Thriftwood
School and College

Teaching and Learning Policy

March 2021

Visions, aims and commitment

1. Our philosophy

Person Centred

Through our teaching philosophy, pupils are encouraged to:

- Listen to each other.
- Try new things.
- Volunteer thoughts and opinions.
- Respect the thoughts, ideas and contributions of others.
- Work hard.

To encourage all pupils to contribute to lessons, teachers:

- Recognise engagement and participation.
- Use a range of techniques to support pupils' sensory needs.
- Adapt teaching to meet the needs of all students.
- Allow sufficient thinking time between questions to allow pupils to consider their responses.
- Plan time in their lessons for pupils to discuss their learning, ask & answer questions promoting pupil talk.
- Have positive regard for every child and demonstrate this through a nurturing approach.

Where possible, interest areas of the students form the starting point for the curriculum

We reward and recognise achievement in the following ways:

- Teacher and staff provide positive re-direction to support individuals understanding.
- Teachers praise, using formal and informal approaches
- The school and college formally rewards pupil in the following ways:
    - Commendation stickers
    - Informing parents of achievements
    - Inviting the pupil to see the Headteacher
    - Achievement assemblies
    - Credits towards the department reward scheme / house system
    - Certificates

- The school and college informally rewards pupils in the following ways:
    - Congratulating pupils privately or in class
    - Saying 'well done' to the whole class
    - Writing positive feedback on written work
    - Writing positive comments in a pupil's diary
    - Phone call or text home sometimes
    - Reward outings.
    - Examples of good work sent home or put on display

The teacher will manage and support staff following our Behaviour for Learning policy.

To ensure that the quality of teaching is of the highest standard, we commit to ensuring that our teachers:

- Understand what excellent teaching is.
- Creatively plan and deliver lessons.
- Motivate pupils effectively.
- Enjoy and have a passion for teaching.
- Continue to learn and enhance their skills.
- Hold high expectations for all pupils and themselves.
- Understand how thinking and questioning develop learning.
- Approach all situations in a professional manner.
- Engage pupils of all abilities.
- Seek out and accept constructive feedback from peers, pupils and parents.
- Are given opportunities to lead.
- Involve pupils' parents and carers in their teaching.
- Understand and implement effective behaviour management strategies.
- Work within the Teacher Standards.

2. Statement of intent

Every child has the right to the best possible education. We aim to ensure that all pupils, regardless of ability, special educational need (SEN) or circumstance, reach their full potential and gain the skills and knowledge necessary to lead healthy and successful lives.

This policy provides procedures aimed towards ensuring high quality teaching and learning throughout the school.

It aims to:

- Embed an agreed range of good practice across the school and college.
- Ensure consistency throughout the school and college.
- Inform staff of the academy's agreed expectations.
- Provide a unified focus for monitoring learning and classroom practice.
- Ensure that the needs of pupils are met.
- Improve and enhance the quality of teaching.
- Ensure that pupils are receiving a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, meeting their individual needs and the wider requirements of the national curriculum.
- Ensure that teaching is appropriately differentiated for all pupils.
- Establish targets for improvement.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1. The role of the Local Academy Committee (LAC)

LAC members will receive reports from the Headteachers and other staff and act upon areas identified as requiring improvement.

LAC members will visit the school and college and meet regularly with the leadership team to have monitoring discussions.

3.2. The role of the senior leadership team

The senior leadership team will:

- Take a general overview of the atmosphere in school and college on a day-to-day basis by visiting classes and talking to staff and pupils.
- Liaise with parents and other stakeholders regarding individual needs.
- Work in classrooms, including teaching.
- Monitor targets set, ensuring they are appropriate and challenging.
- Look for trends in data and identify key focus areas
- Carry out focused classroom-based observations (in line with the Observation Policy).
- Review and comment on curriculum planning.
- Discuss One Planning and reports with staff.
- Report on the quality of teaching and learning to the SLT.
- Act as role models for teaching staff.
- Peer-to-peer leadership team reviews within SEAX Trust
- Plan and hold staff accountable for professional development through Continued Professional Development (CPD) and Performance Management Reviews (PMR)
- Strategic overview of curriculum and teaching and learning

3.3. The role of the curriculum co-ordinators

Curriculum co-ordinators will:

- Develop and review curriculum policies and schemes of work in collaboration with colleagues.
- Share accountability for the progress of children in their given subject by providing an appropriate curriculum
- Allocate resources appropriately
- Help teachers set appropriate targets and analyse data
- Have an awareness of strengths and areas of development within teaching of the key curriculum area across the school.
- Report on the effectiveness of the curriculum to the senior leadership team and the LAC.
- Share expertise with colleagues in a professional dialogue, team-teaching, leading staff training sessions.

