



Odyssey House School - Wokingham

Curriculum Policy

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Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Policy Context & Rationale

2. Curriculum Intentions & Impact

2.1 Intent

2.2 Implementation

2.3 impact

3. Curriculum Overview

3.1 Summary Overview

3.2 Planning the curriculum

3.3 The core curriculum

3.4 The extended curriculum

3.5 The curriculum for personal development

3.6 Curriculum enrichment

This policy links with policies for:

- Individual subjects
- Schemes of work and programmes of study for each subject
- Assessment
- SMSC
- Careers Education and Guidance

This policy should also be read in conjunction with:

- Key Stage Curriculum Overviews
- Key Stage Curriculum Content Overviews and benchmarked Age-Related Expectations

Introduction

1.1 Policy Context & Rationale

Odyssey House School provides for students in Key Stages 2, 3, 4 and 5 who need nurturing through their educational journey. This includes children with autism and associated difficulties including emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA) and some with social, emotional, and mental health needs, for example:

- ☞ those who are not thriving in their current educational placement
- ☞ those with some mild behaviour difficulties
- ☞ those who refuse to attend school
- ☞ previously home-educated children
- ☞ and those with learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, and developmental coordination disorder (dyspraxia).

Odyssey House is an independent school that gives its students specialist teaching and therapeutic support tailored to suit their individual needs. At Odyssey House School students are in control of their education journey. They can either stay at the school until they are 18 years old, or they may choose to stay for a shorter period with the aim to move on to a school or college of their choice. At the very least, students will attend Odyssey House School for a minimum of one year based on regular in-depth reviews of their academic progress and personal development.

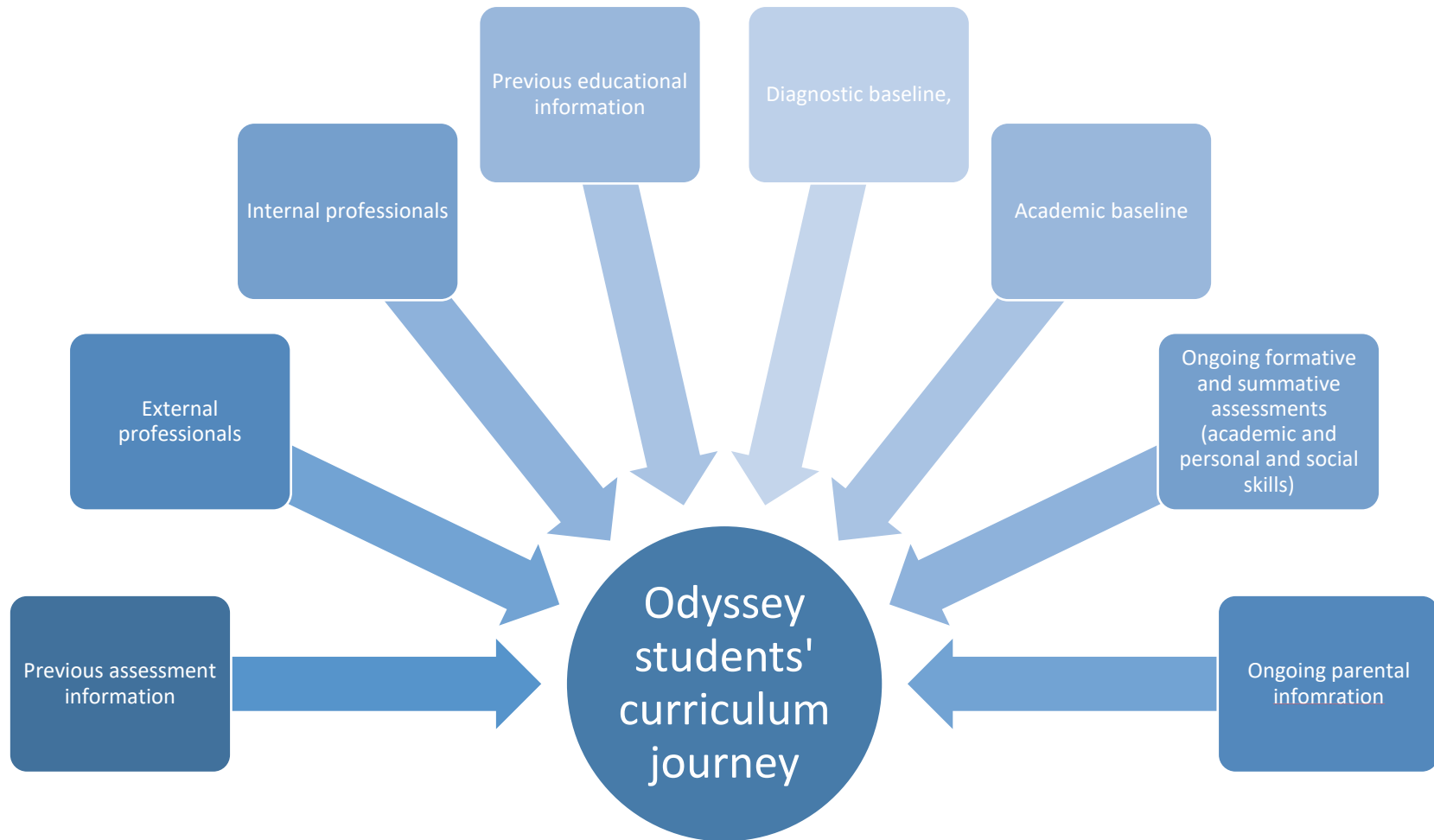
Assessment is central to the work of Odyssey House School. We use a range of initial assessments to determine the exact needs of students who will attend. Through the expertise of staff and as subject experts, we continue to assess and provide input and guidance to Odyssey House School students and staff, usually at the school.

