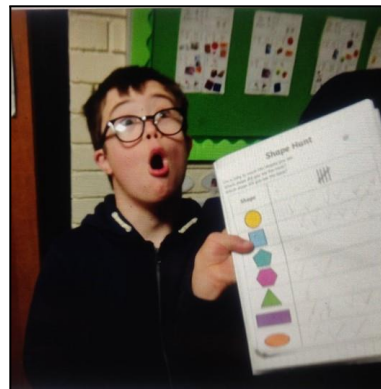


Curriculum policy

2023/2024



Parayhouse Curriculum

At Parayhouse the term curriculum refers to the actual daily experiences that our students have in and out of the classroom. In line with our school values our Curriculum has Communication, Independence and functional life skills at its core. It is constantly being reviewed in conjunction with our staff, parents, students and Governors. When considering our Curriculum we have drawn on the experiences of past students, to identify where they are now and what knowledge and skills they need to be living their happiest, safest and most fulfilling lives.

Our Curriculum journey

We began making changes to our Curriculum in 2020, we consulted with teaching staff, therapists and parents to ensure we offered an individualised, broad and functional curriculum that will best serve our students for life after Parayhouse. It was obvious to us that our students who have needs that are different from neuro-typically conventional learners, would need to be taught differently using different methods. This document will highlight the changes that we have made and explain briefly how we deliver the curriculum in our two different pathways.

After meeting with staff we decided that there was a clear distinction between the ways our learners engaged with learning. Staff reported that we were not capturing the progress of our students with more complex needs using the outcomes that were on our online assessment system SOLAR. They were concerned that the discreet subjects were not meeting their needs in term of functional learning.

We realised that these learners needed more support in learning their skills for daily living and made more progress when their learning was more topic/ life skills based, and where there was frequent repetition.

In September 2021 we began to look at our existing curriculum and decided that our more complex learners needed their own bespoke pathway. The semi-formal curriculum was introduced. We looked at topic areas and mapped out the skills and outcomes that we wanted our students to achieve, that would best serve them in later life. We did this collaboratively with Therapists and Parents and by looking at where our past students on this pathway had moved on to. All learning takes place under the broader headings Communication, Thinking & Problem Solving, Creativity and Wellbeing. We also introduced the ASDAN My independence program at this time across the school which also became a focus in our formal curriculum. We identified the importance of the communication outcomes and the IEP targets with these learners as our main assessment tools whilst we embedded our new semi-formal pathway.

The introduction of ASDAN My Independence, is ensuring that we are focusing on more functional learning for all our students and has encouraged staff from across the school to collaborate in a way they had not before. We believe this has had a positive

impact on student learning and has improved their preparation for adulthood outcomes.

The Curriculum pathways

At Parayhouse we have 5 Key groups. Our Key groups are not defined by age, but by language levels and developmental stages. We have two curriculum pathways but our students are not confined to one pathway for the whole of their school career, they are able to move flexibly between them at any point during their time with us.

All teaching across both pathways is individualised and differentiated, where the students will be supported by the teacher and learning support assistants (LSA's) to work in ability groups to ensure that they are being suitably challenged and supported. We know that not all our students will fit into one pre-existing curriculum.

In each Key group, teachers and therapists joint plan to ensure that communication and learning goals are embedded into all areas of the curriculum. Whole school planning around topics ensures that there is a breadth of learning for pupils if they remain in their pathway throughout their school career. We ensure that the learning is developmentally appropriate whilst providing variation in experiences throughout the curriculum.

Through regular teaching team meetings and meetings with parents and carers we carefully consider preparing for adulthood outcomes which begins as soon as they join us. These will include discussions about living arrangements, post 16 educational settings and leisure activities.

We are able to meet the needs of all our pupils by adopting a personalised approach. All pupils across the school have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) with targets based on the outcomes in their Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP). These are written and reviewed three times a year in consultation with parents and other professionals. The EHCP targets are reviewed once a year at the annual review.

We believe that learning is not restricted to the classroom and takes place throughout the school day in different environments and contexts, and is not the sole responsibility of the teacher but also peers, therapists, lunchtime assistants and everyone else in our school community. Our main focus is to prepare them for the life that they will lead when they leave us and this will look different for all our students

Communication

A total communication environment ensures that specialist support is embedded in all parts of the school day. We have three Speech therapists based across all classes who provide specialist advice to all students, their families and staff in the school. All staff are trained in how to deliver these approaches so that Speech and Language therapy is embedded and students receive direct and indirect therapy every day.



