

## Semi-Formal Curriculum

### **Who are our semi-formal learners?**

Our semi-formal learners are pupils who have a range of complex obstacles to learning. Semi-formal learners are working between P4 and end of year 1 expectations. Some semi-formal learners may learn through structured play others will learn more effectively through functional activities, and others will respond to a topic-based approach.

### **Specific learning barriers for semi-formal learners:**

Our semi-formal learners learn best when it is related to their own experience and many varied learning approaches are provided in order to strengthen connections between the neurones in these pupils' brains.

Barriers to learning could include:

- Cognition – thinking and learning
- Sensory Processing – some pupils have significant sensory integration difficulties and reactions will fluctuate depending on arousal and alertness levels. Pupils may experience both hyper (over) and hypo (under) sensitivities at different times. This may lead to pupils avoiding certain stimulus and at other times need heightened stimulation in order to receive feedback from his environment.
- Generalisation – Difficulty transferring a skill across a range of contexts
- Working Memory - They hold fewer words, numbers and ideas at any one time; they find following a set of complex instructions difficult to remember when working in class.
- Problem Solving – acting upon understanding

### **What is the core commitment of the semi-formal curriculum?**

Teaching and Learning:

- The curriculum is engaging, challenging and motivating.
- Activities related to their own experiences through a theme-based approach to support their sensory processing difficulties.
- A theme-based approach encourages learners to access prior knowledge to support their working memory difficulties.
- Learners will be provided with lots of new and engaging activities to generalise skills learnt
- Targets will be worked on throughout a range of activities



### Classroom environment:

- A high staff to pupil ratio in order to provide a range of learning opportunities
- 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
- 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. This approach allows us to focus on the skills, interests and needs of the individual pupil. Using visual structure to organise the environment and tasks when teaching.
- 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. Our 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.

### 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 semi-formal curriculum look like?

Our semi-formal learners learn best when it is related to their own experience. The curriculum reflects this with the use of a thematic approach using the ground covered by the Early Years Foundation Stage (2013). This framework is not confined to those below the age 5, but rather, extends right across the school where pupils are functioning at P Levels 4 to end of year 1 expectations. However, the teaching approach reflects the age and learning style of the pupils concerned.

The different subject areas encourage pupils to combine different areas of learning, skills and understanding.

English and Communication	Mathematical thinking and problem solving	Personal and social Development	The World around us	Think Scientifically	Physical Development	Art and Creativity	Play	Food Technology
Speaking Listening Reading Writing ICT	Number Problem Solving ICT	Personal Social Emotional Self-Care E Safety	History Geography R.E. ICT	Science ICT	Gross motor Fine Motor Sensory programmes	Art Music Drama D.T. ICT	Structured play Small World Play Role Play	Basic Kitchen skills

Half-termly planning is around a central theme with linked activities planned in all areas to engage pupils and promote generalisation. Medium Term plans show progression with daily plans evaluated after each session to inform future planning. **See the Long-term plan for more information**



### **How is progress measured?**

We use a pupil centred 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 Engagement Profile and Scale, MAPP, SCERTS and PIVATS 5.

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