



Curriculum in the Treetops Learning Community

Heartwood Pathway (Semi-Formal)
Curriculum Intent
Statement

Exceeding
Perceived
Potential





My TLC Curriculum

My Body

Learners on the Heartwood Pathway engage in a variety of experiences aimed at promoting their health, well-being, and personal growth. Weekly P.E. sessions support students to enhance their physical fitness, coordination, and overall understanding of how regular exercise benefits the body. Forest school opportunities and outdoor learning will foster a deeper connections with nature, encouraging both physical activity and the development of personal safety skills in outdoor environments. Science lessons provide valuable insights into how their bodies function. DT, PSHE and Life Skills lessons including understanding personal safety, developing independence and making healthy choices, will empower learners to take control of their own well-being. This is all supported by an overarching holistic approach which focuses on emotional awareness, resilience, and managing feelings effectively.

My Thinking

On the Heartwood Pathway, students engage in a blend of thematic learning alongside discrete teaching of specific subjects. This approach is rooted in the ethos of the National Curriculum but tailored to meet the unique needs of our pupils, ensuring challenges are presented in an age-appropriate manner. In the early stages, learning is primarily thematic, transitioning to a mix of thematic and discrete instruction as students progress through the later stages of key stage 2, preparing them for some subject-specific learning in key stage 3. Teaching emphasizes repetition and practice, allowing students ample time to master concepts and apply them confidently in various contexts. All learners study essential subjects, including English, Maths, Science, PSHE, Art, DT, P.E. Remaining in class groups fosters continuity within their environment, allowing for stability and continuity in their environment. relationships with teachers and peers.

My Creativity

The Heartwood Pathway fosters creativity while promoting emotional development, allowing students to collaborate and communicate through a range of artistic opportunities. Lessons in Art, DT (including resistant materials, textiles, and food technology), and Performing Arts provide a comprehensive environment for learners to explore their artistic talents while building confidence and essential life skills. In Art lessons, students experiment with various mediums and techniques, encouraging self-expression and critical thinking. They engage in singing, signing, and theatre activities, with opportunities to perform in school productions and community shows. Additionally, students experience West End performances, deepening their understanding of the performing arts and enhancing their real-world skills.

My Future

On The Sherwood Pathway we aim to prepare our learners for their next steps in adult life which may include college or work. We aim for our learners to exceed their perceived potential and support them to become active and positive contributors to society. Lessons involve:

- Learning about making healthy choices, positive friendships, emotional wellbeing, resilience.
- Developing independence skills and generalising these across different environments.
- Learning skills to manage their own mental health and well-being and understanding where they can get support.
- Exploring the options available to them when they leave school and develop the skills and knowledge to be able to access this



The Heartwood Pathway (Semi formal Curriculum Pathway) focuses on developing core functional skills that will best prepare our students for adult life. We strive to ensure that every student exceeds their perceived potential, allowing them to thrive in their community and lead fulfilling, happy, and healthy lives. The Heartwood Pathway continues to promote learning through curiosity but develops additional subject specific skills. Learners are taught to experiment, challenge and extend. This pathway lives out our values through:

Quality – We believe in providing a blend of high-quality learning experiences paired with meaningful educational visits to generalise learning. The resources used and experiences offered are of a high quality, that capture interest and promote engagement.

Equality – We believe that learners on this pathway should be equipped with the skills to manage their own emotions (with support) and access a curriculum that is both challenging academically and socially. Learners on this pathway may access aspects of an adapted national curriculum. We ensure equality for our learners on this pathway by offering them the necessary scaffolds to have experiences which their needs may preclude them from accessing.

Opportunity – We believe that learners should not only experience the world around them, but have opportunities to generalise and consolidate their skills in the real world. We provide opportunities for learners to develop independence, express their choices, make decisions and leave with meaningful accreditations that prepare them for their next phase in life.

