Our Vision

St Andrew's Academy is an 11-19 years residential special school located in Breadsall Hilltop, Derby. We are an inspirational community where we take care of each other, enjoy learning and work hard to achieve our goals. Preparing our students for lifelong learning underpins the entire curriculum taught at St Andrew's Academy. Students are provided with diverse opportunities to develop and understand their strengths, show preferences and make informed choices.

At St Andrew's Academy we believe that all of our students are entitled to a curriculum which enriches their communication and interaction. We strive to provide an environment which stimulates development and effective communication amongst all of our students, regardless of their communication ability.

Equal Opportunities

Throughout St Andrew's Academy the planning, assessment and evaluation of progress in communication and interaction will be inclusive and respectful of students from different ethnic groups, religion, gender, sexual orientation, sexual identity, lifelong learning, disability and age range.

Overall Aims

At St Andrew's Academy we use 'an inclusive communication approach' to support students to develop their voice by communicating in the way that is most accessible for them. Focus is placed on modelling language within real life contexts to make it more meaningful and contextually relevant for individual students. We work collaboratively with Speech and Language Therapists, specialist teachers and parents/carers to support our students to overcome individual barriers to communication and use their communication effectively. All students have a Communication Profile detailing their communication ability, and how best to support their speech, language and communication needs.

At St Andrews we offer a range of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) strategies.

At a simple level, students are supported to use **natural gestures**, **physical prompts** and **objects** to express their wants.

Intensive interaction further fosters the development of early communication and social interaction skills, with staff responsive to developing and building on interactions as they occur.

Photographs and symbols (Communicate in Print), providing visual representation of an item, are used to support students to make choices and express their wants or feelings by pointing to pictures.

Communication boards and books (paper-based language systems of varying grid size and complexity where students communicate by pointing to symbols/words) are used to support students to make requests, comments and express opinions.

Communication technology, in the form of speech generated electronic devices using Apps and Voice Output Communication Aids (VOCA), is also used by students to support expressive communication.

Makaton signs are a key scaffold used in school to support both understanding and expressive communication for students. A Makaton trained staff member provides instruction to train and equip staff and support consistent practice across school.

As an academy:
- We aim to acknowledge all forms of communication.
- We aim to develop individual student's strategies to support effective communication and interaction.
- We aim to use motivational resources and learning activities to help foster a strong intent to communicate.
- We aim to provide students with a wide range of experiences to prepare them for each key stage and beyond.

- We support students by giving opportunities for them to communicate and interact in a variety of contexts in and outside of the classroom, local community and work placements.
- We aim to provide a positive language-rich environment where our students want to communicate and feel confident to interact with a range of people.
- We aim to provide an aspirational, sequential, age appropriate and relevant curriculum that enables students to develop, progress and achieve to the best of their ability in a positive and meaningful way and prepares them for adulthood.
- We aim to provide high quality staff development in the support and delivery of communication.

Curriculum

At St Andrew's Academy we place communication at the centre of all learning, recognising that it is foundational for all other learning and the key to enabling students to control their lives, make choices, express themselves, make friendships and become independent. The students of St Andrew's Academy learn through a wide range of speaking and listening activities which are delivered as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. Activities may include (but are not limited to):

- Listening and responding to stories through books and immersive stories.
- Visiting the school and local community library.
- Reading schemes designed to support language acquisition and comprehension (See and Learn, Read Write Inc. and Reading Vipers).
- Participating in regular daily activities which promote opportunities to make requests and express needs and wants.
- Participating in conversations, discussions and group times.
- Recalling events.
- Following instructions in a variety of contexts in and outside of the classroom, local community and work placements.
- Answering questions appropriate to individual Blank Levels (or beyond) in class and in functional situations.
- Developing skills in understanding, ordering and sequencing language through Colourful Semantics.
- Participating in role play and dramatic activities.
- Visiting the local community and practising communication with others eg. through FE work placements.
- Developing visual comprehension skills using objects, photos, pictures, symbols and words.
- Recognising and reading print in the environment.
- Using and recognising Makaton signs.
- Attention Autism to develop awareness of others, attention and listening skills.
- Intensive interaction.
- Incorporating music through lesson activities, discrete Music lessons and Music Therapy sessions to develop expression and social communication.
- Use of resources and displays.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Subject Leader will liaise with other colleagues (Speech and Language Therapy, Teacher of the Deaf, University Research Project Leaders) and outside agencies such as the Makaton Charity to ensure agreed common approaches and staff expertise.

Key Stages will be responsible for the planning and delivery of programmes and the inclusive communication environment, with support and guidance from Speech and Language Therapy as required. Senior Leaders will monitor progress and quality of provision.

St Andrew's Academy's Class Teachers and their teams will work together with Speech and Language Therapists, Teacher of the Deaf, Educational Psychologist and other colleagues to ensure that individual needs are met and appropriately ambitious targets are set and worked towards.

The Subject Leader will observe lessons being taught and monitor standards of delivery, ensuring that staff and students receive consistent support across the school.

How is Progress Recorded, Measured and Reviewed

At St Andrew's Academy students are baselined within their first term of arrival using the academy's bespoke Speaking and Listening framework. Students are also baselined on their ability to understand and process language by means of a Comprehension Screen.

Individual EHCP Communication and Interaction long term targets are broken down into Medium (yearly) and short term (termly) targets that are monitored and evidenced and assessed against using the EfL App.

Students' EHCPs and long term goals are subject to regular review with parents/carers and other professional.

Assessment is ongoing and is integral within our core curriculum.

Targets and rates of progress are set and monitored for each student.

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

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