



## POLICY ON THE CURRICULUM

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# POLICY ON THE CURRICULUM

Review: Annually

Date of review: June 2022

## 1. CURRICULUM STATEMENT

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- 1.1 *'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.'*

## 2. SCHOOL CHARACTER

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- 2.1 The National Institute of Conductive Education (NICE) has a distinctive philosophy, which determines the nature of the curriculum provided for pupils attending its preschool and school groups.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 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.

## 3. PRIORITIES FOR LEARNING

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- 3.1 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 Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). These form the basis of their Individual Target Setting documents (ITSs). The children's needs are the main priority when planning the curriculum at NICE:
- 3.2 '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.
- 3.3 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.

## 4 THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE FAMILY

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- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 '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.
- 4.3 ITS documents are devised, with the involvement of parents, carers and other professionals.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 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 ITS documents and are invited to workshops, open days, asked to contribute written evidence of their wishes before the EHCP meeting, contribute fully to the meeting itself and complete annual questionnaires about the quality of the provision at NICE.'
- 4.6 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 put on their child's Seesaw account 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 pre-school, information about current work is displayed on the walls outside the group room and discussed with parents after each session.
- 4.7 In our school group we hold four 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.
- 4.8 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.

## 5. AIMS OF CONDUCTIVE EDUCATION AT PRE-SCHOOL AND SCHOOL AGE

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- 5.1 The aims of pre-school 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.

## 6. FEATURES OF CONDUCTIVE EDUCATION

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6.1 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.

## 7. PLANNING THE CURRICULUM

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7.1 '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)

7.2 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 pre-school 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;

7.3 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. 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.

7.4 The pre-school 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 EHC plan.

7.5 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.

## 8. STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING TIME AND MEETING CHILDREN'S REQUIREMENTS EFFECTIVELY

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- 8.1 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 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.

## 9. CURRICULUM PLANNING

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### Planning for progression

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 Policy statements are produced for each subject area and help to form the complex curriculum taught at NICE.
- 9.3 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.
- 9.4 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.
- 9.5 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.
- 9.6 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 ITS goals; 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.
- 9.7 Evaluations of these activities are then recorded to inform future planning.
- 9.8 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.

## 10. INDIVIDUAL TARGET SETTING DOCUMENT (ITS)

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- 10.1 In order to highlight the priorities for each full time individual child, an ITS document is devised by staff in conjunction with parents. The priority needs are identified in the child's EHC plan, if he/she already has one, or by observation and assessment by staff at NICE. Two or three targets for each area of development 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.
- 10.2 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 ITS forms then send back to the schools with our evaluation and suggestions for new aims.

## 11. THE CURRICULUM AT PRE-SCHOOL AT NICE

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- 11.1 The National Institute offers, part-time places for young children from age three up until age five. The pre-school's curriculum is based on the three prime areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (Revised in 2017) focusing on Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development in a conductive framework. Although the children are focusing on the three prime areas the programme is set up to cover aspects of the four specific areas of learning as well. This complements the children's early years' education at their main setting.
- 11.2 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 and the world around them, perception skills, fine manipulation and pre-writing skills, hand-eye co-ordination, mathematical skills, creative skills, self-care skills and personal, social and emotional skills.
- 11.3 The conductive programme is delivered through weekly topics, which is the framework through which our pre-school 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.
- 11.4 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.
- 11.5 Children's progress is assessed in a variety of ways such as Individual Target Setting goals, by using the BSquared Connecting Steps assessment scheme and through the GMFM. Observations are recorded on continuous observation forms, which are kept in the children's individual files and written reports are completed annually to show a summary of progress. Learning outcomes for the week are kept in the short term planning folder. Photo evidence of children's performance and achievements are shared with parents and other professionals, who has permission, on The Seesaw Learning Journal.

## 12. THE CURRICULUM AT SCHOOL AGE AT NICE

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- 12.1 From the age of five it is necessary for children to begin following a school curriculum, in most cases this is the National Curriculum. In the school group we aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum interweaving the requirements of the National Curriculum 2014 with the demands of the children's physical, social, emotional, self-care and communication and behavioural needs. Therefore the structure of the day is complex, addressing all these needs simultaneously.
- 12.2 Children who engage in subject specific learning 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 Year 1 of the National Curriculum (Primary Steps), with some work being taken from the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. Some children with more complex difficulties who are not yet engaged in subject specific learning following a highly differentiated curriculum. These children's development is assessed by using BSquared Engagement Steps.
- 12.3 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.

