Teaching and Learning Policy

Woodland Rise School

Henry David Learning

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Proprietary Body Signed off

ZL & JH

1. Our Teaching Approach

- We teach through doing, not just talking.
- We scaffold tasks so pupils experience success quickly.
- We use slow pedagogy—deep, meaningful engagement rather than rushing.
- We prioritise movement, sensory integration, and outdoor time. • We build trust before we build challenge.

2. Readiness, Re-visiting and Engagement

We do not rush readiness. For some pupils, meaningful engagement may take months; building safety, rhythm, trust and belonging is itself part of the curriculum.

Some pupils need to revisit and reinforce earlier developmental stages, identifying gaps in experience, confidence, regulation or skill before new learning can take root.

3. Practical, Creative and Outdoor Learning

Craft and practical skills include woodwork, green woodworking, joinery, soft stone, clay, basketry, fibre crafts, earth-based crafts, nature-based making, tool care, fire craft, shelter building, natural pigments and seasonal making.

Activities are matched to age, stage, regulation and readiness, moving from accessible sensory tasks towards more complex, collaborative and high-supervision craft work.

Safe tool handling is taught slowly and respectfully, helping pupils develop trust, coordination, judgement, responsibility and confidence.

Seasonal craft, festivals and shared making give rhythm to the year and allow pupils to contribute to the beauty and life of the school.

4. Recognising and Evidencing Progress

We value evidence of learning in small steps, using observation, photographs, pupil reflection, craft records and EHCP-linked aims to recognise progress beyond traditional academic measures.

Students are supported to share, exhibit, gift or sell their work, learning pride, contribution and the healthy process of letting go.

5. Our SEND Teaching and Learning Principles

We believe that every pupil is capable of growth when learning is matched to their stage of readiness, regulation and trust. Progress may be academic, social, emotional, physical,

communicative, sensory or practical. We celebrate small steps, repeated atte mpts, increased confidence, emerging independence and the ability to engage more fully with people, materials and the world around them.

High expectations are central to our approach, but they are understood in the context of each pupil's needs, profile and starting point. For some pupils, high aspiration may mean tolerating a shared space, accepting support, communicating a preference, completing a practical task, returning after a difficult moment, or contributing to the school community in a meaningful way.

We start with relationships, safety and belonging. Learning is most successful when pupils feel known, accepted and emotionally held by trusted adults. Staff take time to understand each pupil's communication, sensory profile, interests, anxieties, strengths and patterns of regulation before increasing challenge.

We value pupil voice in all its forms. Some pupils communicate through speech, while others communicate through movement, gesture, behaviour, play, body language, creative expression, choice-making or sensory responses. Staff listen carefully to these forms of communication and use them to shape learning, support regulation and build genuine participation.

Our curriculum is broad, balanced and ambitious, but it is accessed through flexible pathways. Academic learning sits alongside practical work, craft, outdoor learning, movement, sensory exploration, communication, social development and therapeutic approaches. These are not additional to learning; they are core routes through which pupils make progress.

Assessment is ongoing, reflective and rooted in meaningful change. We use observation, EHCP outcomes, engagement, independence, communication, regulation, work samples, photographs, pupil reflection and staff professional judgement to recognise progress. Small steps are valued because they often represent significant developmental movement for our pupils.

We work in close partnerships with families, carers, therapists and external professionals. Families hold essential knowledge about a pupil's history, regulation, communication, sensory needs, interests and wellbeing. This partnership helps us create consistency, reduce barriers and support pupils to generalise skills across school, home and wider life.

We promote resilience through safe challenges, repetition, repair and encouragement. Pupils are supported to try again, ask for help, recover after difficulty and experience themselves as capable learners. Success is recognised through effort, engagement, contribution, reflection and increasing confidence, not only through finished outcomes.

6. Effective SEND Teaching Practice

Teaching pupils with SEND requires us to begin with the whole pupil. Before new learning can take root, pupils need to feel safe, regulated, connected and understood. Teachers therefore start from careful observation: how the pupil arrives, communicates, moves, responds, copes, connects and shows readiness. This knowledge shapes the pace, structure and level of support offered in each lesson.

Planning has clear learning intentions, but the route into learning remains flexible. Teachers may use direct instruction, modelling, guided practice, practical tasks, sensory exploration, outdoor learning, movement, rhythm, repetition, story, craft, shared problem-sotving or reallife responsibility. The approach chosen should be the one most likely to help the pupil engage, understand, practise and apply the learning.

Teachers scaffold learning so that pupils experience success while still being appropriately challenged. This may mean breaking tasks into smaller steps, reducing unnecessary language or sensory load, using visual or practical support, modeling the process, offering processing time, or supporting the first attempt before gradually building independence.

Regulation is treated as part of teaching, not separate from it. Teachers use predictable routines, trusted relationships, movement, sensory strategies, calm spaces, co-regulation and restorative approaches to help pupils remain available for learning. When behaviour communicates distress, avoidance, confusion or unmet need, staff respond with curiosity and support rather than assumption.

Communication is supported throughout the school day. Teachers create meaningful reasons for pupils to communicate, make choices, express preferences and influence what happens next. Spoken language may be supported with visuals, objects of reference, signs, symbols, gestures, modelling, processing time, communication aids or other approaches matched to the pupil's needs.

Learning is repeated, revisited and generalised over time. Teachers plan for overlearning and consolidation, recognising that a pupil may need many encounters with the same skill, concept or experience before it becomes secure. Opportunities are created to practise learning in different places, with different people and through different activities so that it becomes meaningful beyond one lesson.

Teachers work as part of a wider team around the pupil . EHCP outcomes, assessment information, family knowledge, therapeutic advice and staff observations all inform the teaching approach. Specialist advice is most effective when it is woven into everyday routines, interactions and learning opportunities.

Progress is recognised in many forms. Teachers look for increased engagement, reduced anxiety, improved regulation, clearer communication, curiosity, stamina, independence, social

connection, problem-solving, practical skill, academic understanding and pride in contribution. This helps us notice meaningful development and plan the next small step with care.

7. What Teachers Do in Practice

Teachers working with our SEND pupils are expected to translate the principles of this policy into consistent daily practice. This does not mean every lesson looks the same, but it does mean that pupils experience a predictable, thoughtful and responsive a pproach from the adults around them.

- Begin with connection: greet pupils calmly, notice how they arrive, and use known routines to help them settle.
- Check readiness before increasing demand, considering regulation, sensory needs, communication, confidence and emotional availability.
- Use clear, simple language supported by visuals, modelling, objects, gestures or other communication approaches where helpful.
- Break learning into small, achievable steps so pupils can experience early success and build confidence.
- Offer practical, sensory, movement-based or outdoor routes into learning where these support engagement and understanding.
- Provide enough repetition for learning to become familiar, secure and transferable.
- Notice and record small signs of progress, including engagement, regulation, communication, independence, persistence and contribution.
- Respond to behaviour as communication, looking for the need beneath the presentation and adjusting support accordingly.
- Build independence gradually by modelling, scaffolding, prompting, allowing processing time and reducing support when the pupil is ready.
- Use EHCP outcomes, family knowledge, therapeutic advice and staff observations to inform planning and review.
- Create opportunities for pupils to make choices, share preferences, take responsibility and contribute to the life of the school.
- End learning calmly, helping pupils reflect, celebrate effort, transition safely and know what will happen next.