



**MacIntyre**  
Providing support...your way



# **MacIntyre School**

## **Curriculum Policy**

**Policy Date: September 2023**  
**Review Date: September 2024**

**At MacIntyre School we believe that potential is limitless and that every child can and will 'Achieve Above and Beyond'. We recognise that learning begins at birth and continues throughout life. 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.

Our aim is to develop confident, inquisitive learners. The skill of learning is as important as acquiring an ever increasing knowledge and understanding. Independence, problem solving and thinking skills are the cornerstones that support effective learning.

We aim to provide inspirational teaching and learning experiences that lead to a consistently higher level of individual achievement.

We are committed to providing consistency of approach for our students so that learning takes place throughout the waking day and in all environments: in school, in houses, in the community and at home. We have a shared approach to assessment, target setting, intervention and evaluation. Education, residential and therapy team members work together to identify key areas of development for each student and wherever possible 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.

## **Scope**

This policy covers Macintyre School and its children's homes, including the off-site separately registered children's home Hillside.

As described above the school operates a waking day learning philosophy and as such all of those who work directly with its children and young people are considered to be educators regardless of other job titles.

## **Aims**

- To deliver stimulating, challenging and highly effective learning, centred around the needs and preferences of each individual
- To provide a caring, sensitive and learning environment
- To provide a highly individualised education, enabling each child and young person to achieve above and beyond what may have been thought possible
- To provide safe environment; ensuring each young person's wellbeing and allowing them to excel in everything they do
- To ensure that each child and young person is motivated, and able, to effectively communicate wherever they are
- To facilitate each child and young person's ability to understand their needs and be able to self-regulate and self-advocate
- For each child and young person to be constantly developing independence skills in all areas of their life
- For each child and young person to leave school able to engage with and contribute to their community

**In order to achieve our aims we recognize we must:**

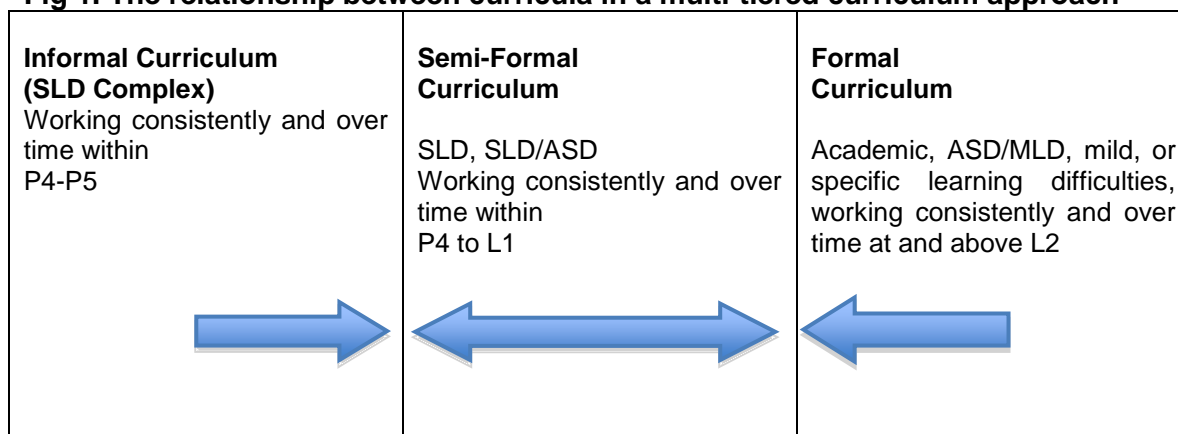
- Provide a stimulating, challenging and appropriate curriculum that engages and equips our students to be able to live the most fulfilling life possible.
- Provide learning environments that develop an enthusiasm for, and positivity toward, learning.
- Recognise that our children and young people are 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, Local Advisory Board (LAB) members and the community feel a sense of belonging and ownership and take a pride in the school
- Ensure our students make expected or better than expected progress

## Curriculum

Macintyre School acknowledges that there is a strong benefit in the concept of a multi- tiered curriculum approach which sees Informal and Semi-Formal curriculum models working with a Formal model that is partly based on the Literacy and Numeracy of the National Curriculum.

