



EMERGE SCHOOL

Emerge School Curriculum Policy

2025 - 2026

☀️ Our Vision: *A culture rooted in safety, where people feel seen, heard, included, and connected through authentic relationships.*

🎯 Our Mission: *To create a safe and nurturing environment where everyone feels a sense of belonging, is empowered in their growth and learning, and is encouraged to embrace who they are and who they aspire to become.*

💖 Our Values: *At EmERGE School, our values are the foundation of who we are, how we work, and what we believe in. They shape how we support young people and how we support each other.*

We are proud to uphold these four core values:



Voice: *empowering every voice to speak, shape and be heard*



Connection: *rooted in relationships, thriving through authenticity*



Growth: *evolving with purpose, innovating with heart*



Inclusion: *where every story begins, and every person matters*

Excel & EmERGE Care was created to give children and young people with complex needs a safe, supportive place to grow and heal. Through residential care, education, and therapeutic support, we build stability, trust, and a future where children and young people can truly flourish.

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Emerge school is proud to offer:

- A broad, balanced, differentiated and relevant curriculum which promotes educational experiences that reach beyond the classroom and supports students to develop social, communication and life skills.
- A stable and caring environment combined with high staff to student ratios, which ensure that every student has the opportunity to develop their abilities, share new experiences and be supported in realising their future potential.
- A multi-disciplinary and person-centred approach to the delivery of education which enables students, who may have previously struggled within educational settings, to engage positively in school life.
- Small class sizes for all students.
- Extensive and individualised resources allowing for a bespoke approach to education which allows us to meet the needs of all our pupils.
- Our multi-agency team around the child approach includes Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists who work together to form personalised plans for children who need extra support.
- Both a formal and semi-formal curriculum, carefully tailored to the needs of each child to ensure they access the most appropriate learning pathways and achieve their full potential.

KEY PRINCIPLES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

We deliver a curriculum that aligns in part with mainstream schooling while also providing access to specialised approaches designed to re-engage disaffected children, emotionally stabilise children who may feel angry or frightened, and support the re-inclusion of children who are ready to transition back into mainstream education. By adopting a creative and flexible approach to learning and offering regular opportunities for success, we support each child in developing confidence in their abilities and building the resilience required for continued progress. This approach ensures that every student is empowered to achieve the learning outcomes and life skills necessary to transition successfully into adulthood.

To meet the diverse needs of our students, Emerge School offers two distinct curriculum pathways:

- **Formal Curriculum** – This pathway closely mirrors mainstream education, following structured learning objectives and subject-specific content. It is designed for students who are ready to engage with academic learning at a level comparable to mainstream peers, while still benefiting from smaller class sizes, specialist support, and differentiated teaching approaches. The formal curriculum aims to prepare students for recognised qualifications and facilitate successful reintegration into mainstream education or further education settings.
- **Semi-Formal Curriculum** – This pathway focuses on functional, experiential, and personalised learning for students who require additional support to access formal academic content. Learning is tailored to individual needs, emphasising social, communication, and life skills alongside core knowledge. The semi-formal curriculum is designed to build confidence, promote engagement, and provide meaningful learning experiences for students who may struggle in traditional academic settings, ensuring they develop the skills necessary to achieve personal and developmental milestones.

By offering both formal and semi-formal pathways, we ensure that every child has access to an education that is appropriate for their abilities, aspirations, and emotional readiness, supporting them to thrive both in school and in future adult life.

2. OVERVIEW

Emerge School is an independent school for pupils aged 5 to 13 years experiencing social, emotional, and mental health difficulties. We offer places to children and young people from within our local authority and beyond who require a tailored approach to learning to meet their individual needs. The majority of pupils arrive at the school having faced difficulties in previous educational placements, often resulting in multiple placement breakdowns. Many pupils consequently have significant gaps in their learning and attainment, sometimes linked to medical diagnoses such as ADHD, ASD, OCD, or other conditions. On entry, pupils may be performing below the national expectations for their key stage. The school places equal emphasis on academic progress and personal development.

The nature of our pupils' SEN and mild/moderate needs often produces uneven academic profiles both within individual pupils and across year groups. This presents particular challenges in ensuring that each pupil has the opportunity to grow academically and socially, while ensuring less able pupils do not feel stigmatised. Many pupils arrive with heightened anxiety or school phobia, which the school seeks to counter through empathy, understanding, structure, and the support of small class groups, flexible timetables, and a reward system.