The Curriculum Approach



In the Heartwood Pathway, a practical, hands-on approach to learning is implemented throughout all age groups, enabling pupils to experience, refine, and generalise skills to real-life settings and environments, while creating a fun, engaging, and meaningful learning environment. This is supported by a strong connection with accessing and applying these skills in the local community and other meaningful environments. There is a strong emphasis on the development of independent living / life skills, self-help skills and healthy relationships with opportunities for this woven throughout the curriculum and targeted within specific subjects e.g. Community Engagement, Life Skills and PSHE etc. Learners following this pathway benefit from following a primary class model, remaining with key staff members throughout much of their learning.

Our youngest students will be learning in the Early Years Foundation Stages, where they will have access to a free-flow and engaging environment that follows the Development Matters Curriculum and addresses their early learning needs. As pupils progress through the primary phase, learning is based on the ethos of the National Curriculum but adapted to meet the specific needs of our pupils to ensure challenge and delivery in an age-appropriate way. At the earliest stages, pupils learning is thematic, moving towards a blend of discrete and thematic learning as they enter the later stages of key stage 2, thus preparing students for some subject specific learning in key stage 3.

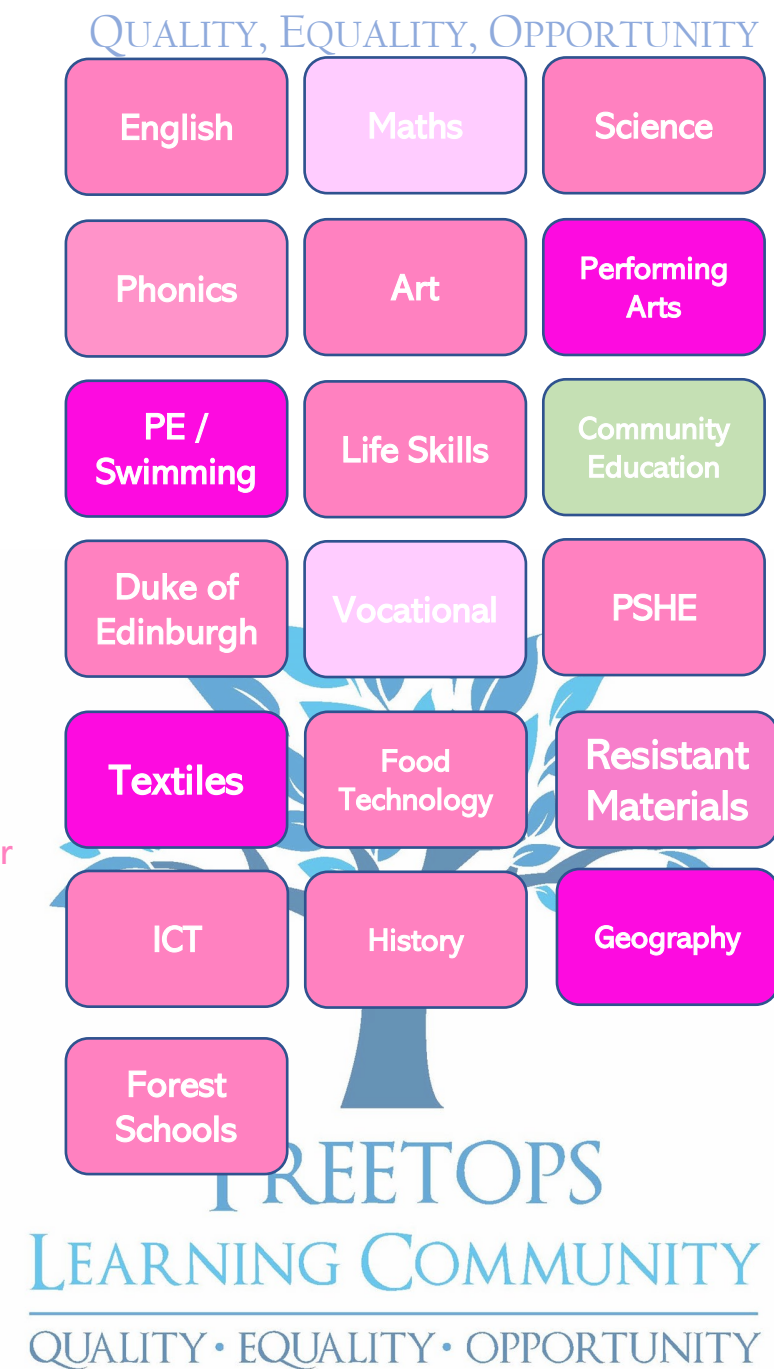
Each year, the composition of our students' changes, which in turn influences the educational path they will follow in their future studies. During their secondary education, students will predominantly access either the Heartwood Pathway or Sherwood Pathway, with some movement between pathways where suited to student needs.



