

2023

Quality of Education Principles



Becton School
Together We Can

Scope

These principles are applicable to Becton School, part of Nexus Multi Academy Trust.

Aims and vision

Becton School's vision is to be a teaching centre of excellence for pupils with complex SEND.

Overarching aims

- **engage pupils in** safe, high-quality relationships with skilled adults who are able to lead, support and scaffold children's learning effectively so that every child accesses a **high-quality curriculum, that takes in to account pupils' individual and group needs**
- promote pupil independence and skill development so that **pupils make effective transitions and develop towards living healthy, fulfilling, independent adult lives** at a pace and level that is appropriate for them
- form **close working partnerships** with parents/carers/families and other agencies that support pupils' learning
- work within a local, regional and national stakeholder network to **improve standards for pupils with complex SEND**

Introduction

As part of the school's drive for continuous improvement and to further develop a culture of consistency; the Senior Leadership Team, in consultation with staff, parents and pupils have developed these Quality of Education principles.

Key Aims

The key aims of this policy are to:

- inform all staff of the standards expected of QofE at Becton School, inclusive of all sites
 - develop consistency of QofE standards across Becton School
 - communicate the core principles of high quality Education for pupils with complex SEND at Becton School
 - engage all stakeholders in a dialogue about the QofE for pupils with complex SEND
 - Guide staff to good practice examples and further reading
-

Standards of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

All staff at Becton School have a role in promoting high-quality teaching, learning and assessment. It is expected that all staff are able to:

- identify how their role and the role of others, impacts on the Quality of Education.
- adhere to the staff code of conduct (see Staff Code of Conduct Policy for further details)
- contribute to a climate where individual contributions are both recognised and valued
- communicate effectively
- engage pro-actively in Continuous Professional Development (CPD)
- ensure relevant information is gathered, shared and recorded in a timely way
- take responsibility for seeking help, advice or support if it is needed

All staff working with pupils in classrooms/alternative learning environments are expected to:

- be at least familiar with the Teachers Standards (see Further Reading at end)
- have a good understanding of what excellent Quality of Education looks like
- Understand and apply the core Quality of Education principles laid out in this policy

The following expectations should be read in conjunction with, and taken as part of the overall, job description for each corresponding role:

Senior and Curriculum Leaders are expected to:

- act as role models in their QofE practice for others around the school
- ensure all systems for monitoring QofE are fair, transparent and robust
- provide quality feedback about the standards of QofE to staff and other stakeholders at whole-school, team and individual level
- follow and apply all other related policies e.g. Safeguarding, Appraisal policy, Staff Code of Conduct

Teachers are expected to:

- embed the Teachers Standards in their everyday practice (see Appraisal Policy for further details)
 - effectively deploy and use the support of Teaching Assistants to raise standards of Teaching, Learning and Assessment
 - follow and apply all other related policies e.g. Safeguarding, Educational Visits and Trips, Feedback principals.
-

Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) and Teaching Assistants (TAs) are expected to:

- effectively support Teachers in their role to apply Teachers Standards
- take a lead role in organising and preparing the learning environment (see below – care of the environment)
- follow and apply all other related policies e.g. Safeguarding.
- lead well-planned lessons with support, where appropriate

Learning Mentors are expected to:

- provide additional pastoral support for pupils and families
- support Teachers and Teaching Assistants to create a calm, positive and creative learning environment.
- follow and apply all other related policies e.g. Safeguarding, Lone working policy

Admin and ICT staff are expected to:

- be aware of the organisational timetable
- ensure systems that support T, L & A, for example, ordering resources and information management systems (i.e. Bromcom) are well-organised and efficient
- adhere to proper confidentiality
- follow and apply all other related policies e.g. Safeguarding, ICT Acceptable Use policy

Governors and other volunteers are expected to:

- perform their core role in relation to challenging and supporting the Executive Headteacher to discharge his/her duties
- be familiar with and follow the standards expected and relevant guidance for staff and volunteers in order to perform their role more effectively

Quality of Education Core principles

Curriculum planning at Becton is underpinned by the principles of Generative Learning. We believe that the learning process depends upon the memory and knowledge that already exists in our minds.

The theory of generative learning is founded on the hypothesis that the human brain does not only passively observe the events or the environment in its surrounding. Rather, it builds its perceptions about experiences, scenarios, and problems. This idea positions learning as an active task that requires effort from learner. Knowledge has to be constructed and built upon, it cannot be downloaded or imparted.

Learning at Becton is coherent, planned and carefully sequenced as a result of checking what pupils already know and understand. All of the pupils who are on roll at Becton have a degree of cumulative dysfluency; finding these gaps is intrinsic to our planning and the way that we teach. Pupils are assessed using a variety of different ways upon admission to the setting to ascertain any gaps in learning. Planning is then done accordingly to help pupils both close gaps and build on and acquire new declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge. The planned learning also takes into account the pupil's medical needs and this is led by the multidisciplinary team. Learning is reinforced so pupils become more confident and fluent as they develop their independence.

