



Essex Primary School - Informal Curriculum

INFORMAL: learners on this pathway have complex learning difficulties, severe and complex social interaction difficulties. Our informal curriculum for pupils aims for the highest level of independence possible, with children learning within their peer age groups. For our most complex learners, we focus on the things that matter with an adapted curriculum which is relevant. We create a positive and supportive environment for all pupils without exception and remove barriers to learning and participation, provide an education that is appropriate to pupils' needs, and promote high standards and the fulfilment of potential for all pupils. We will provide them with opportunities to develop early communication, physical, social, and emotional and cognitive skills that are the foundation of learning. Learners are not yet engaged in subject specific learning and there is a clear emphasis on a multi-sensory approach. We:

- Promote positive relationships, active engagement, and wellbeing for all pupils
- Ensure all pupils can access the best possible teaching with a holistic approach to learning
- Adopt a positive and proactive approach to behaviour
- Ensure teaching is relevant and meaningful over time with lots of repetition which enables our pupils to learn more effectively with more meaningful and deeper knowledge (not abstract and compartmentalised)
- Focus on Communication and Thinking and Problem Solving as processes which are taught throughout the curriculum
- Ensure pupils are taught a curriculum which is personalised to developmentally meet their needs, is meaningful and relevant, focusing on the things that matter, and encourages the development of independence and the deeper learning of meaningful knowledge and skills

We know that an essential part of engagement is to recognise that the complexity of their learning difficulties will mean that our pupils do not learn effectively when taught in a compartmentalised manner. Therefore, our informal curriculum is holistic and learning runs throughout the year. We also have a recognition that deep and meaningful knowledge of each individual pupil, which can only be gained overtime, is an essential part of the long-term teaching and learning experience. This means that our pupils with complex needs are:

- positively encouraged to be comfortable with activities and states of being that are important to them, as part of the process of being given opportunities to discover other activities that may become important to them
- free to like who and what they wish and be encouraged to learn how to express such preferences positively
- free to reject experiences and people not liked and encouraged to learn how to express such preferences positively -be positively encouraged to take total control of their own behaviour so that self-regulation (rather than being regulated by others) becomes a major part of their learning
- given constant opportunities to communicate positively and to have both voice and be always listened to with preferences always acted upon) within the confines of a safe and secure environment

We know that the curriculum and the pedagogy behind the curriculum has each individual pupil at its centre. They will be assessed using the 5 areas of Engagement alongside the Tapestry SEND assessment Framework. This allows teachers to assess learners' engagement in developing new skills, knowledge, and concepts in the school's curriculum by demonstrating how learners are achieving specific outcomes. They represent what is necessary for learners to fully engage in their learning and reach their full potential.

