



Ivy House School Curriculum

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The Ivy House Curriculum

At Ivy House School we believe that it is imperative that everyone within our community is:

“working together to inspire, nurture and empower”

This vision captures the importance of the multidisciplinary approach from all stakeholders including families, education, social care and health professionals to ensure that we create an offer for our learners' that is aspirational (**Inspire**), offers holistic and personal development, removing barriers to learning (**Nurture**) and enables students to be as independent as possible so that they are well prepared for life after school, into adulthood and ensuring that no dream is out of reach (**Empower**).

Our learners are at the heart of everything we do. Ivy House School offers a curriculum which is **broad** in that it covers all aspects of development and **balanced** in that it weighs up the specific input that it is needed for each learner. Most importantly it is **meaningful** to each young person and their family.

We recognise each young person is **unique** and have the added complexities, of physical, sensory and medical difficulties. The multiplicity of these means that each and every learner has their own individual set of barriers to learning. Learners with PMLD and SLD learn fundamentally differently from neuro-typical conventionally developing learners, and as such we are required to teach them differently and teach them different things (Imray & Hinchcliffe, 2014). Students require a high level of adult support, both for their learning needs and also for their personal care. They are likely to need **sensory stimulation** and a curriculum broken down into very **small steps**. We have therefore developed our curriculum offer to ensure that each learner receives their own **bespoke curriculum**, built specifically for them based on their **skills** and **desired outcomes** whilst ensuring it is broad, balanced and **aspirational** so that barriers are removed. It is our aim to ensure that every student leaves us with an appropriate level of control over the world around them and therefore, there is a focus on **functional skills** and **knowledge** as well as promoting our students to be as **independent** as possible.

There are many respected SEND education thinkers whose ideas and support we value (such as Barry Carpenter; Simon Yates; Dr Penny Lacey; Jo Grace; Peter Imray; Flo Longhorn; Dr Sarah Moseley; Dave Hewett & Melanie Nind, Jean Ware and more). However, we believe that there is no standard uniformed teaching technique that can remove all barriers or meet the needs of all of our learners'. There is no single curriculum, approach or intervention that would fit all of our students. Each child requires their own unique curriculum: **“the child is the curriculum”**. Everything we do, and everything each learner experiences, must be meaningful, and we must all, as educators, know why we are doing what we are doing with our learners.

Penny Lacey, an eminent figure in the field of special education, who worked to create a new curriculum based on a personalised approach to learning, suggested that a curriculum for young people with learning difficulties needs to be constructed around the “twin pillars” of **“communication”** and **“cognition”**. There needs to be a “move away from a National Curriculum perspective to a **developmental perspective**” she argues, with “communication” and “cognition” being the principal things which are explicitly taught which form the core of our curriculum. For many young people with learning difficulties, subjects such as history and music should serve to provide a context for learning “communication” and “cognition” rather than represent the focus of learning. However, the extent to which different learners with learning disabilities engage with the

National Curriculum needs to vary, according to their attainment levels and nature of their SEND. In order to provide students across Ivy House School with experiences that are **relevant, interesting and challenging**, and to identify opportunities for **progression**, we have adopted a curriculum structure which encompasses 2 broad levels: '**pre-formal**' and '**semi-formal**'. These terms, originally coined by Whitefield SAC (2009), offer a means of making subtle distinctions between not only groups of learners but also the degree of curriculum formalisation they will experience in either building the prerequisites for, or working within, a more 'conventional' National Curriculum type approach.

The levels are not defined by age, but by need and achievement; students are therefore able to move **flexibly** between levels at any point during their school career. Each level covers **skills, knowledge and understanding** across a range of areas of learning, and they are blended together, so as to facilitate a 'learning flow' between each level.

Our role as educators is to find the very best interventions and teaching techniques for each learner. To do this we need to ensure we research and work with the SEND community, but more importantly, through **knowing our learners** as best we can which is something as a school we pride ourselves on. At the heart of our approach is the recognition that learning and development across all areas are underpinned by our understanding of **engagement** - the way each individual engages with other people, activities, their environment and any stimuli. We seek to **nurture life-long learners** who, rather than just being recipients of support, are **motivated, inquisitive and active participants** in their unique curriculum.

We do recognise the need for a 'broad and balanced curriculum' and this will mean different things for different students. We take ideas and methodologies from documents produced by the Department for Education and elsewhere. In particular, we find the EYFS framework particularly helpful, no matter what the age of our learners. However, whatever we take must be **relevant and appropriate** to the **developmental needs** of each pupil, in order for **meaningful learning** to occur. There is no single curriculum that suits all our learners, no 'set' of subject areas, no bank of targets to be chosen from. Every "Next Step" must be part of a **functional and meaningful** path for that child, not part of a pre-programmed or linear route. We must have no pre-conceptions of any learner's path of progress or we are in danger of limiting our expectations of where they may branch out. We must follow the child, and we always expect to be surprised!

Because of the personalised approach to the curriculum we are able to meet the needs of all our students. All students across the school have **Personal Learning Goals (PLGs)** with targets based on the outcomes in their **Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)**. These are written and reviewed in consultation with parents and other professionals. Some students receive additional funding such as Pupil Premium and the Post-16 Bursary, with the impact of any interventions funded through these monitored to ensure that they support **meaningful progress**.

We want our learners to learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**. We want each young person to have a sense of **belonging** and **active participation** in their life and education. We aim to provide **exceptional education** and care through enabling environments so that each young person can make progress towards **fulfilment**. We provide a curriculum that prepares them with the skills and knowledge they will need as individuals to **maximise their life potential** at each stage of their journey and ultimately in **preparation for adulthood**. We promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all children and young people. We strive to ensure that our students have the opportunity to develop their mental and physical wellbeing and are prepared for opportunities outside of the school environment and in later life. Personal

development and opportunities to build **cultural capital** by ensuring our students get the opportunity to experience their local community and beyond are pivotal to our schools offer.

Our curriculum sets out the knowledge, skills, understanding and programme of study to be taught to enable our students to have a lively, constructive place in society. It is there to **inspire** teachers, not instruct them, it is continuous, and not a sequence or chronology. As practitioners, just like our learners, we are inquisitive and will always ask "**why?**". "Why am I teaching this lesson?", "What are my students meant to make of it?", "What is it for?", "Where does it fit into the bigger picture of curriculum plans?", "Why is it important to know or master it?", "What difference does it make to learning if we didn't do it?". By doing this we can ensure activities are purposeful and meaningful to the individual. This enables a deeper level of learning so that, where possible, our students are able to retain and transfer their learning. We must teach **powerful knowledge**, so what students need to know to make sense of and improve the world around them, to grow into useful citizens who make a **purposeful contribution**.

An Ivy House Child

Whilst every child in the school is unique, and face their own unique barriers to education, to understand how our curriculum is constructed, it is important to understand the student cohort who we are fortunate enough to serve. Whilst understanding this, we are conscious to remain aspirational, and not to have a pre-conception on what our learners can do, or limit the expectations on what they can achieve. There is no glass ceiling for achievement, and we always expect to be amazed.

Our **Pre-formal Curriculum** is for learners with Profound and Multiple Difficulties (PMLD), working at the very early stages of development within the Engagement Model and the Red and Orange Profile of the Rainbow assessment system (*previously between P1 and P4*), and at a developmental level of between 0 and 18 months. Imray (2005) suggested those with PMLD are likely to be pre-intentional communicators and will generally (unintentionally) communicate for needs/wants only, have extreme difficulties conceptualising abstract concepts, have difficulty learning through imitation, be (often totally) physically reliant on others and have limited understanding of cause and effect. Less than half of the average PMLD pupil's time at school is spent in a state where they are fit to learn because of such conditions as sleepiness, pain, discomfort, distraction etc. (Guess et al, 1990). Students with PMLD are learning the fundamental learning skills usually mastered by typical children in the first year or so of life (Lacey, 2011). The subjects may be able to provide an interesting and challenging context for practicing these fundamental skills but it is unhelpful to suggest that students with PMLD are learning English, Maths and Science. Many linear or hierarchical assessments will be unable to detect the very subtle changes in behaviour shown by learners with PMLD, regardless of how many "small steps" are provided. In real life, children's development and learning is not compartmentalised.

Our **Semi-formal Curriculum** is for learners with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), working within the Yellow to Purple Profile of the Rainbow assessment system (*previously between P4 and end of KS1 expectations*), and at a developmental level of between 18 months and 5 years. Students with SLD have difficulties with communication, understanding abstract concepts, concentration, and moving things from short-term memory into the long (Imray, 2005). Lacey (2009) notes these learners typically have inefficient and slow information processing speeds, little general knowledge, poor

strategies for thinking and learning, and difficulties with generalisation and problem solving. These difficulties may well be compounded by considerably higher than usual incidence of sensory, motor and health difficulties (Porter 2005); an additional Autism Spectrum Condition diagnosis (De Bildt et al., 2005) and considerably higher than average chance of having challenging behaviours (Allen et al., 2006).