In the model described in Figure 1, it is neither necessary nor advisable to adopt a hard line on which curriculum might be appropriate for each learner as it is evident that learners on the edges of a learning difficulties spectrum, such as are described by the terms PMLD, SLD or MLD, may benefit from some involvement in the adjacent curricula. That is, those assessed as P3 (i) and (ii) may benefit from some elements of a semi-formal curriculum; those on P4 or P5 from elements of an informal curriculum; learners working at P8 or into the early reaches of the National Curriculum, may well cover some elements of a formal curriculum. Similarly, learners working consistently and over time at levels at or even above this (what used to be described as L2) may still benefit greatly from elements of a semi-formal curriculum, especially in for example, independence.

**Fig 1. The relationship between curricula in a multi-tiered curriculum approach**

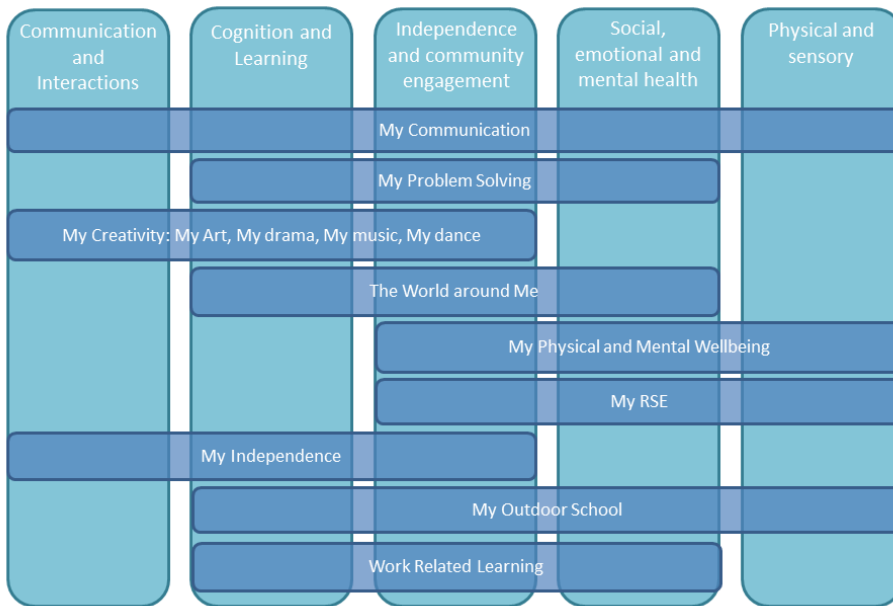


There is a fluidity about this model which both allows for and encourages a personalised (or individualised) approach, whilst still recognising that core elements of each curriculum will broadly fit the learning needs of all learners within the PMLD and SLD spectrums. The logic behind this approach comes from the sure and certain knowledge that our learners can make progress within curricula specifically designed for them, but will struggle to do so within curricula that is not (Imray and Hinchcliffe, 2014).

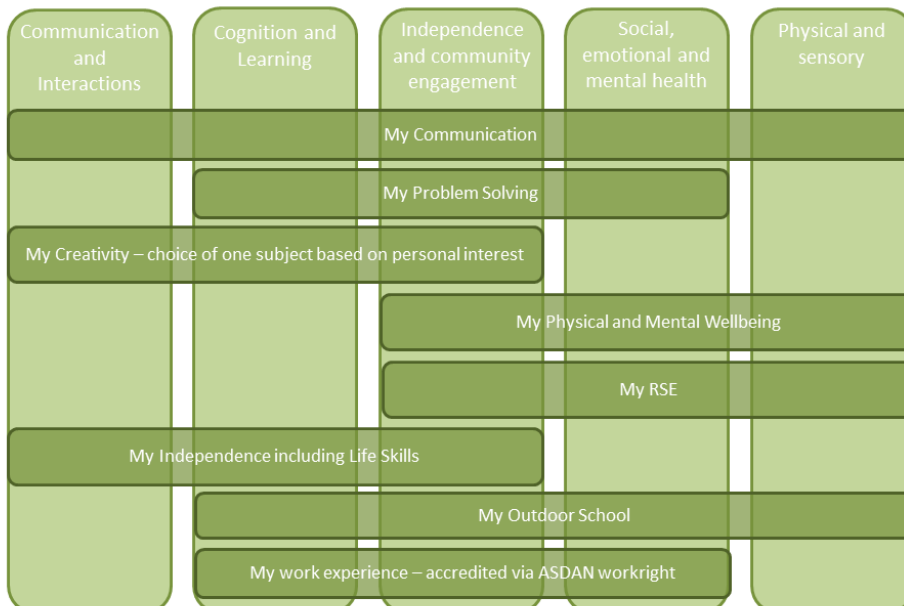
The base of the multi-tiered curriculum is the Equals Semi-Formal Curriculum (Equals, 2018). All areas of learning are carefully considered and individualised to fit each of our learners and link to the main areas of need in their EHCPs as shown Figure 2.

