

- This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for ensuring that pupils at Nunnykirk receive high quality teaching and experiences that support effective learning, and help them make substantial progress over time.
- All members of staff and Governors have individual and collective responsibility for improving standards at Nunnykirk.
- The standard of education provided and the methods of its deployment should be effective throughout the school and have at their core, the values of raising the aspirations and achievements of our pupils.
- The policy is intended to be indicative, based on principles of good judgement and effective communication.
- This policy has been developed in light of our substantial 'Curriculum 2017' review in Spring 2016, the outcomes of which are being implemented from September 2017. This includes an overhaul of our curriculum offer, higher expectations for external exams, and a new whole-school approach to Assessment, Marking and Feedback, due to be rolled out through 2016-17.
- The policy should be read in conjunction with other policies, especially Curriculum; Assessment, Marking and Feedback; Quality Assurance; SEND; Literacy; and individual subject policies, where applicable.
- The policy supports our Mission by directly impacting on the progress and achievement of our pupils.

Barry Frost (Head teacher)

Signed:



Summer 2016

Reviewed by:

Signed:

Date:

Introduction

- Nunnykirk Centre for Dyslexia is a non-maintained residential special school approved by the DfE, catering for the needs of children with specific learning difficulties and other needs, such as Mild ASD, ADHD and co-morbidities. We currently take pupils between ages 9 to 18. The school has a rural location approximately 10 miles from Morpeth and 30 miles from Newcastle.
- The Special Educational Needs of the students at Nunnykirk form the core of their teaching throughout the curriculum. The school, its environment, its curriculum and its teaching all reflect the fact that the students we teach come to us with a Statement of Special Educational Need or a Psychologist's report identifying SpLD. This statement or report, in conjunction with our own assessments, forms the foundation on which we base the education of our students.
- We apply, as per our Mission, a Maslowian approach to T&L, prioritising on creating an environment where our students have their physical needs met, and emotional, so that more effective learning can take place. This is because in many, if not all cases our students have suffered from failure in certain aspects of their lives, which have impacted on them educationally. For example, on arrival many show indications of low self esteem and confidence. These aspects of their personalities also affect the way in which they are taught. The students we teach are quite often fragile both emotionally and educationally and the way in which they are taught is as important as what they are taught.

- Nunnykirk works with parents, local authorities, psychologists, an independent Careers consultant and Connexions, holding Annual Reviews, Reviews of Progress and Transitional Reviews to ensure that the students' statements are being fulfilled and their other needs are also being addressed.
- We know that everyone has the ability to be a competent learner, regardless of disability or other special needs. We believe in, and strive for, continual development and progress, seeking to stretch and challenge all our learners.
- We provide a wide range of opportunities for learning, and experiences that lead to substantial progress over time. We focus on meeting physical and emotional needs, to help support and empower our young people to make academic progress. This takes care and time.
- In Autumn 2016 we are introducing a new approach to assessment, target setting, intervention and evaluation (refer to Assessment Without Levels / Assessment, Marking and Feedback policy).
- Day-school, boarding and others (incl. therapists from Sept 2016) work together to identify key areas of development for each student. Daily briefings are an important part of this. From Sept 2016, Boarding staff are included in these briefings. They are also expected to contribute reports for Review meetings as well as School Reports, and will be invited to Parents consultations. They report on behaviour, extracurricular activities, socialisation, life skills and general health matters.
- Through scheduled reviews we include parents and carers in the identification of key outcomes for their child or young person. In this way each young person has the optimum opportunity to develop their communication, academic, independence and self- help skills to levels beyond what may have been expected.