Whilst these definitions are helpful to understand the challenges our students face it is vital we concentrate on the uniqueness of the individual. We are capability focused, concentrating on the positive potential of an individual so that an understanding of the capabilities of the child, rather than the deficits, become the central theme we work towards.



Curriculum Design

A **developmental perspective** informs the curriculum at Ivy House School, where the starting point is each individual learner. Learning for our students at a very early cognitive level does not occur by laying one skill upon another to form a building block, but is **adventitious**, irregular and random, coming from all experiences in the **holistic** manner of young neurotypical children learning through **play**. Our students need:

- To be able to expressively communicate and understand others.
- To maximise independence through deep learning and mastery.
- To understand rules and the need to follow them, keeping them safe.
- To be able to make choices/decisions.
- To develop resilience.
- To have social skills and apply them in the community.
- To be able to learn to self-regulate to cope with challenge in an appropriate way.
- To know their sense of worth and have self-confidence.
- To use their bodies to complete fine and gross motor tasks and activities.
- To understand the world around them.

Ivy House have worked closely with, and adopted, the EQUALS curriculum for many areas. This suits the needs of the children and offers greater opportunities for extending learning in a range of **exciting** and **vibrant** ways. Curriculum Schemes of Work (S.O.W) have been written by professionals involved within the arena of education for children with SEND and so the activities planned build on important **milestones** and patterns of development. This is important for the children at Ivy House, who require **repetition of learning** to support their own progress and attainment. We pride ourselves on offering curriculum opportunities that foster and develop a range of personal skills, including:

- Finding out and exploring
- Concentrating and attending
- Perseverance
- Enjoying achieving
- Having their own ideas
- Making links
- Choosing how to do things

The school understands that the principles of the **Early Years Foundation Stage** are applicable to many of the students across the age ranges, due to the **developmental** level of learning. An **inclusive curriculum** is about its applicability to all from its inception and not about adaptations and extensions to make a non-inclusive curriculum more applicable to extended groups (Jordan, 2005). It is not an assumption that we just need to water down what is already in place for neurotypical learners. The rationale underpinning our curriculum is in response to the Rochford Review and in consideration of the wealth of research underpinning **effective pedagogy** for pupils with SEND. Therefore, our curriculum design is arranged to **fit the child**, rather than the child to fit the curriculum. It is based on the needs, interests, aptitudes and achievements of learners. As educators we need to have **deep knowledge** of individual differences that steers teachers to provide **meaningful contexts** in which to really engage children by focusing on things that matter to them.

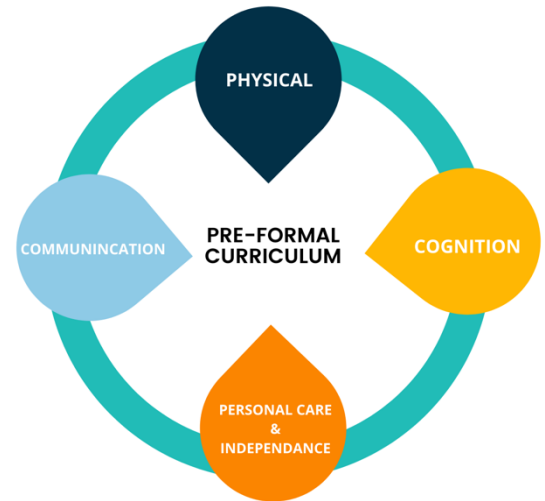
Our learning experiences are designed to provide **maximum opportunities for irresistible engagement** that facilitate the exploration, practise and mastery of the developmental curriculum. The process of engagement must be at the heart of any curriculum development (Carpenter, 2010). The pace of the sequence is set by the individual not by arbitrary measures. It is also not designed to be linear. Progress can be horizontal or in some cases backwards. It may be that the maintenance of a skill or the slowing down of a regression are huge steps for the individual learner. Its aim is to support children and young people to apply what they have learned in school in **real life situations** into real world opportunities so they have agency over their world once they leave us. For some learners, functional skills are directly related to real skills needed for now, transition and the future. Examples are independent eating, understanding and helping with getting dressed or own personal hygiene routines.



Pre-formal Curriculum

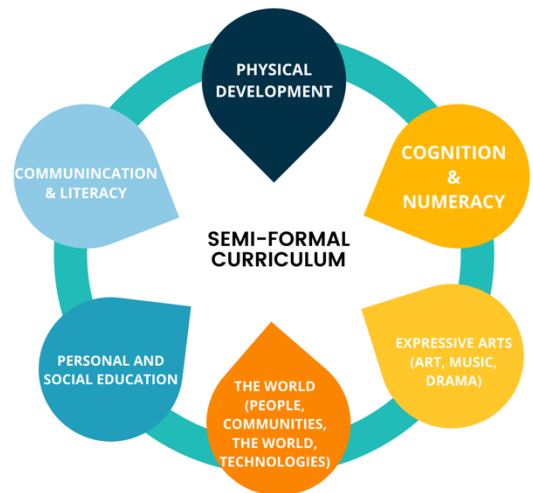
Our pre-formal curriculum offers a narrow range of curriculum areas that are concrete in form and focus on individual needs, physical needs, family needs and affective needs (including well-being and security). The curriculum enables them to develop a sense of security in the school environment, which is comprehensible and meaningful to them. The focus is upon enabling them to establish positive interactive relationships with others, to proactively explore the world around them, gaining environmental control skills. All students will be given maximum opportunities to achieve the highest level of independence possible.

The curriculum is process based, and the delivery includes activities such as intensive interaction, where there is no task at the centre of the process. The teacher doesn't decide the target, the learner decides where the interactive process will go; the pace and direction of learning and therefore the pace and direction of teaching. For example, when participating in an activity such as baking a cake, the aim is to offer meaningful engagement and improve exploratory abilities, the end product of the cake is unimportant; it is the process that is key.



Semi-formal Curriculum

Students following our semi-formal curriculum learn best when learning is related to their own experience. Some may learn through play; others will learn more effectively through functional activities, and yet others will respond well to a topic-based approach. The curriculum content echoes the ground covered by the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021) since this framework is not confined to those below the age 5, but rather, extends right across the school where students are functioning up to end of year 1 expectations. However, the teaching approach reflects the age and learning style of the students concerned.



A Sensory Curriculum

Senses represent a major factor in the design of our school's curriculum. For our pupils extending their understanding, the use and control of their senses allows them to fully explore the world and come to an understanding of it, how to interact with it, and how to interact with each other. Our pupils have a range of sensory and perceptual impairments, which is why we focus on all seven senses of sight (visual), sound (auditory), touch (tactile), taste (gustatory), and smell (olfactory) as well as the kinaesthetic proprioceptive and vestibular senses. These later two physical senses involve our pupils understanding how various parts of the body connect to each other, where they are in space and their whole body understanding. Any activity delivered in school provides us with a sensory opportunity.



A Play Curriculum

Play should be recognised alongside education as a vital part of our pupils healthy and happy development (Hussein, 2010). People with PMLD/SLD can become accustomed to one on one relationships with adults and therefore find it difficult to relate to and cooperate with their peers. Therefore, we ensure we facilitate early play skills, both in and outside of the classroom, to enable our pupils to interact and engage with friends, enabling them to engage in our school community, at home and with friends. Staff will act in the roles of supporters of play, mediators of play and active play partners. Play provides opportunities for our students to engage in turn taking, number, sequencing, anticipation, problem-solving, thinking skills, social interaction etc. they can be repeated many times to develop a deeper understanding.

A Care Curriculum

Care is an essential part of the Ivy House School curriculum. Medical conditions have to be managed for effective education to take place (Farrell, 2006). It is important we do not consider care as a necessary but time-wasting educational by-product, something to be done as quickly as possible so we can get back to the important issue of education. Instead we focus on care within education.

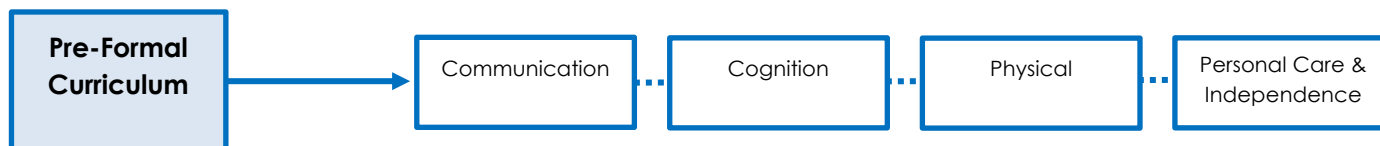
Routines provide an opportunity to teach and learn. Any part of our learner's day, such as going to the toilet (or changing area) is a learning opportunity, using the same routine every time by all staff, including the same object and verbal cues. The use of routines enables our pupils to build upon previous learning experiences that they will have potentially thousands of opportunities to practice during their time in school.



