



CONIFERS HOUSE SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Every Child Is Different - we work together to break down barriers and cultivate a respectful, inclusive community

Conifers House School (CHS) is a co-educational independent day school for pupils aged 5 to 16. All pupils admitted to CHS have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The school provides specialist education for pupils with a range of special educational needs and disabilities, including autism, communication and interaction needs, sensory and physical needs, global developmental delay and other complex or overlapping needs.

The CHS curriculum is designed to ensure that every pupil experiences ambition, challenge, belonging and success, regardless of starting point. It is rooted in the National Curriculum and adapted to meet pupils' educational, communication, sensory, social, emotional and independence needs. It is knowledge-rich, vocabulary-rich and experience-rich: pupils progressively develop subject-specific knowledge, skills and understanding alongside communication, independence and preparation for adulthood.

The curriculum is delivered through three pathways:

- **Learning to Learn (Green Pathway)**
- **Participating in Learning (Orange Pathway)**
- **Independent Learning (Purple Pathway)**

The pathways enable pupils to work towards shared curriculum aims with different levels of support, complexity and independence. Placement and progression reflect pupils' stage of learning, assessed starting points and needs, rather than chronological age alone. Class organisation and pathway placement do not determine a pupil's potential or place a ceiling on their progress.

CHS does not organise its curriculum thematically. Subject knowledge and progression are identified and planned systematically. Where appropriate, staff make purposeful connections through key texts, educational visits, outdoor learning, enrichment and real-life experiences. These opportunities are selected to deepen understanding, develop vocabulary and help pupils apply and generalise their learning beyond the classroom.

Teaching is structured through explicit instruction, informed by Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction. Staff model learning, break it into manageable steps, use questioning and guided practice, check understanding and provide regular opportunities for review. The Gradual Release of Responsibility supports pupils to move from teacher modelling and supported practice towards greater independence and application. Adaptive teaching responds to pupils' starting points, communication, cognition, sensory and regulation needs while maintaining ambition and high expectations.

Curriculum planning takes account of pupils' EHCP outcomes, individual starting points, communication profiles, sensory and regulation needs, interests and aspirations. Learning is revisited through retrieval, repetition, consolidation and overlearning where these support pupils to retain, deepen and generalise knowledge and skills. Revisiting content is purposeful: pupils encounter it through new texts, vocabulary, contexts, investigations and practical applications, with progression reflected in greater knowledge, understanding, communication, independence and ability to apply learning.

Therapeutic and SEND-informed practice supports access to the curriculum and is integrated with educational planning. Communication is everyone's responsibility. Assessment, including the use of BSquared Connecting Steps where appropriate, helps staff recognise pupils' progress, identify next steps and adapt teaching.

Through this curriculum, CHS aims to equip pupils with the knowledge, communication, independence and confidence they need for their next steps and adult life.

2.0 CURRICULUM MODEL

The curriculum is organised through three pathways:

- **Learning to Learn (Green Pathway)**
- **Participating in Learning (Orange Pathway)**
- **Independent Learning (Purple Pathway)**

The pathways provide different levels of support, complexity and independence through which pupils work towards the curriculum's intended knowledge, skills and understanding. Class and pathway placement reflect pupils' stage of learning, starting points, EHCP outcomes and assessed needs. They do not set a ceiling on what a pupil can achieve.

Teaching follows an explicit and structured approach, informed by Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction. Staff explain and model learning, break it into manageable steps, use questioning and guided practice, check understanding and provide opportunities for review. The Gradual Release of Responsibility supports pupils to move from modelling and supported practice towards greater independence and application. Adaptive teaching responds to pupils' communication, cognition, sensory and regulation needs while maintaining high expectations.

Staff use assessment and their knowledge of pupils to identify starting points, check what pupils know and understand, and plan appropriate next steps. Pupils' interests may help make learning relevant and engaging, while the intended subject knowledge and learning outcomes remain clear. BSquared Connecting Steps and other appropriate assessment approaches help staff record and recognise progress, including small steps.

Some pupils need planned opportunities to revisit, practise and consolidate learning before applying it independently or in a different context. Retrieval, repetition and overlearning are used purposefully to strengthen retention and generalisation. Revisits should deepen learning through new vocabulary, texts, contexts, investigations or practical applications.

Staff consider how communication, emotional wellbeing, sensory access and regulation affect pupils' participation in learning. Appropriate adjustments and support are provided, with therapists and other professionals involved where relevant. Communication is the responsibility of all staff. Consistent routines and expectations help pupils feel secure and ready to learn. Behaviour is understood as communication and considered in light of the pupil's needs and circumstances.

3.0 LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy is informed by the legislation, statutory guidance and inspection requirements applicable to Conifers House School as an independent school in England. Relevant references will be reviewed when this policy is reviewed and when changes to legislation or guidance make an earlier update necessary.

