



Curriculum Philosophy

Curriculum Intent

Core Principles:

At Newfield we believe that everything we do, and everything each learner experiences, must be useful and relevant for each stage of their learning journey and ultimately for their life outside school in their home and wider community.

Throughout their journey with us our students are given opportunities to develop skills that will best prepare them for their next steps in learning.

Alongside this we keep in the forefront of our minds the principle that:

We never do for a student something they can, could or should do for themselves.

This means at the heart of all we do we seek to support them to become as independent as possible.

This ensures **we maintain an integrity** that empowers us to ensure all learning and experiences introduced are relevant to our students identified needs.

Our curriculum incorporates a broad, rich, ambitious and meaningful set of experiences, incorporating highly personalised, holistic teaching methods.

From this we support them to be:

- Effective communicators (both receptive and expressive)
- Empowered and challenged to realise their individual potential
- As independent as possible
- Healthy in body & mind
- Happy, engaged & included members of their local and wider community
- Confident & committed to lifelong learning

Principles of Delivery

All children and young people with learning difficulties can have unique ways of learning. We see our pupil's strengths first, and work with these to develop other areas.

There is no one curriculum model which could possibly fit all our pupils. Each student needs a unique curriculum offer and set of learning experiences. These different learning needs require different teaching approaches, which often change over time. As a school we actively research new methods to impact on learning and progress for all our pupils absorbing these into current practice in order to enhance provision.

Our students at Newfield have a vast range of physical, sensory, learning, emotional, social and medical needs. Their cognitive abilities cover a huge range, from those who may be learning consistent eye gaze, in



a very sensory context, to those who are learning to tell stories, tell the time and manage their own money, through more functional, skills-based learning.

At all times we strive to ensure that teaching fits to the needs of the current group of students, and is therefore responsive and adaptable. In simple terms we focus on teaching the way students learn best. We provide our staff with a box of tools to select the best approach for each class and student.

Our curriculum covers every minute of our student's time with us in school. This is extended through our work with families to every minute of their time at home and in the community.

An integrated approach

To achieve our desired outcomes we have developed our very own integrated approach. This is based around a thorough and ongoing detailed assessment of need in the areas we consider fundamental to developing the whole child. These areas are linked to but expand on the areas linked to each pupils Education Health and Care Plan:

- Physical and Sensory
- Cognition and Learning
- Communication and Interaction
- Personal social and emotional development

Acknowledging the need for an aspirational, cognitively appropriate, 'broad and balanced curriculum' our learning experiences and contexts encompass all relevant and required areas of learning across the different key stages in school.

We therefore add teaching of expressive arts, mathematical development, understanding of community and the wider world, and communication language, reading and literacy.

This is delivered in a cohesive, thematic way covering a range of topics or content that can be adapted to reflect development of skills and knowledge over time.

We are flexible in using ideas and methodologies from various sources including the early years curriculum, national curriculum, creative curriculum and study programmes.

From these we empower our expert staff to take what we feel is relevant and appropriate to the developmental needs of each pupil. At all times we seek to ask the key questions:

- ***Why are we teaching this?***



- ***What skills, attitudes or knowledge is this helping them to learn or develop?***
- ***How do we make the content/activity relevant and meaningful to the students we are teaching?***
- ***How can we measure/ show it is working?***

In this way we are confident to justify what we do or don't teach them- maintaining our integrity by ensuring any new approaches enhance our existing provision.

As a result we consider carefully introducing new approaches to ensure they are built in and not simply 'bolted on.'

Over time this planned sequence of learning forms part of a functional and meaningful path for that child following whatever direction the learner needs. This means we allow the learner to lead us in their journey. We never limit our expectations and have no pre-conceptions of any learner's path of progress.

Working together:

Working alongside parents, carers, teams within school and the Local Authority, using the meaningful and personalised outcomes from student's Education Health and Care Plans, we ensure that there is a focused and transparent route through education on to the next stage of each individual learning pathway and lifelong journey.

Progression Rationale

Planning the Journey towards increasing independence and application of skills into functional, relevant and real-life contexts.

Above all we want our learners to be empowered & challenged to realise their individual potential.

Whilst the holistic curriculum we offer is individualised to meet the needs of each child and young adult, there are key progressive focuses throughout each phase of this journey. This is to ensure that at each stage and transition point we support *developing skills, knowledge and attitudes* to learning underpinned by the preparation for adulthood framework.

Our approach to progression is based on challenging but realistic outcomes we want the pupils to achieve at each key stage of their learning journey. This 'next steps' learning approach ensures all pupils make the progress they deserve.

