**CURRICULUM POLICY**

**What do we believe?**

At Dryden School we believe all children have a right to a broad, balanced and relevant education which provides continuity and progression and takes individual differences into account. Our curriculum should be flexible enough to meet the needs of all our students. Work in school, therefore should be designed to meet the often very diverse needs, of all pupils and the statutory requirements of their personal EHCP. We are passionate in promoting pupil engagement, differentiation and personalization. Our curriculum is underpinned and driven by our commitment to promoting communication, functionality, independence and wellbeing.

Staff, parents and carers, and governors are totally committed to the development of our pupils and students in offering them the best education: an education that is rich in opportunities and experiences; one that meets the needs of each individual, is accessible and actively promotes achievement and progressions for all pupils and so allows them to achieve their full potential. **Our curriculum prepares all of our students for adulthood.**

We believe that the curriculum offered to our learners should reflect the aims of the school and follow the fundamental principles of breadth, balance, relevance and differentiation. The curriculum and its delivery are of paramount importance in the effective learning of each pupil. It covers all four areas of need communication, cognition, sensory and physical development and social, emotional and mental health.

The curriculum is continually developed and reviewed and therefore is constantly evolving to ensure that we are responding to a rapidly developing world around us. Our curriculum will promote the spiritual, intellectual, personal, social and physical development of all our learners. It consists of key elements of the National Curriculum, Personal, Social, Health and Moral Education, Religious Education, PSHE and Citizenship as well as cross curricular themes. Extracurricular activities also form an important part of the curriculum.

In light of the changes post Rochford review, we have reviewed our curriculum content.

We are offering four pathways- Hazel-pre-formal (P1- 3): Ivy- semi-formal ( P4-8): Willow – formal ( level 1 beginning to access the National Curriculum and above) and Elder- Post 16 – functional based curriculum focused on the adult outcomes- Life Skills, Community, Independence and Good Health.

At Dryden, we believe our students should be challenged and encouraged through a growth mindset approach where they are not afraid to make mistakes but rather understand this is part of the learning process. Education is a lifelong process and developing the key skills for all our pupils will enable pupils to continue to access learning opportunities. It is a progressive curriculum which is at its broadest at KS3 becoming more focused, as students progress through school. The 6th form provision increasingly will prepare students effectively for adult life.

Students entering school at 11years of age will have the opportunity to access a wide range of subjects while the content for the Post 16 students requires a functional curriculum that emphasizes practical, community-based activities that focus upon the concepts, skills, knowledge and attitudes for adult life.

For students with profound and multiple learning difficulties and who are likely to remain at the earliest stages of cognitive development for the majority of their school lives, the curriculum concentrates upon early cognitive and communication along with a greater weighting of therapy based content (e.g. physiotherapy, water therapy, rebound therapy).

**The Delivery of the School Curriculum:**

The students at Dryden School are organised into classes of equal size as far as possible, and by ability and key stage. Each class is likely to include students who have a variety of learning needs and challenges, including students who may have challenging behaviour. Staff and the Governing Body consider the benefits of this inclusive approach to class organisation as worthwhile. Classes are structured by Key Stage where possible, with the exception of those in the Autism Class or those accessing a predominantly therapeutic curriculum. In these cases, this may not be possible. Pupils following a semi formal therapeutic curriculum will have a higher TA to pupil ratio. All other classes will be of similar size, with streaming by ability where possible.

Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are taught as a group in their own specialised, sensory learning environment. The curriculum is delivered through a sensory approach and incorporate individual learning objectives which are created following very individualised assessments. Planned inclusion with students of all abilities is a key fundamental precept of Dryden school.

Class teachers are responsible for the planning and delivery of the curriculum for the students within their class, and typically small group and individual teaching form the main teaching styles employed within the classroom.

Pupils within Key Stages 3 and 4 are grouped broadly by ability and are taught in these groups for all subjects/ areas of learning. Students within the Post 16 department are grouped according to interest and the course they are following

Teachers flexibly adaptelements of the National Curriculum in their planning and teaching. A functional Maths curriculum operates across school with a topic approach.

