



POLICY ON THE CURRICULUM

Curriculum Statement

'The pre-school and school at NICE provide Conductive Education for children with cerebral palsy, other motor disorders and associated difficulties. Conductive Education promotes children's social, cognitive, emotional, physical, communication and self-care development through engagement in active learning experiences to promote independence. Conductive Education is the vehicle through which children are given access to the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and National Curriculum entitlement.'

School Character

The National Institute of Conductive Education (NICE) has a distinctive philosophy, which determines the nature of the curriculum provided for pupils attending its Cygnet Transition and school groups.

Conductive Education is not a treatment or a therapy and offers no cure. It is a system of habilitation and rehabilitation for children and adults with motor disorders. At pre-school and school age, conductive provision is delivered as special education.

When people first become aware of Conductive Education they usually emphasise the system's success at teaching children and adults to develop greater bodily control. Although this is a central concern, as a system of education (rather than simply exercises or training) it not only aims to improve motor skills and function but also to transform development as a whole, prioritising emotional and intellectual aspects. It offers a philosophy for bringing up and educating children to be self-sufficient and independent that corresponds very closely with many parents' own personal priorities for how their children should be taught.

Priorities for learning

All children who attend NICE have motor disorders, which manifest themselves in a variety of ways. A child may have associated learning difficulties, accompanying sensory dysfunctions and/or behaviour difficulties. The children's needs are highlighted in their individual statements of special educational need (SEN) or in their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC). These form the basis of their Individual Conductive Education Plans (ICEPs). The children's needs are the main priority when planning the curriculum at NICE:

'Provision for these needs is a legitimate and essential element of the curriculum and should be planned for. This provision enhances individual pupils' readiness to learn in many ways for example by:

- supporting the accurate identification and assessment of individual needs in language and communication;
- positioning pupils so that they learn effectively;
- helping pupils to maintain good posture, developing appropriate muscle tone and ease of movement, and encouraging the development, refinement or maintenance of skills in independent mobility;
- helping pupils to manage eating and drinking;
- promoting relaxation and support to help pupils manage stress and anxiety;
- promoting pupils' autonomy and independence through the use of specialist aids and equipment;
- developing pupils' self-esteem;
- allowing pupils' behaviour and alternative ways of communicating to be acknowledged and understood.'

Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties QCA (2009).

Conductive Education focuses on enabling pupils to develop their skills for learning. These include working with other group members, reflecting on their own learning, learning to solve problems and developing thinking and enquiry skills. Pupils are also enabled, through the process of Conductive Education, to develop their personal and social, behavioural and daily living skills.

The contribution of the family

Where a pupil is receiving SEN support, schools should set clear goals involving the parents at least termly, detailing the activities and support that will help achieve them, review progress and identify the responsibilities of the parent, the pupil and the school.

'The views of the families of pupils with learning difficulties should be taken into account in all aspects of the curriculum, including assessment and reporting, in line with the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2014. Practice Guidance for the Foundation Stage outlines features of effective practice of working with families in the early years. These apply to every stage of the education of all pupils. Examples are:

- all parents and carers are made to feel welcome, valued and necessary by being able to work jointly with other parents, carers and staff;
- the knowledge and expertise of parents, carers and other family members are used to support learning opportunities;
- parents, carers and practitioners talk about and record information about the pupil's progress and achievements, for example, through meetings or making a book about the pupil.

'Individual (Conductive) Education Plans should be devised, wherever possible, with the involvement of parents, carers, other professionals and pupils. Some parents and carers support schools by working on the development of skills at home. The families of pupils with learning difficulties, in particular, may require consistent emotional and practical support from schools'.

Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties QCA (2009).

Parents place their children at NICE to learn through Conductive Education and we work in close partnership with them to provide education which meets their children's needs and requirements.

All parents are made to feel welcome at NICE and their views are always sought in matters connected with their children. For example, they contribute to the writing of their children's ICEPs and are invited to observation days, open days, asked to contribute written evidence of their wishes before the Annual Review meeting, contribute fully to the meeting itself and complete annual questionnaires about the quality of the provision at NICE.

It is very important that parents use their own knowledge and expertise of their children's needs to support and develop learning opportunities within the family setting. In order to achieve this, parents of children attending school group have record sheets sent home weekly to inform them of the curriculum activities their children have been involved in and homework is devised to reinforce concepts learnt within the school setting. In the Cygnet Transition Group, information about current work is displayed on the walls outside the group room and discussed with parents after each session.

