

## The Social Communication Curriculum at Spa Bermondsey

Social Communication lessons or “SoCo” are a unique part of the Spa curriculum. They provide students with opportunities to learn how to communicate successfully with others across a variety of situations.

Each class has a daily 30 minute SoCo lesson. Pupils work towards bespoke Communication targets which are informed by their EHC Outcomes as well as learning about a different topic each half term.

Lessons are based around our student’s very individual and specific communication and social interaction needs. We develop confidence, independence, advocacy and communication with others. Students practise, rehearse and develop social skills to help maintain and develop relationships within the school, learn to work successfully with other children and adults in the school community, learn to participate co-operatively and productively in the school community and develop the skills to become co-operative and productive members of the community beyond school.

A range of practical activities are used to support pupils develop their communication skills and pupils are explicitly taught how to generalise their skills to a range of settings, including the local community. Topics about personal safety teach students how to keep safe and ask for help in a variety of situations.

All students are provided with a language rich environment, so that they can communicate their needs and be understood by those around them. In addition to verbal communication, students that would benefit are taught how to use specific language programmes on the iPad (such as Proloquo2Go or Predictable), Picture Exchange Communication (PECS), Communication books and Core boards, Makaton Signing and will have symbols to support their understanding of written and spoken language.

The Social Communication curriculum is planned through schemes of work which are split into three key areas:

- Maintaining and Developing Relationships
- Working Together at School\*
- Developing Confidence in the Broader Community

\*In Key Stage 5, there is a wider focus on getting ready for college

In Key Stage 3 students learn how to work as part of a group, develop the skills they need to engage in a range of play skills in the playground and learn how to ask for help and from whom. Pupils learn how to interact with safe strangers and how communication styles are modified for different audiences.

In Key Stage 4 there is a specific focus on interacting with peers and becoming more independent in learning how to resolve conflict and develop their negotiation skills. Pupils continue to develop their ability to express and explore their emotional needs in a range of settings. Teamwork is explored in more depth and pupils learn how to take on a variety of roles when working with others. In the community, pupils engage with travel training sessions and learn how to identify risk and keep themselves safe. Pupils learn how to deepen their communication skills with a range of strangers in the local community.

In Key Stage 5 the emphasis is on developing life skills, independence and preparing for life after school. Students learn how to respond in situations they might face in the workplace and at college. They learn how to apply their skills to make new friendships in new settings and what it means to act professionally in a work setting. Pupils develop their interview skills. Pupils learn how to ask for help, advice and support from a range of agencies and learn how to give and take feedback when working as part of a team.

As a result of their SoCO lessons, all pupils will have a functional method of communicating with a wide range of people and will be better prepared to engage socially with peers and adults in the world beyond Spa.