

Stephen Hawking School
TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

1. PHILOSOPHY

Our school aims:

To provide a welcoming and accessible environment that enables all pupils to work as independently as possible and take an active part in school life.

To offer a broad, balanced and highly specialised curriculum to raise the standard of pupils' overall development through improved play skills, independence skills and the development of communication skills used by pupils, parents and staff.

To raise the standard of pupil achievement via individual, group and whole class strategies and the children's entitlement to the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and National Curriculum via the school's schemes of work for Early Years and Key Stages 1 and 2. In addition these schemes of work will also take into consideration "Planning for Inclusion in the Foundation Stage" and the Qualification and Curriculum Authority's (QCA's) "Planning, Teaching and Assessing the Curriculum for Pupils with Learning Difficulties".

To promote the spiritual and cultural development of the pupils and to ensure that the religious and cultural difference are respected and celebrated via the ethos of the school and through corporate acts of worship based upon the major religions in accordance with the local Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education (SACRE).

To provide a high level of partnership with parents and carers, via home school agreements, multi-professional work, homework and a wide range of parent activities, in order to raise the standard of children's progress through individual education plan (IEP) objectives and by ensuring that progression is offered in all educational and community activities.

To develop the role of the school in the wider community through partnership with families, local community organisations and the Local Authority (LA) in developing a greater understanding of the work of the school, the commitment of families and raising the profile of children and adults with learning difficulties.

To enable pupils to take a positive and active role in the community by developing and maintaining links with mainstream schools, other special schools, other educational settings and by supporting colleagues and pupils not at Stephen Hawking School.

To work collaboratively with 'Whoosh' - the Stephen Hawking School Trust to ensure high quality child care for three to ten year olds in the summer holidays and a homework club for eight to eleven year olds during term time.

All of our work whether for specific curriculum areas, or such aspects as multi-professional work, class groupings or financial budgeting, is planned and evaluated by the impact it will have on the progress children make in the school.

2. CURRICULUM STATEMENT

Stephen Hawking School has a curriculum that reflects the needs of children with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) (Appendix 1). It is based on national guidance and policies. This guidance and policies are a framework for all schools so that they share a common focus, and commitment, to the children and the community.

Effective Teaching and Learning

At Stephen Hawking School, effective teaching happens when:

- children are taught a broad and varied curriculum where activities, often based on firsthand experience, are well planned and are appropriate to the needs of individuals and the whole class;
- there is regular assessment and recording of progress which ensures that lessons are differentiated to meet all children's ability levels and all children have realistic, yet challenging targets that are based on, and develop, current understanding, skills and interests;
- there are suitable resources for each child's specific targets and staff are happy and well trained;
- there is a friendly and stimulating environment;
- class teams work together, everyone knows they have a part to play and what they are doing; lessons are planned jointly and adjusted when necessary to ensure that pupils are engaged;
- pupils are interested, excited and challenged by the subject matter and context;
- teachers and support staff summarise, illustrate and consolidate information in a consistent fashion.

At Stephen Hawking School, effective learning happens when:

- the child is motivated by the activity offered, they have the opportunity to be an active learner and learning takes place in real, practical situations which allow them to generalise skills and knowledge;
- the activities are at an appropriate cognitive level so that pupils become engaged, concentrate on the activity, are as independent as possible and apply what they are learning;
- staff manage the time children are given to respond, the levels of success and error, the relevance of the activity, the familiarity of the activity and the opportunity to practise through repetition and the extension of skills;
- the whole team, including the parents and multi-professional staff, work together with the children.

3. How Stephen Hawking School Organises Teaching And Learning

Individual Education Plans

These focus on core skills that a child needs (e.g. communication and independence: physical development and ways of learning) and are worked on for the whole day. They are agreed each year with parents and progress is reported to parents each term in the end of term report.