**Fig 2. Curriculum overview**

## Macintyre KS2/3/4 Curriculum



## Macintyre Post 16 Curriculum



## Curricular areas

The core Curriculum at Macintyre School is based on the semi-formal Equals Curriculum. The areas covered by this curriculum areas shown in Fig 2. Most of or learners' needs lay within the realm of this tier and their learning journeys reflect a progression within these areas. All areas of the curriculum are completely tailored to each learner's needs and therefore each learning journey is different.

### My Communication

We only need three essentials in order to communicate: a motivation (a reason) for communicating, a means (a method) of communicating and someone (a partner or partners) to communicate with. By providing all three, we can provide the basis for teaching communication effectively to all young people. We break the teaching of communication down into the following areas:

- Non-verbal, behavioural communications
- Imperative communications – generally based on meeting needs and wants.
- Following instructions
- Declarative communications - communications for the sake of themselves eg 'Isn't it a lovely day'.
- Dynamic communications – builds on declarative communication
- Narratives – retelling events
- Personalised reading and writing
- Formal social interactions with familiar and unfamiliar people

By focusing on each of these areas at a point that is appropriate to the young person's stage of communication, we can develop the young person's ability to communicate effectively in various contexts, including personal and social situations. Each young person has individualised communication tools, including the use of assistive technology, to support receptive and expressive communication, both verbal and non-verbal.

### My Thinking and Problem-solving

This area of the curriculum aims to improve the young person's ability to approach challenges in a systematic and structured way, and to develop strategies for overcoming obstacles in order for them to become confident and self-directed problem solvers.

### My Creativity

My Creativity incorporates the development of sensory and exploratory skills through the mediums of art, music, dance, and drama. This improves the young people's ability to engage with the world around them and to express themselves creatively in ways that are meaningful to them. The aim for this curriculum area is to help the young people's curiosity, engagement, and self-expression.

### My Wellbeing

This area focuses on physical fitness and healthy habits to maintain mental well-being in an individual way. It aims to improve the young person's overall physical health, as well as supporting them to feel good and regulate their emotions. The curriculum also incorporates strategies for developing healthy habits, such as regular meaningful physical activity, healthy eating, good hygiene, and positive sleep habits.

### My Independence

My Independence covers the development of practical skills related to daily living in order to increase independence in preparation for adulthood. This includes dressing and undressing, shopping, cooking, travel training, and personal hygiene. Young people are supported to develop problem solving and decision-making skills in a real-life context.

### My Outdoor Learning

My Outdoor Learning covers the development of skills and knowledge related to the natural environment. It makes use of the outdoors as a learning area but also brings nature indoors. It incorporates supporting young people to develop a connection to nature and increase their physical activity, while also promoting their social and emotional development. It may include learning about

topics such as horticulture, animal care, nature exploration, environmental conservation and outdoor recreation.

MacIntyre School is a registered centre for the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. Young people are working towards and achieving their Bronze, Silver and Gold awards.

### The World About Me

The World around Me covers a topic-based exploration of the environment, community, and world. It aims to promote an understanding of the world around us and to encourage communication and engagement. It includes weather and appropriate clothing, cultural and religious festivals and celebrations and understanding about the different people who help us.

Community is an important aspect of life at Macintyre School and children’s homes where young people enjoy being part of and making a positive contribution to the local and wider communities.

