HIGHSHORE SCHOOL

Teaching Methods and Differentiation Policy

Principles

Differentiation is taken to mean that all pupils have access to an appropriate curriculum and are able to achieve at a level which is appropriate to them.

Differentiation occurs when there is a planned intervention by the teacher with the intention of maximising the achievements of pupils based on their individual needs. The most important prerequisite of good differentiation is good and accurate knowledge of the pupils through their individual education plans.

Differentiation can be described as having five main components: Schemes of work/tasks and teaching methods; Pupil involvement; Resources; Support and Group structure. Planning for pupil learning should be informed by the pupil's IEP and personal targets in each case.

Objectives

- Develop schemes of work incorporating tasks and teaching methods, which allow individuals access to a curriculum appropriate to their needs

- Involve pupils in their own learning

- Ensure that the range and nature of resources facilitates the delivery of a differentiated curriculum

- Provide a level of support which allows equality of access to the curriculum whilst still retaining ownership of the task by the pupil

- Arrange groups and individuals so that each pupil is in a safe, secure environment, which is conducive to their learning needs

Implementation

Tasks and teaching methods

When devising and implementing tasks for specific groups teachers should pay attention to a wide range of factors including:

- The way in which tasks are presented, explained and structured, taking into account the pupils special needs and the thinking and learning of pupils with SEN

- The cognitive levels at which the pupils can operate and their ability to process information. Pupils could work on one task at different levels or with varying degrees of support, or different tasks set according to the individual needs of the pupil
- The pupil's ability to engage in learning and to study independently.

In some instances for the more able pupils in a group appropriate extended tasks may need to be devised. For less able pupils tasks will need to be broken down into component parts with more instruction [including non-verbal] and support. Teachers need to consider how they might cater for pupils who prefer to learn from visual or ICT sources such as the internet, DVD's etc. those who prefer to learn from auditory sources such as story tapes etc, and those who respond better to active involvement e.g. in a practical subject.

Tasks should:

- Show variety throughout a topic and within a lesson if possible
- Be suitable for the ability of the pupil
- Have a structure that enables the pupil to stay on task
- Identify possible outcomes
- Match the pupils' interests
- Allow for some choices to be made
- Allow the teacher to build a learning route through the topic

Pupil involvement

Pupil involvement should:

- Make the course objectives clear to the pupils
- Establish a systematic approach to work
- Carefully plan challenges, which will encourage pupils to reach a solution
- Make assessment criteria clear to the pupils
- Create an atmosphere where pupils discuss their own and others work
- Include some form of self-assessment where possible
- Allow targets to be set for individual pupils
- Reflect what the pupil has achieved and consider the pupil's previous achievements

Resources

Resources should:
- Have an appropriate readability level and be easily understood. This may require the use of symbols and pictorial clues for pupils
- Be easy to use
- Be well designed
- Be in many different forms including a suitable range of sensory resources
- Have a scheme of work that indicates a planned use of available resources and that shows progression and continuity within the course
- Be kept in well-managed storage/retrieval systems
- Build study skills into schemes of work and encourage pupils towards independent learning

Support

Support can be given by Teaching Assistants, other professionals e.g. therapists and by other pupils as well as the teacher. In addition appropriate resources could be a form of support in some cases e.g. an interactive computer programme for teaching literacy.

- Where possible, adults supporting a class should be involved in the planning for individual learning
- The level of support needs to be carefully monitored by the teacher so that the pupil still retains ownership of the task
- Achievements and strengths should be celebrated

Group structure

Group structure can support differentiation if:

- We examine the structure of the teaching groups. Groups may be formulated according to ability communication needs because of behavioural reasons. Some pupils may be better able to learn individually in a separate room or at a quiet work station out of eye contact with others in the group
- There is flexibility within the group when setting tasks according to individual needs
- It allows individual work and interests to be followed where appropriate

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the SLT. Where appropriate, review will include consultation with staff and Governors.

Eileen Ollieuz
May 2017
Review May 2020

Signed by --

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