SoSAFE!

At Parayhouse we strive to increase the knowledge and awareness of how to keep our children safe at all times because we are aware that they are all vulnerable.

SoSAFE! Teaches students how to keep themselves safe, how to have healthy relationships, and how to report physical or sexual abuse using a standardised framework of symbols, visual teaching materials, and concepts.

Some of the key concepts in the initial stages of the strategy are:

- Some body parts are private and we cover them with underwear or clothing
- Only private helpers can touch our private parts AND consent must be given
- Children have a right NOT to consent to others' help

These concepts relate to a variety of contexts including when needing support with hygiene, medical assistance and toileting.

Curriculum pathways

Our curriculum consists of two pathways:

The Semi-Formal Curriculum: For learners with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), working broadly between P4 and end of KS1 expectations.

Our semi-formal learners have a significant intellectual impairment and often have sensory processing difficulties. They need support accessing all areas of the curriculum.

The Formal Curriculum: For learners with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) working at end of P8 and year 3 expectations or above in the National Curriculum. Our formal learners have more moderate learning difficulties and social emotional needs.

Semi-Formal Level (P4-End of year 1 expectations)

A Life Skills Based Programme

Pupils following our semi-formal curriculum learn best when learning is functional and related to their own lives. The learning on this pathway uses a thematic cross curricular approach. The aim is for students to enjoy and engage with their learning, to make positive choices and lead happy and healthy lives and to make a positive contribution to the school and their local communities. All pupils will access some parts the ASDAN programme which they can work on as they progress through the school. Learning is delivered in whole class and small groups through use of multi-sensory resources and activities, interactive games, structured play and opportunities for practical participation in real life events and experiences, using a variety of interventions and teaching approaches.

In this pathway the students have fewer discreet subjects, they access skills based teaching where they will encounter many different opportunities to practise their skills

across a range of contexts. Repetition and repeated exposure to concepts and learning content is key to embedding these skills. It is vital that our pupils' sensory, physical or care needs can be met and that our pupils are as functional as possible. We work closely with therapists to achieve this.

There are four main areas of learning in the semi-formal pathway

- **Communication**
- **Thinking and Problem Solving**
- **Creativity**
- **Wellbeing**

Communication

Communication is the primary area of need for all our students at Parayhouse School. Students present with a range of different needs across the areas of language development including difficulties understanding language, or expressing their needs and opinions. It is important that we identify students' preferred method of communication and provide them with the support and tools to enable them to access and use this effectively. A "Total Communication" approach is adopted across the school, enabling all students to access language in their environment in the most appropriate way for their individual needs. Our students require frequent opportunities across the school day for structured practice of language and social interaction skills, from making choices about their lunch, to choosing an activity as a reward. The goal is to scaffold students' progress towards effective spontaneous communication across a range of environments. In this pathway we allow more time across the timetable for morning, lunchtime and end of day routines in order for students to develop functional communication skills within a meaningful context, and reach their potential with the maximum level of independence.

A variety of interventions and techniques are used across the school to support and develop students' speech, language and communication skills. All of these approaches are embedded within classroom activities to support regulation of sensory, behavioural and emotional needs as well as access to language across all learning tasks. Students are supported to develop their receptive and expressive language skills through implementation of targeted interventions and individualised strategies across the curriculum. We use a number of whole school approaches to support staff and students to understand and progress with language and communication development. Relevant interventions and approaches including Blanks Levels, Shape Coding, and a range of visuals supports (including Makaton signing, objects of reference, symbols and visual schedules) are used across all activities to enrich the learning experience for these students. To address social learning challenges, the "Social Thinking" methodology (Michelle Garcia

Winner) is adapted across the school to support development of skills needed to interpret the thoughts, beliefs, intentions, emotions, knowledge and actions of another person using information about the context of the situation, enabling students to better understand and interact with others in their environment. The students also have opportunities during their time at Parayhouse to take part in smiLE Therapy, which is planned and delivered by specially trained members of staff. This is a structured approach focusing on the 'live' face-to-face interaction between these students and people who are unfamiliar with their needs, in everyday life situations.