On entry to the school, the initial focus is to ensure that the pupil settles into the education routine and starts to build key attachments with staff. As part of this process, further assessments are made of students' educational needs. These include academic assessments such as in numeracy and literacy as well as other assessments which consider the child's personal development, social, and emotional well-being. This enables us to have a more rounded picture allowing us to build a bespoke package tailored to each pupil's education journey to success.

Assessments continue throughout students' time at Odyssey House to ensure provision is tailored to drive their progress effectively. The initial and subsequent assessments inform each pupil's individual learning and support plan (Guiding Star) which, in turn, enables a challenging but relevant curriculum to be developed for them. (See diagram 1 below). The plan will be reviewed termly as a minimum.

Parents are closely involved from the initial assessment right through to the pupil's transfer from Odyssey House School. We believe the most successful outcomes for individuals are based on a strong partnership between parents and Odyssey House School staff, and close liaison with the receiving school/college/placement.

Diagram 1: Creating a student's Odyssey Curriculum: Each pupil's journey through the curriculum is informed by integrating the outcomes of the assessments, together with parents' contribution, previous and ongoing assessments, and school information, with the Odyssey House School curriculum.



Curriculum Intentions & Impact

2.1 Intent

All students have access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, based on the National Curriculum, which is differentiated and modified for students with autism and associated difficulties. We systematically measure, assess, and record the progress of each pupil from entry and throughout their time at Odyssey House School, and use this information to tailor their curriculum and support to ensure effective progress in learning.

We teach through a range of adapted teaching delivery including practical and highly visual approaches, using learning from experience and visuals to support understanding. We recognise the individual needs and talents of all students and facilitate the development of their intellectual, moral, physical, social, spiritual, cultural, creative, and personal capacities. We develop academic, personal and social skills to improve each child's independence, confidence, and resilience.

We aim to create an up-to-date curriculum which provides a balanced academic education, that is exciting, rigorous, and interesting and incorporates a range of challenging learning experiences. It provides these opportunities, through both the core and extended curricula while increasingly helping students to develop independence and life-skills. We believe that promoting students' wellbeing is crucial, now and for their future lives, therefore the curriculum will acknowledge the importance of children's mental health.

At Odyssey House School our 'Intent' is that all children will become "Independent and ready for their journey to success" this is underpinned by our seven-point guiding star.