The Curriculum Approach

At Key Stage 3, learners on the Heartwood pathway will follow a curriculum which incorporates a blend of thematic and subject specific learning, building on what they have learnt in earlier stages. Whilst a thematic approach is predominantly utilised, English, Maths and Science may be taught discretely, whereby there is not a natural link with overarching topics. We believe this approach provides our learners with a more immersive environment, thereby promoting and strengthening links with their knowledge and understanding of the world. Learners following this pathway benefit from a consistent class team and environments.

At Key Stage 4, pupils work towards ASDAN accreditations, which prepare them for their next steps as they transition to college or other supported placements. Those with advanced skills in specific subject areas have the opportunity to access additional accreditations and qualifications offered on the formal pathway. This ensures that all learners can pursue their individual strengths and interests, enhancing their readiness for future educational or vocational opportunities. By focusing on personalised pathways, we support each student in exceeding their full potential as they prepare for adulthood.



My Thinking - English

Literacy skills are central to the development of lifelong learning, personal growth, and social development. These skills empower students to lead successful lives, allowing them to appreciate, enjoy, understand, evaluate, discuss, and make informed choices. The Heartwood Pathway prioritizes the development of early literacy skills, providing numerous opportunities for reading, writing, speaking, and listening through discussions and social interactions throughout the school week. We aim to expand pupils' language and vocabulary in all aspects of our work. While some elements of the literacy curriculum are delivered holistically rather than as separate skills, all learners receive dedicated literacy lessons each week. Our thematic approach enables us to teach subject-specific content while providing opportunities for students to transfer their literacy skills across the curriculum.

Our English curriculum aims to expose children to a rich range of broad and ambitious vocabulary, introducing them to diverse, challenging, and exciting texts that explore various cultures and perspectives. By engaging with a variety of literature, students can expand their understanding of the world while enhancing their language skills. This approach not only fosters critical thinking and empathy but also encourages a deeper appreciation for literature and its impact on society.

As pupils progress through the Heartwood Pathway and into the secondary department, there is a growing cross curricular focus on the functional use of English, to prepare learners for reading and writing in real-world scenarios. This emphasis ensures that students develop practical language skills that they can apply in everyday situations, enhancing their communication abilities and confidence. By integrating functional literacy into the curriculum, learners are equipped to navigate various contexts for a range of purposes. This approach not only reinforces the relevance of their learning but also supports their overall development as effective communicators in later life,

My Thinking - Reading

We foster a 'love of reading' and aim to ensure that all primary aged learners are equipped with good reading and writing skills before they enter key stage 3. We use a systematic, synthetic phonics program called Read Write Inc. Learners on the Heartwood Pathway have discrete, timetabled phonics sessions as well as reading intervention to further develop their skills and knowledge. For learners who struggle with the systematic synthetic phonics program, we use the See and Learn sight-reading program to support whole word reading, incorporating sets of sight words and phrases alongside pictures where appropriate.

Our learners have access to phonetically decodable reading schemes, complemented by a variety of texts to encourage a love of reading. Each class within the Heartwood Pathway implements a daily "Drop Everything and Read" session, creating a dedicated time for students to immerse themselves in books. This practice not only promotes literacy skills but also fosters a positive reading culture, allowing students to explore different genres and develop a lifelong appreciation for reading.

