



Curriculum Policy

Pupils are referred to Dawn House School because they have severe speech and language and communication difficulties which are currently preventing them from realising their full potential intellectually, academically and socially.

At Dawn House School the pupils receive the specialist intensive support that they need. We are able to cater for a number of other difficulties which are commonly associated with communication difficulties. These include: learning difficulties, behavioural difficulties, problems with attention and memory, motor dyspraxia, sensory difficulties, autistic spectrum difficulties, emotional problems, difficulties with friendships and social relationships, poor self image and low self-esteem. However, the primary disability of pupils at Dawn House School is their communication difficulty.

This means they may have difficulties and experience problems in the following areas:

- Articulation problems
- Phonological problems
- Syntactic problems
- Semantic problems
- Pragmatic problems
- Literacy problems
- Social Communication Difficulties

These difficulties may affect a pupil's ability to comprehend the language that they hear and/or to express what they want to say. They may also lead to difficulties in forming and maintaining friendships and/or difficulties in conforming to expectations of behaviour.

The curriculum is mediated in order to support the learning of pupils with severe language and communication difficulties.

It is our intention that at Dawn House School we will deliver a coherent curriculum that builds on pupils' experience, prior knowledge and attainment in previous phases/schools.

We believe a coherent curriculum:

- Makes sense to learners
- Is relevant, engaging and interesting
- Enables pupils to make good progress through effective differentiation according to need.

Our curriculum is designed to help pupils develop their ability to become:

- successful learners
- confident individuals
- responsible citizens

whilst promoting the following outcomes:

- being healthy
- staying safe
- enjoying and achieving
- making a positive contribution
- achieving economic well being

and developing pupils' skills in the three focuses for learning:

- Attitudes and Attributes – becoming determined, resilient, adaptable, confident, measured risk taking and enterprising
- Skills – literacy, numeracy, computing, personal learning and thinking skills
- Knowledge and Understanding of the ideas that shape the world.

By adopting such an approach we believe pupils will:

- achieve high standards and make good progress in all subjects including the skills related to their SLCN
- develop and be able to apply high-quality personal, learning and thinking skills
- develop and be able to use high-quality functional skills
- be engaged, motivated and committed to their learning
- engage with learning to the age of 19 and beyond

whilst at the same time pupils will develop independent and employability skills to:

- interact and communicate with a wide range of people
- express preferences, communicate needs, make choices
- make decisions and choose options that other people act on and respect
- prepare for an adult life in which they have the greatest possible degree of autonomy
- understand and develop relationships with others based on mutual respect and dependence on each other
- develop an awareness and understanding of their environment and of the global community
- explore, question and challenge

Determining curriculum entitlements and priorities for learning.

Dawn House pupils will experience the statutory range of subjects of the National Curriculum including, at key stage 4, the full range of E Bacc subjects when appropriate. Throughout the entire curriculum pupils will be taught how to keep themselves safe from risks such as abuse, sexual exploitation and extremism particularly when using the internet and social media. British Values will be promoted and a wide range of religious beliefs explored to ensure students are well prepared to respect others and contribute to wider society and life in Britain particularly by taking an active role in their local community.

Staff will actively seek to collaborate with external providers such as the NSPCC, Anne Craft Trust and Sexions to ensure the school's programmes reflect current issues in sex and relationship education including keeping safe and free from abuse and other aspects of PSHE. Staff delivering careers education will be supported by Nottinghamshire Futures and delivered in an age appropriate way according to the pupils' relevant key stage.

Staff will ensure that programmes followed prepare pupils for adult life through access to appropriate accredited courses in Key Stage 4 and FE personalised to the needs, interest and aspirations of the individual.

Planning systematically for subjects and qualifications

Planning a coherent and language rich approach to learning is ensured by:

- identifying the key concepts on which to focus
- identifying the key processes that offer opportunities to explore and extend concepts
- selecting the most appropriate context, content or purpose from the range and content section of National Curriculum Programmes of Study
- through collaborative planning, using experiences from the curriculum to bring teaching and learning to life

Making learning more personalised, engaging and motivating

We accept that the curriculum will only seem coherent to learners if they can see its relevance to them. We appreciate that the curriculum will need to reflect pupils' diverse interests and needs and that pupils should be given opportunities to specialise and to make choices. By providing a more personalised approach to the curriculum we aim to:

- develop pupils' aspirations to succeed
- achieve higher levels of attainment
- motivate pupils to become life long learners

To achieve such aims we:

- aim to involve pupils in the co-construction of personalised programmes
- make learning more interesting by taking it out of the classroom
- make assessment part of the learning experience by encouraging self and peer assessment activities
- instill the belief in pupils that they can make a difference to what they achieve through effort and a positive attitude
- make the most of teachers strengths by building on their enthusiasm for their subjects

The curriculum is constructed to make full use of the flexibility offered to address the differing needs of our pupils whilst ensuring, at the same time that all pupils have maximum opportunities to realise their potential, particularly with regard to external accreditation.