Group lesson plans

These focus on subject areas that are relevant to each pupil's developmental stage. These plans ensure that all children receive a 'broad and balanced curriculum' and the content is guided by the school's schemes of work.

Each lesson will have planned opportunities for the children to work as a whole class group, in small groups and 1:1 with an adult.

Topics and long term planning

Each department of the school has long term plans based on a topic approach.

Topics			
	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Early Years	Me	Growth and Change	The world around us
Year 1	Ourselves	Food	The seaside
Year 2	My world	Animals	On the move
Year 3	Containers	Community	Colours
Year 4	Weather	Materials (Romans)	Wheels
Year 5	Light and Dark	Holes (Egyptians)	Water
Year 6	Festivities (Tudors)	Change	Rivers

This enables us, in addition to covering legal requirements, to provide a rich and diverse learning programme. It allows us to bring new and exciting activities into the regular routines of the class. It is via a combination of regular routines and new activities that we can ensure that all children reach their potential and enjoy school.

4. Additional Support For Individual Children

1:1 support

Support staff are allocated to classes according to the needs of the individual children in the year group. We are able to support one child in each class who needs an enhanced

level of adult support. Although additional staff are employed to support sessions such as PE, swimming or educational visits where some children may need 1:1 support or supervision, there is no provision for permanent 1:1 staffing arrangements for any children. All children are expected to work or play independently of adults for at least some part of the day.

Catch-up programmes

From time to time children experience long absences from school. Where these are avoidable, for instance, extended family holidays, they are strongly discouraged. However, some are unavoidable as the result of extended periods of ill health or long stays in hospital.

Whether the period is avoidable or not the school has system of intensive input to ensure that the child can, as quickly as possible, re-establish their learning pattern in school. These programmes may include therapy support and the allocation of additional staff to the class team.

Adult support

It is important for staff to gradually withdraw from sitting next to pupils and not to feel that they are failing in their duties if the pupil works with another adult or, if it is not disruptive, they prepare the next session. Supporting the aim of the individual or group work must be the focus; the physical presence of a member of staff does not automatically achieve this. If staff always sit next to a pupil there will be a stronger temptation to intervene rather than allowing the pupil time to respond independently.

5. Generalisation And Transfer Of Skills

Generalisation is when a skill taught in one setting is then used in other situations. It is considered essential learning for children with learning difficulties and is therefore scheduled into their daily routines. Communication and positive reinforcement are key elements in ensuring that generalisation occurs. At Stephen Hawking School, along with the QCA, we recognise the generalisation of skills as progress:

[pupils] 'demonstrate an ability to maintain, refine, generalise or combine skills over time and in a range of circumstances, situations and setting'. (QCA, 2001, p.25)

In addition to the generalisation of skills, along with the QCA, we also recognise and celebrate lateral progress: the use of related skills in different situations and subjects:

[staff] 'identify lateral progress by looking for related skills at similar levels across subjects' (QCA, 2001, p.30)

References

QCA / DfES. (2001) *Planning, Teaching and Assessing The Curriculum for Pupils with Learning Difficulties: General Guidelines*, London, QCA.

Appendix 1

Assessment Level		Subject Areas										
		CLL	PSRN	KUW				CD		PD	PSED	
		Eng	Maths	Sci	His	Geo	RE	DT	Music	Art	PE	PSE
P1(i)	FS1	Communication	Exploration	Discovering my world								Personal and Social Education Personal, social and emotional Development
P1(ii)												
P2(i)	FS2											
P2(ii)	FS3											
P3(i)	FS4											
P3(ii)	FS5											
P4	FS6	English Communication, Language and Literacy	Mathematics Mathematical Development	Science Knowledge and Understanding of the World	Awareness of the wider world			Creative Arts		Physical Education Physical Development		
P5					History	Geography	Religious Education	Design and Technology	Music		Art and Design	
P6												
P7												
P8												
		← ICT →										

Reviewed by Governors: October 2014

Agreed by Governors: 14 October 2014