

Core Pathway
Curriculum Rationale
2021-2022

Overview

Pupils with a variety of needs including Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), Speech and Language Communication Need (SLC), Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI) and Physical Disability (PD) have conditions that co-exist. These conditions overlap and interlock creating complex learner profiles. The co-occurring and compounding nature of difficulties requires a bespoke learning pathway that recognises children's and young people's unique and changing learning patterns.

Pupils present a range of issues and combination of layered needs eg. Mental health, relationships, behavioural, medical, sensory, communication and cognitive. They need informed specific support and strategies which will include multidisciplinary input to engage effectively in the learning process and to participate actively in school activities and the wider community.

Intent

The 'Core Pathway' enables young people to become the very best version of themselves by developing their functional independence. The cohort is composed of learners who are working below the overall standard of the national curriculum and national accreditations, but who are engaged in subject-specific study. There is a broad range of needs catered for through high-quality teaching and learning that prepares learners to become a valued part of their community. A sequential curriculum is planned to challenge and excite all learners; including those who need learning blended with the non-subject specific engagement model or those who can access an accreditation in a single area of strength.

Within a nurturing environment the requirements of learners are met through a curriculum that allows learners to discover a sense of belonging. This empowers them with strategies to overcome hurdles and inspires all to continually develop, which they will do at their own rate and in their own way. The core pathway enables learners to conquer barriers linked to their individual needs set out in the four areas of their Education Health Care Plan (EHCP); Communication and Interaction, Cognition and Learning, Social Emotional Mental Health and Sensory Physical. Success will mean: an increased sense of belonging, an awareness of personal safety, increased independent skills, the ability to regulate with or without adult input, an improved capability to form and maintain friendships, a development of social skills allowing a pupil to communicate with others, an increased metacognitive ability enabling problem solving in real life situations, an awareness of the emotions others may feel, a capability to recognise their own strengths and weaknesses, a developed understanding of what a trusted relationships looks and feels like, an increased capacity to access subject specific learning, enabling individuals to be ambitious about their future study or work.

To ensure the success of all learners, Personal Learning Intention Maps (PLIMs) determine the sequence, structure, and implementation of the Core pathway. PLIMs guarantee that each learner's education is carefully and cohesively planned, and the provision offered is shaped around individual needs (formally reviewed at Annual Review and documented in their EHCP). Careful consideration and close collaboration with parents/carers and significant others, ensures that aspirational outcomes are set in the four areas of their EHCP.

Throughout the pathway there is an ethos of high attainment for all, where every young person is viewed as an individual and staff consciously avoid stereotyping disadvantaged learners – it is never assumed that learners face similar barriers or have less potential to succeed. All disadvantaged groups do as well as their peers and attend regularly allowing them to engage positively.

Implementation

Curriculum Content

All pupils within the Core Pathway access a personalised curriculum, meaning the breadth of study is dependent on a learner's engagement level and the four areas of need set out in their EHCP. Pupils only access subject content that enables them to build towards a smooth transition into further education and sufficiently prepares them for their chosen future. The curriculum has been deliberately planned to be flexible, broad and balanced which helps to ensure it is ambitious for all learners. This is accomplished by having strong links with national curriculum subjects, which provides pupils with an introduction to the essential knowledge needed to access their own communities successfully and helps them develop an appreciation of human creativity and achievement. This facilitates pupils working towards their individual EHCP targets through interdisciplinary learning approaches and innovative timetabling which encourages skills being transferred to the long-term memory in a sequential manner. PHSEE is vital in preparing pupils well for life and relationships to give them secure, safe knowledge and an awareness of their rights.

Discrete subjects are taught, and formal learning is blended with play and practical experiences. There is a focus on developing independence, social and play skills, communication, problem solving, physical development, self-care, and emotional regulation. All transferable skills that equip children and young people for life beyond school. Functional English and maths are prioritised and taught discreetly as well as in a cross-curricular way using a range of learning contexts. Over the course of each half term there is a whole school focus on an English and maths strand to accelerate the development of key skills across the whole of the curriculum followed. This enables pupils to generalise the skills they develop by using them through meaningful learning experiences. Phonics is taught in a systematic way using the Essential Letters and Sounds framework that gives all children a solid base upon which to build as they progress through school. If a pupil is not ready to access phonics, Launchpad to Literacy is used as a systematic, skill-based approach to create firm foundations to develop basic literacy skills. White Rose and Numicon are used to enhance our maths curriculum by encouraging pupils to explore maths using structured imagery and apparatus in order to understand and communicate mathematical concepts.