The principal requirements and guidance relevant to the curriculum and assessment are:

- **Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014**, as amended, particularly Part 1, paragraphs 2 to 4. These set requirements for the written curriculum policy and supporting plans and schemes of work, the areas of learning to be covered, pupils' progress and the system for evaluating pupils.

- **Department for Education, Independent School Standards Guidance (April 2026)**, which explains the requirements of the Independent School Standards.
- **Equality Act 2010**, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils.
- **Children and Families Act 2014** and the **Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014**, together with the **SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years**. The school has regard to the Code when supporting pupils with SEND and taking account of their EHCPs.
- **Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework and current Non-association Independent School Inspection Toolkit**, which set out how inspectors evaluate curriculum, teaching, achievement and the school's compliance with the Independent School Standards.
- **Careers guidance and access for education and training providers**, as relevant to the school's careers and preparation-for-adulthood provision. CHS will have regard to applicable duties and use the guidance to inform its programme.

CHS has chosen to root its curriculum in the National Curriculum. As an independent school, it is not generally required to follow the National Curriculum programmes of study. The school uses relevant National Curriculum content as a reference point when designing and reviewing its curriculum, adapting it to pupils' ages, aptitudes, EHCP outcomes, starting points and needs.

The Engagement Model and pre-key-stage standards may be considered where relevant to a pupil's assessment, including where statutory or optional national assessment arrangements apply. They do not replace the school's own curriculum, assessment systems or responsibility to monitor each pupil's progress.

4.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

CHS Board

The CHS Board provides governance oversight of the curriculum and holds school leaders to account for its quality, implementation and impact. It will:

- approve the curriculum policy and receive assurance that it is implemented effectively;
- consider whether the curriculum is suitably broad, ambitious and responsive to pupils' ages, aptitudes, EHCP outcomes and needs;
- review information about curriculum quality, teaching, assessment, pupil progress and preparation for adulthood;
- consider whether leaders identify and address risks or weaknesses in curriculum provision; and
- seek assurance that statutory requirements and applicable Independent School Standards are met.

Executive Headteacher

The Executive Headteacher provides strategic leadership, challenge and support in relation to health and safety, safeguarding, compliance and school improvement. In relation to this policy, the Executive Headteacher will support governors and proprietors to understand assurance information, inspection findings, strategic risks, priorities for action and the extent to which the school is meeting its statutory duties and the Independent School Standards in practice.

The Executive Headteacher will also support the Head of School and senior leaders by providing professional oversight, constructive challenge and guidance on policy implementation, quality assurance, improvement planning, response to external scrutiny and the timely completion of actions arising from monitoring, incident

review, Independent School Standards or Ofsted inspection, governor visits or third-party advice. This role helps ensure that leadership and governance remain well informed, well supported and focused on continuous improvement.

Head of School

The Head of School is responsible for the day-to-day leadership and effective implementation of the curriculum and this policy. The Head of School will:

- ensure that curriculum plans and schemes of work are in place, appropriately sequenced and implemented;
- ensure that teaching takes account of pupils' starting points, EHCP outcomes, ages, aptitudes, communication and other identified needs;
- ensure that assessment is used to identify progress, inform teaching and plan next steps;
- oversee curriculum monitoring, including the evaluation of teaching, pupils' work, assessment information and progress;
- ensure that reasonable adjustments and appropriate support enable pupils to access learning;
- ensure that staff receive appropriate guidance, supervision and professional development to carry out their curriculum responsibilities;
- ensure that parents and carers receive appropriate information about pupils' progress;
- oversee qualification and examination arrangements, where applicable; and
- report to the Board and Executive Headteacher on curriculum quality, implementation, impact and priorities for improvement.

Assistant Headteacher

The Assistant Headteacher supports the Head of School in curriculum leadership and implementation. Responsibilities may include:

- contributing to curriculum planning, monitoring and evaluation;
- supporting quality assurance of teaching, pupils' work and assessment;
- supporting staff development and the sharing of effective practice;
- coordinating delegated curriculum responsibilities, including careers education or examinations, where assigned; and
- reporting on delegated responsibilities to the Head of School.

Middle Leaders and Subject Leaders

Middle Leaders and Subject Leaders are responsible for the quality and development of their assigned curriculum areas. They will:

- develop and maintain subject plans and schemes of work that identify intended knowledge, skills, vocabulary and progression;
- support staff to deliver the planned curriculum consistently and adaptively;

- monitor teaching, pupils' work and assessment in their area and use findings to identify strengths and improvement needs;
- support the assessment and reporting of pupils' progress in their area;
- contribute to staff development and curriculum review; and
- follow the school's safeguarding procedures and raise concerns through the appropriate route.

