

## Curriculum Policy

# Promoting Learning and Progress

### Introduction

*“Our children and young people will be nurtured in a supportive environment. They will receive the highest possible standards of support, guidance, care and education. Everyone is valued, all achievement is celebrated and together we will overcome challenges so that all lives are lived with quality”*

This is our school’s mission statement and it is our core ambition for all learners to reach their full potential and make a successful transition to adulthood. In order to ensure that this happens we work in partnership with parents, carers and our multi-disciplinary team as well as a range of external professionals. As part of the drive to ensure that all lives are lived with quality we decided to clarify the rationale behind our practice and formalise the structure and content of the waking day curriculum so that everyone has a clear understanding of the part they play in the learning and development pathways of our children and young people.

*“They pass this way only once so we must scatter their paths with quality experiences”*

Hollybank School is at the heart of the Hollybank community and plays an important part in the wider local community too. Through positive experiences we strive to develop our learners’ abilities and interests as fully possible, giving them the confidence and self-belief to make choices and take their place in society. We work to provide an environment in which the children and young people are confident, happy and secure and can develop the skills needed to meet real life challenges and live their lives with quality and fulfilment.

The vision statement of Hollybank Trust is “Quality of Life...for Life” and it is our responsibility, as a school community, to lay the foundations for this.

The core principles our curriculum are:

- ✓ Creating meaningful and challenging learning opportunities
- ✓ Responding to pupils’ diverse and often changing learning needs
- ✓ Overcoming barriers to learning
- ✓ Celebrating and sharing success

## Our Learners

Our learners are working at the earliest levels of physical and cognitive development and it is important that we work to develop their skills and capabilities rather than working towards subject related targets. The core elements of our curriculum focus on developing each learner's ability to learn, interact, communicate and to be as independent as possible, whilst also striving to increase their physical and sensory skills so that they can successfully interact with the environment around them. We believe these to be the building blocks of a quality life for children, young people and adults with complex physical, sensory and medical needs.

Our learners experience significant barriers to their learning, they have profound and multiple learning difficulties and additional impairments what can challenge their learning, for example:

- Sensory needs
- Physical needs
- Communication needs
- Behaviours which challenge
- Medical needs
- The need for high levels of individual care and support

This means that they need:

- A personalised curriculum
- A high level of multi-disciplinary input
- A modified physical environment
- Access to specialised resources and equipment
- A high level of individual care and support

Our personalised curriculum is created from an in depth knowledge and understanding of each and every learner in our school. All learners in our school need a highly individual learning pathway with trans-disciplinary delivery and co-operation in order to succeed and reach their full potential.

## Features of Successful Learning

### ✓ *Personalisation*

Student voice is key to successful learning. The curriculum should empower the learners to be as active as possible in their learning. We strive to progress our learners from passive to active and then to independent in each area of the curriculum.

We do this through:

- Building positive relationships with each learner
- Having a thorough knowledge of individual learners and their needs
- Supporting learners communication and self-expression
- Building on individual progress and learning styles
- Focussing on the development of skills and capabilities
- Helping learners to establish self-esteem and confidence

### ✓ *Engagement*

Learners who are curious about the world around them are able to learn. Engagement grows from experiences and from interaction with people and the environment.

We strive to engage our learners through:

- Delivering fun and meaningful learning experiences
- Developing realistic and relevant learning opportunities
- Helping learners to stay focussed
- Using consistent and/or varied teaching approaches as appropriate
- Offering choices and listening the learners' needs, wants, likes and dislikes
- Using the Engagement Scale and Profiling tools. (CLDD 2012)

### ✓ *Learning Opportunities*

We know that learning happens when certain conditions are in place and quality experiences are made available.

We believe that learning is promoted through:

- The delivery of an inspiring, engaging, motivating and stimulating curriculum
- The delivery of learning in a secure and safe physical and social environment
- The provision of specialist learning environments which are tailored to meet specific learning tasks
- Finding the right pace for each learner
- Allowing the unplanned to happen
- Ensuring that the curriculum is accessible to all learners
- Providing age appropriate and interesting learning opportunities
- The setting of targets which are appropriate, realistic yet challenging

### ✓ *Integrated Working*

All our learners have an integrated support team who meet on a regular basis to review progress, share knowledge and plan further learning opportunities across the waking day.

