

Teaching and Learning Policy

Engage Motivate Inspire

Rationale

High quality teaching and learning is central to providing every student at Gradually Developing Futures (GDF) with the very best opportunity to succeed. We strive to ensure that teaching in every lesson, and overtime, meets the requirements of the DFE school teaching standards. We believe that this inspires and challenges students to achieve their potential and provides them with the foundations to be lifelong learners.

Purpose

Through high quality teaching and learning experiences, our young people will have every opportunity to reach their full potential, raise attainment and nurture aspirations. Students will leave us as:

- Self-confident individuals who can make informed decisions and communicate them based on their values and beliefs
- Responsible citizens who respect others and take part responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life
- Effective contributors with a positive attitude who can lead or work in a team, meeting the challenges of the 21st Century

GDF is committed to ensuring every student makes progress regardless of their context or starting point. We set high expectations to inspire, motivate, support and challenge students. We believe students should enjoy and be enthusiastic about their learning and should be engaged and motivated in all lessons.

Our understanding

We acknowledge that people learn in many ways, and when planning our lessons, we take into account these different forms of intelligence ensuring wherever possible that there is a visual, auditory and kinaesthetic element to each of our lessons.

Effective learning results in:

- Knowing you have succeeded
- Feeling you can do more
- Explaining what you have learned
- Applying it to other situations
- Teaching it to someone else
- Feeling good about yourself.

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.



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Effective learning requires 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 planning documentation to guide our teaching; this sets out the aims, objectives and details what is to be taught to pupils.

For effective teaching to take place there are several 'ingredients' that are needed:

- Effective preparation and planning resulting in a purposeful, well prepared teaching plan
- A clear learning objective shared with the children both visually and auditory
- A clear link to previous and future learning
- A clear outcome to be achieved at the end of the lesson
- A review of the learning at the end of the lesson
- Appropriate challenge for all children
- Teacher modelling through effective use of 'teacher talk' time
- Be appropriately and readily resourced
- Good questioning
- Quality interaction between teacher and pupil and pupil and pupil
- Pace. Enthusiasm. Fun
- Involvement of all the children
- Excellent behaviour management
- Opportunities for independent learning
- Elements of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning
- Follow up feedback through effective, interactive marking.

Approaches to Teaching & Learning for students with SEND

Underpinning teaching and learning is the celebration and rewarding of positive behaviour, improved social skills and communication development. GDF believe that ambition, achievement, and meaningful communication built through strong relationships are a crucial part of life for a student with SEND/ASC. Many of our students will experience the world as randomly organised and full of disconnected objects - such perceptions inevitably confuse or overwhelm the individual. GDF's environment and learning activities are designed to aid our students' understanding of the world, to see it as an organised, predictable and meaningful place in which they can succeed and grow.

Many of our pupils have a range of conditions but we consider every individual to be different. One of the factors affecting the educational development of pupils, indeed people in general, is their preferred style of learning. We each prefer a particular means of receiving information that helps us best process it ie: visual, auditory, kinaesthetic etc. The tendency of individuals with ASC is that they are more likely to rely on only one style of learning. Through observation and discussion with the pupils, teachers aim to find their preferred style of learning and utilise this when teaching and encourage other ways if appropriate.



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To support and develop teaching and learning, GDF will adopt a blended approach to key interventions that will enable pupils to access their learning and meet their challenging needs. This can include approaches such as:

- TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Children)
- SCERTS (Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support)
- Positive Behaviour Support (as outlined in the Behaviour policy)
- Social Stories
- PECS (Picture Exchange Communication system)
- EHCP target (IEP)

Our Approach to Effective Teaching and Learning

All pupils at GDF currently hold an EHCP and addressing these individual needs forms a crucial aspect of our teaching. In addition, we set individual key skills targets which we monitor throughout the year sharing progress with both pupils and parents. We review the progress of each child termly and set revised targets. Children have targets in their books and these are displayed on the classroom walls for reference by the class teacher. Our teaching is guided by our knowledge of the children's prior attainment (where applicable) and through our baseline work at the start of the autumn term.

Lessons are planned with clear learning objectives (I can statements) and all staff evaluate each of their lessons to reflect upon their teaching and find opportunities to improve practice. Staff have coordination responsibility for key areas of learning and support others to develop their skills in these areas.