Phonological awareness skills are targeted alongside discrete teaching of phonics using the Ruth Miskin 'Read Write Inc.' programme. In addition to this, we use a bespoke whole word reading approach to teach words that are linked with key vocabulary, class topics as well as environmental language.

Although communication is encouraged and supported across the curriculum, students will spend more time with a focus on developing communication skills in the context of functional daily routines, including greeting and initiating interactions, accepting and rejecting, making choices and requests, expressing feelings and opinions, and engaging in meaningful interactions with their peers.

Thinking and Problem Solving

Students with additional needs have limited understanding of and ability to think flexibly in order to find appropriate solutions to problem solve within everyday situations. Our students also find it challenging to generalise skills taught in a structured classroom setting to more unpredictable real life situations or from one context to another. Our students respond best to a structured and familiar routine, allowing them to feel safe in a controlled and predictable learning environment. They often become anxious and upset when this routine is disrupted. We work to equip the students with the tools to consider and respond to some common problems they may face in a range of real life situations as well as developing awareness and skills in requesting support where necessary. This may include intentionally sabotaging situations to create opportunities for practise of skills. This requires additional time and specially trained staff, to ensure our students develop maximal independence and confidence in using learnt skills outside of the school environment.

Thinking and problem solving is linked closely with ICT and accessing technology, teaching social understanding in the context of commonly used technology and devices such as ipads, laptops and the interactive whiteboards. Students use these devices to consolidate learning across other areas of the curriculum such as writing, reading and counting. Thinking & Problem Solving will incorporate number skills and math related concepts and language including quantity, shape and pattern, position and time. We aim to make content and delivery of teaching as functional as possible, making real life connections and using engaging and motivating resources that the students will use out in the community.

Wellbeing

The wellbeing part of our curriculum consists of physical, emotional and mental wellbeing as well as sensory processing. These areas are all closely linked. If we can help regulate students sensory needs then they should be more ready to learn, engage, improve their physical skills, manage their behaviour and build more positive relationships.

The Wellbeing sessions include P.E, games, yoga, SHRE, PHSE, play, swimming and outdoor learning. P.E on this pathway may include basic movement and sensory circuits as they do not have the motor skills or cognition to take part in mainstream sports and games. The OT and OT assistant are timetabled into each class every week in order to provide OT programmes and upskill the staff to deliver OT interventions and strategies. It also covers sensory circuits and other OT activities and zones of regulation which is a programme which is used school wide to encourage the students to label and regulate their emotions.

A working partnership with parents is key in all areas of the curriculum in order to have an impact, but we work closely with parents in this area to ask which areas they need support with, especially in SHRE, where they can often find it difficult to teach or communicate certain ideas in order to make sure that children are less vulnerable. In PHSE and SHRE we take our outcomes from the PHSE (SEND) association programme of study, and are introducing the So SAFE programme in the Autumn term.

Some of our students have high physical needs and are visited by Physiotherapists from their local authority. Our staff attend these sessions in order to carry out the individual student's programme throughout the week according to what is outlined in their EHCP. This can include working with walkers, splints, standing frames and appropriate physical touch.

Strategies and interventions to support wellbeing.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Sensory circuits● Weighted blankets● Gym balls● Scooter boards● Wobble cushion● Oral motor activities● Gross and fine motor activities● Sensory room● Mindfulness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ear defenders● Deep pressure● Brushing● Zones of Regulation

Creativity

Initially our students' experiences of the world are all accidental but as they develop their creativity emerges. We provide them with opportunities to create in order to express themselves and experience enjoyment. Students are given opportunities to perform through song, drama, art and music. We often come together in assemblies or during class and whole school performances to share our creativity, and increase self-expression and confidence. We also take part in creative projects outside the school with our yearly SEND exhibition at the Tate in London and through museum and gallery visits to experience other people's creativity and expression.

We have a part-time drama therapist who has a caseload of students across the school. Class teams are able to refer to them if they identify students who have strengths in expressing themselves through the arts and those who may appear to be having difficulties with their social and mental health.

In creativity sessions the students will access music, drama, role play, arts, craft, dance and play. It gives the students a chance to express themselves through different mediums and to work with and explore different materials. This part of the curriculum has cross curricular links to other parts especially communication where they may use a theme from a story they are reading, or they could be related to annual celebrations or seasons or holidays.

