



Teaching and Learning Policy

Circulated for Consultation		
Policy Written on: April 2018	Approved and Signed by Simon Garrill, Chief Executive Officer	Approved and Signed by Chair of Governors
To be reviewed: April 2020		

Teaching and Learning Policy

School Vision

“Inspire Excellence - Champion Potential - Empower Learning”

Rationale

This policy aims to reflect the core aims of our school vision and in ensuring that the students at The Grove are provided with high quality learning experiences that lead to consistently high levels of achievement and that are adapted and tailored to meet the needs arising from their autism diagnosis.

It also takes into account the criteria outlined in the Teacher Standards and identifies these as a minimum requirement of good practice.

Links

This policy should be read in line with;

- Curriculum policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Assessment, recording and reporting Policy
- Marking Policy
- Behaviour and wellbeing Policy
- PHSC and SMSC Policy
- Autism Handbook
- Communication Policy
- Flexibility of Thought Statement
- Sensory statement

Aims

We have high ambitions for our students to fulfil their potential, recognising their skills and strengths as well as equipping them with effective tools to help self-manage any areas of difficulty related to their autism.

Our strong commitment to students developing independence and enabling them to feel empowered to make positive choices about their own lives is a key driving factor. Learning is built on student’s strengths and interests, giving them a reason to learn and instilling a belief in the importance of what they can achieve, not what they can’t.

Teaching and learning takes into account the difficulties faced by our learners and the curriculum and its delivery is highly modified to be autism friendly without sacrificing challenge. Focus is on developing functional skills and life skills towards adulthood, academic learning and personal, social and emotional learning which all enable our students to become as independent as possible in their lives. In addition, learning extends beyond the classroom to encompass learning within the community and learning at home through high engagement with families. This is the core essence of the school and the expectations that all families, staff and professionals will be committed to.

More specifically, our focus is to develop:

- Learners who are ready to learn because their additional needs have been met
- Independent learners who are confident, flexible and able to cooperate with others
- Learners who are engaged and enjoy their learning
- Learners who take pride in achievement and are motivated to learn new things
- Reflective learners who are able to take risks and embrace challenges

At The Grove, we believe that learning is most effective when:

- It takes place in a secure, stable and stimulating environment that is autism friendly
- Learning is supported by autism specific approaches and strategies that meet individual needs
- Is appropriate to the emotional and intellectual ability of the child
- Students understand the purpose and function of their learning
- The learning builds on prior knowledge and understanding
- Success criteria and outcomes are explicit and shared with students
- The learning is active and collaborative
- Student questioning, reflection and discussion are high quality
- Independent learning and thinking is facilitated and encouraged wherever appropriate
- Different learning styles are acknowledged and provided for
- Students are able to self assess at their [appropriate] level, and know what they need to do to improve
- Humour, warmth and enjoyment are evident
- Students have opportunities to transfer skills, knowledge and understanding to other contexts

The Grove Learning Experience

We have high expectations that all lessons will:

- Be planned around the needs of the students and have clear aims and objectives, build on prior learning, knowledge and understanding and provide sufficient challenges for students
- Meaningful and motivating for the students
- Include the sharing of learning expectations with students and make explicit the success criteria by which the learning will be evaluated
- Allow time to review learning outcomes; providing accurate and appropriate feedback
- Provide opportunity for student success to be celebrated and purposeful student reflection and or self/peer evaluation
- Allow for further development of skills in literacy, reading and maths addressing individual targets
- Provide opportunities to deepen skills through generalisation
- Support learning, where appropriate, through meaningful homework activities

We expect all teaching will:

- Present lessons with clarity, enthusiasm and pace. Teachers should aim for a sense of awe and wonder during the lessons.

- Make learning active and fun, using ICT where appropriate
- Take account of the semi-formal curriculum to incorporate the development of life skills, thinking and problem solving and play and leisure skills.
- Provide appropriate levels of intervention and scaffolding to support students' learning
- Use a variety of high quality questioning techniques to probe and develop students' understanding
- Create activities which are sharply matched to individual needs, learning styles and levels of attainment
- Promote active listening and encourage reflection as appropriate to each student
- Offer high quality verbal, visual or oral feedback that supports further learning
- Provide opportunities for success
- Use a variety of effective teaching methods and strategies; including specific autism strategies and according to the task
- Demonstrate flexibility in their approach and be prepared to deviate from the lesson where appropriate or as a response to the needs of the students
- Checks student understanding using highly effective AfL strategies
- Deploy staff as they see fit for the benefit of the students; staff know their allocated roles however, they should exercise good judgment and take initiative where appropriate
- Ensure behaviour and wellbeing support for each student is consistent and appropriate. The school policy and behaviour support plans are implemented to enable students to learn effectively and to the best of their ability

