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## Curriculum and Learning Policy 'Learning Together'

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St Nicholas School is a UNICEF Rights Respecting School with Gold Status and promotes rights respecting values in all its policies



*The Governing Body of St Nicholas School formally adopted*

*this Policy on October 13<sup>th</sup> 2022*

*This policy is a working document and therefore is open to change and restructuring as and when the need arises.*

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Head Teacher

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Chair of Governors

## **Rationale**

Our Curriculum and Learning Policy reflects our values and beliefs based on a shared vision of education

This policy is based on our shared understanding of: -

- 1. How children with a range of needs learn most effectively.**
- 2. How learning can be enjoyable.**
- 3. How children can achieve their full potential.**
- 4. The best environment for children to learn in.**
- 5. How children with special educational needs can become resilient and independent learners.**
- 6. How children with a special educational need can best develop social skills.**
- 7. The variety of teaching styles which meet the needs of different learners**
- 8. The role that parents have in supporting the development of their child**
- 9. How to consistently promote high expectations.**
- 10. How to develop progression which builds on prior experiences.**
- 11. How to teach using a multi-sensory approach.**
- 12. Mutual respect between staff and pupils.**
- 13. How we can make it safe for children to get things wrong.**

All elements of our Curriculum and Teaching Policy are reviewed regularly and the contents reflected in each of the subject curriculum documents.

## THE VISION, AIMS AND VALUES OF EDUCATION AT ST NICHOLAS

We would like St Nicholas to be a school in which parents and staff can learn in a safe, supportive and inquisitive environment. At St Nicholas School, our motto is 'Learning Together' as this encompasses the collaborative approach to helping our special pupils achieve their full potential, regardless of their ability. Our vision is for the children at St Nicholas to be given daily learning experiences that enable them to be equipped with the skills, resilience and life experiences to become healthy, active and respectful learners.

We at St Nicholas achieve this by focusing on seven key areas:

**School Learning Environment** – We are in a state-of-the-art school with learning environments that are accessible to all and tailored to meet the individual sensory and learning needs of the children. These areas include sensory rooms, a cooking room, outside learning classroom, soft play, music room, therapy room, a library and a Learning Resource Centre.

**Curriculum** – The school promotes a holistic approach to the education of its pupils. Our curriculum is broad and balanced with lessons tailored to the individual needs and interests of the children, inspiring them to reach their full potential academically, socially, emotionally, physically and culturally.

**Working Together** – The relationships between children and children, children and staff and staff with each other are built on a supportive and nurturing ethos. A climate of honesty allows everyone to feel respected, listened to, safe, valued and inspired to develop.

**Working with Parents** – Parents play an invaluable role in the work we do with our children. The school draws in the knowledge and expertise of parents and carers and uses this to inform future development.

**Behaviour** – The school adopts a positive, proactive approach to behaviour, allowing the children to be respected and have a better quality of life. We ensure we create an environment that promotes positive behaviour focusing on calmness, continuity, routine, communication and acceptance.

**Diversity** – We aim to allow the children to see themselves and their beliefs and cultures reflected within the school community, allowing for their self-esteem to be built upon alongside teaching children to be understanding and tolerant of differences.

**Therapies** – Our school works in partnership with other professionals to deliver services that meet the needs of children, their families and the local community bringing together the collaborative and 'Learning Together' ethos.

# **POLICY FOR CURRICULUM AND LEARNING**

## **CURRICULUM INTENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT**

**AGREED INTENT 1: *Children feel cared about and are happy, secure, motivated, stimulated and valued.***

This is implemented by:

- In EYFS and Key Stage 1 teachers plan and deliver continuous provision ensuring they use child-led resources and setting clear routine.
- In Key Stage 2, children follow an adapted National Curriculum. Contexts for learning are well considered so that they are meaningful to pupils and are linked to pupil interests.
- Adults use communication aids to support children transitioning and alternative teaching approaches such as TEACCH and Attention Autism allow some of our sensory and non-verbal learners to access the curriculum. Where appropriate, a personalised learning approach is also implemented.
- All adults ensure that the basic needs to the pupils are met e.g. toileting, food, water and giving them a means to communicate.
- The school has adopted the Zones of Regulation which allows children to be able to communicate how they feel and give them opportunities to reach the green zone and regulate their emotions when they are in other zones.
- Children are motivated by the resources that are used, particularly resources that use their own photos.

