

## Provision for pupils in the Structured Learners



*Table of changes*

| <i>Date</i>       | <i>Section of Policy</i>                       | <i>Amendment</i>  |
|-------------------|--|---|
| <i>October 22</i> | <i>Implementation</i>                          | <i>Target tracker removed. Communication assessments added.</i>   |
|                   | <i>Structured Curriculum</i>                   | <i>Added humanities / Science / Computing</i>   |
|                   | <i>Approaches and Interventions</i>            | <i>Sensory Circuit changed to The Engine Room<br/>Removed ABA<br/>Added Zones of Regulation<br/>Added scrummy crew<br/>Moved Sensory Integration to specific approaches</i> |
|                   | <i>The Engine Room</i>                         | <i>Additional sentence about the development of the new engine room</i>   |
|                   | <i>Multi-agency approach</i>                   | <i>Removed ILD</i>  |
|                   | <i>Training</i>                                | <i>Added Zones of Regulation<br/>Moved Attention Autism to all staff<br/>Changed specific "sensory integration" to "Complex sensory Integration &amp; sensory circuits"</i> |
|                   | <i>Delamere ND Pathway</i>                     | <i>Changed to TASC Pathway<br/>Changed head of structured learners to "lead staff"</i>  |
|                   | <i>Impact</i>                                  | <i>Amended section</i>  |
|                   | <i>Evidence for learning</i>                   | <i>Amended section</i>  |
|                   | <i>Role of the Head of Structured Learners</i> | <i>Removed</i>  |
|                   | <i>NAS Accreditation</i>                       | <i>Updated status to advanced</i>   |

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies: Teaching and Learning policy, Assessment and Recording Policy, Sensory Policy, Communication Policy, Transition Policy and Attachment Aware and Behaviour Regulation Policy.

### **Overview**

All pupils at Delamere School have an EHC plan [Education and Health Care plan] that defines them as having a learning difficulty. Most pupils who are under the umbrella of Structured Learners have a diagnosis of autism.

People with autism have difficulties in:

- non-verbal and verbal communication,
- social understanding and social behaviour,
- thinking and behaving flexibly (rigidity of thought) according to the situation
- sensory perception and responses

Children in the Structured Learners may also present with a range of additional needs, such as physical or health needs and behaviours which challenge.

All pupils within Structured Learners benefit from a structured approach to teaching.

There is a wide range of cognitive ability within the Structured Learners department which ranges from children working below P4 on the Engagement Profile through to children working above P8 within Delamere Steps.

The curriculum will look very different according to where children are at within this continuum.

As an example;

Children at an higher cognitive level (above P5) must have access to formal phonics regardless of them being within the Structured Learners department.

At the other end of the scale, children at a lower cognitive level (below P4) must have access to Intensive Interaction regardless of them bring within the Structured Learners department.

This situation further demonstrates the need for highly personalised learning journeys and provision.

### **Intent**

Our vision, our values and our rights underpin all of our policies and the education we deliver. Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that: "The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions that affect children". This policy has been created to keep the children at Delamere School safe and happy.

At Delamere School, we recognise that our pupils within the Structured Learners Department require access to a specific learning style. Our intent is to:

- Work collaboratively with families and other professionals to provide a highly personalised flexible and adaptable curriculum
- Provide an environment which is calm, distraction free and has a low level of visual and auditory stimulus
- Provide pupils with a high degree of visual and physical structure
- Provide a 'total-communication' environment, where all children are encouraged to communicate their wants, needs and interests
- Provide access to personalised sensory programmes to support regulation and increase access to learning
- Provide pupils with a means of requesting withdrawal to a chill-out area (Safe Space or other) when their levels of anxiety become raised
- Provide a wide range of experiences, including visits into the community, to support the development of social skills and independence
- Provide high-quality training and collaboration for all staff in order to ensure consistent approaches throughout the school

### **Implementation**

#### ***Personalised Learning Journey***

At Delamere, all pupils' personalised learning journeys are designed in collaboration with families and other professionals, with reference to:

- Delamere Curriculum
- EHC Plan
- Personalised Learning Targets
- B Squared online assessment tool

- Communication assessments, in collaboration with SALT
- Sensory Profiles

### ***Structured Curriculum***

Underpinning all teaching and learning is an emphasis on the development of Communication and Personal Development including: social interaction, social understanding, social communication and sensory regulation.

Pupils in the Structured Learners need access to a highly structured environment and teaching approach. Learning is broken down into small steps and repetition is key to help consolidate skills.

Structured Learners access the Delamere Curriculum, which includes:

- Communication: Receptive and Expressive Language
- Literacy: Reading and Writing
- Maths: Numeracy, Measurement, Geometry and Statistics where appropriate
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development including: social interaction, social understanding, social communication, eating and drinking skills.
- Physical development; gross motor skills, fine motor skills including games and swimming.
- Expressive Arts and Design; music, creating art and design, music, dance and drama.
- Humanities; Geography, History and RE
- Science
- Computing

Lessons are planned to facilitate development in these areas but specific teaching, for example in social skills, life skills and sensory desensitisation are also necessary. Pupils all access a full differentiated curriculum delivered in a way that addresses the triad of impairment and sensory issues.

### ***Sensory***

Many pupils with autism have sensory difficulties which can result in unusual or uncomfortable perception of sensory stimuli; this means that many children are easily distracted which can have a profound impact on their ability to focus on teaching and can impact upon behaviour.

All class staff at Delamere are trained in sensory needs and have access to a range of strategies to support children who experience these. Class teams may seek advice from the Head of Structured Learners and the sensory integration lead in order to develop individual personalised sensory diet plans. Longer Sensory Profiles/assessments may be conducted for pupils with autism with more complex sensory needs, following referral to the Sensory Occupational Therapist.