3.4. The role of teachers

Teachers will:

- Follow the SEAX Code of Conduct, fulfil their job description and work to the Teachers Standards.
- Monitor and evaluate their teaching through reflective practice.
- Seek professional dialogue and constructive criticism from their Phase Leader / Senior Leadership Team.
- Review and evaluate their planning regularly to ensure they are meeting all pupils' needs.
- Set appropriate and challenging targets for pupils based on ability.
- Adapt teaching to meet needs of all pupils within the class group.
- Collaborate with colleagues to moderate pupil achievement.
- Involve parents and other professionals in the monitoring process.
- Hold a One Planning meeting to track progress towards the EHC plan Outcomes.
- Complete an annual or termly report assessing the progress of their pupils.

3.5. The role of pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Follow the Thriftwood Code of Conduct
- Be prepared to engage and learn.
- Be on time for school / college
- Wear appropriate school uniform.

3.6. External monitoring

- The Academy leadership team will work with the Local Authority SEN Standards and Excellence Commissioner to scrutinise all available data and discuss the school's self-evaluation, along with all matters arising from it.
- The Executive Principal and other Directors of the SEAX Trust will support, challenge and monitor progress across all schools in the Trust. Collaborative working and sharing good practice is embedded within the Headteachers' Group.
- The support of leaders from other special schools will be sought to evaluate the work of the school through professional discussion and joint lesson observations.
- Ofsted inspections will also be used to identify strengths and weaknesses, and to develop an action plan for improvement.
- Peer-to-peer monitoring through the SEAX Trust to help improve practice

4. Self-evaluation

4.1. Discussion with senior leaders

Senior leaders should discuss the following questions to assess the quality of teaching at the school:

- What is the academy's view on teaching?
- What is being done to monitor teaching?
- How is assessment used to inform planning, ensure appropriate challenge, set targets and provide feedback?
- To what extent do teachers use assessment within the lesson (for example mini-plenaries and questioning) to ensure that all pupils understand the lesson objectives?
- Are judgements based on the interpretation and evaluation of data and evidence?
- Are strengths and weaknesses in teaching and management identified?
- What strategies do teaching assistants employ to support learning?
- Do pupils work independently, co-operate to solve problems, develop workplace skills and understand what they need to do to improve?
- What additional support is required to meet individual pupil needs and how do we provide that support?