Ivy House Curriculum Overview



Primary (Year 1-Year 6) & Secondary (Year 7-Year 9)



Key Stage 4 and 5 (Year 10-Year 14)



Curriculum Delivery

We aspire to deliver life changing practise through high quality teaching & learning based on sound knowledge of each child's needs. We understand the privilege we hold to be able to have a positive impact on our learners' every time they come through the doors into school.

It is fundamental to the curriculum that we can be helping the learner make progress towards all their targets, no matter what the activity they are engaged in, at any time of the day. This includes break times, play times, off-site visits (even the journeys), personal care, eating time and so on. Learning is best done when every moment and situation is regarded as a learning opportunity (Routes for Learning, 2006). It could be argued for example, that necessities like toileting and feeding directly impinge upon the school's ability to educate, since doing it efficiently, safely and with care and consideration, takes up so much of the school day. Yet these are precisely the areas of learning which challenge us to use learning time effectively. Therapies are also integrated throughout the day, and throughout the learning, with the curriculum supporting the delivery of therapy and therapy supporting the learner progress.

The structure of the school day is timetabled for the different needs of different classes and learners, ranging from the very free flowing, slow-paced, reactive practice for PMLD and early years, through to a semi-formal, more structured approach for the most high-ability learners who have a more subject-specific curriculum, or for those who require a high level of structure such as those on the autism spectrum.

Each pupil drives the direction and content of their own 'curriculum'. Whilst we deliver our curriculum through half-termly topics, the planning, learning and delivery may differ between and within classes. Priorities based on PLG targets, EHC outcomes, students' age, need, motivation and learning style will help build the curriculum. It is essential that our pupils are comfortable and ready to learn and there is a focus on students being skilfully supported to be as independent as they can be. Learning opportunities should be concrete and real. Real objects should be used or very tangible representations of things/feelings/atmospheres. We expect more learning to take place when we teach in a concrete manner, through real life actual experiences, rather than in an abstract manner (through things such as written or spoken language). This means that learning is likely to be enhanced if we can actually practice thinking and problem solving in real situations in real time.

We need to be able to take every opportunity that the children present, as we cannot predict what their physical state might be, nor their levels of alertness, nor always what stimulus works or doesn't. There are very few 'lessons' in the old- fashioned sense of children listening to a teacher and following instructions, rather we try what we think might work and then follow the children's responses to see where we might go next, and this mostly means on an individual basis, or very small groups within a class. Our learners will not learn effectively under stress and therefore they must:

- Feel secure with the people around them
- Feel safe
- Be positioned comfortably
- Not be overloaded with stimuli (Cognitive Overload)
- Not be overly thirsty, hungry, tired etc.
- Be calm, as much as is possible to know

Learning is often skill-based, that need to be required by much practice. A skill must be broken down into smaller steps that are repeated over time so that they can be mastered and applied to relevant situations. Cognitive science tells us that learning is most effective with repetition and helps develop a deeper understanding. Our curriculum is not one-off activities that are likely to be forgotten but instead build up to mastery over time, where applicable, to enable fluency, reasoning and problem solving. Skills are improved if they are taught in context and the learner understands why. Our learners need an understanding of cause and effect to understand intrinsic reward, and they need to be motivated to engage within an activity. However, we recognise that a skill can be acquired without understanding and can be a useful teaching technique and a justifiable teaching and learning goal.

We allow and actively encourage our students to learn from their mistakes. Skills can and will be lost if we were to stop teaching them, therefore they are regularly practiced. We provide the opportunity for learners to make small steps of progress and allows for the transfer of knowledge and skills into different and new contexts.

Oracy and our use of language must be clear and expressive. Sessions can be 'teacher led' with a structure, or may be set out in the class to allow for supported pupil-led exploration with only a small amount of teacher led introduction. Adults create ladders and scaffolds to provide additional support for our learners, which are gradually taken away as the learner "learns" to be more independent and solve problems on their own. It is important that we enable the students enough time in order to succeed and enable opportunities for students to take risks, make mistakes and work up through the following levels:

- **Participatory** – during which learners perform activities with considerable physical assistance, which may include physical manipulation or partial assisted movement and assisted technology such as switches, adapted utensils etc.
- **Supported** – during which learners perform activities with guidance and support, which may include physical prompts – such as object or music cues, verbal prompts, visual prompts – such as colour coding, icons or symbols, pictures or assistive technology such as BIGmack switches. All with supervision from occasional inspection to continuous observation.
- **Independent** – the final level where learners should be expected to perform the activities on their own.

Irresistible engagement is central to everything we do. Staff will continually consider how they can change the learner activity to stimulate curiosity, what they can change about the experience to encourage the child to persist, find learning that our learners respond to best. In order for the moment of discovery to come and real learning to occur, our pupils need us to wait and be given the time and space to process and discover.



The use of cues

Underpinning the delivery of all communicative activities throughout the day will be the extensive use of cues. These essentially fall into the category of Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) and will include touch cues, sound cues, object cues, signing, symbol use and photographic cues.

Object cues (Objects of Reference; OoR) - At Ivy House we use a generic, standard set of objects across the whole school for key actions throughout the day such as our time to learn star. This helps support our learners make sense of the world around them, helping to structure and routine the day. OoR should be readily available in every classroom and in key places around the school such as bathroom doors.

Touch cues - These are very simple additional physical cues to assist with understanding, for example, a tap on the right shoulder indicates to the learner the wheelchair is turning right.

Sound cues - At Ivy House these are generally pieces of music which are played at the start or end of a particular session. For example, the school day starts with the same start and finish song throughout the school. Classes will have a time to learn and plenary song.

Symbol cues - Particularly used to develop choice making or make sense of the current task for example in the use of work cards to support understanding of the current demands on the learner.

Signed cues - using Makaton symbols as part of a total communication approach, even if learners are unable to understand the particular sign.

Thematic Learning

So that learning is relevant, suitable and engaging for our children and young people, the school has developed the following curriculum model. National Curriculum subjects (including English and Maths) have been planned into thematic subjects, which better meet the complex needs of the students. They link closely to the areas of the EHC plans and this allows the teachers to plan creatively and ensure that learning is appropriate to the individual needs. We have established a [rolling cycle of themes](#) at each stage of our learners:

- **EYFS** (Nursery 1 & 2, Reception and Year 1) – have a 3-year rolling programme
- **Primary** (Year 1-6) – have a 6-year rolling programme
- **Secondary** (Year 7-9) - have a 4-year rolling programme
- **14-19 Department** (Year 10-14) – themes have been identified as those which are important and relevant to our learners but are flexible to reflect the needs and motivations of our learners as well as following national, local and seasonal events

Half-termly Themes link to National Curriculum subjects (or areas of learning within our EYFS department) to provide varied experiences to add interest for pupils as they develop individual skills in the core areas of learning. Each class will differentiate the theme as appropriate to their class group. There needs to be breadth of learning throughout students' time at school, especially if they will be staying within the same learning cohort (pre-formal etc.), whilst ensuring that the learning is developmentally appropriate. We also celebrate key events throughout the year as a whole school such as World Book Day, National Science Week, Chinese New Year etc. to promote Fundamental British values as part of Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural opportunities for our whole school community to learn and celebrate together.



At our curriculum's core is 'What our pupils need to learn'. This thematic learning is the means of delivering this. This is the 'Provision' and means through which PLGs are worked on. Classes ensure that there is a balance throughout the year and the choice of themes is designed to incorporate this. Repetition is essential for all these discreet sessions, but this 'pace' is always led by the learning needs of the group that is being planned for.

Areas of learning

We must educate the whole child and not compartmentalise learning into discrete subjects. However, some areas of learning are required to be covered as part of the school's curriculum. Throughout all lessons and activities; communication and sensory cognition is always at the focus. Our pupils develop their communication skills through these activities, either conventional or unconventional forms (these can include stilling, change in breathing pattern, vocalisations, change in facial expression, gesturing or purposeful eye contact). Experiences are repeated regularly to allow students to develop familiarity and feel confident to interact. It is vital we make these meaningful to each individual child.

