The Sunflower Federation

Meadow Wood

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

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Emma Gritten _____

Chair of Governors

Merja Paakkonen _____

Head teacher

Introduction

At Meadow Wood School we have a personalised curriculum where all learners benefit from individualised learning opportunities. A holistic approach to learning means that there is a multiple focus on physical, academic, social and independence skills and this is structured in proportion to meet the needs of the individual learner.

Core principle; At Meadow Wood we centre on the importance of ACTIVE learning - the students learn best as we work together to develop their PHYSICAL and cognitive capabilities;

The curriculum is reflective of the physiological and neurological potential of each student and aims to provide the right level of targeted support and interventions that lead to independent learning. As the students grow and develop, the curriculum seeks to challenge at each stage and encompass a breadth covering early sensory, cognitive and engagement levels through to academic levels that mirror National Curriculum ages and stages. The students will engage in a curriculum that promotes a 'learning for life' be it communicating their leisure choice using eye gaze technology or independently accessing a disabled toilet in the community.

Implementation

The curriculum at Meadow Wood School is comprised of the EYFS curriculum and a tailored curriculum that is split into 3 pathways: The Developmental Curriculum, Pre-Key Stage Standards and National Curriculum. The curriculum is differentiated to meet the needs of the individual within each of these pathways. The rationale for these pathways is that students can be placed within a curriculum framework which accommodates their cognition and learning levels. At Meadow Wood School this level may range from complex and severe learning difficulties, through to moderate learning difficulties.

All students who attend Meadow Wood in Nursery and Reception Years follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework which sets out the statutory strands for development up to the age of 5. Once they reach Year 1 the students will follow the curriculum pathway that best suits their current developmental level. They may spend the entirety of their Meadow Wood schooling in one pathway or move pathways depending on their rate of learning and progress.

The Developmental Curriculum pathway includes these core areas of curriculum and learning that pupils have structured within their timetables.

- My Communication
- My Thinking
- My Body
- My Independence

The Pre-Key Stage Small Steps Curriculum is a bespoke version of the Pre Key Stage Standards broken into smaller steps and comprises the core elements of Maths, Reading, Writing and Speaking and Listening and PSHE, but also incorporates other subject-based areas of learning such as Science, History, Geography, R.E, Art and Music. This provides the breadth and depth of learning that each student requires at their developmental level and key stage.

Each half term we have a topic, on a four yearly cycle, and all students in school work within that topic which facilitates many opportunities for cross curricular learning and generalising skills across different contexts.

Intent

The curriculum intent is to support our students to gain functional skills to be as independent and confident in their life as they can. We provide our students with carefully personalised curricula that is planned and delivered to remove the barriers to learning faced by each of the pupils with PNI.

The students have opportunities to learn

- to value themselves as individuals with their own abilities, needs and aspirations
- skills and knowledge that they can know, remember and apply both now and in the future
- functional mobility and independence skills that enable access to the classroom, the school and the wider community and facilitate everyday living skills
- to be as independent as possible by developing their ability to control their own environment as they move through the primary years and transition to secondary school
- functional communication skills to become understood and be able to make decisions and choices in their life
- functional self-help skills: eating/drinking, dressing, hygiene, keeping themselves safe
- leisure skills that bring them joy, engagement and pride in taking part
- skills to regulate their emotions enabling the student to manage different feelings
- skills to manage and contribute to social situations in different environments
- skills to feel confident when accessing the community
- skills to benefit from using technology
- positive self-esteem and self-image

As a learner they are able to

- stay engaged
- make positive interactions
- enjoy their learning
- communicate confidently
- access the community
- try new things and maintain curiosity
- have a sense of identity
- become flexible
- make relationships
- occupy themselves
- ask for help
- make choices and decisions
- are able to self-regulate behaviour
- practice perseverance
- develop generalised skills
- become self-aware
- develop independence, autonomy and self advocacy

Teaching Strategies

Personalisation and Differentiation

Every student's learning is personalised according to individual need and ability. Some learners are able to learn successfully in group based teaching contexts and they will have more of their teaching and learning delivered via group lesson plans with individual lesson plans supporting their access to group teaching.