Those learners working across the Informal Curriculum will have generally fewer areas to focus on, but these areas will be worked on in a more cross curricular way. The areas covered in the Informal Curriculum are shown in Fig 3

### Religious Education

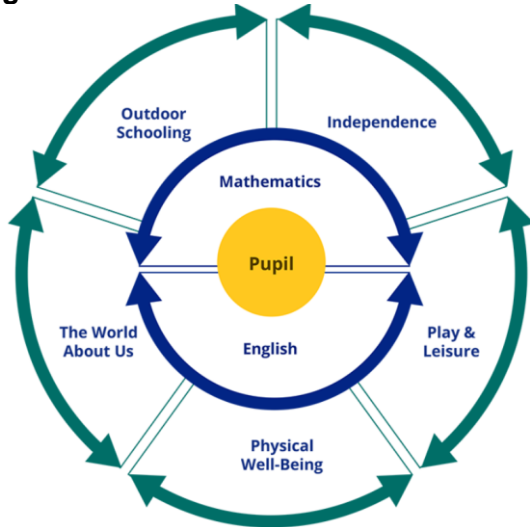
Although this is not a specific Curricular Area, all our young people have access to Religious Education unless they or their families choose to opt out. This area is taught in a range of different curricular areas throughout the school year. Religious Education at Macintyre School is mainly linked to festivals and celebrations that can be experienced by the students directly. This is to present religion as something concrete and tangible that makes it easier to learn and understand.

Fig 3. Informal Curriculum



For learners who are consistently able to work at a more formal level, we offer a formal layer based around formal Maths and English. This formal layer is included throughout the teaching of other curricular areas and continues to have a very strong functional aspect. Given the highly spiky profiles of our young people, careful consideration is given when deciding which formal aspects are appropriate to each learner. These are carefully mapped and differentiated at the right levels depending on individual needs. The formal layer may include the areas shown in Fig 4.

**Fig 4. Formal Curriculum overview**



The Curricular learning priorities are set at the beginning of the school year and reviewed at least once a term. These priorities are recorded in the learner’s Curriculum Map. Depending on the learner’s needs the number of priorities and curricular areas prioritised will be different. The progress recorded at the end of the year in the learner’s Curriculum Progress Summary will reflect these differences.

All learners working across any tiers will have a learning priority in the following areas:

**My Relationships and Sex education**

The curricular area of Relationships and Sex Education develops understanding of different types of relationships, puberty, sexuality and personal safety, including consent, in a manner appropriate to their emotional developmental needs. It explores basic concepts of understanding their own body and different changes that may happen over time. We support the development of self-awareness and self-esteem as well as incorporating strategies for promoting positive social behaviour and developing appropriate boundaries.

RSE is a standalone Scheme of Work that is part of the Semi-Formal curriculum. This Scheme of work is completely individualised to each young person to suit each individual’s needs and meet them at the right developmental stage of their learning. See the RSE policy for further information.

**Online Safety**

This area focuses on learner’s understanding of online risks and the skills necessary to access valuable online resources safely. The areas covered includes self-image and identity, online relationships, online reputation, online bullying, managing online information, health, wellbeing and lifestyle, privacy and security, copyright and ownership and contact. This area is highly differentiated to ensure all learners, even those who require full support to access any type of content online, are consistently working on developing new skills.

## Learning

We believe that learning is an active process and that children and young people learn through being motivated and engaged in exciting, relevant activities. Everyone has their own individual learning style and learning needs and we recognise the importance of developing strategies that allow the individual to learn in the ways that suit them best. Learning styles may be visual, auditory and/or kinaesthetic. Our teaching styles are adapted to reflect the different ways in which each student learns.

Learning should develop a sense of students' responsibility for their own learning. Wherever possible they are able to exercise choice, develop goals, plan their approach, work independently and assess their achievements.

- Students show consistent progress in all areas
- Students display a strong desire to contribute the effort and concentration required to match the teachers passion for learning
- Differentiation enables all students to succeed beyond expectations
- Assessment is used to involve students in their learning in an active and useful way (see Assessment Policy)
- Individuals show interest in improving their own learning around life skills and independence within their residential setting

At Macintyre School the curriculum is completely individualised to the need to each one of the learners. This is achieved by mapping the curriculum based on their starting points, interests and strengths as well as their emerging skills. The Curriculum maps will also reflect the areas where the learner may be working at Informal or Formal tiers. The Curriculum maps are designed to highlight the priority learning intentions in different areas of the curriculum. These maps are then used to produce timetables and lesson planner that will cover a broad access to the curriculum.