Class Teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils in their class. They will:

- implement curriculum plans and adapt teaching to pupils' starting points and identified needs;
- use assessment to check understanding, identify progress and plan next steps;
- promote communication, participation and increasing independence;
- work with Subject Leaders, support staff, therapists and other professionals, as appropriate;
- maintain appropriate records and contribute to progress reports and EHCP review information;
- guide and deploy support staff in learning activities; and
- follow the school's safeguarding procedures and report concerns promptly.

Education Support Staff

Higher Level Teaching Assistants and Teaching Assistants support teaching and learning under the direction of the Class Teacher. They will:

- support pupils to access learning and participate in line with agreed plans and adjustments;
- contribute observations and relevant assessment information to the Class Teacher;
- promote communication, engagement and independence, avoiding unnecessary adult support where pupils can act independently;
- follow the Class Teacher's direction and the school's policies, including safeguarding procedures; and
- undertake curriculum-related responsibilities only when appropriately trained, authorised and supported.

The Head of School may delegate specific responsibilities to other leaders or staff. Delegation does not remove the Head of School's responsibility for the effective day-to-day leadership of the curriculum. The Executive Headteacher's strategic oversight and challenge do not replace the operational responsibilities of the Head of School or the governance responsibilities of the CHS Board.

5.0 CURRICULUM – INTENT

The CHS curriculum is designed so that every pupil experiences ambition, challenge, belonging and success, whatever their starting point. It is rooted in the National Curriculum and adapted to meet pupils' educational, communication, sensory, social, emotional and independence needs. Subject knowledge, skills and understanding are identified and sequenced so that pupils can build on prior learning over time.

The curriculum is not thematic. It is knowledge-rich, vocabulary-rich and experience-rich. Purposeful connections may be made through key texts, visits, outdoor learning, enrichment and practical experiences where these

deepen subject understanding, develop vocabulary or help pupils apply and generalise learning. These experiences support the planned curriculum; they do not replace subject-specific intent or progression.

Pupils' EHCP outcomes, individual starting points, strengths, communication profiles, sensory and regulation needs, interests and aspirations inform curriculum planning. The curriculum aims to remove barriers and provide appropriate challenge without lowering expectations. Communication is everyone's responsibility. Therapeutic and SEND-informed practice supports access to learning and preparation for adulthood.

Curriculum Aims

The curriculum aims to:

- provide a broad, balanced and ambitious education with clearly planned subject knowledge, skills and progression;
- enable pupils to develop communication, reading, writing, mathematical understanding and subject-specific vocabulary;
- build pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world, including its human, social, scientific, technological, physical, aesthetic and creative aspects;
- develop pupils' confidence, emotional understanding, relationships, wellbeing and sense of belonging;
- develop independence, self-help, decision-making and the ability to apply learning in different contexts;
- promote respect for themselves and others, including people with different backgrounds, faiths and beliefs;
- support pupils to understand safety, healthy lifestyles, their rights and responsibilities, and their role in the community;
- prepare pupils for their next steps and adult life, including further education, training, employment and independent living, as appropriate to each pupil; and
- provide access to relevant qualifications, careers learning and work-related experiences, where appropriate.

Curriculum Opportunities

The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to:

- learn and communicate through approaches suited to their individual communication profiles;
- develop reading, including systematic phonics teaching where appropriate, and enjoyment of books and texts;
- learn new knowledge and skills through explicit teaching, guided practice, review and opportunities to apply learning;
- revisit, consolidate and retrieve important learning so that knowledge can be retained and used in new contexts;
- engage with subject-specific content through texts, investigations, practical work, community experiences and enrichment;
- develop creativity, curiosity, problem-solving and reflection;
- practise independence and life skills in meaningful contexts; and

- contribute to their learning and, where appropriate, express their views about what helps them to learn.

Curriculum Pathways

The curriculum is delivered through three pathways:

- **Learning to Learn (Green Pathway)**
- **Participating in Learning (Orange Pathway)**
- **Independent Learning (Purple Pathway)**

The pathways support pupils to access the curriculum at different levels of complexity, support and independence. They are organised around pupils' stage of learning and developmental readiness, informed by assessment and professional understanding of each pupil. They are not fixed labels, and do not define the limits of a pupil's potential. Staff teach to pupils' needs and intended learning, rather than teaching to a pathway label.

Learning to Learn – Green Pathway

This pathway prioritises access to learning and the development of foundations that enable pupils to participate. This may include communication, attention, engagement, interaction, emotional regulation, early literacy and numeracy, and learning readiness. Subject content is made accessible through carefully structured teaching, meaningful contexts and individualised communication and sensory support.

Participating in Learning – Orange Pathway

This pathway supports pupils to participate increasingly in subject-specific learning and to develop knowledge, skills and vocabulary across the curriculum. Teaching may include explicit modelling, guided practice, structured opportunities to respond and regular review. Pupils are supported to communicate their understanding, practise skills and begin applying learning with growing confidence and independence.

