



Curriculum Policy

Yew Tree Farm School
Bredgar and Wormshill Light Railway
Swanton Street
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ME9 8AT

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Introduction:

Pupils attending YTFS typically come to us following a breakdown in their previous educational placement. This often manifests in disengagement, behavioural challenges, or emotional barriers to learning. As a result, YTFS provides a supportive, nurturing environment tailored to rebuilding each pupil's confidence and motivation for learning.

At YTFS, pupils are taught in small, highly focused groups with high adult-to-child ratios to ensure personalised attention and a supportive atmosphere. The majority of learning takes place outside of the formal classroom, utilising the farm-based setting and outdoor spaces to facilitate hands-on, experiential learning. This approach not only helps engage learners but also supports them in developing essential life skills and practical knowledge.

The curriculum is carefully structured to meet the individual needs of each pupil, recognising that learners arrive at different stages in their educational journey. It is designed to maximise progress, achievement, and confidence, enabling pupils to overcome previous challenges and re-engage with learning at their own pace. The curriculum is flexible and responsive, adjusting to the needs, strengths, and interests of each pupil while ensuring that all learners feel valued and empowered to achieve their full potential.

Intent:

The curriculum at YTFS is designed with a clear intent: to provide a broad, balanced, and inclusive educational experience that meets the diverse needs of our learners. We aim to make the curriculum accessible and engaging for all pupils, taking into account their unique ages, aptitudes, and specific educational needs. It aligns with national curriculum expectations, yet it is adapted to ensure that pupils can experience success and make meaningful progress.

Central to the curriculum is the emphasis on developing the **fundamental values of YTFS**, which are integral to the holistic development of our learners:

Fundamental Values:

- **Kindness Above All Else:** We foster an environment where kindness, understanding, and compassion are core values. We believe that building strong relationships based on empathy and respect is essential for creating a safe, nurturing learning space.
- **High Expectations:** We encourage both pupils and staff to set and achieve high expectations. Through mutual support and collaboration, we work together to promote excellence and accountability.
- **Perseverance and Resilience:** Learners are encouraged to face challenges with perseverance. We help students develop the resilience needed to overcome obstacles, recognising that setbacks are an opportunity for growth.
- **Personal Discovery and Confidence Building:** Pupils are supported in exploring their personal interests, identities, and strengths. We aim to empower learners by helping them build self-confidence and recognise their value as individuals within the school community and beyond.

- **Engagement in Learning:** Learners are encouraged to actively engage in their educational journey. By focusing on practical, outdoor-based learning, we foster an enthusiasm for learning that is both enjoyable and meaningful.

The curriculum ensures that pupils are not only ready for their next educational placement but are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable them to thrive in future settings. We aim to close any achievement gaps that may have developed due to disengagement in previous placements, ensuring that pupils are on a trajectory toward academic success and emotional well-being.

Key Aims of the Curriculum:

- **Closing the Achievement Gap:** Through personalised learning pathways, the curriculum ensures that pupils can progress at their own pace, catching up on missed learning while exceeding expectations.
- **Building Confidence and Independence:** The curriculum places a strong emphasis on confidence-building activities, including outdoor and practical learning, which foster resilience and a sense of self-worth. Pupils are empowered to become independent thinkers and learners.
- **Fostering Strong Identity and Values:** Pupils are encouraged to understand their own identity, values, and role within the wider community, promoting a sense of belonging and purpose.
- **Preparing for the Future:** Learners at YTFS are prepared to move on to their next educational phase, equipped not only with the academic knowledge they need but with the social, emotional, and practical skills necessary for success in life and future placements.

At YTFS, we take pride in offering a curriculum that motivates and engages learners. Pupils are actively interested in their studies, setting high standards for themselves and consistently striving to achieve. The learning environment, combined with the curriculum's focus on both academic and personal development, ensures that pupils enjoy attending YTFS and find their learning experiences both challenging and rewarding.

Implementation:

At YTFS, our curriculum is designed to nurture the individual strengths of each learner while promoting collaborative learning, personal growth, and a sense of community. We offer a curriculum that integrates academic learning with hands-on, real-world experiences, ensuring that students remain engaged and motivated. The approach is flexible, differentiated, and tailored to the unique needs of each student, empowering them to take ownership of their learning journey.

Curriculum Structure

Pupils in Key Stage 2 (KS2) follow a structured daily timetable which includes:

- **Wellbeing Check In**
- **English (Phonics and SPAG)**
- **Maths**
- **PE (Physical Education)**
- **PSHE (Personal, Social, and Health Education) and Coffee Break**
- **Topic or Science**

- **Farming**
- **Personalised Interventions**

The curriculum is thematic, with cross-curricular lessons that integrate linguistic, scientific, technological, human and social, and aesthetic and creative education. This approach allows for rich connections between subjects and provides students with opportunities for deep, engaging learning that has real-world applications. Every term, all KS2 students investigate the same theme, creating a sense of unity and shared purpose across the school. The curriculum aims are differentiated based on students' age and developmental stage, ensuring that each learner receives the appropriate level of challenge and support.

