



The Forge Secondary Short Stay School

Curriculum Policy

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Ratified by Governors: Pending

Next Review Due: Summer 2026

Introduction

Pupils at The Forge School have access to a curriculum that is broad, engaging and encompasses a purposeful and balanced approach to learning that is adapted to meet specific needs.

Pupils attending the Forge are some of the most vulnerable children in the community coming to us at a point of crisis in their lives: they have been permanently excluded from their mainstream school and find themselves facing any number of challenges, directly or indirectly, associated with that permanent exclusion.

Pupils come to The Forge with different levels of prior education. Many have been out of school or out of the classroom for a significant period of time before gaining a place at The Forge. Many pupils have had 3 or more school moves often accompanied by significant non-attendance at their previous setting. Within this context, many of our pupils come to us with significant gaps in their learning and unmet or unaddressed SEND challenges that serve as further obstacles to their engagement in learning.

Filling Gaps in Knowledge

Accepting the fact that The Forge is a short stay school, the average stay of a pupil at The Forge is currently 42 weeks, our key priority is filling the gaps in knowledge that our pupils arrive with. We have a particular focus on filling the gaps in knowledge of our pupils in English and Maths, while also opening our pupils' minds to a wider range of subjects such as Science, Art, PE, Food and World Studies.

Through teaching the requirements of the national curriculum we aim to prepare our pupils for either a return mainstream provision or for a more suitable educational setting that can better meet their specific needs. The Forge is a recognised Exams Centre offering qualification entries that are suitable for each individual pupil. While every Year 11 pupil is entered for GCSE Maths, English and Science, we aim to provide access to a range of suitable KS4 outcomes so that our pupils are best equipped for life beyond The Forge.

Our key goal is to ensure that all pupils make good progress based on their individual starting points.

Aspirations

When delivering our Curriculum our intent is to enable all the young people at The Forge to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to best support them in taking their next steps.

At The Forge, we want our pupils to aspire to be the best version of themselves. We recognise that wider, complex, structural inequalities in our society can reproduce themselves through the generations. Our curriculum seeks to empower our pupils to help overcome some of these fundamental challenges by not only giving them the academic foundations they need, but by also explicitly teaching them what the societal norms of behaviour are in different contexts. This means we constantly help shape the responses and interactions of our pupils to other people, whether in classrooms, corridors, or in the wider community.

In addition to this, we seek to help our pupils overcome these structural inequalities by introducing them to places and experiences that they may not hitherto have experienced or would not otherwise go on to experience. Our programme of Enrichment activities breaks down barriers to people, places and experiences so that our pupils do not impose limits on themselves for what they can go on to achieve in life.

Belonging

Thus, we believe the word 'curriculum' should be interpreted in its widest meaning. It is every planned learning experience the pupils have as a member of the school, and it is the wider 'social' interactions that our pupils have with each other, staff and other people: it is also the place they go and the people they meet.

Our pupils are supported in this by their tutor team. Each pupil belongs to a form class made up of a form teacher and a teaching assistant who are the key adults in understanding and meeting the complex needs of our pupils. While the form teacher is a subject specialist who teaches across the school, the teaching assistant remains with the class across the teaching day and is well placed to support pupils in accessing their learning in the most effective way.

These tutor groups are also supported by a range of other interventions and professionals to help our pupils better understand who they are and how they can overcome the challenges that they currently face and will continue to face. These school-based approaches include access to the speech and language therapist, personal and group mentoring; a counsellor and dog therapist; and a boxing/self-defence coach. The provision of this wider network of support acknowledges that, in order to feel part of something bigger, some of pupils do need individual attention and support.