Across all Key Stages and Pathways, comprehension continues to be a central emphasis. Enhancing the significance of contextual understanding is a core objective for our learners. We strive to cultivate their capacity for independent reading and comprehension, thereby enriching their understanding of texts as well as the wider world. The integration of tools such as Accelerated Reader, Colourful Semantics and Communicate InPrint Symbols serve as valuable scaffolds in our approach.

Learners apply their reading knowledge to practical real-life situations preparing them for independent living or employment in their adult lives. They have daily opportunities to further develop and utilise their reading skills with opportunities continually embedded throughout their curriculum and at a level which is meaningful to them.



My Thinking - Reading



My Thinking - Mathematics

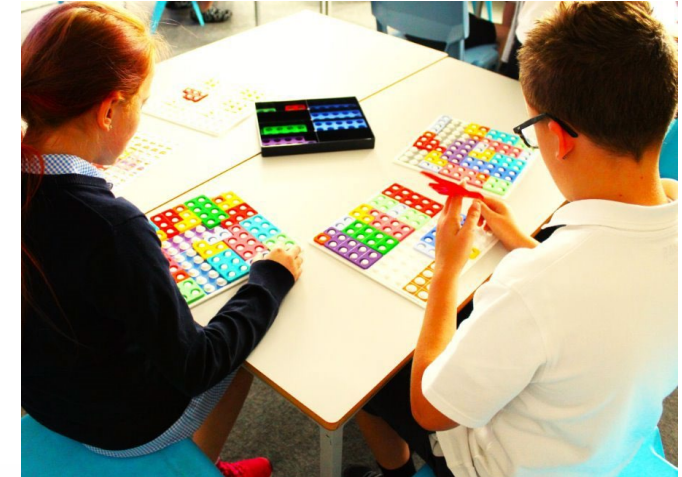
We aim to ensure that all learners are equipped with the skills and knowledge to utilise their Maths skills within the school community and beyond in preparation for adulthood. On the Heartwood Pathway, our Maths curriculum is based on the ethos of the National Curriculum and adapted to promote engagement, making meaningful connections and provide practical, hands-on experience to ensure that students can confidently apply their skills to their everyday lives. Lessons focus on the development of fluency, problem solving and reasoning across the topics of; number, four operations, ratio, money, calendar and time, measures, geometry and statistics where appropriate. Each area has its own progression of skills and knowledge which supports teachers to extend and challenge learners but also build on previous knowledge.

In our Primary classes, we deliver Maths lessons in ways that are engaging, creative, and motivational to ensure that all students are fully involved. We place a strong emphasis on play and practical activities, tailored to suit each pupil's level. Our focus is on nurturing confidence through hands-on experience with concrete objects and manipulatives before progressing to pictorial representations and abstract approaches.

Within the secondary department, learners are taught through discrete sessions as well as through a thematic curriculum where appropriate. Lessons incorporate key skills from all maths topic areas with a greater emphasis on the application of these skills to real life and everyday living. These skills are rehearsed and developed within familiar and predictable environments to gain confidence before generalising these skills and applying them to wider community settings. As pupils transition to Key Stage 4, they will ASDAN qualifications in different areas of the curriculum. Learners are also able to access qualifications on the formal pathway where appropriate.



QUALITY, EQUALITY, OPPORTUNITY



My Thinking - Science

We aim to inspire our learners to be curious about the world around them. On the Heartwood Pathway, we teach early skills of scientific inquiry and investigation, fostering a sense of awe and wonder about the natural world. We achieve this by providing a science-rich environment filled with a variety of resources for exploration. Through hands-on activities and engaging experiments, students are encouraged to ask questions, make observations, and draw conclusions. This approach not only deepens their understanding of scientific concepts but also cultivates a lifelong passion for learning and discovery.