We know that this is having an impact because:

- The children are happy to come to school and parents give positive feedback.
- Children are confident to communicate with adults and peers in a range of environments.
- Children accept that making a mistake is okay and that they can learn from their mistakes.
- Children are able to self-regulate and obtain mutual regulation.
- Children feel loved, build strong relationships and are able to freely communicate.
- Children are secure and confident in their ability to explore their environment and use resources with purpose.

**AGREED INTENT 2: *The learning environment is well organised, is attractive and celebrates children's achievements.***

This is implemented by:

- Classrooms adopt a commonality approach to the classroom environment so that children become familiar to the resources available.
- Classroom activities that engage and are of interest to the children are planned for and delivered throughout the day
- Classroom displays use signs, symbols and visuals that allow the children to access the learning and support them in becoming familiar with the routine of the school day. PECS is also used in classrooms to allow children to communicate.

- Children's work is displayed, regardless of ability. Where appropriate, some classes may limit their amount of displays so that there is limited sensory stimulation for the children.
- The school actively celebrates the achievements of the children, no matter how small, through stickers, House Points and in achievement assemblies such as Star of the Week.

We know that this is having an impact because:

- Children enjoy seeing their work displayed and this promotes pride in their work and achievements.
- As the children work their way through the school, they become more independent learners.
- Staff are aware of the expectations of the learning and the learning environment.
- Children not only celebrate their own achievements but also recognise the achievements of others.

**AGREED INTENT 3: *Children learn most effectively when they participate in a variety of learning situations that are interesting, stimulating and fun***

This is implemented by:

- Planning incorporates multi-sensory approaches and children's interests.
- Teachers plan for opportunities for outings and for visitors to support and compliment the learning.
- Staff use a range of resources including sensory and IT that enhance the learning experience.
- Children have access to the whole school learning environment including a outdoor learning classroom, a sensory room and additional learning spaces.
- Teaching is delivered creatively, is adaptable and flexible with cross-curricular links and adapted to make it accessible to all.
- Topic areas can be child led, adapted to develop in line with children's interests as they learn and allowing them to work within the EYFS framework and National Curriculum requirements.
- A broad and balanced curriculum is offered to explore new interests and stimulate learning.
- Staff are positive and enthusiastic, provide praise and encouragement and celebrate achievements.

We know that this is having an impact because:

- As they move through the school, children become more independent with their learning.
- Children are exposed to a variety of experiences and will develop a wider range of interests.
- Children are engaged and involved in their learning. They share their learning outside of school and generalize their skills taught.
- Children are happy at school and are keen to attend. They feel valued and are proud of their achievements.

Children are better prepared for the next stage in their learning and engagement with the local community.

#### **AGREED INTENT 4: *The learning task is matched to the children's ability.***

This is implemented by:

- All subjects are adapted to match the ability of each individual and appropriate resources are used to support learners.
- Feedback from previous learning focuses on next steps and helps to inform planning. All staff are involved in the feedback, planning and learning for their class.
- There is a high level of expertise amongst the staff and staff are used appropriately across a year group and across the whole school.
- Targets and Pupil Passports are displayed in the class and are understood by all staff in the class.
- Observations written on Evidence Me and feedback written on work reflects the understanding of the child.

We know that this is having an impact because:

- Children will be confident, happy, enjoy learning and are challenged at all times.
- Where appropriate, some children become positive role models and good examples of work is shared.
- There is a positive impact on their behavior because children are not over or under challenged in lessons.
- Children progress in their learning and this is evident in the Assessment tracking.
- The classroom environment is calm and relaxed and reflects the positive attitude to learning.
- Children take ownership in their learning and are proud to share their achievements.

#### **AGREED INTENT 5: *Children form positive relationships and partnerships with their peers and adults based on value and respect.***

This is implemented by:

- There are opportunities for structured and unstructured social interaction and play between peers and adults. This is either from school clubs, social time or through the curriculum.
- Staff plan for opportunities for group tasks and are encouraged to reflect on the contribution of all children.
- There are strong positive role models in each class.
- There are opportunities to celebrate children's success and achievements in class and in the whole school through Star of the Week Assembly and in-class systems.
- The whole school follows a Right Respecting ethos.
- Snack time and carpet time provide opportunities for children to use their communication skills with their friends in an informal environment. Use of communication aids enable children to communicate with adults and to help them feel understood.

