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About the curriculum development
This curriculum was developed by the curriculum team; Merja Paakkonen (chair), Cath Brookes, Jo Dudek, Ruth Davies, Beth Goodband, Sarah Cragg, Brenda Williams and Bernie Young during the academic years 2011-13.

We would like to thank you Chris White, Jamie Raynold, Kate Hallam-Jones and all the teaching assistants, who have given valuable feedback when developing this curriculum.

The curriculum team has consulted leadership team, parents and the therapy team during the process.

Penny Lacey (Birmingham University), Ann Ferguson (Northamton University) and Miranda Brookes (Specialist VI-teacher) have provided us with challenging and inspiring feedback. Thank you for that.

1.7.2013 we understand that this document is a working process and the CLDD curriculum will be further developed by the school.
1. Curriculum for PMLD students

1.1. Introduction

“Our goal is for disabled young people and young people with SEN to have the best opportunities and support so that as far as possible they can succeed in education and their careers, live as independently and healthily as they are able to and be active members of their communities. For a small number of young people, independent living may not be possible, and their families may be anxious about their ongoing care responsibilities. For these young people, we want to ensure the best quality of life with support for them to fulfil their potential and support for their parents and carers.” (Green Paper 2011)

The challenge to scrutinise our curriculum for complex needs students was driven by current practice and a desire to meet individual educational needs even more effectively. We felt that clarification of the rationale behind our practice, the formalisation of its structure and the content of our curriculum, will improve our teaching and students’ learning.

Our ambition is that all of our students will reach their full potential in school and make a successful transition to adulthood. In order to achieve this goal we work in partnership with parents, carers and multiagency teams. Developing our school curriculum defines our principles about how we are working towards National Guidelines in providing relevant and challenging learning for all children (DfE 2011):

- setting suitable learning challenges
- M., responding to pupils’ diverse learning needs
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils

The vision of Birkett House School is that it is a school at the heart of its community. We aspire for all our pupils to work in an environment that encourages lifelong learning, equipping pupils with the tools and skills to achieve. We will work to encourage pupils to develop confidence, self-belief and be aware of the choices open to them. We will encourage tolerance and inclusion, where all pupils are able to build effective relationships based on strength of community, friendship and respect. In short, we expect the students and staff of Birkett House to be both aspirational and inspirational.

Our aims are driven from the Every Child Matters principles. Through positive experiences, we will develop as fully as possible our students’ abilities and interests and be proud of our achievements and ourselves. We will work in partnership preparing for life in and beyond school where we are able to contribute to our own futures and take our place in society. We will develop the skills we will need for a successful future. We will respect others and ourselves in an environment where we are confident, secure and happy. We will develop the skills we need to meet real life challenges.

We are committed to our school mission statement of “Challenge, Achieve and Celebrate” in all areas of school life.
1.2. Description of Learners

At Birkett House School our pupil attainments span the full range covered by P scales and National Curriculum levels. By implementing and designing our own Curriculum Framework we want to ensure that our students can access a curriculum that is inclusive, accessible and relevant for them.

Students who are working at the earliest levels of physical and cognitive development have specific teaching and learning needs; it is important to focus on developing their skills and capabilities rather than “working towards” subject related targets. Developing students’ intellectual capacity, interaction and independence, communication, physical control and sensory skills and creativity are the core elements of our curriculum for students with complex physical, sensory and medical needs.

This document is focusing on curriculum content, delivery and assessment for students at the “Developmental Level”. All students at Birkett House School are children with potential to learn. They are unique and placed at the centre of our individualised educational programme.

Students who are learning at a ‘Developmental Level’ experience significant barriers to their learning. They have profound and multiple learning difficulties and additional impairments which can challenge their learning due to their

- sensory abilities
- physical abilities
- communication
- behaviour
- significant health care
- use of an alternative method of communication

Therefore they need

- a significant adaptation to the curriculum
- a high level of specific multiagency support
- a modification of the physical environment
- a high level of special resources
- a high level of individual care and support

Our individualised curriculum is constructed from an in depth understanding of each and every student.

In this document we use ‘CLDD’ for students with Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities instead of ‘PMLD’ students with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties. By doing this we want to emphasis that this particular group of students have conditions that co-exist and therefore they require highly individual learning pathways and trans-disciplinary cooperation. It is also useful to notice that according to the definition CLDD students’ attainment level can be from P-levels to National Curriculum levels. Although this curriculum document is focusing on students who’s attainment level is P1-P4 methodological thinking is also relevant for students whose attainment level is P 5 and above. (Appendix A. Definitions of Learning Difficulties)
1.3. Curriculum Requirements

At Birkett House School teaching and learning of complex needs students relies on the following essential features:

**Individuality**
It is paramount to listen to a student’s voice. The curriculum should empower individual students to be as active as possible in their learning. We endeavour to:

- build our teaching and learning on positive relationships with a student
- know individual students and their learning needs
- support students’ communication and self expression
- build learning on individual objectives and learning styles
- focus on teaching developing skills and capabilities
- help pupils establish positive self-esteem

**Motivation**
Students who are curious about the world around them are able to learn. Motivation grows from experiences, from interaction with people and the environment. We make every effort to:

- deliver fun and engaging learning experiences
- develop realistic and relevant learning settings
- help students to stay focused
- use appropriate consistent and/or varied teaching approaches
- offer choices

**Delivery**
Learning happens when:

- the curriculum and its delivery is interesting, inspiring, engaging, motivating and stimulating
- teaching is delivered in a secure and safe physical and social environment
- specialist environments are created to meet a specific learning task
- the pace is right for the student
- the opportunity for the unplanned is allowed to happen
- a varied curriculum is accessible and offers lots of opportunities for learning
- learners are active
- teaching and learning is age appropriate and interesting
- students’ learning targets are appropriate, realistic and promote progress
- is based on sensory experiences

**Partnerships**
We value all sources of knowledge when planning the curriculum. Co-operation with parents, therapists and other agencies ensures shared feedback providing information that is necessary for an accurate assessment, planning and consistency. Our curriculum is delivered in partnership with:

- the student
- parents
- multidisciplinary teams
Quality
The main purpose, of all teaching and learning arrangements, is to enable the student to make the best progress in developing skills, knowledge and understanding. The focus is on the learner. The staff understand that every moment of the students’ school day is important and therefore they strive to maintain pupil’s engagement at all times. We have a high expectation when planning and delivering curriculum.