Lessons are planned to ensure all students have access to all areas of the curriculum regardless of race, disability, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity or gender reassignment.

Staff have high expectations of students using national data sets to identify ambitious and if key stage targets for students. Opportunities for accreditation reflect both the ambitious targets set by staff but also the diverse range of attainment levels of our pupils. Opportunities for gaining accreditation in the core subjects range from Entry Level; discrete Level 1 qualifications such as Functional Skills, Aim Awards and B Tec, to GCSE courses as is the case for foundation subjects. Accreditation for vocational options may also include BTec and Aim Award qualifications in addition to the Sports Leadership Award. Students' achievements in problem solving, team work and resilience is accredited through the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and Asdan COPE Awards. However, the school recognizes that underpinning all subjects and progression pathways post Dawn House are the key skills of literacy and numeracy.

Numeracy

Acknowledging the importance of developing confidence in numeracy and other mathematical skills as a precondition of success across the curriculum, daily numeracy sessions have been included within the timetable across the entire age range. In addition, all subject teachers promote pupils' numeracy and mathematical reasoning to reinforce the importance of mathematics. Combined, these two approaches develop students' mathematical fluency and accelerate the progress of all students.

Pupils are encouraged and supported to apply arithmetic fluently to problems, understand and use measures, make estimates and sense check their work. When appropriate pupils are encouraged to apply their geometric and algebraic understanding, and relate their understanding of probability to the notions of risk and uncertainty. Students regularly experience the opportunity to collect, present and analyse data and when appropriate taught to apply their mathematics to both

routine and non-routine problems, including breaking down more complex problems into a series of simpler steps.

Literacy

Given the specialism of the school, the development of pupils' spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary is regarded as a priority across the school and in the teaching of all subjects across the curriculum.

Pupils are supported and encouraged to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently using Standard English. Whenever appropriate they are supported to justify ideas with reasons; ask questions to check understanding; develop vocabulary and build knowledge; negotiate; evaluate and build on the ideas of others; and select the appropriate register for effective communication.

Staff challenge higher achieving students to give well-structured descriptions and explanations and develop their understanding through speculating, hypothesising and exploring ideas. By doing so staff recognise this will enable them to clarify their thinking as well as organise their ideas for writing and enhance levels of attainment.

Reading and Writing

Daily literacy sessions are timetabled across the school to support students to develop the skills needed to read fluently, understand extended prose (both fiction and non-fiction) and to read for pleasure. Within literacy sessions staff promote and encourage wider reading. Spelling and punctuation also feature prominently as does the correct use of grammar.

Staff build on students' prior achievements to expand the range of their writing and the variety of grammar they use. Higher attaining pupils following GCSE courses are presented with the opportunity to write at length in a variety of genres including narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations.

Acquisition of Academic Vocabulary

Pupils' acquisition and command of vocabulary are key to their learning and progress across the whole curriculum. SLTs work collaboratively with teachers to develop vocabulary by building systematically on pupils' prior knowledge. All staff aim to continually increase pupils' store of words in general. However, simultaneously, they support students to make links between known and new vocabulary and discuss the shades of meaning in similar words.

Staff recognise how vital it is to pupils' comprehension that they understand the meanings of words they meet in their reading across all subjects, and may work 1:1 or in small groups to develop understanding. In addition, older pupils receive dedicated sessions on the meaning of instruction verbs that they may meet in examination questions. Staff recognise the importance of inducting pupils into the language which defines each subject such as accurate mathematical and scientific language.

Inclusion

Attention has been given to the principles in the National Curriculum inclusion statement when planning the school curriculum.

Staff ensure:

- High expectations for all students - by setting ambitious learning challenges.
- Equal Opportunities – by responding to pupils’ diverse learning needs.
- Potential barriers to learning are identified, addressed and differentiated accordingly for individuals and pupils.

Addressing Barriers to Learning:

All pupils at Dawn House School have significant speech and/or language and communication needs (SLCN), some of which may not be immediately apparent. All of the pupils have some degree of comprehension difficulties, which may affect their access to the curriculum, particularly as the demands become increasingly complex and abstract. Many pupils have numeracy and literacy difficulties. Some pupils have additional difficulties and these may be social, emotional and/or behavioural, cognitive, sensory, eating and drinking etc. Increasingly, pupils have SLCN as their main area of difficulty within a more complex disorder or syndrome e.g. Autistic Spectrum Disorders, Landau Kleffner Syndrome. Some pupils have alternative or augmentative means of communication. Their strengths and weaknesses are individual and within one class or year group the pupils will show different levels of communication ability. These needs will be identified in the educational statement of need. However, these needs may change for individual pupils over time.