## Learning Environment

An effective, appropriately 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.

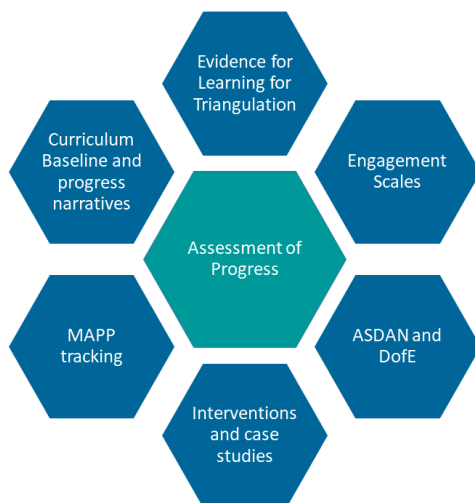
The importance we attach to an effective, stimulating learning environment is reflective of the ethos of the school.

## Assessment

It is very important to us to ensure each student is assessed accurately and to know exactly where they are in their learning at any given time. This enables us to develop targeted strategies and learning programmes so they can achieve the best outcomes possible.

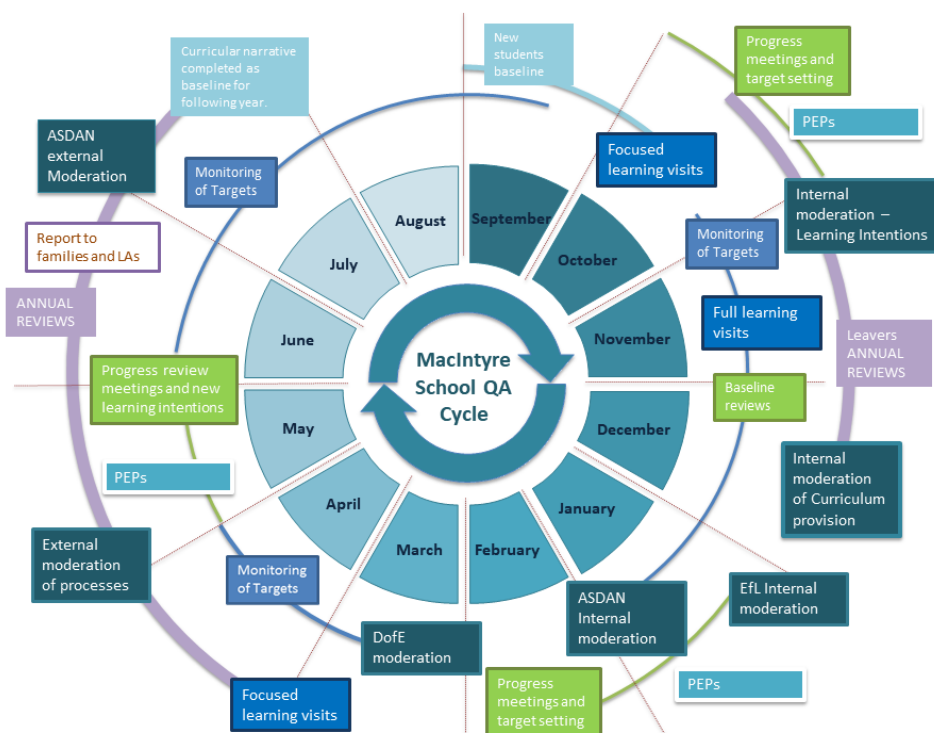


We use a basket of assessments to ensure our judgements are accurate and agreed in a multidisciplinary way. This enables us to report on the aspects of learning that are relevant and meaningful for each learner.



The assessment model enables the possibility to tailor the learning intentions to the individual's needs and his or hers unique profile, taking into account the stage the learner is in his or hers cognitive development and learning. This model is based on ipsative assessment. This means that performance is assessed against the starting point of each learner and taking into consideration his or hers very unique journey, rather than judging against external criteria and standards. This makes the assessment process a lot more flexible as any changes in performance and needs are taken into consideration when assessing a learner. It also enables teachers to better assess smaller changes over time, for example looking at fluency or maintenance of a skill over time.

In order to collect data accurately, consistently and ensure the data and evidence collected is monitored on a regular basis, we follow the Macintyre School assessment cycle.



