



Staff
Document

Woodfield School

Our Curriculum Journey

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Our Curriculum Journey

Following our Ofsted inspection in November 2013 we made the decision to ‘throw our curriculum up in the air and catch what we valued’. Our cohort of pupils was changing and we needed to make sure the curriculum on offer met the needs of the pupils. The first task was to identify what skills and knowledge our pupils needed to learn in order to prepare them for adulthood; and what experiences and opportunities they would benefit from. We consulted stakeholders: parents and families; pupils and the school council; governors; teaching and support staff; other professionals including our NHS colleagues.

We did some ‘blue skies’ thinking as we wanted to find out what they felt was important and what their priorities for learning were; if our pupils could learn anything what should it be? On top of these priorities we wanted to identify the best ideas, curriculum content and structures for not just what our pupils needed to learn but how best to deliver these. We visited a wide range of schools and learning establishments across the county and overseas; we examined the curriculums of outstanding schools and read an extensive array of literature, invited in external speakers and had many discussions and planning sessions.

Alongside this, in November 2014, we were asked by the Local Authority LDD Strategy and Commissioning Manger if we would be interested in piloting Supported Internships in a SLD school context. This started us on our work related learning journey as part of our curriculum development and involved us working with a member of staff from the National Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) Team (part of the DfE). We were enabled through this to develop our work related learning team – initially 3 members of staff who trained in Systematic Instruction and then as Job Coaches. This firmly embedded work related learning and preparation for adulthood outcomes within the curriculum and ethos of the school.

Philosophy:

At the core of our curriculum is the philosophy that learning needs to be fun or functional and ideally both, if it is neither why are we teaching it? It also needs to be destination led and focused on preparing our pupils for adulthood. If it takes a pupil 3 years to securely learn and generalise a skill we must ensure that this is something useful for their life, otherwise their time has been wasted. We cover the national curriculum in ways that are meaningful and relevant to our pupils; and ensure that our curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant.

QCA (2009) states that:

“Although the national curriculum is specified into subjects, schools are not necessarily required to teach them separately. They can organise their curriculum in ways which provide opportunities for appropriate and relevant learning, have meaning for pupils, parents, carers and staff, and use resources to their maximum effect.”

Content:

The production of the Woodfield Curriculum has been a team effort. We set up our Curriculum Learning Teams (CLT) – one CLT for each Area of Learning. Each teacher, Nursery Nurse and Job Coach are members of 2 CLTs; and we worked in these Curriculum Learning Teams as we developed our curriculum.

The curriculum has been designed to be a curriculum that will be individualised for all pupils. Each individual pupil is at the centre of their own unique curriculum. By really knowing each pupil we are able to create an individualised curriculum that wraps around them, providing exactly what they need for their life now and in preparation for their future. As pupils learn, develop, change and priorities for them alter their curriculum is adjusted accordingly. The Woodfield Curriculum is a dynamic, live document which is adapted as the world our pupils live in changes and technology advances. In this sense it will never be finished.

Structure:

The curriculum for our 5 –16 year olds comprises of six Areas of Learning: Me and My Communication, Me and My Maths, Me and My Personal Development/Relationships, Me and My Creative Development, Me and My Physical Development and Me and My World/Community. Each area is broken down into strands, and within each strand there are identified learning outcomes and possible teaching activities. This provides a framework (Scheme of Learning) within which teachers develop their termly planning for their class/specific subject area. For our pupils in Early Years we follow the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum; and for our Post 16 students we have developed a Curriculum for Adulthood which follows the same model as our 5-16 curriculum.

Although the curriculum is laid out by key stages it is vital that all staff who use it recognise that as a single pupil moves through the school they will make progress through a hierarchy of skills and knowledge; however, pupils in EYFS and Key Stage 1 could be working at considerably higher cognitive levels than pupils in Key Stage 4 or Post 16. The skills pupils of different ages are learning can be the same but the contexts within which they are learning them will be different.

Our pupils have peaks and troughs in different areas of skills and knowledge. The job for each teacher is to identify the important areas of learning for each pupil and ensure they get what they need. One pupil may need a significant amount of their learning to be focused on physical development whilst another may need a high focus on independent work skills. The important thing is to tailor every child's curriculum to their unique needs and to give them a broad, balanced and relevant range of learning opportunities.

Our goal is to develop deep and profound learning so pupils gain real skills that they can use and apply in functional ways. This takes time and opportunities need to be planned for skills and knowledge to be practiced and applied in different contexts.

Progress continuum:

Our assessment system (ISEC) which focuses on development of Independence, Self – Esteem and Confidence, as well as our teaching and learning methodologies, have been developed alongside our curriculum development, to work harmoniously together. These are based on increasing pupils' levels of independence and recognising that progress in learning moves from working on developing a skill, through to occasionally showing it, to frequently using it, to consistently using it in a couple of contexts, to having a generalised skill. We also keep a track of when pupils have gone beyond this to being able to apply the skill anywhere, anytime and with anything or anyone.

A key responsibility as educators is to teach our pupils skills to develop greater independence across a range of useful functional skills and to develop the knowledge that goes along with this. These must be skills and knowledge that each pupil can use now but that is useful for their lives beyond school and in preparation for adulthood. It must give them