We acknowledge all our pupils progress at individual rates within this overall trajectory but we always ensure our expectations remain high and targets set are realistic but aspirational.

As a Special School it is difficult to compare our students progress with other settings. We therefore evidence progress for each student against their own starting points, across all aspects of learning. To ensure suitable challenge and aspirations we set realistic but challenging goals.



To build on previous learning we also develop and teach new skills and knowledge sequentially across the different key stages.

We also adopt a spiral approach to learning skills and knowledge that allows pupils to revisit and reinforce skills over time at a deeper level towards **mastery and generalisation**.

This means that whilst themes studied may be revisited over time this is done with more age-appropriate resources and more challenging content covered.

Through this approach pupils progress in their ability over time to **acquire, develop, reinforce, apply, master, and generalise skills and knowledge**. All the time we also seek to develop levels of independence.

Across school these skills are then applied in an increasingly functional context and real-life settings to equip our learners to transfer their school-based learning into the wider community.

Progression Across School

Explorers

At Newfield our Explorers includes up to year one or two. The journey is delivered through an immersive, exploratory and play-based curriculum that aims to develop a foundation of skills and behaviours. Pupils are supported to engage in active exploration of their environment to develop a sense of self and independence from adults, whilst fostering a curiosity for learning. All this is underpinned by the development of early communication and interaction skills. Outcomes are set that reflect each child's personal needs.

The activities in the Explorers classes are planned using the foci taken from The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework from birth to 5 years. These are then adapted to meet the individual needs of the children in the class - supporting where needed individual focused work to ensure sufficient challenge.

We provide a balanced weekly timetable to help the children to make purposeful choices and learn how to become active 'learners' through interaction, reflection, consolidation, experimentation and enjoyment in each of the six areas of learning. The focus is very much on developing independent learning skills and perseverance to complete tasks in a supportive environment.

Key Stage 1

Throughout the primary age phases, children are encouraged to develop their own sense of identity, preferences and opinions, communicated by their own preferred method. Their journey towards positive outcomes focuses on developing the necessary self-help skills, independence, learning skills and self-regulation skills to enable them to access the world around them.

Students follow a broad and balanced timetable of structured activities building on the foundation established in the foundation classes. Literacy activities are introduced discretely as well as being



embedded and include interactive story sessions, where pupils can experience and/ or interact with the characters and events through sights, sounds, smells, tastes and textures. In addition to this, pupils are given regular opportunities to develop their fine motor/ writing skills through various textured materials and finger tracing.

Mathematical skills are also introduced discretely where appropriate, and include counting games and rhymes, matching/ exploring shapes and colours, measuring heights and role play shopping.

Community and the Wider World activities are linked to a theme. Other subjects such as art, geography, history and Religious Education are also included as part of the creative curriculum termly theme. Physical Education includes activities both in and out of school such as gymnastics, boccia, swimming/ hydrotherapy, visits to parks and other play areas.

Pupils are assessed using B Squared against the pre- key stage standards to ensure appropriate challenge.

Key Stage 2

At Key Stage 2, Literacy and numeracy, are taught discretely or linked where appropriate to the termly theme depending on the ability of the students. Literacy activities include interactive story sessions, where pupils can experience and/ or interact with the characters and events through sights, sounds, smells, tastes and textures.

In addition to this, pupils are given regular opportunities to develop their fine motor/ writing skills through various textured materials and finger tracing.

Other subjects such as art, geography, history and Religious Education are also included weekly and delivered through our themed approach. Other statutory requirements are taught through whole school themed events.

Pupils are assessed using B Squared against the pre- key stage standards to ensure appropriate challenge.

Secondary:

From Year 9 staff work with students and families to consider the most appropriate destination post 19. From this school supports an appropriate accreditation pathway and ongoing transition opportunities to support future decision making.

Throughout the secondary phase, there is a shift in the way outcomes are planned. The focus moves to applying existing skills, knowledge and learning behaviours in a functional context **linked more specifically to real life situations which are relevant to our students lived experiences.**

The focus is on ensuring that targets reflect desired longer-term outcomes and future destinations. This means that targets start to focus on the PfA (Preparing for Adulthood) pathways of “Employment”,



“Independent Living”, “Friends, Relationship & Community and “Good Health”. There is also focus in year 11 on transitioning to the post 16.

Key Stage 3

At the start of the secondary journey, we also focus on developing independent work skills and applying skills into increasingly functional settings.