We expect students will:

- Have equal opportunities to work effectively and purposefully in a range of contexts
- Be supported to maximise their learning in all areas of the curriculum and through enriching experiences
- Be encouraged to ask questions [using any means of communication relevant] where appropriate
- Work collaboratively, recognising that the contributions of all are valid
- Know and understand how to ask [or request] for and seek help
- Be able to select appropriate learning resources
- Be able to work with increasing independence and less dependence
- Be able to show respect and consideration for each others
- Follow school rules appropriately supported through their behavior support plans and school wide approaches
- Demonstrate a positive attitude to their learning

Autism Specific approaches to Teaching and Learning.

The support we give to our students will be tailored to meet their needs. School wide approaches to teaching and learning include the following systems;

- TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and other Communication Handicapped Children)
- Sensory Integration (SI)

- SCERTS (Social Communication, Educational Regulation, Transactional Support)
- Makaton signing and symbols
- Intensive Interaction
- PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System)
- SVN (Subject, Verb, Noun Systems)
- Colourful Semantics
- Team Teach (Physical Intervention)
- Differentiation of the National Curriculum and its assessment
- Mentoring
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

The school ensures the availability of sufficient suitable teaching and support with a widespread awareness amongst staff of the particular needs of our students. Emphasis is on ensuring an understanding of needs and identifying strategies for appropriate methods of teaching and learning within the classrooms and beyond.

Structure provides stability, predictability and security. For many of our students, these are crucial elements to ensuring they are ready and able to learn. The way in which students' days are timetabled, structured and organised will depend on their individual needs but is achieved through; timetabling, rewards, exercise, schedules, reflection, teaching support and intervention, and consistent approaches outlined in their personalised learning plans.

"Movement and sensory breaks" are available throughout the school day as we recognise our learners learn best when they can do this. We promote exercise as a key feature in enhancing attention and concentration, and its benefits in contributing to health and well-being. Transition times are an essential part of our planning. We explicitly teach all our students how to manage these times and how to prepare for changes including planned vs unplanned changes and welcomed and less welcomed changes.

Planning

Our emphasis is on developing high quality teaching and learning. We see planning and preparation as a key element in this process.

Planning takes form in many different ways, each area being important in the planning of the whole approach to the child such as;

- Lesson planning
- Personalised Learning Plans (PLP)
- Positive behaviour and wellbeing support plans
- Personal handling plans
- SCERTS plans
- Medium term planning and differentiation
- Pen portraits
- Therapy plans

Academic planning is taken from schemes of work devised to provide breadth and balance. The schemes of work highlight the topics and areas of study that match the objectives outlined within

the National Curriculum or the semi-formal curriculum. Separate schemes of work are written for students who are on different ends of the autism spectrum and with different intellectual abilities. The Trust's secondary schemes of work are adapted and differentiated to make them autism friendly.

Teachers are expected to create a detailed medium term plan that reflects the needs of their class. The medium term plan identifies specific areas of need and identifies differentiated learning objectives and outcomes for individuals (see appendix 1).

At The Grove we believe that planning for learning should always

- Identify, differentiated lesson objectives, prior attainment, progress and activities to meet these and wider cross-curricular learning opportunities.
- Focus around the learning experiences of the students, including personalised targets and be focused on deepening understanding as well as mastering new skills.
- Highlight differentiation and identify challenging and creative activities to motivate learners.
- Make the learning objectives clear.
- Take account of student's progress and build on this
- Reflect the criteria as outlined in the teacher standards.
- Take account of Assessment for Learning (AfL), both verbal and written.
- Identify high expectations and appropriately challenging tasks.
- Link to schemes of work and matches the objectives, taking into account student prior attainment levels and progress.
- Be open to adjustment and refinement, responding to the needs of students

Assessment (Refer to Assessment Policy)

- Teachers use a variety of formative and summative assessments to monitor and track progress (Personalised Learning Plans, Student Progress Meetings, end of year testing, ongoing tracking and assessment using BSquared, exams/formal testing).
- Baseline assessments are used to identify student starting points
- Students receive regular verbal and written feedback (following marking policy)
- Students are supported to understand what they need to do to make progress
- Assessment is standardised during internal and external moderation meetings
- Teachers keep detailed records of their work and on-going evidence portfolios
- Assessment data is collected a minimum of twice times a year and be used for target setting and tracking of student progress.

