



The Formal Learning Pathway at Shaftesbury Victoria School

After completing EYFS, learners at Victoria School follow one of three learning pathways – Pre-Formal, Semi-Formal or Formal. The Formal pathway is for those who have mild to moderate learning difficulties. Formal learners may have complex physical, sensory or medical needs, but are cognitively able to access National Curriculum subjects, modified in light of their developmental level and special educational needs.

Learners following a formal curriculum will require additional adult support, both for their learning needs, communication and possibly their care needs. Formal pupils complete a range of accreditation appropriate to the level at which they are working.

The school ensures that there is fluidity between pathways, allowing for a personalised approach, that enables pupils to benefit from approaches from other pathways and to move between pathways as appropriate to their development.

Most formal learners will stay with us until Y13 and will progress on to local colleges for further preparation for adult life.

All our Formal pupils follow timetables that include the following 5 areas:

- **English:** literacy, phonics, reading, writing, speaking and listening and speech and language therapy
- **Maths:** number, measurement, geometry, statistics
- **Citizenship:** topic lessons, life skills, PSHE and occupational health therapy
- **Enrichment:** option subjects for post 16, expressive arts and LEAP
- **Physical wellbeing:** PE, swimming and physiotherapy

All our Formal learners will be learning at every opportunity through:

- **Lessons** that include: adapted National Curriculum content and assessments, appropriate scaffolding, explicit instruction, deliberate practice, total communication, collaborative learning.
- **Community links** that include: trips out, external visitors, outdoor learning, involvement in the school radio and school council.
- **SMSC** that includes: assemblies, the rewards ladder, PSHE, social stories, links with the local church.
- **Personalised learning** that includes PLPs based on EHCPs being central to all learning, therapy goals, personalised communication strategies and zones of regulation.
- **Therapy Provision** that includes: integrated therapies (SaLT, Physio and OT), individual therapy sessions, nursing provision, ELSA support, rebound swimming and hydrotherapy.



Intent – What are we trying to achieve through our Formal curriculum?

The Formal Learning Pathway aims to provide a curriculum that delivers LIFE: a love of learning, promotion of independence, a focus on the future and high quality enrichment. **In order to implement our LIFE intent, the Formal pathway prioritises the development of communication skills, life skills and the skills needed to become active citizens.** These skills are delivered discretely through lessons, but also permeate all aspects of the curriculum.

The curriculum will:

Inspire a love of learning through:

- developing learners' levels of engagement by finding out what interests and motivates them
- Igniting curiosity
- equipping and supporting learners to persist through difficulties and setbacks
- supporting learners to grasp new opportunities

Promote independence through:

- providing explicit instructions and sufficient time for learners to repeat, practise, maintain and consolidate skills to develop independence;
- providing the appropriate degree of scaffolding to lead learners to greater independence
- building self-esteem and confidence
- developing a sense of belonging and of importance to support them to contribute to society
- fostering self-reliance, allowing learners to feel they have control over their life

Focus on the future through:

- making explicit reference to how learning is relevant to life
- linking learning to life skills
- maximising opportunities to experience and interact with the wider community

Provide high quality enrichment through:

- offering a wide range of enrichment opportunities through our LEAP Programme
- a comprehensive expressive arts curriculum offer delivered by specialist teachers and involving a range of specialist visitors and enrichment visits
- Themed weeks off timetable in sport and expressive arts
- A wide range of trips and external visitors to enrich aspects of the taught curriculum



Implementation – How do we deliver our Formal curriculum?

Lessons that are underpinned by the following learning approaches:

Learning Approach	How this is applied in the formal pathway?
Adapted and modified National Curriculum	Assessment frameworks in the Formal pathway in all relevant subjects are underpinned by a modified and adapted National Curriculum. Through an age and stage approach, we ensure that objectives are appropriately sequenced and are challenging for the changing needs of cohorts. This involves drawing on objectives from KS1 to KS4 and beyond.
Explicit Instruction	In line with pedagogical research (Rosenshine 2017), students in the formal pathway learn best when taught by explicit instruction that is clearly delivered, modelled, practised and repeated in small manageable chunks.
Deliberate Practice	As above, practising learning is part of processing and embedding both skills and knowledge. Through an “I do, we do, you do” structure we build practice to ensure increasing independence.
Scaffolding and Differentiation	Learning targets, and the support that each individual needs to reach those targets, is highly individual. Teachers make skilful judgements regarding differentiation by task and outcome, and by providing appropriate scaffolding to put students in the ‘challenge’, where optimum learning will take place.
Assessment for Learning/ Observation	In <i>Seven Myths of Education</i> (2014), Daisy Christodoulou refers to the need for teachers to be ‘thermostats, not thermometers’ – not just taking a measurement of where a student is, but making changes depending on where they need to be’. In the formal pathway, learning is continually assessed using a wide range of strategies and adaptations to teaching are made accordingly.
Total Communication	Knowing an individual’s preferred communication methods is vital to all pathways. In the formal pathway, this will be bespoke to the individual and will involve, where appropriate, symbols alongside verbal prompts, Makaton, touch communication and dual coding.



Questioning	Questioning in the formal pathway is central to developing thinking skills and the capacity to learn. It is essential to enable learners to practise their responses verbally, to check their understanding, to assess knowledge and to facilitate retrieval. In his 'Principles of Instruction', Rosenshine notes that more effective teachers tend to ask more questions, involve more pupils, probe in more depth and take more time to explain and clarify. For learners in the formal pathway this will involve teachers creating the right climate, allowing appropriate wait time, using a range of question types and scaffolding questions.
No opt out strategies	Effective classrooms ensure all learners are engaged at all times. In the formal pathway, learners are supported to try at all times and a range of strategies including Cold Calling, think, pair, share and no opt questioning are regularly used to ensure maximum participation and engagement.

In addition to discrete lessons, those on the formal pathway will learn through:

Community links that include: trips out, external visitors, outdoor learning, involvement in the school radio and school council.

SMSC that includes: assemblies, the rewards ladder, PSHE, social stories, links with the local church.

Personalised learning: that includes PLPs based on EHCPs being central to all learning, therapy goals, personalised communication strategies and zones of regulation.

Therapy Provision that includes: integrated therapies (SaLT, Physio and OT), individual therapy sessions, nursing provision, ELSA support, rebound swimming and hydrotherapy.

Impact – What difference is our curriculum making?

We know our curriculum is impacting because:

- Learners communicate that they love their learning, are encouraged to be independent, that they are equipped for the future and that their lives are improved through enrichment activities.
- Learning walks demonstrate that learners are actively engaged in all aspects of learning.
- Planning, observation and discussion demonstrate that the curriculum is well planned and thoughtfully sequenced in all areas.
- Planning, observation and discussion demonstrate that the curriculum provides appropriate stretch and challenge for all learning.
- EfL demonstrates high-quality recording of learning journeys.



- Our assessment strategies and tracking systems (EfL, Assessment books, PLP reviews and annual EHCP reviews) show that learners are making progress in line with or exceeding expectations.
- Assessment systems and tracking systems are regularly and rigorously moderated and monitored to ensure consistency and quality.
- External accreditation in the form of entry level qualifications, AQA Unit awards and GCSEs are successfully completed for all appropriate learners.
- All of the above demonstrate that all learners are successful learners and confident individuals who are involved in their community.