Each learner's integrated support team consists of:

- Parents/carers
- Teacher
- Education Key Worker
- Speech Therapist
- Physiotherapist
- Occupational Therapist
- Named Nurse
- Senior Support Worker (if accessing residential provision)
- Any other relevant professionals

### ✓ *Quality*

Our main aim is to ensure that all our learners make the best progress in developing skills, knowledge and understanding. We put the focus on the individual and all our staff understand that every moment of a child's day is important and they strive to maintain engagement and interest in all activities.

"Quality of life...for life" means developing and maintaining high standards through:

- Ensuring that safeguarding and the welfare of our students is at the heart of all we do
- Having highly skilled staff who receive regular and relevant CPD
- Providing high quality equipment and resources
- Believing that every minute matters
- Having high expectations of learners and staff
- Promoting progression and achievement
- Celebrating success

## Curriculum Coverage

|                                       |   |                               |
|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| English                               | ➤ | Communication and Interaction |
| Maths                                 | ➤ | Cognition and Learning        |
| Science                               |   |                               |
| Computing                             |   |                               |
| Citizenship/ Modern British Values    | ➤ | Personal and Social (SEMH)    |
| Personal, Social and Health Education |   |                               |
| History                               | ➤ | Cultural                      |
| Geography                             |   |                               |
| Religious Education                   |   |                               |
| Physical Education                    | ➤ | Physical and Sensory          |
| Music                                 | ➤ | Creative                      |
| Art                                   |   |                               |
| Design and Technology                 |   |                               |

## Individual Progress Planning

Each learner has an Individual Progress Plan (IPP) which is created, delivered and reviewed by their individual support team. IPPs state the aims and learning intentions being worked towards for each of the 4 key development areas: Communication, Cognition and Learning, SEMH, Physical and Sensory. These aims and intentions are also covered in cultural and creative learning sessions as appropriate. The aims set on an IPP should link directly to those in a learner's Education, Health and Care plan and reflect closely the milestones set in the appropriate phase of the Hollybank Assessment Tool. IPPs and their evaluation sheets are readily available in a student's file and on the Evidence for Learning "cloud" app.

An IPP is the assessment document for all learning opportunities. In their lesson plans teachers state the specific learning intentions that are being worked towards. At the end of the session the teacher or SSA completes an evaluation record sheet (ILR) to record the progress made towards the learning intention(s), the pupil's level of engagement and any additional comments that need to be recorded for next time. Any significant learning or progress is also recorded on the "cloud" app which then shares the update with all members of the individual support team, including parents.

At the end of each term progress is transferred to the Hollybank Assessment Tool and at the end of each year the teacher reviews the progress made in relation to the targets set and then new targets are set for the coming year. This information feeds into the EHCP review and the cycle starts again.

(See the Dual Assessment Model, Assessment Cycle document and Hollybank Assessment Tool for more information)

## Planning Individual Programmes

Once the aims and targets have been set, the teacher and the wider class team use their knowledge of the individual learner to create Individual Learning Programmes (ILPs). Each session has a learning programme tailored to the individual needs of the learner, taking into account their engagement and learning profile information. The engagement profile and scale is used to ensure that the pupil engages successfully with each activity and therefore deep learning takes place.

ILPs may consist of a wide range of activities such as:

- Intensive Interaction
- Sensory Stories
- Sensory / messy play
- TAC PAC
- Resonance Board
- Assistive technology and environmental control
- Sensory Rooms
- Soft Play
- Dark Rooms
- Physiotherapy and movement programmes
- Visual programmes
- Community visits
- Food Technology
- Drama and Dance
- Daily Living Skills: break time, meal times, personal care, Smart flat
- Creative sessions – music, art, D.T.
- Standing, walking, hydrotherapy, rebound therapy, horse riding
- Smart chair
- Outdoor learning

We believe that for our learners every moment, situation and environment is as a learning opportunity. All teachers consider and document transferable skills when creating ILPs and we have clear focus on the generalisation and transference of skills across the waking day. The “cloud” app records progress made in therapy, residential and at home as well as in school. We strive to work in an integrated way; sharing and celebrating success and adapting programmes based on up to date, real time information.