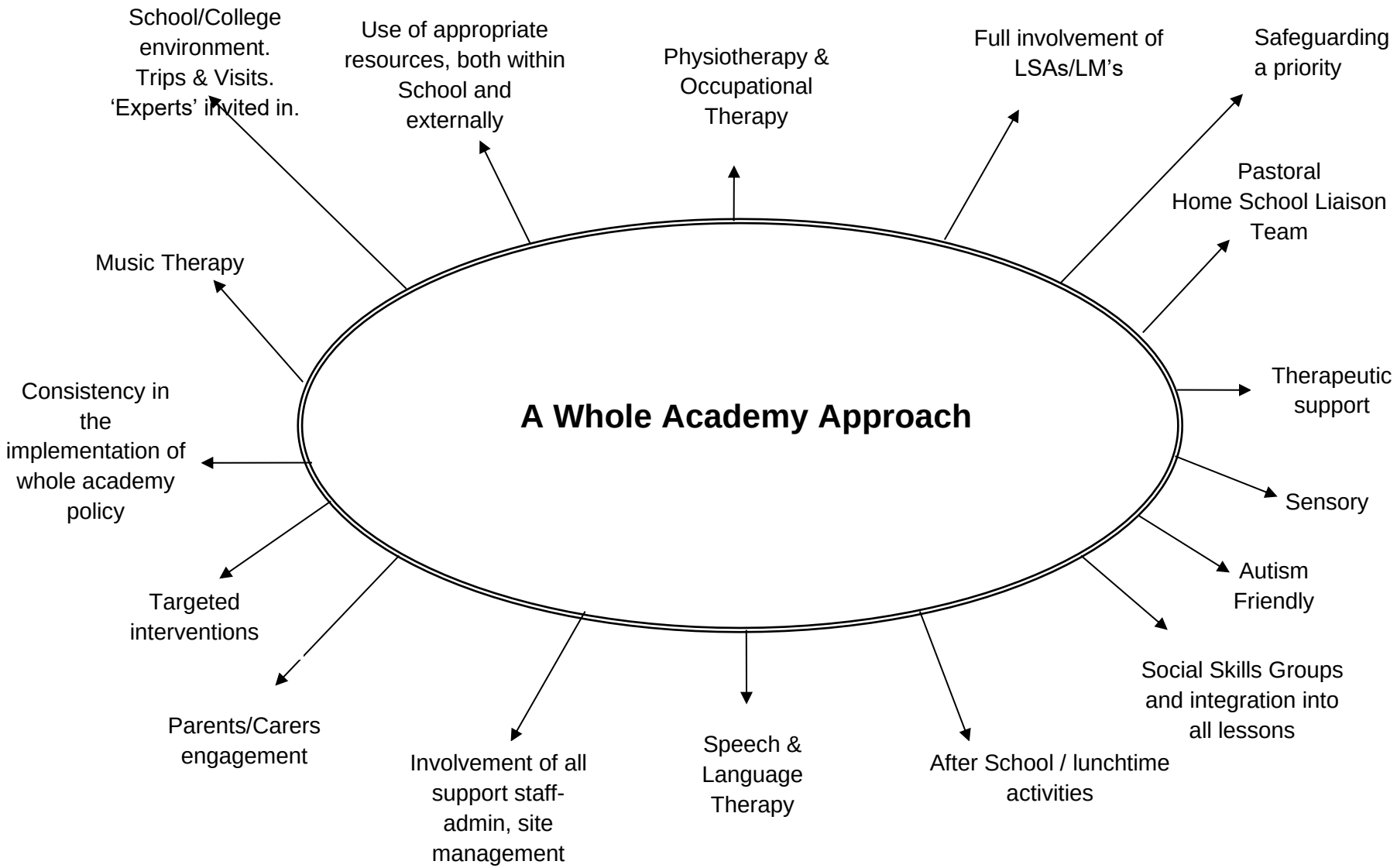
4.2. Discussion with pupils

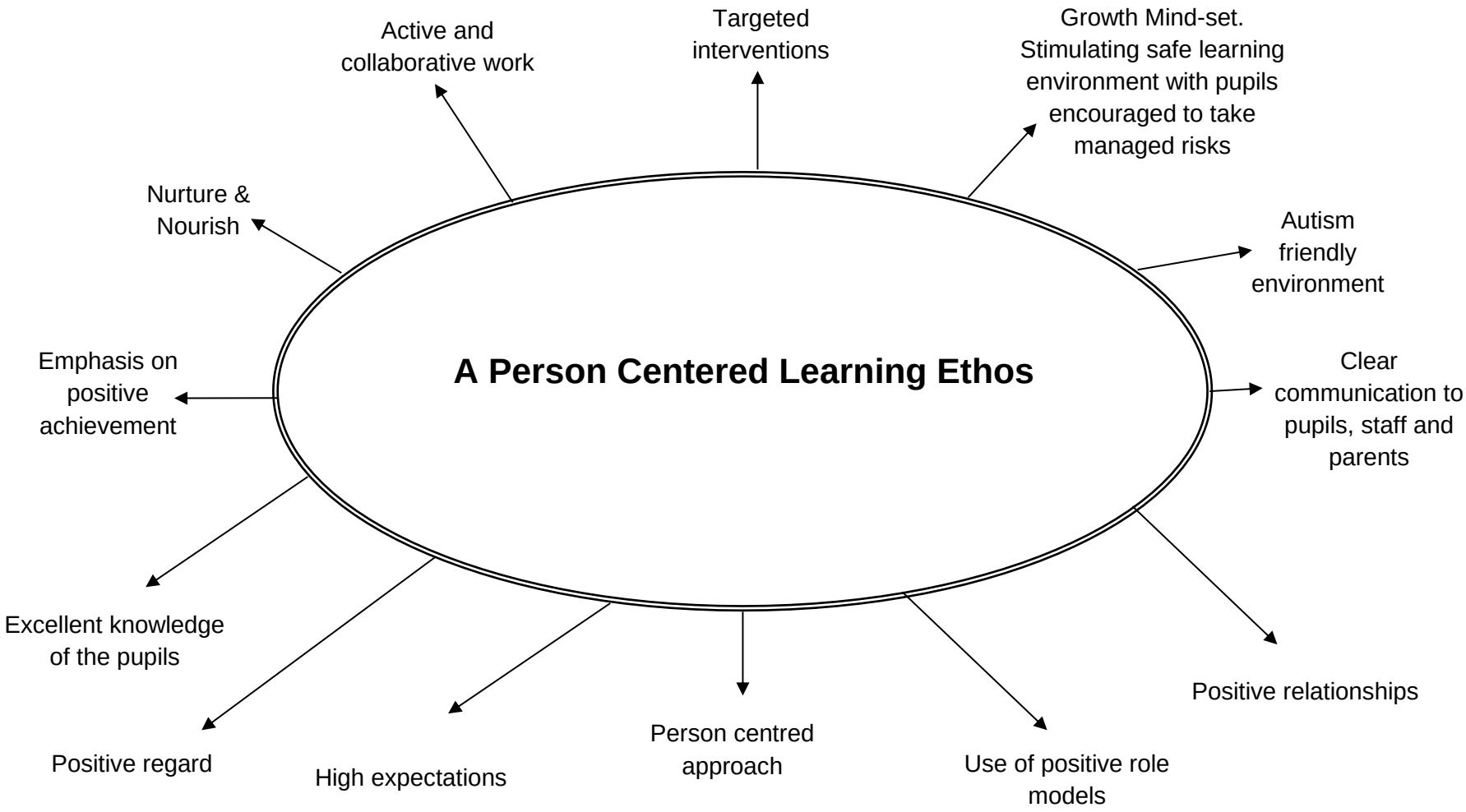
The following questions are discussed with pupils to assess the quality of teaching at the school and college, relevant to the individual students' cognitive ability.