The quality of our provision means maintaining and developing high standards;
- to ensure safeguarding and the welfare of our students
- skilled staff to deliver high level quality teaching and learning
- to develop the environment so that it is accessible, appropriate, positive and stimulating
- to use high quality equipment and resources
- to believe that every minute matters
- to enhance students’ skills and have high expectations
- to ensure quality in content, delivery and assessment
- to promote progression
2. Developmental Curriculum

2.1. The curriculum structure

The curriculum structure at Birkett House School includes 3 broad approaches:

1. Developmental
2. Semi-Formal
3. Formal

A personalized curriculum means that it is relevant to the student. All the students follow a curriculum that is tailored to meet their individual needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attainment level</th>
<th>Developmental / CLDD</th>
<th>Semi-Formal</th>
<th>Formal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogical focus</td>
<td>P1-3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Curriculum content focus | - learn through sensory delivery  
- sense of security, positive relationships with adults and use of students' physical and sensory capabilities are essential for delivering curriculum  
- developing skills and capabilities  
- curriculum is linked to National Curriculum subjects via programmes of learning  
- older students are likely to achieve accredited studies | - P4-8  
- learning through play, functional and concrete activities  
- topic and subject based approach corresponding to National curriculum subjects  
- curriculum content broadly corresponds with Early Years Foundation Stage and National Curriculum Subjects  
- older students are likely to enter Entry Level Exams and achieve accredited studies | - L1 onwards  
- students can learn from auditory, visual and written information  
- although more abstract it's still practical focusing on functional skills  
- content corresponds with National Curriculum subjects  
- high level of subject structure  
- older students are likely to enter Entry Level Exams, achieve accredited studies, in few cases enter GCSEs |
| KS2, KS3, KS4, 16+ | EYFS, KS1  
KS2, KS3, KS4, 16+ | EYFS, KS1, KS2, KS3, KS4, 16+ |

Most of our students’ learning will progress in a linear fashion. However it is important to consider that some students’ learning will become more lateral and for a few students their learning may regress.

All the students at Birkett House School follow EYFS curriculum till the end of KS1.
2.2. Induction to Developmental Curriculum

At Birkett House School the Developmental Curriculum (CLDD curriculum) is divided into five programmes of learning:

1. Communication and language
2. Social and emotional
3. Cognition and thinking
4. Orientation, motor and mobility
5. Expressive Arts

They link to the National Curriculum subjects as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Curriculum Subjects</th>
<th>Communication and Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Modern Foreign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>Social and Emotional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Cognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Orientation, Movement and Mobility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>Social and Emotional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education</td>
<td>Expressive Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>Cognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Orientation, Movement and Mobility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>Orientation, Movement and Mobility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art and Design</td>
<td>Expressive Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and Technology</td>
<td>Social and Emotional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orientation, Movement and Mobility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Programmes of learning are taught through different activities such as;

- Intensive Interaction
- Songs for Interaction
- Sensory Stories
- TAC PAC
- Resonance Board
- Swimming
- Physiotherapy and movement programmes
- Visual programmes
- Food technology
- Community visits
- Drama and Dance
- Sherborne sessions
- Daily living: break time, dinner time, personal care
- Inclusion links
- Music, Art, Design Technology
- Exploratory activities
- Fine motor skills

For students with CLDD every moment, situation and environment is regarded as a learning opportunity.

In order to ensure delivery of a broad, balanced and age appropriate curriculum in the all core areas of learning, specific activities link to Birkett House Curriculum Map at all Key Stages.

Students’ learning is supported by the use of

- Physical prompts: cues, Body Signing, Object of Reference
- Visual prompts: cues, symbols
- Verbal prompts
- Assistive technology
- Guidance, support, assistance, supervision

Teaching and learning is delivered at the right pace through all senses.

Students’ progress is documented using both linear and lateral assessment

- Records of learning; evidence of work such as learning journeys, learning logs, memory books/CDs, observation and photo commentary
- Planning and assessment files
- Cumulative IEP target summaries
- Accreditation studies
- BSquared assessment

In order to support the students’ progress at school we work in partnership with other professionals and multidisciplinary teams and benefit from their specialist advice.

We identify and celebrate students’ individual progress whether it is an individual achievement or measured attainment.

The students’ next steps are formulated by using the broad evidence of learning.
3. Programmes of learning

3.1. Communication and language

This developmental area is linked to National Curriculum subjects; English and Modern Foreign Language.

The ability to communicate is central to learning and life. At Birkett House we strive to find ways for every student to be understood. Therefore the development of communication and language is central to the work we do at school. This is reflected in the school's Total Communication Policy. We use a variety of communication methods including Verbal communication, Makaton Signing, Body signing, Objects of reference, photographs, symbols and PECS.

