



Engagement Pathway

Curriculum and Assessment

Intent/Rationale

Pupils with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) and complex learning difficulties and disabilities (CLDD), have conditions that co-exist. These conditions overlap and interlock creating a complex profile.

The co-occurring and compounding nature of difficulties requires a personalised learning pathway that recognises children and young people's unique and changing learning patterns.

Pupils present a range of issues and combination of layered needs eg. Mental health, relationships, behavioural, medical, sensory, communication and cognitive. They need informed specific support and strategies which will include multidisciplinary input to engage effectively in the learning process and to participate actively in school activities and the wider community.

We provide a skill and context based (learning through actual, practical experience) curriculum which, through immersive learning experiences, encourages engagement in learning. The emphasis is on developing key skills of communication, emotional and sensory regulation, independence, physical development and self-care, all transferable skills that equip children and young people for life beyond school.

Personal Learning Intention Maps (PLIMs) These are highly significant in planning for and ensuring pupils' development. We ensure that we plan each child's education carefully and cohesively, shaping each pupils provision around their needs (formally reviewed at Annual Review and documented in their EHCP). Careful consideration and close collaboration with parents/carers and significant others, ensures that aspirational outcomes are set in the areas of communication and interaction, cognition and learning, social and emotional mental health, sensory and/or physical, and, from Year 9, preparation for adulthood. Curriculum activities are carefully designed to optimise engagement, emotional regulation and enjoyment in learning. The individual nature of the curriculum design optimises the pupils' communication and interaction skills and knowledge now and for the future.

Through an ongoing programme of CPD and the Appraisal process, school ensures that staff understand and respond to autism positively. We create time for staff to reflect on, discuss and evaluate their practice and the rationale that informs practice, to create a consensus and consistency of practice across the pathway and setting.



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Our curriculum acknowledges the uniqueness of our pupils and their individual priorities for learning, which they will do at their own rate and in their own way. We aim to meet the learning needs of pupils (including preferred learning styles and uneven ability profiles) and also address their social, emotional well-being, their communication and life skills in well-chosen curriculum elements for life and learning in the 4 areas of need identified on each child's EHCP.

Implementation

Teaching and Learning

All staff strive to create a learning environment which is calm and consistent, visually clear and structured, with clear communication to pupils about what is expected of them, both as individuals and in small groups. This ensures maximum information processing throughout each day allowing pupils to realise their full potential. To support teaching and learning, we pay significant attention to the National Autistic Society SPELL Framework principles and the National Autism Standards provided by the Autism Education Trust.

There are **4 main areas of difference** that are particularly important for staff to understand and consider when planning to meet the needs of learners with ASC and CLDD. Pupils will have different levels of support needs in relation to:

- **Understanding the social interactive style and emotional expression of staff and peers (PSHEE)**
- **Understanding and using communication and language (Communication and Interaction)**
- **Differences in how information is processed (Sensory & Cognition/Learning)** can lead to strict adherence to routines; difficulties in planning and personal memory; difficulties predicting
- **Differences in the way sensory information is processed (Physical and Motor)** often leading to over-sensitivities (often to external stimuli such as lighting, sounds, smells) and under-sensitivities (not noticing internal feelings of hunger, body awareness, pain, until they become overwhelming). Over-stimulating or unfamiliar environments can lead to extreme levels of anxiety due to sensory sensitivities.

To support the 4 main areas of difference, there are 4 themes (AET Standards) to consider for teaching and learning. These are:



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- **The individual pupil**-how to understand and address their needs and strengths
- **Building relationships**-with staff, parents/carers and peers
- **Curriculum and Learning**-adjustments to the way in which activities are presented, selection of priorities and modifications to the timetable
- **Enabling Environments**-how to create good classroom and school environments for pupils

Within the 4 main areas, we are developing/delivering the following provision:

The individual pupil	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing safeguarding and pupil well-being by recognising predisposition to high levels of stress and anxiety and to prevent or reduce these by recognising and meeting needs• Understanding pupil's needs, interests and how they like to be supported in school• Supporting pupils' to develop and use effective communication systems• Developing suitable environments where pupils can be away from other pupils and adults if requested or needed
Building relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish strong relationships between staff and pupils as the starting point for mutual understanding and support for learning and well-being• Understanding building effective relationships requires active listening to pupils and their parents/carers, promoting creative opportunities for the exchange of information and ideas• Accessing professionals in health, social care and the voluntary and independent



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">sectors and working effectively with themEstablishing links with other settings and disseminating expertise to other practitioners
Curriculum and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Developing a curriculum that captures not only the learning needs of pupils, but also addresses their social, emotional well-being, communication needs and life skillsDeveloping individualised visual supports to ensure that the sequence of activities during the day is understandable, predictable and desirableDeveloping activities that are well organised, structured and plannedEstablishing flexibility in making adjustments to activities, timetables and their delivery as necessaryEstablish trained staff in the use of a range of communication strategies to facilitate two-way communication
Enabling Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Adapt the setting to the needs of the pupilsDevelop clearly defined spaces/areas for personal equipment and places of safety for pupilsDevelop a variety of cues (visual, tactile, auditory) to help pupils understand and navigate the environmentUse of work systems to promote independence and provide visually clear systems that enable learners to understand



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	what is required without relying heavily on language
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Curriculum

We have high aspirations for all pupils and a curriculum which is responsive to the sensory and therapeutic needs of each learner.