Curriculum Planning

All activities are carefully designed to optimise engagement, emotional regulation, and enjoyment in learning. The individual nature of the curriculum design optimises the pupils' communication and interaction skills now and for the future. The curriculum provides an outline of core skills around which teachers can develop exciting and stimulating lessons to promote the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding as part of the wider school curriculum. During the school day and in each week, term, and year there is time and space to move beyond the curriculum specifications and take part in enrichment activities. These allow pupils to experience and pursue an understanding of a wide range of subjects that add to their cultural capital. The programme of study is broken down into a clear progression framework which gives the essential structure needed for long-, medium- and short-term planning. Medium term plans focus around an exciting topic that fully engages learners, this can be a thing, a concept or a place that learners have previously demonstrated an interest towards. Medium term plans span

over one half term and move towards preparing for a memorable experience, whether this be a trip, an event or creating something. Within the planning stage teachers consider; lines of enquiry, home learning (through tapestry), intended outcomes and the impact learning will have. Opportunities to recognise Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural aspects of learning as well as British are also recorded in medium term plans.

Teaching and Learning

A series of skills and knowledge objectives show how we intend to cover the fundamental concepts and aspects of each national curriculum subject and they are linked to a learners EHCP. Over a period, objectives connect and build upon one another to make sure that concepts and aspects are developed over time and in a variety of contexts. Staff plan in a collegiate way to ensure pace, challenge and progressive learning is achieved. Staff also share their varied expertise to support their colleagues through peer learning visits, staff led training and team-teaching opportunities. Learning objectives and success criteria are routinely shared with students and feedback is given so all learners understand the next steps they should take. There is an emphasis on visual learning and staff recognise the need to deliver concepts visually and to manage learning by 'chunking' these concepts into smaller steps. The learning environment is structured to support understanding and enable pupils to work independently where appropriate.

By starting with 'The Child at the Centre' high-quality teaching and learning is responsive to the interests and abilities of the learners and builds upon their strengths. This ensures that learners access well-structured, challenging and enjoyable experiences within a range of learning environments. High standards are kept through; setting challenging expectations, monitoring performance, tailoring teaching and support to suit learners and sharing best practice. Staff identify what might help each learner make the next steps in their learning and focus on providing targeted support for under-performing pupils during curriculum time (as well as providing learning support outside school hours).

Multidisciplinary Approaches

Through a multiple disciplinary approach staff seek out strategies best suited to addressing individual needs, rather than simply fitting pupils into existing support strategies. This relies on spotting the potential of front-line staff, allowing them to grow, and acknowledging that devolved responsibility is needed to ensure they have the greatest impact. Through an integrated therapeutic approach classroom environments organically develop to meet the needs of its learners as they change and grow. With therapies and educational professionals working closely an ever increasing toolkit of approaches has been created to ensure the provision is suitable for all learners.

Multidisciplinary Approaches Toolkit 2022			
Approach	Overview and Impact	Research	Further information and Research Links
Zones of Regulation	Zones of Regulation is an approach used to support the development of self-regulation in children. Children who are well regulated are able to be in the appropriate zone at the appropriate time	The Zones of Regulation, written by L. Kuypers and published by Social Thinking in 2011, has sold over 260,000 copies and counting, and has been widely implemented in homes, schools, districts, and clinical practices all over the world to address	https://www.zonesofregulation.com/index.html

	meaning they make good progress.	social emotional learning (SEL).	
Choice Boards / Books	A choice board is a visual representation of items/activities that are available for an individual to choose from. This tool encourages communication, provides a visual reminder of what activities are available, and develops metacognitive independent decision making.	Research with individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) indicates that providing choice opportunities increases on-task behaviour and decreases behaviours of concern.	http://autismcircuit.net/tool/choice-board
PECS (The Picture Exchange Communication System)	The primary goal of PECS is to teach functional communication. PECS consists of six phases and begins by teaching an individual to give a single picture of a desired item or action to a "communicative partner" who immediately honors the exchange as a request. The system goes on to teach discrimination of pictures and how to put them together in sentences. In the more advanced phases, individuals are taught to use modifiers, answer questions and comment.	Research has shown that some learners using PECS also develop speech. Others may transition to a speech generating device (SGD). The body of research supporting the effectiveness of PECS as an evidence-based practice is substantial and continues to expand, with more than 190 research articles from all over the world.	https://pecs-unitedkingdom.com/pecs/
Consistent Visuals supports	Visual supports are a communication tool that can be used with autistic people. They can be used in most situations, are adaptable and portable. Consistent visual supports can help to: provide structure and routine, encourage independence, build confidence, improve understanding, avoid frustration and anxiety and provide opportunities to interact with others.	Visual supports can be implemented with individuals across all ages. Effective visual supports in early childhood settings include visual schedules to increase task engagement, visual scripts to encourage social interaction, and picture cues to support play skill development. In a range of SEN schools, visual supports such as schedules and picture cues have proven effective in reducing transition time, increasing on-task	https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/communication/communication-tools/visual-supports

