

Oakfield School

Teaching and learning Policy



Reviewed
September 2011
September 2012
September 2013

To be reviewed
September 2014

School Context.

A 35 place residential provision for Oakfield Special School was opened to students on 7th January 2013. Its purpose is to support identified students within the Oakfield cohort that require additional support of a 24 hour curriculum to enable them to engage in learning, achieve and attain. The provision consists of 6 houses. This offers flexibility to meet the needs of different cohorts of students. As a central part of the school all school policies apply within the residential provision and have been thus amended to take into account the provision. All residential policies have been written specifically for the new school and tie in with the existing policies and ethos of the school.

Oakfield School

Teaching and Learning

Introduction

Oakfield School is a co-educational special school for pupils with a statement of special educational needs in that they have emotional and behavioural difficulties. These pupils are in Key stages 3 and 4. Whilst it is impossible to generalise on the nature of these problems, they inevitably necessitate approaches to classroom management which may restrict or modify the range of teaching styles which can be used. In addition, within the relatively small pupil population, there is an extremely wide range of abilities with many pupils exhibiting learning difficulties and/or delay in their learning which again influences the teaching approaches used.

At Oakfield School we believe in the concept of lifelong learning and the idea that both adults and children learn new things every day. We maintain that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone; it should be fun. Through our teaching we equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives.

Aims and objectives

We believe that people learn best in different ways. At our school we provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential.

Through our teaching we aim to:

- enable children to become confident, resourceful, enquiring and independent learners;
- foster children's self-esteem and help them build positive relationships with other people;
- develop children's self-respect and encourage children to respect the ideas, attitudes, values and feelings of others;
- show respect for all cultures and, in so doing, to promote positive attitudes towards other people;
- enable children to understand their community and help them feel valued as part of this community;
- help children grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens.

Effective learning

We acknowledge that people learn in many different ways and we recognize the need to develop strategies that allow all children to learn in ways that best suit them. The psychologist Howard Gardner identifies seven main areas of intelligence: linguistic, logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, kinaesthetic, musical, interpersonal/group working, and interpersonal/reflective. We take into account these different forms of intelligence when planning teaching and learning styles.

We offer opportunities for children to learn in different ways. These include:

- investigation and problem solving;
- research and finding out;
- group work;
- pair work;
- independent work;
- whole-class work;
- asking and answering questions;
- use of the computer;
- fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest;
- creative activities;
- watching television and responding to musical or tape-recorded material;
- debates, role-plays and oral presentations;
- designing and making things;
- Participation in athletic or physical activity.

We encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved as far as possible in reviewing the way they learn, and to reflect on how they learn – what helps them learn and what makes it difficult for them to learn.

Effective teaching

When teaching we focus on motivating the children and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. We use the school curriculum plan to guide our teaching. This sets out the aims, objectives and values of the school and details what is to be taught to each year group.

We base our teaching on our knowledge of the children's level of attainment. Our prime focus is to develop further the knowledge and skills of the children. We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each child's level of ability. When planning work for children with special educational needs we give due regard to information and targets contained in the children's Individual Education Plans (IEPs). We have high expectations of all children, and we believe that their work here at Oakfield School is of the highest possible standard.

We set academic targets for the children in each academic year and we share these targets with children and their parents. We review the progress of each child at the end of the academic year and set revised targets. This process takes place at the child's annual review.

We plan our lessons with clear learning objectives. We take these objectives from the National Curriculum or the National Literacy or Numeracy Strategy. Our lesson plans contain information about the tasks to be set, the resources needed, and the way we assess the children's work. We evaluate all lessons so that we can modify and improve our teaching in the future.

Each of our teachers makes a special effort to establish good working relationships with all children in the class. We treat the children with kindness and respect. We treat them fairly and give them equal opportunity to take part in class activities. All our teachers follow the school policy with regard to discipline and classroom management. We set and agree with children the class code of conduct. We expect all children to comply with these rules that we jointly devise to promote the best learning opportunities for all. We praise children for their efforts and, by so doing, we help to build positive attitudes towards school and learning in general. We insist on good order and behaviour at all times. When children misbehave we follow the guidelines for sanctions as outlined in our school behaviour policy.

We ensure that all tasks and activities that the children do are safe. When we plan to take children out of school, we first inform parents and obtain their permission.

We deploy learning assistants and other adult helpers as effectively as possible. Sometimes they work with individual children and sometimes they work with small groups. Our adult helpers also assist with the preparation and storage of classroom equipment.

Our classrooms are attractive learning environments. We change displays regularly, to ensure that the classroom reflects the work currently being studied by the children. We ensure that all children have the opportunity to display their best work at some time during the year. We believe that a stimulating environment sets the climate for learning, and an exciting classroom promotes independent use of resources and high-quality work by the children.

All our teachers reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and plan their professional development needs accordingly. We do all we can to support our teachers in developing their skills, so that they can continually improve their practice.

We conduct all our teaching in an atmosphere of trust and respect for all.

The role of governors

Our governors determine, support, monitor and review the school policies on teaching and learning. In particular they:

- support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively;
- ensure that the school buildings and premises are best used to support successful teaching and learning;
- monitor teaching strategies in the light of health and safety regulations;
- monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment;
- ensure that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching;
- monitor the effectiveness of the school's teaching and learning policies through the school self-review processes. These include reports from co-ordinators and the annual headteacher's report to governors as well as a review of the in-service training sessions attended by our staff.
- are a critical friend to subject leaders as part of the bi-annual Leaders and Governors (LeGo) Meetings.

The role of parents

We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn. We do all we can to inform parents about what and how their children are learning by:

- key workers perform home visits at the end of each term to explain pupils progress and achievement throughout that term;
- sending regular termly reports to parents in which we explain the progress made by each child and indicate how the child can improve further;
- explaining to parents how they can support their children with homework.

We believe that parents have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies. We would like parents to:

- ensure that their child has the best attendance record possible;
- ensure that their child is appropriately dressed and equipped with the correct PE kit;
- do their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school;
- inform school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect a child's performance or behaviour at school;
- promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general;
- fulfil the requirements set out in the home/school agreement.

Personalised Learning Policy.

Pupils experience a rich and varied educational experience through the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities because all provision is suitably adjusted to individual needs'.

The school accepts pupils of all abilities and therefore learning is always tailored to meet the needs of the individual. This unique approach together with small class sizes enables all pupils to achieve their full potential.

All pupils benefit from an education which is tailored to meet individual needs. Pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum, but within this there is a great amount of parental and pupil choice. Pupils individual needs are recognised and personal learning plans are catered to their strengths and weaknesses. This is to ensure effective progress and achievement in the programme.

Pupils have the options of off-site provision, one to one social and emotional support with the primary aim of curriculum time to focus on English and Mathematics.

As they progress through to Key Stage 4 study, they have choice regarding numbers of subjects studied and at which level. We offer both GCSEs and vocational qualifications which are GCSE equivalent.

Pupils who are particularly able in a subject such as Science may be 'fast tracked' and then encouraged to take on further study at a higher level and the school has a well-managed and challenging Gifted and Talented/More Able programme.

Pupils who require learning support are catered for and their learning is monitored by SLT. All staff are dyslexia aware and teachers use a variety of teaching approaches to overcome this barrier to learning within the classroom. Dyslexic pupils receive examination concessions and individual support is available within the classroom and on a one to one basis.

Monitoring and review

We are aware of the need to review the school teaching and learning policy regularly so that we can take account of new initiatives, changes in the curriculum, developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school. This monitoring and review process is to be lead by the Assistant Headteacher (Curriculum) and involve all staff.