Further Opportunities for Learning

- All staff have a responsibility to promote the school's core values at all times.
- Assemblies and collective worship will be well planned and involve opportunities for student participation wherever possible.
- Enrichment activities should be open to all and encourage all students who wish to attend. They should provide opportunities for extending learning beyond the classroom. This includes short trips, clubs day trips and residential trips.
- Leisure times and break times should be adult led and support the social communication of the students

- Therapists will support further opportunities for learning in and outside of the classroom.
- Students will have opportunities to contribute to school development through the school council and other advocacy forums.

Resources

- Materials should be well organized and appropriate to the abilities and communication needs of the students.
- Stocks should be checked and replenished regularly.
- A range of equipment should be used to deepen student's experiences and their learning.
- Subject and class budgets are allocated to ensure high quality resources support learning.
- Resources should be motivating and stimulating for learners.

Professional Development

As part of the school's commitment to continually raise standards of learning in the classroom, we adopt the teaching shapes approach which is based on the international lesson study programmes. Teachers work in triads with peer to peer observation and feedback that focuses specifically on aspects of learning that takes place in the classroom.

Regular in house training for all classroom staff focuses on teaching and learning in the classroom with a continuous commitment to improve the quality of learning for every student. Training is determined through monitoring and quality assurance processes, school evaluation and feedback from the performance management processes.

Monitoring

Learning walks take place each half term and are conducted by senior leaders and heads of department. There is a half termly focus linked to the school development plan which feeds into evaluation and quality assurance. Feedback provides opportunities to celebrate success and share high quality practice whilst also allowing regular opportunities to revisit practice and tackle any shortfalls quickly.

Work [and evidence] scrutiny takes place each half term and focuses on identifying student progress, student outcomes and the impact teaching has on them. The quality of marking and feedback and how students' targets are incorporated across their learning day is scrutinised and how these impact on student achievement and progress. Work scrutiny takes place in formats relevant to the students' needs and are carried out by department heads or by SLT. Feedback contributes to the school development plan and the school evaluation process; targets may be set based on evidence observed. Work to be scrutinised is relevant to the students' needs and is familiar with their specific way of working. Such examples may include workbooks, photographic or pictorial recordings, any form of multimedia recordings and adult led assisted work.

Line managers complete lesson observations as part of the performance management cycle; teaching and learning objectives form part of this cycle. In the autumn term new teachers and teachers who we have concerns about are observed. Where poor teaching and learning is observed, the teaching and learning lead will work with that member of staff to ensure rapid progress is made and standards are improved quickly. In the summer term teachers with responsibility will be observed. Newly qualified teachers are observed regularly throughout their NQT year and evaluated against the standards. They follow the Trust's induction and NQT programme. Teachers who are a cause for concern will be observed at scheduled times within any of the terms as deemed appropriate.

Working with Parents, carers and families

At The Grove, we view teaching and learning as a 24 hours experience. For this reason we believe that the most effective teaching and learning takes place when there is a joined up approach between home and school. In order to facilitate this process and support parents, carers and families The Grove provides the following;

- Home liaison service
- Parent coffee mornings
- Parent training sessions
- A minimum of four meetings with parents, carers and families across the school year
- Daily home school communication
- Home visits to support the implementation of strategies in the home
- Resources to be used at home to support work in school
- Practical life skills activities that can be practiced at home

Equal Opportunities

At The Grove, we insure every student has access to the same quality learning opportunities regardless of their needs or difficulties. We place high value on ensuring teaching styles and approaches are adapted and tailored for every individual and takes account the range of need and profile of each student as identified within their PLP.

Appendix 1 – Medium term plan format

Class	Topic	Teacher	Subject	Date
What is the big picture?			Prior Learning	
Week	Learning Outcomes	Activities	Resources	Success Criteria
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
Opportunities for Assessment for Learning			Literacy and Numeracy Opportunities	

Links to Communication (Including Social Communication)			Links to Thinking and Problem Solving
Links to Life Skills	Links to PSHE	Links ICT	Links to Play and Leisure