Differentiation

We strongly believe in providing learning experiences that are tailored to the individual needs of each student. At YTFS, differentiation is applied across all subjects to ensure that all students can engage with and succeed in their learning.

- **Topic Lessons:** All students work on the same theme but at different levels. Tasks are differentiated by outcome and the level of support provided, ensuring that all learners, regardless of ability, can contribute meaningfully to the project. Some students can work independently, while others may require additional help from staff, peers, or the use of manipulatives.
- **Individual Learning Plans:** At Yew Tree Farm School, we design personalised learning pathways to cater to the diverse and complex needs of our learners. Each pupil's educational journey is assessed individually to determine their starting point, enabling us to create bespoke plans that build on their strengths and address gaps in knowledge or skills. Small class sizes and a high adult-to-child ratio allow for close monitoring of progress, with regular adjustments made to ensure students receive the support, challenge, and encouragement they need to succeed. To assess and track progress, we use B Squared to monitor small steps, ensuring that achievements are recognised and any gaps in learning are addressed effectively. Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), informed by students' EHCPs, provide further guidance on how best to support each learner's development. These ILPs are reviewed regularly to track progress and ensure that students are on course to meet their learning targets. By following these personalised pathways, we ensure that each pupil experiences success at every stage, helping them close achievement gaps from previous disengagement or missed learning.
- **Interventions:** At our school, a range of targeted interventions forms an integral part of our curriculum, supporting the diverse needs of our students. All pupils engage in *Zones of Regulation* and social skills development, delivered through individualized 1:1 and small group sessions at least twice a week. These interventions are tailored to enhance emotional awareness and social interaction. Additionally, we collaborate with occupational therapists (OT) and speech and language therapists (SALT) who design and monitor bespoke sessions to address sensory and communication needs. To further support emotional regulation and well-being, we provide intervention sessions with a clinical psychologist, offering specialist input to help students develop strategies for self-regulation and resilience. This holistic approach ensures every child receives personalized support to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Topic Curriculum

The topic curriculum is a cornerstone of our approach to learning, allowing students to explore a wide range of subjects through a shared theme. Each term, students investigate a theme that is linked to the National Curriculum and tailored to their interests and developmental needs. Themes are chosen based on student input, ensuring relevance and engagement. These thematic units are designed to encourage curiosity, problem-solving, and critical thinking.

- **Subject Integration:** The thematic approach allows us to integrate multiple subjects into one cohesive learning experience.
- **Hands-On Learning:** Topic lessons are designed to be experiential, with students engaging in practical, real-world activities that deepen their understanding of the theme. Many of these lessons take place outside the classroom, either on the farm or in the local environment, allowing for authentic, context-rich learning experiences.
- **Cross-Curricular Links:** Each topic is designed to have clear links to other subjects, creating opportunities for students to see the connections between different areas of knowledge.
- **Real-World Applications:** Themes are chosen to be relevant to students' lives, encouraging them to apply their learning to real-world situations. This could include projects such as caring for farm animals, growing food, or participating in community-based environmental initiatives. These practical experiences help students develop life skills such as teamwork, responsibility, and problem-solving.
- **SMSC and British Values:** Each topic also includes explicit teaching on Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural (SMSC) development and British values, ensuring that students grow not only academically but also as responsible and empathetic members of society.

Subject-Specific Implementation

- **Maths:**
We have adopted the *Maths No Problem* scheme, which spans Reception to Year 6 and is based on the Singaporean mastery approach. This program emphasizes deep understanding, small incremental steps, and mastery of concepts before progression.

Key Features and Benefits for SEN Students:

- **Mastery Through Small Steps:** Concepts are broken into manageable pieces, helping SEN learners avoid being overwhelmed while building confidence.
- **Concrete, Pictorial, and Abstract Approach (CPA):** Hands-on materials, visual aids, and abstract symbols are used in progression to make learning accessible.
- **Differentiation Opportunities:** While studying the same topic, students can engage with tasks at varying levels of complexity, ensuring personalized support.
- **Repetition and Reinforcement:** Frequent revisiting of concepts ensures retention and builds a strong foundation.
- **Engaging Resources:** Vibrant textbooks and workbooks capture attention, while interactive tools make learning enjoyable.

This scheme aligns well with the needs of our students, providing a structured and inclusive learning environment that encourages confidence and mastery.

- **Phonics:** We are following the *Read Write Inc.* (RWI) phonics scheme, starting from the beginning to rebuild foundational literacy skills. Many students have been out of formal education for extended periods, and this approach ensures gaps in learning are addressed systematically.

Key Features and Benefits for SEN Students:

- **Systematic and Sequential Approach:** Phonics is introduced in a logical order, with consistent repetition to ensure mastery.
- **Multisensory Learning:** Activities engage students visually, auditorily, and kinesthetically to accommodate diverse learning styles.
- **Small Group and 1:1 Interventions:** Students receive targeted support tailored to their specific needs.
- **Practical Application:** Writing tasks are linked to phonics lessons, reinforcing learning through immediate practice.
- **Training for Staff:** All staff have received RWI training, ensuring consistent delivery and effective support.