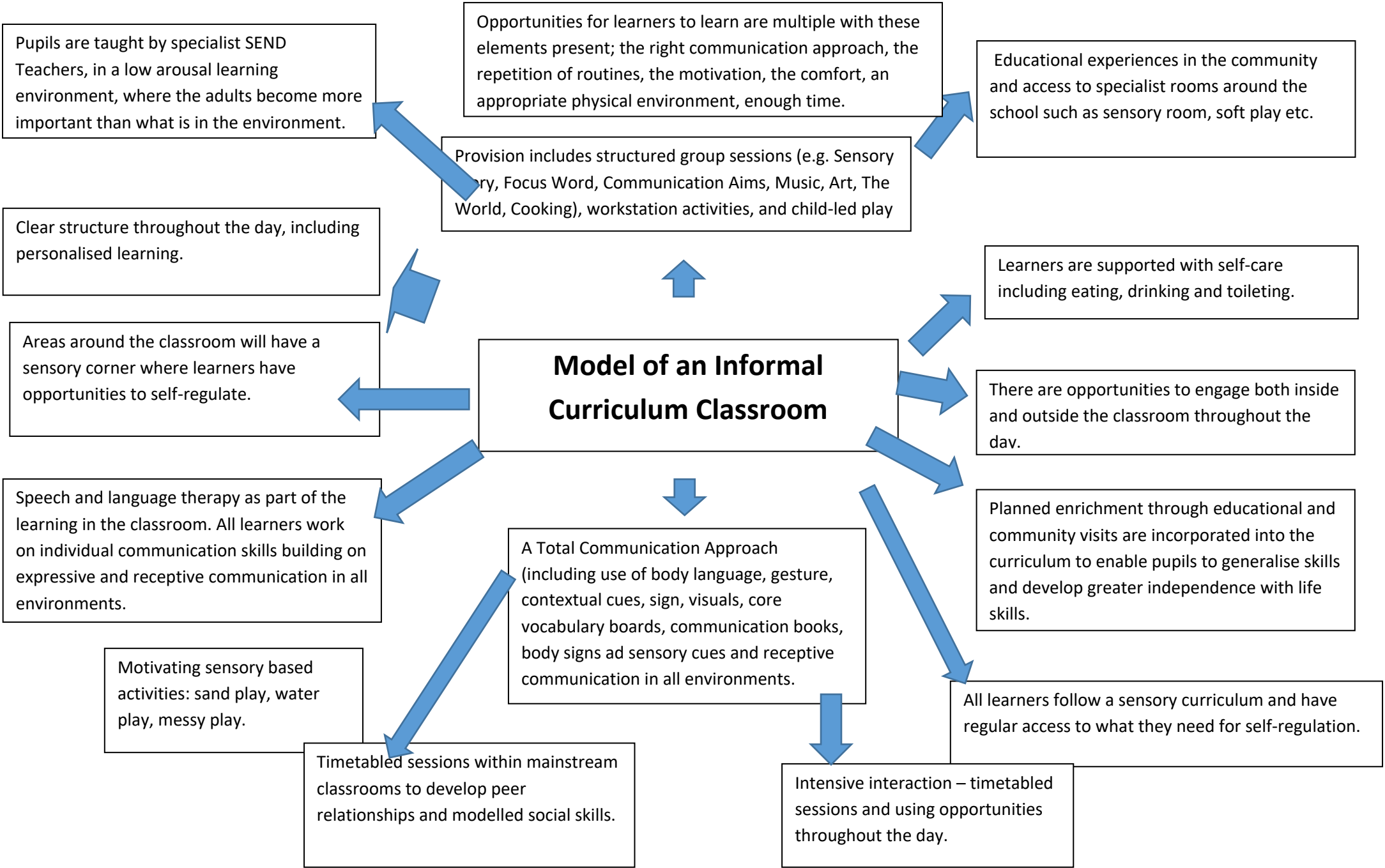


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<u>Informal Characteristics</u>	<u>Person Centered Approach</u>	<u>Assessment</u>	<u>Strategies</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication difficulties (may be pre-intentional and communicate most effectively through their actions) • Difficulties with abstract concepts • Difficulties in concentration and attention • Difficulties with both short term and long-term memory • Difficulties with sequential memory and working memory • Inefficient and slow information processing speed • Poorly developed strategies for thinking and learning • Difficulties with generalisation and problem solving (may have early problem solving skills) • Early preferences • Contextual awareness in known situations • Learnt responses in familiar routines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapies • SMSC • Personal Learning Goals • Experiential learning • EHCP or in process • Physical development • Allow processing and response time • Sensory profiles • Use of pupil motivators within learning • Learning within a low arousal environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EHCP Outcomes/Annual Review Outcomes • SEND Tapestry Assessment Framework • Engagement Model • SALT Outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-sensory learning experiences • Development of joint attention • Building tolerance • Visual supports • Speech and language therapy as part of the learning in the classroom • Intensive interaction • Total communication approach • Active exploration and engagement • Learning that is relevant and meaningful with lots of repetition • Promotion of learner voice • Sensory Cues/Objects of Reference • Desensitisation, Acclimatisation • Positive reinforcement with intrinsic rewards when teaching happens around the thing that's motivating



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Informal Curriculum: My Communication

Aims: Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To gradually increase the amount and type of key information they can process, understand, and respond to support them to develop a functional means of communication.• To increase engagement and expand their academic progress.• To develop an awareness of their surroundings and the world around them.• To promote the learners voice to empower them to make their wants and needs known.• To provide a tool to develop each learner's voice and functional language skills.• To develop independence and reduce dependency on adults in preparation for adulthood.
Content: What	<p>Imperative communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To work on I want..... communications.• To build up a bank of clear and unambiguous likes and dislikes.• To make a supported positive choice from two given options.• To make a supported negative choice from one given option.• To establish a bank of each learner's favourite imperative words.• To be introduced to the correct sign and single symbol every time the favourite imperative words are used.• To use the correct word, sign and/or symbol for favourite, motivating activities.• To positively gain the attention of another person.• To extend imperative communications into shared declarative, dynamic and/or narrative communications. <p>Declarative communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To be part of a 'Good morning' greeting when meeting others for the first time in the day/initiate/respond to.• To engage in a declarative 'conversation' with another.• To engage in communicative learning.• To extend communicative engagements that might be focussed on a narrow field of interest. <p>Non-verbal, behavioural communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To communicate 'no' appropriately.• To positively share attention with a staff member.