A flexible approach is adopted to ensure that opportunities for maximising learning within appropriate groupings are established and resources (including the involvement of other professionals such as the physiotherapists) are efficiently deployed.

**Four Pathways**

Long term curriculum plans have been devised in Dryden school that ensure access to a broad range of content at a developmentally appropriate level, and within age-appropriate contexts for all pupils. All long-term plans have been evaluated in light of new changes including the New secondary Curriculum and the increased complexity of the needs of our pupils – especially taking into account their sensory and therapeutic needs. In light of the changing world of assessment post Rochford review, we are making our pathways more explicit. We have reviewed curriculum content and from September 2018 have adopted a thematic approach (recently revised in 2022) for pre and semi formal and formal learners.

**Willow Pathway-Pre-Formal Curriculum**

The pre-formal curriculum recognises that some students, in particular those with profound and multiple leaning difficulties, need a special, highly creative curriculum that stimulates those very early communication skills. It will be delivered as a thematic, multi-sensory based curriculum where students will encounter and engage with a variety of experiences and stimuli in a carefully crafted environment.

Each student will have personalised and precise goals and targets, such as initiating a response or demonstrating a clear response to stimuli (eg. Initiating a switch to make a response which is rewarding or tracking an image across a screen; developing curiosity by manipulating or finding objects, encountering a variety of experiences through the senses of touch, taste, sight, hearing and positioning). Secondly through communication targets (eg. Choice making, vocalising, and responding to a ‘good morning’ familiar tune). Also of great importance are targets to develop personal independence such as loading a spoon or being compliant and ‘helping’ during personal hygiene. As a school with a wholly inclusive ethos at its heart, great importance is also given to the development of social relationships both within the group and with the wider body of the school and as such, there are opportunities in the curriculum for joint working with other classes as well as enjoying social time.

The EHCP will be central to personalised programmes of learning. The development of all these early skills will be carefully monitored, especially through the Engagement profile as an ongoing qualitative tool measuring 5 areas:

The engagement model has 5 areas of engagement:

* exploration
* realisation
* anticipation
* persistence
* initiation

These areas allow teachers to assess pupils’ engagement in developing new skills, knowledge and concepts in the school’s curriculum by demonstrating how pupils are achieving specific outcomes. They represent what is necessary for pupils to fully engage in their learning and reach their full potential. However this is not just a tool for assessment but also affects curriculum design and approach as it enhances the planning of stimulating and immersive lessons to promote communication amongst our most profoundly affected learners.

We have Dryden pre-formal assessment tool (based on Routes For Learning) which provides a useful tool for baselining where a pupil is at in the pathway of development. Therapies, physical movement and social involvement play a crucial part in the pre-formal curriculum which are individually designed in liaison with other professionals such as the physiotherapist, the visual impairment team for example, as well as parents and carers at the annual review. The nature of learning in this specialist environment necessitates a lot of repetition and will be seen perhaps in only very small steps of learning but each student is challenged to achieve their very best while giving the optimum level of care and consideration to their every need.

**Ivy Pathway- Semi-formal ‘Explore and Discover’ Curriculum**

The semi-formal curriculum offered in Dryden School is very much focused on stage rather than age and details of each area of learning is outlined within the seven areas of study and links to SMSC & British Values are also included for each area of learning.  We use a topic based approach and the content of what will be taught each academic year is changeable in order to meet the diverse needs of our pupils.

We acknowledge the stage some of our pupils are functioning is below their chronological age. We aim to make al activities age appropriate unless we feel stage appropriate is more conducive to their learning. We aim to make all our activities developmentally engaging for all our pupils to enable them to Prepare for Adulthood at a developmental stage appropriate for them as individuals.