We know that this is having an impact because:

- Children are able to use the experience of their positive relationship to outside of school and life going forward.
- Children are able to transfer their skills and knowledge of appropriate behaviors and language to home life.
- Children show compassion and understanding of their own and others unique and individual needs.
- Children are confident and open to take on new challenges.
- Children copy and display the positive learnt behavior from peers and adults.
- Children begin to understand boundaries in place for appropriate relationships.

**AGREED INTENT 6: *There is a strong relationship between home and school.***

This is implemented by:

- A series of coffee mornings for parents that cover both social events as well as for training and information.
- Whole School events such as Christmas Shows, Sports Days, school BBQ as well as Family Events such as winter craft sessions.
- A blended approach (face to face and online) is used for Parents Evening and EHCP reviews
- Parents are invited to contribute to school events such as International Week or to share their experiences e.g. jobs, or role in the community
- Parents are invited to volunteer their time in other classes e.g. to hear children read
- Class teachers make weekly contact with the parents in the class detailing what the children have learnt and will be learning.
- Parents are informed of school events through a parent Facebook page, the school website and through Weduc.

We know that this is having an impact because:

- Parents feel engaged and have opportunities to socialise and meet other parents
- Parents are equipped with the knowledge and skills of SEND which enables them to have more confidence when dealing with a child with SEN.
- Parents feel part of the wider school community.
- Children are proud to have their parents and siblings in school to share and celebrate in their achievements.

**AGREED INTENT 7: *Children's physical, social, spiritual, moral and emotional needs are catered for.***

This is implemented by:

- The school has adopted a Rights Respecting Schools Approach that teaches children about their rights and the rights of others

- Through their PSHE lessons, children are taught to respect and value themselves and others. They are also taught how to eat healthily and how to look after their bodies in Science and PSHE. Children will also follow an adapted SRE curriculum.
- Children are taught about different religions through RE teaching and they visit different places of worship.
- Children are taught how to stay actively healthy through PE lessons where they are taught a range of skills. The children are also taught how to ride a bike or scooter safely and how to make sure they are safe when riding.
- Children are given opportunities to attend a range of after school clubs as well as Friday afternoon clubs.
- Every class uses the Zones of Regulations to support the children discussing their emotions and how they can regulate them.
- The achievements of children are celebrated within their class through stickers and rewards as well as through weekly Star of the Week Assemblies.
- Class Charters are written by children at the start of every academic year.

We know that this is having an impact because:

- Children are happy to attend school and are engaged and on task.
- Children are able to discuss how they can keep themselves healthy.
- Children feel safe and secure.
- The school has a UNICEF Gold Award and is working towards its Gold Award. The school also has a Healthy Schools Award.
- All children try hard to reach their potential.

**AGREED INTENT 8: *Cultural diversity and the wider world is celebrated and incorporated into the curriculum alongside positive promotion of disability and gender issues.***

This is implemented by:

- Children have weekly assemblies based on the UNICEF rights of the child where they learn not only about their rights but the rights of others.
- Children celebrate an International week where they study a different country and their culture.
- Parents are invited to contribute to school events such as International Week or to share their experiences.
- All children are treated equally .
- Staff are trained on a range of disabilities and strategies to support each disability.
- Toys and dolls are used that cover cultural diversity, disability and gender.
- Children learn about other countries and cultures through their Geography lessons and through the EYFS curriculum.
- Through their daily learning experiences, children are taught how to be resilient and to never give up.



We know that this is having an impact because:

- All children feel safe and secure to express their opinions and feelings.
- Children are aware of the wider world and are aware of cultural background and accept others regardless of where they are from, what culture they follow, what beliefs they have and what disability they have.
- Children are aware of different disabilities and celebrate the achievements of children.
- Children feel a sense of acceptance amongst their peers and have confidence to express their needs and wants.