Cognition/Cognition and Mathematics

We provide pupils with the foundation for understanding the world and the ability to reason, and is essential to everyday life. This is by developing ways of exploring, investigating and understanding the world. At the earliest stages of development where thinking centres around concrete situations, pupils strive to make sense of experiences and sensations that involve changes in pattern quantity, space and time. All matters relating to learning must also be related to cognition, to the degree of understanding the learner holds. Cognition deals with the ways in which we gain information about the world around us, the conversion of this information into forms of knowledge our brains can deal with, the organisation of this knowledge and its use in direction and informing our behaviour. Learning involves relatively permeant changes in behaviour which come about as a result of experience (Barber & Goldbart, 1998). Cognition at Ivy House covers areas such as attention, perception, pattern, recognition, learning, memory, concept formation, thinking, language and intelligence.

Mathematics is a holistic concept taught through all areas. Mathematical literacy is defined as an individual's capacity to identify and understand the role that mathematics plays in the world, to make well founded judgements and to use and engage with mathematical in ways that meet the needs of that individual's life as a constructive, concerned and reflective citizen (OECD, 2006). At Ivy House there is a focus on functional use in real world situations, pupils are encouraged to apply maths in context and maximising independence is always the long-term aim.

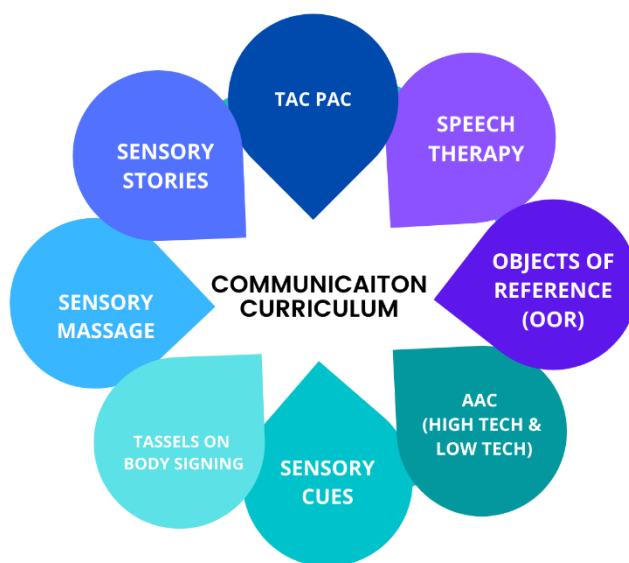
Intent

- To become aware of events and actions and to recognise changes in pattern, quantity and space.
- To develop an awareness to anticipate and predict change.
- To use awareness, develop understanding of pattern, shape and space to develop problem solving skills.
- Use cognitive skills and understanding which allows them to visualise, compare and estimate.
- To become confident and fluent in the language of and some fundamental concepts and skills of early mathematics
- To use early concepts to solve simple problems
- To transfer these skills and concepts across learning areas

Communication/Communication and Literacy

We provide the foundations for equipping pupils with receptive and expressive communication, developing communication methods which are central to every interaction throughout the day in a Total Communication Environment. Communication for our learners is most successful with familiar, responsive partners who care about the person they are communicating with (Goldbart & Caton, 2010). It is suggested there are four essential minimum conditions required in order for communication to take place; a means of communicating, a motivation to communicate, someone to communicate with and time to communicate. We provide the conditions to maximise opportunities for spontaneous communication. In order to develop effective communicators at Ivy House School, we encourage the development of basic communication skills such as

- Emotional engagement
- Attention skills – person and time
- Turn taking – reciprocity
- Using and understanding non-verbal communication – eyes, face, body language
- Being close enough to a communicative partner – proximity
- Receiving and giving touch
- Responsiveness to vocalisations





Intentionality is likely to be crucial for developing intentional communication as, until you realise you can affect the environment intentionally, you are not going to realise you can specifically affect the behaviour of people in the environment (intentional communication (Goldbart, 1994)). The pragmatics of communication can be broken down into four broad areas:

Expression – ability to request, ability to reject, ability to gain attention, intent, other means of initiation

Comprehension -response to [name], response to verbal commands in context, response to gesture and Makaton signs.

Social interaction – ability to joint reference with significant other, turn taken after a model and/or prompt, number of times significant other needed to prompt.

Behaviour – ability to express pleasure, ability to express distress.



Intent

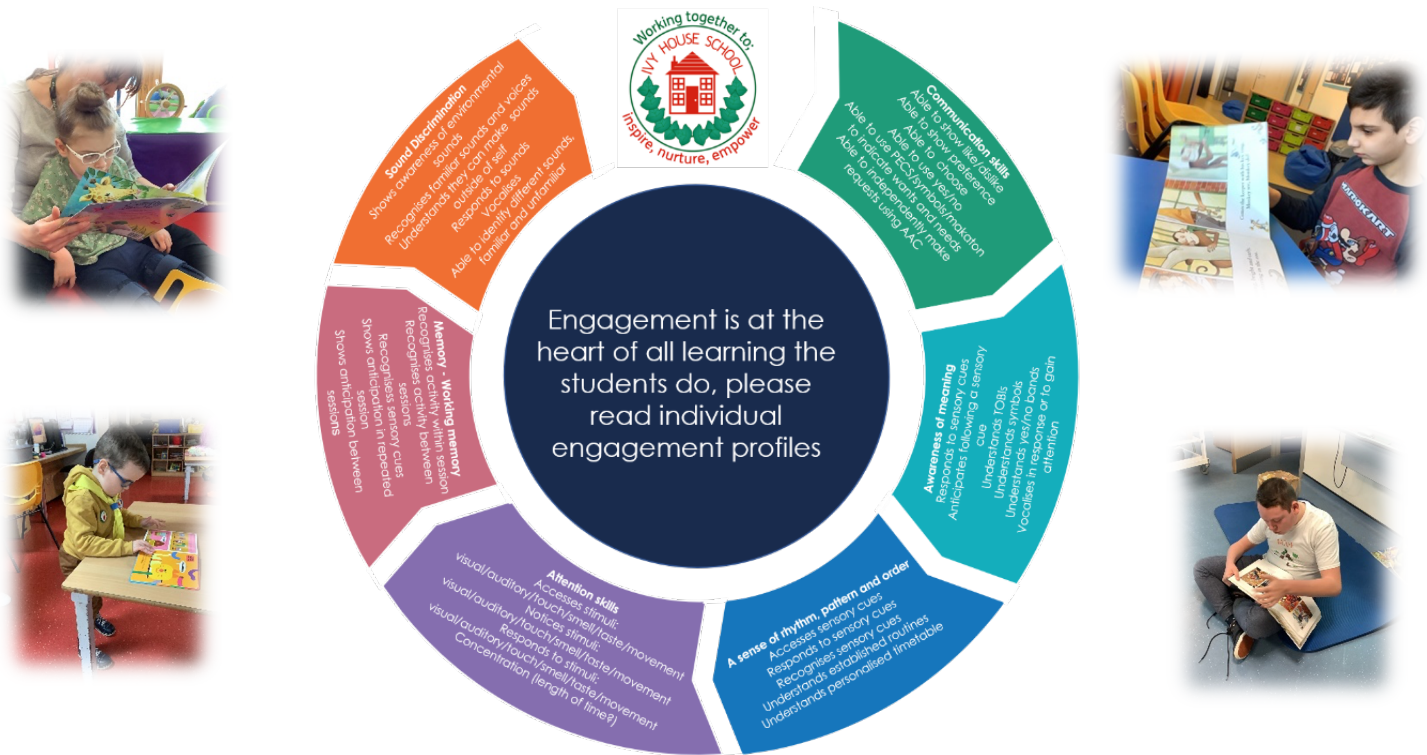
- To develop competence in speaking (or expression) and listening (or comprehension)
- To be aware of the purpose to communicate
- To communicate functionally or express self through preferred modes confidently and competently appropriate to individual needs and abilities
- To interact and communicate for social reasons and personal self esteem
- To communicate needs, ideas and emotions
- To listen and attend
- To comprehend or understand others
- To develop early visual skills
- To develop functional hand skills leading to early mark making, name writing or labelling.
- To develop and increase an appropriate vocabulary for individual students
- To read with understanding
- To develop reading for purpose and pleasure
- To develop writing skills for purpose
- To utilise communication skills across all subjects and sessions

Reading

At Ivy House, we encourage all pupils to develop a love of reading. Developing reading skills enables our children to access meaning from different forms: rich and varied language, text, symbols, expressions, objects, pictures, people and the environment. We know reading provides a gateway to learning and provides all learners with access to rich experiences which may exist outside of our learners' immediate world. The pre-requisite reading skills we strive to develop in our students provide a foundation for the development of word recognition and language comprehension. The journey to becoming a reader begins with the development of prerequisite skills to learning which include: engagement; communication skills; awareness of meaning; attention skills; a sense of rhythm, pattern and order; memory retention; and sound discrimination.