This will not be appropriate for all learners. Some will need individually planned timetables and learning opportunities based on the students learning style in order to grow in skills and knowledge. This may be required for a variety of reasons relating to physical, medical behaviour and other needs that necessitate a tailored approach.

We pride ourselves on differentiating to the level of the students' ability (not their disability) and curriculum and lesson plans are modified accordingly so that students can learn at their level.

All students should be enabled to participate alongside peers and in small group settings as their skills develop and the acquisition of group skills forms part of the learners personalised curriculum.

Relationships and Routines

We believe that the relationships between staff and students are vitally important and underpin the quality of the learning that is delivered. We invest time in developing positive interactions, understanding interests and motivations as well as recognising and acknowledging individual moods and behaviours.

Relationships strengthen through routines and a consistency of approach. All students at Meadow Wood benefit from a timetable that is structured and reliable so that they can learn effectively e.g. the connection between an object of reference and the lesson they are travelling to or that they can prepare for a horse-riding lesson by reading a social story with an adult.

Curriculum in Context

Teaching and learning takes place throughout the whole school day in structured lessons, lunch time or in the playground. Staff support students learning in a variety of contexts and 'make the most of every opportunity' to reinforce learning. This for example could be a student introducing his friends to visitors or a student lifting their legs to support their changing routine.

Learning is at its most powerful when practised in context. We want students to develop skills and knowledge in a safe class setting but recognise that learning is made secure or permanent when completed in context e.g. a student learns to exchange a coin with a peer for a snack in class and then completes the same learning to pay the cashier for a food item in the local shop.

Repetition and Response Time

For the majority of our complex and diverse student population it is vitally important that students repeat learning. Repetition reinforces the physical movements required by some of our PMLD students to complete a simple task e.g. lifting their arm towards their mouth to feed

themselves with a spoon or to learn a simple sign. Repetition reinforces the learning of those counting up to five objects or learning to write their name. Repetition develops the learning needed to reproduce those skills in a new context or with a different person.

All our students can learn but we need to be aware that they may require varying amounts of time or a longer time to respond to our request or to process the learning. Classrooms can be busy environments, and it is important that we value and respect students and focus on their responses however small and give them the time they need to be successful.

Mobility and Movement

The students at Meadow Wood with physiological and neurological impairments all need their curriculum to be focussed on physically moving more and learning to move successfully and safely. This necessitates a timetable which allows significant time for the development of physical independence. It means time for physiotherapy programmes to be carried out and students to experience learning at many different levels from the floor, to using equipment like standers and ladder backs to manually using their own wheelchairs or operating their own power chair. Students will have access to the MOVE room and a MOVE programme in which targets are set for their mobility and individual programmes are worked on daily to progress through the range of movements. Teachers incorporate the physical programmes and moving more into the teaching and learning and lessons use creative ways to get students to learn through moving inside and outside the classroom.

Optimizing the Learning

Reflective pedagogy and CPD

Sustainable learning can occur only when there is meaningful engagement. The process of engagement is a journey which connects a child and their environment (including people, ideas, materials and concepts) to enable learning and achievement. At Meadow Wood School our teaching pedagogy is based on a deep knowledge of an individual child; this approach enables us to reflect on our practice and adapt our teaching and learning approaches to individual needs.

Active learners are engaged, curious, involved, excited and interested. At Meadow Wood School we build teaching by providing our students with meaningful and motivating learning experiences. This enables our students to use and apply what they are learning, become deeply involved, and become resilient and enthusiastic about their learning.

Reflective pedagogy means that our teachers need to have a good understanding of how children develop and progress in their learning. It is important that all teaching staff can accurately assess the pupil's achievements and progress. Reflective pedagogy involves the use of assessment information to plan relevant and motivating educational experiences for each pupil. Therefore we invest in continuous professional development for our teaching staff by providing them with high quality CPD in all aspects of SEN pedagogy.

Environment

Meadow Wood school is a purpose built step-free environment which maximises access for our pupils. In addition to this, we recognise that the creative use of space can optimize the learning for the individual students. Both classroom learning alongside their peers and 1:1 work with a student in a small room can produce the best outcomes. A sensory room is used for Intensive Interaction and support for a visual impairment, a large soft play room for

developing physical skills as well as the outdoor garden area for observing nature, while other students engage doing paired reading around a whiteboard. The classrooms utilize the space they have with screens for focus and concentration and enable accessibility for students to be hoisted out of their chairs to work on physical skills and to reposition them for the best learning outcome.