To ensure that these needs are addressed the school employs a team of SLTs/OTs who:

Work collaboratively as a key member of a multi-disciplinary core team for a specified class or year group.

Work within this team to ensure that to the best of their ability pupils will be able to express needs and ideas e.g.

- *Give instructions and retell events*
- *Speak intelligibly*
- *Use augmentative or alternative methods of communication if necessary*
- *Be able to follow and join in discussion and conversation.*

Develop effective literacy skills to:

- *Develop phonological awareness skills for literacy and vocabulary.*
- Understand spoken and written language
 - *Understand a range of vocabulary, concepts and syntax.*
- Interact successfully with peers and adults
 - *Understand and use social rules and conventions*
 - *Develop interaction skills necessary for group membership*
 - *Develop play and imagination*

- *Recognise, understand and express emotions in themselves and others*
- *Moderate their own behaviour.*
- Access the curriculum at Dawn House School
 - *Understand a range of vocabulary, concepts and syntax within the curriculum*
 - *Be able to follow class work, both oral and written after differentiation*
 - *Develop the ability to work independently.*

Develop students' awareness of their strengths and weaknesses

- *In language and learning*
- *Take responsibility for their own communication*
- *Develop strategies for dealing with a range of difficulties e.g. memory, interaction, communication, processing, emotional, eating.*

Ensure students are able to competently eat and drink.

Support students' development of independence and organisational skills.

Assess individual SLC needs according to the assessment policy.

Implementation of the Therapy Provision is detailed in the schools speech and language therapy and occupational therapy policies

To ensure that individual needs are being met, the following points need to be taken into consideration.

- Many of the pupils' language and communication needs can be met through the curriculum (including extended curriculum) when there is effective collaboration and shared use of lesson time.
- There is a need for flexibility to allow for a range of different intervention types throughout all curriculum areas whether they are core, foundation or examination subjects.
Examples are: regular intensive 1:1 sessions in and out of the classroom if required, small group work focusing on particular skills or strategies, consultation with care officers about self-care etc.
- Direct 1:1 therapy may not always be appropriate for individual pupils.
- Withdrawal from the curriculum lessons should be carefully monitored, agreed with the teacher and its impact on curriculum access minimised by careful selection and rotation of subjects. Any concerns relating to withdrawal for one-to-one or small group work should be discussed with the Head of Therapy and Head of Education.
- At different stages in a pupil's time at Dawn House they will need different amounts and type of therapeutic intervention. Therapy in the primary department may be more intensive and skills-based, whereas higher up the school it may be more strategy orientated.

- Therapy type and amount is based on individual needs, there is not a recipe for all.
- More individualised intervention may be needed for a range of specific needs, which include speech work, AAC assessment, teaching learning rather than teaching and practice, 'counselling', assessment, specific targeted work, motor skills, sensory integration, play sessions, specific 'programmes' e.g. 'Earobics'.
- Programmes are regularly reviewed for individual pupils; they do not run for prolonged and ever-lasting periods of time.
- 'Blocks' of intervention, whether in the classroom or out of it, are clearly defined and focus on specific objectives. These are then evaluated at the end of the 'block' of intervention.

A by-product of successful collaboration is role interchange and shared two-way staff development, therefore it is not always necessary for SLTs to be in all lessons. However, shared responsibility and involvement is essential and in this way a consistent approach for meeting the needs of pupils with SLCN should be developed across the physical, social, language and learning environments that Dawn House provides.

Delivering a Broad and Balanced Curriculum

Pupils across all key stages are offered a broad and balanced curriculum. At key stage 4 and FE, in line with the expectation that pupils will have more opportunities to determine some of their own learning, new experiences are included within the curriculum and offered to individuals, for example, vocational modules delivered within school; link courses at Portland and Vision West Notts Colleges; links with neighbouring mainstream schools; and when appropriate, links with independent training agencies. In addition to this range of courses students are also able to access the full range of English Baccalaureate subjects. At the start of the year students' can choose either History or Geography; however, in order to ensure the viability of groups we may only run one subject. They may also opt to attend a Modern Foreign Language group. Where appropriate these subjects may be studied to GCSE level.

For all subjects programmes of study are delivered at a level appropriate to the pupils' needs.

Out of class experiences, visits, college link courses, sports activities, visiting artists and theatre groups all enrich the curriculum on a regular basis and staff are actively encouraged to find other sources of enrichment including the use of our onsite Outdoor Classroom. Where activities are taking place off site a full risk assessment is carried out to ensure that all pupils are able to access the activity safely.