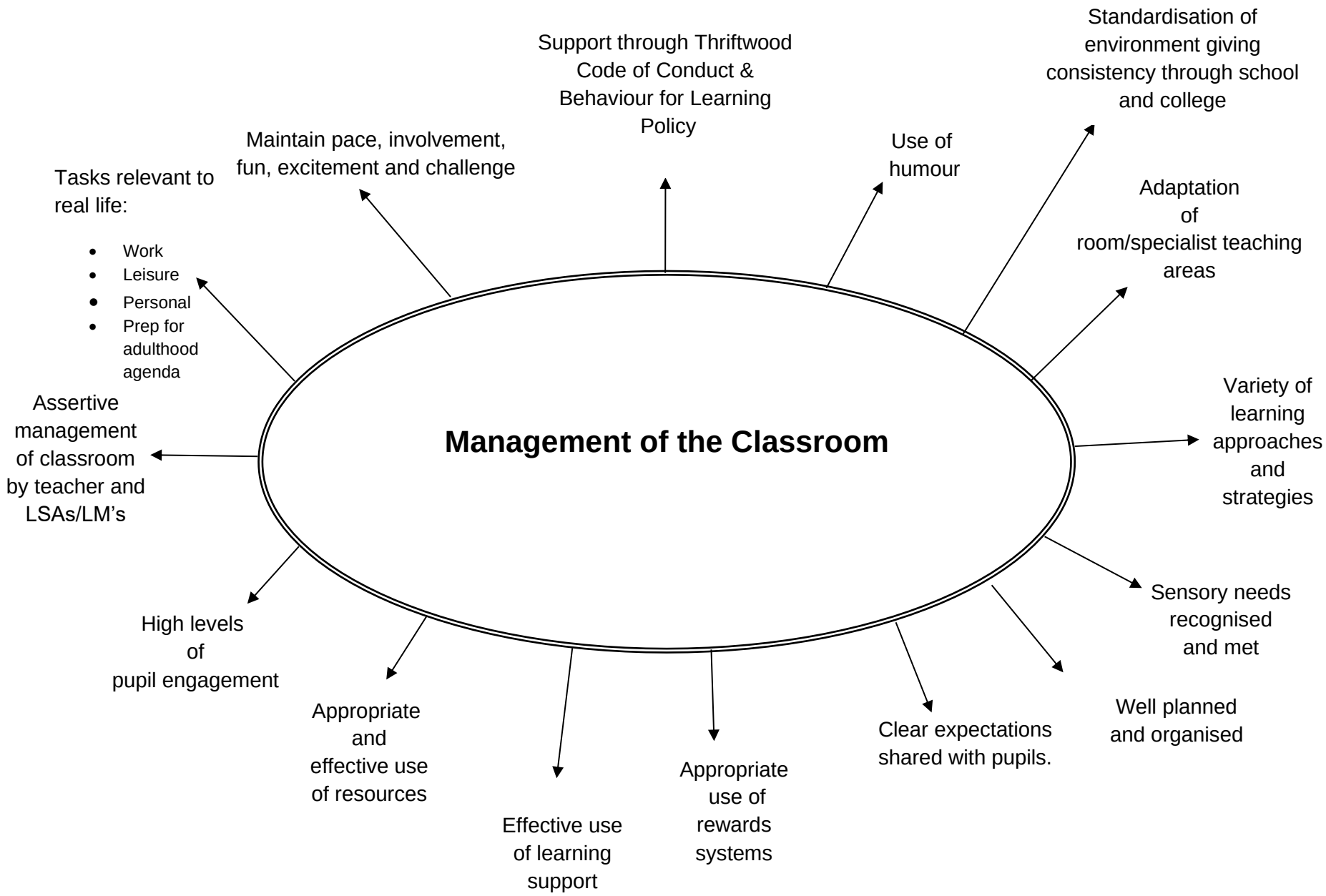
- Tell me about this piece of work. What were you learning?
- Do you know your targets? What are they?
- How do you know when you have achieved your targets?
- Show me a piece of work that you are really proud of. Why?