Independent Learning – Purple Pathway

This pathway supports pupils to deepen subject knowledge, strengthen retention and apply learning with increasing independence. Teaching addresses gaps in prior learning while building towards appropriate curriculum expectations, qualifications and preparation-for-adulthood outcomes. Pupils are supported to make choices, solve problems, communicate their thinking and transfer learning to unfamiliar or real-life contexts.

Pupils' pathway and class placement are reviewed in light of their progress, needs and appropriate class organisation. Pupils may revisit important knowledge and skills over time. This is planned to secure retention, deepen understanding and support generalisation; it should involve new learning, application or increasing independence rather than repetition without progression.

Curriculum Pedagogy

Teaching is based on explicit instruction, informed by Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction. Staff explain and model new learning, break it into manageable steps, question and check for understanding, provide guided practice and revisit learning regularly. The Gradual Release of Responsibility supports movement from teacher modelling and supported practice towards increasing pupil independence and application.

Adaptive teaching enables staff to respond to pupils' starting points, communication, cognition, sensory and regulation needs while maintaining ambition and high expectations. Visual structure, accessible resources, augmentative and alternative communication, including Makaton, PECS or AAC where appropriate, and advice from relevant professionals are used to support access and participation.

Staff use key texts, investigations, outdoor learning, educational visits, enrichment and practical activities when these advance planned curriculum learning. Approaches such as Attention Autism and Zones of Regulation may be used where they are appropriate to pupils' needs and consistent with relevant plans and professional advice.

Curriculum plans identify what pupils are expected to learn. Subject leaders and teachers use long-term and medium-term plans, lesson planning and assessment to sequence learning, adapt delivery and identify next steps. BSquared assessment frameworks—including Autism Progress, Early Steps and Progression Steps where appropriate—may support the recording and review of pupils' progress. Pupil views are sought in ways that are accessible to them and inform teaching where possible.

6.0 CURRICULUM - IMPACT

The impact of the curriculum is seen in what pupils know, understand and can do over time. Leaders and staff evaluate pupils' progress from their individual starting points, alongside the knowledge and skills set out in the planned curriculum. Progress may include securing new knowledge, retaining and recalling prior learning, using vocabulary, communicating understanding, applying learning in new contexts and becoming more independent.

The school uses assessment, pupils' work, observations, discussions and other appropriate evidence to evaluate the impact of teaching and curriculum provision. Assessment is used to identify what pupils have learned, what they need to learn next and whether adaptations or additional support are needed. Small steps in learning are recognised and recorded where appropriate, including through BSquared Connecting Steps.

Through the curriculum, pupils are supported to:

- develop knowledge, understanding and skills across the planned subjects;
- strengthen communication, language, literacy and mathematical understanding;
- use subject-specific vocabulary and communicate their ideas in ways suited to their profiles;
- retain and retrieve learning and apply it in different contexts;
- develop confidence, curiosity, creativity, problem-solving and a willingness to seek help;
- work with others and develop relationships, respect and understanding of different people and beliefs;
- develop emotional understanding, self-regulation and strategies that support participation in learning;
- increase independence in learning, daily living and decision-making;
- understand how to keep themselves safe and make choices that support their health and wellbeing;
- experience belonging and make a meaningful contribution to school and community life; and
- prepare for their next stage of education, training, employment and adult life.

These outcomes are pursued through all three pathways. The specific knowledge, skills, levels of support and degree of independence will reflect each pupil's starting points, EHCP outcomes, needs and aspirations. Pathway placement does not determine or restrict what a pupil can achieve.

Where appropriate to a pupil's learning programme, progress may lead to recognised qualifications, including Functional Skills, GCSEs, ASDAN awards or other suitable qualifications. Decisions about qualifications will take account of the pupil's interests, learning pathway, strengths and next steps.

The school reviews the impact of its curriculum and teaching through planned monitoring and evaluation. Leaders use this evidence to identify effective practice, address gaps in learning and make improvements to curriculum planning and delivery.

7.0 READING IN THE CURRICULUM

Reading is a central life skill and an important means of accessing knowledge, communication, information and enjoyment. CHS aims to support every pupil to develop their reading and literacy from their individual starting point, with high expectations for progress.

Reading is taught and promoted across the curriculum. Subject teaching includes opportunities to develop pupils' vocabulary, knowledge of language, comprehension and understanding of written information. Key texts are selected to support planned learning, introduce pupils to a range of authors, genres and ideas, and develop reading for pleasure. Texts support subject learning; they do not determine or replace the planned subject curriculum.

CHS aims to support pupils to:

- develop word recognition, decoding and fluency, where appropriate to their stage of learning;
- build vocabulary and understanding of language;
- understand and respond to texts in ways suited to their communication and learning profiles;
- develop comprehension, including recalling information, making connections, drawing inferences and expressing opinions, where appropriate;
- read for information and enjoyment, using accessible texts and formats; and
- communicate their responses to reading through speech, writing, symbols, AAC or other appropriate means.