Work Related Learning

Dawn House School is committed to maximizing the benefits for every pupil in the development of a whole school approach to work based learning. Work related learning is available for all pupils, particularly those in the FE department, and provides them with opportunities to learn about work, learn through work, and learn for work.

In addition, all pupils will be provided with opportunities to acquire, develop, practise, apply and extend their employability skills in a range of contexts across the curriculum. These personal learning and thinking skills will also be relevant to life and learning outside and beyond the school.

For further details please refer directly to the WRL policy

Personal Learning and Thinking Skills

Independent enquirers

Learners frequently are asked to solve problems and answer questions as essential components of activities across the curriculum. Students are also expected to develop skills which will allow them analyse and evaluate data, looking for bias and using reasoned arguments to draw conclusions

Creative Thinkers

Pupils are asked to put themselves in a variety of roles, and to come up with unusual solutions to a number of problems.

Reflective Learners

Pupils are expected to look over their evidence and ideas and to redraft methods, ideas and theories based on evidence they have been given (and reflected over). Assessment for Learning activities i.e. self, peer, group and whole class activities are integral to schemes of work within all curriculum areas and are scheduled at regular intervals to encourage pupils to reflect on how they might do a task differently.

Team Workers

Much of the curriculum is aimed at developing team work skills, from working in groups for discussion work to carrying out practical work as part of a team. Pupils are encouraged to understand the importance of team work for the success of the activity and strategies are used to promote a variety of pairings and groupings.

Self managers

Pupils are encouraged to assess and manage their own risk for some of the practical investigations carried out in school. When carrying out practical lessons pupils are expected to collect their own equipment and learn how to manage their time and work to meet deadlines.

Effective participators

Pupils are encouraged to engage with ideas and problems (e.g. sustainability / resilience) which will be important in their post-school life. Pupils look at ways we can effect long term change, and who they will have to influence to make a change to policies and processes. Pupils are also encouraged to see the viewpoint of others,

and how they might seek to change this viewpoint to match their own by using their powers of reason and persuasion.

Planning for Progression.

At Dawn House School we celebrate all achievement and acknowledge that when preparing students for their progression pathways post Dawn House there may be lateral rather than vertical progression i.e. students working at the same level but developing a wider range of skills and knowledge.

Staff may decide to adjust the balance in the curriculum and to focus on priority areas of learning by ensuring their planning accommodates differentiated group or individual plans. Work is clearly differentiated in order to take account of the different rates of progression between pupils and staff will ensure that students are given opportunities to learn through a variety of media and stimuli including the use of sensory experiences.

LSAs work collaboratively as part of the team supporting as required which may involve working 1:1 with a particular pupil or leading small groups in tasks whilst the teacher delivers work to other young people.

We believe that for all our pupils the social, interpersonal and communicative aspects of working with others enhances learning. Over time pupils will experience a variety of learning situations, including:

- whole class teaching
- larger cross-class groups
- small mixed-ability groups
- pairs
- one-to-one staff / pupil settings.

Curriculum planning, monitoring and evaluation

A curriculum review takes place every year in order to evaluate and improve the content and delivery of all subjects. This review informs future curriculum planning.

When planning, staff ensure aspects of the curriculum which are entitlements for all are included and that learning opportunities reflect the range of needs, interests and the past achievements of pupils in each age group.

The Head of Education, Subject Co-ordinators and SLTs ensure that schemes of work reflect the balance between different parts of the curriculum in each key stage, and:

- Offer guidelines and practical advice for staff which help them teach each subject
- Offer advice about resources, management and the use of equipment and stress important points to consider when teaching
- Indicate how content and skills in each key stage and programme of study are covered.

- Identify links between subjects and build in progression, consolidation and diversification for pupils across units
- Define intended learning outcomes for units of work, provide information on teaching activities and resources and identify assessment and recording opportunities
- Clearly indicate the language and vocabulary opportunities offered by each area

Systematic monitoring and evaluation helps staff identify clear priorities for curriculum development and gather information for review. This process is done with a commitment to evaluation informing future planning.

Curriculum monitoring, evaluation and review ensures that:

- curriculum aims are being met
- the curriculum is balanced and offers an appropriate pace of learning
- relationships between curriculum policy and practice are analysed
- the curriculum enables the targets set for individual pupils to be met
- pupils' entitlement to curriculum content is met
- the individual needs of pupils are recognised and fully provided for
- the cultural backgrounds of pupils of different ethnic origins and religions are respected and acknowledged
- attention is given to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- previous learning is built on, practised and applied, and there is provision for continuity and progression

Governors can ensure that monitoring and evaluation is undertaken.

Reviewed: September 2015

To be reviewed: September 2016

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-framework-for-key-stages-1-to-4/the-national-curriculum-in-england-framework-for-key-stages-1-to-4>