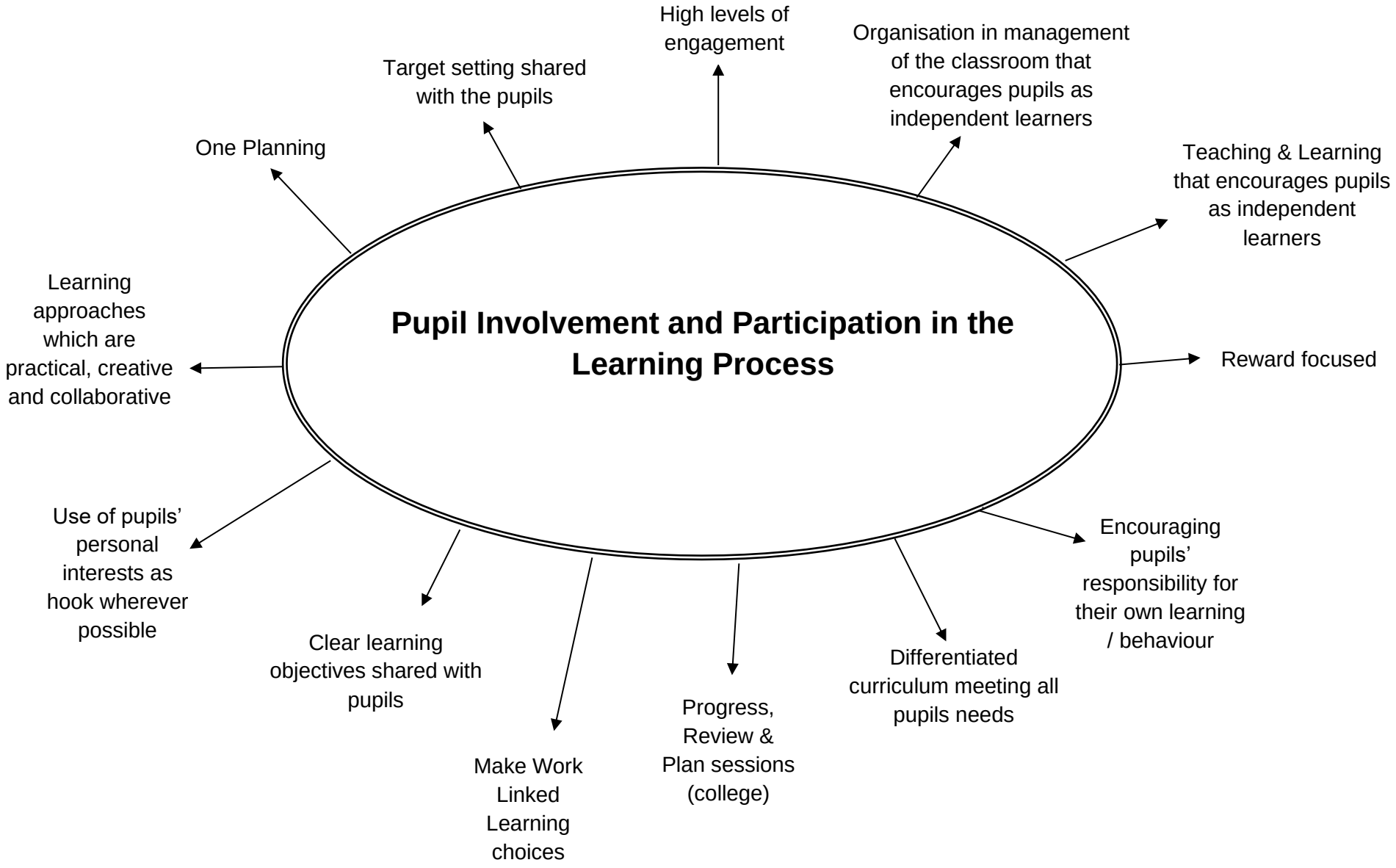
5. Our Approach – see diagrams

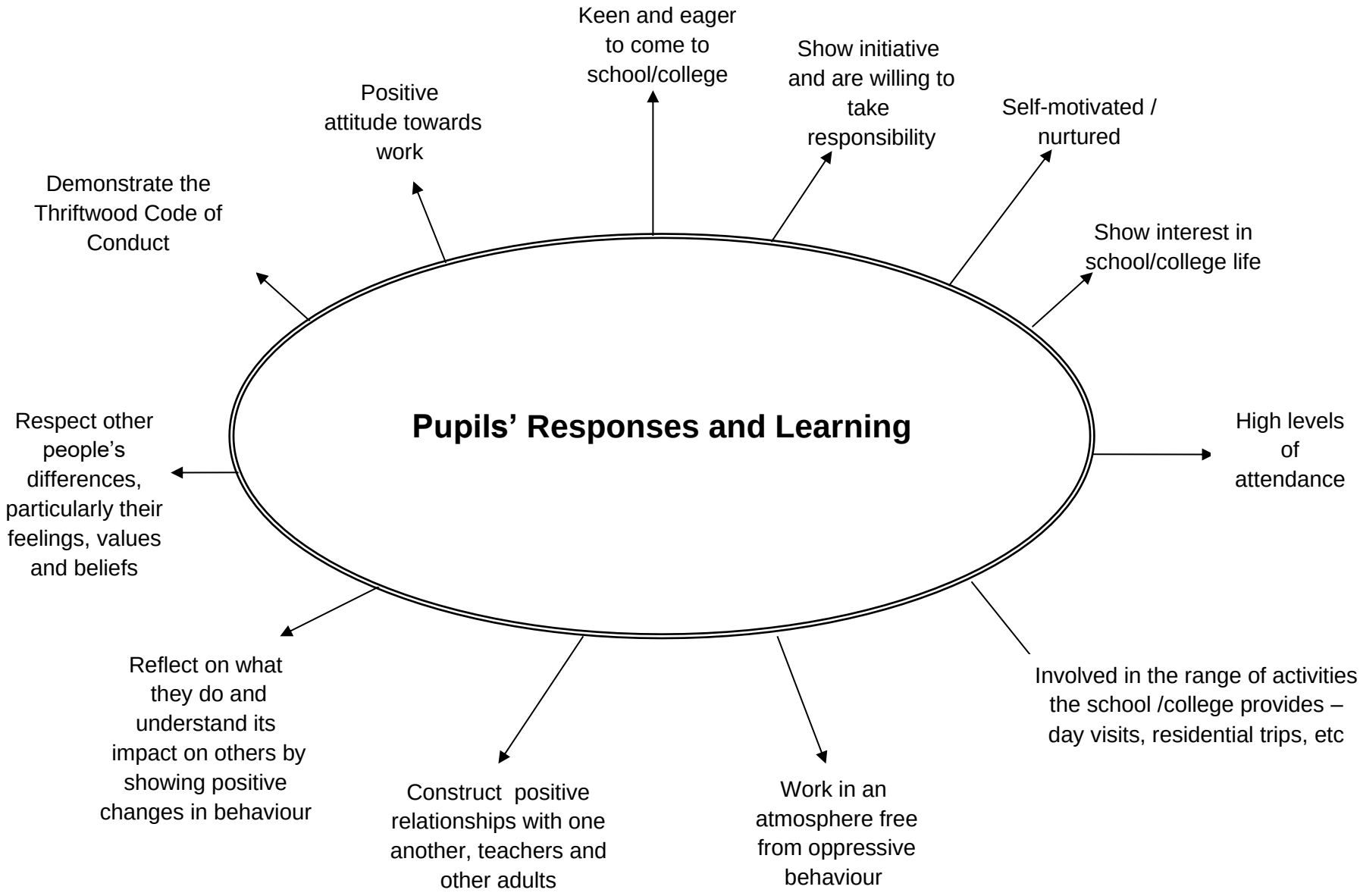
- Whole School Approach
- Person centred learning ethos.
- Management of the classroom.
- Pupil involvement.
- Pupil responses & learning.
- The use of assessment.

