



Grantham Additional Needs Fellowship

Curriculum Policy

Curriculum Intent and Principles

Grantham Additional Needs Fellowship (GANF) is an all-needs specialist school and provides education for children and young people aged between 4 and 19 years of age. All our pupils have a wide range of needs, abilities and differences within the broad areas of SEND (Cognition & Learning, Communication & Interaction, Social, Emotional & Mental Health, Sensory & Physical), which can have a significant impact on their learning and development.

We are passionate about providing the best quality of personalised education and care for all our pupils and place their individual profile of strengths, needs, abilities and interests at the centre of everything we do. The learning journey for each of our 'unique learners' is driven by their developmental stage, rather than age. Our curriculum is flexible, creative and ambitious for all, and at every stage we are constantly mindful of what the future may look like for each one of our pupils, keeping the long-term perspective firmly in focus throughout the educational journey of each child or young person.

Learning, knowledge and skills are continually built upon as a child moves through each phase of their education at GANF. We aim to make sure that each pupil has the learning opportunities, learning challenge, social opportunities, cultural experiences and exposure to relevant services and providers during their time at school, which will ultimately enable them to successfully transition into adulthood and lead a happy, fulfilling life as an active participant in the wider community.

The curriculum at GANF is based on the understanding that each pupil may see the world and learn in a very different way. Our teaching approach is therefore very flexible and informed by specialist knowledge of what good SEND practice looks like in education. Our aim is to provide 'limitless learning' opportunities for every pupil by recognising that there are many ways to help children and young people with SEND to learn, achieve and to experience success. We therefore use a combination of evidence-based SEND practices and approaches in our work with pupils, to ensure that we are able to respond to their individual needs and abilities.

The whole school curriculum model at GANF respects, reflects and is driven by the principles of The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for our most complex learners and the different subjects within The National Curriculum for pupils who can participate in subject-specific learning. Adaptations are made to allow space and time for the careful integration of SEND specific approaches, therapies and interventions that are vital for each pupil's development.

Our school motto is 'Unique learners. Limitless learning' and this underpins every aspect of our provision. We see every pupil as an individual with their own unique skills, interests and talents that are nurtured and encouraged through 'limitless learning' opportunities provided through our curriculum and wider enrichment offer. We care very much about the success of every pupil but understand and respect that success for each of our pupils may look very different, depending on the curriculum pathways they follow throughout their time at school. The different curriculum pathways are an overt articulation of our understanding of the individualisation necessary for each of our pupils to thrive and flourish during their time at school. We also appreciate the need to work closely with







parents, carers, families and our multi-agency colleagues – all considered to be key partners in the education process - to develop our SEND expertise and specialism.

The focus of our curriculum philosophy is on nurturing the whole child or young person. We offer a range of flexible curriculum pathways which have been designed to allow our pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and character required to move on to the next phase of education or stage in their life. We ensure that our curriculum is challenging but inclusive across the range of need, so that all our pupils can fulfil their potential, regardless of background or starting point. We strive to ensure that disadvantage of any kind is not a barrier to pupils experiencing and achieving success; we are committed to developing and promoting the positive physical and emotional health and well-being of all the children and young people we are privileged to work with. It is our fundamental belief that ‘healthy and happy children learn’.

It is important for all children and young people to feel success and to know that they are making progress and attaining at an appropriate level. At GANF, some content of the National Curriculum may be inaccessible or irrelevant to some of our pupils because of their complex learning needs and differences. Our aim therefore is to make learning meaningful and relevant to the individual, and responsive to where pupils are at in terms of their development. It is for this reason that we need to regularly review, refine and adapt our curriculum offer to make sure that it continues to meet the needs of our ‘unique learners’.

What the curriculum is designed to do

At GANF, we understand that the learning journey for each individual pupil will be personal and unique and so our whole school curriculum has been designed with this in mind. Our ambitious curriculum is characterised by flexible pre-formal, informal, semi-formal and formal learning pathways to reflect the diverse range of developmental needs, differences, abilities and aspirations of our pupil population. We allow time and space for our pupils to progress at individually appropriate pace, and use the long term aims and short term outcomes identified in each child or young person’s Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) to create an Individual Progress Plan (IPP), which helps us to assess learning and inform each pupil’s personalised curriculum offer.

Curriculum Pathway	PRE - FORMAL 	INFORMAL 	SEMI – FORMAL 	FORMAL 
Summary of needs	Profound and multiple learning difficulties	Complex Severe learning Difficulties/Autism Spectrum Condition	Severe learning difficulties/Autism Spectrum Condition	Moderate learning difficulties/Autism spectrum condition
	Development 0-18 months Additional physical and health needs.	Development 12 months – 36 months Additional sensory sensitivities and emotional regulation needs.	Development 36 months – 7 years	Working 3-4 years below age-related expectations.
Pedagogy	Process-Based learning.	Process-Based learning with some skill-based learning.	Skills based learning with some early knowledge learning.	Skills and knowledge-based learning.



