

POLICY FOR CURRICULUM DESIGN AND DELIVERY

Date	Review Date	Headteacher	Co-author
Sept 17	Sept 18	Anne Martin	Julie Yeomans

A fully inclusive environment

The Quest school is committed to providing a fully inclusive environment, which recognises and meets diversity of need. We value all members equally, and ensure that all individuals are treated with respect and are provided with equal opportunities.

There are 3 key principles conducive to the provision of effective learning opportunities for all:

- *setting suitable learning challenges;*
- *responding to pupil's diverse learning needs;*
- *overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils*

Quest School takes account of these factors, and implements them at all levels of curriculum planning, from individual to group work, and from lesson plans to assessment and recording.

Pupils who attend Quest School will have been diagnosed as having an autistic spectrum disorder; such a diagnosis will involve the following major impairments:

- An impairment in communication which affects their ability to understand, and use, all aspects of verbal and non-verbal communication. This includes facial expression, gesture, body language and social timing in addition to speech.
- An impairment in social relationships which includes a fundamental disability in developing social empathy i.e. being able to understand something from another's point of view.
- A rigidity and inflexibility which can extend into every area of a pupil's thinking, language and behaviour.

The degree, or severity, of autism will vary for each pupil. Autism can also affect pupils across the whole range of intellectual ability, however, the majority of pupils with autism will have additional learning difficulties and these learning difficulties may be severe.

The SEN Code of Practice highlights that many children have needs and requirements that fall into one of four main categories: communication and interaction; cognition and learning; behaviour, emotion and social development; and sensory and/or physical; many of which will be inter-related. At Quest school we are committed not only to meeting the academic needs of our pupils, but also the needs outlined in the four categories above.

Barriers to learning

Quest School is keenly aware of the potential of autistic spectrum disorders to limit and hinder learning experiences, and is committed to reducing and eliminating barriers to learning, not only for individual pupil's difficulties, but also within the whole school approach to learning, in accordance with SEN Code of Practice. The school provides a 1:1 ratio of staff for the majority of pupils in order to provide a suitable level of support for pupils and an individualised curriculum. Further information on addressing barriers to learning is found within the school's Inclusion Policy.

Teaching Methodology

Quest School has a distinctive teaching methodology, based on the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA). Teaching focuses on creating a positive and motivating environment, by ensuring that children experience a high level of success in their learning.

Where appropriate for pupils, curriculum delivery is of a 'small steps' approach, where tasks are broken down into smaller components, and taught systematically, hence building up pupils' skills in a methodical way.

Design of the Curriculum

Key Stages 1-3

For more able pupils, who are working across National Curriculum levels 1-5 (prior to KS4), the teaching and learning framework is based on the National Strategies (now under re-development due to changes in the current framework) for English, Maths, Science & ICT, and National Curriculum programmes of study across the remainder of the curriculum. For this group of pupils, Social and Communication skills are additionally addressed in a number of ways, including pupils' individual behaviour targets and programmes such as the Social Use of Language programme (SULP).

More able pupils in KS 2&3 study Humanities, Music/Art, Drama, Design & Technology, RE, Modern Foreign Languages, PE, PHSEC and Careers Education, at a level appropriate to their ability. The small size of the groups provides flexibility to shape the curriculum around the interests of the pupils.

For pupils with additional learning needs (typically pupils working within P Levels), curriculum delivery is of a 'small steps' approach. Pupils have individualised and continually adapted learning programmes which focus on key skills including: Social & Communication skills, Independence, Literacy & Numeracy. Much of this learning takes place in a one to one setting. However, pupils also work within groups, to develop such skills as listening to each other, taking turns and sharing. These pupils follow differentiated programmes of study across the remainder of the curriculum. They may access work from a lower age level of Key Stage, or work tailored to their specific needs, incorporating as much appropriate National Curriculum material as possible.

The curriculum covers the breadth of the ECM agenda, incorporating: Enjoy & Achieve, Staying Safe, Making a Positive Contribution and Achieving Economic Wellbeing.

Key Stage 4 & 5

At Key Stage 4 and 5, there is a specific focus on preparing our students for transition to further education and for adult life, with a view to enabling them to live as independently as possible in the future.

The curriculum therefore focuses on:

- Core (and functional) academic skills: Maths, English & ICT
- Where appropriate, pupils continue to follow a broadly academic curriculum leading to external accreditation, including GCSE or Entry level exams, where relevant.
- Life Skills: Independence in daily living skills, including personal hygiene, cooking, washing and cleaning
- Work related learning: students participate in on-site mini enterprise and/or work experiences including Horticulture, Car Washing, Office Skills.
- Where appropriate, students also have the opportunity to access work experience placements in the community.
- Leisure and Recreation/ Creative Arts.