In our school group each term we hold a parent workshop on a carefully chosen theme. In the past these have been on e.g. self care, speech and manipulation, writing etc. Parents are asked to give feedback and ideas for future workshops.

We encourage parents to record information about any work carried out at home so that we can use this information in assessment and recording of the child's learning in a variety of settings.

Aims of Conductive Education at pre-school and school age

The aims of the Cygnet Transition and School Groups at the National Institute are:

- to 'conduct' (lead) the development of personality, to achieve activity, problem-solving, self-expression, spontaneity and independence;
- to work towards the recognised childhood 'milestones' in every aspect of a child's development;
- to create high standards of learning experiences for all children, through the provision of Conductive Education;
- to provide access to the National Curriculum and also to the Prime areas and some aspects of the specific areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum through a conductive approach;
- to create a lively and stimulating environment that is exciting today, as well as a preparation for the future;
- to create a caring, secure environment, so that all in school feel a sense of worth;
- to promote pupils' social, spiritual, moral and cultural development in preparation for their future life experiences;
- to create a partnership with parents and relevant professionals;
- to develop a place for the school within the community;
- to prepare children for full-time school education in a conductive setting or elsewhere;
- to maximise the child's potential for full inclusion within society;
- to maintain and develop the essential qualities of Conductive Education; to ensure that Conductive Education develops with standards appropriate for the teaching of future conductive professionals.

Features of Conductive Education

Features of conductive pedagogy (teaching) include the following:

- firm commitment to an optimistic educational philosophy that regards development as dependent upon learning which occurs through activities which are more than mechanical exercises but models of how to solve problems and lead on to independent learning;
- teaching by conductors, specially trained to enhance the whole development of learners;
- teaching in groups, so that motivation to learn comes from other learners;
- an organised and integrated routine, including programmes in which the focus of teaching may change, but all-round learning continues at all times;
- learning and development are maximised when individuals determine their own goals and are highly motivated to reach them;
- working towards the goals and processes of ordinary development, looking for success from the personal efforts of learners without unnecessary reliance on complicated aids and adaptations;
- use of ‘facilitation,’ any means to promote learning (may include, physical, emotional, verbal or rhythmic guidance/assistance);
- the use of rhythm and singing to enable the solution of the task within a given time period and to import rhythm to a movement;
- teaching the children to achieve for themselves with the least necessary help;
- a commitment to providing quality services and seeking highest standards from staff, through close co-operation and positive relationships with children, their families and carers and other professional agencies; maintaining a sensitivity to the individual needs of children and their families through a philosophy which emphasises the strengths and abilities of those children and families; a belief in the power of teaching and learning to create new possibilities for independent and creative thought and activity; and the application of equality of opportunity to all who require our services.

Planning the curriculum

‘School must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based and which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and
- prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.’
(DfE 2014)

There are no nationally specified time allocations for particular subjects. The decision of how to allocate time is for individual schools to make. In determining the curriculum at NICE we have taken the following factors into consideration:

- the needs of the children in terms of their all-round development and learning;
- the aims of Conductive Education for children with motor disorders and associated learning difficulties and the aims of our Cygnet Transition Group and School Groups;
- the requirement to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which includes the Early Years Foundation Stage or the New National Curriculum and RE;

It is essential that the curriculum at NICE is based upon the needs of the children and that these needs are addressed in a non-compartmentalised way to ensure consistency with the aims of Conductive Education and to ensure that all round learning takes place. ‘Schools use a range of effective strategies for managing time...these include giving significant time to those parts of the curriculum which are priorities for their pupils, for example, communication, physical development or PSHE’ (Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties: General guidance, QCA, 2009). As all children attending NICE have physical, communication and personal care needs these are given a priority in the curriculum. This can be seen in the way the daily routine and timetable of each of the groups has been devised.

The Cygnet Transition and School Groups each have daily routines, which interweave the requirements of the Prime areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage or National Curriculum with the demands made by the children’s needs and their statements of SEN.

Cognitive and motor development needs are met simultaneously in all sessions of the day with the focus of the session changing from, for example, Maths to Speech and communication to motor co-ordination to Personal Social and Health Education.