We work closely with speech and language therapists and specialist teachers when planning students’ learning programme for developing their communication and language skills. Student’s individual therapy targets are integrated in this programme of learning and monitored regularly.

Our students are intentional communicators. This means staff need to be skilled and sensitive when interpreting students’ behaviour so that we can respond appropriately. Every opportunity should be taken to develop students’ intentional communication. This means that students’ vocalisation, eye contact, gestures, shiver, cough, laugh etc, needs to be responded to immediately either by vocalising, commenting on what has happened or copying the sound. This reinforces intentional communication through the learner realising that performing a particular action causes an effect.

‘Contingent responding’ means that the students hasn’t made the one to one association yet but is working towards that. It is important to remember that humans have sympathetic nervous systems and can pick up emotions and feelings around them. Students respond to the emotional atmosphere in the classroom that can positively or adversely impact on their emotional well being and therefore learning.

At Birkett house our Total Communication Policy means that we take every opportunity to support students’ individual communication. Students with complex needs particularly benefit from the use of sensory cues, body signing and objects of reference. In the school's VLE and shared drive there are additional information resources, videos and photos about total communication strategies.

**Intensive interaction** principles are used throughout the day. These include:
- being anticipatory, positive and calm
- being aware of learners’ moods and feelings
- using pauses
- allowing the learner to lead
- giving eye contact
- smiling, vocalising along with student and turn taking
- mirroring body movements

**Establishing routines** helps students to develop their communication. This means
- to greet students in the same way each time you greet them
- to keep adults’ voice (tone), smell (scent, aftershave) touch (where to touch, how much pressure) consistent when communicating with a student to avoid too much language, but equally not assuming that the learner can not understand what you are saying or doing
- to use language which is appropriate to the situation and the student
- to use repetitive language in order to ensure that students have many opportunities
- to understand meanings in real and concrete ways
- to use language in the presence of students that is student centred, involving students in conversation
- to use key words in a sentence as they carry significant cues

**Stages of Communication Development**

1. Children at a very early stage of developing communication require people around them to be responsive to any attempts at communication. Interpreting behaviour as potentially meaningful is one important adult response. To be responsive, adults need to attend very carefully to each child and treat all behaviour as potentially communicative.

2. Some children will be more intentional in their communication but not yet able to use conventional language. At this level, children will be developing ways of indicating what they like and dislike. A responsive environment provided by staff should include a widening range of motivating activities upon which children can ‘comment’.

3. Some children will be beginning to use conventional communication, understanding or even using a few single words such as ‘more’, ‘finished’ and perhaps names of familiar people and objects. Staff should encourage new words and meanings through a range of stimulating activities and providing the example of new words and phrases.

4. Although the basics of communication are established before children reach P4, there is still a need for adults to interpret unconventional communication attempts to help shape spoken words and eventually aspects of early literacy.

Key areas that are necessary for the development of communication are: gaze, imitation, turn taking/social interaction, social organisation/social skills, receptive language and expressive language.

**Aims**

The students to develop their skills

1. **Gaze**
   - Early stage of communication for students that is pre-verbal.
   - Skills in this area give students opportunities to make choices and communicate using their eyes.

2. **Imitation**
   - Where communication begins for students,
   - They will have opportunities to copy sounds, gestures made by adults
   - Use these sounds and gestures in a meaningful way.

3. **Turn taking/social interaction**
   - Early communication skill for students to develop through interactions with adults.
   - Students to begin to be proactive in their responses.

4. **Social organisation/social skills in relation to language**
   - Next step on from turn taking,
   - To learn more about interactions with others.
   - To develop skills in initiating and controlling communication.

5. **Receptive language**
   - Allows students to understand what is happening during their day.
   - To understand the words/language/objects that adults use with them.

6. **Expressive language**
   - Allows students to express needs and feelings.
   - Allow students to make choices.
   - Using objects, signs, symbols/photographs through to verbal language
To enable this curriculum to be an effective document for all students with Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities we must extend this programme of learning beyond P-level 4. Whilst implementing and developing this curriculum we have found that there is a group of students who benefit from following CLDD curriculum but have communication and language skills up to P-level 6.

By extending this programme of learning we can include these students in CLDD curriculum whilst still tracking, measuring and celebrating their achievements in Communication and Language. We have therefore included two further key areas of Inclusive Reading and Writing to encompass skills within P5 and P6.
3.2. Social and Emotional

This developmental area is linked to National Curriculum subjects; Maths, English, Science, ICT, PSHEC, Music, Art and Design, Design and Technology.

Social and Emotional development focuses on developing four key areas;
- Confidence and self belief
- Effective relationships
- Strength of community
- Self-care

Social development supports students in finding a meaningful and effective way of interacting and participating with the world around them. It focuses on enabling students to build positive and productive relationships in our school and local community.

Emotional development supports students in developing their own emotional literacy- how we communicate our own emotions, and enabling them share their emotions in meaningful and effective ways. We value students emotional responses and support them in developing and using these to share preferences, feelings and influence the world around them.

We recognise an overlap between the social, emotional and communication development of students. Communication is an integral part of social and emotional development and we aim to support student progress through focusing on the separate curriculum areas as they are of equal importance to student development.

The curriculum supports students in developing their own emotional literacy through a delivery that is appropriate to the individual and at an differentiated pace. Activities will be focused on addressing learning objectives and developing key identified skills.

Through the Social and Emotional area of study students will work closely with the staff teams who become attuned to an individual’s method of communication. This will continue to develop throughout the students’ school life. The curriculum will be delivered through a variety of methods such as, but not exclusively, TAC PAC, Music Interaction and Songs of Interaction to develop social interaction.