Our Science curriculum is designed around National Curriculum expectations and adapted to fit our thematic cycle where appropriate. While elements of Science are interwoven throughout the curriculum, some areas are taught discreetly to ensure comprehensive understanding. As learners progress, they develop deeper thinking and hypothesizing skills through practical activities that foster teamwork and collaboration. Each area of the Science curriculum has its own progression of skills and knowledge, which supports teachers in extending and challenging learners while building on their prior knowledge.

This approach encourages curiosity and enhances students' ability to apply scientific concepts in various contexts, helping them connect their learning to real-world applications. By exploring topics such as scientific enquiry, biology, physics, and chemistry, students gain a well-rounded understanding of the natural world. Additionally, they learn to appreciate the interconnections.





Communication Approaches

The core focus of the Heartwood pathway is to nurture and develop each learner's functional communication and interaction skills. Therefore, speech and language therapy strategies are embedded in every aspect of school life.

The therapy team provide training to and liaise closely with classroom staff to support teaching practice to ensure that speech, language and communication needs are met at the right level for each learner.

Using a graded approach, learners are initially given the opportunity to practise functional communication skills in a safe and supportive environment, before generalising and applying these into community settings with appropriate support.

Speech and Language therapists provide interventions, set EHCP targets and upskill staff in providing an inclusive communication environment. Working within the school, gives the therapy team ample opportunities to observe and support learning across a variety of real- life settings and scenarios, such as visits to the supermarket and cafes.

A 'Total Communication' environment enables inclusive participation for all learners with Speech, Language and Communication needs, and therefore this approach is used throughout the Trust. This includes using speech, signing, visuals and low/high-tech devices (AAC).

Embedding Speech and Language strategies within daily classroom routines and learning activities, ensures that the support for communicative independence is made a natural part of learning.



Occupational Therapy and Sensory Processing

In general terms, Children's Occupational Therapists enable children and young people with special needs to participate in and successfully manage the activities that they want or need to do at home, at school or work and during their free time. They have the skills and expertise to identify the personal, task and environmental factors that support or inhibit children's development, participation and achievement.

Within Treetops School, the OT role focuses on managing the activities in the school/learning environment, although, naturally, this will extend to life skills and leisure activities as part of the special school's holistic approach to learning.

Many of our learners have significant differences in how they process all sensory information. To address this, our learners access movement activities, which provide regulating proprioceptive and vestibular input regularly throughout the day, with staff receiving training and advice from Occupational Therapy. Some learners have individualised Sensory Schedules/Diets, which they follow with the appropriate support. Being as regulated as possible enables our learners to achieve their maximum level of participation in learning activities.

The semi-formal pathway has a focus on life skills; Occupational Therapy can provide strategies to enable learners to become more independent with activities of daily living by breaking them down into smaller steps or by providing adaptations to grade the difficulty.



My Body - Physical Education

Within the Heartwood Pathway, our Physical Education curriculum is designed to inspire learners to succeed and excel in a variety of competitive sports and physical activities through a skill-based approach. Grounded in National Curriculum objectives, we ensure that all learners have access to 1.5 hours of PE each week.

Our curriculum offers a broad, inspiring, and sequential journey where students learn what constitutes a healthy active lifestyle and how sports contribute to physical, social, and mental well-being. This curriculum not only enhances motor skills but also fosters essential life skills such as relationship-building, self-esteem, confidence, teamwork, problem-solving, and independence.

Learners on the Heartwood Pathway participate in discrete lessons that cover gymnastics, invasion games, athletics, dance, trampolining, team and individual games, as well as various adventurous activities. Additionally, students will engage in swimming and be assessed against the ASA national swimming standards, ensuring they achieve essential swimming competencies.

To further enrich their experience, we offer a range of extracurricular sporting activities and opportunities for learners to access offsite facilities, competitions, and events. Our goal is for learners to engage in regular physical exercise and adopt a healthy lifestyle beyond the Treetops Learning Community. This educated mindset, combined with the enjoyment of physical activity, gives true value to Physical Education as a vital component of their overall development.