Staff adapt texts, teaching and response methods to enable pupils to access reading and demonstrate their understanding. Reading instruction, including systematic synthetic phonics where appropriate, is set out in Section 8.0. Progress is monitored through assessment and used to plan teaching and next steps.

8.0 PHONICS AND READING

Reading supports pupils' access to the curriculum, communication, independence and enjoyment. CHS teaches and promotes reading in ways that take account of pupils' starting points, communication profiles and learning needs. Reading is taught directly and practised across subjects; it supports the subject curriculum and does not organise it thematically.

Systematic phonics and word reading

Where appropriate to a pupil's learning needs and stage of reading, staff teach decoding through a systematic synthetic phonics approach, using the school's chosen phonics programme. Teaching may include phoneme–grapheme correspondences, blending to read, segmenting to spell, reading words and sentences, and applying phonic knowledge in reading and writing.

Staff assess pupils' reading skills to identify what they know and the next steps in learning. Assessment may include diagnostic activities informed by phonics screening materials; these are used to inform teaching and are not presented as a statutory assessment for CHS. Where a pupil needs additional teaching, staff plan appropriate support and review its impact.

Phonics is an important approach to early word reading, but staff also consider each pupil's communication, language, sensory and learning needs. Where an individualised approach or additional communication support is needed, staff adapt teaching and consult relevant professionals as appropriate.

Reading books and assessment

Staff select reading materials that are accessible and appropriately challenging, taking account of pupils' decoding skills, comprehension, interests and age. Decodable books are matched to pupils' phonic knowledge where this is appropriate. Pupils who read familiar words automatically are supported to extend their reading, vocabulary and comprehension through suitable texts.

Assessment may draw on teacher observation, reading records, discussion with pupils, BSquared Connecting Steps, Salford Reading Tests and other suitable measures. These sources help staff build a rounded understanding of reading, including word recognition, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Assessment informs teaching and next steps; no single measure is used in isolation.

Parents and carers are encouraged to support reading at home where this is appropriate and practicable. The school shares relevant information about pupils' reading progress and ways to support it.

Reading for pleasure and comprehension

CHS promotes reading for pleasure through access to a range of books and texts, shared reading, stories, poems, non-fiction and other suitable formats. Pupils may respond to reading through speech, writing, symbols, AAC, retelling, acting, selecting or other communication methods appropriate to them.

Teaching supports pupils to develop vocabulary, understand what they read, recall information, make connections and express responses at an appropriate level of challenge. Staff provide opportunities to practise these skills in English and other subjects.

Additional support

When assessment indicates that a pupil needs additional support, staff plan and review suitable interventions. Support may include additional phonics teaching, individual or small-group reading, repeated practice, accessible texts, pre-teaching vocabulary or support from relevant specialists.

Structured activities, including collaborative play approaches, may support interaction and communication where appropriate. They do not replace speech and language therapy, individual communication plans or other specialist provision set out for a pupil.

Equality, wellbeing and safeguarding through the curriculum

The curriculum is adapted so pupils can access learning and participate meaningfully. CHS has regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, and to the school's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Pupils' wellbeing and personal safety are supported through planned curriculum learning, including PSHE/RSHE, as well as through other relevant subjects and activities. Teaching is adapted to pupils' ages, understanding, communication and needs. Sensitive content is handled carefully and in line with relevant policies, curriculum plans and safeguarding arrangements. Curriculum teaching about safety supports—but does not replace—the school's safeguarding procedures.

Age, development and access

Staff consider pupils' chronological age, developmental stage, interests, dignity and individual needs when selecting resources, planning teaching and organising learning. Adaptations support access and understanding while preserving ambition and pupils' entitlement to a broad curriculum. Pupils should have opportunities to engage with age-respectful materials and experiences, with appropriate adjustments where needed.

9.0 CAREERS – PREPARATION FOR ADULthood

Careers Overview

Conifers House School provides a progressive careers and preparation-for-adulthood programme that supports pupils to develop aspirations, understand their strengths and interests, explore future options and prepare for their next steps. The programme is adapted to pupils' ages, communication, learning needs, EHCP outcomes and aspirations.

Careers learning is developed across the curriculum and through planned activities, including encounters with employers and education or training providers, work-related learning and, where appropriate, workplace experiences. Learning is built up over time: pupils may explore interests and roles, learn about different routes and workplaces, and develop relevant skills and understanding.

The Gatsby Benchmarks inform the design and review of the careers programme as a framework for good practice. The programme is aligned with pupils' pathways, curriculum learning, PSHE/RSHE and relevant qualifications. Careers learning is impartial and enables pupils to consider a range of suitable academic, technical, vocational, training, employment and independent-living options.