Our core belief is that if the input to each learner's learning is the very best it can be, then the progress made by that learner, whatever that is, will be the very best that the learner could have made. It is therefore essential that teachers fully understand each learner's needs and are able to collect data and robust evidence to be able to build a narrative of progress and be able to accurately judge the progress made by each learner.

We do not use any system of measurement of progress to compare any one learner with other learners and the numerical data we collect is only used to see the progress being shown within each learning intention. This data can only be understood directly related to the context, learner and learning intention.

The learning intentions set are broad to enable students to show additional lateral progress so the progress can be seen as a whole rather than as very specific measurable steps. This also enables to better see any emergent skills and to set up further learning intentions based on the previous learning and the learners' interests and talents.

All students who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or a Statement of Special Educational Needs must, by law, have an Annual Review. Every internal and external specialist that works with the student (Social Workers, Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Music Therapist, etc.) provides a report and input to the review as appropriate. The review highlights the achievements made during the year by the child and this forms the basis of the projection of the next year's curricular aims and objectives.

## 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, support staff, therapists, teachers, the extended schools activity coordinator, parents/carers, other children etc. Effective educators support learning by being alongside the child or young person: modelling, scaffolding, validating and extending.

Teaching should be relevant, creative, inspirational and enthusiastic, within an atmosphere of trust and respect. The quality of teaching is monitored following a quality assurance cycle that includes classroom observations, learning walks, teachers' supervision and progress meetings. 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;
- 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 specialised approaches that provide strategies to meet the specific needs of our students such as Structured Teaching, Symbol exchange and Intensive Interaction.
- 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

## **Planning and Assessment**

Planning and assessment are an intrinsic part of the teaching and learning process, with each constantly informing the other in an ever-evolving cycle.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Local Advisory Board**

Our Local Advisory Board (LAB) agree, support, monitor and review the school's policy on teaching and learning. They keep themselves informed of teaching and learning practice through meetings with staff and visits to the school.

### **Role of the Head of Education and Deputy Head of Education**

#### **Monitor the implementation of this policy;**

- Monitor student achievement;
- Monitor the quality of teaching and learning.
- Ensure that the school's buildings and premises are best used to support successful teaching and learning;
- Ensure optimum use of community settings for developing student's learning;
- Monitor teaching and learning strategies in the light of health and safety;
- Ensure that the school's policies promote high quality learning experiences;
- Support staff development through the performance management system and provision of high quality, relevant professional development.

### **Role of Teachers**

- Provide a balanced, stimulating and relevant curriculum and that recognises and meets the needs of the individual.
- Work with all educators to develop effective, relevant and motivating learning plans (ILPs, curriculum targets etc)
- Keep parents/carers informed about their child's curriculum and learning plans.
- Keep parents/carers informed about their child's achievements and progress by ensuring that trackers and learning journeys are up to date and available, and by holding informal conversations;
- Track individual student progress and, with other educators, collaboratively plan intervention strategies that ensure all students make expected or above expected progress.
- Provide evidence of progress
- Remove barriers to children's learning opportunities and thus raise expectations and achievements

### **Role of Educators**

To give children the best possible learning experiences we will:

- provide a caring, inspirational and happy learning environment;
- discuss with teams any concerns;
- fully utilise the student's waking day to enhance learning and life chances;
- where appropriate work with parents to support their child's learning at home;

## Parents' Role

To 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 annual 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.

We will assess the impact of this policy by:

- monitoring children's achievement;
- taking part in external moderation;
- reviewing the policy annually.

## Criteria for Success

- Data collected shows the vast majority of students are achieving expectations or achieving beyond expectation across all areas of learning. (External moderation validates data). Data to be audited by Quality Board annually.
- Observation by LAB members with responsibility for curriculum and learning shows that students are purposefully engaged.
- Parents' comments, gathered via annual questionnaires, leavers questionnaires and contribution to Annual Review/EHCP meetings, show high levels of satisfaction regarding their child's learning and development.
- A student representative in each class is able respond appropriately to the question "What have you been learning about?" when the question is posed using the child's preferred mode of communication. (Communication is likely to require the use of visuals and/or electronic communication devices) Data to be gathered termly by Governor observing child contact staff talking to children.