**AGREED INTENT 9: *Children's individual sensory and behaviour needs are met***

This is implemented by:

- Every pair of classrooms has a shared space that allows children to access quiet 1:1 or small group learning.
- Children's sensory needs are met through a range of sensory integration strategies and a sensory diet.
- The school has a dedicated sensory room that is timetabled for small group use as well as a **Sensory Integration room for use by appropriate children.**
- Strategies to support sensory and behavior needs in the classrooms include TEACCH tasks, Now and next Boards, communication strategies and Zones of Regulation.
- Children have a Behaviour Plan, if needed, which details triggers, types of behavior and strategies for dealing with the behavior and is shared with staff. Behavior Plans are reviewed regularly.
- The school has adopted the PRO-ACT SKIPr approach to behaviour where proactive approaches are implemented.
- The school works closely with other professionals such as OT, CAHMs and SALT to ensure individual sensory and behaviour needs are met. The school also welcomes regular training from professionals.

We know that this is having an impact because:

- Children behave well at St Nicholas School.
- Children with behaviour and/or sensory needs have their needs met in the classroom
- Parents feel supported if their child has sensory or behaviour needs

**AGREED INTENT 10: *Expectations are high but achievable for all pupils. Feedback is formative, positive and delivered in an accessible way.***

This is implemented by:

- Staff assess use the school's own Assessment Booklets and use tracking data to inform of future planning.
- SLT use tracking data to be aware of children who are not making as much

- progress and discuss class intervention strategies where appropriate.
- Lessons are adapted and resources used are appropriate so that all children are able to access the learning.
  - Individualised strategies such as TEACCH and Colourful Semantics are used for appropriate children.
  - Pupil passports are written, displayed and delivered.
  - Feedback is given to the children in a way that is appropriate to their cognitive ability e.g. immediate verbal feedback is given to younger children to show that they have done something well and stickers or certificates given to celebrate achievements. All adults use the schools 'Effective Marking and Feedback Policy'.
  - Every classroom has a Wow Board where all children have one piece of their work displayed that is celebrated as an achievement. All other work is displayed on other display boards regardless of ability.
  - Children are shown how to improve their work and to develop their skills.

We know that this is having an impact because:

- Children know when they have done something well and are able to celebrate their achievements, no matter how small.
- Parents are happy with their progress, not only in English and Maths but also in PSED.
- Children feel confident when they are working and feel safe and secure to make mistakes. Children know how to improve on their mistakes.
- All staff who work with a group of children know what helps the children to learn and the next steps they need.

**AGREED INTENT 11: *There is a clear sequencing of learning throughout the school.***

This is implemented by:

- Schemes of work written by subject leaders have clear sequencing and progressions where skills are built upon.
- Ongoing assessment is used to inform future planning.
- Children have opportunities to over learn new concepts so that they are embedded.
- EYFS and Key Stage 1 follow the Early Years curriculum to enable children to reach their Early Learning Goals.
- Key Stage 2 follow an adapted National Curriculum where knowledge and skills are built upon what they have learnt in Key Stage 1.
- There is a commonality in approach in communication e.g. PECS, visual timetables, Now and Next boards, used throughout the school so that children are familiar and can build on their skills.

We know that this is having an impact because:

- By following the EYFS curriculum for a further 2 years, children in year 2 are able to reach their Early Learning Goals – a foundation for future learning.
- Children have a better understanding of the daily routine
- Children continue to make progress, regardless of their ability.

- Children are better prepared for the next stage of their learning journey.

**AGREED INTENT 12: *Children use technology appropriately as an aid to learning.***

This is implemented by:

- Children have access to iPads, Beebots, Computers, Talking Tiles and interactive whiteboards that aid and compliment their learning. Children also use adapted keyboards where appropriate.
- Apps and programmes that children can access include: Education City, Mathletics, Lego Therapy (we do), Purple mash, Accelerated Reading, Handwriting without tears, Busy Things, 'Helpkidzlearn', Communicate in Print and BoardMaker.
- Remote Learning has been implemented for a small handful of children who are medically unable to attend school.
- Logins are sent home with the children so that they can access apps and programmes at home.
- Computing Scheme of Work is adapted to the cognitive age of the children.
- Through PSHE and computing lessons, children are taught about Internet Safety.
- AAC is used with appropriate children
- Technology enables the teacher to use a range of styles of teaching (visual/auditory)

We know that this is having an impact because:

- Children are confident at using technology including those who use AAC.
- Children have increased independence in their learning as they are actively participating with technology.
- Children are better prepared for the wider world and the role technology has to play.
- Children who learn better using visual or auditory cues have their needs met.
- Parental engagement is improved as they were able to access remote learning. Children are also able to extend their learning outside of the classroom using apps and online programmes to complete directed tasks.

