; and Junior Citizenship activities. Regular Staff meetings are held to help embed this across the school.

Differentiation, scaffolding and adaptive teaching

Most subjects are taught in mixed ability groups and a variety of differing teaching and learning methods and materials are used to suit pupils' different needs. All teachers are issued with a detailed SEND profile pack to strengthen their understanding of pupils with SEND or additional needs and to support consistent, informed practice across the school. Our high teacher:pupil ratio and split class timetabling which enables children to be taught in half classes for some of their core subjects means that we are able to provide a high level of support or extension when needed. This includes subject matter appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils, including those pupils, if any, who have an Educational Healthcare (EHC) plan. Where a pupil has an EHC plan, we will provide education which fulfils its requirements. Learning support is provided by specialist teachers for pupils with special educational needs who require help in a specific area of learning and/or disability. Provision maps are provided for these children (*see SEND policy*).

For pupils with EAL, we assess language proficiency on entry, provide targeted in class and intervention support and track progress via the usual assessment cycle.

EYFS

To be read in conjunction with the separate EYFS Policy.

The curriculum is planned with reference to Development Matters, the EYFS Statutory Framework (2025) for the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Planning is topic-based and highly flexible on both a long and short-term basis so that the individual needs and interests of the children can be taken into account. On-going observation and assessment also influence the planning and we reflect on the different ways that children learn and demonstrate this in our practice. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- playing and exploring
- active learning
- creating and thinking critically

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape our educational programmes, all of which are important and interconnected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These are the prime areas. There are also four specific areas, through which the prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The prime areas of learning

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

The specific areas of learning

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Subject specialists teach Computing, Physical Education (PE), Swimming and Music. (Please see the EYFS Policy for further details.)

In KS1 and KS2 all subject planning is underpinned by the National Curriculum and is enriched by a wide a variety of resources and schemes. Please see subject long-term plans and curriculum subject leader documents in the appendix.

KS1

Subjects Taught:

Mathematics, English including Synthetic Phonics, Science, History, Geography, Music, French, Art and Design Technology (DT), Computing, PE, Swimming, Religious Education (RE), PSHE and RSE

Subject specialists teach Computing, Art, French, PE, Swimming and Music.

KS2

Subjects taught:

Mathematics, English, Science, History, Geography, Music, French, Art, DT, Computing, PE, Swimming, RE, PSHE, RSE and Reasoning.

Subject specialists teach Computing, French, Music, Art, DT, Swimming, PE and Science. All Junior children go off site one afternoon a week for Games and one morning for swimming.

On Thursday afternoons all Junior children participate in a variety of enrichment activities (clubs). In 2025/26 these clubs include: cooking, pottery, horse riding, padel, golf, debating, dance, forest school, coding, DT, Art, sewing, STEM and sailing.

Cross-Curricular Teaching: Much of the teaching in Unicorn School is taught with a cross-curricular approach. To further enrich learning, pupils can complete termly homework projects aligned with the curriculum topic. These projects include a broad range of activities aimed at developing essential skills in Art and DT; Science; research and publishing; music and cultural understanding; hobbies and sports; and hands on building and making.

Homework

Phase specific homework timings and expectations are set out in the Homework Policy and parent leaflets; teachers ensure consistency and progression across the school.

Trips & Residential

Each class undertakes at least one curriculum linked visit per term. KS2 pupils attend an annual residential trip. All visits comply with our Safeguarding and Educational Visits policies.

Assessment

We use Sonar (by Juniper Education) to monitor pupil attainment and progress, supported by age appropriate GL Assessment standardised tests:

- **Annually:** CAT4
- **Termly:** NGRT (reading), NGST (spelling), NGMT (maths)
- **End of Year:** PTM (maths) and PTE (English)

Assessment outcomes are used to inform grouping, targeted interventions, and reporting, and they are reviewed as part of our termly progress meetings with teachers, SLT and the SENDCo.