## 13. CURRICULUM POLICY DEVELOPMENT

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- 13.1 The Head Teacher and the Leading Conductor are the co-ordinators of policy development at the National Institute of Conductive Education.
- 13.2 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.
- 13.3 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.

## 14. POLICY REVIEW

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- 14.1 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.

## 15. SUBJECT PLANNING AND EVALUATION

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- 15.1 See Policy on Planning and Evaluation

## 16. ASSESSMENT, RECORD-KEEPING AND REPORTING

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### Recognising progress

- 16.1 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.
- 16.2 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.

## 17. ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING AND RECORD KEEPING

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17.1 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, SeeSaw, pupil files.

17.2 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.

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

17.4 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.

17.5 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.*

## 18. RECOGNISING ATTAINMENT

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18.1 The BSquared scheme is used by staff in pre-school and school groups to record ongoing 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.

18.2 In School group we use the two forms of BSquared assessments:

- Engagement Steps – for pupils not yet engaged in subject-specific learning;
- Primary Steps – for pupils engaged in subject-specific learning

## 19. ENGAGEMENT STEPS

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- 19.1 The assessment framework is divided into key developmental areas which reflect the four areas of need listed in the “Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years”. These areas are:
- Cognition & Learning;
  - Communication & Interaction;
  - Social, Emotional & Mental Health; and
  - Sensory & Physical.
- 19.2 The Engagement Steps assessment framework is designed to be used in a nonlinear fashion. Through our research and understanding, we know that students will not work progressively through each step, completing one and then moving on to the next. Students will experience and engage with skills across multiple levels. For example, a child may develop their responses to environmental sounds regularly but may also be less motivated to respond to human voices. Therefore, students will develop skills across multiple steps simultaneously. Engagement Steps is organized into the following areas:
- Cognition & Learning;
    - Responsiveness
    - Curiosity
    - Investigation
    - Discovery
    - Anticipation
    - Persistence
    - Initiation
  - Communication & Interaction;
    - Expressive Communication
    - Receptive Communication
  - Social, Emotional & Mental Health;
    - Social Affection
    - Emotional Affection
  - Sensory & Physical;
    - Sensory Operation
      - Visual
      - Auditory
      - Tactile
      - Olfactory/Gustatory
      - Vestibular
      - Proprioceptive
    - Physical Operation
      - Fine Motor
      - Gross Motor

## 20. PRIMARY STEPS

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- 20.1 BSquared devised a new structure which complements the new statutory assessment framework. This provides an assessment framework for Cognition and Learning that leads into the Primary Curriculum.
- 20.2 Within the new Primary Steps framework, Cognition and Learning focuses on academic achievement. It is based the Cognition and Learning aspect of Primary Steps on the primary National Curriculum using the same subjects and breadth. The assessment is inclusive by providing an assessment framework for pupils working on subject-specific learning which is in line with the National Curriculum. This inclusive approach will prepare and support children who will transition on to the Age Related Expectations of the Primary Curriculum. This will assist teachers working with a wide range of abilities to differentiate work for their pupils. They will be able to look at a subject over a range of abilities so they can plan and deliver appropriate lessons.
- 20.3 The government using pre-key stage standards for statutory end of key stage assessment and these should include all pupils working on subject-specific learning. These standards link in with the end of key stage standards used for pupils working at the level of National Curriculum tests, providing an inclusive scale for all pupils working on subject-specific learning.
- 20.4 At NICE, in common with some other schools, we consider the Progression Steps and Engagement Steps useful as one of several mechanisms when setting school improvement targets.
- 20.5 Also see Policy on Assessment, Record-Keeping and Reporting

## **21. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

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21.1 See Policy on Special Educational Needs

## **22. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

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22.1 See Policy on Equal Opportunities

## **23. CROSS-PHASE/SCHOOL TRANSFER**

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23.1 See Policy on Cross-Phase/School Transfer

## **24. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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- 24.1 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.
- 24.2 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 available on our website.
- 24.3 See Policy on Staff Performance and Development Appraisal.

## **25. RESOURCES AND ACCOMMODATION**

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25.1 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 the headteacher's and leading conductor's offices as well as cupboards located in the corridor adjacent to the School Group.