GDF endeavours to form trusting relationships with pupils, not only to facilitate effective curriculum learning but also to strengthen social and communication skills used in everyday life. These relationships in tandem with clear expectations of behaviour are supported through our dual academic and social skills approach enabling a pupil's needs to be addressed in a flexible manner.

We treat the children with kindness and respect to enable the perception of fairness to be in everything we do. We praise children for their efforts and help to build positive attitudes towards school and learning in general. Staff follow the school policy regarding behaviour, referring to *consequences* should inappropriate behaviour occur. Pupils are aware of our school values and are keen to earn Dojo points which demonstrate their understanding and develops intrinsic worth.

We ensure the day has an organised and clear beginning which sets the tone for the day's work. All children begin their morning with a *Check in* to gauge their mood and allow time to discuss any needs they may have and how best to approach the individual.

We teach daily phonics through Read Write Inc and we use VIPERS to develop reading comprehension.



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We share the learning with parents through Class Dojo messaging and both school and students' individual portfolios for wider events.

The 'Pupil Voice' in our school is growing and we are developing a School Council as pupil numbers grow.

Our Learning Environment

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. We aim for our learning environment to:

- Be welcoming
- Be challenging and stimulating
- Be peaceful and calm
- Be well organised
- Make learning accessible
- Be encouraging and appreciative
- Provide for equal opportunities
- Provide for a working atmosphere
- Support the development of independent learners.

Our learning environments are organised to ensure that the children can learn in different ways. These include:

- Group work
- Paired work
- Independent work
- Whole-class work.

Children's Work

For each new piece of work:

- The date is written in full for literacy and numerically for mathematics. Pupils underline the date using a ruler
- The learning objective is written and underlined
- Where appropriate, children are taught how to stick work into their books carefully. These should be trimmed prior to sticking in.
- Covers on exercise books are not defaced.

Marking

Written responses are used mainly for marking children's work. These responses may be to praise, advise, inform, or to mark the child's successes and areas for improvement.

Teachers respond where possible, with the child being present. This enables the work to be discussed together and the teacher to read the comment to the child if appropriate. It also allows



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for reflection by the child, stimulation of ideas and the teacher to suggest the child's next task or action. Opportunities are made for a child to respond and make improvements to their work.

A written response is usually made to a piece of work when the teacher looks at a set of books. This is particularly applicable when responding to work such as creative writing. In other curriculum areas such as mathematics, marking – and hence a written response – may occur during the lesson with the pupil alongside. If the teacher has responded to a piece of work in the absence of the child the written response may be given again as an oral response when the work is returned.

Children are involved in the marking process and may respond to their own, and each other's work in written form. Areas of success are highlighted in pink and an area for improvement will be highlighted in green. All work is marked against agreed success criteria and a comment may be added to support and close the learning gap.

All written comments are made in clear, legible, neat handwriting in a style consistent with that being taught to the children. Written comments are made positively and at the same time are constructive in that they may inform or advise the child as to how they can improve their work or performance.

Comments may be written at the end of a piece of work or part way through depending on the layout of the work.

Achievement

We take every opportunity to celebrate achievement through:

- Verbal or written praise by teachers, peers and parents
- Displays of work
- Opportunities to perform or share
- Positive comments to parents via Dojo or phone calls
- Certificates and rewards.

The Role of Governors

Our governors determine, support, monitor and review the school policy 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 how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment
- Ensure that staff development and appraisal policies promote good quality teaching
- Monitor the effectiveness of the school's teaching and learning policy through the school self-review processes. These include reports from curriculum team leaders, the principal's report to governors as well as a review of the in-service training sessions attended by our staff.



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The Role of Parents and Carers

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

- Holding parents' consultation workshops to explain our school strategies for teaching literacy, numeracy etc.
- Explaining to parents how they can support their child.
- Sending an annual progress report to parents in which we explain the progress made by each child and to indicate how the child can improve further.
- Sending home a curriculum overview at the start of each term
- Sharing good practice on class Dojo.

Evaluation

Improvement in our learning and teaching will show itself in:

- Well behaved, well-motivated pupils and a well-ordered school
- Improved SATs results (where appropriate)
- Improved attendance rates
- Good parental feedback
- Positive feedback from Ofsted/LA/visitors etc.
- Highly motivated staff
- Good attendance of staff
- Over-subscribed admissions register
- Good response from parents to open evenings, questionnaires etc.