The curriculum pathways at GANF

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage 1 (KS1)

Most of our pupils begin their learning journey with us in their Reception year. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework underpins the curriculum taught in our mixed Reception / KS1 classes, with specific SEND approaches, communication strategies and therapies (e.g. speech and language therapy, occupational therapy) skilfully integrated and embedded into teaching to ensure a focus on the holistic development of each child.

The curriculum in EYFS / KS1 is the bedrock of all that occurs subsequently at GANF, and we recognise and respect that the starting point for each child is unique and individual. Our focus for pupils in the early phase of their education at GANF is to support each child’s communication, physical, social and emotional development so that they feel safe, secure and confident to engage with others and the world around them. As our pupils start out on their educational journey and throughout their time in Reception and KS1, we aim to give them the opportunity to gain the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to progress from their individual starting points and onto the next most appropriate curriculum pathway in Key Stage 2 – pre-formal, informal, semi-formal or formal.

The reception and KS1 curriculum is built around the areas of learning and development specified in the statutory framework for the EYFS

EYFS – 7 Areas of Learning and Development	
Prime areas	Specific areas
Communication and Language Physical Development Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Literacy Mathematics Understanding the World Expressive Arts and Design

The curriculum is characterised by topics that aim to engage pupils in a broad range of motivational learning experiences to help develop their understanding of self, others and the world around them. We appreciate, respect and celebrate the diversity of our pupil population in terms of cultural difference, socio-economic background and their individual profiles of strengths and needs. Our curriculum model gives teachers the flexibility to adapt teaching to suit the developmental needs of each child; teaching is personalised by using each child’s Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which is used to create an Individual Progress Plan (IPP).

Our reception and KS1 curriculum is delivered and taught through



- carefully planned **continuous provision** which provides well structured, sequenced and meaningful learning experiences to help pupils develop the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' (playing and exploring, active learning, creative and critical thinking), whilst promoting progress in social communication, emotional regulation and independence. Effective learning must be meaningful to a child, so that they are able to use what they have learned and apply it in new situations. These abilities and attitudes of strong learners will support them to learn well and make good progress in all the Areas of Learning and Development
- **enabling environments** which aim to secure engagement from pupils, with a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities available to enhance learning and promote progress
- **organised and engaging indoor and outdoor environments**, rich in physical resource with high quality adult support available, to guide and scaffold learning for pupils within all areas of learning
- **high quality interactions between adults and pupils** that are rooted in our core value of 'kindness' and driven by the 'Unique Child' philosophy, whereby all pupils are seen as competent learners who are able to succeed, regardless of their individual needs and differences
- **positive role modelling** for pupils by the adults who teach and support them
- **careful observation, assessment and feedback** used to meet individual needs, to provide challenge and to inform the next steps of learning for each pupil
- **responsiveness** to the changing needs and interests of pupils and the use of individual motivators to hook them into learning
- **phonics and maths lessons** taught discretely each day and embedded into continuous provision. Our dedicated programmes 'Read Write Inc' and Mastering Early Number underpin these lessons, and there is a clear progression route for reception pupils who make good progress and begin to show retention of letter sounds and early number skills. If pupils demonstrate a readiness to learn and show that they can attend to a more formal approach to their learning, they will transition into a differentiated phonics and maths group
- **promoting a 'love for reading'** with regular opportunities to interact with literature during shared story time sessions and visits to our school library
- **real world visits** to places in the community so that pupils have opportunities to generalise, apply and recognise relevance of knowledge and skills learned in the classroom, and to make meaningful and contextual links in their learning
- **integrated therapies** such as rebound therapy, sensory pool, music therapy, massage therapy, speech and language therapy and occupational therapy

We acknowledge that excellent progress will look different for each of our pupils, as their individual additional needs will impact them in very different ways. From their individual starting points, pupils will make excellent progress in terms of their social communication, social interaction and emotional regulation skills due to the specialist support and SEND specific strategies incorporated into teaching. Providing targeted and specific, personalised support in these key areas early enough gives pupils the best opportunity to develop the skills they need to communicate and self-regulate more effectively, and to become successful learners. Throughout reception and KS1, pupils will be supported to become



more confident and curious and will therefore demonstrate increased levels of engagement in activities designed to promote learning.