Our pupils take different pathways depending on their individual needs, pupils who are working on the pre-formal curriculum and use the Engagement Model as part of their assessment work on pre-requisite and emergent reading skills that are intertwined in all our practice. Our semi-formal learners are beginning to use more formal phonics sessions in line with Read, Write, Inc. As a school we are

passionate about the inclusive nature of all of our teaching and therefore our phonics sessions are differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils.



Physical Development

We develop fundamental movement skills, supporting students to become increasingly competent and confident and access a broad range of opportunities to extend agility, balance and co-ordination, individually and with others. All children have their own physical program, which may include physiotherapy; hydrotherapy; rebound therapy; MOVE etc. which form the basis of the school's physical curriculum. Wherever possible, physical activity is functional and meaningful. For example, walking in a specialist walking frame to see a friend in another class. The main aim of encouraging movement is to increase independence, protect body shape and improve general health and morale. The physical curriculum is an everyday part of our learners' lives and will include; eye/hand coordination and fine motor control, posture, spatial awareness and orientation and movement. The exploration of art materials offers opportunity for our learners to work on things such as grasp, manipulation, feel, taste etc. which form the focus of the activity as opposed to the production of art work, it is the exploration and the physical practice that's important. Opportunities to practice fine motor movements will come through switch work and through the manipulation of any materials and objects that are motivating to our pupils, whatever they are. Physical literacy and movement to music in school, for example, through Physibods, supports with building muscle memory and improvement of both gross and fine motor control. Our students require regular positional changes in order to engage in activities through the day. Massage is used alongside stretches and positional changes as an

activity to support with loosening of muscles and easing stiffness, it also supports body understanding and proprioception.

Intent

- To increase confidence in movement and enjoyment of physical activity.
- To compensate for restricted movement experiences through active/ passive participation in various movement experiences
- To develop competence in a range of physical activities both gross and fine motor
- To extend the range and control of movement initiated
- To sustain physical activity for extended periods
- To improve balance and postural mechanisms and encourage mobility and loco-motor skills
- To increase agility, strength and co-ordination
- To promote motor organisation and the ability to carry out purposeful movements.
- Promote a healthy life
- Promote an active life
- To promote well-being
- Engage with others in physical activities
- To develop physical skills for leisure including outdoor opportunities.
- To consider health and safety awareness.

Personal Care & Independence/Personal & Social Education

We provide the foundations for developing independence, self-esteem, social and community skills. The ability to exert one's independence is a basic human right, so it must be placed centrally within the curriculum. Independence can only be developed when the person has developed an understanding of themselves as a person who can perceive the world around them, develop their thinking about what they perceive and begin to communicate about their desires and choices. Independence is not the ability to conform but rather the ability to take control over the experiences that go on around them. This is vital for our pupils where they are likely to have limitations on their ability to be functionally independent in many areas. Pupils liable to be involved in activities that take a substantial amount of time, are about the most personal areas of self-care and are usually associated with the needs of children of an early age. Our curriculum makes time for these activities to take place, but is designed to ensure that the pupil can develop the maximum amount of independence in these areas as possible. This may be physical independence skills but may also be the ability to communicate about these activities, to accept or decline, to request or to terminate.

The basic activities of self-care are also the ones that are likely to have the greatest impact on the family in terms of time and location. The more independent a pupil can become the more life possibilities and opportunities are available for them and their families. Our curriculum must focus on those activities, valuing them and giving them time to be achieved: Eating & Drinking, Dressing, Personal Care, Personal Presentation & Hair and Washing & Bathing.

Intent

- To become aware of events and actions that relate to personal care.
- To develop awareness to anticipate events
- To tolerate activities and routines.
- To co-operate with activities and routines.
- To begin to use mobility to perform some skills independently.
- To develop skills of independence
- To develop personal care skills
- To develop self-confidence and awareness

- To explore and manage feelings
- To explore and manage behaviour encourage students to accept responsibility for their behaviour,
- To develop and understanding of social rules
- To develop appropriate relationships with others
- To enable students to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence;
- To enable students to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the law of England
- To encourage respect for other people.

Understanding the World

We provide the foundation for understanding about the world around us, our bodies and living creatures. This curriculum area focuses on meeting the requirement of all human beings to belong and make sense of the world around them. Our pupils have a right to be part of the community and have a unique identity within it. Understanding the community can only be developed through a growing awareness of the pupils' own body, developing their perception and thinking and including them in a communicative environment where they can discover and develop their voice. Language and Culture, Science, Geography, History and Technology themes can inspire students' curiosity and fascination of the world, natural and man-made resources. A variety of ICT is used to support the development of learning teaching supports the inclusion of these skills across the curriculum. ICT education needs to prepare students for using information technology in their daily lives. Learning is presented in functional contexts where pupils can be part of real time events and experiences which need to be repeated in order to develop real meaning and understanding.

Intent

- To develop a wide range of early scientific concepts and knowledge and appropriate vocabulary
- To understand some basic processes and uses of science.
- To experience and be able to use or access appropriate computer technology
- To experience designing or making products that we can use or help us to solve problems.
- To experience food preparation and learn how to prepare or cook as appropriate
- To experience and access knowledge about diverse places, people, resources and natural and human environments (land and water, climates, various terrains, physical and human features)
- To experience some significant aspects of the past in Britain and the wider world
- To experience other languages and associated cultural activities
- To experience or access RE that reflects the traditions in Britain which are in the main Christian whilst considering the teaching and practices of other principal religions represented in Great Britain which are defined as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism.
- To develop tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling students to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures.

Expressive Art & Design

Art, craft and design education should engage, inspire and challenge students involving them in experiencing, experimenting, creating and inventing. Music is embedded within in the curriculum to engage and inspire students to develop a love of music, increase their self-confidence, creativity and sense of achievement. Pupils are supported to explore and experience a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities for them to develop their communication and sensory cognitive skills through choice making and reaching/grasping materials. The pupils are supported in cooking activities, allowing the children to use all their senses to explore the ingredients.

Intent

- To experience, explore, be engaged, inspired and challenged through access to a range of media and materials
- To produce creative work exploring ideas and imagination
- To record experiences
- To access music, drawing, painting, sculpture and a wide range of art, craft or design techniques.
- To experience or access the works of great artists in various forms.

Additional areas of learning

Relationship & Sex Education (RSE)

We have very detailed and carefully considered teaching approaches for all aspects of these, personalised for each child, their needs and abilities following [consultation with families](#). Helping our pupils to understand how to keep safe, to whatever degree they can, when they rely completely on adults for all their care is vital.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC)

Each class keeps an audit of their [coverage of SMSC](#). With such a huge range of cognitive ability to teach, SMSC is interpreted in creative and thoughtful ways, keeping as close as possible to the spirit of what SMSC is meant to convey and promote. All of our children are given opportunities to have experiences related to other cultures than their own, and to have time for reflection.

Religious education (RE) and Collective Worship

As with SMSC, we interpret the purpose of RE for our pupils. All our learners are given time and opportunity for spiritual experiences at whatever level is meaningful for them. Those who can and do express wishes to do with their faith, will have opportunities to worship.

Fundamental British Values (FBV)

These are [promoted](#) within Ivy House School: the values we promote are equality, respect, co-operation, compassion, democracy, understanding right and wrong, tolerance and harmony, responsibility and understanding of traditions and cultures. These have been adapted to make them more assessible for our learners to Believe in yourself, Show you know right and wrong, Contribute to your community, Accept other people's beliefs and Respect those who keep us safe.



Functional skills

Wherever any of the children can achieve any sort of independence, this is pursued and promoted. Functional skills can include (as examples) continence; assisting with personal hygiene; helping when dressing; eating and drinking skills; mobility and so on.

Subject specific learning

A small minority of children who are working at a subject specific level will have targets related to these subjects, particularly Reading (symbols or words), Speaking & Listening (using alternative and augmentative communication systems, high and low-tech) and Maths (in particular functional skills such as telling the time; using money). There is no pre-determined set of expectations for the children in these subjects – as with the rest of the curriculum, these targets are personalised to each child ensuring that they are meaningful.

Curriculum Activities

This section gives a brief outline of some of the suggested activities which teachers may timetable as regular weekly events, this is not a definitive list of activities. ICT is, of course, integral to our curriculum and will be taught through many of the activities. This is not prescriptive and teachers are not directed to teach all of the activities suggested, though there is an expectation that many of them will be covered. All of these activities assume that learning will primarily be Process Based in nature.