Strategies for managing time and meeting children’s requirements effectively

There are a number of strategies that we use to enable children’s priority needs to be met as well as to fulfil the requirements of the curriculum:

- Significant time is allocated within each daily routine to addressing children’s movement, mobility, communication and personal care needs e.g. toilet training receives high priority with all children attending NICE learning how to use a potty or toilet as soon as it is appropriate;
- Daily sessions are allocated to core aspects of the curriculum such as English and Mathematics, while other subjects are taught weekly;
- In the EYFS the timetable is devised to enable the areas of learning to have the appropriate emphasis, based upon the children’s needs and national requirements;
- History and Geography are taught in alternate half-term blocks;
- Some aspects of subjects are taught in more depth than others with priority being placed upon those parts which emphasise elements that

- are of significance to the children attending our school;
- PE and Music provide focus and develop essential skills and so are taught throughout all our programmes;
- The whole daily routine forms our curriculum and we see mealtimes, toileting and dressing programmes as of as much significance as any other part of the curriculum as they meet the children's priority needs;
- Children's ICEP targets are addressed throughout each day; specific periods of time are not allocated to their achievement. This gives the opportunity for frequent learning and practising of skills;
- Some activities are carried out in blocks at certain times of the year in order to teach and practice skills and provide frequent reinforcement. These may take the place of timetabled sessions at these times e.g. a series of Art or Music workshops may take place over a period of two or three weeks.

Curriculum Planning

Planning for progression

'Planning involves the careful and deliberate sequencing of curriculum content and experiences which build on previous learning and achievements to promote further learning...For pupils with learning difficulties, progression is not necessarily only movement up a hierarchical ladder of skills and knowledge. Lateral progression is also important' (Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties, 2009, p.17).

Policy statements are produced for each subject area and help to form the complex curriculum taught at NICE.

Staff plan carefully taking into account all the factors mentioned in previous sections and the need to balance familiar experiences with new challenges. Materials need to be carefully chosen, ensuring that pupils' intellectual, physical and sensory needs are met.

Long-term planning identifies the content of study over a period of time, shows links between subjects and how the child's all-round development can be maintained while being engaged in a National Curriculum task.

Planning in the medium-term indicates learning outcomes, which have been appropriately differentiated for groups of children, provide recording and assessment ideas, activities and resources.

Short-term or weekly plans describe in detail the outcomes intended for each child or small groups of children. These are based on children's ICEP targets; individual facilitation needs and their interests and prior achievements. They describe the children's intended activities and set out recording and assessment opportunities. It is in short-term planning that staff consider the grouping possibilities to ensure children's maximum learning. This may mean that children work with the whole group, in pairs or individually at different times.

Evaluations of these activities are then recorded to inform future planning.

Work is usually practical enabling children to have opportunities to refine and develop their gross and fine motor skills whilst engaged in National Curriculum activities.

Individual Conductive Education Plans (ICEP)

In order to highlight the priorities for each full time individual child, an ICEP is devised by staff in conjunction with parents. The priority needs are identified in the child's statement of SEN or EHC, if he/she already has one, or by observation and assessment by staff at NICE. Three or four targets are identified that can be focused upon each term with strategies for teaching; the provision required to meet the targets; where this should take place; when the plan is to be reviewed and a comment on the outcome of the target. These plans are reviewed three times each year and following review are sent to the child's funding LA.

We liaise with the schools where our part time children attend. This is providing the best chance for the pupils to achieve their targets. The completed IEP forms then send back to the schools with our evaluation and suggestions for new aims.

The Curriculum at Cygnet Transition Group at NICE

The National Institute offers, part-time places for young children. The Cygnet Transition Group's curriculum is based on the three prime areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (2014) focusing on Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development in a conductive framework. This complements the children's early years education at their main setting.

The skills, knowledge and understanding, which pre-school pupils will require as a preparation for future learning through the National Curriculum, are taught throughout the routine of the session. . Along with their gross and fine motor development the children are developing their listening skills, expressive language skills, knowledge of their environment, perception skills, fine manipulation, hand-eye co-ordination, mathematical skills, creative skills,

self-care skills, personal, social and emotional skills.

The conductive programme is delivered through weekly topics, which is the framework through which our Cygnet Transition Group's curriculum is taught. These topics cover knowledge appropriate to the children's ages, personal interests and abilities including: the seasons, weather, shapes, colours, hygiene, transport, etc. These themes are introduced through structured play (games, role-play, rhymes and songs) at the beginning of each programme and run throughout each programme. The prime areas of learning of the EYFS are carefully incorporated into conductive programmes and medium and short term planning reflect how learning in these areas is incorporated in detail.