Careers Objectives

The programme aims to support pupils to:

- recognise and communicate their interests, strengths, skills and aspirations;
- develop understanding of different jobs, workplaces, education and training routes;
- build employability, communication, self-advocacy and work-related skills;
- take part in careers activities and experiences that are accessible and meaningful to them;
- make informed choices about education, training, employment and adult life; and
- prepare for transition to an appropriate next destination, with support from families, the local authority and other relevant professionals.

Pupils' views and EHCP outcomes inform their careers learning and transition planning. The school works with parents and carers, the local authority, employers, education and training providers and other relevant partners to support this planning.

Leadership and Evaluation

The Head of School is the Careers Lead and is responsible for coordinating and overseeing the careers programme. This includes planning and reviewing careers activities, supporting staff and partnership work, and evaluating the programme's delivery and impact.

The programme is evaluated using evidence such as pupils' participation, learning, feedback, encounters and experiences, transition planning and destinations where known. Evaluation informs improvements to the programme.

10.0 ASSESSMENT, MARKING AND FEEDBACK

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning at CHS. Staff use it to understand what pupils know and can do, identify progress from their starting points, check understanding and plan appropriate next steps. Assessment reflects the curriculum's intended knowledge and skills and takes account of pupils' EHCP outcomes and individual needs.

Legislation and guidance

The school's assessment arrangements are informed by the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended. These require the school to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly, use assessment information to plan teaching so pupils can make progress, maintain a framework for evaluating pupil

performance, and provide an annual written report on each pupil's progress and attainment in the main subject areas taught, unless the parent has agreed otherwise.

CHS uses assessment approaches appropriate to its curriculum and pupils. Nationally standardised assessment is used where relevant and appropriate; it does not replace the school's assessment of pupils' progress across the curriculum.

Principles of assessment

Assessment at CHS should:

- inform teaching, curriculum planning and pupils' next steps;
- identify what pupils have learned and where further teaching or practice is needed;
- recognise progress from pupils' starting points, including small steps, retention, communication, application and independence;
- be accessible and appropriate to pupils' communication and learning profiles;
- draw on a range of evidence rather than a single assessment measure; and
- support clear reporting to pupils, parents and carers.

Pupil progress and EHCP outcomes

Staff use pupils' EHCP outcomes, curriculum expectations and individual starting points to inform planning and assessment. Where used, Pupil Individual Learning Steps (PILS) translate relevant priorities into focused, measurable learning steps. Progress towards these steps is reviewed regularly and contributes to teaching decisions, reporting and EHCP review discussions.

An EHCP may continue up to age 25 where the statutory criteria are met. The existence of an EHCP does not in itself mean that a pupil will remain at CHS or receive provision at CHS until age 25.

Inclusion and access

Assessment arrangements are adapted so pupils can demonstrate learning in ways that are appropriate to their needs. Evidence may include written work, practical activity, observation, discussion, communication aids, photographs, video or other recorded evidence. Staff consider pupils' communication, sensory, physical and regulation needs and make appropriate adjustments.

Expectations remain ambitious. Progress is considered in relation to the intended curriculum as well as the pupil's starting points, EHCP outcomes and individual circumstances.

Assessment approaches and frequency

Staff use formative assessment during teaching to check understanding, identify misconceptions and adapt instruction. Summative assessment is used at appropriate points to evaluate what pupils have learned over time. Nationally standardised assessments may also be used where relevant to a pupil and the school's assessment arrangements.

Assessment is ongoing; the timing and method depend on the learning being assessed and the pupil's needs. Staff use professional judgement to select evidence that is meaningful and proportionate.

Marking and feedback

Feedback helps pupils understand what they have achieved and, where appropriate, what to do next. It is:

- relevant to the learning and accessible to the pupil;
- specific enough to support improvement or further learning;
- delivered in a form the pupil can understand, including verbally, visually or through communication support; and
- used by staff to inform subsequent teaching.

Feedback may be given verbally, in writing, through symbols, discussion, modelling or other suitable methods. Pupils are given opportunities to respond where this is appropriate to the learning and their communication profile. Self- and peer-assessment are used when they are accessible and beneficial to the pupil.

Recording and use of assessment information

Staff record assessment information and feedback where this will help them understand progress, plan teaching, communicate with colleagues or report to pupils and families. Records should be concise, useful and proportionate. Staff may record levels of support or independence where this provides meaningful information about how the pupil completed the task or applied learning.

The school may use BSquared Connecting Steps, including Autism Progress, Early Steps and Progression Steps where appropriate, alongside other assessment evidence. Assessment information is reviewed by staff and leaders to monitor individual progress, identify patterns and inform curriculum and school improvement.