Accessibility

Students learn best when they can access their learning and the potential barriers are reduced. Learners with physiological and neurological impairments will require specialist equipment, adapted resources and appropriate levels of support to make access to elements of their curriculum and their learning possible and then productive. These forms of Assistive Technology (AT) include a student using a hoist to access a trampoline or the swimming pool, to being able to use their electric wheelchair to negotiate the school corridors and classrooms. We want to enable students to develop their independence physically by providing the equipment that supports them to learn the skills of movement. Equally we want to enable students to develop their cognitive skills and reach the highest academic potential possible. As part of this we use Alternative and Augmentative Communication devices and systems to specifically support the communication of the students. This can be through providing access to aids such as communication books, eye gaze and Grid player devices.

Extending Students Learning Experiences

Links with other schools

We have links with the neighbouring, local primary and secondary schools which provides joint projects during the school year that extend our students learning experiences. These range from students participating in primary school lessons where appropriate to their level of learning to integration opportunities at the other PNI school, Lonsdale to engage in transition activities and secondary learning. The school is linked with the other Hertfordshire SEND Schools through attendance at competitions throughout the year including dance festival, primary panathlon and boccia.

Enrichment

The teaching and learning at Meadow Wood is supported by a wide ranging amount of enrichment opportunities for the students. These may include literacy and numeracy interventions, sailing, dog therapy, and music therapy. In addition there are dance workshops, performances by musical artists, and theatre groups that provide additional enrichment experiences. Students also participate in ‘Curriculum Enrichment Weeks’ and ‘theme days’ linking to the half termly topic or events happening in the wider world.

Community visits

Learning in the local and wider community is a significant part of the school curriculum. The Geography, History, and RE subjects provide opportunities for students to visit places of interest in the area that are relevant to the topic. Students learn how to access and be part of the wider community by visiting the library, local shops, park and café. In the process of accessing these places students learn about personal safety, social skills, transitions and self-regulation skills. Deep learning occurs in context as students experience the real world. As students move through the school there are more opportunities to develop their functional skills. Visits will also take place to leisure and sporting venues to widen students’ experiences and give opportunities to develop physical skills and discover new interests.

Multi agency approach

The school maintains strong partnerships with different agencies in order to get the best outcomes for students. This involves regular communication with parents using Class Dojo, our online platform, and at parents' evenings and EHCP meetings so that consistency and clarity can be established. Links with therapists in school provide the expertise for physiotherapy, speech and language and occupational therapy needs and requirements. We also work with a Family Support Worker who we employ to support families in areas such as behaviour, access to support services, housing and general wellbeing. In addition we work with social workers, family practitioners, transition support workers, mental health support team (MHST) and educational psychologists where support for the wider family situation is required.

Planning

Planning implementation of curriculum ensures that in all key stages teaching and learning is designed considering:

- Careful assessment of individual student's learning starting points (baseline assessment)
- Information of individual students' progress over a period of time (Key Stage, academic year, term)
- Setting realistic yet challenging individual targets (high expectations)

Planning ensures delivery of our broad, rich, motivating, individualised and balanced curriculum in line with Meadow Wood School's programmes of learning at different key stages.

We expect our teachers to be able to present their plans to ensure high quality teaching in their class. The curriculum planning documents outline how our teachers ensure that individual students' teaching and learning needs are covered.
They do this by planning 'a termly coverage' document that summarises the sequence within different programmes of learning and differentiated learning opportunities for the students in their class. The teachers then may use either medium term plan or weekly lesson plan documents to describe differentiated learning activities, resources and methodological decisions to summarise their planned actions for consistent and successful teaching for the students' to achieve their targets.

At Meadow Wood School we give our teachers freedom to design their own planning documents. It is noted that the outcome of effective planning is not necessary a lengthy planning document. The teachers are able to use their personal style to plan their teaching in the way that is helpful for them.

The planning process incorporates classroom assessment documents for measuring students' progress towards their targets. This information informs necessary adaptations in the planning implementation of curriculum.

