



Curriculum Intent

Our curriculum is grounded in practice and research based evidence and pedagogy, cemented in the belief and confidence that all students are able to learn and are capable, over time, of becoming happy, successful, self-fulfilling and contributing adults. We know that our children come to us with different challenges and starting points, yet our core responsibility to them all is to: diminish learning barriers; increase knowledge; teach positive behaviour and enhance skills and understanding; build self-esteem, confidence, strength and resilience, character and virtues. Our broad, balanced and ambitious offer provides substantial opportunities for personal development, bonded by dependable relationships. With careful scaffolding, we create a platform for engagement and a drive for moral and civically minded successful citizens.

Our core aim is for every child to:

- Have a Quality of Life which illustrates their individual hopes, dreams, interests, skills, aspirations, independence and happiness
- Be a functional reader and writer; have an increasing vocabulary; have the capability to read for pleasure and also to gain and provide information for life's journey
- Have functional maths and computing skills
- Be able to recognise their strengths, have the confidence to try new things, visit different places, meet different people, have confident conversations and make sense of the world around them
- Know how to make safe choices and develop the skills to make better decisions independently
- Know how to build a sense of mental and physical health, well-being and happiness
- Know how to play, make friends and build and maintain healthy relationships and have the ability be able to transfer these skills in to adulthood
- Experience the outdoors as well as creative and expressive arts
- Know who they are, where they belong and how they can contribute to the school, their home community and society.
- Have respect for their own and others' identity, views, rights, faiths and beliefs and the law
- Embrace diversity, and have the skills and values to help them contribute as a respected member of society
- Have the ability to reflect, explore and solve problems
- Develop the resilience to challenge themselves and the perseverance to bounce back from experiences and overcome barriers and previous experiences
- Have the skills to access further education, employment or training.

All our children come to us with a depth and range of diagnoses, with prevalence around Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs and challenges, complicated by co-existing conditions. The needs of our students, including their barriers, starting points, their contexts on arrival and experiences and feedback, are what shapes our curriculum design. Very broadly speaking, the special educational needs of our children fall under the following areas: Communication & Interaction; Cognition, Learning & Play; Sensory & Physical; Preparation for key transitions/independence/adulthood; and Health & Medical. Therefore, the breadth, diversity and complexity of their needs dictate individual approaches and pathways to scaffold education, health and care.

Quality of Life is a very important component of our intent. As well as a whole school approach to hearing student and family voice and using feedback from termly surveys (to inform our curriculum priorities), we use a universal and widely accepted QoL model. This is centred upon three broad dimensions - Independence, Social Participation

and Well-being. This model, and associated sequential descriptors, forms the basis of Key Workers' and whole school curriculum priorities.

Varying in prevalence, significance and impact, there are a number of pre-existing and current factors that affect some of our children and their families, including their very wide social, economic and demographic make-up and backgrounds. Research suggests that where vulnerability factors exist, these increase susceptibility to adverse childhood experiences and that there is a potential correlation to poor health in adulthood. Our parents tell us that their children have had, generally speaking, negative experiences of education and that coupled with SEN and other challenges, their family life is significantly impacted upon. It is important therefore, that we work closely with parents and carers and this is an important feature of our work in terms of engagement, providing support and guidance, helping fulfil aspiration and potential, and enhancing quality of life for the entire family.

We know that pre-birth and early cognitive development is of profound importance and we recognise that some of our children have not had the platform to experience positive early childhood experiences and that some have not reached 'timely' developmental milestones. We understand that concepts such as: information processing; intelligence and reasoning; development of language and memory, demand significant attention in order to build the ability to encode, store and retrieve information. We know the vital importance of play, early reading and writing, maths, language acquisition and social interaction and we acknowledge that without these, our children are unable to move more confidently to the next stage of their development.

Through the delivery of a Total Communication Approach, we aim to reduce the pressure for our students to communicate verbally and alleviate the anxieties, behavioural issues and difficulties with verbal expression created during states of heightened arousal. We therefore ensure that they have access to non-verbal communication methods, such as PECS, writing and Zones of Regulation.

A high proportion of our students' exhibit language and communication difficulties with one of the most significant being a deficit in vocabulary. This extends to emotional vocabulary, leading to issues with accessing the curriculum and emotional regulation, which results in a high frequency of challenging behaviours. Many of our students have not yet acquired the skills needed to express and understand higher-level language and therefore may struggle with verbal reasoning, complex sentence structures and problem-solving tasks, all of which require the ability to make predictions. Social skills difficulties play a large part in our students' lives and a limited understanding of non-literal language and others' perspectives combined with an inability to analyse social situations or to perceive and abide by social rules can often lead to misinterpretation of social interactions. Many of our students are unable to provide an accurate narrative and explanation of sequences (Oracy) and therefore to improve these skills, our Speech and Language Therapists offer Visuals and Colourful Semantics to provide colour-coded visual learning to improve sentence structure and understanding of word categories.