Reporting to parents and carers

The school provides parents or carers with an annual written report on each pupil's progress and attainment in the main subject areas taught, unless the parent has agreed otherwise. CHS also provides termly updates and opportunities to discuss progress and next steps in line with the school's reporting arrangements.

11.0 FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Formative assessment is part of everyday teaching. Staff use it to check what pupils understand, identify misconceptions, recognise progress and decide what to teach or practise next. Assessment may take place through observation, questioning, discussion, pupils' work, practical activity, communication or other evidence suited to the learning and the pupil.

Sharing learning intentions and success criteria

Staff make the intended learning clear to pupils in a way they can understand. This may be through spoken or written language, modelling, symbols, visuals, objects, communication aids or other approaches suited to the pupil.

Where helpful, staff share success criteria that show what successful learning may look like. They should be relevant to the learning, accessible to the pupil and appropriately challenging. Pupils are not required to copy learning intentions or criteria unless this supports their learning.

Feedback

Staff provide feedback that helps pupils recognise what they have learned and, where appropriate, what they can do next. Feedback may be verbal, written, visual, demonstrated or provided through an accessible communication method. Staff use professional judgement about when feedback is most useful and whether the pupil needs time or support to respond.

Feedback should relate to the intended learning where appropriate, identify or address misconceptions, and encourage pupils to practise, improve or apply their learning. Staff adapt feedback to pupils' understanding, communication and sensory needs.

Recording formative assessment

Staff record formative assessment when it provides useful evidence for planning, monitoring progress, communicating with colleagues or reporting to pupils and families. Records should be clear, relevant and proportionate. They may include the level of support or independence shown, where this helps staff understand how the pupil completed or applied the learning.

Not every interaction, piece of work or verbal comment needs a written record. Learning intentions, success criteria and feedback should be documented when this supports the pupil's learning or provides meaningful evidence, rather than as a requirement on every item of work.

Staff may use the following codes where they help to record learning and support:

Code	Meaning
LI	Learning intention
TA	Target achieved
VF	Verbal feedback
PM	Progress made
GW	Group work
Sp	Spelling
→	Next step
Underlining	Evidence that a target has been achieved

Staff may also record the level of support shown:

Level	Meaning
Fully supported	The pupil completes or mirrors the task with full adult support.
Guided	The pupil completes the task with adult guidance, discussion or support.
Prompted	The pupil completes the task following a prompt.
Independent	The pupil completes the task without additional adult support in that setting.
Applied	The pupil applies the learning independently in another lesson or context.

These codes and support levels can be used where they provide meaningful information; they do not need to appear on every piece of work.

Using assessment information

Staff use formative assessment to adapt teaching, revisit learning, provide practice or increase challenge. Assessment information contributes to the review of pupils' progress and next steps, including through BSquared Connecting Steps and other appropriate methods. The timing of updates should be sufficient to support teaching and review, and consistent with the school's assessment arrangements.

Pupil reflection and self-assessment

Pupils are supported to express what they understand, what they have enjoyed and when they need help. Staff may use accessible tools such as symbols, visual scales, choices, communication aids or discussion. Self-assessment is used where it is meaningful to the pupil; it is not expected to take one standard form.

Peer assessment

Peer assessment may be used where it is appropriate, accessible and beneficial to the pupils involved. Staff prepare pupils for this and establish respectful ground rules. It is not required for every pupil or activity.

Recognising success

Staff recognise pupils' learning, effort, progress and application in ways that are meaningful to the individual. This may include specific verbal feedback, sharing or displaying work, communication with families, certificates, assemblies or other approaches used by the school.

12.0 SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Summative assessment at Conifers House School (CHS) is used to review what pupils have learned over time and to evaluate progress against the intended curriculum, their assessed starting points and relevant individual outcomes. It draws on a range of evidence and is interpreted in the context of each pupil's communication, learning and access needs. A single score or assessment measure does not provide a complete account of a pupil's progress.

Purpose and use

Summative assessment helps:

- teachers evaluate pupils' learning at the end of a unit, topic or other planned period;
- teachers identify knowledge and skills that have been retained, need further teaching or can be applied in a new context;
- leaders review progress over time, identify patterns across subjects, classes or groups, and consider whether teaching, support or resources need adjustment;
- staff contribute relevant evidence to reviews of pupils' learning and outcomes; and
- pupils and parents or carers understand progress and, where appropriate, next steps.

Assessment information informs professional judgement and planning. Leaders consider it alongside lesson evidence, pupils' work, observation, communication, engagement and other relevant information. Progress may not be linear; periods of consolidation and differences in how pupils demonstrate learning are taken into account.

EHCPs and individual outcomes

The local authority is responsible for reviewing and maintaining each pupil's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in accordance with its statutory duties. CHS contributes to the review by providing relevant evidence about the pupil's progress, needs, outcomes and provision. Staff use current EHCP outcomes, curriculum learning and, where used, Pupil Individual Learning Steps (PILS) to inform teaching and review progress. Termly assessment and reporting support ongoing communication with families and preparation for the EHCP review; they do not replace the statutory review process.