11+ Adaptations

In Years 5 and 6, timetables are flexed to include timed practice papers, interview skills and targeted reasoning. Breadth of curriculum is maintained; reduced time in selected non-core subjects is restored post-assessment to rebalance provision.

Use of technology

Computing is taught as a subject in its own right but, where appropriate, computing is also incorporated across the curriculum. All classes from Yellow to UV have their own set of iPads, with a 1:1 ratio from Green to UV. Children have access to iPads as a purposeful tool to enhance and support learning. This includes enabling accessibility for pupils with SEND or additional needs as well as providing opportunities to research, create and publish their work. Teachers are expected to plan the use of technology carefully and intentionally so that it meaningfully strengthens learning outcomes.

A coding club is also offered to both Infants and Juniors.

RSE Compliance

Our RSE programme complies with the Relationships Education, RSE & Health Education Regulations 2019 (updated July 2025) with changes taking effect from 1 September 2026. Parents may withdraw their child from non-biological content; biological aspects remain statutory.

Review, Evaluation and Development of the Curriculum

We want to ensure that the teaching of topics give meaningful regard to diversity and inclusion. In response to the recommendations set out in the 2023 ISI report, the school has prioritised the development of pupils' independent thinking skills. Over the past three years, and in alignment with the School Development Plan, we have implemented a structured cycle of CPD to strengthen teacher practice in this area. This CPD cycle has focused on the development, modelling and embedding of:

- **retrieval practice strategies** (Year 1),
- **critical thinking skills** (Year 2), and
- **metacognitive strategies** (current year).

Through this systematic approach, teachers are equipped to support pupils in becoming critical, reflective and self-regulated learners.

Subject policies, plans and monitoring

Full details of the subject policies, curriculum overviews by subject and year and long-term plans are kept on SharePoint.

Subject co-ordinators are responsible for drawing up and monitoring long-term plans.

Subject Co-ordinators are expected to annually:

- update subject policies and monitor long-term plans
- hold a staff CPD session to aid teachers with their subject delivery and provide support with resources.
- Keep abreast of new initiatives and best practice within their subject area by attending relevant cluster meetings or accessing training.
- complete a book look and planning review with teachers who teach their subject and record and discuss any issues that arise (please see appendix)
- complete a subject evaluation document (SED – please see appendix) that will be reviewed at SLT. This will inform a review of how the subject is being taught, plans and targets for the future, including any budget requests, which will be put into a Subject Lead Action Plan (SLAP). The SLAPs will be monitored and reviewed annually with Subject Leads and SLT.

Where Subject co-ordinators are specialist teachers they will be paired with a member of SLT who will be involved in the monitoring and overview of their subject.

SUBJECT CO-ORDINATORS 2025-26

Head of Teaching and Learning Mr Jones
 Head of EYFS Mrs Fraley

	Infants (Incl EYFS)	Juniors
Art	Mrs Daw	
English	Miss Engelmann	Mrs Bird
French	Mrs Baghaei	
PE	Mrs Young	
Geography	Miss Botes	
History	Miss O’Gorman	
Computing	Mrs Walcot	
Mathematics	Mr Jones & Mr Gough	
Music	Miss Gresson	
PSHE & RSE	Mrs Young	
RE	Mrs Maher	
Science	Mrs Roblin	
SEND	Mrs Simons	

EYFS Characteristics of Effective Learning			
Playing and Exploring	Finding out and exploring	Showing curiosity about objects, events and people	
		Using senses to explore the world around them	
		Engaging in open-ended activity	
		Showing particular interests	
	Playing with what they know	Pretending objects are things from their experience	
		Representing their experiences in play	
		Taking on a role in their play	
		Acting out experiences with other people	
	Being willing to 'have a go'	Initiating activities	
		Seeking challenge	
		Showing a 'can do' attitude	
		Taking a risk, engaging in new experiences and learning by trial and error	
Active Learning	Being involved and concentrating	Maintaining focus on their activity for a period of time	
		Showing high levels of energy, fascination	
		Not easily distracted	
		Paying attention to details	
	Keeping on trying	Persisting with activity when challenges occur	
		Showing belief that more effort or a different approach will pay off	
		Bouncing back after difficulties	
	Enjoying achieving what they set out to do	Showing satisfaction in meeting their own goals	
		Being proud of how they accomplished something – not just the end result	
		Enjoying meeting challenges for their own sake rather than external reward or praise	
	Creating and thinking critically	Having their own ideas	Thinking of ideas
			Finding ways to solve problems
Finding new ways to do things			
Making links		Making links and noticing patterns in their experience	
		Making predictions	
		Testing their ideas	
		Developing ideas of grouping, sequence, cause and effect	