### ***Approaches and Interventions***

The teaching philosophy at Delamere School embodies the rationale of the SPELL approach developed by the National Autistic Society. This is: - provision of a Structured, Positive, Empathic and Low-arousal environment with good Links between school, home and outside agencies.

Structured teaching is delivered through specific approaches:

- Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children (TEACCH)
- Social Communication, Emotional Regulation, Transactional Support (SCERTS)
- Zones of Regulation
- Sensory Integration

Under these interventions, pupils have access to:

- Personalised learning programmes
- Visual prompts and cues; *symbols, photos, objects of reference*
- Individual or group visual schedules
- Micro-schedules
- Visual instructions
- Visual calendars
- Structured teaching
- Individual work-stations
- Opportunities to learn to work without prompting from an adult
- Social Stories
- Team Teach (Positive Behaviour Support)
- Calm areas / Safe Space
- The Engine Room
- Scrummy crew

Specific communication approaches used to support our Structured Learners are:

- AAC (Alternative Augmented Communication)
- PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System)
- PODD (Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display)
- Snap+ Core
- Intensive Interaction

### ***The Engine Room***

“Children and young people need sensory motor experiences to occur with frequency, intensity and duration to assist with the more complex aspects of their development.”

(Horwood, 2008)

The Engine Room was renovated in September 2022, following ongoing research into the impact of “sensory circuits” on behaviour and engagement. Sensory circuits provide a regular, structured opportunity to explore an environment which requires complex movements and concentration with the intention to prepare them for learning. Sensory circuits aim to reduce challenging behaviours in the classroom such as fidgeting or disrupting others, and essentially improve engagement for learning.

### ***Equal Opportunities and Inclusion***

Some pupils with a diagnosis of autism also attend classes in either the Experiential or Independent Learners Department. Staff throughout the school have a knowledge and understanding of autism and autism-specific strategies to ensure consistency for those who require a more structured approach to teaching and learning.

Structured Learners are provided with many ‘real life’ opportunities, for example, educational visits are used to help reduce rigidity, develop appropriate social skills such as waiting in shops or having snack in a café and learning about the world in general.

Pupils may also have opportunities to attend inclusion sessions with a range of local schools.

### ***Multi agency Approach and Working with Families***

The multi-disciplinary approach to pupils learning is a strength at Delamere and there are wide range of professionals that are dedicated to supporting pupils. The multi- agency approach enables, and gives value to all sources of knowledge when planning for our learners. It is acknowledged that different assessments will be used by different professionals. Professionals at Delamere include physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, school nurse, learning disability nurses, play therapy, specialist music teachers, sensory support services [HI and VI] and educational psychology.

Delamere has a strong commitment to working closely with parents. Ongoing dialogue via email, telephone or face to face enables shared feedback of information so that accurate assessment, planning and delivery of the curriculum can take place and children's learning can be developed.

### ***Training***

All class-based staff have regular training and updates in autism awareness. In addition, staff have in-service training and workshops in:

- Team Teach - Positive Behaviour Support
- Visual support and structured teaching
- AAC
- Sensory needs & support
- Intensive Interaction
- Social Stories
- Zones of Regulation
- Attention Autism

Some staff attend specific training, such as:

- TEACCH
- PECS
- Complex sensory Integration & sensory circuits

When staff attend specific training, there is an expectation that new skills will be shared across the general staff to ensure consistent, high quality provision throughout the school.

Staff are kept up to date with current research relating to the education and well-being of pupils with autism.

### ***The Delamere TASC Pathway***

The TASC Pathway group meet three times a year at Delamere School to decide collaboratively whether a diagnosis of autism should be given to an individual pupil. The group includes professionals from a variety of agencies including a Paediatrician, Educational Psychologist, Clinical Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapists and lead staff at Delamere.

Information is gathered from a range of professionals working with or caring for the child along with input from the child's parents and carers and brought to the meetings to inform the decision. NICE guidelines are referred to throughout. Parents or teachers can refer pupils to the TASC Pathway (with parental permission).

Assessments such as the Early Signs & Symptoms Checklist or ADOS will be used to aid diagnosis.

### **Impact**

- All children will form positive relationships with staff at Delamere
- All children will have access to a personalised curriculum and receive a wide range of experiences

- All children will have access to a total communication approach
- All children will make a good level of progress based on their starting points
- All children will receive high quality input from a range of professionals
- All children will have a functional form of communication
- All children will be able to recognise relevant emotions in themselves and others
- All children will have strategies to support self-regulation
- All children will have a basic understanding of rules and boundaries
- All children will have strategies to support transitions (micro or macro)
- All children will be able to form positive relationships
- All children will develop independence skills

### ***Evidence for Learning***

Pupils in the main body of school have an EHC Plan.

Children will have personalised learning targets which link to their EHC outcomes. Teachers assess progress and development of pupils by recording their attainment through B squared and through the Engagement Model where appropriate.

Assessment outcomes are reported as part of the Annual Review process. Analysis of pupil progress data is carried out throughout the year.

Detailed observations, photographs and video evidence are recorded and form the basis of our evidence for our summative annual review reports.

End of Year reports for parents

### ***NAS Accreditation***

In 2020, Delamere School achieved “advanced” status from the NAS accreditation programme, which we joined in 2014. Delamere’s autism provision is reviewed by specialists in autism on a tri-annual basis. This ongoing programme provides a valuable opportunity to gain an objective judgement of the quality of provision as well as informed future whole school planning and development. Provision for pupils on the autism spectrum is continuously monitored and evaluated as part of the self-evaluation process and forms part of the whole school development plan.

Policy Reviewed: November 2022