National and externally standardised assessments

CHS uses national or externally standardised assessments where they are applicable, appropriate to the pupil and consistent with the relevant assessment arrangements. The school considers access arrangements and whether an assessment will provide meaningful information about the pupil's learning.

End of Key Stage 1 national curriculum tests and teacher assessment are optional. As an independent school, CHS does not formally administer the statutory phonics screening check. Published check materials may be used after the administration window to inform teaching and assessment, where appropriate. CHS does not administer Key Stage 2 national curriculum tests. Relevant Key Stage 4 qualifications may be offered where appropriate to the pupil's learning programme, strengths and next steps.

The school may also use selected tools to assess particular areas of learning, such as reading, spelling or mathematics. Such tools support assessment within the school's own provision and are not described as nationally statutory assessments unless that status applies.

Collecting and using assessment information

Teachers collect assessment evidence during teaching and at planned review points. Leaders review information at appropriate intervals, including through pupil progress discussions, to understand individual and cohort progress and identify any action required. Assessment information may inform:

- curriculum planning and teaching;
- the review of learning steps and support;
- decisions about interventions and resources;
- reporting to parents and carers; and
- the school's evaluation of curriculum quality and improvement priorities.

Assessment records are relevant, proportionate and used for clear educational purposes. Staff consider pupils' progress over time and the context in which evidence was gathered, including the level of adult support or independence where this is useful.

Reporting to parents and carers

CHS provides parents or carers with an annual written report on each registered pupil's progress and attainment in the main subject areas taught, unless the parent has agreed otherwise. The report reflects the pupil's learning and progress and may include relevant next steps.

The school also provides termly progress information and opportunities for discussion in line with its reporting arrangements. Digital platforms, including Tapestry where used, may support communication and sharing of learning; they do not replace the annual written report.

13.0 STAFF TRAINING, ROLES AND MONITORING FOR ASSESSMENT

Staff training

CHS provides staff with appropriate guidance and professional development to support consistent, accessible and purposeful assessment. This may include training or collaborative work on assessment approaches, moderation, recording progress, feedback, communication needs and the use of assessment tools adopted by the school.

Staff are expected to follow this policy and relevant assessment procedures. The Head of School ensures that staff understand their responsibilities and identifies training or support needs through supervision, quality assurance and professional development.

Roles and responsibilities

The Head of School is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and monitoring of assessment across the school. This includes ensuring that assessment information is used to inform teaching, review pupils' progress, support reporting to families and contribute to curriculum evaluation.

Subject Leaders and other delegated curriculum leaders support the quality and consistency of assessment in their areas. They may contribute to reviewing pupils' work, assessment evidence and curriculum progression, and to identifying strengths and areas for development.

Class Teachers assess pupils' learning, maintain relevant records and use assessment information to plan teaching and next steps. They contribute appropriate evidence to progress reports and EHCP reviews and work with support staff and other professionals where relevant.

Education Support Staff contribute observations and other relevant evidence to the Class Teacher. They do so in line with their role, training and the direction of the Class Teacher.

The Executive Headteacher provides strategic oversight, professional challenge and support in relation to assessment quality, policy implementation, school improvement and the timely follow-up of actions. This does not replace the Head of School's operational responsibilities or the CHS Board's governance responsibilities.

Monitoring and review

The Head of School monitors the implementation and effectiveness of assessment through proportionate quality assurance, which may include review of planning and assessment records, pupils' work, moderation, lesson visits, pupil progress discussions and feedback from pupils, parents or carers where appropriate.

Monitoring should help leaders evaluate whether assessment is accurate, useful and accessible, whether it informs teaching and next steps, and whether it supports an appropriate understanding of pupils' progress. Findings inform staff support, curriculum development and school improvement priorities.

The Executive Headteacher may provide strategic challenge and support by reviewing assurance information, monitoring findings and actions arising from quality assurance. The CHS Board receives appropriate assurance about assessment, pupil progress and the effectiveness of the school's arrangements.

This policy is reviewed annually by the Head of School and shared with the CHS Board for approval. It may be reviewed earlier if changes to legislation, guidance or school practice make this necessary.

14.0 RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

This policy should be read alongside the school's other policies and documents where they are relevant to curriculum planning, teaching, assessment, inclusion and pupils' preparation for adulthood. These include:

- Special Educational Needs and Disability and Inclusion Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- PSHE Including RSHE Policy

- Careers Advice and Guidance Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Supporting Medical Needs Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy

The school also uses curriculum plans, schemes of work, assessment arrangements and individual pupil documents, including EHCPs and PILS, to support implementation of this policy. These documents should be read in their current approved versions.