Success through Learning and progress

- To develop effective listening skills
- To develop effective communication skills
- To develop lifelong learning skills and strategies
- To have opportunities to learn through a broad, ambitious and challenging range of experiences
- To build on prior knowledge
- To develop transferable thinking skills
- To work with others
- To take risks in learning and develop resilience
- To develop strategies to overcome our individual barriers to learning
- To develop readiness to transition to the next stage whether this is work or education

Independence through Growth and understanding

- To acknowledge and celebrate our differences
- To develop understanding of our own emotions and those of others to establish and retain strong relationships
- To Develop independent regulation skills
- To Develop life skills
- Develop their understanding of themselves and wider society
- To develop positive physical and mental health
- To know how to keep ourselves safe
- To develop as respectful and active citizens

2.2 Implementation

Our aim to provide a multi professional team and integrated approach, which is key to our effective practice. Regulation skills are taught and practiced in Orientation and Regulation time where the zones of regulation are taught, and these skills are then encouraged and reinforced throughout the day across all elements of the school day. Our quality first approach incorporates therapeutic approaches alongside academic teaching. Our approach supports our students to develop and utilise their self- awareness and self-regulation skills in context.

This is evident in their increasing ability to firstly co-regulate before being able to self-regulate enabling them to maintain focus on their learning. These approaches are embedded within the learning experience and adapted as required to meet the needs of individual learners.

Students are supported in all lessons to develop their independence, initially they may need support and scaffolding but over time as their confidence increases, they develop increasing levels of independence.

Life skills are taught across the curriculum including in core subjects, food tech lessons and through careers and PSHE lessons.

The school runs themes through each term of the year to help students to develop their understanding themselves and the world around them.

Identity supports students to explore who they are, how they can express themselves, individual differences and similarities.

World view - during this topic students explore influential people within society and history and the impact they have had on the world we live in today. They also consider the impact of their own choices and the wider choices that humans make on our planet, considering sustainability, recycling and how they can make changes to have an impact on these key issues.

Community explores how they fit into our school community and the wider community and how they are an integral part of both our school community and their wider community outside of school.

2.3 Impact

The impact of the Odyssey House School curriculum is to enable students' to:

- become successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress, and achieve well
- become confident individuals and responsible citizens, who live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives and make a positive contribution to society
- develop positive self-esteem, a sense of worth and respect for themselves and others, and achieve personal well-being
- develop their curiosity, problem-solving and thinking skills
- improve their skills, knowledge and understanding in literacy, numeracy, and science
- improve their skills, knowledge and understanding in all other subjects
- develop their speech, language, and communication skills, and communicate with and relate to others effectively and constructively
- access and use technology effectively and safely
- understand and positively influence the world in which they live
- develop physical understanding and ability
- appreciate and enjoy aesthetic and creative activities
- extend their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development
- develop a thirst for learning.

Curriculum Overview

3.1 Summary overview of the curriculum

Odyssey House School is committed to providing a broad, balanced, and relevant curriculum for its students.

At Key Stage 2, students follow a broad and balanced curriculum aligned to the National Curriculum and includes all the areas of learning required by the Independent School Standards. It is assessed against published Age-Related Expectations.

At Key Stage 3, students follow a broad and balanced curriculum based on the National Curriculum and includes all the areas of learning required by the Independent School Standards. (See diagram 2). It, too, is assessed against published Age-Related Expectations following individual flightpaths determined by end of Key Stage 2 assessments where available.

At Key Stage 4, a diet of GCSE, BTEC, Functional Skills and where appropriate Entry Level awards are provided to suit each individual and include the core subjects required. Other accreditation, for example provided by, Duke of Edinburgh, AQA Unit awards, STEM, and CREST awards will be offered as needed.

At Key Stage 5, a bespoke study programme is provided for students whose gaps in learning were not narrowed sufficiently by the end of Key Stage 4. Students can prepare for GCSEs or other accredited courses, including re-sits, or follow a combination of vocational and academic programmes. The offering at Key Stage 5 is not a Sixth Form entry but an opportunity for students who may wish to take additional GCSEs or have the opportunity for more catch-up time to enable them to undertake qualifications/ credits up to GCSE levels.

All students regardless of age, ability and needs, have access to an education which has the breadth and range expected by national frameworks. The amount of time spent on each subject will be based on priority needs, on the age of the pupil and, for those in Key Stages 4 and 5, to meet subject specification requirements.

Curriculum planning is rigorous and ambitious. Each pupil's personalised curriculum is developed from information gained from the Odyssey House School assessments and information from parents and the pupil's previous setting and assessments. Our intent is that everyone's curriculum will give them the knowledge, skills, support, and personal development they require for a successful future in education or employment.