The curriculum consists of 3 key areas; Core Curriculum; Specialist Curriculum and Enrichment Curriculum.

Core Curriculum

Focuses on enabling access to individual learning programmes (PLIM). Flexible approach, supported by the specialist and enrichment curriculum focus, to meet learning needs taking into account social, emotional and developmental profiles.

This ensures learning is relevant and meaningful and promotes application of skills in a manner which allows optimum levels of achievement.

The 4 areas within the Core Curriculum reflect the key areas in pupils EHCP's and provide the basis for pupil target setting supporting PLIMs.

Important considerations-

Communication Development- up to half learners with ASC/CLDD will be non-verbal (NAS 2005). Learners require a total communication environment and specific approaches and resources, appropriate to their individual communication profile in order to optimise progress.

It is vital to acknowledge any attempt by the individual to communicate.

Sensory and Cognitive Development- Individuals with ASC/CLDD often experience the world one sense at a time (Cassanova 2011). Therefore care should be taken not to overload pupils with a multi-sensory experience which could cause hyper-stimulation. Instead, staff should seek to provide pupils with single focus sensory experience aimed at increasing the pupil's interest and joint attention without causing sensory overload (Lawson 2012)

Physical and Motor Development- regular exercise enhances well-being, fine and gross motor skills and levels of fitness. Cortisol levels can be lowered and induce a



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calm/alert state for the pupil. 95% of children with ASC have sensory perception difficulties (Eapen 2011). Staff should be mindful of sensory needs when selecting physical activity.

Emotional and Social Development- SEMH difficulties are common for pupils with ASC/CLDD. Intensive support is needed in order that learners can respond appropriately to social situations and deal with their own emotions and those of others.

Preparing for Adulthood (Year 9 onwards)

Intensive support and individualised strategies are required to optimise participation in activities of daily living and self-care. Individual's with complex needs require skilled support to access and cope within a range of contexts and to manage transitions. In the Core Curriculum there is a focus on building the individual's ability to tolerate and enjoy a range of experiences. There is also a strong focus on equipping the individual to express needs and wants and make choices.

Specialist Curriculum

The Specialist Curriculum structure is supportive and enables pupils' to manage the effects of their needs as independently and effectively as possible and therefore remove barriers to their learning potential and life success.

Below is a list of specialist curriculum activities and approaches which can be used and adapted to provide personalised learning opportunities;

- Access to therapeutic intervention including Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy including intervention to support sensory processing, Physiotherapy, Music Therapy, Dogs as Therapy
- Total Communication including Intensive Interaction, Attention Autism, TacPac, Picture Exchange Communication (PECS), visual supports (Objects of Reference, photographs, pictures, symbols), key words and phrases, spoken language and specialist technology (speech generating devices, VOCA's)
- Structured teaching and visual supports
- Consistent Approach Plans
- PLIMs
- Social Stories
- Sensory strategies (including platform swing)
- Hydrotherapy
- Rebound Therapy
- Regular physical activity (trim trail, meadow, sensory garden, outdoor swing, Seb and Olivia's Den)

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- Anxiety Management and Relaxation Support
- Access to low distraction environments/work place-where children can be away from the group if this is causing anxiety
- Access to quiet spaces to enable pupils to withdraw if they need to take breaks during their day reducing anxiety and stress
- Short interactions as pupils cannot always manage within one context and can find it difficult to transition. We know that for a child to 'decompress', they need times without adult intervention. These times are important to the child. Staff ensure that during these times the child is safe and that they have reduced demand.

Considerations for transitions

Numerous types of transitions occur throughout the day, school term and year. Transitions can be very problematic for pupils with ASC/CLDD, mainly due to their cognitive processing of the environment and need for predictability. Pupils are likely to have difficulties with;

- Interpreting the thoughts/feelings/expectations of others
- Understanding or establishing appropriate new routines
- Planning and organising
- Waiting prior to a chosen event/activity
- Sensory input experienced, which can be unpredictable for an individual with ASC

All of the above can provoke high levels of anxiety and may result in unusual behaviour or responses such as;

- Fear
- Sensory overload which can lead to inappropriate reactions and emotional dysregulation
- Inappropriate reactions due to lack of social understanding and what behaviour is expected
- Attempts to remain in current environment or avoid transitioning to new environment, which can result in emotional dysregulation and disruption to routine
- Non-compliance
- Behaviour that adults find challenging

Approaches to support individual pupils with transition that are used at Cleaswell Hill School include;