Assessment

At Meadow Wood School we have developed our own assessment system recognising that if the students need a personalised curriculum it follows that they need a personalised assessment system too. The students we teach learn in very different ways and at different

rates therefore our assessment system recognises that there is not 'a one size fits all' but a 'basketful of tools' approach that is needed to show individual progress. We believe strongly that no students are comparable and that each student has their own learning journey and makes individual progress based on their own abilities. We want to 'measure what matters' for the students and work collaboratively with parents to achieve this.

The cycle of assessment looks like this:



The students are assessed within the most appropriate framework for their level of cognition and learning. These are grouped in this way incorporating Statutory Assessments alongside our Meadow Wood assessments

STUDENT TYPE	**ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK**
EYFS students (Nursery and Reception Years)	Early Years Profile Differentiated Early Years Outcomes MOVE
PMLD students (Year 1 +)	Pre-Formal Assessment Independence assessment levels alongside MOVE Engagement Model Routes for Learning
PNI students with SLD and MLD (Year 1 +)	Pre Key Stage Standards Independence assessment levels alongside MOVE Pre Key Stage Standards – Small Steps
Students working towards or at age related levels.	Pre Key Stage Standards/ National Curriculum Independence assessment levels alongside MOVE

(Year 1 +)	Pre Key Stage Standards – Small Steps and National Curriculum levels

Tracking Progress

This begins at a target level where our Classroom Assessment Tool (CAT sheet) are completed for each student according to their targets either in a lesson or as part of their daily learning. These sheets are completed throughout the school day to capture the progress in that focussed area of learning as it happens. In addition post-it notes may be written quickly so that special moments of progress are not missed and these can be added to learning journals to support EYFS assessment if required.

The CAT sheet information then provides the evidence for our web based assessment system called Evidence for Learning where we record students' progress. All the assessment systems are stored on Evidence for Learning, the system and each students' learning journey is tracked on their individual pathway.

Students are baselined on their learning pathway in the first 6 weeks of starting the school. Then begins a learning journey that tracks students from their starting points to progress year on year in different subject areas.

Tracking and assessing students' progress focuses on their individual progress over a period of time from their starting point. The starting point that we measure the progress against can be a key stage, the academic year, a term or a module of learning for a shorter period of time.

Our assessment systems all work most effectively as we work collaboratively with other professionals and agencies as mentioned earlier.

In addition to the main assessment systems, our holistic approach to learning includes opportunities for students to learn and progress in swimming, to participate in sports tournaments and creative festivals and receive special achievement certificates for aspects of personal achievement and development. This is facilitated through reflection times in classrooms and celebration assemblies.

Teachers meet with the Head of School twice in the year and in June progress is reported on. The process is set so that targets are set for progress in the core areas of the curriculum in September. Progress is reviewed in February and appropriate interventions and support are put in place. Then in June progress can be reported on in line with individual learning journeys. The Head of School will produce reports for the Governors according to the progress and learning of the students each year and report to the Department for Education as required with the statutory data requirements.

Monitoring

At Meadow Wood, we effectively carry out monitoring through a model of distributed leadership. The Head of School is responsible for monitoring timetables, curriculum coverage, medium term plans. The Senior Leadership Team carry out regular lesson observations and learning walks and meet frequently with the phase leaders to monitor ongoing planning and delivery of teaching and learning. There are opportunities for peer observations and curriculum discussions between teachers and learning support staff. The main purpose of the monitoring is to carefully assess what each student needs now, next and in the future in their learning journey but also recognises what each student might need on that day in terms of accessing the curriculum from their daily starting points.

Reporting to Parents

Teaching and Learning is reported to parents in a number of different ways both formally and informally. The teachers prepare a report for the EHCP which details the students' general learning and development, and their progress towards the EHCP targets from the previous year. This is sent in advance to parents in preparation for the yearly EHCP meeting. Teachers produce an end of year report for parents and meet twice a year for parent evenings to show case students learning and progress.

In addition, we utilise a home – school communication with online platform called Class Dojo where staff share learning and achievements with parents on a daily basis and regular letters from the Headteacher inform parents of the more general achievements of individuals or groups of students during the school year.