As well as working within their class groups, students also have opportunities to develop their socio-emotional skills with peers from other settings. These experiences enable them to develop positive and meaningful relationships with others. The sessions can be discrete, such as a lesson a week or as part of non-timetabled times such as dinner time or assembly.

Our community visits are important to our school community and to the community around us. Visits to the local community provide our students an opportunity to use and develop their skills in a variety of social situations such as visiting local shops or visiting the cafe for a drink.

We understand self care to be focusing on eating and drinking, hygiene routines, medical interventions and living a healthy lifestyle. We aim to support students to become as independent as possible during these times with privacy and respect being of paramount importance. We recognise the importance of knowing and having a positive relationship with students due to the close personal contact that is part of these routines. Opportunities need to be given and responses respected in relation of students expressing their choices, likes and dislikes.
Aims

1. To develop student confidence and self-belief
   1.1. To demonstrate comfort and security through being happy and calm.
   1.2. To demonstrate likes and dislikes throughout the day
   1.3. To make choices to influence the environment around them
   1.4. To enjoy activities and communicate their enjoyment

2. To enable students to build effective relationships
   2.1. To be aware of people around them
   2.2. To respond positively to interaction with familiar people
   2.3. To attract and maintain attention
   2.4. To establish the conventions of group activities

3. To develop strength of, and belonging to, our community
   3.1. To show awareness of different environments
   3.2. To demonstrate likes and dislikes for different environments
   3.3. To anticipate going to a specific environment
   3.4. To respond to interesting stimuli in the environment

4. To develop self-care awareness and skills
   4.1. To show awareness of, anticipate and actively co-operate with self-care routines
   4.2. To develop eating and drinking skills and enjoyment
   4.3. To accept and co-operate with medical and artificial feeding routines
   4.4. To experience ‘Healthy Choices’ within daily routines
3.3. Cognition and thinking

This developmental area linked to National Curriculum subjects; Maths, Science, ICT, History, Geography, RE, Music, Art and Design, Design and Technology.

Children and young people with CLDD learn like any other child about the world around them by establishing key concepts through play and exploration. Pupils at a very early stage of development need lots of support to explore and interpret their environment because they have difficulties to independently access and experience the world around them and make sense of it.

When developing the students’ cognitive skills it is paramount that they have a wide range of opportunities to improve their sensory skills. Developing their awareness and ability to respond to different stimuli that they receive through sight, hearing, touch, taste, balance and movement (vestibular sense) or muscle and joint sense (proprioceptive sense) we enhance their further understanding and experience of the world.

Skills such as ‘cause and effect’ or ‘turn taking’ may take a long time to develop. Pupils may have limited short-term memories and may need the opportunity to encounter events many times before they become familiar. This will also include constant repetition of skills and concepts but also a great deal of support to generalise learning in new situations. A key element to this work will be to assist the pupils to establish routines to ensure they feel secure in their learning and the environment. Once pupils are secure with their routines we challenge them with variations and the introduction of new experiences, exploring new people and places. We would also hope by exposing pupils to larger group activities, they will build and develop a sense of their wider community. Importantly we want to provide pupils with the building blocks for future learning and skills.

Our curriculum focuses on supporting students to understand the structures and routines of their day. This allows them to begin to be aware of their immediate environment and explore objects and their surroundings. Once young people are comfortable and happy within their environment we hope to build their trust in others and the wider community.

According to “Routes for Learning” and “Quest for Learning” there are seven key points in a child’s development. They are called key milestones. The seven milestones represent the key learning priorities of early cognitive development and social interaction that are integrated through communication. When assessing students’ progress the seven milestones provide us with an appropriate context of early development. Appendix M introduces links between seven milestones and P-levels.

The seven milestones of development are:

1. Noticing stimuli
   - learner becomes aware of the stimuli
2. Responding consistently to one stimulus
   - learner responds to a stimulus reliably
3. Contingency responding
   - learner demonstrates an ability to associate cause and effect
4. Contingency awareness
   - learner uses the same action to receive a different effect
5. Object permanence
   - learner responds to the object which has moved from the field of attention
6. Selecting from two or more items
   - learner chooses between two items
7. Exerting autonomy in a variety of contexts
   - learner initiates an action to achieve a desired result in a variety of contexts

This programme of learning outlines the curriculum that enables pupils
   - to develop their senses
   - to develop a sense of security of people and places
   - to develop a sense of signifiers, object and sensory cues for sessions, people and places
   - to develop a sense of the importance of consistent routines and remember the steps which are important to themselves
   - to respond to the stimuli presented by the physical world (people, objects, activities)
   - to explore objects, material and substances
   - to exercise control (objects, materials)
   - to develop their understanding of time (sequence, patterns)
   - to develop sense of self in different environments

Aims
1. Develop awareness
   1.1. Awareness of the stimuli around them
   1.2. Ability to attend to stimuli
   1.3. Interest in objects and materials
   1.4. Responds to other people
   1.5. Responds to the group

2. Develop exploration
   2.1. Explore objects and materials
   2.2. Locate objects and materials
   2.3. Manipulate objects and materials
   2.4. Awareness of and interest in changes in objects and materials
   2.5. Ability to share a focus of interest with an adult

3. Develop control
   3.1. Ability to affect objects and materials
   3.2. Ability to relate objects and materials
   3.3. Control of objects and materials
   3.4. Understanding of cause and effect

4. Develop sense of time, sequence and pattern
   4.1. Awareness of change
   4.2. Awareness of structure of activity
   4.3. To take part in activity
   4.4. Understanding of the structure of activities
   4.5. Recognises the associations between objects
   4.6. Spatial awareness
   4.7. Discrimination through vision, touch or hearing
5. Develop sense of self in different environments
   5.1. Awareness of their immediate environment
   5.2. Responds to familiar landmarks or cues
   5.3. Develop awareness of routes
   5.4. Responds to the school community
   5.5. Responds to the local community
   5.6. To be able to explore the environment
3.4. Orientation, motor and mobility

This developmental area is linked to National Curriculum subject; Physical Education

‘Movement is the foundation on which all learning is built’ Van Diijk

For children who have not developed speech or sign, communication is most effective through movement. Physical control gives children a degree of independence, allowing them to access objects, places and activities. Students are assisted to join in with play, leisure and learning activities and to participate in social and self-care activities. Children who are able to maintain and change position are healthier, more comfortable and therefore more likely to learn.