All pupils have the opportunity to achieve external accreditation at the end of Key Stage 4 and 5 according to the following criteria:

- Courses are selected based on the relevance to pupils' needs and abilities as well the personal interests of the pupils.
- The purpose of external accreditation is to recognise and celebrate the achievements of pupils but the selection of courses and accreditation will be determined by the needs and functional skills of the pupils rather than for the qualifications themselves.
- Pupils will be involved in the process of choosing options at KS4&5

During KS 4&5, pupils follow individualised pathways, leading to external accreditation, depending upon ability level, selected from the following:

- GCSE or Entry Level (according to individual ability) in English, Maths, ICT and Science
- BTEC/Vocational courses
- Asdan Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE)
- Asdan Towards Independence
- Asdan Bronze and Silver Awards
- Asdan Transition Challenge

Where appropriate, pupils may participate in the Schools' Partnership programme at local colleges, which provides a one day a week experience of studying in a college environment as part of pupils' progression towards transition at Post-16.

Out of School Visits

At Quest School, all pupils have opportunities to develop appropriate behaviour, communication and functional life skills which will help them to lead independent lives in the future, as well as building a sense of motivation and high self-esteem.

In achieving this aim, it is crucial that all skills taught within the school are generalised and put to use functionally in the real world. Out of school visits are a particularly important aspect of achieving this objective, and provide opportunities for pupils to practise newly learned skills outside of the school environment, with the help and guidance of school staff.

There is a regular programme of community trips to address skills such as using shops, cafes, library as independently as possible; in addition there are weekly Physical Education activities in the community, such as Gym, Trampolining, Horse Riding and Swimming.

Out of school visits also offer pupils opportunities to encounter, first-hand, a range of experiences which will support and enhance knowledge and understanding, particularly of topics about which they have been learning at school.

Residential Experiences

All pupils in Year 11 or above have the opportunity to participate in a residential trip to an outdoor adventure centre. For many pupils this is their first experience of staying away from home overnight.

Transition

The school works closely with Local Authorities to identify suitable placements and prepare students for transition to further education or adult services at Post-16 or Post-19 transition phases.

Therapies and Consultancies

The pupils at Quest School benefit from a range of external consultants and therapists:

- Behaviour consultant: provides advice and guidance on implementation of ABA (Applied behaviour Analysis) intervention and curriculum development, where appropriate for all pupils in the school for all pupils at the school.

- Speech & language therapist: provides advice and input to individual pupil programmes for pupils in the school
- Occupational therapist: provides advice and input to individual pupil programmes, as well as providing 'hands on' therapy for some pupils according to their level of need.

Relevance and Functionality

There is, at all times, the need to strike a balance between offering the full breadth of curriculum opportunities, and thereby not limiting opportunities to broad curriculum access, whilst endeavouring to maintain an emphasis on those skills that will enable our pupils to lead more independent and satisfying lives in the future. At all times, therefore the curriculum is focused around relevance and functionality. Within the school this primary focus on the selection of functional and relevant targets, helps to ensure that learning time is maximised, and pupils are offered significant opportunities to develop functional life skills and effective communication systems.

Target Setting

Baseline and Continuous Assessment

Upon entry into the school pupils undergo assessment in order to achieve a baseline assessment of attainment against National Curriculum levels, as well as their Verbal capabilities and Behaviour.

Following assessment, Individual Education Plans are developed which outline long term objectives covering the priority areas of Language and Communication, Personal and Social Education, Independent Learning and Behaviour as well as the National Curriculum. From the long term objectives, short term targets are developed. Data collated on short term targets provides an objective measure of skill acquisition; this data is used in the IEP review process.

IEPs are developed at the beginning of terms 1, 3, and 5, and are reviewed at the end of terms 2, 4 and 6.

Data Collection

For the less academically able pupils, data on short term targets is recorded daily. For each pupil, there are individualised pre-set mastery criteria which determine when targets are mastered.

Progress data is monitored termly to assess individual pupil's progress and rate of acquisition of skills over that period. Comparison of the acquisition rate of each pupil, with their average acquisition rate means that any areas of concern are highlighted, and adjustments to teaching/target selection can be made as appropriate to ensure the rate of acquisition remains steady, and potentially accelerates over time.

Parent's Involvement

Parents are encouraged to be fully involved with their child's education. The school operates an 'open door' policy by which parents may attend the school (by prior appointment) to observe their children working, and/or to talk through their child's programme with a teacher. Parents are requested to stay abreast of their child's newly acquired skills (predominantly within areas of self help and language acquisition) in order to maintain consistency of expectation, thereby allowing their child to transfer new skills into new environments and to new people, to establish fully generalised and functional systems.

On a day-to-day level parents are kept informed of developments on the child's programme through the home-school liaison book/email, and via emails or telephone calls where appropriate. Parents are encouraged to record any issues of concern in the book, or to arrange a time to discuss such issues, in order to maximise the learning potential offered to each child at the school.

Parents are invited to attend scheduled Parent-Teacher meetings, as well as SEN Annual Reviews.

Quality Assurance

An integral part of the school's evaluation process includes monitoring by the Headteacher and senior staff of all curriculum delivery. This includes direct observation by regular visits to classrooms whilst teaching is in progress, as well as regular reviews of documentation relating to curriculum planning and assessment. ABA consultants are used regularly to assess the success of the education offered by the school, providing a valuable external perspective.