

Reviewed: March 2015

Next Review: March 2016

Curriculum Policy

Northumberland PRU statement:

Northumberland Pupil Referral Unit endeavours to provide a safe, nurturing, community based environment that facilitates a personalised holistic approach to learning enabling pupils to reach their potential.

Inclusion statement:

We uphold the ideal of inclusion in its broadest sense and seek to involve all stakeholders in achieving this. As a team we aim to stimulate re-engagement, participation, interest and achievement by providing bespoke educational interventions, pupil-centered planning and solution-focused support – ultimately leading to successful educational integration.

Racial equality:

We are committed to eliminating racial discrimination, promoting good race relations and ensuring equality of opportunity.

These values are explicit to the ethos of the PRU and implicit in all policies and practices.

Context – pupils at the PRU:

Many of the pupils who attend the PRU have negative attitudes towards school and school subjects. Many have problems accessing large parts of the National Curriculum, caused by a combination of factors: poor literacy or numeracy skills; limited concentration; problems with interaction with other pupils, and a general lack of confidence and self-esteem. There is simply little point therefore, in attempting to replicate the lesson content and teaching approaches that have failed to motivate these pupils in the past.

Pupils attending Northumberland Pupil Referral Unit form a group which is unique within the county. A meaningful curriculum policy for this group therefore needs to take the following factors into consideration. First, pupils attend the unit for a relatively short time. Second, pupils are drawn from a wide range of schools across the county and will have experienced a wide range of teaching activities, topics and assessment methods prior to attending the PRU. Third, pupils' ages range from year two to year nine and the composition of teaching groups is constantly changing. Additionally, some pupils have significant barriers to learning; these include negative perceptions of school and a lack of confidence in their own ability to learn, specific learning problems and behaviour patterns which have become entrenched.

Staff at Northumberland PRU need to adopt a multi-layered approach, delivering exciting and challenging lessons which take into account all the factors above. Clearly a priority for each placement is to help pupils to improve their behaviour within school, but disruptive behaviour is frequently closely bound up with deep-seated fears and antipathies related to learning. A successful strategy for impacting upon pupils' learning is at the heart of an effective behaviour plan.

Curriculum Policy

The curriculum supports the aim of facilitating appropriate progression by providing the opportunity for accelerated academic, social and personal development.

The aim of the curriculum is to provide a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum which, as far as possible, fulfils the requirements of the National Curriculum whilst being sufficiently flexible to address the diverse and complex needs of the pupils referred to this school.

The content of these modules is linked to Out-of-Classroom-Learning themes wherever this is practicable. This helps to maintain children's motivation as they participate in exciting and challenging visits and provides a clear linkage between learning objectives and learning outcomes.

Northumberland Pupil Referral Unit aims to provide:

Continuity of learning by ensuring:

- accurate baseline assessments are made using information from schools, comprehensive 'Primary Assertive Mentoring' assessments and 'Readiness for Reintegration Scale' profiling
- grades and assessments are moderated and validated by comparison with those in mainstream core subjects
- staff have up to date knowledge, and understand links between mainstream and other appropriate alternative progression routes

Early identification of and support for individual needs by:

- close liaison with all schools and involved professional agencies
- close adherence to SEN procedures (see SEN policy and procedures)
- whole Unit support for cross-curricular improvement of basic skills, including ICT skills
- half termly progress meetings where attainment data, progress and intervention planning is scrutinised, monitored and reviewed
- referral to individual support sessions according to need
- sharing information on a regular and formal basis
- fortnightly mentoring and coaching sessions with keyworker

Supporting development of personal skills necessary to access academic curriculum by:

- involvement in target setting
- individualised PHSE programmes
- encouraging participation in personal challenges
- provision of individual counselling/Mentoring
- organising activities which help develop co-operation and social skills
- providing activities which allow for individual achievement
- including pupils in planning and self-assessment, wherever possible
- closely monitoring personal progression and adapting strategies as necessary

Encouraging inclusion and access by:

- being aware of the diverse social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds of all pupils and the local community, and reflecting this in curriculum planning, resources and displays
- using informal opportunities to consider moral and spiritual issues
- ensuring those with poor basic skills receive well targeted and effective support to overcome barriers to learning
- encouraging parents to be active members of the PRU community
- ensuring ILPs address individual barriers to learning
- differentiating the curriculum for individual pupils according to need by content, delivery, support and expected outcome

- develop and resource risk management strategies and plans that enable all to access the full curriculum wherever possible

Assertive Mentoring:

The curriculum is supported by 'Assertive Mentoring' a well structured system that integrates assessment, target setting, tracking, mentoring and checking in Writing, Reading and Maths.

This ensures the overall progress of individual students is carefully monitored and individual support is well targeted. All pupils have a keyworker assigned to them. The keyworker is within all pupils' lessons throughout the week and there is a timetabled coaching / mentoring session timetabled fortnightly.

The PRU aims to encourage all aspects of personal development by creating an ethos which encourages the development of integrity and a sense of community.

How will it be delivered?