For pupils working at the earliest levels the immediate priorities are to develop body awareness and physical control and to establish which positions are most physically comfortable for them. Physical contact needs to develop from a process that maybe stressful to one that is comforting and secure. All staff aim to make physical contact as positive an experience as possible by moving at an appropriate pace, handling pupils gently and with confidence.

We support pupils to develop:
- Physical control
- Mobility
- Orientation
- Enjoyment of physical activities

To achieve maximum independent movement students have to develop
- **Orientation**, defined as, an awareness of space and understanding of the situation of the body within it. The development of the proprioceptive and vestibular senses.
- **Mobility**, defined as, the ability to move oneself without coming to any harm.

We also support the choices that lead to **healthier lifestyles**.
We encourage this for example through
- Movement and physiotherapy programmes
- Swimming and hydrotherapy
- Physical education
- Positioning of students
- Encouraging movement to communicate
- Body signing

We work alongside and in partnership with students, parents, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and other related professionals. We pay due consideration to safe moving and handling practices.

Through the piloting of this curriculum we have identified a group of students who work well through this developmental curriculum but who have motor skills that exceed our highest level of P3. Therefore we have decided to include in the developmental steps example (appendix N) further targets within the P-scales 5-6. This will enable this group of students to continue following the CLDD curriculum whilst being able to track their progression past P3.
Aims

1. Developing and Maintaining Control and Mobility

To enable pupils to:

1.1 Experience and tolerate a range of physical positions
1.2 Maintain flexibility
1.3 Develop awareness of physical positioning and movement
1.4 Develop head control
1.5 Develop awareness of different parts of their own body
1.6 Move co-actively with an adult
1.7 Increase range of intentional movements
1.8 Develop communication through intentional movement
1.9 Use and develop physical control in a variety of learning contexts
1.10 Sit safely with increasing independence
1.11 Move safely from place to place

2. Enjoying Physical Activities

To enable pupils to:

2.1 Enjoy activities through passive or supported movements
2.2 Participate more independently in physical activities
2.3 Make choices between and within physical activities
2.4 Access appropriate leisure activities

3. Practising a Healthy Lifestyle

To enable pupils to:

3.1 Experience and tolerate options which promote better health
3.2 Participate more independently in making healthier choices
3.3 Enjoy activities outside the classroom
3.4 Maintain a healthy lifestyle by tolerating positional programme
3.5. Expressive Arts

This developmental area is linked to National Curriculum subjects; History, Geography, R.E. Music, Art and Design, Design and Technology.

At Birkett House expressive art is understood to be a major vehicle for students’ sensory and cognitive development. Expressive art is a personal, learning and thinking skill which links to the whole curriculum. The inspiration and power of the arts play a vital role in enabling our children and young people to enhance their creative talent and develop their artistic skills.

By engaging in experiences within the expressive arts, children and young people will recognise and represent feelings and emotions, both their own and those of others. The expressive arts play a central role in shaping our sense of our personal, social and cultural identity. Learning in the expressive arts also plays an important role in supporting children and young people to recognise and value the variety and vitality of culture locally, nationally and globally.

Learning through and about the expressive arts enable children and young people to:
- be creative and express themselves in different ways
- experience enjoyment and contribute to other people’s enjoyment through creative and expressive performance and presentation
- develop important skills, both those specific to the expressive arts and those which are transferable

The expressive arts are rich and stimulating, with the capacity to engage and fascinate learners of all ages, interests and levels of skill and achievement. Therefore Birkett House School seeks opportunities within our own teaching approaches for interdisciplinary learning and to foster partnerships with professional arts companies, creative adults and cultural organisations.

Our framework then begins with experiences and outcomes for presentation and performance across the expressive arts, followed by the experiences and outcomes in:
- art and design
- music
- dance and drama

Art and design, dance, drama and music provide opportunities for students to express themselves or respond to other people without using formal language. Through creative activities students have opportunities to develop all their senses, communication and their cognitive, social, emotional, motor skills. Students can also enjoy positive forms of self-occupation that can lead to the development of enjoyable leisure activities.

Pupils work coactively with an adult to explore musical sounds and different creative materials that provide positive and exciting experiences for them. Later, as pupils become more independent, they learn to control tools, instruments and media to influence the outcome and to repeat effects which they find interesting. They also learn to work as part of a group to produce music, dance and drama and to work within more defined contexts to produce pieces of art. Appropriate technology can be used to enable pupils to be more independent, particularly in producing and playing music.
Aims

1. Creating art and design
   1.1. Explore creative materials
   1.2. Create an ‘end product’ through interactions with an adult
   1.3. Use a range of tools and media to create different effects

2. Enjoying music
   2.1. Listen and respond to music
   2.2. Interact with an adult via music
   2.3. Share the experience of making music as part of a group
   2.4. Use music for self-occupation

3. Responding to dance and drama
   3.1. Experience dance and drama productions
   3.3. Interact with others via drama and dance
4. Planning and Assessment

4.1. General

The planning of teaching and learning for students who follow a Developmental Curriculum / CLDD Curriculum abides by the school policies for Special School, Planning, Teaching and Learning, Monitoring and Total Communication. These documents can be found on Birkett House VLE and they are regularly updated.