The structured, engaging nature of RWI helps rebuild confidence in literacy while fostering fluency and comprehension.

- **Personal, Social, Health, and Economic (PSHE) Education:** PSHE is a cornerstone of our curriculum, taught daily to provide consistency and structure. Lessons are based on the *Twinkl* PSHE scheme and are tailored to meet the needs of our SEN students and our farm-based setting.

Adapting PSHE for SEN Students:

- **Daily Routine:** Regular lessons support the development of essential life skills and ensure consistent reinforcement.
- **Multisensory and Practical Learning:** Students practice concepts like kindness, responsibility, and teamwork through farm activities. For example, a lesson on kindness is followed by caring for animals, such as grooming or feeding.
- **Simplified and Visual Resources:** Adapted materials, including social stories and pictorial guides, support comprehension.
- **Focus on Emotional Literacy:** Tools such as emotion charts and role-playing help students identify and manage their feelings.
- **Real-Life Application:** Topics are reinforced through hands-on tasks such as cleaning animal enclosures (responsibility) or planting seeds (teamwork).

This approach ensures PSHE is not just taught but lived, enabling students to build confidence and social skills in a practical and supportive environment.

- **Physical Education (PE):**
PE lessons are focused on physical wellbeing, teamwork, and mental health. Activities include orienteering, team-building exercises, dog walks, and mindfulness sessions. These outdoor adventures promote physical fitness, social interaction, and emotional wellbeing, ensuring that students enjoy

movement and develop healthy habits.

- **Science:**

Our science curriculum is based on the *Hamilton Brookes* schemes at Year 1 level, focusing on developing scientific thinking skills. Lessons are hands-on and exploration-based, encouraging students to:

- Ask questions.
- Make predictions.
- Conduct investigations to find answers.

Practical, sensory-rich lessons allow students to engage deeply with scientific concepts, helping them build curiosity and problem-solving skills in a way that is accessible and enjoyable.

- **Art:**

Art is integrated into topic work, and students are encouraged to experiment with different media, both indoors and outdoors. The natural environment around the farm provides abundant inspiration, and students learn to appreciate and create art while focusing on the process rather than the final product.

- **Design Technology:**

Design and technology projects are often farm-based, where students work to solve practical problems using creativity and hands-on skills. Whether it's designing farm tools, constructing structures, or cooking on the campfire, students develop their design and problem-solving abilities.

- **Geography and History:**

Geography is focused on understanding the local environment and global connections, with a particular emphasis on fieldwork and map skills. History lessons encourage students to explore different time periods, critical thinking, and how historical events shape the present. These subjects are taught through thematic units, ensuring a rich understanding of the world and its history.

- **Music:**

Music lessons take place around the campfire, where students sing, perform, and experience the joy of making music together. Music serves as both an artistic outlet and a way to build community, with students often inviting family and friends to join performances.

By integrating differentiated teaching with thematic, hands-on learning, YTFS ensures that every student has the opportunity to engage with the curriculum in a meaningful and effective way. Our unique approach promotes both academic achievement and personal development, helping students grow as learners, team members, and responsible citizens. Through the use of real-world experiences, cross-curricular links, and ongoing reflection, we ensure that our curriculum remains relevant, engaging, and accessible for all learners.

Impact:

At Yew Tree Farm School, the impact of our curriculum is measured through a combination of assessment tools, observations, and collaborative evaluations to ensure our approach delivers meaningful progress for every student.

The use of **B Squared assessment** allows us to track and monitor small, incremental steps in learning, ensuring achievements are celebrated and gaps are identified early. Evidence of student progress and engagement is captured using **Evisense software**, providing a rich portfolio of learning experiences, practical skills, and academic milestones. Regular **lesson observations** assess the quality of teaching and learning, ensuring that the curriculum is being implemented effectively and that students are engaging with the material in meaningful ways.

To ensure consistency and high standards, we participate in **moderation with other schools** and seek feedback from **external education consultants**, who provide an objective perspective on our curriculum delivery and its outcomes. These processes help us refine our approaches, maintain best practices, and ensure alignment with national standards.

The integration of thematic, real-world learning with academic rigor fosters curiosity, resilience, and a love for learning. Students develop core skills in literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking while gaining practical life skills through hands-on activities in our farm-based setting. Regular monitoring ensures that individual progress is recognized and celebrated, building confidence and motivation.

Beyond academics, our curriculum promotes social, emotional, and moral development, preparing students to thrive as responsible, empathetic individuals. The emphasis on outdoor learning, teamwork, and community engagement equips students with the tools to navigate challenges, build relationships, and contribute positively to society.

By the time students leave YTFS, they are not only more confident and capable learners but also well-rounded individuals equipped with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to succeed in the next stages of their education and life.