		behavior, and in completing self-help in the home.	
Attention Autism	Attention Autism is an intervention model designed by Gina Davies, Specialist Speech and Language Therapist. It aims to develop natural and spontaneous communication through the use of visually based and highly motivating activities.	Attention Autism groups support pupil development of social communication skills which has been identified as a prerequisite for optimum communication attainment.	https://www.twinkl.co.uk/teaching-wiki/attention-autism
Colourful Semantics	Colourful semantics is an approach to support spoken and written language learning across the curriculum. It aims to help children develop skills when it comes to sentence development, understanding questions, developing narrative, understanding written text and developing vocabulary.	A 2011 study tested the effectiveness of Colourful Semantics therapy with a group of pupils who had expressive difficulties. These included word order problems, lack of verb use and failure to complete sentences. The study found that measures of the children's expressive difficulties had improved after using the colourful semantics framework for 8 weeks.	https://www.twinkl.co.uk/teaching-wiki/colourful-semantics
Intensive Interaction	Intensive Interaction is a practical approach to interacting with people with learning disabilities who do not find it easy communicating or being social. The approach helps the person with learning difficulties and their communication partner to relate better to each other and enjoy each other's company more.	Intensive interaction was developed in the 1980s in the United Kingdom by Dave Hewett and Melanie Nind. Intensive interaction is used to help children learn basic communication skills like eye contact, facial expressions, the ability to copy sounds, and shared attention.	https://www.intensiveinteraction.org/ https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2016-11/Intensive%20Interaction%2004.pdf
SCERTS	SCERTS aims to help families, teachers and therapists work cooperatively to support autistic children. It combines several techniques to create individualised programs for autistic children. The acronym stands for Social Communication (SC), Emotional	The SCERTS Model is a research-based educational approach and multidisciplinary framework that directly addresses the core challenges faced by children and persons with ASD and related disabilities, and their families.	https://scerts.com/research/

Structured Workstations	Staff reduce sensory input wherever possible. Provide blinds, avoid neon lights and minimise disruptive background noises. While many autistic learners are very sociable and perfectly comfortable with working in open-plan classrooms, some may find it important to have a quiet space to retreat to.	A workstation is part of the TEACCH approach which has been used successfully for many years, to teach children with autism. The approach focuses on an individual's strengths to enable them to develop independent learning skills, support weaknesses and to reduce stress.	https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/strategies-and-interventions/strategies-and-interventions/teacch
Play Based Learning	Play-based learning is a type of early childhood education based on child-led and open-ended play. Play itself is a voluntary, enjoyable activity with no purpose or end goal.	Both Piaget and Vygotsky believed through play children can discover the world, formulate opinions and impart some meaning to their ever-changing view of the world. Piaget argues play parallels development, while Vygotsky puts forward that play promotes development.	https://www.unicef.org/sites/default/files/2018-12/UNICEF-Lego-Foundation-Learning-through-Play.pdf
Blanks Model	The Blank Levels of Questioning, was developed by Blank, Rose and Berlin in 1978. Its main aim is to develop children's verbal reasoning and abstract language capabilities.	There are four levels of questioning which move from simple, concrete questions to more difficult, abstract questions. Blank's questions encourage development of general language and vocabulary as well as skills in comprehension, reasoning, inferencing, predicting and problem solving	https://www.southwestyorkshire.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Blank-questioning-information.pdf https://salda.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/SALDA-Blanks-level-of-questioning.pdf
ELSA	Emotional literacy support assistants - or ELSAs - are teaching assistants trained to provide emotional and social skills support to children.	The ELSA programme is a targeted intervention aimed at developing the social and emotional skills of primary and secondary school aged children	https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/ https://www.elsanetwork.org/
Preparing for Adulthood	The term "Preparing for Adulthood" is used to describe the process of moving from childhood into adult life. There may be a number of different agencies involved in supporting the transition	Local Authorities must ensure that the EHC plan review at Year 9 (age 13-14), and every year thereafter, focuses on preparation for adulthood: employment; independent living; health; and friends,	https://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/