Aims

We aim to:

- Provide a stimulating, challenging and appropriate curriculum that engages and equips our students to be able to live the most fulfilling life possible.
- Support a substantially overhauled curriculum offer
- Provide learning environments that develop an enthusiasm for, and positivity toward, learning.
- Recognise that our children and young people are individuals and build upon their successes.
- Enable students to feel valued and respected so they can be confident and secure: willing to seek help in the understanding that overcoming difficulty is part of the learning process.
- Develop, through example and explanation, a sense of responsibility, self-discipline and respect for: one another; the school; and the community.
- Encourage aesthetic and spiritual awareness.
- To lay the foundations for a lifetime of learning through providing active, challenging and enjoyable learning experiences. Students will be involved in and will be aware of the process of learning and, where appropriate, become responsible for their learning
- To enable students to make progress in their learning
- To train, develop and support educators in their vital role of enabling students to overcome barriers to learning and make progress in their learning
- To ensure that children, staff, parents, and other members and the community feel a sense of belonging and ownership and take a pride in the school

Learning

- Learning at Nunnykirk is an active process and that young people learn through being motivated and engaged in exciting, relevant activities – as well as having periods of calm. This is a particularly important aspect of our provision, and the setting of Nunnykirk supports this.
- We recognise the importance of developing strategies that allow the individual to learn in the ways that suit them best.
- Learning should develop a sense of students' responsibility for their own learning. Students are encouraged to exercise choice, develop goals, plan their approach, work independently and assess their achievements.
- All students, but especially our boarders, are encouraged and supported to show interest in improving their own learning around life skills and independence.

Learning Environment

The importance we attach to an effective, stimulating learning environment is reflective of the ethos of Nunnykirk. An effective, stimulating environment sets the climate for learning and may include:

- A well organised formal learning environment where sensory stimuli can be modified in order to overcome sensory barriers when acquiring new skills.
- Independent, co-operative and adult supported learning.
- Individual, pair, small group, and whole class learning
- Opportunities for research, experimentation and finding out.
- Opportunities for creative exploration and expression.
- Using actions and words to ask and answer questions.
- Well organised, clearly defined learning areas with easily accessible resources to encourage independence.
- A variety of locations, for example: inside and outside the school, in the wider community, at home, and in a range of natural environments.
- Reading Period

Effective Teaching

Everyone has an important role to play in contributing to learning; therefore the term educator as used in this policy equally applies to non-teaching staff, therapists (from 2016), boarding staff, parents/carers, other children etc.. Effective educators support learning by being alongside the young person: modelling, scaffolding, validating, extending, and so on.

All staff are involved in discussions related to the needs of the students and have access to their IEPs and baseline assessments in order to inform their teaching. There are daily staff briefings where students' educational needs are discussed when necessary.

Teaching should be relevant, creative, inspirational and enthusiastic, within an atmosphere of trust and respect. We believe that educators teach best when they:

- have a good knowledge of the individual's abilities, learning styles and attainments;
- use evaluations of individual children/young people's learning to inform future planning;
- set clear expectations for what the learner is expected to achieve;
- share learning objectives with the child/young person (See AMF Policy);
- are able to relate learning intentions to learner's own interests and life experiences;

- develop the learner's ability to independently think and problem solve;
- actively promote positive behaviours which create an environment in which learning can take place;
- challenge stereotypes and promote a positive appreciation of difference;
- share a sense of enjoyment and excitement with the children and young people.
- work collaboratively together to ensure a consistency of approach across the school, house, community and home environments
- use a variety of approaches that provide strategies to meet the specific needs of our students
- reinforce and extend what students have learned across a variety of environments to ensure generalisation and maximum independence.
- Use assessment to inform planning and target setting to meet the needs of the individual students and groups

The importance of Parents and Carers

Last but not least, the relationship between home and school is critical to supporting effective progress. Parents are encouraged to arrange to come into the school to discuss their child if they have any worries and staff will make time to verbally report to them. Parents and carers can help support their child's learning by:

- contributing to Annual Review, EHCP and other meetings;
- expressing their opinions about their child's learning by participating in Head teacher and OfSTED questionnaires;
- keeping the school informed about concerns or problems which may affect their child's behaviour, well-being and learning;
- attending parent consultations and taking advantage of other opportunities to support the school