(See specific curriculum rationales for more detailed information)

## Individual Programmes and Activities

The following describes in more detail some of the activities which are options when planning individual programmes and sessions.

### ✓ *Intensive Interaction*

Intensive interaction is an approach to developing the pre speech fundamentals of communication for those learners still at an early stage of communication development. The approach can be used with learners of any age and with a range of learning needs.

Intensive interaction can be done anywhere and at any time. It does not need a stimulus free room although some learners may find this beneficial and there are many suitable rooms around the Trust. Some learners may enjoy using a stimulus such as a toy, fabric or instruments to turn take whilst other may prefer to use their own bodies to carry out imitation of sounds, expressions and actions. Primarily intensive interaction is about building a relationship with someone so use whatever you need to engage the person you are working with.

Intensive interaction is difficult if you are self-conscious – so relax! The approach works by developing enjoyable and relaxed interaction exchanges between the adult and the child that can gradually progress. As this happens the fundamentals of communication are rehearsed and learnt in an enjoyable way. A central principle of intensive interaction is that the student leads and directs the interaction with the adult responding to and joining in with the behaviour, actions or sounds of the child. The focus is on exchange of communication which also includes pauses and space.

The sessions should be frequent, quite intense but also fun filled, playful and enjoyable. Both participants should be at ease with enjoyment as the main motivation. Remember you are building a relationship with someone; the experience should be positive and enjoyable for you both.

### ✓ *Resonance Board*

Resonance board activities stimulate communication, learning and self-expression. Sessions are playful, intuitive and student led and all those who are involved are able to join in at a level which suits them. Nearly all learners respond to and enjoy the activities, rhythms, songs and music demonstrating engagement and motivation. Resonance board sessions are usually delivered using only the resonance board, rhythm and voice.

Sessions need to be well structured providing opportunities to anticipate, communicate and listen. Resonance board sessions benefit from repetition, conscious use of silence, rhythm and changes of intensity, tempo and pitch. The nature of the sessions is based on intensive interaction and learners' contributions.

A learner can be placed alone on the board or he/she can use it with another child or with an adult in any safe, desired or useful position. You can use resonance boards without any equipment making rhythms and sounds using your hands to tap, scratch, pat etc. Any toys and equipment can also be used on the board.

In particular for children who are deaf-blind the amplified sounds coming through the board might be important but the vibration that accompanies the sounds will have an immense impact on them if the child is in direct contact with the board's surface.

### ✓ TAC PAC

The name TacPac stands for 'tactile approach to communication.' As identified, TacPac is based on tactile play. The skin is the largest sensory organ and for our learners touch may be their primary means of contact. TacPac associates stimuli with music, we learn to associate sounds with touch, taste, smell, emotion and people. For learners with hearing impairment, they will access the sounds through vibrations; these can be felt across their whole body.

TacPac works as a partnership between two people; this would usually be an adult and a learner. In TacPac terms we would refer to the adult as the 'giving partner' and the learner as the 'receiving partner.'

TacPac is an experience that integrates touch, sound, pattern and the interpersonal relationship between partners. The level at which the student experiences TacPac can vary. The levels are:

- Awareness; becoming aware of the stimulus – touch or sound
- Variety; the process of differentiation between sound and touch
- Pattern; repetition of single sounds or sets of sounds and physical patterns. Over time learners begin to anticipate these patterns
- Association; through repetition, touch and music, stimuli can become associated with certain objects. When repeated students can learn to anticipate and control their responses to these stimuli.

TacPac is an official resource and we have all the packs in school. However we have also created some of our own resources which we refer to as 'Sensory Rhythms' although the same principles apply.