Teaching staff should be familiar with the QofE core principles at Becton School. Staff should take responsibility for ensuring they understand the principles and that they are able to apply them in their everyday practice.

1. Preparing to teach – care of the teaching environment

The teaching environment; how it is resourced, presented and prepared has a big impact on setting the tone or climate for learning. It is important that any spaces being used for learning are appropriate for the task. Learning spaces should be uncluttered, purposeful and prepared.

Care of the teaching environment is a shared responsibility between all stakeholders, especially staff and pupils.

It is expected that **Teaching Assistants** take a lead role in ensuring resources are well-organised, classrooms are well-equipped, prepared for learning (including displays) and tidied appropriately following learning activities.

It is expected that **Teachers** share planning in a timely way; leaving adequate time for resources to be prepared and equipment to be put away.

If lessons require specialist equipment i.e. prepared card sorts, cooking ingredients, Science or Arts equipment that are not routinely stored or ordered in to school, then Teaching Assistants should be given *adequate time to prepare*.

Teachers and Teaching Assistants should model, for pupils, working together to care and manage the environment.

Pupils should be encouraged to take a role in clearing up and putting away to promote independent and organisation skills, alongside being part of a community with shared responsibilities.

2. A holistic approach to assessment and planning – knowing the individual

Teaching must take account of the needs of the individual child.

At Becton School it is recognised that deep learning is a complex, multi-sensory process. To engage fully in learning, the learner must be able to integrate emotional, cognitive and physical functions. Becton pupils experience difficulties in at least one of these areas and may also experience difficulties in executive functioning (integrating and organising information). From this perspective high-quality teaching, learning and assessment must take in to account the individual pupil needs and must be adapted for these needs.

Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer coined the term 'Emotional Intelligence' in 1990 describing it as *"a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action"*.

At Becton we use this theory to understand that a pupil's emotional and intellectual intelligences are separate. All staff play a role in helping to assess pupils in both these areas so that we can meet the pupil where they are; that support and interventions can be tailored to meet individual needs.

Because of their health needs, all staff carefully considered the most important and generative content when planning the curriculum. They are aware of what pupils typically struggle to learn, remember, use and apply and have constructed a curriculum to support this.

At times, pupils at Becton School are referred for closer observation and assessment, so that their needs can be fully understood and described in detail.

All staff play an important role in observing and assessing pupils in an educational environment. All staff should be aware of who to feedback to and the systems for sharing relevant information with multi-disciplinary and SEND networks within the school. This includes accessing and updating relevant fields on the SEND register.

3. Multi-disciplinary team (MDT) working

Multi-disciplinary team working is central to Becton School practice and improving pupil outcomes.

Due to the complex needs of Becton School pupils, it is essential that Becton School staff communicate well and work effectively with professionals in other disciplines. The sharing of knowledge, skills and expertise between disciplines and within multi-disciplinary teams (MDT) informs professional practice, MDT assessment and improves outcomes for pupils. It also inevitably leads to higher standards of teaching, learning and assessment; as strategies for improving engagement and learning can be more closely matched to the pupils' needs.

Sheffield Children's Hospital, Becton: Tier 4, and Chapel House all have close links with their in-patient, community and Local Authority networks and teams i.e. CAMHS, neuro-developmental, SaLT, SEND teams.

4. A working knowledge of Special Educational Needs

All staff are expected to have a working knowledge of a wide range of special educational needs (SEND), appropriate to their role.

The most prevalent SEND at Becton School is Autism or Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). There are high proportions of children with attachment difficulties, literacy and numeracy difficulties and other related cognitive processing and/or speech and language difficulties alongside smaller numbers of pupils with physical and developmental difficulties.

All teaching staff are expected to be aware of the barriers to learning for these children and have knowledge of which are the most appropriate strategies to use to support these children.

Teaching staff are expected to apply this knowledge in their planning, delivery and evaluation of lessons and other planned activities e.g. after school clubs, visits/trips etc.

5. Engaging in learning – relationships with pupils

Becton School pupils have, almost without exception, experienced negative messages about themselves in the form of; bullying; 'failure' in a mainstream environment; difficulty forming friendships; physical, sexual, emotional abuse; and/or other trauma, that are impacting adversely on their development.

Learning takes place in relationship with others. The process of learning is controlled by the limbic, or emotional system in the brain. The more emotion in a situation, the more likely it is that we will learn from it. In order for pupils at Becton School to make progress it is necessary that they form positive, warm and nurturing relationships.