- Visual supports (photographs, symbols, schedules, timetables etc)
- Clear visuals depicting motivating activities (eg. Now and Then)
- Home-school diary
- Social Stories
- Adapting environments
- Adapting routes to support sensory regulation



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- Additional staffing
- Transition objects to support understanding and motivation
- Allowing plenty of time
- Identifying key resources required to support the transition including staff training and awareness
- Providing supporting documents eg. Communication Passports, Consistent Approach Plans, Transition Packs (in back-packs)

Enrichment Curriculum

The Enrichment Curriculum promotes the development of individual resources and capabilities. It enables pupils to apply knowledge, understanding and skill in a manner that enables success in society and facilitates patterns of life-long learning and active citizenship (Cultural Capital). Examples of enrichment activities may include;

- Independence Programmes and targets
- Work related learning
- Local community participation
- Links with other providers including post-school provision
- Enterprise Programmes
- Healthy Eating Programmes
- PSHEE focused activities
- Sex and Relationship Education
- Focus weeks for eg. Science; Health, Wellbeing and Fitness

Curriculum Planning

Depending on the age and needs of individual pupils, teachers' develop the curriculum through the use of the following and other work related documents;

- Cleaswell Hill School Curriculum and Assessment Policies
- Curriculum Progression Model and Action Plan
- Phase Flow Documents
- Individual Pupil Progress (files)
- Individual PLIM targets
- PSHEE Framework
- Autism Education Trust Standards
- Routes for Learning
- Equals Informal Curriculum



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We have taken the conscious decision not to plan an annual cycle of themes. This allows us to respond to pupils' current preferences and motivators on an ongoing basis.

Where appropriate, in-task visual schedules effectively support pupils identifying the sequence, focus and intended learning objective within each activity/lesson. This enables the pupils to know what is expected of them, understand the relevance of what is being learned and identify and celebrate achievement.

Impact

The Rochford Review (2016) made a number of recommendations relating to assessment for pupils with SEND. These included the need to ensure that assessment be tailored to the child or young person's individual needs and unique profile and that it should be aligned to a curriculum appropriate to needs. For young people not engaged in subject-specific learning, a non-linear approach to assessment is needed that emphasises the importance of engagement as essential to learning.

Assessment is a crucial element in meeting the needs of all pupils. It is vital to establish an accurate pupil profile on which to base educational targets and pupil outcomes for needs in areas included in the EHCP. Assessment is individual to each pupil (ipsative) and relies on careful observation, identification of concepts or skills which require further exploration, dialogue with parents/carers, other professionals and reflective interpretation of this information.

Important factors for assessing pupils:

- Assessment and intervention should be carried out in a range of environments to ensure transfer of skill
- Assessment may need to be an eclectic mix of information from different sources which can be collated to form a holistic profile
- Information from home and parental perspective is important
- The developmental profile can be uneven or spiked
- Cleaswell Hill School uses Chery Garden; MAPP assessment tool, Benchmarks for Learning and Engagement Profiles (which are currently being trialled).

Teachers', in consultation with parents/carers and multi-agencies, identify individual priorities. Long term outcomes (end of Key Stage) are decided in all 4



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areas of the EHCP; Communication and Interaction; Cognition and Learning; Sensory and Physical; Social, Emotional and Mental Health.

Short term (yearly) outcomes are agreed at the Annual Review meeting.

Termly targets meet the short term (yearly) outcome to ensure the child's continued learning progress and are included on the child's Personal Learning Intention Map (PLIM).

In addition, learning intentions are in place for all activities, for eg. board time, Attention Autism, hydro and rebound therapy, snack and meal times.

Our range of indicators and formative assessment tools that are relevant to pupils needs and abilities includes;

- MAPP
- SCERTS
- Engagement Profile
- Routes for Learning
- Sounds of Intent

In this way, we are able to demonstrate clearly the real, functional and hence valuable, deep learning gains that our pupils' can make which will impact on the quality of their and their families' life.

All the tools that we use, while showing achievement (summative assessment), it is recognised that for pupils with a slow rate of learning, formative assessment (assessment to drive learning) will be of more importance.

Comparative judgement meetings take place where teachers focus on each area in the child's PLIM and scrutinise provision and accuracy of evidence of progress. Data is scrutinised closely and any pupil not on track to meet targets will be discussed by the staff team, in the form of a 'deep dive' and interventions put in place as required, which can include educational and therapeutic interventions and may involve referral to outside agencies.

Our curriculum is monitored and evaluated through stringent whole school processes. Teachers' constantly assess the process and quality of the learning experience from the perspective of the pupil.

Parents/carers are regularly consulted and informed about their child's targets and progress. Communication is facilitated by;

- Parents' evenings
- Annual Review of EHCP
- Home-School diary



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- Regular phone/email contact
- Tapestry
- Coffee mornings
- Information evenings
- Stay and Play sessions
- School newsletter
- School website