The semi-formal curriculum is offered at KS3 and KS4 for identified students. These groups will access a broad and balanced curriculum which is thematically based and will also include Rebound therapy, water therapy, art therapy, music therapy, TAC PAC, and play therapy. It has been designed to bridge the gap for those learners who are operating above the sensory level but have not yet developed the cognitive or communication skills to be able to access a more formal curriculum. This curriculum will also be very creative and stimulating and will include a wide variety of activities which will reinforce personalised learning targets. It is divided into seven areas in the curriculum: physical development; communication/language/ICT, mathematical thinking, thinking scientifically, the world around us, creative development, daily living skills and PHSE/ RSE.

Communication will be at the heart of the curriculum and developing communication skills throughout everything the student does is a key element whether through sign, symbol or spoken word. Speaking and listening are important components throughout the curriculum and understanding language and expressing themselves and their feelings, opinions and preferences is key. Makaton is used universally where appropriate to augment communication and where students can verbalise, they are encouraged to develop speech, language and communication at every opportunity. Some students may also use an alternative augmented communication aid, under the direction of the speech and language therapist. Teachers work with speech and language professionals to develop individualized programmes for example PEC’s.

The curriculum consists of a lot of repetition in different contexts and the pace is adjusted to being appropriate to those students whose information processing and working memories are compromised. They will have opportunities to link objects, events and experiences (eg. sharing news; linking events in a story or predicting what comes next in the day or in a task).

Students will also be encouraged to think creatively and imaginatively: because these learners are still operating at the level of play, this is recognised as an important component of learning and the curriculum. Games are imaginatively included to reinforce learning and students are encouraged to be imaginative and creative in their expression, including role play for example of characters in a story.  Play Therapy is an important part of the curriculum for semi-formal learners and pupils engage in fun and engaging lessons incorporating for example, turn taking and those early social skills which are so important and are learned through play

In Mathematical thinking and understanding the world around them, students are encouraged to develop skills and knowledge to help them make sense of the world around them. At Dryden, Maths is about exploring, mastering skills in counting and developing an understanding of number. It involves exploring shape and pattern, and measurement through activities which contextualise the skills and knowledge. Mathematics is about developing a curiosity in the world around us, and offering solutions to problems. It is functional, aiming to develop skills which will enable greater independence as our learners grow.

Social inclusion is important so students may also have targets incorporating social development. There will be multiple opportunities to engage with a wide variety of people and planned shared social time with others of all ages throughout the school. Community access and inclusion is also planned into the curriculum with outings into the community and opportunities to experience learning beyond the school gate.

**Hazel Pathway-Formal Curriculum**

The formal curriculum offers a more structured approach to learning and will be based on more subject specific, rather than thematic learning. These students are beginning to be able to access National Curriculum subjects and will be starting to develop skills such as blending sounds and phonemes in their reading and being able to develop a concept of number which allows a deeper exploration of the subject; some learners may be able to record their work more formally in beginning to develop writing skills. Their ability to learn and embed new skills will be slightly more developed, as will their ability to process information and hold information in their working memory. These learners will benefit from a deeper challenge academically but will still need to access curriculum at a differentiated level. Tasks will still be practical and functional and relevant to the students’ EHCP and adult outcomes. Developing our students into effective communicators remains at the heart of the curriculum and students are supported by advice from the Speech and Language Therapy department as well as other therapies where necessary.

The formal curriculum is over a 3 year cycle of curriculum coverage at Key Stage 3 and a 2 year cycle at Key Stage 4. For pupils within Key Stages 3 and 4 the subjects of the National Curriculum, together with Religious Education form *part* of the whole curriculum. Each subject area has been considered in light of Preparation For Adulhood and the theme underpins the whole curriculum from Year 7. Schemes of Work are broken down into termly or half termly units of work. Each subject unit of work is written with a number of learning outcomes. The teacher uses their skill and judgement to ensure the curriculum meets the needs of each cohort of students, taking into account their motivation and individual needs. As an outcome at the end of KS4, each pupil will aim to gain a qualification in ASDAN: Transition Challenge where they will study modules leading to accreditation in preparation for further ASDAN accreditation in the 6th form.