As part of nurturing pupils to achieve their potential Becton School relationships are under-pinned by the core values:

- **curiosity**
- **empathy and**
- **unconditional positive regard**

These are essential ingredients in forming a school culture free from judgement, where attitudes and behaviours can be effectively challenged, where individuals are valued and reflection is integral to understanding of pupils and how then to scaffold further learning opportunities.

6. Behaviour management – behaviour as a means of communication

At Becton School we hold the belief that **complex behaviour is a way of communicating feelings and experiences that the child may be struggling to process, identify or describe to others.**

Becton School takes a positive approach to behaviour management and does not use punishment or chastisement as a way of managing behaviour. Feelings associated with punishment include shame, humiliation and fear. It is the view of Becton School that these do not lead to better outcomes for the child.

Becton staff are expected to apply the core values (curiosity, empathy, unconditional positive regard) and use observation, assessment and MDT working to; manage behaviour; identify which skills pupils need further help to develop; and to help the child reflect on the behaviour in order to develop further skills and self-awareness.

A child may not always be at the stage where they can connect consequences to action. Where a child is able to understand 'action-consequence' relationships the pupil should be supported to reflect at a level that is appropriate for them in order to help them develop further, appropriate boundaries and skills.

Where appropriate pupils should be supported through Individual Plans to scaffold their skill development.

7. Learning as a therapeutic tool – learning is intrinsically rewarding

Learning itself can be therapeutic.

The 'reward feeling' or 'penny-drop' moment that you get from being a successful learner is intrinsically motivating and so the focus of effort for teachers and teaching assistants is on providing high quality educational experiences for all pupils which in turn build identity, self-awareness, self-confidence and resilience which improve life outcomes for Becton School pupils.

8. Appropriate challenge – learning involves an element of failure or 'not-knowing'

Dependent on the level of challenge, success in learning requires varying levels of effort, persistence and a degree of failure.

Teaching staff recognise that the learning process is an emotional experience and that many Becton pupils struggle with managing the difficult emotions triggered by this process. For example, task avoidance may be a coping behaviour to minimise the fear of failing - which can be experienced as catastrophic by pupils with chronically low self-esteem.

Teaching staff at Becton School are expected to use their assessment and observation skills to ensure that challenge is pitched appropriately; to engage learners; and gradually build their resilience i.e. their ability to manage their emotions, put in effort, persist and to make use of failure (to reflect and learn from what did not go well as much as what has gone well).

This means teachers and teaching assistants need to continually assess the level of challenge a learner can cope with at any one time, as part of a larger picture.

9. High aspirations for pupils

We believe that **Becton School pupils are:**

- **capable of learning and growth when they have the appropriate support**
- **that potential is not something that can be reliably predicted**
- **that every pupil has unique talents and deserves the opportunity to discover them**

Therefore, at Becton School we make every attempt to ensure that pupils are set *realistic/challenging/aspirational* targets which encourage progression and that can be reviewed regularly.

We currently use PRISUM data to set aspirational academic targets (see Feedback principles)

10. Continuous Professional Development and reflective practice

It is important that teaching staff engage in regularly planned Continuous Professional Development (CPD). At Becton School we believe that learning is a lifelong journey and that access to high-quality CPD ensures that staff are able to continue moving towards their potential; in turn impacting on pupil outcomes through high-quality education.

QofE practice is reviewed through regular appraisal (see Appraisal policy). All staff are expected to take an active role in reflecting on and developing their practice. Reflective practice means regularly evaluating practice through asking appropriate evaluation questions. Sometimes this will involve getting feedback from others. It can take lots of different forms; 'What went well?'/ 'Even Better If?' questions, surveys aimed at getting feedback around a particular focus or attending supervision for example.

Reflective practice is integral to a healthy system where QofE tasks are high priority and QofE continually improves.

Further Reading

- Teachers Standards can be found at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/665520/Teachers_Standards.pdf
- Information for governors can be found at:
<https://www.nga.org.uk/Knowledge-Centre/Pupil-success-and-wellbeing/Educational-outcomes/How-do-those-governing-access-quality-of-teaching.aspx>

Books/Publications:

- Merlin C. Wittrock "Generative Learning Processes of the brain" (1974)
 - Geoff Barton, "Don't Call it Literacy" (2012)
 - Sarah Jayne Blakemore and Uta Frith, "The Learning Brain" (2005)
 - Ross W. Greene PhD, "The Explosive Child: A New Approach for Parenting and Understanding Easily Frustrated and Chronically Inflexible Children" (2014)
 - Matthew Johnstone, "Living with a Black Dog" (2009)
 - Isca Salzberger-Wittenberg, "The Emotional Experience of Teaching and Learning" (1993)
 - Dylan Williams, "Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards through Classroom Assessment" (1998)
 - Dr. Andrew Curran "The Little Book of Big Stuff about the Brain" (2008)
 - Jean Piaget "Origins of intelligence in the child" (1936)
 - Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer 'Emotional Intelligence' (1990)
-