Sensory Stories are a key way we deliver literacy at Ivy House School. They support the delivery of thematic topics in an interesting, exciting and wholly developmentally sympathetic manner. Stories are age appropriate as opposed to classes developmental stages and adapted/remodelled to make them suitable. The stories are repeated at least weekly for a half term so our learners have a real opportunity to become familiar with it and so practice their sequencing, turn taking, anticipatory and memory skills – all essential base elements of communication. Literature is too important to restrict to those who can read (Grove, 2005). Interactive storytelling recognises the music of words and that apprehension proceeds comprehension. Our students deserve to access great literature, even though their meaning is opaque, the pattern, rhythm, affect and emotion strikes at a deep and central part of our humanity (Park, 2010). Personal stories are how we all make sense of what happens in our lives, they are central to our sense of who we are with 65-80% of communications relating to a personal experience (Grove, 2012). Therefore, we encourage our pupils to become story tellers themselves, focusing on what they can do to contribute.



Intensive Interaction is a teaching and learning approach to develop communication between two people. The method works by progressively shared moments or sequences of enjoyable interaction that will often be frequent and short in duration increasing as time goes by. The process is led by the individual with the supporter responding to behaviour and using this behaviour to encourage interaction. Intensive interaction develops the fundamentals of communication prior to speech, the skills that are generally learnt at the very early stages of development. The core principles are those of tasklessness, that is, a deliberate lack of agenda or any specific target or objective. Adults follow the child's lead, celebrate any actions or vocalisation as an intentional act of

communication – whether it is or not – and try (in the long term) to extend knowledge and understanding of communication interactions. The adult therefore needs to “turn in” to the learner and look for communication moments, so that the act of creating the flow becomes the objective of the session. This includes using and understanding eye contact, facial expressions, gestures and body language as well as the learning the importance of turn taking and enjoying being with others. The fundamentals of communication form an important part of communications development as without some of these skills it is very difficult to engage in communication.

TACPAC draws together touch and music to create a structured half hour of sensory communication between two people. Tacpac creates sensory alignment and helps people of any age who have sensory impairment, developmental delay, complex learning difficulties, tactile defensiveness, and limited or pre-verbal levels of communication.



Mobility Opportunities Via Education (MOVE) Programme is an activity-

based practice that enables young people to gain independent movement. Being able to move allows us to learn much more effectively. It uses the combined approach of education, therapy and family knowledge to teach the skills of sitting, standing, walking and transitioning between. The aim of the MOVE Programme is to offer these movement opportunities to disabled people, opening up and transforming the world around them and creating an accessible, interesting and educational world full of opportunity and choice. The programme's central philosophy is that movement is the foundation for learning. In early development, children learn about their environment and gain skills to navigate the world by moving, exploring, and practicing repeatedly. A disabled child who uses assistive equipment and relies on others for much of their movement is generally provided fewer opportunities to independently move and learn. The MOVE Programme ensures that disabled young people are provided these vital



opportunities to develop their mobility and independence.

Rebound Therapy is the therapeutic use of a trampoline to develop and promote motor skills, body awareness, balance, co-ordination and communication. It is designed to accommodate pupils' individual abilities and disabilities, whilst drawing upon their previous experience and likes and dislikes. Improved health and fitness and greater independence are encouraged, whilst fun, enjoyment and the opportunity to succeed are of paramount importance.



Massage provides a focus for pupils to understand their own bodies. It can support them to understand how their body parts are connected (proprioceptive sense) and can help with them to know where their bodies are with regards to the space around them (vestibular sense). These two kinaesthetic senses need to be worked on as much as the conventional five, and massage can be an excellent focus. We also use Story Massage which combines the benefits of positive, respectful touch with the creativity and engagement of storytelling.



Creative Arts - Drama, dance and music are merely more sophisticated extensions of both play and games playing, not necessary to be strict about divisions. Creative arts enable our students to develop self-confidence, enabling them to achieve in literature without writing, in situations where there is no right and no wrong. They are related to making and sharing meanings, and stimulate a process of personal growth, imagination and curiosity (Carpenter & Hills, 2002). Creative arts offer the potential for all of our learners to integrate their knowledge, skills and understanding.



Art offers sensory experiences relating to the materials and the cognitive experiences derived from combing materials which is more important than the finished work. The focus is enabling our learners to facilitate art for themselves.



They will create art based on what they have experienced, but will also experience what they create, prompting further responses and making connections. It creates the opportunity to work in a multi-layered way, in contexts that are motivating, meaningful and energising to our learners capitalising on their inherent playfulness (the natural way all children learn). Music can be an extremely effective conduit through which movement, learning, communication and socialisation can be filtered.

Cooking allows for an infinite variety of sensory exploration and experience for our learners. The focus is not on the end product, but the process of exploration through looking, touching, smelling and so on. Depending on the individual learner it also offers a vehicle for mathematical thinking and scientific exploration such as size, quantity, position, measurement, weight, structure of properties, temperature, sequencing, cause and effect, estimation, counting, addition and subtraction, fractions division etc.



SoundBath is a meditative experience where pupils are "bathed" in sound waves. These waves are produced by various sources, including healing instruments such as gongs, singing bowls, percussion, chimes, rattles, tuning forks, and even the human voice itself. The music doesn't have a catchy melody or rhythm, but instead is a carefully selected wash of instrument and voice with notable resonance and overtones to produce a calming through sound. During a SoundBath staff work closely with one pupil and then move onto the next. In the pause between this intensive interaction the pupil continues to experience the sounds created as they await their turn. The sound could be helping to hold the attention of the pupil during the 'down time' before the staff returns to work with them intensively.

Pupil Voice

At Ivy House school, 'pupil voice' is about giving our pupils the opportunities to share their views, their feelings and their learning, and be enabled to communicate them, whether that be by spoken word, signing, symbols, gesture, AAC or combination of any of these. At the root of all of this, to ensure pupil voice is relevant and meaningful, are strong relationships with our staff. We get to know our pupils really well so we can understand how they best learn, how they can best communicate and how best to facilitate opportunities to share their news, views, and feelings.



We have a school council, which includes a representative from all classes across the school. This enables students to be part of key decisions within the school, such as playground development and the student library.

The below responses are taken from the Spring 2022 student survey.

- **100% of students said they were happy in school**

"I have always loved coming school" "I really like school"

- **100% of students said they felt safe in school**
- **92% of students said they enjoyed learning in school**

"I like using my communication aid" "I like new topics and remembering and recalling old topics" "I love my communication aid"

- **100% of students said they felt staff helped them to learn in school**
- **100% of students said they had a friend in school**
- **84% of students said the school supports them to stay healthy (physical exercise, eating and drinking, hygiene)**
- **What students said they enjoyed most about coming to school:**

"Playing" "Art, Tac Pac, Story massage, sound bath, when Geoff comes to class and sings, numeracy, Horrid Henry, having turns on YouTube, playing interactive games with my friends" "I enjoy coming to school with his friends" "Hydro" "Being with friends" "Music, snack time hand massage" "I like seeing my friends" "Tac Pac, different lands, Maths, Sound Bath, Personal Care" "I am happy"

- **What students said were their favourite activities:**

"Swimming" "Sound Bath, playing interactive games with my friends" "Hydro and communication aid" "Hydro. Powered wheelchair. Lessons. Worker of the week" "Music" "Themed activities, swimming, music" "Tac Pac" "Communication aid, Lessons, hydro, eating, spending time with friends"

Assessment at Ivy House

Assessment celebrates the different abilities of our learners, rather than trying to fit them into an existing framework not developed with their complex needs in mind. Providing equal opportunities is about meeting individual needs, not treating everybody in the same way. By focusing on pre-determined small steps from checklists we may be distorting individual priorities and narrowing the curriculum. Learners will not make sense of a fragmented curriculum, divided somewhat arbitrarily into subject categories. Tasks are relevant and purposeful to maximise motivation and to help learners make sense of the world around them. The curriculum experiences we offer are carefully mediated, as uncoordinated approaches, particularly those using different sensory pathways, can lead to a range of experiences that carry little meaning for learners. Our learners are entitled to access a curriculum and assessment framework which is fit for purpose and meets their specific needs. There is little benefit or increase in entitlement if they are included in structures which fail to do this.

We believe that recording and reporting on progress is vital to the success of process-based learning. We encourage every teaching session to finish with a plenary, where the whole class pauses the formal teaching process in order to celebrate success, record specific pupil progress, pick up areas of concern, and inform the next lesson.