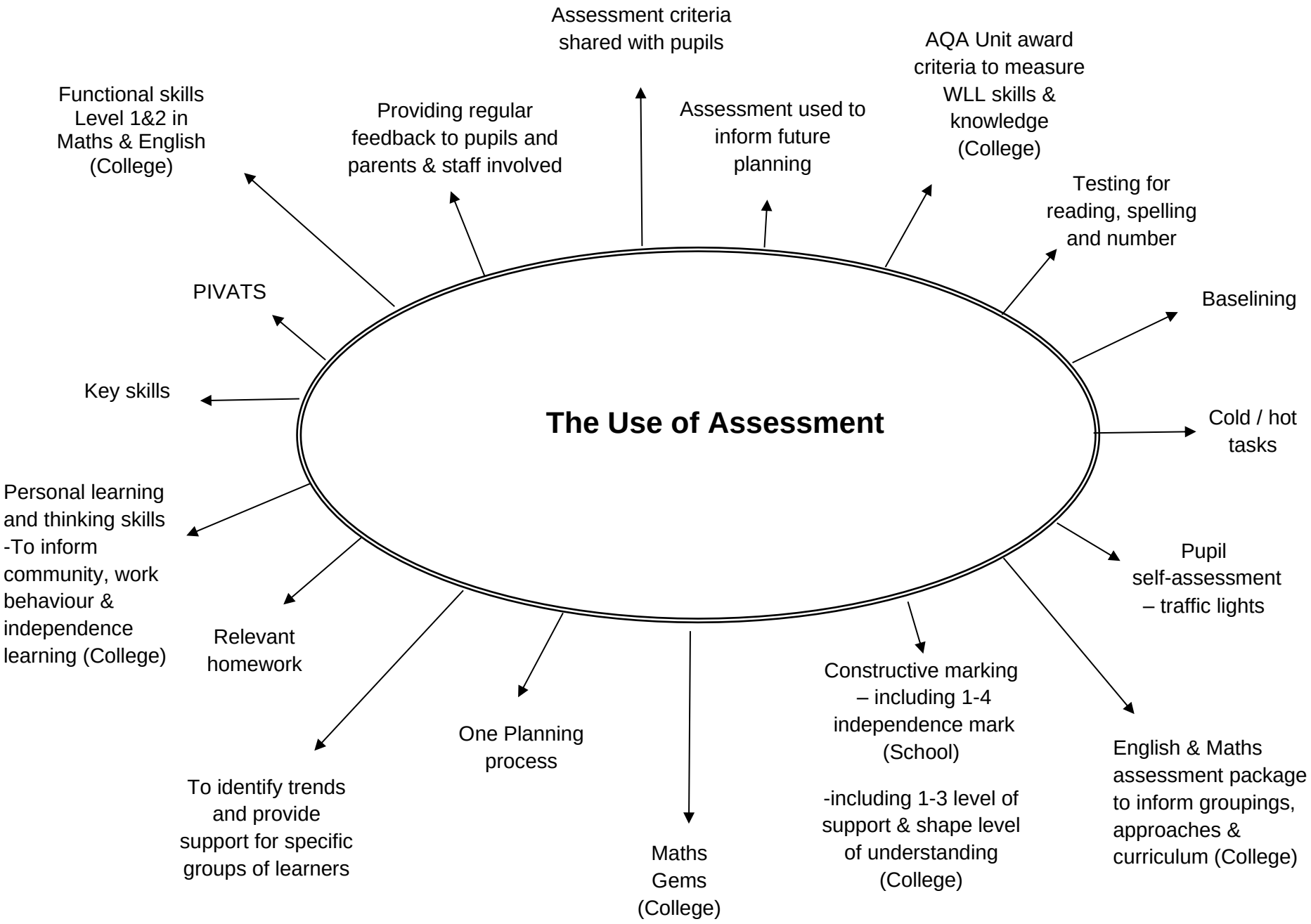

A Whole Academy Approach
School/College environment. Trips & Visits. 'Experts' invited in.
Use of appropriate resources, both within School and externally
Physiotherapy & Occupational Therapy
Full involvement of LSAs/LM's
Safeguarding a priority
Pastoral Home School Liaison Team
Therapeutic support
Sensory
Autism Friendly
Social Skills Groups and integration into all lessons
After School / lunchtime activities
Speech & Language Therapy
Involvement of all support staff- admin, site management
Parents/Carers engagement
Targeted interventions
Consistency in the implementation of whole academy policy
Music Therapy


A Person Centered Learning Ethos
Active and collaborative work
Targeted interventions
Growth Mind-set. Stimulating safe learning environment with pupils encouraged to take managed risks
Nurture & Nourish
Autism friendly environment
Emphasis on positive achievement
Clear communication to pupils, staff and parents
Excellent knowledge of the pupils
Positive relationships
Positive regard
High expectations
Person centred approach
Use of positive role models


Management of the Classroom
Tasks relevant to real life:
Work
Leisure
Personal
Prep for adulthood agenda
Maintain pace, involvement, fun, excitement and challenge
Support through Thriftwood Code of Conduct & Behaviour for Learning Policy
Use of humour
Standardisation of environment giving consistency through school and college
Adaptation of room/specialist teaching areas
Variety of learning approaches and strategies
Sensory needs recognised and met
Well planned and organised
Clear expectations shared with pupils.
Appropriate use of rewards systems
Effective use of learning support
Appropriate and effective use of resources
High levels of pupil engagement
Assertive management of classroom by teacher and LSAs/LM's


Pupil Involvement and Participation in the Learning Process
High levels of engagement
Organisation in management of the classroom that encourages pupils as independent learners
Target setting shared with the pupils
One Planning
Teaching & Learning that encourages pupils as independent learners
Learning approaches which are practical, creative and collaborative
Reward focused
Use of pupils' personal interests as hook wherever possible
Encouraging pupils' responsibility for their own learning / behaviour
Clear learning objectives shared with pupils
Differentiated curriculum meeting all pupils needs
Make Work Linked Learning choices
Progress, Review & Plan sessions (college)


Keen and eager to come to school/college
Show initiative and are willing to take responsibility
Self-motivated / nurtured
Positive attitude towards work
Demonstrate the Thriftwood Code of Conduct
Show interest in school/college life
Pupils' Responses and Learning
Respect other people's differences, particularly their feelings, values and beliefs
High levels of attendance
Reflect on what they do and understand its impact on others by showing positive changes in behaviour
Construct positive relationships with one another, teachers and other adults
Work in an atmosphere free from oppressive behaviour
Involved in the range of activities the school /college provides – day visits, residential trips, etc


The Use of Assessment
Assessment criteria shared with pupils
AQA Unit award criteria to measure WLL skills & knowledge (College)
Functional skills Level 1&2 in Maths & English (College)
Providing regular feedback to pupils and parents & staff involved
Assessment used to inform future planning
Testing for reading, spelling and number
PIVATS
Baselining
Key skills
Cold / hot tasks
Personal learning and thinking skills -To inform community, work behaviour & independence learning (College)
Pupil self-assessment – traffic lights
Relevant homework
Constructive marking – including 1-4 independence mark (School)
-including 1-3 level of support & shape level of understanding (College)
English & Maths assessment package to inform groupings, approaches & curriculum (College)
One Planning process
To identify trends and provide support for specific groups of learners
Maths Gems (College)

6. Teaching strategies

6.1. The curriculum

We use a wide range of teaching strategies to engage and motivate our young people. These strategies may be personalised to individuals as required. Overlearning, backward chaining and repetition are key techniques utilised.

6.2. High expectations

The school and college set high expectations for all pupils, regardless of ability, circumstances or need.