The pupils work through a curriculum that is more age appropriate yet is adapted to allow all pupils to access the various subjects across the agreed areas of learning. We continue to link lessons by themes building on skills and knowledge from earlier stages.

We also focus on developing key skills across the curriculum and really concentrate on developing functional literacy and numeracy skills in all lessons.

Pupils are assessed using B Squared or pre- key stage standards.

Key Stage 4

From this stage adults increasingly become facilitators of learning and the intention is for the students to lead the direction of their learning experiences.

The curriculum offers an increase in emphasis on a personalised timetable of accreditation and option choices based around destination and outcome led planning. The pupils from the ages of 14 to 16 work through a curriculum that is age appropriate and based on consolidating and generalising skills into more adult based, real-life settings, following the principles of preparation for adulthood

Pupils cover careers and work -related learning in a variety of ways. We give our pupils a realistic employer encounter, they go into the local community and see work-based situations at first hand, such as visits to a local farm and local businesses. They have their own mini enterprise in school across the terms and we have good links with Blackburn Market where we have a stall once per term.

Acquiring skills in preparation for leaving school between the ages of 16 and 19 is fundamental to achieving the best post-school provision. Access to relevant work experience and an emphasis on independence and essential life skills are a priority for pupils in Key Stage 4.

The KS4 pupils follow the ASDAN Transition Challenge leading towards studying in KS5 for the ASDAN Personal Progress Award, Certificate or Diploma. Challenge and progression are achieved via access to Entry Level 1 – 3 as appropriate and moderated both internally and externally. This is a time for students to build a sense of moving on, with an expectation of increasing maturity as a learner.

Post – 16



Moving into college we now seek to empower our students to shape their learning needs as much as possible.

Post 16 curriculum is based on a destination led model. In its truest sense we provide all students with a focused timetable to prepare them for their lives beyond Newfield, whether this be supported living, day services or further study.

We believe moving into post 16 is a right of passage towards adulthood and our provision is designed to support students who need longer to prepare for this transition.

We focus on ensuring that we capture wishes and feelings in all decisions about the future of our young people. The focus is now based around individual study programmes the Preparing for Adulthood pathways of “Employment,” “Independent Living,” “Friends, Relationship & Community and “Good Health.”

Across the three years students work with our transition workers and post 16 staff to understand the options available to them on leaving Newfield. This may be further education, supported employment or supported living or inclusion through social care activities in the community.

Due attention is paid to the Mental Capacity Act 2005, which seeks to ensure that decision making, wherever possible, it is done with the involvement of the young person. Where necessary, a ‘Best Interests’ approach to decision-making will be facilitated in a multi-disciplinary manner. This ensures that the young person remains at the centre of their journey.

Students follow their own study programmes and access each of the Preparation for Adulthood areas at an appropriate level, including functional skills, work related learning and Personal and Social development in addition to an integrated life- skills focus.

We offer a mixture of awards designed to recognise achievement for all our students depending on need. This accreditation and curriculum offer is under constant review to best match the needs of the students.

Pupils are assessed across ASDAN Personal Progress and Entry level 1 – 3 to ensure sufficient breadth and challenge.

Pre - Formal Learners all Key Stages

Learners not yet engaged in subject specific learning engage with the pre-formal curriculum. This focuses on the early communication, physical, personal & social and sensory & cognitive skills that are the foundation of learning.

Our pre-formal curriculum is designed to provide a stimulating education for learners who have:

‘Profound and multiple learning difficulties as well as complex learning needs. In addition to very severe learning difficulties, pupils have other significant difficulties, such as physical disabilities, sensory impairment or a severe medical condition. Pupils 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. Some pupils communicate by gesture (including body language, facial expression), eye pointing or symbols, others by very simple language.’ The Salt Review 2010.

It is a curriculum that supports the learner’s development by employing appropriate approaches that take account of their emotional wellbeing. It recognises how our learners learn, by supporting and developing their strengths and abilities and focuses on developing the learner’s understanding of the world around him/her, and of social interactions and relationships. It is delivered in an integrated manner, incorporating learning, therapies and health needs and many opportunities to practice and achieve these learning goals are offered continuously in a wide range of settings.

We recognise and understand that factors such as the time of day, comfort or choice of positioning may affect a person’s ability to concentrate and therefore learn. We understand the importance of the environment to our learners. For those with a PMLD, we should view every moment and situation as a learning opportunity – therefore the vital ‘routine’ activities such as postural changes, toileting and assisted eating/feeding are integral areas of learning within this curriculum.

We use the engagement profile linked to an achievement continuum considering: Exploration, Realisation, Anticipation, Persistence and Initiation.