

April 2020



# SENSORY CURRICULUM POLICY

**HORIZONS EDUCATION TRUST  
AMERICAN LANE, HUNTINGDON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE. PE29 1TQ**

## **AIMS**

At Spring Common Academy we aim to:

- create a happy and stimulating environment for the physical, intellectual, emotional and social development of the pupils which takes into account their special needs and individual differences;
- encourage respect for and tolerance of other races, religions and cultures;
- help pupils acquire the knowledge and skills required for everyday living and, through this, make informed choices;
- provide pupils with opportunities to learn about themselves, their society and their culture;
- provide opportunities for pupils to assess evidence, make decisions, negotiate, discuss, listen, make and deal with relationships, solve problems and work independently;
- foster a sense of pride and community within school and in the wider environment.

Although these aims are set out separately, the qualities, attitudes, knowledge and skills developed are interdependent. A whole school approach is essential, including all adults who teach, help and care for our pupils.

## **RATIONALE**

Sensory experiences alone are not an end in themselves, but rather a means of accessing and developing the curriculum. A rich sensory environment, especially when tailored for pupils with specific needs, can support development and attainment. Part of this is ensuring the environment and stimulus is optimum to enable individual pupils to focus and self-regulate. Sensory experiences need to be extended into all areas of school life, and therefore part of the broad, balanced and relevant curriculum we offer to our pupils.

A sensory curriculum is part of a whole school curriculum or learning experience. It covers the development of the senses of taste, smell, touch, tactile experiences, vision, sound and bodily experiences. It also covers development of the integration of all these senses to form a multi-sensory approach for the child to use learning situations. Very special children usually find a sensory curriculum is a vital part of their learning process. It is a tool for learning.

## **DEFINITIONS OF SENSORY IMPAIRMENT**

In the normal course of development we develop the ability to process and make sense of our world through our ability to see, hear, smell, taste, touch. We also have a sense of our bodies (proprioception) and a sense of ourselves in space (vestibular system). These 7 senses underpin all our learning and interaction with the environment around us. Some people suffer an impairment in one or more of these areas, which may impact on their overall development as a learner.

The sensory range extends from profound and permanent impairment through to lesser and temporary levels loss. Impairments may arise from physical, neurological or metabolic causes. At Spring Common Academy we recognise that pupils with a sensory impairment may be found across the whole academic ability range. There are four principle areas of impairment (Appendix 1).

## **ENTITLEMENT**

All pupils are entitled to a curriculum which engenders their personal and cultural development and prepares them for adult life.

The curriculum offered is delivered to and accessed by every pupil regardless of gender, ability, racial or cultural differences. These issues are addressed fully by the School's Equal Opportunities Policy.

## **INCLUSION**

Pupils who attend Spring Common Academy have a range of needs. A whole school ethos is promoted which encompasses and values all pupils and their families. There is a climate which supports flexible and creative responses to individual needs. Appropriate assessment and support arrangements are in place, both within the school and involving external agencies, so that children's needs are properly addressed. All Staff have access to suitable professional development opportunities which will support inclusive practice. The school will share its knowledge and expertise with other educational establishments in order to promote inclusive practices.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

We aim to provide a stimulating multi-sensory curriculum (Appendix 2) for all our students who will benefit from this approach, to encourage more awareness of visual, auditory and tactile experiences. This method gives rise to new learning and self-awareness, using all the senses to access the curriculum and develop learning behaviours.

At Spring Common Academy we currently employ a specialist TA for sensory support and a teacher has responsibility for the coordination of sensory provision. These members of staff work with identified pupils, monitor and measure impact of interventions and run specialist sessions in addition to their regular work in our classrooms. Their aim is to empower pupils to understand their sensory needs and work toward independent regulation for later life.

## **ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING**

Assessment is an integral part of teaching. This extends to the use of sensory approaches to teaching and learning, where assessment is a continuous process, which takes into account the learning process and the way pupils approach and deal with tasks. Where appropriate, pupils will be involved with self-assessment.

Any notable progress made can be reported to parents via the Annual Summative Report. Pupils have a sensory profile where appropriate which details their sensory behaviours and strategies drawn up in consultation with parents and professionals. This is updated and shared with parents and carers annually and a visual form is displayed in the classroom sensory hub. There is regular feedback from specialist teachers for the visually and hearing impaired.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Any monitoring or observation of planning, teaching and learning through a sensory approach will take place in accordance with the school's monitoring cycle. Please refer to the current Sensory Action Plan for specific information regarding monitoring and evaluation for the current academic year.

## **HOME-SCHOOL LINKS**

We value parents'/carers' involvement in their child's learning. Teachers keep parent's informed of any approaches used in school.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

This policy has been written according to the guidelines laid down in the school's Equal Opportunities Policy. A sensory approach is intended to include all children, irrespective of their ability, gender, race or ethnicity.

## **POLICY REVIEW**

The policy will be reviewed annually and updated as appropriate by the designated teacher with responsibility for sensory co-ordinator and SMT, with input from other staff and advisors, as appropriate. The policy will be reviewed by Governors.

*Linda Crook*

Linda Crook, teacher with responsibility for sensory, 27/04/2020

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1:**

The principle categories of impairment are:

- **Hearing Impairment (HI)**  
'Hearing impairment' ranges from a mild hearing loss to profound deafness. Hearing loss may be because of conductive or sensory-neural problems and can be measured on a decibel scale. Four categories are generally used: mild, moderate, severe and profound.  
Pupils are regarded as having a hearing impairment if they require hearing aids, adaptations to their environment or particular teaching strategies in order to access the concepts and language of the curriculum.
- **Visual Impairment (VI)**  
'Visual impairment' ranges from minor impairment through to blindness. Pupils are regarded as having a visual impairment if they require adaptations to their environment or specific differentiation of learning materials in order to access the curriculum.
- **Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI)**  
Pupils with multi-sensory impairment have a combination of visual and hearing difficulties. They are sometimes referred to as deaf/blind but may have some residual sight or hearing.

➤ **Sensory processing disorder (SPD; also known as sensory integration dysfunction)**

Sensory processing disorder has been characterized as the source of significant problems in organising sensation coming from the body and the environment. This disorder will often lie concurrently with a diagnosis of Autism. Our pupils may demonstrate oversensitivity (hypersensitivity) to incoming experiences such as noise or light. This can lead to pupils avoiding sensory experiences and becoming anxious and overwhelmed (over processing), a barrier to focus and learning. Some pupils may demonstrate under sensitivity (hyposensitivity). This causes pupils to be sensory seeking—they look for more sensory stimulation manifested in behaviours such as chewing, rocking, pressure seeking or vocalising.

Again this can interfere with the ability to focus on another’s agenda and the learning task at hand.

**Appendix 2:**

We offer a range of multi-sensory curriculum activities including:

- Sensory room sessions
- Sensory integration room sessions
- Ball pool sessions
- Access to dark dens
- Horse riding
- Swimming
- Hydrotherapy
- Ipac
- Aromatherapy massage
- Sensory story sessions
- Body awareness programmes
- Sensory circuits
- A sensory hub in each classroom (this provides pupil sensory profile information for staff and tailored equipment to support pupils sensory regulation throughout the day)

Policy agreed on: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed on behalf of the Trustees: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee: CURRICULUM \_\_\_\_\_

Author: Linda Crook \_\_\_\_\_

Review date (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Website **Y/N**