Appendix 1: Pedagogic Styles and Methodology

TEACCH

Autistic individuals often have difficulty with receptive and expressive language, sequential memory, and handling changes in their environment. The TEACCH method is designed to provide the individual with structure and organization to respond to these difficulties. It concentrates on five key areas:

- Physical Structure
- Scheduling
- Work System
- Routine
- Visual Structure.



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Once established, the TEACCH system is primarily used to assist the autistic individual in better understanding his/her environment. Rather than be faded out over time, the system works by consistent application across a variety of environments. GDF will adopt the TEACCH method in five key ways:

- Understanding the culture of autism
- Developing an individualised person/family-centred plan for each client or student, rather than using a standard curriculum
- Structuring the physical environment
- Using visual supports to make the sequence of daily activities predictable and understandable
- Using visual supports to make individual tasks understandable

In using the TEACCH approach GDF will enable students to overcome the following difficulties that they commonly experience and that prevent them becoming successful learners:

- relative strength in and preference for processing visual information (compared to difficulties with auditory processing, particularly of language)
- frequent attention to details but difficulty understanding the meaning of how those details fit together
- difficulty combining ideas
- difficulty with organising ideas, materials, and activities
- difficulties with attention (some individuals are very prone to distraction, others have difficulty shifting attention when it is time to make transitions)
- difficulty with concepts of time, including moving too quickly or too slowly and having problems recognizing the beginning, middle, or end of an activity
- communication problems, which vary by developmental level but always include impairments in the social use of language (called “pragmatics”)
- tendency to become attached to routines, with the result that activities may be difficult to generalise from the original learning situation and disruptions in routines become upsetting, confusing, or uncomfortable
- very strong interests and impulses in engaging in favoured activities, with difficulties disengaging once engaged
- marked sensory preferences and dislikes

SCERTS

- is a developmental model that supports a student to develop skills such as joint attention in order to become a competent Social Communicator
- recognises most behaviour is a coping strategy and the model aims to develop functional Emotional Regulation skills to maintain the optimum level of emotional arousal (homeostasis) to cope with everyday stress in order to attend, engage and learn
- through the use of Transactional Supports (complimented by TEACCH) e.g. SCERTS promotes students using visual supports such as key-rings to aid emotional regulation. For example one might say when I am angry – I can go outside for a run



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- SCERTS assessment process is conducted in natural settings to identify functional, meaningful, and developmentally-appropriate goals for IEP targets that will lead to the most positive long-term outcomes (National Research Council (2001) Educating Children with Autism)
- SCERTS observation method is used to monitor the effectiveness of both staff and physical support strategies and inform changes that need to be introduced to improve progress towards achieving target

Positive Behaviour Support

GDF will adopt Positive Behaviour Support as outlined in the Behaviour, Engagement, Mood Management and Physical Intervention policy. This may include:

- Proactive strategies include environment modification, skills teaching and reward use (IABA)
- Planning for teaching new equally effective pro-social behaviour
- Outlines adjustments to the environment to support pro-social behaviour
- Identifies responses to that will support and reinforce the new, desired behaviour
- Setting triggers as well as proactive, preventative and reactive strategies

Thrive

Thrive is a dynamic, developmental and trauma sensitive approach to meeting the emotional and social needs of children. Thrive is underpinned by science and theory, encompassing attachment theory, children development, neuroscience and play, creativity and the arts.

At GDF we aim to embed the Thrive approach in to all our work and connections with the children, supporting students to understand and take ownership of their own well-being, equipping them with the skills needed to remain well-regulated in a range of activities and settings. All children at GDF are profiled on Thrive Online and are given both right time targets and reparative targets, working on these in a variety of sessions, both 1:1 and small group to suit the needs to each individual. Individual progress is recorded through engagement levels each session, written comments and observations by staff and termly on Thrive Online where data is collected and new targets set when necessary. Children's voice is heard at the end of every session through supported reflection on individual targets.

The impact of Thrive can already be seen in the student's ability to self-regulate throughout the day, enabling them to access both social and academic sessions. Relationships built through using the Thrive approach ensure children feel safe and able to express their wants and needs appropriately throughout their school day.

Appendix 2: Teachers Standards

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards>



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Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis as a minimum. Next review date 01.09.2026



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