Pupils will be continually observed and assessed throughout their time in Reception and KS1 in all prime and specific areas of learning. This information, alongside the expert knowledge of our reception teachers and teaching assistants, informs decision making and so ensures that each pupil is placed onto the most appropriate curriculum pathway for progression when they move into the next phase of their learning journey in Year 3.

The pre-formal pathway

Our pre-formal curriculum pathway is designed to provide a stimulating education and a range of play based, multi-sensory learning experiences for our pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) or very complex and severe learning needs. Our pre-formal learners may have other significant difficulties such as physical disabilities, sensory impairment or a complex medical condition and so require a high level of adult support for their learning needs and personal care.

The focus of our pre-formal pathway is on the development of early communication, physical, personal, social, sensory and cognitive skills that are the foundation of all learning. The pathway is characterised by topics that provide the context for a range of play based and multi-sensory experiences, with therapeutic strategies (e.g. hydrotherapy, rebound therapy) and interventions incorporated into the personalised planning for each pupil through their Individual Progress Plan (IPP).

The Engagement Model is used as a tool for monitoring progress in relation to the five areas of engagement:

- Initiation
- Persistence
- Exploration
- Anticipation
- Realisation

The informal pathway

The informal pathway is for our pupils with very complex needs and focuses primarily on the development of early communication skills, emotional and sensory regulation, and personal independence skills (e.g. toilet training, feeding skills, dressing and personal hygiene etc.). Teaching is characterised by a combination of play based and therapeutic approaches to encourage progressive development that is guided by personalised Individual Progress Plan (IPP targets). Learning within this pathway is holistic and centred around the four broad areas of need pertinent to our pupils, and the areas which make up each child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

These are:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional and mental health



- Physical and sensory development.

Individual Progress Plans (IPP) are based on the outcomes identified in each child's EHCP are used to personalise the curriculum for each pupil, with known motivators and special interests used to encourage and support engagement within the learning environment and activities. Our aim is to create curious and inquisitive learners by providing a range of motivating, exciting learning experiences, whilst being mindful that each pupil's journey will be unique to them.

The informal pathway curriculum is delivered through themed continuous provision, topic based learning and integrated therapies. Pupils learn through a carefully considered balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities and challenges. Child-led learning is encouraged through continuous provision, where highly skilled staff model, scaffold and encourage the development of knowledge and skills by facilitating interaction and play. We encourage group activities such as circle time and snack time to give pupils a sense of belonging, to help them build the social skills of friendship and to enjoy being part of a group.

From their different starting points, the aim is for all pupils to make good progress in relation to their communication and social interaction skills, purposeful play, emotional regulation, personal independence and confidence.

Pupils will show readiness to transition onto the next curriculum pathway, the semi-formal pathway by:

- Demonstrating and using a preferred communication method
- Showing increased focus and attention in a small group activity
- Demonstrating increased retention of knowledge and skills in early mathematics, literacy, communication and language
- Developing the core balance, strength and physical coordination required to sit and engage with an activity at a table
- Responding positively and purposefully to transactional supports and behaviour for learning strategies to support emotional regulation

The semi-formal pathway

The semi-formal pathway at GANF builds upon the foundational learning skills that pupils have developed within EYFS / KS1 or whilst accessing the informal curriculum pathway. Pupils will transfer onto the semi-formal curriculum pathway, from either the Reception / KS1 or informal pathway, when they are showing a 'readiness to learn' through their retention of basic knowledge and skills in literacy and numeracy – the building blocks for a life of learning. They will also be able to sustain their attention and focus within a small group activity. The key intentions of the semi-formal pathway are to develop functional social communication, cognitive and academic abilities, and greater independence skills. We refer to this pathway as being 'semi-formal' as it is characterised by subject-specific lessons and themed play provision, with therapeutic strategies and approaches embedded into teaching.

The 'semi-formal' curriculum pathway consists of a range of immersive topics and themes taught through a combination of structured lessons and play based learning activities. The 'enabling



environment' concept is crucial for our semi-formal pupils, who learn best when they are motivated by activities developed around their own special interests, with SEND specific supports and strategies in place to support engagement, focus and attention.

As with all other curriculum pathways at GANF, social communication, emotional and sensory regulation, and the development of personal independence skills are all key priorities within the semi-formal pathway, so all pupils will be continuing to develop their skills in these key areas alongside more formal academic learning. We acknowledge that some of our semi-formal learners (and indeed, some of our informal learners) may have a 'spiky profile', whereby the disparity between their strengths and difficulties is more pronounced than it would be for a neuro-typical person. Where this is the case, we provide opportunities for these pupils to access learning in specific areas from the formal pathway, which may involve joining a different class for specific lessons. These pupils benefit from the carefully crafted flexibility of our curriculum arrangements which allow individuals to 'bridge' across pathways.

