

Educational Approach And Curriculum

The nature of our pupils' needs clearly has implications for teaching and learning. We recognise these implications and attempt to address them in three main areas
What we teach (curriculum content)

How we teach (Teaching style and approach)

Where we teach (Context of teaching and learning)

At the same time as recognising the special needs and difficulties experienced by children with SEN the individuality of each pupil is considered. At Woodlands we aim for a flexible individualised program of experience and learning for each student.

CURRICULUM CONTENT

The national curriculum set out to provide a curriculum, which is broad, balanced, differentiated and relevant. It should be remembered that a curriculum is 'an organisation of experiences which is designed to meet all of the child's needs' (Rita Jordan 1990)

The nature of needs experienced by the pupils at Woodlands means it is essential to supplement the guidelines and content of the national curriculum and curriculum guidance for foundation stage learning with extra emphasis in the following areas, which we are committed to developing:

Language and communication: Pre verbal skills including PECS, listening, comprehension and social skills.

Physical and sensory: Sensory integration, sensory handwriting, multi sensory/interactive teaching and learning.

Independence: Through the TEACCH (see below) system and the development of this into to real-life situations we look to develop the independence of all pupils as much as possible.

TEACHING STYLE AND APPROACH

Pupils with communication and complex difficulties require a very structured learning environment to maximise their learning. This can include minimising sensory stimulation, simplifying language, visual clarification, use of symbols and breaking learning into small manageable steps.

We work in close co-operation with the Speech and Language Therapist, educational psychologist and specialist health professionals, to provide each pupil with a highly structured individual programme. Pupils have access to aspects of TEACCH, total communication, PECS, intensive interaction, social skills programmes, social stories, sensory integration therapy, occupational therapy and the National Curriculum. For many with SEN, learning is often compa

CONTEXT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Compartmentalised skills, which are learnt in isolation and have difficulty generalising to different settings.

Abstract thinking is very difficult and they do best with concrete situations. At Woodlands, skills are practised in a variety of situations, to help broaden our pupil's skill base.

Real life materials and situations are used as far as possible, making extensive use of the community. Hopefully giving our students the life skills they need when they leave us.

KS4 pupils will complete Bronze and Silver awards ASDAN awards or may complete a Towards Independence Course. This will compliment the work we do whilst giving pupils an appropriate target to work towards.

TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children)

TEACCH is one of the approaches that we use throughout The Woodlands Academy. It is a structured teaching approach based on:-

Visual structure – This gives students a way of completing tasks and is broken down into three areas.

- Visual organisation – Organises resources and space to reduce distractions and make the task clear
- Visual instructions – Gives the student all the information needed to put the parts of the task together in an organised way
- Visual clarity – used to focus the student on the most important bits of the task

Physical structure – this is how rooms are laid out to provide students with clear areas for different types of work.

e.g. group work, 1:1, structured play.

These boundaries may be:-

- physical, such as screens
- visual, as simple as a line on the floor.

Visual timetables – This gives students a visual idea of which activities will happen and in what order. This helps build independence, helps organise the student in time and space and helps develop skills for work.

Independent work – This structured, visual work gives the student a clear approach to the class work that needs to be completed. This builds independence and helps the student to become more independent in other areas.

We use a structured teaching approach because it helps to:-

- improve understanding and meaning for students
- engage with the learning styles of students with autism and related communication difficulties
- decrease anxiety and increase students' ability to learn
- promote independence.
- improve behaviour

ASSESSMENT & REPORTING

We report annually to parents. Each pupil will have an annual review where parents, the academy and any other professionals involved can discuss progress and the next steps. Pupils are invited to contribute to this meeting.

Our assessment of pupils takes many forms including the use of PIVATS (Performance Indicators for Value Added Target Setting).

To Find Out More About Our Curriculum Please Contact Us On 01723 373260