

Discoverer

Discoverer Lead: Leah Carless

Intent

The intention is to provide our learners with the provision to create life-long learners who can flourish as independently as possible in society. We intend to expose students to a variety of themes, subjects and experiences to inspire and motivate. We wish to provide students with the skills to communicate their thoughts, feelings, wants and needs to enable them to be empowered to make choices; acquire knowledge of subjects and concepts to promote creativity, forward thinking and an understanding of morals.

We have developed a pedagogy and curriculum which meets the diverse nature of our learners with complex needs. Our sensory curriculum has communication and sensory at its heart. These core strands allow our learners to develop a more holistic approach to their learning, which is more engaging.

Implementation

The 3 C's Approach

We believe that our learners thrive when they feel connected, calm and communicative. Our curriculum is delivered under the 3 C's Approach. This allows us to develop effective relationships with our learners, their parents/ carers and other agencies working to equip and prepare them for adulthood.

Connect:

- We create an empathetic connection- showing genuine understanding and care.
- Gather any and as much information about what makes our learners feel safe and how they learn best
- We facilitate and spend quality moments with our learners which they lead.
- We use 'Clear Time' - clear of distraction, clear of expectation and clear of disruption

Calm:

- Our department is safe and supportive encouraging our learners to be safe individuals too.
- We make ourselves calm and demonstrate this through our modelling to our learners.
- We normalise any anxieties through reassurance.
- We share calming exercises and have stress toys available.

- We manage our sensory environment ensuring it is suitable for all.
- We model self-regulation techniques and support our learners in developing their own.

Communicate:

- Our communication is person centred and secure being mindful of our body language and being literal and concrete.
- We encourage and validate all different communication styles, often modifying our own style to create a system that works for our learners.
- We allow our learners processing time.

Our learners in the Discoverer classes have varying strengths and needs; we provide pathways for learners at each Key stage. Students access opportunities to experience a broad range of subjects and themes that will spark excitement and interest. Each Discoverer class follows their own timetable.

However, it is clear many learners gain knowledge and skills not only in set subjects but throughout the school day, for example, applying mathematical skills in cooking, communication skills in PE, scientific skills in forest school and therefore cross-curricular links are encouraged and carefully promoted to facilitate retention.

Staff are trained to communicate with learners using their preferred methods of communication including Makaton, PECS, Communicate in Print and Augmentative and Alternative Communication.

Implementation of subjects and themes vary from key stage and for each learner. Differentiation is implemented in many ways in each lesson including; length of task, type of task, resources, staff support, communication method, delivery of information and feedback to learner. Staff adapt their teaching style to meet each students' learning style which may differ depending on subject.

Impact

Student progress is collected and analysed depending on their pathway. Some learners' progress is measured using SOLAR, a summative assessment tool used to track key steps in students learning. Some learners' progress is measured using the 5 areas of engagement, which cater for progress up to level P4 who are not engaged in subject-specific study who are

- exploration
- realisation
- anticipation
- persistence
- initiation

This provides an observational framework which teachers use to provide a holistic view of students' barriers to learning, engagement and progress which can be shared with other professionals.

Once in Key Stage 4 & 5 students begin to master skills and apply these to AQA Unit awards at Pre-Entry to Entry Level 1. AQA Unit awards are selected depending on subject and ability of students allowing individuals to achieve a variety of awards. ASDAN Personal Progress and Personal, Social Development (PSD) are also attained which are national recognised qualifications equating to Entry level and Entry Levels 1, 2 & 3. ASDAN Personal Progress and PSD are widely recognised qualifications that provide students with a curriculum to encourage life skills, preparation for work and community participation.

Attainment is collected and analysed to ensure students have accessed a variety of subjects at a challenging yet achievable level to provide foundations for students to continue into further education and adulthood.

The impact of this curriculum is to develop student's communication, knowledge and understanding of themselves, the world around them and how to flourish as individuals in the community.