## **THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

St Nicholas staff have spent much time and thought considering the classroom learning environment; what it should contain, how it can be made aesthetically pleasing and stimulating, and how it can be organised to ensure quality learning experiences. We have agreed that our classrooms will provide:

- a safe, happy and stimulating learning environment.
- classroom organisation which ensures that all materials and equipment are tidily stored, easily accessible and clearly labelled and that surfaces remain uncluttered.
- appropriate furniture conducive to good working conditions including specialist equipment being correctly used.
- a reading area which highlights and displays a variety of up to date reading materials in an attractive and accessible way.
- Resources that are appropriately labelled and accessible to children so that they can work independently.
- children's work in books or folders stored in an organised and accessible way.
- a variety of classroom displays, reflecting the current topics, including some which have been established to stimulate curiosity and some which celebrate display examples of children's work.
- Children's individual targets displayed appropriate to their understanding.
- A visual timetable so that children understand what is happening during the day.
- Teachers planning, so that all staff can refer to what is happening throughout the week.
- Quiet places so that children can work in small groups or on their own in a calm setting.
- At least one workstation to enable independent work.
- School rules displayed.
- Potentially dangerous equipment or materials stored securely.

## **MONITORING OF LEARNING AND TEACHING**

Teaching and Learning will be monitored through regular visits and feedback to teachers, and Learning walks involving the Senior Leadership Team and School Link Advisor.

Having agreed the principles upon which Learning and Teaching takes place at St Nicholas lesson observations will follow the attached format.

# LESSON OBSERVATIONS

The following table indicates the characteristics we will be looking for when carrying out a lesson observation.

	Inadequate ←			Outstanding →
<b>1. Is work challenging enough for all pupils? Does it meet their individual needs?</b>				
Clear learning intentions are evident in planning				
Different abilities are planned for through differentiated objectives.				
Stimulating activities cater for a range of learning styles.				
Multi – sensory input is used.				
<b>2. Do pupils responses demonstrate sufficient gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding, including in literacy and mathematics?</b>				
Children demonstrate gains in their learning and/or understanding				
Children acquire or reinforce their basic skills in literacy , communication and numeracy				
Communication needs are well supported				
<b>3. Does the teacher monitor pupils’ progress in lessons and use the information well to adapt their teaching?</b>				
Objectives build upon prior learning.				
Plenary is used to evaluate children’s understanding and inform future planning.				
<b>4. Does teaching engage learners and promote positive attitudes to learning?</b>				
Children settle quickly and are ready to learn.				
Children are on task throughout the lesson.				
Children enjoy what they are doing.				
<b>5. Does the teacher use questioning and discussion to assess the effectiveness of their teaching and promote pupils’ learning?</b>				
Information is delivered in a stimulating way with enthusiasm, creating interest in the children.				
Questioning is differentiated and appropriate to each pupils’ understanding.				
<b>6. Do pupils understand well how to improve their work?</b>				
Children know what to do or are well supported to understand what they need to do				
PUPIL PASSPORT targets are presented in a way that children can work towards them				
<b>7. Does the teacher manage behaviour effectively?</b>				
Discipline is maintained through the use of positive strategies				
Individual behaviour strategies are used to manage more challenging children.				
<b>8. Does the teacher use learning assistants effectively?</b>				
Teaching assistants’ input is planned appropriately				
Support is used in a way which encourages children to be independent				
<b>9. Are marking, assessment and testing used well to help pupils improve their learning?</b>				
Formative assessment is used, feedback is ongoing and positive				
Classroom is organised appropriately and materials are readily available.				
<b>Additional Characteristics</b>				
Activities are relevant, practical, enjoyable and appropriate for all children				
Concentration breaks occur as appropriate				
Praise and encouragement are used generously				
Learning reflects children’s experience of the wider world.				
Transitions are managed well and understood by the children,				
Music is used for a particular purpose				
Time is managed well to ensure learning opportunities are maximized.				
Tone of voice and body language are encouraging and supportive				
Plenary activity involves all the children, is fun and leaves children on a high as the lesson ends.				
The Learning Environment reflects our agreed learning and teaching policy				

# LESSON OBSERVATION

Date:

Time:

Teacher:

Other adults:

Lesson observed:

Lesson observed by:

Context of the lesson:

General observations:

Strengths:

Area(s) for development: