

## **CURRICULUM OVERVIEW**

### **Aims**

Victoria Education Centre aims to offer all students a broad and balanced curriculum that provides rewarding and stimulating activities for students and helps them prepare for increasing involvement in a fulfilling social and cultural life.

We seek to promote the qualities of enthusiasm, curiosity, creativity, independent learning and determination and we encourage children to participate actively in the life of our school and community.

Our curriculum aims to:

- Promote personal development at the individual's level and pace
- Prepare students positively for life in modern Britain
- Develop independence and life skills including self-advocacy and employability
- Support students in making healthy choices;
- Establish a safe, secure and supportive ethos;
- Support learning which stretches individuals;
- Promote self-confidence and positive behaviour; and,
- Support students in contributing to the wider community.

### **Implementation**

The curriculum forms the basis for the learning experiences offered. It goes far beyond the required elements of the National Curriculum and involves richly imaginative, creative, exciting and challenging opportunities. Additional elements incorporating enrichment opportunities, cross-curricular themes, learning outside the classroom and out of school hours learning are also offered. The aim is to offer students a curricular experience which enables them to develop the skills and competencies to live a full life and realise their potential. Integrated therapy is also provided as appropriate.

We want to provide opportunities for students to:

- develop a lively, enquiring mind and a strong desire to learn
- experience creativity and learn to appreciate the value of this
- learn to be self-reliant and adaptable and to acquire skills relevant to a technological world
- develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural values and respect those of others
- develop a sense of self-respect and individual worth as well as the capacity to work well with others

### **Characteristics of the whole curriculum**

There are a number of characteristics, which reflect the whole curriculum and its impact and effectiveness on the education of each student.

- *Breadth*: Opportunities to experience learning enrichment activities such as off-site educational visits, residential trips, LEAP.
- *Balance*: Ensuring appropriate time and resources for each area of the curriculum.
- *Relevance*: Taking account of, and building upon, each student's experience and linking to the wider world.
- *Access*: Ensuring equal access to all regardless of background, ability, gender, race or religion.
- *Differentiation*: Learning objectives need to match the needs of the students and consider carefully individual differences in ability, aptitude and learning style.

- *Coherence*: Learning activities should support and reinforce one another.
- *Continuity*: Previous learning needs to be assessed to plan the next steps effectively and to build links in the transfer between classes and schools.

We provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which is accessible to all our students and provides smooth progression and continuity from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) through to Post 16.

### **Teaching and Learning**

Students are most likely to realise their potential when they experience a personalised educational programme that targets key priorities for them as individuals. We believe that personalised education in a special school context involves:

- Organising the timetable so as to enable each group of students to address the requirements of their curriculum;
- Addressing the specialist elements of each curriculum;
- Ensuring students develop independence skills through structured life skills teaching including elements of postural management, communication skills development and developing thinking skills;
- Organising the curriculum so as to enable students to access work related learning and work experiences as appropriate;
- Differentiating learning objectives, teaching strategies and approaches within each lesson to maximise involvement and learning for each student.

### **At Victoria we seek to:**

- Put in place a curriculum that is sufficiently flexible to cover the needs of students across all Key Stages for all students;
- Ensure that each curriculum addresses the key areas of learning; communication, cognitive development, social interaction, sensory impairment and/or physical impairment;
- Plan subject-based lessons to incorporate cross-curricular content, including the use of a broad range of approaches to communication – objects of reference, touch cues, speech, sign (Makaton), symbol, gesture / body language, and direct responses;
- Create an ethos in which all students feel valued, by our response to individuals and by giving an appropriate emphasis to social, moral, spiritual and cultural education;
- Incorporate the use of strategies which we believe to be effective with particular groups of students; for example, PECS, intensive interaction, objects of reference and sensory integration;
- Make full use of all members of the classroom team to support students in active learning;
- Work alongside the multi-disciplinary team to promote the development of language, communication, physical and life skills.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage**

During the EYFS, students focus on developing their core skills through the three prime and four specific areas of learning:

- Communication and Language Development
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Each student has a 'Learning Journey' which includes observations and photos, demonstrating a breadth of experiences and identifying examples of learning and achievement. An EYFS profile (involving the child, parent, KS1 teacher and class teacher) is completed at the end of the year in which they are five years old. Information from the profile is used to inform the KS1 teacher about each student's attainment and learning needs.

Some students in Early Years will experience learning through the MSI curriculum in order to meet their individual learning needs.

Termly themes are used in the EYFS and link directly with the KS1 class.

### **Key Stage 1**

Many students in Key Stage One continue to be taught using the EYFS framework, as this continues to be relevant and appropriate for their learning needs. The 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' continue to be a priority for these students and our aim is to provide the students with the engagement, motivation and thinking skills that will maximise their future learning as they move through the school.