Work is stimulating and practical thus developing the children's social skills, gross and fine manipulation skills as well as preparing them for National Curriculum work. RE, Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Music permeate all aspects of the curriculum.

Children's progress is assessed in a variety of ways such as Individual Conductive Education targets, by using the B squared Connectiv steps assessment scheme and through the GMFM. Observations are recorded in regular written reports placed into the children's files. Learning outcomes for each programme are kept in the short term planning folder.

The curriculum at school age at NICE

The children in School Group follow the National Curriculum Key Stage 1 or 2 programme of study appropriately modified and differentiated for their needs. Some children who have severe learning difficulties follow a modified programme of study based upon small steps leading to level 1 of the National Curriculum (P-levels), with some work being taken from the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum.

Children's progress is assessed and recorded on weekly short-term plans; in children's personal files and in Annual Review reports. Children's work is kept to ensure progression is taking place.

Curriculum Policy Development

The Deputy Head and the Leading Conductor are the co-ordinators of policy development at the National Institute of Conductive Education.

Utmost care is paid to all aspects of the child's needs from the social and emotional to the curricular. The children's particular physical, learning and communication difficulties are taken into account within this planning process. Strategies for enabling children to work towards the Early Learning Goals and make progress within the National Curriculum are exchanged and developed.

The national curriculum is just one element in the education of every child. There is time and space in the school day and in each week, term and year to range beyond the national curriculum specifications. The national curriculum provides an outline of core knowledge around which teachers can develop exciting and stimulating lessons to promote the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills as part of the wider school curriculum.

Policy Review

Once established and agreed, each curriculum policy is reviewed yearly in order to ensure that they all remain up to date and appropriate. However NICE will remain responsive to change and innovation and, to that end, changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum, National Curriculum and other developments will be considered as they arise and policies amended as appropriate.

Subject Planning and Evaluation

See Policy on Planning and Evaluation

Assessment, Record-Keeping and Reporting

Recognising progress

Making progress concerns pupils' development and change. For most pupils with learning difficulties, achievements can be predicted and planned for and progress can be shown by increased knowledge, skills and understanding. Some may follow expected developmental patterns, but not necessarily at the same age or rate. Progress may be made in some areas of development but not in others. For some pupils, progress may be unpredictable or very personal and may possibly only be demonstrated in particular environments or with specific people or materials.

Progress may be recognised when pupils with learning difficulties:

- develop ways to communicate from the concrete (body language and objects of reference) to the abstract (pictures, symbols, print, signs, ICT and the spoken word);
- develop a range of responses to social interactions from defensiveness through resistance (for some pupils, a positive response) to tolerance; and from passive cooperation toward active participation with individuals, in groups and in wider social circumstances;
- develop a range of responses to actions, events or experiences even if there is no clear progress in acquiring knowledge and skills;
- demonstrate the same achievement on more than one occasion and under changing circumstances;
- demonstrate an increase in knowledge and understanding about a subject;
- demonstrate an ability to maintain, refine, generalise or combine skills over time and in a range of circumstances, situations and settings;
- move from a dependence on secure and predictable routines toward a greater degree of autonomy shown by risk-taking and increased confidence;
- demonstrate a reduced need for support, for example, from another person, from technology, from individualised equipment, in carrying out particular tasks;
- develop a wider regular use of learning positions and learning environments, reducing the need to present activities in consistent and personalised ways;
- show a reduction in the frequency or severity of behaviour that inhibits learning through more appropriate behaviour;
- demonstrate an increased ability to cope, for example, with frustration and failure, with new or challenging learning opportunities or situations;
- decide not to participate or to respond.

Assessment for learning and record keeping

Effective assessment and record keeping at NICE is supported by:

- ensuring staff observe during all units of work and record their observations in short-term plans and in each pupil's reports written termly or half termly according to the subject;
- targeting specific pupils for observation and recording in particular lessons, ensuring that all learners are assessed in all subjects over time;
- ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities for observation and record keeping for the lessons they teach and the children whose files they up-date;
- involving pupils in their own assessment and maintaining a record of work to provide evidence of their engagement and/or attainment in activities. This may be by a variety of media e.g. photos, recordings, use of ICT, pupil files.

Working like this means that assessment, record keeping and acknowledging progress and achievement become an integral part of teaching and learning for all pupils. Some pupils may monitor and analyse their own strengths and weaknesses; others may indicate their preferences within and between activities, some with help from staff.