At Emerge, we aim to develop the whole child, encompassing skill acquisition, building relationships, expanding knowledge, and promoting progress through a variety of learning experiences. Learning can take place in the formal classroom setting, but equally in informal settings outside the classroom. Pupils are encouraged to develop key life skills including socialisation, cooperation, negotiation, and collaboration, preparing them to become contributing citizens. Staff have a critical role in supporting this development through a nurturing approach. The school actively promotes values such as tolerance, respect, the rule of law, and democracy.

Our curriculum provides opportunities for growth and development both inside and outside the classroom, Personal, Social, and Health Education (PSHE) alongside Social, Moral, Spiritual, and Cultural (SMSC) opportunities form the backbone of our curriculum, empowering pupils and fostering a local and global sense of identity and responsibility.

To meet the diverse needs of our cohort, Emerge offers **formal and semi-formal curriculum pathways**:

- The **formal curriculum** mirrors mainstream education and is designed for pupils ready to engage with structured academic learning, preparing them for recognised qualifications and potential reintegration into mainstream or further education.
- The **semi-formal curriculum** is experiential and highly personalised, focusing on functional skills, social communication, and life skills, providing meaningful learning experiences for pupils who may struggle with traditional academic content. Both pathways are carefully designed to ensure every pupil can access learning that is appropriate to their abilities, needs, and readiness, while building confidence and resilience.

The purpose of our curriculum is to:

- Raise aspirations for all pupils.
- Ensure learning is purposeful, relevant, and contextualised.
- Inspire and immerse pupils in their learning.
- Underpin our school values of respect, resilience, cooperation, and empathy.
- Promote a growth mindset.
- Celebrate the process of learning, viewing mistakes as opportunities for growth.
- Develop independence and prepare pupils for adulthood by focusing on practical life skills.
- Provide memorable, experiential learning opportunities that enrich pupils' lives – please see our curriculum maps.
- Foster strong relationships within the school, local, and wider community.
- Offer entrepreneurial and real-world experiences.
- Embed SMSC and British Values throughout pupils' learning journeys.

3. CURRICULUM – STATEMENT OF INTENT

Through our curriculum, we aim to deliver a clear set of intentions:

- **Intention 1:** Maximise behaviour and skills for learning
- **Intention 2:** Reach full academic potential
- **Intention 3:** Rebuild and nurture personal and social development
- **Intention 4:** Prepare pupils to make a positive contribution to society and embrace British values

Our curriculum is designed to provide all pupils with access to a safe and nurturing learning environment. It offers a supportive, structured, and flexible approach with a diverse range of high-quality learning experiences that are relevant to each pupil and prepare them for the next stage in their life. Pupils access a bespoke blend of learning tailored to their needs, encompassing both academic and personal progression.

We aim for pupils to leave Emerge with the knowledge, skills, confidence, resilience, and independence to care for themselves mentally and physically. Pupils are supported to perform confidently with their peers, become capable future citizens, and take advantage of the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences that adult life will offer.

The school is committed to:

- Providing a safe and nurturing school environment.
- Offering a broad and balanced education that is coherently planned and sequenced to develop cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment.
- Providing subject choices and tailored support to enhance pupils' learning and personal development and enable them to achieve their goals.
- Developing pupils' independence, resilience, and self-management skills to equip them for further education, employment, and adult life.
- Supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.
- Supporting pupils' physical development and encouraging responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.
- Supporting pupils to understand and manage their mental health effectively.
- Promoting a positive attitude to learning.
- Ensuring equal access to learning for all pupils, maintaining high expectations and academic ambition, with appropriate challenge and support.
- Equipping pupils with the knowledge and cultural capital needed to succeed in life.
- Enabling students to achieve formal qualifications in line with their academic abilities while also providing semi-formal learning pathways for those needing functional and experiential approaches.

As a specialist provision, we recognise that children:

- Have different educational and behavioural needs and aspirations.
- Require varied strategies and approaches for learning.
- Acquire, assimilate, and communicate information at different rates.
- Benefit from a range of teaching approaches and experiences tailored to their individual needs.

By offering both **formal and semi-formal curriculum pathways**, we ensure every pupil has access to learning that is appropriate for their abilities, readiness, and developmental stage. The formal curriculum supports pupils ready to engage with structured academic content, preparing them for qualifications and mainstream progression, while the semi-formal curriculum prioritises functional skills, life skills, social and communication development, and experiential learning to build confidence and engagement.