In order to gain as broad a picture of the way our pupils learn as possible, we use **Evidence for Learning** to collect and collate clear information about individual pupils. Recording and reporting can also be aided immensely by simple use of photo and video. This also allows us to celebrate and share learning with families to raise their aspirations of what their children can do. Staff must be certain that the pupils are credited for what they can do by themselves and not what we interpret as being their true intent. For many of our pupils, their progress will not be able to be charted in a linear way but, they will show the developments in a more lateral sense and may show breadth and depth of learning. Once evidence is collected it is mapped against a range of criteria, including:

- The Engagement Model
- Rainbow Profile
- EHCP targets
- Personal Learning Goals (PLG)
- Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement -RARPA (*14-19 department only*)
- Mapping and Assessing Personal Progress – MAPP (*14-19 department only*)

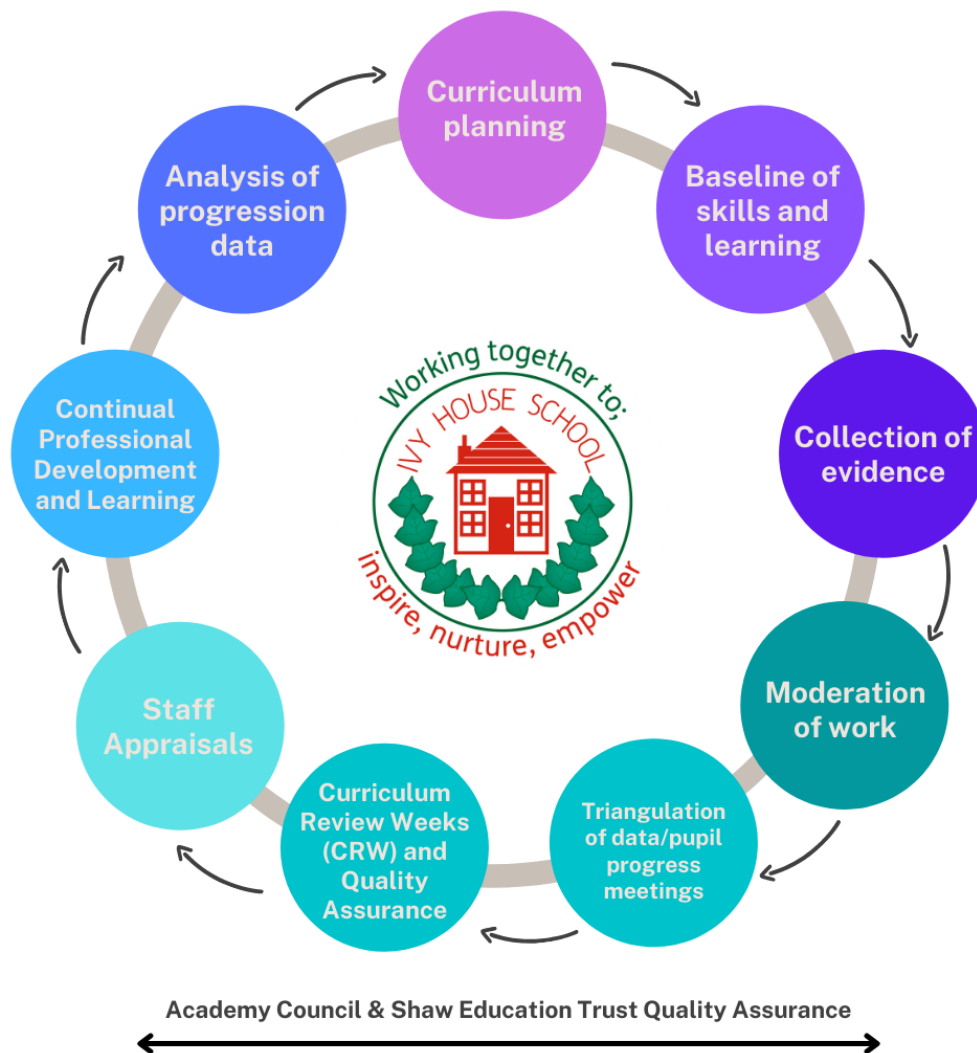
This informs which targets should be worked on within PLGs. By working in this way, we will be able to demonstrate that pupils have made true progress; which in turn will lead onto the next key stage of development. These valuable and deeply learned skills will have a direct impact on the quality of their lives. Whilst target setting is important; we must ensure we do not set too many targets so that they lose meaning, or set too few so that the capture of success is only on those targets and not other potential progress not assigned to targets. Targets must be achievable and realistic, although it is not always possible to set specific, measurable and time bound targets. Attainment for our learners may be inconsistent, presenting an atypical or uneven profile. Assessment is used to set out the direction of travel, it is not the focus of teaching, and the curriculum is the driver to how we reach the target.

How do we know it is working?

Pupil progress meetings take place with the Senior Leadership Team three times a year and include triangulation of available data and assessments, work scrutiny and observation/pupil voice. This can then support discussions as part of the teacher's appraisal/performance management where appropriate.

In order to validate our assessments, teachers take part in cross school moderation and work scrutiny and samples of work are also moderated across schools as part of the Shaw Education Trust Special Schools' Assessment Group.

The curriculum is regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure that it is working, through a rigorous quality assurance process called **Curriculum Review Weeks (CRW)**. CRWs provide an in-depth look at various aspects of each curriculum area every half-term. Curriculum teams led by Curriculum Coordinators complete quality assurance activities that provide individual feedback and shape the schools Continual Professional Development (CPD) calendar to ensure our curriculum continues to be relevant and meet the needs of all learners.



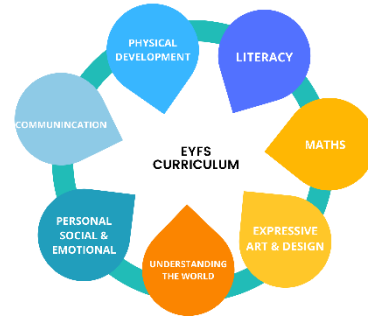
Early Years Foundation Stage – Nursery 1 & 2, Reception & Year 1

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape the EYFS programme. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. The learning and promotion of skills are delivered through a thematic approach, with a balance across all the EYFS aspects. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the prime areas, are:

- **Communication and language**
- **Physical development**
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

Children are also supported in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- **Literacy**
- **Mathematics (Cognition)**
- **Understanding the world**
- **Expressive arts and design**



EYFS have a 3-year rolling programme of themes



Physical skills promoted during daily activities and in conjunction with the MOVE Assessment



Cognition is developed through appropriate and exciting sensory activities in a range of contexts.



Children are provided with opportunities to apply their learning outdoors, as well as indoors.



Families are actively encouraged to learn alongside their children throughout the year, to develop greater home links.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Throughout the EYFS curriculum, staff reflect on the characteristics of effective learning, which include:

- **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

Pre-formal - Primary (Year 1–6) and Secondary (Year 7–9)

There are 4 core subjects delivered, each with Programmes of Learning and Schemes of Work. Learning and skills are delivered through a thematic approach, with a balance across the National Curriculum foundation subjects as relevant to the Key Stage. Children working on the 'Pre-formal Curriculum' are most likely to require a bespoke and individualised programme of learning, which provides multi-sensory activities and focuses on very early levels of development. Typically, these children and young people may have complex health needs alongside a diagnosis of profound and multiple learning disabilities.

Communication (*English*)

Cognition (*Maths, Science*)

Physical (*Physical Education*)

Personal care and independence (*Personal, Social, Emotional Development*)

Primary have a 6-year rolling programme of themes.

Key stage 3 have a 4-year rolling programme of themes



Children develop their Cognition skills by exploring the world around them.



Emergent expressive skills are developed through appropriate sensory based learning.



Children are encouraged to explore activities with increasing independence.



Physical skills are developed through a range of activities, including Sound Boards and specialist equipment.

Semi-formal - Primary (Year 1–6) and Secondary (Year 7–9)

There are 6 core subjects with Programmes of Learning and Schemes of Work. Skills are delivered through a thematic approach with a balance across the National Curriculum foundation subjects. Children working on the 'Semi-formal Curriculum' will have mastered the ability to communicate with intent and demonstrate increasing levels of engagement. There are further opportunities to promote independence and embed a depth of learning that will ensure that they can apply this within a range of contexts. Many of the children within this pathway have a diagnosis of Severe Learning Disabilities and require adult support to access many of the activities throughout the day.

Communication and literacy (*English*)

Cognition and numeracy (*Maths, Science*)

Physical development (*Physical Education*)

Personal and social education (*Personal, Social, Emotional Development*)

The World (*Geography, History, Religious Education*)

Expressive arts (*Dance, Music, Drama, Art*)

Primary have a 6-year rolling programme of themes.

Key stage 3 have a 4-year rolling programme of themes



Pupils extend their skills to help them develop curiosity and explore the world around them.



Leaners are supported to be an active part of the community, providing appropriate communication methods to assist in answering simple questions.