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Informal Curriculum: My Communication

Implementation:
How

Promoting communication through personalised teaching and learning activities and strategies throughout the school day and in structured group sessions:

- The right communication approach, using strategies recommended by SALTs.
- Positive reinforcement with intrinsic rewards when teaching happens around the thing that's motivating.
- Intensive interaction – timetabled sessions and throughout the school day.
- The repetition of routines.
- An appropriate physical environment.
- Giving pupils enough time.
- Sensory Cues, Objects of Reference, Body signs, Symbols, Visuals, Now and Next, Sign-a-long, spoken language.
- Core Vocabulary Boards used consistently across the school day.

Communication strategies used in structured sessions and child-led play:

- Attention Bucket
- Communication Aims
- Sensory Story
- The World About Me
- Physical Wellbeing
- Art, Music and Cooking
- Get Set for Learning
- Word of the Week
- Life Skills



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Informal Curriculum: My Thinking and Problem Solving

(includes Early Reading and Maths)

Aims: Why

- When faced with problems and difficulties, pupils who have learned to rely on routine, order, certainty and structure will have no skills or strategies to fall back on. In these circumstances it may well be that their distress will be even greater. In preparing learners for life beyond school and greater opportunities for independence it is vital that they are able to function in a range of situations and contexts. In order to be able to do this they will need to be able to apply knowledge, skills and understanding to circumstances that may be unusual, unexpected and unpredictable.
- We are teaching children to think and problem solve as independently as they possibly can as a necessity, not an option. There is a big wide world to be discovered beyond the routine, and we make the connection between thinking and problem solving very explicit or the pupils may not notice. Thinking and Problem Solving is a process, with different possibilities and solutions for each problem and each individual learner. They will probably work best when contextualised because then learners will have at least one strategy for resolving a real time problem.
- **We never knowingly do something for a learner when we think they might be able to do it for themselves.**
- Learners will be exposed to early reading and maths to support the development of learners' functional skills for adulthood.

Content: What

- Tier 1 – Memory building. This involves introduction of the task and being taught a potential solution to the problem before the problem occurs.
- Tier 2 – Sabotage and recognition of a problem. Recognising that something is different or that a required element of the task is not to hand; recognition that asking for help from a member of staff is a minimum requirement for solving the problem.
- Tier 3 – Independent solutions. Recognition of what the problem is and that the problem can be resolved without asking a member of staff for help; evaluating this one solution; questioning whether the same problem can be avoided in the future.
- TIER 4 Generalisation. Recognition that a solution to a similar but unrelated problem can be adapted; recognition that there may be several possible solutions to the problem, including asking peers for help; evaluating whether the solution chosen was the best one.
- Learners will be exposed to a range of written text. They will be introduced to books and stories be exposed to environmental sounds (Early Reading).
- Learners will be encouraged to communicate through mark making.



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Implementation:
How

- There are opportunities for thinking and problem solving in everything we do and therefore everything we do is regarded as an opportunity for thinking and problem solving. e.g. To gain access to my favourite...toy, snack, drink, To acknowledge that I want/need equipment, Recognising that the thing that I want or need is not working, is broken, does not fit etc., To collect own lunch utensils, To put litter in a bin.
- Sensory Story sessions.
- Exposure to Early Reading through phase 1 phonics – environmental sounds.