##### Elder Pathway- Post 16 Curriculum

At Post 16 an greater emphasis is placed upon functionality. The independent application of existing skills and knowledge gained in Key Stages 3 and 4 are seen as being as important as the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. There are inbuilt opportunities for consultation and negotiation with the students over content, taking into account their needs and interests. Self-evaluation and subsequent target setting plays a major part in all subject areas. Core subjects, world knowledge, creative and cultural learning are delivered through different contexts depending upon the course running at any given time for example, sports and leisure, catering and general studies.

Fundamental to achieving successful outcomes at Post 16 is the motivation and engagement of each student.

We seek to offer a curriculum that reflects the interests and abilities of each cohort, each year.

Whilst the context for delivery of the curriculum may change, the skills that we seek to develop remain the same.

Emphasis is placed upon functionality and students learning to work with increasing independence.

Our curriculum seeks to prepare students for their adult life. We are ambitious for our students and value the ultimate goal of employment and independent living, acknowledging that this is likely to require some level of support for most.

We work to a CAPABILITY model - we identify strengths and try and build on what they can do.

In short –

Promote INDEPENDENCE

Provide CHALLENGE

Develop A WORK ETHIC

Enable COMMUNICATION

Increase CONFIDENCE/SELF ESTEEM

Inspire ENGAGEMENT with the COMMUNITY

Support TRANSITION to ADULTHOOD

**Timetabling**

The timetable has been created to fit our extensively varied curriculum. Pupils in KS3 main classes have 3 maths and english lessons per week, including weekly lessons in the other curriculum areas. They also have a designated EHCP session every week. We now have the flexibility to focus on phonics, reading and written communication in other sessions. Those following semi formal have more therapy time so lose some of the formal curriculum timetables sessions. Some of their learning can be incorporated into the therapy sessions, eg. Maths lessons during rebound.

All pupils cover “The World Around us” and RE in 2 week half termly thematic blocks. This ensures we get the curriculum coverage required, while linking the themed topic to subject areas. It frees up time in the timetable to give the extra EHCP lesson and additional communication slots. The Themes were carefully considered and taken from the National Curriculum and run over a 3 year KS3 and 2 year KS4 rolling programme.

**Religious Education**

Dryden School has a fully integrated R.E. policy and follows the Gateshead Agreed Syllabus. Should parents wish to withdraw their children from this part of the curriculum they may do so by contacting the Head Teacher. The School has no affiliation to any specific religious denomination.

**Collective Worship**

The students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly promoted through the wide range of daily activities that is on offer. During the week there are three whole school assemblies, one of which is a celebration assembly and another a singing assembly. This provides an excellent opportunity for all staff and students to join together as the whole school community. On other days class groups gather for collective worship after registration and before the start of the day. Acts of collective worship are broadly Christian in nature. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from collective worship, and should contact the Head Teacher if they wish to do so.

**Sex Education**

The Staff and Governors of Dryden School support the teaching of relevant sex education. (refer to Sex and Relationships Education policy) In partnership with parents and as part of the entitlement to the curriculum, great care is taken in matching the approach to sex education to the maturity and ability of the pupils and students.

The sex education programme is incorporated within the personal, social and health education programme, and the science curriculum.