As an appendix there are the following templates and examples of planning and recording students’ progress;

- Example of medium term plan for (Appendix B)
- Template of implementation strategy (Appendix C)
- Example of implementation strategy (Appendix D)
- Baseline recording Sheet (Appendix E)
- Template of CLDD IEP (Appendix F)
- Example of CLDD IEP (Appendix G)
- IEP tracking sheet (Appendix H)
- Examples of short term plans, lesson plans (Appendix Ia, Ib and Appendix J)
- Example of timetable for CLDD group (Appendix K)
- Template of annual curriculum report (Appendix L)

This curriculum document is accompanied by the following planning and assessment tools;

- Additional resource: Quest For Learning (GfL) Guidance and Assessment material
- Additional resource: Quest map
- Additional resource: QfL Assessment Maps 1-5
- Appendix M. Quest for learning and P –scale MAP
- Appendix N. Examples of developmental steps

Assessment of students’ progress in their learning can be summarised into these four categories;

- providing information about pupils progress, achievements and attainment
- monitoring pupils understanding
- informing future planning
- to enable the evaluation of the provision and give information for whole school improvement

Assessment for learning; Formative assessment starts with a retrospective view but is largely prospective. It is intended to improve learning rather than prove it. Formative assessment is about helping the learner to map their ‘next steps’ for their own learning.

Assessment of learning; Summative assessment is retrospective, looking back over the learning that has happened. It is intended to provide a judgement on performance at given points in time. Summative assessment is about making a judgement on behalf of the learner.

Students and parents receive an Annual Report and Annual Review Report over the course of academic year.
**BSquared**
Is an assessment tool to meet the statutory requirement to assess students’ progress at P-scales. It gives us data that we can use for assessing students’ attainment at the end of a key stage. BSquared assessment is a summative assessment. BSquared assessment is done several times during the academic year. At the end of academic year the summative information is used to set individual progress targets within the key stages in line with the government’s Progression Guidelines.

**Early Years Foundation Stage Profile**
Formal assessment is recorded at the end of the Foundation Stage. The evidence of this is gathered in line with current government policies. This can be observation, multimedia, photographs or annotated copies of students’ work.

**Accreditation**
All our KS4 and 16+ students have as a part of their curriculum an opportunity to learn from accredited studies. Their progress will be assessed externally. Students have an assessment file that comprises of assessment documentation and annotated copies of their work.

**Quest for Learning**
Is an assessment tool that was developed in Northern Ireland CCEA (The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment). It is mainly based on Routes for Learning which is an assessment material developed by the Welsh Department for Education (2006). The Quest for Learning assessment contains non-statutory assessment materials and guidance. This material is an assessment tool and not the curriculum.

It gives us detailed information about the learners that we can use when planning their teaching and learning. Quest for Learning supports both summative and formative assessment. Assessment maps provide detailed information about students’ lateral progress. Students have an assessment file that comprises of assessment maps and other evidence. This can be observation, multimedia, photographs or annotated copies of students’ work.

The QfL is an additional tool for us to assess students’ progress and plan their IEP targets. All students have in their assessment file a QfL map for each programme of learning. It is necessary that the teacher and the class team familiarise themselves with the definition for key milestones. The team uses QfL assessment maps as a tool to gather evidence from students’ lateral progression. Any relevant evidence needs to be added to the area of learning it represents for example by using postage notes or photos.

QfL is not part of Birkett House’s documentation. We use Northern Ireland ‘Guidance and Information material’ and assessment maps to record and evidence students’ lateral progression, to plan their learning (IEPs) and gather information about the learners.

**4.2. Medium term plans**
When determining the medium term curriculum plan for CLDD students the teacher needs to familiarise themselves with Birkett House medium term maps for a particular key stage. To ensure a broad, balanced and age appropriate curriculum the teacher uses the key stage schemes of work as a resource from which they take ideas for developmental curriculum programmes of learning. Programmes of learning are the curriculum content that the teacher then delivers in a rich and varied way.
Planning steps
1. Familiarize with BHS curriculum maps
2. Research schemes of work/topics
3. Plan how to link the topics to the activities
4. Ensure that you have a wide range of activities that give the students many opportunities to develop their skills in different areas of learning
5. Over the academic year you can change the balance of different curriculum areas
6. Make conscious decisions to offer a wide range of different learning opportunities

When planning for a CLDD group
- in your medium term planning document clarify links to BHS curriculum map
- in your medium term planning document give the reason why you have chosen a particular activity for this learning area: explain the overall focus of the learning for all the students
- it is useful to write an implementation strategy for your CLDD students
See templates and examples in appendices D and E

When planning for a mixed ability group
- you do not need to differentiate the medium term planning for CLDD students from the rest of the group
- make explicit which area of learning in the CLDD curriculum is linked to subjects by writing an implementation strategy for your CLDD students
See example in appendix B

4.3. Short term plans, lesson plans
Teachers can use either individual lesson plans or a module format, depending on the activity within the programme of learning.

The use of a modular plan does not mean that the lesson plan stays the same for a period of time. Although CLDD students’ learning benefits from repetition over a longer period of time it is important to amend the original plan as often as needed to maximise students’ learning.