A termly theme continues to be used and Literacy and Mathematics is taught through play, child-initiated and adult directed activities. All children benefit from the use of new technologies and specialist taught subjects : Physical Education, Swimming, Drama, Dance, Art & Design, Design & Technology and Music. Students who are exceeding the EYFS ELGs in an area or several areas will be taught using the National Curriculum in those particular areas whilst continuing to develop skills through the EYFS curriculum.

Some students continue to be taught using the MSI curriculum in order to meet their individual needs.

### **Semi-formal Curriculum**

In addition, for students who need to continue their development of learning skills and are not yet ready to follow the more formalised curriculum pathway above, a semi-formal curriculum has been designed. The semi-formal curriculum integrates the thematic approach to learning from Key Stage 1 with more formalised English, Communication and Mathematics within a comprehensive life skills programme.

### **Formal Curriculum**

The formal curriculum in Key Stages 2 and 3 includes:

- Core Curriculum: Literacy, Numeracy, ICT/New Technologies and Personal & Social Education (PSE).
- Enrichment: Science, Physical Education, Humanities (Geography, History, RE), Drama and Creative Arts, Design and Technology, Art and Design, Music, Religious Education and Modern Foreign Language (French) where appropriate are also provided.

### **Accredited Courses / Key Stage 4**

The focus in Key Stage 4 is Functional Skills (English, Maths, ICT), Personal & Social Education (PSE), Work Related Learning including Experiences of Work.

Additional Subjects/Courses:

Science, Physical Education, Swimming, Drama and Creative Arts, Design and Technology, Art and Design, French, Music.

All students follow the core curriculum and choose additional subjects leading to an accredited award. This may be examined as General Certificate of Education (GCSE), Foundation Certificate of Education (FCSE), Entry Level Certificate (ELC) qualifications or linked towards ASDAN awards (Transition Challenge and New Horizons). Arts Awards, Sports Leader Awards and Duke of Edinburgh Awards are also provided dependent on student choice and interest.

### **Post 16**

Courses are available in Post 16 for a maximum of three years, although for some students a shorter one or two year programme may be more appropriate. Courses are available at a range of levels from Pre-Entry level through Entry Level up to Level 2.

The core curriculum areas remain as Literacy and Numeracy, which are based upon 'Functional Skills' programmes. Functional Skills are seen as crucial in enabling individuals to make the most of learning and employment opportunities, as well as being relevant to life in general. We try to develop an

individualised learning programme for each student in order to meet his or her strengths, needs and interests. Whenever possible the student's individual timetable is linked to their goals and ambitions set out in their Education Health and Care Plans. Most of the students are also working on 'Personal and Social Development' (PSD), which is linked into their Life Skills work. As part of the PSD programme, students will focus on developing skills to become more independent, including, Life Skills and Home Management. Students can also work towards an Entry Level qualification in Independent Living Skills which includes Household Skills, Basic Cooking and Food Safety Skills, Shopping, Personal Care and Getting About Safely.

Students also have a choice of subjects that they might like to study. Options include Sports Leaders, Music Technology, Music, Enterprise, Photography, Drama, Horticulture, Media, , Health & Social Care, Events Management , Food Technology, Craft, History, Media, and Spanish. All students also study Work Related Learning at a level appropriate to their skills and understanding.

In Post 16, preparation for transition and maximising independence, primarily with life skills, is the main therapy aim involving close liaison with the classroom staff and therapies.

### **Sensory Curriculum**

This curriculum relates to the provision within Victoria School for those students who experience a range of Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (CLDD) and/or Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) and/or sensory needs.

For these students the curriculum is based on the MSI Curriculum (Victoria School, Birmingham) and this is the context within which we address students' individual targets. This curriculum is much broader than the National Curriculum, centred around eight domains; Social Relationships and Emotional Development, Communication, Conceptual Development, Sensory Response, Ownership of Learning, Response to routine and Change, Understanding of Time and Place and Orientation Movement and Mobility. It is driven by individual student need and delivered in a multi-sensory way.

In addition, Routes for Learning (Welsh Government) is used as a guide for planning teaching and learning, and demonstrating progress for this group of students. The materials support teachers in assessing the early communication and cognitive skills of learners with profound learning difficulties and additional disabilities. They meet the very individual needs of these students by showing a range of possible learning pathways and supporting a wider view of progress.

It is the intention of this policy that the sequencing of curriculum content will be done with a fundamental aim of enabling students to build upon their prior learning. It additionally recognises that linear, chronological progression is not always relevant to the circumstances of some students and for these students, progression is more likely to be confined to experiencing changes in curriculum matter, rather than expectation that all students will achieve in accordance with the Key Stage they have reached chronologically.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The curriculum is monitored by the Education Leadership Team (ELT) for relevance to students and to ensure it meets legal requirements and reflects national changes in the curriculum.

It is formally evaluated annually by the ELT and Subject Leaders and developed by the teaching team as required.

Reviewed: February 2019	Due for next Review: September 2019
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