Parents are informed of the sex education policy and the essential principles under which it will be developed;

* sex education will be delivered sensitively
* a variety of materials will be used including videos.
* sex education will be discussed with the children in the context of a stable relationship
* where appropriate, children’s questions will be answered honestly and factually as they arise. Particularly difficult questions will be referred to parents in consultation with the class teacher
* parents with views as to the suitability of sex education should in the first instance discuss the matter with the Head Teacher

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from sex education lessons

**In Summary**

A broad curriculum of opportunities is therefore achieved at Dryden School in all phases and through all four pathways by;

* the inclusion of an enhanced curriculum which includes a range of therapies and therapy based class programmes some provided by and in consultation with our Health Authority colleagues. This includes Rebound Therapy, Speech and Language therapy, Occupational therapy, Physiotherapy Hydrotherapy, Sensory Integration and multi-sensory approach.
* giving pupils and students the opportunities to experience the world in which they live gives more meaning to the content of the curriculum. Units of work are often extended by regular and frequent visits within the local community and further afield through planned visits to many and diverse places of interest. Students can enjoy visits to places such as local museums, art galleries, historical sites, local landmarks, and shops and to leisure facilities such as bowling alleys, restaurants, theatre and sports centres.
* giving pupils and students inclusive opportunities in other schools or in the local community to enhance the curriculum. (e.g. visits to use community facilities, work with staff from local mainstream schools or with visitors from a variety of backgrounds).
* giving pupils and students opportunities to use skills they have learnt in a more practical, fun, expressive and significant way e.g. participating in whole school events – Artsweek, Science Week, Enterprise Week, Drama Days, special themed assemblies, performing in school productions or working in Dryden Café
* giving pupils access to travel training where appropriate with full support to develop independence in the community

**Marking and Annotation**

Marking is part of the dialogue that exists between teacher and pupil. It is our policy that work is marked regularly both during and after a task is completed. Marking is a positive and constructive activity and not merely a record of what is right and what is wrong and is done in relevant and meaningful ways as appropriate to the ability of the student. (e.g stickers, symbols etc.) Next steps of learning are discussed and pupils/ students are involved in this learning process.

**Home/School Learning**

At Dryden School we have a strong commitment to parental involvement and see homework as one way of developing this partnership. We recognise that homework can be an important means to raise pupil’s self-esteem as well as supporting class based learning. We define homework as any activity that pupils undertake outside of school, either on their own or with the support of family members. Dryden school is not a school at which homework dominates home and school life. We accept that not every activity will capture children and parent’s imagination and that weekends can sometimes be busy. We believe homework should be enjoyable and manageable for all concerned and that if it becomes a chore/burden/source of conflict it ceases to be a constructive aspect of teaching and learning. Some pupils read at home and parents support this through school enabling them to access resources on their home devices or sending home appropriate materials.

**Purpose**

* To allow parents/carers to work with their child outside of school
* To further stimulate enthusiasm for learning
* To take advantage of the home environment and resources
* To apply learnt skills and increase independence, as well as consolidate learning

**Progress and Assessment**

At Dryden School:

* we consider accurate and focused assessment as the cornerstone of high quality teaching, as it allows the work to be planned and taught accurately as well as meeting the needs of the requirements of the children and ensuring high levels of expectation and support.
* the staff seek to promote achievement and progress in all areas of the curriculum for all students throughout their school lives.

Pupil progress is currently recorded and evaluated in the following ways:

* setting and evaluating Individual Pupil Targets arising from the EHCP Review
* building Individual Pupil Profiles on Earwig (a rolling programme that provides multiple snapshots of attainment to demonstrate achievement and provide evidence) This will form evidence to contribute to the EHCP Educational Advice.
* assessment for pre-formal curriculum using routes for learning (for some pupils to establish a baseline)
* assessment of pre-formal and some semi-formal learners through the Engagement Profile
* Assessment of “I Can Statements” giving a percentage score of those achieved in relation to total possible outcomes.

**Accreditation**

**Key Stage 4:**

The majority **of** pupils working within Key Stage 4 work towards achieving the ASDAN ‘Transition Challenge’.

The 5 modules which comprise the ‘Transition Challenge’ include subject specific work (usually ICT, P.S.E., P.E., Science, Technology, R.E.) in the following focused areas;

Independent Living Skills

Self Advocacy

Positive Self Image

Personal Development

Personal Autonomy

For those pupils with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties, Personal Progress(ASDAN) is being trialed.