Intrinsically tied in with the curriculum is its effective implementation. This is achieved through closely monitored and supported high quality teaching, suitable resources, and ongoing assessment to help students embed and use their knowledge widely, and to check understanding and inform teaching.

The impact of our strong curriculum, teaching and support is that students achieve well. They develop their skills and knowledge across the curriculum and can apply them in a range of contexts and cross-curricular work. They read widely and often, with fluency and comprehension. The curriculum encompasses three important streams.

Firstly, it emphasises the core subjects to help students fill gaps in prior learning and move forward to make effective academic progress. It also exposes students to new subjects to expand their intellectual repertoire.

Secondly, it engages students through an active, dynamic approach which makes links between subjects to extend, deepen and embed their learning. Some of these subjects are combined and taught through themes and topics, such as 'the value of friendships' or 'culture, identity and place'.

Thirdly, the curriculum both explicitly and implicitly supports students' personal, social, emotional, spiritual, moral, and cultural development (SMSC). Aspects of SMSC are infused within the day-to-day operation of our school; incorporated through the curriculum, both in content included in subject schemes of work and through other planned learning opportunities in the school. They are captured in our written aims and expressed in the ethos and behaviour of everyone.

This is achieved through the ethos of Odyssey House, through taught lessons in personal, social, health and citizenship education, with constant support for students' well-being and resilience. (See diagram 2)

Diagram 2: Curriculum Overview

Core Curriculum

English, mathematics and science form the core curriculum at Odyssey House School. Students will have regular lessons across all three core subjects throughout all key stages with subject content aligned with the National Curriculum or accredited courses in line with students' skills and abilities. We recognise that students will enter Odyssey House School at different stages of their educational life. Through high quality teaching and assessment will come the most effective learning. Students' individual needs will be carefully planned for and lessons tailored to suit their abilities and needs. The core curriculum is essential for supporting students in becoming independent learners, raising their self-esteem, achieving their potential and preparing them for return to their mainstream schools if they choose to.

Promoting British Values:

The core curriculum promotes British Values (BV) through choices in literature that support the values such as tolerance and mutual respect, and class discussions, class debates and poetry from different cultures. At times, lesson content may explore the meaning of concepts such as liberty, democracy and tolerance.

SMSC Development:

Students' SMSC development is nurtured through the core curriculum. Improving their basic skills in these essential areas builds self-esteem and gives them skills to further explore themselves, their sense of belonging and where they see themselves in the wider world.

Extended Curriculum:

This includes art & design, computing, design & technology, food technology, geography, history, music, personal, health, social and citizenship education, physical education and religious education. Providing students with an extended curriculum that augments their core curriculum is essential for an exciting, productive and engaged learning community.

Where possible, links will be made between subjects, to deepen students' understanding and give them opportunities to master and apply their developing skills in topic-based projects. Subjects' content will be checked to ensure appropriate balance and curriculum coverage over the academic year.

Promoting British Values:

The extended curriculum actively promotes BV by creating an ethos of respect, tolerance, fairness, freedom of speech and a right to voice an opinion without fear of ridicule or prejudice.

SMSC Development:

The extended curriculum makes a significant contribution to the SMSC development of our students. Through PHSCE especially, SMSC provision during lessons will be substantial and explicit.

Curriculum for personal development

The core and extended curricula, and the support and interventions, promote students' overall personal development. This is achieved implicitly through the ethos of the school, by taught lessons through our PSHE & Enrichment curriculum framework.

The curriculum policy and schemes of work are reviewed annually to ensure that they are properly effective and up to date with national developments. Underpinning our curriculum is the conviction that all adults must be aware of students' strengths and difficulties, and work in conjunction with them, their parents and other professional agencies to:

- safeguard students and ensure their well-being, as well as the safety and well-being of staff
- foster a secure, safe, stimulating and enriching educational environment
- hold high expectations of students for academic achievement, behaviour and personal development
- incorporate multi-professional advice and support into their planning for the benefit of each individual pupil.