The core curriculum is delivered in 'nurture group' classes of approximately 8 pupils of mixed age and ability. Northumberland PRU has four intervention groups based on the guiding principles of the 'nurture group' albeit carefully developed, planned and resourced to meet the differing ages, individual and often disparate needs of pupils referred to the unit.

The timetable

The first half hour of the day is spent in the 'kitchen/dining area'. Pupils are encouraged to prepare, serve and eat breakfast typically toast, cereals, juice and tea. During this time, both the adults and the children sit down together at the table; this enables the adults to model social conversation and engage in any problem-solving regarding a current issue that may have arisen within the group.

Other activities throughout the day vary according to the particular nurture group – but may include:

- A session when the children engage in **Free Play**; they can access a range of activities at this time and it is an ideal opportunity for staff to observe the children's learning and development of social and emotional skills. Table top and floor activities may be set up to cover each area of learning.
- A session when the children engage in **Group Time**; one member of the staff will lead the group whilst the other becomes a member of the group providing a role model for the children.

Focused Teaching Sessions - Core Subjects.

- These will include individually planned, differentiated and personalised learning in Literacy, and Numeracy (English and Maths). Learning will be informed by 'assertive mentoring' assessment and progress profiles. Teaching may be 1-1, in small groups or in whole classes.

Focused Teaching Sessions – Foundation Subjects.

The PRU attempts to provide a balanced curriculum that is relevant, appropriate and engaging. The afternoon session at the PRU tends to be thematic; topic based learning encompassing a range of cross curricular skills, knowledge and understanding from the foundation subjects. Numeracy and literacy skills taught and learned in the discrete lessons in the morning are developed, extended and practised in planned and incidental, cross curricular opportunities and activities in the afternoon.

Story Time

Where one member of the staff reads a story to the group as a whole while the other becomes part of the group once again. This enables them to model appropriate behaviour, listening skills, etc, and also support the children's enjoyment, learning and development of language skills.

Enrichment activities

Pupils are encouraged to engage, participate and succeed in activities and learning across the curriculum. The formal curriculum is supported and reinforced by a range of activities and learning opportunities aimed at stimulating re engagement, participation and interest. These include: cooking, crafts, sewing, farm, orienteering, nature walks, enterprise, sports, board games, creative play, role-play and drama.

Extra-curricular reward activities and 'attention' sessions. Tuesday (2.30-4.00pm)

Each class arranges weekly 'attention activities' a broad range of planned activities that pupils can work towards. Pupils can only access these sessions if they consistently work towards individual behavioral targets. The sessions are an alternative to detentions and they provide a powerful and popular incentive to pupils, whilst addressing the problem of pupils being 'negatively incentivised'; misbehaving and contriving situations aimed at getting detentions to access attention, support, someone to talk to or simply the warmth of the classroom. Activities contribute strongly to the social and emotional elements of the curriculum, and are also used to reinforce skills knowledge and understanding within the formal programmes of study.

Monitoring:

The effectiveness of the informal and formal curriculum is continually monitored through:

- regular reviews of individual pupil progress using PAM baseline information to calculate progress (*See Assessment Policy*)
- careful monitoring of attendance
- assessment of improvements in behaviour through the use of behaviour profiling
- regular in-class observations to monitor quality of teaching and learning
- the content of the curriculum is reviewed annually in light of new initiatives
- participation and engagement measured against behaviour targets
- pupil, parent and school surveys

How outcomes will be measured:

The PRU will endeavour to measure the quality, impact and relativeness of the curriculum through lesson observations, pupil and visitor feedback, evaluations of projects and assessment procedures relating to curriculum activities.

Outcomes will be measured via:

- the PRU's behaviour profiling systems
- exit surveys
- LA exclusion data

Promoting 'fundamental British' values as part of SMSC.

The PRU will promote the value of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Opinions and behaviour contrary to these values will be challenged.

Conclusion

In each academic subject, staff use their experience of working with pupils who are failing at school to devise courses which will deliver the desired objectives within each theme. Courses need to be coherent within the learning theme as well as the timescale of a placement, sufficiently interesting and fast-paced to re-motivate pupils who have switched-off from school, and capable of challenging the ablest while allowing sufficient differentiation to enable pupils with learning difficulties to be supported.

For some subjects – English, technology and humanities for example- it is possible to ‘cherry-pick’ the topics and approaches which most pupils will enjoy, while still covering a good deal of ground within the timescale. Such an approach also makes it easier to provide appropriate materials for pupils of a wide range of ages and abilities. Careful use of whole-group teaching is important in fostering the vitally important social skills many of our pupils lack. Individual lessons plans are in place for all pupils and the work set is dictated by National Curriculum, individual profiles and behaviour targets rather than simply by year group. This individualised approach enables pupils to be taken out of lessons to work one-to-one with support staff at very short notice and with minimal loss of continuity.

The resulting planning should lead, by the end of a pupil’s placement, to a detailed assessment of what a child is able to do in subject areas across the curriculum when he or she enters the PRU, an insight into at least some of the barriers to learning, and a comprehensive record of teaching strategies and outcomes. Most important, the process should have laid the foundations of a new attitude to learning by the pupil, with a shift in emphasis from resistance and low expectations to increasing awareness of the value of learning.

_____ **Chair**

_____ **Date**