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Informal Curriculum: My Independence	
Aims: Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support learners to be self-reliant, self-sufficient and capable – to equip learners for life beyond school (into adulthood). • To support learners to have a sense of importance and belonging. • To support learners to think for themselves and improve decision making. • To promote a sense of wellbeing and happiness.
Content: What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners will work on Dressing/Undressing skills. • Learners will work on Eating skills. • Learners will work on Toileting skills. Travel training • To walk as independently as possible in school. • To walk as independently as possible outside of school. • To cross a minor road with support. • To be aware of landmarking. • To travel on public transport. • To support learners to enjoy a positive Shopping experience and achieve as complete a level of independence that the learner is able to achieve in shopping, in each individual shop. • Learners will be supported to achieve and become competent in the basics of Cooking and learn skills for example, spreading, cutting, chopping, pouring, wiping down, washing up, drying, putting away etc..
Implementation: How	<p>Promoting independence through personalised teaching and learning activities, in structured group sessions and using opportunities throughout the school day – We never knowingly do something for a learner when we think they might be able to do it for themselves.</p> <p>Using the right communication approach, using strategies recommended by SALTs.</p> <p>Positive reinforcement with intrinsic rewards when teaching happens around the thing that’s motivating.</p> <p>The repetition of routines.</p> <p>An appropriate physical environment.</p> <p>Giving pupils enough time.</p> <p>Sensory Cues, Objects of Reference, Body signs, Symbols, Visuals, Now and Next, Sign-a-long, spoken language.</p> <p>Core Vocabulary Boards used consistently across the school day.</p> <p>Community visits.</p> <p>Life Skills sessions.</p>



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Informal Curriculum: My Sensory Play

Aims: Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To provide opportunities for learners to explore and learn about the world around them.• Through these experiences, learners can develop problem-solving skills, critical skills, and creativity as they explore and play.• To promote positive relationships, active engagement, and wellbeing for all learners.• To promote language development, social development, emotional development, physical development, creativity and positive attitudes towards learning.
Content: What	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learners will be given the opportunity to engage in child-led play with materials that motivate and engage them.• Learners will be encouraged to engage in a wide range of different media and partake in sensory exploration.• Learners will be given opportunities to explore Sensorimotor Play, Relational Play, Functional Play, Symbolic Play.• Learners will be given opportunities to develop skills through the different levels of play – solitary, parallel, shared, turn taking, cooperative.
Implementation: How	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child-led Play ('play stations' e.g. tuff trays/carpet area with construction, sensory items, messy play, water, sand – using pupils' motivators. Adults stay at a play station and model playing (making it look exciting). Children can choose where and what they want to play with. Adults use ACI strategies (adult, child, interaction), intensive interaction and build on each pupils' communication and language using core vocabulary boards and vocabulary specific to the play station.• Playtimes and lunchtimes in the playground – adults supporting the development of play skills.• Adult-led group sessions using motivating play materials.



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Informal Curriculum: My Physical Wellbeing	
Aims: Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We aim to support our learners to develop their core strength, improve their body awareness and movement to promote better physical emotional and psychological health.• To use physical activity to maximise opportunities for functional movement, whenever and wherever possible, continually throughout each day.• We support learners to improve on their social and gross motor skills to enable them to develop greater independence.• The inclusion of postural management helps support with the quality of life of the learners. It helps improve daily functioning and participation by ensuring that learners are comfortable and ready to learn which in turn leads to positive behaviours.• To promote and encourage lifestyle choice or learners to be and remain, physically active throughout the whole of their lives.
Content: What	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learners are supported to be involved in physical activities throughout the school day, including:• Get Set for Learning session every morning on arrival at school.• P.E sessions with mainstream classes and additional P.E. sessions with sports coach.• Outdoor play sessions using a variety of equipment to improve motor skills, explore different physical activities and discover preferences.• Local area walks –purposeful physical activity.• Personal physio, OT programmes will be integrated into sessions across the school day.• Self-help skills are promoted in all activities throughout the school day and learners are always encouraged to be an independent as possible.• Exploring a wide variety of food and making healthy food choices.
Implementation: How	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adults aim to lead learners into truly believing that the healthy options are the ones they want to adopt, so that learners will want, and be able to, carry on with physical activity outside of school. We concentrate on getting learners into good habits from an early age and keeping those good habits going so that there is a long-term acceptance, welcoming and enjoyment of the intrinsic benefits of physical activity. We work closely with parents and carers to achieve this.• The emphasis is process based as well as skills based, in that the benefit is sometimes in the doing rather than in the acquisition of a specific skill and the by product may be the specific skill attained.• The Get Set for Learning daily session sessions have been devised in conjunction with the OT Service• Learners are supported at play times to fully use the playground and playground equipment.• Life Skills sessions, Cooking sessions, Local area walks.