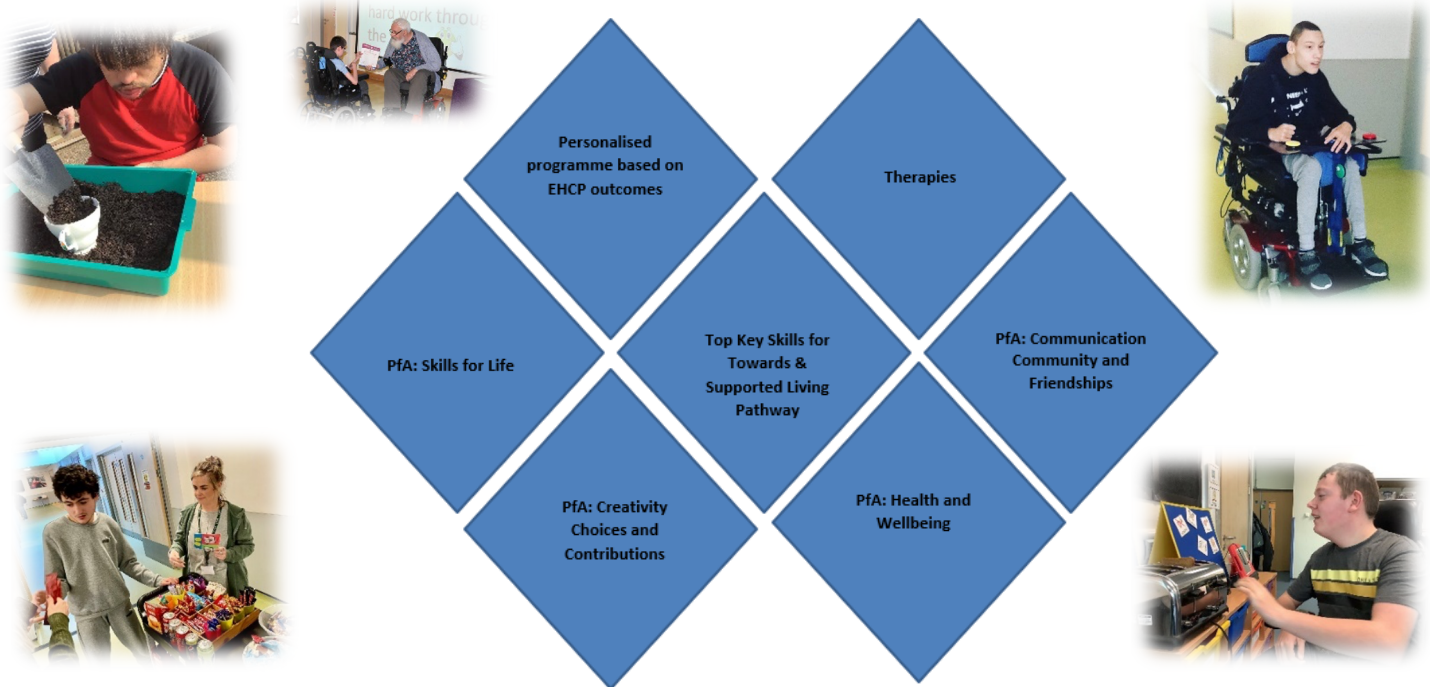
Independence is developed and there is a focus on personal choice.



Functional skills for life help our pupils to grow into useful citizens who make a purposeful contribution.

14-19 Department (Year 10-14) - BRANCH

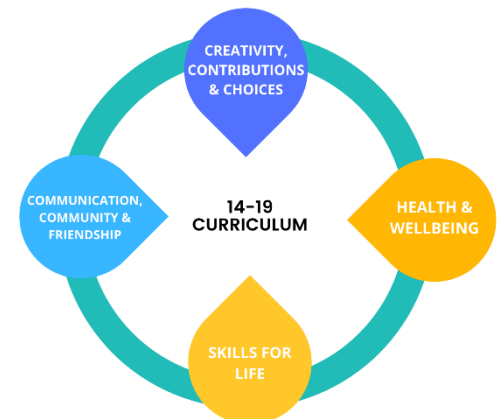
The 14-19 curriculum at Ivy House School is constructed from a series of core life skills content that build into a coherent, personalised offer for each learner. Most importantly it is meaningful to each young person and their family in preparing them for life after school and into adulthood. It empowers our young people to have increased confidence to make realistic and critical decisions about their future.



Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) is the process Ivy House School uses to ensure the quality of non-accredited learning programmes and learning opportunities across our curriculum offer within the 14-19 department. It provides an educationally sound framework for planning and delivery of courses which are learner-centred and ensures personal learners' goals are recognised and counted towards their success. It is not a qualification but a process (or structure) which has at its core ensuring each young person has the right 'Core Life Skills' programme to meet their needs and support progress. It is broken down into 4 areas: Communication, Community & Friendships, Creativity, Contributions & Choices, Health & Wellbeing and Skills for life.

RARPA is a five-stage process that we use to measure how well learners are making progress towards their identified chosen destinations. It is based on person-centred values, keeping the learner at the centre of the process so they can achieve their aspirations and long-term outcomes'.

Each programme has a focus on the skills, EHCP and Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) outcomes required by each learner to support them to prepare for a meaningful adulthood as contributing citizens. The 'Core Life Skills' frameworks are a context (or 'vehicle') for learning – actual learning content is guided by each learner's EHCP, PfA, skills needed, Personal Learning Goals and planned destination/s. Learners may 'Bridge' between 'core life skills' programmes or depending on the learner, may complete a broad set of skills within one 'core life skills' programme, covering or reinforcing different skills. Final "Core life skills" can also be assigned at the end of the programme depending on the Individual Learning Journey, progress and learning.



Preparation for Adulthood (PfA)

Learners will have multiple learning opportunities to develop key skills and/or independence skills over the year. We focus on destinations, key skills and/or independence skills the 'core life skills' offer, these are what our young people will need as they progress into adulthood.

'Life After School' Event

The 'Life After School Event' each year (Spring Term 1) should be planned into all T&L Plans.

'Core Life Skills' Supported Living Pathway (SLP)

The SLP programme provides complete flexibility to build on Key Life Skills focussed around the individual needs, levels and interests of each learner.



Workplace settings / trips and visits

The experience of the workplace can be supported through trips and visits. Where possible link with an employer, to plan a trip (e.g. to a supermarket or shop) so that learners get input and opportunities to practise skills as part of the visit.



Internal Work Experience

The School provides a range of internal work experience opportunities – helpful where a learner is not ready for Work

Experience in the wider community. These include the kitchen, library, Tuck Shops, Cafes, Reception, Admin Support and supporting the Site team.



The [Gatsby Benchmark standards](#) is taken into account and considered as appropriate to our individual learners.

Acknowledgements

Ivy House School would like to thank Dr Penny Lacey and Castlewood School Staffordshire, for providing us with the firm foundations and base as the springboard to develop our curriculum from. We researched and read from many sources including special schools' curricula, books and research papers. Some of these sources have formed the basis of our curriculum.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the following:

- Carol Ouvry whose book and ideas we have used to support our thinking.
- Equals (a registered charity)- for many additional schemes of work ideas and suggestions.
- Lisa Heeley, Physio TI and MOVE practitioner, for her knowledge on physical development and input to the physical curriculum development.
- MOVE (Move Opportunities Via Education) for the MOVE programme information links.
- All the teaching staff who have inputted many hours in this project, and many more to follow as we continue to adapt and shape it to ensure it remains relevant and meets the needs of our learners.
- TASsEls - body sign system we use
- Makaton – signing system referred to within school.
- Communicate in print – symbol system we use
- Speech and language therapy service for support with the development of eating, drinking and oral hygiene care.
- April Winstock - eating and drinking guidance from book resources
- Leicestershire County council for Language and Literacy ideas.
- Ash Lea School Curriculum Handbook
- Chailey Heritage School curriculum documents
- Peter Imray and Viv Hinchcliffe - Curricula for Teaching Children and Young People with Severe or Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties
- Mary Mayatt - The Curriculum: Gallimaufry to coherence
- Swiss Cottage School curriculum
- Five Acre Wood school curriculum handbook
- Saxon Hill Academy who we worked in conjunction with to further develop our curriculum and assessment models
- The Shaw Education Trust for their ongoing support and challenge to ensure our curriculum is robust
- Alan Wood and Evidence for Learning for supporting the development of the school's assessment system

We also give thanks to the many wonderful colleagues working within our education system who continue to provide ongoing support and ideas such as Dr Barry Carpenter; Simon Yates; Jo Grace; Peter Imray; Flo Longhorn; Dr Sarah Moseley; Dave Hewett & Melanie Nind; Jean Ware and many more.