As previously mentioned, semi-formal pupils will be demonstrating a 'readiness to learn' but will not be entirely ready for a full subject specific curriculum.

Pupils will be ready to transition onto the formal curriculum pathway when they can:

- communicate effectively with familiar adults and peers
- demonstrate sustained engagement, confidence and a degree of independence in their learning
- demonstrate progress in English (i.e. can read and write with some accuracy and fluency), maths (i.e. has good, basic number sense) and has met (or is close to meeting) the Early Learning Goals in all 7 areas of learning and development

The formal pathway

The formal pathway is our subject-specific curriculum for pupils who are ready to access the full range of National Curriculum subjects. As in all other pathways, pupils will continue to work on their social communication, emotional regulation and personal independence skills, but academic progress and the acquisition of subject specific knowledge and skills is also a key focus for formal pupils. Reading, writing and maths are also embedded into lessons wherever possible to ensure that we are continually focusing on the development of key skills in these areas. Although this pathway is more 'subject specific', lessons are still adapted and differentiated in order to meet the wide-ranging needs and abilities of pupils.

The formal curriculum pathway incorporates all National Curriculum subjects (English, maths, science, history, geography, computing, languages, PE, art and design, music and design and technology) and starts with the Key Stage 1 programmes of study. We also include PSHE, which incorporates statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education

The fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect of those with different faiths and beliefs are reinforced wherever relevant, and at the appropriate level, in all curriculum pathways at GANF. For semi-formal and formal classes however, discrete Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) lessons also lend themselves very well to the explicit teaching of



these concepts, in addition to providing a forum for pupils to learn about the importance of good physical and mental health, and how to keep themselves safe.

Pupils should learn and value what is distinctive about the character, beliefs, interests, and abilities of themselves and others. Opportunities for promoting Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural (SMSC) development are therefore incorporated into pastoral activities (e.g. circle time, story time, snack time etc.), formal Religious Education lessons and the whole school Culture and Enrichment programme.

Careful attention has been given to the order in which subject specific knowledge, in whatever form that might take, should be introduced and revisited. This ensures that the content taught within each subject area is coherent and follows a logical progression, as learning one concept often relies on the understanding of what has come previously and what will come next. Furthermore, retrieval techniques are used in formal class lessons to help pupils recall facts, knowledge or concepts they have previously learned as a way of checking and developing learning further.

In Key Stage 4, pupils at our Ambergate Campus access a range of 'options' (e.g. sport, hospitality, outdoor education) that are accredited through the ASDAN Lifeskills Challenge programme. Some pupils also access GCSEs in English Language, Double Award Science, Mathematics and Statistics.

At GANF we have an ambitious careers education programme that aims to provide pupils with the information and guidance they need to enable them to make appropriate choices about their future. Our careers programme provides opportunities for pupils to engage with employers and employees in different places of work, during visits and practical work experience placements, to give them the chance to experience different jobs and work environments first hand. We also provide opportunities for pupils to engage with further education establishments, to help them consider post-school further education options.

Post 16

Pupils in Post 16 will typically follow the 'horticulture' or 'hospitality' pathway. Both curriculum pathways have been designed around the four key 'Preparing for Adulthood' themes:

- Employment
- Independent Living
- Community Inclusion
- Health

The post-school options for each pupil will very much depend on their very individual profile of strengths, interests, needs and abilities. For some pupils, living independently, having a job and being an active participant in the wider community are realistic and appropriate future aspirations, whereas this may not be appropriate for some of our other pupils who may require a more bespoke, supported independence package in the future, designed around their specific interests and needs. Our two Post 16 pathways therefore incorporate a range of opportunities for pupils to engage in activities to further develop their knowledge, skills and independence, alongside opportunities to engage with employers, community facilities and services that will support their post-school transition.

The learning journey for all pupils on each pathway is highly personalised to reflect the long term aims and short-term outcomes identified in each pupil's EHCP. As is the case in all other phases, all pupils will have an IPP based on their EHCP, and targets from the IPP are incorporated into teaching.



There are regular visits to places of interest within the community, which helps bring learning to life and supports pupils to generalise learning and develop greater independence.

During their time within the Post 16 phase, pupils will continue to develop their English and maths skills, with an emphasis on utilising and practicing these skills in 'real life' situations. For example, pupils are encouraged to plan and organise their weekly community visits to college or the Hope Café in Grantham for work experience, which are ideal opportunities for pupils to practice their English and maths skills in a meaningful and practical way.