The expectation at Odyssey House School is that teachers make the education of their students their first concern and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. Teachers act with honesty and integrity, have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up to date, are self-critical, forge positive professional relationships, and work with parents in the best interests of their students. Teachers will, always, adhere to the Teachers' Standards. The Teachers' Standards can be found on the GOV.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards>

3.2 Planning the curriculum

The curriculum can be clearly categorised into three streams as shown in Table 1: the core curriculum, the extended curriculum, and the curriculum for students' overall personal development. Learning opportunities will be presented through a range of approaches, such as enquiry, active and practical learning, and will take account of students' varying learning styles. Wherever curriculum planning is explicit, adjustments will be made for each individual pupil's learning needs and the support required, as identified by ongoing assessments.

At Odyssey House, to support the flexibility required by our students, we present our curriculum in the areas of learning required by the Independent School Standards. The diagram below shows how these link with 'traditional' school subjects.

Table 1: Odyssey House School curriculum delivery

Regulatory area of learning	National curriculum/accredited subjects. Aspects also embedded throughout	Stream
Linguistic	English;	Core
Mathematical	Mathematics	Core
Scientific	Science (combined science)	Core
Technological	Food Technology	Extended
Human and Social	Geography; History; Religious Education; Citizenship	Extended Extended Extended Extended
Physical	Physical Education	Personal development
Aesthetic and creative	Art and design; Music;	Personal development
PSHE / Careers	PSHCE; Citizenship; Careers Education	Extended Personal development Personal development

3.3 The core curriculum

This consists of English (including phonics and reading), Mathematics and Science. The core curriculum forms the foundation on which all other aspects of learning take place. Extending their literacy, numeracy and scientific skills, knowledge and understanding enables our students to develop their ability to communicate, engage in other subject areas, solve problems, and think creatively.

Literacy and numeracy are foci. These are taught as discrete subjects, with all staff being aware of individuals' targets, and are also cross-referenced in other curricular planning. Careful baseline assessment enable staff to identify gaps in learning or talents and provide catch-up programmes or extra-challenging work to meet each pupil's particular needs.

Subject matter for the core subjects are taken from the Odyssey House School schemes of work, each, in turn, based on the National Curriculum or accredited courses at the appropriate age and stage. ~~More detail is found in each subject's policy and planning documents.~~

The actual content of lessons will depend on the prior assessments of each pupil's current level of skills, knowledge and understanding. Consequently, while students might be studying the same unit of work, challenging targets for everyone will reflect the next steps required in their personal learning journey. Assessment of their success in this will feed into the next lesson/unit of work's planning.

3.4 The Extended Curriculum

The Extended Curriculum provides an opportunity for students to experience a wealth of different subject areas and see the connections between them. This approach deepens students' understanding of each subject and enables them to apply the skills learned in other areas, particularly literacy.

The curriculum for these subjects follows the Odyssey House schemes of work, based on National Curriculum guidance, accredited courses, and vocational awards as relevant. However, subjects may, at times, be combined and taught through themes and topics, for example, PSHCE with religious education, or technology with art and design. To ensure that breadth and balance across the curriculum is maintained, the subject content covered is carefully tracked to ensure that the expected breadth in all subjects is maintained.

3.5 The curriculum for personal development

Supporting students' personal development, including the promotion of British values and their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development underpins learning across the curriculum. Odyssey House School strongly promotes students' personal learning and thinking skills with the aim of students becoming successful learners, confident individuals, and responsible citizens of the future.

Where students have had difficult experiences in their previous school, this can result in anxiety, a barrier towards school or the pupil falling behind in their learning. Students might have an Education and Health Care Plan outlining the specific support required for their needs. Conversely, students may struggle with relationships or anxiety in school because they find learning easier than their peers, which can be resented.

Odyssey House School aims to address all such issues through its small classes, supportive and needs-led provision of interventions, careful planning, and flexibility. We emphasize mindfulness, well-being, and resilience in everyone. We do not fit the students to our curriculum and provision; we tailor our curriculum and provision to fit the students. At times, this will require a flexible approach to the timetable, for example, for those students who might previously have refused to attend school.

However, the overriding objective is for young people to leave Odyssey House School with a high level of self-esteem, confidence in their ability to learn and develop further and to be able to engage positively and productively in their next educational setting or in employment.

Personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is taught through a coherent, planned and progressive program of study for all year groups. However, we recognise that successful personal development stems from a wider provision, which includes:

- constructive relationships with staff
- appropriate daily routines in school
- assemblies and community meetings to give students a voice
- curriculum enrichment through visitors to the school and educational visits
- upholding and actively promoting British values
- the provision of religious education and careers education (see separate policies)
- constructive approaches to behaviour management.

3.5i. British Values

We promote 'British Values' in all aspects of our provision and through our explicit and implicit provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These aspects permeate the curriculum and support the holistic development of students. We recognise that such development is most successful when these values and attitudes are promoted and modelled by the staff. Subjects such as history, English, PSHCE, religious education and current affairs provide excellent vehicles for the direct promotion of British Values.

We have identified 'British Values' to be:

- democracy
- the rule of law
- individual liberty
- mutual respect
- tolerance of different faiths and beliefs
- respect all, including those with Protected Characteristics.

3.5ii. Promotion of political views

Partisan political views are not promoted in the teaching of any subject at Odyssey House School. When political issues are brought to the attention of the students, we ensure that a balanced presentation of opposing views is offered. This applies:

- while the students attend school
- when the students are taking part in extra-curricular activities which are provided or organized by or on behalf of the school
- in the promotion at the school, including through the distribution of promotional material, of extra-curricular activities taking place at the school or elsewhere.

3.5iii. Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development

The Odyssey House School vision and values have a strong commitment to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. We take this to mean:

Spiritual development: the ability to explore beliefs and experience and respect faiths, feelings and values; enjoy learning about oneself, others and the surrounding world; use imagination, creativity and reflection.

Moral development; recognition of right and wrong; have respect for the law; understand the consequences of actions; be able to explore moral and ethical issues; and can offer reasoned views.

Social development; use a range of social skills appropriate to different contexts; participate positively in the local community; appreciate diverse viewpoints; participate, volunteer, and cooperate with a range of other people in different situations; resolve conflict; appreciate the role of Britain's parliamentary system; and engage with the 'British values' of democracy, the rule of law, liberty, respect and tolerance.

Cultural development; appreciate and value diverse cultural influences; participate in cultural opportunities; understand, accept, respect, and celebrate diversity.

Our approach to SMSC ensures that principles are actively promoted which:

- enable students to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem, and self-confidence
- enable students to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England
- encourage students to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated and to society more widely
- enable students to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England
- further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling students to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures
- encourage respect for other people, paying regard to the Protected Characteristics set out in the 2010 Act: and
- encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic process, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England.

Discriminatory or extremist opinions or behaviours are challenged as a matter of routine. In addition, our approach to SMSC ensures that all students will gain an:

- understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process; Appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their well-being and safety
- understanding that there is a separation of power between the executive and the judiciary, and that while some public bodies such as the police and the army can be held to account through Parliament, others, such as the courts, maintain independence
- understanding that the freedom to hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law
- acceptance that people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour, and
- Understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination.

The provision for students' SMSC development is embedded throughout the curriculum and everyday activities at Odyssey House School. All subjects provide excellent vehicles for promoting students' SMSC development, for example through collaboration with peers, exploring moral dilemmas in science, learning about different cultural influences in art and history, and appreciating the plight of those less fortunate than themselves in current affairs.

3.6 Curriculum enrichment

A key approach to curriculum planning at Odyssey House School is to ensure that the students find it engaging, that it captures their imagination, gives them opportunities for success and offers learning experiences that broaden their horizon. Hence, curriculum enrichment at Odyssey House School plays a key part in helping bring the curriculum alive and gives new and unique learning experiences to all the students.

The curriculum enrichment programme is designed to provide enrichment experiences to all students throughout the school year. This includes:

- ☞ six cultural enrichment days per academic year
- ☞ a half termly after school club offer that includes guided learning opportunities
- ☞ one enrichment activity per week as an opportunity for broadening horizons and minds

Every subject area is expected to run a specific trip and visit that links to the subject matter being taught and the intention of the visit/trip is to support and enrich the students' learning. Our intent is that everyone's curriculum will give them the knowledge, skills, support, and opportunities for personal development to ensure that they are able to achieve their 'personal best' and prepare them for their future education and/or employment.