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Informal Curriculum: The World About Me (includes Science, History, Geography, Computing, Technology, R.E.)	
Aims: Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We provide learners with an opportunity to engage in, experience, explore and respond to a range of activities and resources to develop an understanding of the world around them and how things work. • We aim to extend learners' understanding of learning beyond that which is immediately apparent. W • We aim to inspire learners to develop their skills and knowledge through, hands-on experiences and exciting opportunities. • We will develop learners' ability to attend and focus for increasing periods to allow them to actively engage in the world around them. • The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to, and observe. • The quality and variety of what learners see, hear, and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary, and ability to communicate.
Content: What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners will engage in learning which links learning to their communities and the environment around them. • Topics include: Weather, Water, Life Cycles of Plants and Animals, Recycling, Festivals, People. • Topics include the world immediately about the learners (enabling a broader understanding of things that affect the learners from day to day). • Learners will be encouraged to engage in a wide range of different media and partake in sensory exploration. • Learners will be given the opportunity to explore different sounds and environmental cues.
Implementation: How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning is based around topics which engage the learners. • Learning experiences need to be concrete and not abstract. • Learning is contextualised within the topic, so that background experiences are essential for real understanding. • A key part of all topics are their potential for narrative (i.e. learners' narration of their understanding of the topic) • Some topics for example 'Weather' run throughout the year. • The time spent on topics allows for revision and repetition of every session. • Learners will expand their learning according to their intrinsic abilities (i.e. individual learners may stay within one small area of the topic for much longer than other learners). • Planning brings out the holistic and inter-connected nature of elements of the topic. Connections are emphasised at every opportunity.



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Content: What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners are supported to be involved in physical activities throughout the school day, including: • Get Set for Learning session every morning on arrival at school. • P.E sessions with mainstream classes and additional P.E. sessions with sports coach. • Outdoor play sessions using a variety of equipment to improve motor skills, explore different physical activities and discover preferences. • Local area walks –purposeful physical activity. • Personal physio, OT programmes will be integrated into sessions across the school day. • Self-help skills are promoted in all activities throughout the school day and learners are always encouraged to be an independent as possible. • Exploring a wide variety of food and making healthy food choices.
Implementation: How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults aim to lead learners into truly believing that the healthy options are the ones they want to adopt, so that learners will want, and be able to, carry on with physical activity outside of school. We concentrate on getting learners into good habits from an early age and keeping those good habits going so that there is a long-term acceptance, welcoming and enjoyment of the intrinsic benefits of physical activity. We work closely with parents and carers to achieve this. • The emphasis is process based as well as skills based, in that the benefit is sometimes in the doing rather than in the acquisition of a specific skill and the by product may be the specific skill attained. • The Get Set for Learning daily session sessions have been devised in conjunction with the OT Service • Learners are supported at play times to fully use the playground and playground equipment. • Life Skills sessions, Cooking sessions, Local area walks.



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Informal Curriculum: My Music/My Art	
Aims: Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We aim for learners to express themselves through artistic means.• We aim for learners to experience art a means of combining expression, creative skills, imagination and emotions, typically within a visual or multi-sensory form.• We support learners to develop a visual, tactile and sensory vocabulary.• We aim for learners to encounter, explore, and develop their understanding of music and movement.• We support learners to use sensory experiences as a way of understanding and responding to the world.
Content: What	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learners will be encouraged to engage in a wide range of different media and partake in sensory exploration.• We aim for learners to be interested in the effects of making movements which leave marks, to make marks in a range of media, make defined marks or shapes.• Learners will be encouraged to engage in different sounds, music and songs.• Learners will be encouraged to join in with songs, making choices of songs using visuals/props related to song, join in with actions and refrains (anticipating), share enjoyment of music with peer group, use instruments, sustain attention on an adult led activity.• Learners will be exposed to new vocabulary.
Implementation: How	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learners will be given the opportunity to engage in Music and Art group sessions.• The emphasis is process based as well as skills based, in that the benefit is sometimes in the doing rather than in the acquisition of a specific skill and the by product may be the specific skill attained.• The repetition of routines.• An appropriate physical environment.• Giving pupils enough time.• Sensory Cues, Objects of Reference, Body signs, Symbols, Visuals, Now and Next, Sign-a-long, spoken language, core vocabulary boards.