My Body - PSHE

PSHE lessons are taught discretely and form the foundation of a holistic approach throughout the curriculum. Research indicates that the most effective model for delivering personal, social, health, and economic (PSHE) education is a sequenced, spiral program that builds on prior learning as pupils progress through their educational journey. Therefore, our PSHE teaching is grounded in the frameworks outlined by the PSHE Association and is personalized to meet the specific needs of our learners.

Our program of study encompasses key areas, including Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), Health Education, economic well-being, and careers. These topics are delivered through three central themes: Health and Well-being, Relationships, and Living in the Wider World and link closely with our Life Skills programme. This comprehensive approach ensures that students gain essential knowledge and skills that promote their overall development, well-being, and readiness for life beyond school. By fostering a safe and inclusive environment, we encourage learners to engage in meaningful discussions and reflections, helping them to navigate their personal and social lives effectively.





My Body - Life Skills

Developing life skills is a vital component of our program, aimed at supporting our learners in becoming as independent as possible. These skills are interwoven throughout the curriculum, ensuring that students gain practical knowledge alongside their academic learning. When teaching self-help skills, complex tasks are broken down into smaller, manageable steps, allowing learners to build confidence and independence gradually. For instance, in the area of social skills, learners practice developing positive relationships through role-playing and group activities, enhancing their ability to communicate effectively. In terms of personal care, lessons focus on dressing appropriately and maintaining good hygiene practices, teaching students the importance of self-presentation and health. Additionally, we emphasize healthy eating habits and basic food preparation skills, empowering learners to make informed choices about their nutrition.

This structured approach not only equips students with essential life skills but also fosters a sense of accomplishment as they master each task. By providing a supportive environment where learners can practice and refine these skills, we prepare them for greater independence in everyday life, promoting their overall well-being and confidence.



My Body - Community Engagement

Pupils on the Heartwood Pathway are actively encouraged to engage with the local community to develop their independent living skills, promote self-confidence, foster a sense of belonging, and prepare for a future where they can participate positively in society. Through regular planned curriculum visits, they learn essential life skills, such as managing money, planning trips, staying safe, and becoming socially aware of their surroundings. These real-world experiences help students understand the practical applications of their learning, making it relevant and engaging. By interacting with community members and participating in various activities, our pupils gain valuable insights and experiences that enhance their ability to navigate everyday challenges, ultimately boosting their confidence and independence.

Community trips are planned to closely align with our overarching thematic topics. These outings provide learners with opportunities to engage with various skills and practices in functional settings, allowing them to transfer and apply what they've learned in the classroom. By immersing students in real-world environments, we enhance their understanding of core concepts while fostering critical thinking and problem-solving abilities..



My Creativity - Art, Music and Performing Arts

The teaching and implementation of the Creative Arts curriculum within the Heartwood Pathway provides our learners with the opportunities to develop and extend skills using a variety of media and materials. Teaching and Learning is based on National Curriculum programmes of study, personalised to meet the needs of students.

Throughout the pathway, our learners are taught Art as part of a thematic approach, making links with other areas of learning across the curriculum. Our learners can explore the world around them, be creative, express themselves and develop their knowledge of famous artists. They are expected to be reflective and evaluate their own work, thinking about how they can make changes and keep improving.

Performing Arts and Music are powerful modes of expressions through which our learners build upon their self-esteem, confidence and resilience. Our curriculum develops language and communication skills and encourages social and emotional development. Beyond whole school music lessons and performing arts lessons many students take part in extracurricular musical activities such as song club, whole school productions, carols by candle-light and Jack Petchey presentations where we showcase our learners' creative talents. They can also attend Young Voices event in O2 Arena, London

In both Art and Performing Arts, pupils on the Heartwood pathway are able to join the discrete teaching of subjects in our formal pathway if this appropriate to their skills and further development. This will enable them to work towards a BTEC level 1 Introductory Certificate in Performing Arts from year 9, or a GCSE qualification in art



My Creativity - Design Technology (Textiles, Resistant Materials, Food Technology)

Within the Heartwood Pathway our practical subjects, such as textiles, resistant materials and food technology aim to inspire our learners to be creative, take risks and encourage their independence.