**POST 16:**

There are two pathways available to our post 16 students.

Pathway - Life Skills

ASDAN Personal Progress Qualification

For students working towards entry level 1. outcomes can be assessed against an engagement continuum for students working at pre-entry level 1. Fully bespoke and adaptable to meet the needs of the individuals. All units are directly linked to the Preparation for Adulthood Curriculum. Each student will cover units related to each of the four key learning areas (Employment, community inclusion, independent living, and good health). All students will access an internal work experience placement.

Pathway - Employability Skills

ASDAN Employability Qualification

For students working at Entry 2/3 (can progress to Level 1 and 2). This will be delivered through a range of work experience opportunities (both internal and external placements).

*Also accessed by both pathway cohorts are*

*LIFE SKILLS Challenges*

*Bespoke bitesize learning opportunities to tackle key domestic and general living skills. Accredited through ASDAN. An example of sequential learning delivery through the LIFE SKILLS Challenges would be*

*challenge 1 - Getting to the right bus stop at the right time.\**

*challenge 2 -  recognising your bus, signaling for it to stop and communicating effectively with the driver.\**

*challenege 3 - making a short familiar journey via bus in the local area.\**

*\*Differentiated by level of support.*

**Monitoring the Curriculum:**

Subject Leaders are responsible for reviewing modules in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team and colleagues throughout the school. As part of the Curriculum Audit, an annual Subject SEF is completed by Subject Leaders to report on the progress of each subject area and includes a bid for funding for resources or to support new initiatives and includes an action plan for the forthcoming year.

It is the responsibility of the Curriculum Co-ordinator in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team to monitor the curriculum with reference to balance, breadth and relevance for individual pupils, and with reference to the issues of vertical and horizontal progression and continuity for all pupils throughout all stages in their school career.

The process of monitoring will be conducted by the curriculum co-ordinator and the Senior leadership team using;

* classroom observations according to agreed criteria,
* joint peer observations
* through dialogue with teachers ensure their understanding and planning meets the needs of their learners and provides challenge and appropriate differentiation
* monitoring of progress through evidence on Earwig
* scrutiny of pupils work.

Subject co-ordinators will review their curriculum documentation at regular planned intervals (Subject Leaders are given a half day per 2 weeks for Subject Development) to ensure that changes in statutory requirements and new initiatives are considered and integrated into the school curriculum as appropriate.

Staff will be encouraged and supported in their professional development and in order to meet the requirements of the school as outlined in the School aims, the Curriculum policy, and the Learning, Teaching and Assessment policy.

Members of the Governing Body are invited on class monitoring twice per year.

**Responsibility of the Subject Leader:**

Each member of the teaching staff has the responsibility to lead and manage on teaching and learning in areas of the curriculum. (Newly Qualified Teacher’s do not have this responsibility until they have completed their NQT year) Each subject leader is responsible for managing the development of the subject including writing the policy, schemes and guidelines for their subject area, managing a budget for the subject, advising colleagues on the delivery of the subject and assisting the Senior Leadership Team in monitoring the effective teaching of the subject. They should also lead on the development and delivery of any initiatives in the area.

**Curriculum Queries and Complaints**

Any parent or carer who is concerned about the content, balance or structure of the school’s curriculum is most welcome to discuss the matter with the Headteacher. If there is a significant complaint that cannot be resolved the parent (or whomsoever) may contact the Chair of Governors or a representative of the LA.

**Equal Opportunities**

The school offers the curriculum equally to all pupils regardless of gender, cultural background, race or religion. Within its’ current resources, the school attempts to discriminate positively on behalf of all pupils to compensate for any educational problems that are due to specific language difficulties, medical or physical disabilities or social attitudes caused by being in segregated specialist provision.

**POLICY REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed regularly as part of the School Self Evaluation Process.

**This policy should be read in conjunction with**:-

Governors Monitoring Policy

Race Equality Policy

Collective Worship Policy

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Handbook

Home Activities Policy