ASDAN- My Independence

This is covered by the ASDAN programme of work and the students are streamed across the whole school according to their age and key stage. This course is accredited and is mapped to the preparing for adulthood pathways (PfA). The students will cover a range of topics and areas of learning, meaning there may be some overlap with the other areas and it provides an opportunity to consolidate and generalise some of their learning. In addition to the ASDAN programme of study the students will have other life skills lessons which may include cooking and self-care activities.

Formal Curriculum

An Adapted National Curriculum, with a functional focus.

Pupils experiencing our formal curriculum access the range of National Curriculum subjects, modified in the light of their developmental level and special educational needs. Life skills and independence skills will also form a large part of the curriculum. In this phase the learning is more formal and reflects that of a primary mainstream classroom. The students will still use a topic-based approach, and links will be made to their everyday lives where possible to avoid teaching abstract concepts. As in the semi-formal curriculum, students will work towards accreditation through ASDAN, they will add to their personal portfolios throughout their time at school, and can take them with them to their next provisions to ensure a continuation of learning.

The students on this pathway follow an adapted National Curriculum with cross curricular links which help embed learning and vocabulary.

Language and Communication

Ruth Miskin- Fresh Start

Pupils following the formal curriculum are following an adapted National Curriculum. In their Language and Communication lessons they follow the fresh start (RWI) programme of study where they will visit phonics and reading comprehension at their own level in differentiated groups.

Read Write Inc. Fresh Start is a catch-up and intervention programme. It aims to accelerate reading progress and enable students to read accurately and fluently. It helps develop good comprehension, spelling and punctuation skills.

CLPE

The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE)

Pupils throughout the school are experiencing the CLPE programme. CLPE is a UK based children's literacy charity working with primary schools. Their work raises their achievement in children's reading and writing by teaching literacy creatively and effectively, putting quality children's books with exceptionally meaningful illustrations at the heart of all learning.

The program incorporates many teaching approaches such as responding to illustrations, looking at language, role-play and drama, shared writing and using visual organisers. There are cross-curricular links to embed reading for meaning, language and communication skills accessible to all the students. The program encourages discussion and talk-based activities to strengthen the students' ability to converse meaningfully.

The schemes of work incorporate VCOP activities to consolidate enriching vocabulary, connectives, openers and punctuation.

Maths

Functional maths

In this area learners encounter situation-based and contextualised problem-solving activities. This area explores numbers, patterns and sequences, pattern, memory, and ways of finding new information. The students will experience maths in different contexts so they can generalise their skills. We also apply their maths learning to functional activities such as shopping, budgeting, planning and through to P.E and games.

ASDAN

All students are streamed for ASDAN My Independence lessons weekly across the school, and will complete one of four courses aimed at their Key Stage. The course embeds the preparation for adulthood targets ensuring that the students are taught functional skills in a range of real life contexts.

P.E & Yoga

All students are required to partake in Physical activity sessions weekly. As well as swimming we also participate in competitive sports both internally and externally in our SEN schools network. These include football, swimming and pentathlon sports. With funding from our P.E sports grant we are able to offer other activities and experiences such as sailing, tennis, and climbing. We use the REAL PE programme to support our P.E curriculum and ensure that PE is taught in a fun and inclusive way.

For our more complex students, our staff work with the OT team and will work on core strength and stability and fine and gross motor skills. Most students will regularly take part in our sensory circuits programme to help regulate their sensory systems and ensure they are ready for learning.

A SEN yoga teacher who delivers yoga across the school, helps the students with strengthening, stretching, and mindfulness techniques.

Swimming

All students will attend swimming lessons for one half term of the year. Those students who have additional physio, medical and OT needs may attend more regularly if agreed with the school. Swimming lessons are supported by LSA's and qualified swimming instructors. For our more complex learners swimming lessons are used to increase water awareness and confidence, whilst our more able students will improve their swimming strokes, stamina and ability.

Music

Students take part in weekly music lessons across the school, taught by a specialist music teacher. The school topics are often linked to the songs or music that the students will experience. Students also have the opportunity to play a variety of musical instruments in these sessions and the music teacher will work alongside other teachers to support the students in contributing to Christmas performances and school productions.