6.3. Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

All pupils are treated as individuals. Every pupil is provided with the appropriate support. Children causing concern are discussed at staff meetings and, if necessary, additional professional support is provided. Teachers also discuss, informally, the needs of individual children, enabling all teachers to be aware of pupils requiring support. We work collaboratively with parents and external agencies to provide all round support to our students and their families.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

	Playing & Exploring engagement	Active Learning motivation	Creating & Thinking Critically thinking
A Unique Child: *observing how a child is learning*	**Finding out and exploring** • Showing curiosity about objects, events and people • Using senses to explore the world around them • Engaging in open-ended activity • Showing particular interests **Playing with what they know** • Pretending objects are things from their experience • Representing their experiences in play • Taking on a role in their play • Acting out experiences with other people **Being willing to 'have a go'** • Initiating activities • Seeking challenge • Showing a 'can do' attitude • Taking a risk, engaging in new experiences and learning by trial and error	**Being involved & concentrating** • Maintaining focus on their activity for a period of time • Showing high levels of energy, fascination • Not easily distracted • Paying attention to details **Keeping on trying** • Persisting with activity when challenges occur • Showing belief that more effort or a different approach will pay off • Bouncing back after difficulties **Enjoying achieving what they set out to do** • Showing satisfaction in meeting their own goals • Being proud of how they accomplished something-not just the end result • Enjoying meeting challenges for their own sake rather than external rewards or praise	**Having their own ideas** • Thinking of ideas • Finding ways to solve problems • Finding new ways to do things **Making links** • Making links & noticing patterns in their experience • Making predictions • Testing their ideas • Developing ideas of grouping, sequences, cause & effect **Choosing ways to do things** • Planning, making decisions about how to approach a task, solve a problem & reach a goal • Checking how well their activities are going • Changing strategy as needed • Reviewing how well the approach worked
Positive relationships: *what could adults do?*	• Play with children. Encouragement them to explore & show you own interest in discovering new things. • Help children as needed to do what they are trying to do, without taking over or directing. • Join in play sensitively, fitting in with children's ideas. • Model pretending an object is something else & help develop roles & stories. • Encourage children to try new activities & to judge risks for themselves. Be sure to support children's confidence with words & body language. • Pay attention to how children engage in activities – the challenges faced, the effort, thought, learning & enjoyment. Talk more about the process than products. • Talk about how you & the children get better at things through effort & practice, & what we all can learn when things go wrong.	• Support children to choose their activities – what they want to do & how they will do it. • Stimulate children's interest through shard attention, & calm over-stimulated children. • Help children to become aware of their own goals, make plans & to review their own progress & successes. Describe what you see them trying to do, & encourage children to take about their own processes & successes. • Be specific when you praise, especially noting effort such as how the child concentrates, tries different approaches, persists, solves problems & has new ideas. • Encourage children to learn together & from each other. • Children develop their own motivations when you give reasons & talk about learning, rather than just directing.	• Use the language of thinking & learning: think, know, remember, forget, idea, makes sense, plan, learn, find out, confused, figure out, trying to do. • Model being a thinker, showing that you don't always know, are curious & sometimes puzzled, & can think & find out. • Encourage open-ended thinking by not settling on the first ideas: What else is possible? • Always respect children's efforts & ideas, so they feel safe to take a risk with a new idea. • Talking aloud helps children to think & control what they do. Model self-talk, describing your actions in play. • Give children time to talk & think. • Value questions, talk & many possible responses, without rushing toward answers too quickly. • Support children's interests over time, reminding them of previous approaches & encouraging them to make connections between their experiences. • Model the creative process, showing your thinking about some of the many possible ways forward. • Sustained share thinking helps children to explore ideas & make links. Follow children's lead in conversation & think about things together. • Encourage children to describe problems they encounter, & to suggest ways to solve the problem. • Show & talk about strategies-how to do things-including problem solving, thinking & learning. • Give feedback & help children to review their own progress & learning. Talk with children about what they are doing, how they plan to do it, what worked well & what they would change next time. • Model the plan-do-review process yourself.
Enabling Environments: *what adults could provide?*	• Providing stimulating resources which are accessible & open-ended so they can be used, moved and combined in a variety of ways • Make sure resources are relevant to children's interests • Arrange flexible indoor & outdoor space & resources where children can explore, build, move & role play • Help children concentrate by limiting noise & making spaces visually calm & orderly • Plan first-hand experiences & challenges appropriate to the development of the children • Ensure children have uninterrupted time to play & explore	• Children will become more deeply involved when you provide something that is new & unusual for them to explore, especially when it is linked to their interests • Notice what?	• In planning activities, ask yourself: Is this an opportunity for children to find their own ways to represent and develop their own ideas? Avoid children just reproducing someone else's ideas. • Build in opportunities for children to play with materials before using them in planned tasks. • Play is a key opportunity for children to think creatively & flexibly, solve problems & link ideas. Establish the enabling conditions for rich play: space, time, flexible resources, choice, control, warm & supportive relationships. • Recognisable & predictable routines help children to predict & make connections in their experiences. • Routines can be flexible, while still orderly. • Plan linked experiences that follow the ideas children are really thinking about. • Use mind-maps to represent thinking together. • Develop a learning community which focuses on **how** & not just what we are learning.