4. Implementation

Our curriculum supports our mission statement: Learning Today for a Better Tomorrow, by providing pupils with opportunities to learn and develop in a supportive, creative environment. It is individualised, innovative, and flexible, nurturing each pupil's intellectual, social, moral, spiritual, and physical development.

The curriculum is based on the National Curriculum (2014) but blended with functional skills, independence skills, and skills for working life. Subjects are taught both discretely and through thematic, topic-based approaches to promote continuity, progression, and holistic learning. Pupils are encouraged to work independently, collaboratively, and creatively. Those with particular talents are offered opportunities to further develop their abilities, including integration into mainstream settings when appropriate.

Classes are small, usually no more than five pupils, grouped by age, social dynamics, and ability. Each class has a dedicated teacher responsible for coordinating Individual Education Plans, Milestone Planners, and termly reports. Pupils are predominantly taught in age-related groups, with adjustments made to meet individual needs and maximise engagement.

Formal Curriculum (Thematic Approach)

The formal curriculum is delivered through a **thematic approach**, where subjects are taught under overarching themes to integrate learning across disciplines. This approach enables pupils to see connections between subjects, apply skills in multiple contexts, and engage with real-world issues.

Key aspects:

- Integration of subjects under a central theme.
- Focus on real-world contexts.
- Progressive, holistic units of learning.
- Collaborative lesson planning across subjects.
- Variety of teaching methods including project-based learning, discussions, simulations, and hands-on activities.

Benefits:

- Increased engagement and motivation
- Deeper understanding of concepts
- Development of transferable skills including critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving

The formal curriculum provides progression, continuity, and challenge while being delivered in small classes with high support and personalised differentiation.

Semi-Formal Curriculum (SLD/MLD)

The semi-formal curriculum is designed for pupils with severe, complex, or profound learning difficulties. Following the **Equals multi-tiered curriculum**, it recognises that differentiation from the National Curriculum alone is insufficient for pupils whose learning is significantly different from neuro-typical learners.

Principles:

- Curricula are **different rather than differentiated** to reflect the unique learning styles of pupils working below national curriculum levels
- Breadth and balance are adapted to meet individual needs, with focused intensity on areas most beneficial for each pupil
- Schemes of work are developmental, personalised, and aim for the highest level of independence
- Not tied to age or key stage; pupils access content based on abilities, interests, and learning journey
- P Scales language is occasionally used for clarity, but National Curriculum alignment is not a requirement

The semi-formal curriculum focuses on **functional skills, independence, communication, and social development**, providing meaningful, learner-led experiences to build confidence, engagement, and progression.

Breadth of Curriculum

Emerge School uses the National Curriculum (NC) as a foundational framework while developing a bespoke curriculum tailored to the needs of our pupils. Pupils following the formal curriculum have access to all NC subjects, including Maths, English, Science, History, Geography, PSHE, Design & Technology, Food Technology, ICT, RE, Art, and PE, following the published programmes of study. Pupils following the semi-formal curriculum access a personalised and functional curriculum that prioritises life skills, communication, independence, and social development, while incorporating relevant elements of the NC where appropriate.

Individualised Access and Differentiation

Access to MFL and Music is provided on an individual basis to allow pupils sufficient time to address attainment gaps and focus on personal development. In recognition of pupils' individual needs, some may require partial or full disapplication from certain subjects. These decisions are guided by each pupil's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), which may highlight priority areas beyond the NC such as social skills, communication, sensory processing, cognition and learning, and motor skills.

Even when pupils demonstrate average or above-average cognitive ability, some may require specialised teaching methodologies to access certain areas of the curriculum effectively. Pupils with ASD or AS diagnoses may process information literally and struggle to relate abstract concepts to concrete reality. Others may have difficulties understanding temporal concepts, making subjects like History particularly challenging. Teachers at EmERGE carefully consider these learning access issues when planning topics, ensuring they are integrated into meaningful and comprehensible learning experiences.

Therapeutic and Skill-Based Support

Emerge supports pupils' physical and sensory development through:

- Individual work with Occupational Therapists.
- Daily physical activities and sensory therapy sessions.
- Sensory Integration and relaxation techniques through alternative therapy programs.

