

Rationale For The Curriculum

As a special school for children with Moderate Learning Disabilities we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children, thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future life and learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that support children to become confident and more independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and other professionals to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

The curriculum is all that we do, say, teach and learn in our school both in class and out, both formally and informally. It defines the experience of our children and the environment in which they learn. As a special school we have a duty to provide a truly unique curriculum which supports all to build bridges over barriers and overcome difficulties in learning. We teach our children in unique ways, using skill, empathy, encouragement and ambition; looking outwards to the therapeutic community and the expertise that lies both within and outside of our school.

We aim to support and teach our children to become successful young adults by ensuring that they are:

- Independent and curious learners who demonstrate ability to explore and take safe risks
- Happy and confident individuals
- Respectful and tolerant of others
- Able to reach their potential
- Have an awareness of theirs and others needs
- Celebrate their individuality and be proud of who they are and express themselves through their own means.

We aim to do this by:

- Ensuring our children have the basic writing and reading skills or can communicate in a way that works for them
- Ensuring that our curriculum is purposeful and personalised
- Ensuring that learning is focused on real life- functional skills, providing opportunities for children to learn in a meaningful, enjoyable way and focuses on skills rather than content.
- Providing learning opportunities that support, motivate and encourage our children to enable them to make progress in line with their ability and developmental age rather than their peers.
- Ensuring our learning is focused on developing the whole child, providing opportunities that develop children's mental and physical wellbeing

Subjects covered in each stage and sequential content for each subject identified.

Please see linked coverage charts for curriculum content.

Phonics

Children at our school often have difficulties with retention and application of knowledge. We recognise that phonics needs to be short, pacy, and interesting but we also recognise that our children take longer to retain these skills. Therefore, we as a school, teach phonics in a way that enables children to have time to learn, retain and practice the sounds and skills they need to become effective readers and writers.

Phonics will be taught daily for a minimum of 15 minutes. These sessions will be planned for ensuring that they are fun, practical and engaging. 'Letters and Sounds' is used to support planning. Resources that use the letters and sounds documents, such as www.phonicsplay.com can be used to enhance learning.

Classrooms should promote and display phonics so that children are able to use visual resources to support their phonics learning in every learning session, this can be in the form of a phonics display, phonics mats or examples of annotated writing. Phonics will be encouraged and supported in each session where writing and reading are present.

Reading

We use Big Cat Collins reading books which directly link to our letters and sounds programme of phonics teaching.

Children are assessed and placed on a reading book band colour. Reading record sheets are a tool to collect evidence but also to track progress and provide next steps in supporting children's reading development. Children are listened to read a minimum of 4 times a week one to one with an adult and once a week with the teacher.

Reading is not restricted to the English lesson. Many opportunities are provided for children to practice and extend their reading in other subjects. Reading for pleasure and enjoyment is given a high priority and sufficient time is set aside for this. Classrooms provide a literacy rich environment with access to high quality texts that peak children's interest, with a designated reading area, where possible.

Reading at home

Each child will have a short video or sound clip sent home on a Monday via seesaw which will demonstrate their new phonics sound of the week. This is to support families understanding of what they are working on in school. In addition to this, every child will have a reading book and record sent home. A leaflet has been sent home to share tips and strategies for reading at home and further guidance and support will be given via seesaw if requested or needed.

We also provide home reading books either through physical books or through setting reading books through using the Big Cat Collins online library.

If parents want to find out more.

If parents have any questions or wish to find out more information, please read the curriculum policy and speak to class teacher in the first instance. If they are unable to help you with a specific enquiry then you can contact our curriculum design and implementation leads, Sam Maguire and Nancy Hardwick.