Our students often present with difficulties that prevent them performing and accessing everyday tasks and activities thus limiting their independence. These include challenges associated with gross and fine motor skills, anxiety, and sensory needs. As a result of under and over-loading of stimuli, they are unable to access the higher-level cognitive functions required to learn new information. Therefore, our Occupational Therapists assess students' needs, provide strategies and create tailored intervention programmes and equipment to help them address these issues. These interventions are designed to develop the underlying skills required for completing activities independently and support students with baseline skills required for reading, writing, completing self-care tasks and using self-regulation techniques required for attention and listening within the classroom.

All our children have guaranteed unequivocal fair access to a rich, broad, balanced and experiential curriculum delivered across 24-hours of seamless learning opportunities. Experiences in residential care and after school, including evening activities, membership of clubs, trips, cultural/subject/topic and learning celebrations, outdoor learning weeks, weekends and holidays away have very clear and tangible links within the curriculum offer. All students have access to creative opportunities, i.e. music, art, singing, dance, yoga and play as well as outdoor and progressive skills that build on prior experiences, develop and promote interests and talents which link with and are transferrable to home and families. The curriculum is delivered via an integrated approach from staff across all

disciplines including residential care, teaching, learning support, family support, OT, SaLT and Psychotherapists and is scaffolded by extensive support services. Staff are experienced and appropriately trained and they **ALL** work on the principle that there are no limits to success.

Our curriculum is the totality of students' experiences from KS1 through to KS4, and beyond for young people who reside and attend local colleges in KS5. It is a 24-hour curriculum in its purest sense, providing students with teaching and learning experiences across a range of subjects and activities throughout the day and into the evening. Day time learning is delivered in a sequential, progressive manner through each stage, at each point checking learning with recall and retention (using a multitude of methods) and developing learning over time. Whilst teachers understand the knowledge and skills to be gained at each stage, the curriculum and its delivery addresses gaps in knowledge and understanding from individual starting points to ensure our students develop, consolidate and deepen understanding across all areas over time. Subjects and curriculum areas include: English, Maths, phonological awareness, RSE, Modern Britain, PHSE, SMSC, Imaginative Learning, Computing, Investigative Science, Outdoor Learning, Creative & Expressive Arts, Water confidence, Sports, Leisure & Fitness, The Arts Award and Careers & Employability; Design & Technology, First Aid, Construction, Duke of Edinburgh Award, Textiles, Music, Hospitality & Catering, History, and the National Citizen Service are also offered.

Some students still need to embed the foundations of learning and therefore are best suited to an Early Years type provision/delivery, designed to develop communication and language, physical, personal, social, and emotional skills, literacy and mathematics, understanding of the world, and expressive arts and design. Supported by a carousel of continuous provision stations, appropriately designed and resourced, children in KS1 and 2 are introduced to imaginative learning projects, in a cross curricular approach, that build on knowledge and help make sense of concepts. This provides firm foundations, using the phases of Engage, Develop, Innovate and Express. As well as building on early learning goals, there is increased focus on areas of English, Maths, Science, Art & Design, PHSE, Geography, History, Computing, Design & Technology and PE. Students are also encouraged and supported to complete the challenge of '50 things to do' before moving to KS3.

In KS3, *most* students are ready for their next stage of personal learning and development. This includes more choices and opportunity to access academic and vocational study in areas of interest and skill, whilst still providing access to core subjects and the wider curriculum areas. Our personalised WHSS EBacc pathways provide core subjects, personalised choices and a breadth of opportunities and experiences to create a 'passport to the future', including a further '50 things to do', leading to a transition to KS4.

In KS4, students are introduced to more formal study options dictated by personal pathways linked to career aspiration, interests and skills. Some of our young people access bespoke learning and development packages and are supported off site at local education and skills providers. Students are encouraged to complete their passports to the future, participate in work experience and develop the skills for independence, further study and employability.

Assessment and monitoring plays a key part in identifying needs and using information to assess and address the suitability of delivery and the curriculum, therefore developing a holistic package of experiences and activities required to meet individual and group needs. A range of means, such as observation, questionnaires, QoL termly surveys, standardised and bespoke assessments, activity analysis and cross professional communication, best practice progress meetings, subject and topic celebrations, learning lunches, celebration assemblies and governance etc... ensures we track, amend and prioritise curriculum and wider work with individuals, groups and families.