Speech and Language Therapists (SaLT) play a key role in supporting communication, speech, and social language skills. This is delivered through individual withdrawal, small group, and whole-class sessions, built into the daily curriculum timetable. A range of approaches and resources is used, including established programmes such as **The Social Use of Language**, alongside individually constructed programmes tailored to pupil needs.

Flexible Curriculum Design

We recognise that some pupils require highly flexible timetables, balancing academic and therapeutic input. Staff across disciplines collaborate to ensure that any bespoke timetable supports reintegration into the classroom, strengthens access to learning, and maximises developmental outcomes.

This approach ensures pupils develop academically, socially, emotionally, and physically, while providing the personalised support necessary to succeed alongside their peers.

Supported by the **SEND Policy**.

Co-ordination and Documentation

The **Senior Leadership Team (SLT)** is responsible for the overall co-ordination of the curriculum, with individual teachers taking responsibility for specific subject areas. Effective communication is essential for co-ordination and continuity and takes place formally through daily and weekly teacher meetings, academic and annual review reports, and informally via emails and discussions.

Each subject is co-ordinated by a designated teacher who reviews subject resources and identifies needs across the school. Without effective planning, monitoring, reporting, and assessment, the curriculum would be less effective. Planning ensures lively, reflective delivery with appropriate pace and continuity, providing a positive and rewarding learning experience for pupils.

Curriculum documentation at Emerge forms the backbone for continuity and effective progress across Key Stages. These documents serve as tools for planning, differentiation, assessment, and communication between departments, parents/carers, and external agencies.

Key areas of curriculum documentation:

- **Annual Review documentation**
- **Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs)**
- **Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs)** incorporating time-out procedures
- **Milestone Planners**
- **Curriculum Planning**
 - Long-term plans based on NC and subject-specific schemes.
 - Medium-term plans completed termly, detailing objectives, activities, differentiation, outcomes, assessment opportunities, resources, and evaluation.
 - Short-term plans managed daily using medium-term plans as a guide.

Assessment and Recording:

- Annotated work in exercise books, levelled by teachers to support teacher assessment.
- Records from curriculum planning.
- Formal testing, mock examinations, and skill-specific assessments in areas such as reading and spelling.

Reports:

- Academic end-of-term reports, including current attainment, progress, and next steps, sent to parents/carers three times per year.
- Progress reviewed each half term and used to monitor achievement.

The **Assessment Toolkit** enables teachers to plan and record pupil progress alongside evidence of teacher-assessed levels. Teacher moderation ensures consistency across age groups and subjects, supported by whole-staff collaboration. Documentation is stored on the school Dropbox and subject tracker system, with individual planning files allowing daily flexibility and adaptation.

Pupil Profiles (IEPs):

Produced termly in consultation with pupils, IEPs review progress and set targets for the next period, informed by Annual Reviews, PEPs, LACs, and teacher meetings. The class teacher coordinates the monitoring and record-keeping of IEP action plans. The **'Steps for Success'** system breaks down targets into manageable, progressive steps to clarify progress for pupils and staff.

Interventions, Enrichment, and Therapeutic Support

Pupils have access to targeted interventions delivered by trained staff, supporting emotional regulation, social understanding, and focused learning. Interventions are planned based on assessment outcomes to address specific emotional, literacy, numeracy, or behavioural needs.

Pupils also have opportunities for weekly enrichment sessions, which can be pupil-led, conducted individually or in small groups, and may include onsite or off-site activities with key adults to further support learning.

Some pupils require highly individualised and bespoke timetables. The school adopts an innovative approach in these cases, sometimes delivering education mainly off-site with increased therapeutic input. These programmes aim to engage pupils effectively and develop essential life skills alongside academic and personal growth.

Staff respond to pupil needs by:

- Supporting communication, language, and literacy development.
- Planning experiences that engage multiple senses to deepen understanding.
- Ensuring full participation in learning, physical, and practical activities.
- Helping pupils manage behaviour and emotions to participate safely and effectively.
- Providing a nurturing and encouraging environment.

The school is supported by a multi-agency clinical team, including Speech and Language Therapists (SaLT), Occupational Therapists (OT), and clinical and educational psychologists. These professionals work closely with staff to devise personalised pathways that best support each pupil's learning and development.

Integration with Curriculum Pathways:

- Pupils following the **formal curriculum** receive these interventions alongside academic learning to support attainment, engagement, and social development.
- Pupils on the **semi-formal curriculum** receive interventions integrated into functional and experiential learning, ensuring support is personalised to their developmental, communication, and social needs.

