



Queen's Croft High School

TEACHING, LEARNING AND CURRICULUM POLICY

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Introduction

At Queen's Croft we recognise that the operating environment within the school affects the quality and degree of students' learning and potential outcomes. Our teachers and TAs are highly trained to work with young people with a range of complex needs and are committed to empowering and enriching their lives, giving them every opportunity to make progress towards fulfilment and independence. This means that every learner has their own curriculum built specifically for them based on their skills and desired outcomes. It is broad, in that it covers all aspects of their development, and it is balanced in that it weighs up, specifically for them, the input that is needed.

Our teachers use a variety of different teaching methods (e.g. direct instruction, problem-based learning, cooperative learning, experiential learning, small group and whole class discussions) and make adjustments for different learning styles (e.g. visual, verbal, physical, logical, social, solitary) providing opportunities for all students to learn effectively.

Maintaining and communicating high expectations for all students is a critical feature of classrooms that support effective learning. As a school we recognise that all students need challenging subject matter to remain engaged in learning. Using formative and summative assessments in a systematic manner provides valuable information to students and significantly improves learning and achievement. Teachers set objectives and provide regular feedback (including praise) on student progress.

At Queen's Croft, creating an atmosphere in which diversity is respected and individual differences are appreciated contributes to student success and resilience. Treating social and emotional learning as a valuable and teachable subject contributes to a positive classroom context and supports academic learning. Fostering positive relationships within the classroom contributes to substantial improvements in student outcomes. Not only do we help each child fulfil their true potential while they are here, but we also take great care in preparing them for life beyond Queen's Croft and help them and their families to find the best educational placements or employment, when they leave us, so they may lead as full and independent lives as possible.

The groups children learn in are constructed based on a variety of factors that include age, academic ability and social skills. Age is not the sole determining factor and many students are taught in classes where the majority of students are younger or older than them because this is the most appropriate group for them in other ways.

The Curriculum

The curriculum offered at Queen's Croft depends on the needs, abilities and skills of the individual student. Within each class setting there are individual adaptations to the curriculum to meet the specific needs of learners.

Key Stage 3

At Key Stage 3 our learners are either class based (our Blue and Orange groups) or following a more mainstream curriculum (our Green groups).

Blue and Orange groups have a class teacher, similar to a primary school, where the class teacher teaches the majority of the curriculum. This includes Maths, English, Science, Humanities and PSHE. Specialist teachers will be used for some or all of Music, Communication, PE, Art, DT, Food, Forest School and ICT.

Green groups have specialist teachers for all their lessons and move round from classroom to classroom for their lessons. Their curriculum comprises English, Maths, Science, ICT, Humanities, Music, Art, DT, Food, PE, Communication, Forest School and PSHE.

All students are taught in groups that have a Teaching Assistant with them all the time to support their emotional and social development. Whilst academic development is extremely important to us as a school and we wish to challenge and nurture such development as effectively as possible, we nevertheless recognised that students must be emotionally and socially secure in order to thrive.

Key Stage 4

The curriculum offered at Key Stage 4 changes annually depending on the specific needs of the students in the key stage. In some years there are class based groups that continue to operate in the same way as those in Key Stage 3.

Most students are taught English, Maths, Science and ICT in setted-ability groups, with GCSEs offered as appropriate. Most students take option choices of some sort leading to accredited qualifications in subjects such as Sport, Art, Food, DT, Work Skills or Employability.

Students continue to enjoy a high level of personal and emotional support.

Key Stage 5

Our curriculum at Key Stage 5 divides into two principal types – a vocational programme and the 'Skills for Life' programme. The Skills for Life programme is followed by those students with the highest level of need which, whilst continuing to develop literacy and numeracy skills, concentrates on the development of those skills which will support learners in maximising their independence levels for adult life. These include cooking, shopping and travel.

The vocational programme offers opportunities for students to experience Retail, Hospitality and Catering and Horticulture. Students develop a range of skills backed up with opportunities for Work Experience, to support them in effectively accessing their next level of education, training or employment. Students on vocational pathways also continue to study literacy, numeracy, ICT and PSHE, whilst also working towards the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award.

Nurture is at the heart of everything in Key Stage 5, with a clear emphasis on preparing learners for entering the adult world.

Complex Needs

Learners with the most complex needs are taught in multi-age classes based on need. The curriculum they follow differs depending on the needs of individuals but is often partly or entirely based on sensory learning. Success is celebrated based on what constitutes success for individuals and the department is extremely strong. Where appropriate, learners develop their literacy and numeracy skills whilst also working hard to maximise their independence for adult life.

Nurture Group

Our nurture group exists to support students who are struggling in one of our other classes. Students may access the nurture group for a variety of reasons that may include:

- Struggling to adapt back to school life after a persistent period of absence, for example at a mainstream school
- Significant behavioural challenges that can best be supported in a very small, nurturing environment
- As an alternative to fixed term exclusion where specific aspects of challenging behaviour can be addressed and reflected on
- Attachment or ASC issues that make socialisation in other groups particularly difficult

Individual students work on bespoke programmes aimed at supporting their emotional and social growth. This includes academic lessons where students are not accessing this in their usual class.