	Choosing ways to do things	Planning, making decisions about how to approach a task, solve a problem and reach a goal
		Checking how well their activities are going
		Changing strategy as needed
		Reviewing how well the approach worked

Book Monitoring Feedback Form

Subject:		Class reviewed:		Date of monitoring:		
Term:		Class Teacher:		Date of meeting:		
Book monitoring questions:					Yes	No
Does the learning follow the subject's long- and medium-term plans?						
Is there evidence of differentiation/adaptive learning? If so, give an example:						
Is there evidence of SEND provisions in place (where applicable)?						
Has children's learning been assessed and marked in line with the Marking Policy?						
Have the children had opportunities to respond to marking and feedback?						
Is there a range of different learning opportunities (e.g. writing, drawings, diagrams...) Examples:						
Is there evidence of digital learning? If so, give an example:						
Any other comments:						
Questions for the feedback meeting:						
1. What are some of the highlights of teaching this subject? 2. What strengths and areas for development do you have? 3. What changes might you envisage if you teach this subject next term/year? 4. Do you need any further support e.g. CPD? If so, please specify.						
Summary of meeting (this information will help you complete your SED in Summer 2):						

2026/27 Unicorn School Observation Form

Name of teacher	Observed by	Class and year	Subject and topic	Date

What did the teacher want the children to learn? Was this clear to them?

Was prior knowledge assessed?

Was questioning used effectively? Please give examples

Notes on children's engagement in and enjoyment of the lesson

Notes on lesson organisation (e.g. pace, timing, organisation)

Notes on use of resources, including teaching assistants/ other adults

Were differentiation /scaffolding strategies used effectively?

Were assessment strategies used effectively (including peer- and self-assessment and reflection opportunities)?

Was there any evidence of wider learning (e.g. cross curricular, British values)

Did the lesson coincide with the long, medium and short-term planning. If not, why not?

What were the particular strengths of this lesson?

What aspects might you suggest for the teacher to reflect on?

Points arising from follow up discussion

2026/27 Unicorn School Planning Sheet for Lesson Observations

Name of teacher	Class and year	Subject and topic	Date

Learning Intention + Success Criteria (if relevant)

Prior Learning

Brief outline of lesson (including retrieval practice & critical thinking opportunities and use of technology)

Scaffolding/differentiation incl strategies for particular (named) children i.e. SEND, additional needs and/or G&T

Assessment strategies (including peer-and self-assessment and reflection/metacognitive opportunities)

Follow up learning opportunities: (including homework)

Subject Evaluation Document (SED)

Subject:		Name of co-ordinator:		<i>The purpose of this form is to summarise findings from the annual subject review by subject co-ordinators, to identify areas of development and to suggest future changes.</i>
Date of review:		Year groups reviewed:		
Overall summary of findings <i>(strengths, areas for development, trends and extra-curricular/enrichment opportunities, SEND provision)</i>				Recommendations <i>(specific training needs, areas for development and future CPD)</i>
Marking & feedback <i>(Is marking and feedback being evidenced in line with the Marking & Feedback Policy? Are children responding to feedback?)</i>				CPD sessions delivered <i>(include date, content and audience)</i>
Proposed changes to the subject <i>(curriculum development or plans, best practice and educational trends)</i>				Co-ordinator CPD training attended <i>(if applicable)</i>
Enrichment opportunities for the future <i>(trips, workshops & CPD)</i>				Budget and/or training requests