5. Impact

At Emerge School, pupils are assessed regularly to enable teachers to plan the next steps in learning for each child. Assessment is aligned to learning objectives and the skill requirements appropriate for each pupil's level, providing live feedback that supports progress within lessons and over time. Pupils are expected to make good or better progress from their individual starting points in all subjects. Progress is tracked and reported to parents and carers at least three times per year.

Through ongoing assessment, monitoring, and evaluation, we ensure that:

- All elements of the curriculum have aims and objectives that reflect the school's ethos and meet the needs of individual pupils.
- Adequate time is provided for teaching all required elements, reviewed regularly by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- Assessment procedures meet statutory requirements.
- Staff are actively involved in decision-making regarding curriculum breadth and balance.
- Provision is differentiated and delivered appropriately for pupils with varying abilities, including those with SEN, enabling meaningful learning and quality first teaching.
- Robust procedures exist to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment.

Assessment

Emerge School employs a rigorous triangulated monitoring system to measure curriculum impact. Senior Leaders and Subject Leaders review learning, evaluate pupil voice, provide feedback to staff, celebrate successes, and identify areas for development. Curriculum impact is reviewed half-termly, with progress measured against individual end-of-year outcomes.

Enjoyment of the curriculum promotes achievement, confidence, and positive behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to try new things safely, collaborate with peers, and develop independent inquiry skills. They are motivated to excel, embrace challenge, demonstrate resilience, and become responsible citizens. The curriculum fosters respect, tolerance, and appreciation of diversity within the school community and beyond.

Monitoring and Evaluating Practice

The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, and Lead Teacher monitor the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment to ensure continuous curriculum improvement. Individual curriculum area plans feed into the whole School Development Plan and align with the school's ethos and intent.

Senior Leadership Team monitors:

- SMART Pupil Profile targets, reviewed each term.
- Subject-specific targets set by teachers.
- Long-term, medium-term, and lesson planning aligned with Schemes of Work.
- Marking that provides constructive feedback and guidance for next steps.
- Consistency of practice and provision across the school.
- Milestone Planner reviews linked to individual EHCPs.

Quality assurance activities include:

- Learning walks and environment checks.
- Lesson observations.

- Scrutiny of planning, marking, and pupil work.
- Pupil interviews and voice activities.
- Collection and analysis of pupil progress data.

Integration with Curriculum Pathways:

- For pupils following the **formal curriculum**, assessment focuses on subject-specific knowledge, skills, and attainment, alongside personal and social development.
- For pupils following the **semi-formal curriculum**, assessment emphasises functional skills, communication, independence, and social/emotional progress, ensuring that learning is meaningful and tailored to individual needs.

6. Legislation and Guidance

This policy reflects the statutory requirements for Independent Schools to provide full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age, as defined in section 8 of the Education Act 1996. The curriculum is designed to give pupils experience across a broad range of areas, including linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human, social, physical, aesthetic and creative education, in line with **The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014**. Where appropriate, Emerge School follows the **National Curriculum programmes of study**, adapted to meet the individual needs of our pupils.

This policy also aligns with the requirements for inclusion, equality, and the provision of a high-quality education for pupils with additional needs, in accordance with:

- **Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014**
- **Equality Act 2010**

It additionally takes into account the curriculum-related expectations of governing boards and inspection guidance, including:

- **Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014**
- **Education Inspection Handbook – Ofsted, November 2019 (updated July 2022)**
- **Non-association Independent School Inspection Handbook – Ofsted, October 2019 (updated July 2022)**
- **A Competency Framework for Governance – Department for Education, October 2020**

Emerge School ensures that the curriculum is compliant with statutory guidance while remaining flexible and adaptive to the needs of pupils on both **formal and semi-formal pathways**. This includes personalised adjustments, differentiated teaching, and bespoke provision to ensure all pupils access meaningful learning and achieve their full potential.

The policy also reflects best practice in safeguarding, health and safety, and multi-agency working, ensuring pupils receive a safe, inclusive, and supportive education in line with statutory and regulatory expectations.

Review Date	February 2025
Reviewed By	Danielle Clowes & Andy Gould
Next Review	February 2027
Summary of Changes	First Edition January 2026 – Approved by Headteacher- Sarah Mason

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Shahar'.

Headteacher:

Date:06.01.2026