

Dear Parents and Carers

Please take the time to read the information below about the curriculum here at Sunnydown. This will help you to be confident about what your son is learning at any given point of the year; the high expectations we have of your son; how we report on your son's progress and the broad range of subjects we offer here.

If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to contact me via email.

Mrs Jensen

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What my child will learn during the year:

[The school website](#) is your first port of call to know what your son will be learning during each term.

Here you will find the [curriculum plans](#).

The curriculum plans for each subject and each term explain the overall intention for that subject for the year: the topic being studied for that term; the core learning and key concepts that your son will become familiar with; as well as outlining what knowledge and skills are being built on and what this new knowledge will be building towards.

The subject teacher will make this clear to your son at the start of each unit or term.

To reflect this level of organisation, your son's classbook or folder will have a knowledge organiser at the front of each unit which will outline visually the knowledge and skills that will be learnt.

When you visit the website, you may benefit from reviewing the curriculum plans for each subject with your son so that you can both see what his learning experience will be like in that subject. You might also want to look at other years ahead of him to see what might be studied in exam years for example.

In your son's diary is a timetable of all the lessons he has and in addition to the National Curriculum subjects, you will also see Communications lessons and Careers education timetabled.

We have the highest expectation for your sons:

At Sunnydown we aim to embed knowledge into our students' long term memory so that they will **know more, remember more** and be able to **do more** - both academically and socially.

We know that for a young person to achieve and demonstrate progress, they need the confidence to do so and we work tirelessly to encourage your son with targeted support and quality lessons.

All lessons at Sunnydown are structured using the **Sunnydown 4:**

- Learning Objectives
- Quality differentiation
- Opportunities to be an active learner
- Regularly checking for progress.

Our yearly exam results are testimony to the excellent quality of education at Sunnydown - **students' progress at the end of KS4 place us in the top 10 special schools out of approximately 1500 in the country.**

How we let you know how your child is doing:

We are confident that our reporting and parent evening systems provide clear information about progress being made by your son in each subject. However, you are very welcome to contact us at any point to talk about how your son is progressing here at Sunnydown.

Progress in KS3 is determined using Flightpaths. Your son will be assessed in core subjects within the first two weeks of being at Sunnydown to establish his baseline Flightpath. For each subject, there are descriptors of skills and knowledge that can be attained which are arranged from 1 up to 9. These are further grouped in Emerging, Developing, Securing and Mastering bands. For example:

Emerging 1
Emerging 2
Developing 3
Developing 4

Securing 5
Securing 6
Mastering 7
Mastering 7
Mastering 9

KS4 descriptors are directly linked to the exam board subject grade criteria - there are links in the subject areas on the website for you to look at.

Often there are summative assessment opportunities at the end of each topic taught and we also offer GCSE practice exams in December of Year 11. We know that 'cramming' for a test is stressful and at best tests knowledge in a working memory. For knowledge to be recalled from long term memory a test is best done with preparation over time as opposed to just before an exam. This allows students to demonstrate what knowledge has been retained and where there are gaps that can then be addressed.

At KS4, our winter practice exams are focussed on your son's well being, developing resilience and the skills needed to activate long term memory.

Our yearly public exam results see our students acquiring the qualifications they need to access their next stages in learning and education, often achieving impressive results.

In each report, your son's teacher will reflect on how much effort he put in, how much of an active learner he is (taking responsibility for his own learning), his approach to homework and then a comment with suggested next steps for improvement. The reports make it clear if your son is working below, at, or above the Flightpath expectations determined during the baseline assessments in Year 7.

Sunnydown is a Growth Mindset school and students are encouraged to demonstrate that they can learn beyond standard expectations. If your son is consistently working above their expectations throughout the year, it may be decided to move your son up a flightpath. This is an exciting occasion and you will be informed of this in writing. If you have any further questions you are very welcome to contact your son's subject teacher.

Reports are sent home twice a year.

Parents' evenings are once a year (Y7 have two parents' evenings)

Sunnydown offers an excellent range of subjects to your son:

Our aspirational curriculum is well designed, broad, enriched, enhanced and exciting, and importantly, bespoke to our cohort of SEN students.

We teach 12 National Curriculum subjects Monday to Thursday, and PSHE (KS3) and Personal Development (KS4 - PSHE/Citiz/RE) as part of our Friday curriculum.

In October 2021 Ofsted recorded that 'the rich and varied 'Friday curriculum' exposes pupils to a wealth of useful learning'. Our innovative Friday curriculum includes but is not limited to specific RICE challenges, Outdoor and Adventurous Activities, Food Technology, Life Skills, Media and Information Literacy, landscaping and animal husbandry, and going to college (KS4) also enhance these skills.

Throughout our holistic curriculum offer, your son will participate in opportunities to develop his Resilience, Independence and Cooperation through Encouragement, Enablement and ultimately becoming Empowered which constitutes our Mission - RICE³.

Sunnydown also offers a wide range of clubs and special interest groups. For example, we offer a language club (Spanish) even though our students are disapplied from studying a MFL (see your son's EHCP). This is enhanced through additional opportunities to experience language for other cultures through food technology, SMSC week and a special Year 11 trip to practise some of the vocabulary learnt.

Our links with an outstanding community theatre group enables our students to access drama and performing skills, as well as lighting and stage management, performing to the school body and the public in various venues. We offer an annual Fine and Performing Arts trip, and Sunnydown's Got Talent is a much anticipated Christmas event.