

Formal Curriculum

Our formal learners are pupils who are working at levels that can be related to the National Curriculum performance expectations. This group of pupils are largely taught through individual subjects including Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Personal and Social Development, Humanities and Expressive Arts.

This group of pupils will benefit from a structure that enables personalised learning. Older pupils will undertake work related learning, including opportunities for work experience. The formal curriculum recognises that many of the pupils have a range of needs and may require access to specialist provision. This is made available through the carefully planned and designed curriculum plan, for example bespoke Social Communication sessions.

Specific learning barriers for semi-formal learners:

Our formal learners require a highly structured curriculum that supports personalised learning.

Barriers to learning could include:

- Sensory Processing – for some of our pupils the brain has trouble organising information from the senses.
- Communication difficulties – socialising and communicating can be challenging for pupils with autism. Difficulties include reading social cues, knowing when to speak and listen understanding body language.
- Complex attachment needs – some of our pupil may have experienced difficulties forming relationships in their childhoods and life so far which will shape the way they manage meaningful relationships in school.
- Generalisation – Difficultly transferring a skill across a range of contexts
- Working Memory - Poor working memory capacity is characteristic of children with many kinds of learning difficulties. Working memory is the ability we have to hold in mind and mentally manipulate information over short periods of time.
- Problem Solving – Pupils require support in using techniques to problem solve and have opportunities to solve problems with their peers.

What is the core commitment of the formal curriculum?

Teaching and learning

- The curriculum is engaging, challenging and motivating.

- Opportunities to develop the pupil's independence embedded throughout the curriculum.
- Thinking skills and problem solving will be targeted throughout subject specific learning in Literacy and Maths
- Learners will be provided opportunities to embed new skills across a range of cross circular activities
- Pupils are encouraged to be self-motivated in their learning.
- Opportunities for peer scaffolding by which peers model the problem solving process then step back and offer support as needed.

Classroom environment:

- Staff understand and believe in the clear philosophy and ethos of how they will work together to meet the needs of the pupils in their care.
- Strong emphasis on building up the pupil's resilience. Skills are built into the curriculum including communication, problem solving, healthy coping and understanding emotions.
- TEACCH – (Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication related handicapped Children) is an evidence-based service, training, and research program for individuals of all ages and skill levels with Autism. focus on the skills, interests and needs of the individual pupil. Using visual structure to organise the environment and tasks when teaching. Many of the learners like structure, routine and certainty in their learning however, opportunities that encourage them to think and problem solve as independently as possible should be incorporated into the daily structure.
- Visual environment to support the pupils communication needs and working memory difficulties
- Structure and routine to support pupils who have difficulties associated with autism including thinking skills and problem solving

Staff knowledge and Understanding:

- Staff have a secure knowledge of the teaching strategies needed to overcome barriers to learning
- Staff have a full understating of 'what' and 'how' they want the pupils to learn through the implementation of a personalised approach planned with the use of rigorous assessment and evidencing.



What does the formal curriculum look like?

Our formal pupils learn will receive a structured curriculum however, teachers ensure learning is linked to meaningful practical experiences. It is based on the National Curriculum that is differentiated to meet need. It covers all areas including Literacy, Mathematics, Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Development, ICT, P, E, R.E, Humanities and Creative Arts. A three-year rolling programme ensures coverage of all elements of the curriculum allowing for progression. **See the long-term plans for further information about this programme.**

How is progress measured?

We use a pupil centered approach to assessment, pupils Education, Health Care Plan shapes the individual assessment measures used to measure progress. Pupils need a range of indicators to show progress and make informed judgements about their current levels and needs. Assessment tools used for our semi-formal learners include PIVATS 5 and SCERTS.

Older pupils working at the formal level may pursue accreditation pathways, including ASDAN, Open Awards and a Catering Qualification.

Please see the Woodlands Academy assessment policy for further information about these processes.