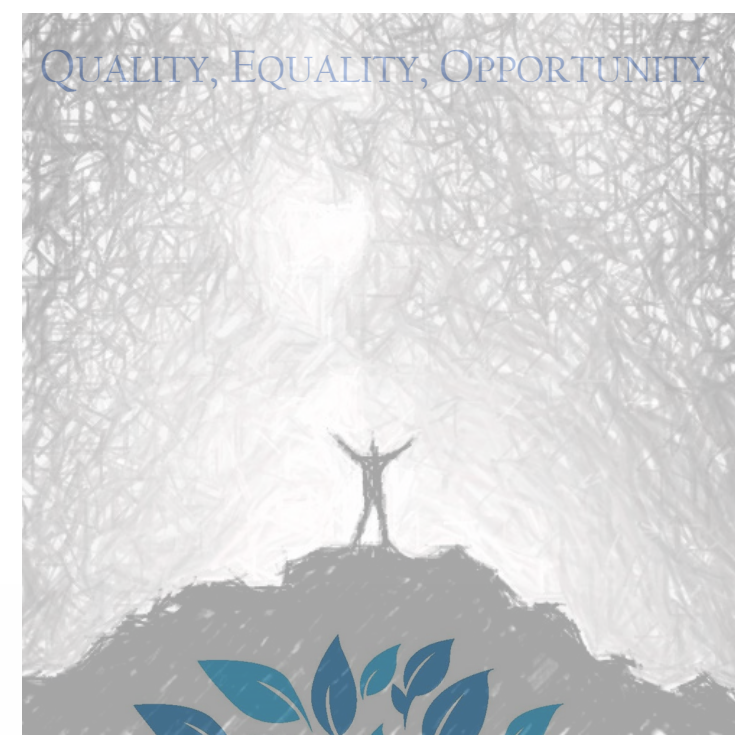
Design Technology within the primary department is creative, practical and provides our learners with the opportunity to explore problem solving and to develop their own creative ideas both as individuals and as part of a group. Pupils are taught through a thematic curriculum that covers materials, mechanisms, textiles and food technology. Through hands-on, practical experiences, Design Technology supports the fine and gross motor skills of our learners. Exploration of a range of objects, how certain working parts are made and how to join, fix, and use materials effectively encourage and develop the concept of enquiry. We teach our learners about the fundamentals of healthy eating and the skills required in the process of cooking. Within the Primary department we instil a love of cooking in pupils from a young age via our creative curriculum lessons.

Within the secondary department each class is divided in two to allow for smaller groups to access our specialist rooms. Our learners have the opportunity to develop their skills in the following key areas: resistant materials, mechanisms, electronics, textiles and food technology. Within the Heartwood pathway, the skills that the pupils develop are functional in nature and centre around supporting development of future life skills e.g. cooking a simple, sewing a button on to clothing. Skills developed from Key Stage 4 work towards ASDAN accreditations.

As with all other curriculum subjects, learners on the Heartwood pathway can to access learning offered within the formal pathway where appropriate and thus have the potential to access AQA awards, BTECs and GCSE's.



My Future



Pathway Vision:

When learners on the Heartwood Pathway leave Treetops Learning Community, our goal is for them to possess the skills and knowledge necessary to live as independently as possible. We aim to equip learners with a range of strategies that enable them to access the community with greater independence, whether for leisure or supported work. Developing meaningful relationships that are reciprocal, supportive, and appropriate is essential, allowing learners to engage with the community safely while reducing the level of support needed.

The curriculum for the Heartwood Pathway is specifically designed to help learners apply their skills and knowledge in the local community and beyond. We place a strong emphasis on educational visits, as these experiences prepare learners for the next phase of their lives. Skills and knowledge are revisited in various contexts to support generalisation, ensuring learners can transfer what they've learned effectively. In addition to practical elements aimed at fostering independence, learners earn meaningful and relevant accreditations that recognise and support their learning journey.