	including health, social care and education services and these will all change as the young person approaches adulthood.	relationships and community participation.	
Educational Visits	Educational visits, outdoor learning and adventurous activities are a key to broadening the horizons and providing valuable cultural experiences that improve the physical and mental wellbeing of young people.	Risk is a natural part of everyday life; all activities involve risk and it is impossible to eliminate it entirely. As they grow up, it is important that children and young people learn to understand and manage risk and uncertainty for themselves.	https://oeapng.info/
Outdoor Learning / Forest Schools	Outdoor learning / Forest Schools is a child-centred inspirational learning process that offers opportunities for holistic growth through regular sessions. It is a long-term program that supports play, exploration and supported risk taking.	Research demonstrates outdoor learning develops confidence and self-esteem through learner inspired, hands-on experiences in a natural setting.	https://www.outdoor-learning.org/ https://forestschoolassociation.org/
Social Stories	Social stories and comic strip conversations can help autistic people develop greater social understanding and help them stay safe.	Social stories were created by Carol Gray in 1991. They are short descriptions of a particular situation, event or activity, which include specific information about what to expect in that situation and why.	https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/communication/communication-tools/social-stories-and-comic-strip-conversations

The whole staff team works together to reduce the distress that an individual may experience if they become dysregulated. Following the principles of Positive Behaviour Support (PBS), staff seek to understand the cause of distress enabling them to be proactive in using primary prevention strategies. They have been empowered to do this by completing Non-Abusive Psychological and Physical Interventions (NAPPI) training. All learners within the pathway have a Consistent Approach Plan that identifies the function or purpose of behaviour, as well as the developing alternative methods of communicating. Ultimately strategies agreed reduce the likelihood of learners demonstrating a behaviour of concern and increase their quality of life.

Level of Demand

Depending on an individual's needs as well as their state of regulation the level of demand placed on a learner will differ.

Increased demand activities are based around the process of arousing interest, where pupils respond with wonder and awe when encountering new knowledge (knowledge is theoretical). Pupil's process information so it can be stored in the brain, an understanding of a preferred learning style is crucial in allowing pupils to strive for accuracy in their output. During increased demand activities pupils will develop their ability to organise their own learning. Staff support

pupils in persevering in a task through to completion by helping them remain focussed and scaffolding learning so pupils can reach their goal when stuck. Pupils learn not to give up when they find something difficult. A high level of communication is evident and pupils become accustomed to questioning and problem posing, this enables pupils to communicate with clarity and precision.

When demand is decreased learners develop functional skills (skill is practical) linked to learnt knowledge. Pupils use the process of memory storage to develop fluency in a skill. During these activities pupils will develop their problem solving skills. Staff create an environment where pupils can manage impulsivity by learning to take their time, remaining calm, thoughtful and deliberate. Staff communicate purposefully and only at the individual's developmental level. Pupils acquire the ability to listen to and understand others by thinking flexibly and looking for alternatives. They have the opportunity to gather data through all their senses to understand the world around them. Being adventurous and living to the end of one's competence is promoted by allowing pupils to take responsible risks. Humour is used to keep the learning environment favourable and to enable pupils to laugh at themselves.

At times of no demand learners take time to apply knowledge and skills to develop a conceptual (having a plan or intention) understanding where abstract ideas are formed. Pupils use the process of memory retrieval to make links between previous learning to apply past knowledge to new situations. During no demand activities pupils will develop their ability to self-regulate. There is limited communication or direction from staff. Pupils have time to think about their own thinking and become aware of their own thoughts, strategies, feelings and actions. They generate new ideas by creating, imagining and innovating. Pupils develop into independent thinkers and begin to be able to work with and learn from others through teamwork. Pupils become open to continuous learning and begin to seek out further experiences to increase their knowledge and skill set. Staff are aware of the stages of play and set up suitable activities to progress pupils' levels.

Throughout the school day many learners in the pathway require regular sensory and movement breaks. Transitional activities are also used to help learners regulate.

A sensory break is a designated portion of time that may allow a child to de-escalate from the sensory stimulation of the classroom setting. Sensory breaks also are beneficial for students that benefit from additional movement or deep pressure input opportunities to help with focus, attention, and learning. Staff assess the situation for specific sensory triggers, such as sound, and provide tools for defensiveness, they then set a timer and give the child a 5-minute warning at the end of activity. Movement breaks help students change their alertness. They can support sensory regulation. The purpose is to help students either increase or decrease to a level where they can engage and participate in their learning. Transition activities and strategies promote self-regulation by helping children know what to expect and actively participate in their daily schedule. They also promote an understanding of the sense of time (i.e., past, present, future) and help with the development of social-emotional skills.