PSHE/RSHE

In PHSE our outcomes and resources are taken from the PHSE association. In these lessons, learners enhance their overall health and wellbeing. They also learn about personal care, healthy eating and safer lifestyle choices. This curriculum area also has a strong emotional and social dimension. Learners are supported to understand their feelings and their emotions

Relationship, Sex and Health Education

The aim of RSHE is to equip children and young people with the information, skills and values to have safe, fulfilling and enjoyable relationships, and to take responsibility for their health and wellbeing with an appropriate understanding of their current capabilities and needs. We take our curriculum objectives from PSHE

Association (SEND) to ensure we teach a breadth of topics. We created the curriculum in consultation with students, parents and Governors. Many of the themes will be taught through ASDAN and Everyday emotions are embedded throughout the school using The Zones Of Regulation.

Teaching of R.E.

We cover R.E. outcomes in a number of ways. Through our ASDAN courses, celebration assemblies and culture week celebrations. At Parayhouse we aim to teach through topics and at an appropriate developmental and language level. Through teaching RE outcomes we aim not only to teach our students about different faiths but also to promote respect and tolerance for different beliefs in line with British Values.

We bring the classes together regularly throughout the module for assemblies, which are used as a time for thought, reflection and celebration.

Communication and Speech Therapy

Communication is at the heart of everything we do at Parayhouse School. There are many barriers impacting our students' speech, language and communication development. The complex needs that many of our pupils face, means that they may not be able to develop language skills in the same way as a 'neuro-typically' developing child. We use a range of interventions and strategies to support students access to language across the academic classroom learning, including a range of visual supports alongside verbal language (e.g. Makaton signing, objects, photos, symbols), Blanks Levels, shape coding as well as a phased hierarchy of prompting to step students towards independent comprehension and expression.

Understanding themselves and others, navigating the social world and fostering meaningful relationships often presents significant challenges for our students. To address the social learning challenges faced by many of our students we draw on various interventions and strategies. These include relevant strands of the "Social Thinking" methodology, as well as teaching live interactions in specific everyday contexts through use of smiLE therapy.

The Social Thinking programme breaks down complex social concepts (such as perspective taking) into concrete, achievable learning goals. It provides a common language that is used consistently when helping students to navigate challenges across their daily routine, to help them comprehend social behaviours and problem solve within the unpredictable social world.

smiLE therapy teaches students a number of crucial skills within real life communication contexts. They are taught to become actively responsible for their own communication and learning, including preventing or repairing communication breakdown in face-to-face situations. They develop a range of strategies to ensure they communicate their message successfully, as well as strategies to clarify information received, self-evaluate their own interactions and working alongside peers within a group to support and observe others' social learning.

Each individual's communication pathway will be unique. Pupils' communication styles and preferences are assessed and developed, with help and guidance from the Speech and Language team, so that communication opportunities can be maximised throughout the school day.

Assessment and recording

The way in which our pupils learn, directly affects the way in which we assess our pupils' development. Each individual pupil is on their own 'learning journey'; and as such each pupil needs to be assessed on their own pathway (see assessment policy)

With this in mind, the pupils' learning journeys will provide evidence of their progress. For many of our pupils, their progress will not be able to be charted in a linear way but, they will show the developments in a more lateral sense and may show breadth and depth of learning.

This informs which targets should be worked on within IEPs. By working in this way, we will be able to demonstrate that pupils have made true progress; which in turn will lead onto the next stage of development. These valuable and deeply learned skills will have a direct impact on the quality of their lives.

The curriculum is monitored and evaluated to ensure that it is working, through a rigorous quality assurance process. Each pupil's progress is discussed as part of the teacher's appraisal/performance management. Pupil progress meetings take place with the Key teacher and class therapist twice a year and include triangulation of available data and assessments, work scrutiny and observations.

Moving on

Our vision is for all pupils to have a meaningful planned route through their final years at Parayhouse to equip them to live a fulfilled and independent life. We embed the Preparation for adulthood targets in our Curriculum, through ASDAN which all our students take part in from the earliest stages of their school career. From year 9 onwards we begin to look at preparation for adulthood targets at the annual review, which are shared with the young person's case worker at the local authority. These targets are set with the student, teachers, therapists and parents. The student will also have an IEP with targets. Our family support manager will work with the local authority and the parents to identify suitable provisions in enough time to plan suitable transitions which will involve school visits, and social stories. All of our students go on to access higher education in a variety of settings:

- Residential settings
- colleges
- SEN sixth forms.