As with all pupils, where possible, pupils with learning difficulties attending NICE will be involved in monitoring their own progress.

Recording the context in which learning takes place helps to build up the profiles of individual pupils. Regular monitoring and recording of pupils' responses and progress across the curriculum identifies areas where pupils are making steady progress and where progress is not being maintained. The responses of some pupils may change from lesson to lesson and subject to subject and may be dependent on factors such as:

- preferences for certain members of staff
- proximity to certain pupils
- different environments
- the time of day
- access to favourite items of equipment
- particular sorts of sensory experience
- subject contexts
- preferences for subject-specific experiences
- emerging talents in particular subject areas.

Recording such information and keeping up-to-date records can help staff build on what they know pupils can do, and make decisions about the need to adjust teaching methods, provide additional support or look into factors that may affect performance, such as a deterioration in health or a change in home circumstances.

Recognising attainment

The framework provided in Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties, (QCA, 2009, p.35) can help teachers recognise attainment below level 1 of the National Curriculum for children above the age of five. It describes possible changes in individual pupils' responses and behaviour as their early perceptions of experiences and their increasing involvement in the learning process develop into areas of knowledge, skills and understanding. The development of internal learning processes, for example, thinking skills, is shown by degrees of attention, discrimination and participation in experiences and activities.

The framework recognises attainment by considering pupils' abilities to:

Encounter

Show awareness

Display attention and response

Engage

Participate

Become involved

Gain skills

The framework should not be used as a tool to measure hierarchical and linear progress mechanistically from encounter to attainment. It is possible, for example, that pupils' responses may change from day to day and from experience to experience. The pupil who used to be an active participant may, for a range of complex and (hopefully) temporary reasons, show little response in a new setting. Later, the same pupil may give responses showing that new skills, understanding or areas of knowledge have been strengthened. This framework will help staff to gain a greater understanding of how pupils move through a learning process.

The B-squared scheme is used by staff in Pre-school and School groups to record on-going evaluations of children's progress and attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage and National Curriculum and contributes to summative assessment at the end of each year or key stage

Using performance descriptions to recognise attainment

Performance descriptions are set out in each of the QCA's subject handbooks. These have been developed using the framework set out above. They also build on and refine, in response to requests and involvement of teachers, the P scales for English and mathematics set out in the DfES/QCA booklet, Supporting the target setting process.

These descriptions outline early learning and attainment for each subject in the National Curriculum, including citizenship, RE and PSHE. They chart progress up to level 1 through eight steps - P1 to P3, which show general attainment, and P4 to P8, which show subject-specific attainment.

The performance descriptions for P1 to P3 are common across all subjects. They outline the types and range of general performance that some pupils with learning difficulties might characteristically demonstrate. From level P4, many believe it is possible to describe performance in a way that indicates the emergence of subject-focused skills, knowledge and understanding.

The descriptions in the subject materials are used by staff at NICE:

- develop or support more focused day-to-day approaches to ongoing teacher assessment by using the descriptions to refine and develop long-, medium- and short-term planning;
- track linear progress ;
- identify lateral progress by looking for related skills at similar levels across subjects;
- record pupils' overall development and achievement, which is carried out at the end of a year or a key stage;
- decide which description best fits a pupil's performance over a period of time and in different contexts, using their professional judgement.

At NICE, in common with some other schools, we consider the P scales useful as one of several mechanisms when setting school improvement targets.

Adapted from Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties, QCA, 2009.

Also see Policy on Assessment, Record-Keeping and Reporting

Special Educational Needs

See Policy on Special Educational Needs

Equal Opportunities

See Policy on Equal Opportunities

Cross-Phase/School Transfer

See Policy on Cross-Phase/School Transfer

Professional Development

NICE views professional development for its staff as vitally important. Staff attend training courses and conferences relevant to their particular areas of work and make arrangements to disseminate the important information gained to other staff.

In addition, Children's Services staff have five training days each academic year when children do not attend services and appropriate training is organised for staff. These dates are shown in the prospectus which is published each year.

See Policy on Staff Performance and Development Appraisal.

Resources and Accommodation

The development of curriculum materials and resources is carried out on a continuous basis. The stock of relevant materials and books can be seen in the resource room, the reception classroom, and leading conductors' offices as well as cupboards located in the corridor adjacent to the School Group.

Review Frequency: Annually **Next Review:** June 2016