### ✓ Sensory Room

Multi-sensory environments are used throughout Hollybank Trust to promote learning and development in alternative and appropriate ways. It is important that we enable our learners to use all their senses when learning. Stimulation that focuses and targets each sense is a valuable method to encourage sensory stimulation and learning. Our sensory rooms offer light, auditory and physical sensory stimulation and this provides opportunities to explore, engage and connect with the world around us.



Many learning intentions can be met through activities in the sensory room:

- Communication: Looking and listening skills, choice making, interactions
- Physical skills: Movement, stretching, change of position, fine and gross motor
- Sensory skills: All the senses can be challenged and developed
- Cognition and Learning: Exploration, turn taking, responding to stimuli
- SEMH: stimulate and encourage social interaction, making opinions known

### ✓ *Dark Room*

The dark rooms are designed to facilitate looking, gazing, tracking and focussing on a variety of lights in a relaxed, calm environment with minimal distraction. Learners have an individual visual programme, devised by our MSI specialists, which are delivered and monitored by classroom staff and then reviewed and updated by the MSI team. The dark room is also invaluable for promoting focussed listening skills

### ✓ *Soft Play*

Our soft play rooms are designed to cater for learners who require physical play and interactive experiences. They are a rewarding, softly furnished, visual space with an emphasis on fun and engagement where gross and fine motor skills are focussed on. The space is a lot brighter than the sensory/dark rooms and contains soft surfaces for rolling and crawling as well as clambering areas of varying heights.

Staff may use the soft play for intensive interaction purposes calling, hiding and engaging in playful exchange. This is also a lively area in which learners may fully access different surfaces and planes for repositioning, body awareness and motor programmes. Our physio and OT programmes may set out specific activities to use in these rooms, but they can also be used to develop communication, cognition, SEMH, physical and sensory skills.

### ✓ *Magic Carpet*

The magic carpet is an interactive projector which can be shone onto to the floor, soft play surface, table or even the ceiling. It encourages the learner to interact with images developing their sensory, physical, communication, cognition and SEMH skills. These programmes can tailored to meet the specific needs of each individual and can be stored on a personalised swipe card for the student. The magic carpet can be built into learning programmes in the following ways:

- Communication: Making choices, taking turns, engaging and interacting
- Cognition and Learning: Exploration, motor planning, responding to stimuli in a timed way
- Sensory: Visual skills such as tracking, locating and focussing
- Physical skills: gross and fine motor skills, targeted movement
- SEMH: turn taking, interacting, giving opinion and making choices

### ✓ Plasma Screen (VisiLift+)

The programmes on the visilift+ can be used in a very similar way to the magic carpet; however it is more easily accessed by wheelchair users, as both the height and tilt can be adjusted, providing maximum opportunities for successful learning. Other programmes can also be used on the visilift+, such as the Inclusive Technology suite of software, to encourage cause and effect, timed responses and consequence.

### ✓ Smart Chair

The Smart Platform offers the freedom and independence of a powered chair to learners with the most complex of needs. Integral ramps allow any wheelchair to be easily loaded onto the platform, and then switches are used to follow a pre-determined route, in complete safety using the timed function. The track can be used as a guidance system and with numerous control options it can gently match the learner's ability and where skills improve the control can move from timed, to latched and even to using several switches to travel without the track!

This fully integrated system can be used to establish the maximum potential for mobility and switching control of any individual, whilst they remain in the familiar surroundings of their own chair, classroom chair or even a beanbag!

### ✓ Smart Flat

The Smart Flat is a fully switch adapted one bedroomed flat. It also contains a living room, kitchen and bathroom; all fully kitted out with assistive technology resources. The learners can use this space to develop their environmental control skills in preparation for the transition to adulthood and if they are to remain within the Trust beyond school we will endeavour to provide the necessary assistive technology in their home.

The flat can also be used to develop personal and social skills as small groups can 'role play' a living situation, food technology activities can be undertaken in a meaningful environment and self-help skills can be developed.