Termly timetables need to be written in an informative way (see appendix K). CLDD students’ timetables are always individual comprising of lessons, therapies and postural management sessions. The timetable does not include breaks; this emphasises our vision that every opportunity should be considered as a learning opportunity. During the day students have time to learn and refresh. Our informative timetable provides information about curriculum topics during the term.
See examples of lesson plans in appendixes la., lb. and J

How to link IEPs to the lesson planning
- a exemplary practice in planning is that the teacher starts their lesson planning based on a good understanding of the students’ IEP targets
- the activities and delivery needs to be planned so that it focuses on students’ individual learning objectives
- during the sessions student’s learning is supported to achieve all of his/her IEP targets: however planning, delivery and support can be more focused when the teacher makes a professional choice to focus on one particular target
- recalling IEP targets at the beginning of the session is an integral part of your lesson plan. This ensures that the support staff are familiar with the student’s IEP target for effective learning support.
- at this stage it is important to avoid unnecessary adult talk about the targets; familiarizing the target can happen by scanning the IEP form, given a separate small copy of the targets that the student is expected to work towards or by using IWB.
- during the plenary the feedback needs to be about the learning rather than what the students enjoyed.
- keep the feedback positive and focused on the targets students have been working on.
- IEP tracking sheets need to be filled immediately after the session.

4.4. Planning of Individual Educational Plans, IEPs

An IEP comprises of targets for all five programmes of the curriculum learning areas. The targets are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time bound) and clearly focused on students’ individual learning needs. Targets are set for 8 weeks and continuously assessed. There should be 1-2 targets set and not more than 2 for each area of learning (curriculum areas). Individual educational plans and their monitoring sheets are readily available in a student’s file.

The IEP is the assessment document for all programmes of learning. The teacher identifies in their lesson plan the specific targets that students are working at. At the end of each session the staff records on students’ IEPs their progress. It is possible that the student demonstrates significant progress in a different area than the lesson focus. All students’ progress needs to be recorded on the correct IEP tracking sheet through their school day. The person who has supported the student completes the tracking sheet. See templates and examples in appendixes F and G.

- there is a minimum of one IEP target for each curriculum area
- IEP targets can cross link to the students’ physiotherapy, VI, communication targets
- If the student has IBP the behaviour target is also written in their IEP
- The student works within a particular target for one term (8-12 weeks)
- If necessary targets can be changed more often
- All the targets are cross curriculum targets; the student needs to be given opportunities to work towards all the targets every day

IEP planning and tracking - steps

1. Assessing student’s developmental level
   - the first week of term is given to assess student’s developmental level
   - recalling scruffy achievements enable us to observe students’ skills closely and verify the judgement of their developmental level: see appendix E
   - this enables us to verify the milestone the student has achieved and the milestone he/she is working towards e.g. student’s developmental level
   - this process helps us to plan relevant and need based IEP targets

2. Scrutinise student’s developmental level
   - Use B-squared, Quest map and ‘Quest for Learning and P-Scale Map’ as an assessment tool to assess student’s developmental level: see appendix M
   - The key milestone is the next developmental milestone that the student is likely to achieve
   - Using her/his professional judgement the teacher chooses two milestones (cognition and social) ‘stepping stones’ to the next key milestone to be achieved (write the date on the quest map)
   - this enables us to decide the specific focus for IEPs that will support students’ cognitive, social and communicative development towards the next key milestone

3. Plan specific IEP target for each area of learning
   - we have included some examples of students’ learning outcomes after each area of learning
   - examples of developmental steps in each curriculum area can be found in appendix N
   - you can colour code the curriculum target to link to the cognition and social milestones
- note that students can work within key milestones for a long time and their progress is not necessarily linear; therefore milestones can be revisited several times if necessary
- IEP targets are recorded on 'IEP accumulation' sheet

4. Tracking
- ‘PARTY’ week at the beginning of each term helps us to verify assessment of key milestones (use Baseline Recording Sheet, Appendix E)
- scruffy target recording needs to happen whenever the student demonstrates learning during a situation
- IEP tracking is completed after each lesson and activity or when relevant through the school day
- Record of Learning file contains the evidence of the student’s learning (IEPs, tracking sheets kept until the annual report, Quest maps and annotated evidence sheets of students’ learning)

5. Programmes
- Individual students might have specific input from external professionals such as VI-teacher, physio – or occupational therapist or speech and language therapist
- Other professionals have set targets and planned a programme to support students to progress in a particular area of development or skill
- These programmes are delivered at school in consultation with the specialist
- At school we record how often the programme is delivered and the student’s progress. These programmes and their monitoring sheets are readily available in the classrooms in student’s file.

When recording students’ progress it is paramount to
- share our recorded information with parents and concerned professionals
- ask parental permission to collect video and photographic evidence
- save students’ IEP plans, individual programmes and Quest for Learning maps electronically on the server in the student’s individual progress file
- base recording on professional judgement and our school policies celebrate and record any success
- recognize the individuality and dignity of a learner
- use multiple ways to record assessment
- record any significant situational evidence of learning

4.5. Curriculum Reports

Curriculum reports are informative documents of the student’s progress over the academic year providing an overview and summary of student’s progress in different curriculum areas. Therefore it is not recommended to give a list of IEP targets in the curriculum report; appendix L.