Curriculum Progress

Teachers have responsibility for reviewing progress regularly, which allows them to spot any signs of underperformance and address them quickly. This is done by engaging with the data: they input, analyse and use it to underpin their teaching. This promotes a culture of transparency where every staff member recognises they are accountable for pupil progress. To measure curriculum progress, multiple systems are used to ensure that the assessment method is appropriate for specific cohorts. The systems used are; Cherry Garden (EYFS / KS1), MAPP (Reduced Breadth), iASEND (KS2 / KS3) and Trackers (Accreditations PHSEE and PE). Each system benefits from the use of live assessments being made against the depth that an individual

curriculum expectation is met. The depth of learning is determined by how fluent, generalised, maintained and independent a skill has become. The inputted information allows for data to be collected on pupil attainment, progress and achievement meaning variations in cohort performance can be monitored. For those learners who fall behind their expected rate of progress, evidence based interventions are delivered in small groups or to individuals by trained staff. Skills developed during intervention sessions are implemented in other areas of the curriculum throughout the school day triangulating learning, approaches and support.

Impact

Measuring Impact

The Rochford Review (2016) made a number of recommendations relating to assessment for pupils with SEND. These included the need to ensure that assessment be tailored to the child or young person's individual needs and unique profile and that it should be aligned to a curriculum appropriate to needs. A non-linear approach to assessment is needed that emphasises the importance of engagement as essential to learning.

Assessment is a crucial element in meeting the needs of all pupils. It is vital to establish an accurate pupil profile on which to base educational targets and pupil outcomes for needs in areas included in the EHCP. Assessment is individual to each pupil and relies on careful observation, identification of concepts or skills which require further exploration, dialogue with parents/carers, other professionals and reflective interpretation of this information.

Important factors for assessing pupils;

- Assessment and intervention should be carried out in a range of environments to ensure transfer of skill
- Assessment may need to be an eclectic mix of information from different sources which can be collated to form a holistic profile (Pupil Progress Report).
- Information from home and parental perspective is important
- The developmental profile can be uneven or spiked

Teachers', in consultation with parents/carers and multi-agencies, identify individual priorities. Long term outcomes (end of Key Stage) are decided in all 4 areas of the EHCP; Communication and Interaction; Cognition and Learning; Sensory and Physical; Social, Emotional and Mental Health. Short term (yearly) outcomes are agreed at the Annual Review meeting. Termly targets meet the short term (yearly) outcome to ensure the child's continued learning progress and are included on the child's Personal Learning Intention Map (PLIM).

Quality Assurance

Comparative judgement meetings take place where teachers focus on each area in the child's PLIM and scrutinise provision and accuracy of evidence of progress. Data is scrutinised and any pupil not on track to meet targets will be discussed by the staff team, in the form of a 'deep dive' and interventions put in place as required, which can include educational and therapeutic interventions and may involve referral to outside agencies.

Internal and external quality assurance processes take place throughout the school year, which involve numerous stakeholders. This allows an assessment to be made on the quality of the learning experience from the perspective of the learner. Information collected from learning walks, formal observations and moderation sessions is triangulated with performance data to aid in creation of develop plans that feed into pathway targets that have a positive impact on pupil performance. Chosen targets drive the ongoing programme of CPD and the Appraisal process, ensuring that staff understand and respond to the needs of all pupils positively. Within pathway

meetings, time is set aside for staff to reflect on, discuss and evaluate their practice and the rationale that informs practice, to create a consensus and consistency of practice across the setting.

Parent / Carer Input

Parents/carers are regularly consulted and informed about their child's targets and progress. Communication is facilitated by;

- Parents' evenings
- Annual Review of EHCP
- Home-School diary
- Regular phone/email contact
- Tapestry
- Coffee mornings
- Information evenings
- Stay and Play sessions
- School newsletter
- School website

End of Pathway standards

When a learner comes to the end of their journey through the core pathway, they are prepared for their next stage by;

- Being prepared to transition into further education (Brightside, Journey, Buzz, Azzure, Northumberland College, Kirkley Hall, Tyne Coast, or Newcastle College).
- Having a greater set of skills that has increased their independence.
- Having a greater tolerance of social situations.
- Being able to follow social conventions and demand in a range of settings.
- Having a chosen method of functional communication.
- Being able to access their community regularly in a regulated state, whether this is supported or independent.
- Having an increased set of independent skills (dressing, cooking, crossing road, travel).
- Having an understanding of if supported or independent living would be appropriate as they get older.
- Knowing what area of employment they would like to work towards or how they can complete meaningful activities in their community.
- Having an increased awareness of personal safety (road safety, E-Safety and stranger danger)
- Using functional maths and English skills in the community to visit local amenities.
- Being able to use suitable technology in a safe way.
- Being able to form and maintain positive relationships.