### ✓ Outdoor Learning

At Hollybank we have beautiful grounds and these areas are invaluable as therapeutic and holistic learning spaces. The sensory garden was designed by Landscape Architecture students from Leeds Beckett University and includes different textures, planes and materials that are both natural and man-made. The floor surfaces are varied to give a range of sensory feedback and there is a tunnel to experience going under and through. Raised beds are planted with sensory plants chosen for their smell, texture, safety and handling and the central rhododendron bush allows the learners to experience a den style environment. The sensory garden also contains 2 wheelchair adapted swings and an all access roundabout, again to promote the development of a range of senses and physical skills. There is a range of musical instruments, water features and fixed shade sails which can provide an outdoor classroom space.

## Strategies for Delivering Successful Learning Activities

### ✓ *Routines*

For our learners life can become a fragmented series of events with little order. Without structure, learners may never develop anticipation and memory. Therefore it is essential to provide a simple, structured environment with ordered activities and routines.

### ✓ *Turn Taking*

Turn taking can be challenging skill for our learners. They need to have opportunities to practise turn taking with other people and in different social situations so that they are able to generalise the skill and become more independent.

Turn taking is about the start and finish of your part in an activity or conversation, so that someone else can engage with you. The same principle also applies with objects. The following can help learners to develop this vital skill:

- Make each turn very short and as the learner builds up confidence they will make a response, then you can start to increase the length of time that each turn takes
- Use short, concise and repetitive language
- Give verbal reminders, along a physical reminder, if necessary
- Provide lots of opportunities to practise turn taking
- Use 1:1 games with adults, small group turn taking activities with peers and adults and cause and effect switch activities

### ✓ *Waiting Time, Pausing and Anticipation*

Our learners are often slow to respond to stimuli, waiting time is needed for allow them to process the information. Giving learners adequate time and space to respond to and process information enables them to share control and have equal interactions.

By building pauses into familiar routines and activities we create opportunities for learners to 'fill the gap' and to make a response which indicates their wish for an interaction or desirable activity to start or continue. The idea is to give them an opening to make a communicative response.

It is important to recognise the potential for communication in everyday tasks

### ✓ *Imitation*

Imitation is the ability to copy the actions, sounds, words or facial expressions of another person. This ability generally occurs very early in life, from the simplest pre-verbal communication and is refined over time. Imitation involves the ability to pay attention to something that another person is saying or doing then trying and gradually learning to copy the action, sound or word. For our learners this skill is often in the very early stages of development and they needs lots of opportunities for intensive interaction activities.

Imitation skills develop in steps and we can support the learners to develop their imitation skills through intensive interaction strategies such as:

- Modelling facial expressions such as frowning and smiling
- Imitating the facial expressions that a learner makes
- Making speech sounds changing the pitch and volume of our voice
- Imitating the sounds that learners make
- Imitating the actions and movements of a learner
- Making exaggerated movements and encouraging the learner to join in

✓ *Hand Under Hand*

Learners need to have opportunities to lead in all learning activities. Hand under hand (as opposed to hand over hand) means that the learners hand is on top of yours when exploring, manipulating or using materials and equipment. This often gives the learner a better autonomy to express their likes and dislikes, encourages the learner to lead the activity and encourages rather than forces the learner to take part.

Supporting the learner to explore using their hands enables them to receive an increased amount of information about the world around them.

✓ *Fun*

Most importantly, children learn best when they are engaged and having fun – so enjoy and have fun with your students!

## **Responsibilities**

Class teachers are responsible for:

- medium and short term planning
- differentiation to meet the individual needs of pupils
- summative and formative assessment
- using a range of teaching and learning strategies, techniques and resources
- directing the work of Teaching Assistants
- attending and contributing to training and meetings are requested

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Head of Education and Leader of Learning will co-ordinate the monitoring cycle. This will include:

- auditing planning
- moderating assessment data
- analysing progress data

- observing lessons
- learning walks
- work scrutinies
- curriculum development and planning
- initiating training/workshop opportunities with specific focus