The teacher uses IEP tracking sheets to inform about the lateral progression of student’s learning

**Place:** location, sensory factors, positioning

**Activity:** session, resources, stimuli, what adults/other students did

**Response:** what the pupil did

**Time:** place, time of day, duration, date

**You:** how the student responded to different adults
5. Teaching and learning guidelines

5.1. Extending students’ learning experiences

‘Quest for learning’ states that creating an effective learning environment is fundamental for being able to systematically extend and change students learning experiences;

1. Students need to feel secure with the people around them
   - They must feel safe and be positioned comfortably and their physical needs be met
   - Consider the learners immediate surroundings in order to avoid distraction
   - Be aware of physical factors that can affect learners readiness to learn (hunger, thirst, would the student need some time after gastro feed etc)

2. The best times for learning are during quiet and active alert stages
   - At times of very high or low arousal, learning will not be effective
   - Both internal factors (tiredness, hunger etc) and external factors (noise, temperature etc) have an impact on student’s learning
   - Learners might need support to become calmer such as rocking or warmth or they might need to be aroused by a strong stimuli such as a cooler temperature
   - Learners need strategies for regulating their own position for example bringing their hands into their mid-line or changing posture

3. Learners ability to attend can change at different times of the day

4. Optimum times for learning might need to be planned around students’ feeding, care and physio routines
   - Medication can cause side effects that are detrimental to learning

5. Use simple communication strategies at the appropriate level to avoid overloading the learner
   - Use different environments, such as MSI or soft play, with care and a clear focus on purpose and complexity of activities

6. Carefully assess learners to determine the preferred or dominant sensory channel
   - Pupils need specific support to develop their senses
   - Some students have sensory impairment(s) and they need a special programme to either maintain or develop their ability to use a specific sense Often students with a sensory impairment rely on their stronger senses and are not motivated to use less developed ones
   - They might be over sensitive (for example “tactile defensive”) or intolerant of a particular sensation
   - Students with autism may be vulnerable to over stimulation and ‘block out’ some sensory information to protect themselves
   - Systematically developing students’ skills to search for stimuli and to be able to discriminate between them is important as this enhances further learning

7. Students need immediate and consistent feedback about their responses
   - Students are vulnerable to develop “learned passiveness / helplessness” because they have lack of control of their lives and they have limited feedback on their activities. This might lead them to learn stereotypical behaviour.
   - Be consistent, active and positive when giving students feedback about their responses
   - Observe and react appropriately to responses that may indicate rejection
8. Observe early affective, spiritual and emotional development
   - Students responses to naturally occurring stimuli need to be enhanced for their learning
   - Sudden ‘awe and wonder’ responses tell us what motivates the student
   - Providing opportunities and time to explore different environments

9. Learners must be emotionally ready to learn
   - Any issues at home, at school or at respite care can affect their ability to respond

5.2. Teaching strategies

Structure
For learners with complex needs life can become a fragmented series of events with little order. Without structure, learners may never develop anticipation and memory. Therefore it is essential to provide a simple, structured environment with ordered activities and routines.

Turn Taking
Turn taking is a challenging skill for students with complex needs. Students need to have opportunities to practise turn taking with other people and in different social situations. They will be more likely to generalise a skill and become more independent with it.

Turn taking is about the start and finish of your part in activity or conversation, so that someone else can engage with you. The same principle applies to students with complex needs when they are turn taking with objects. The following can help students to develop the skill;

   - make each turn very short and as the learner builds up confidence they will make a response, start to increase the length of time that each turn takes
   - use short, concise and repetitive language
   - give verbal reminders, along with a gentle physical reminder, if necessary
   - give lots of opportunities to practise turn taking
   - use one-to-one games with adults, small group turn taking activities with peers and adults and cause and effect switch computer activities/games

Waiting Time, Pausing, Anticipation
Learners with complex needs are often slow to respond to stimuli. Waiting time is needed to process the information. Giving students adequate time and space to respond and process information enables them to share control and have equal interactions.

By building pauses into familiar routines and activities we create opportunities for learners to ‘fill the gap’ e.g. to make a response that indicates their wish for a desirable activity to continue. The idea is to give them an opening to make a communicative response.

It is important to recognise the potential for communication in every day tasks.
Imitation

Imitation is an ability to copy the actions, sounds, words or facial expressions of another person. This ability occurs very early in life, from the simplest pre-verbal communication and is refined over the time. Imitation involves the ability to pay attention to something that another person is doing or saying then trying and gradually learning to copy the action, sound or word.

Imitation skills develop in steps. We can support students to develop imitation skills by;
- using facial expressions such as smiling and frowning
- imitating sounds or facial expressions that a student makes
- making speech sounds changing pitch and volume of our voice
- making different sounds along with the associated words
- adjusting our words to be on a student's level
- talking in single words and short phrases
- demonstrating how to participate in classroom activities e.g. model or use musical instruments, roll a ball etc. co-actively
- emphasise imitation during play and activities

Hand under hand – principle

Students need to have opportunities to lead in all actives. Hand under hand means that the student’s hand is on the top of your hand when exploring, manipulating or using materials and equipment.

Hand under hand – principle
- often gives students a better autonomy to express their likes and dislikes
- encourages student’s activity
- allows students to lead

Supporting student’s exploratory procedures such as the hand’s lateral motion, pressure, static and enclosure position give students an increasing amount of information about the world around them.

Recognize students’ individual learning styles

Learning styles are simply different approaches or ways of learning.

Visual Learners: Learn through seeing
- These learners need to see the teacher’s body language and facial expression to fully understand the content of a lesson. They prefer to sit near the front of the classroom to avoid visual distractions. They may think in pictures and learn best from visual displays.

Auditory Learners: Learn through listening.
- They learn best through verbal lectures, discussions, talking things through and listening to what others have to say. Auditory learners interpret the underlying meaning of speech through listening to tone of voice, pitch, speed and other nuances.

Tactile, Kinaesthetic Learners: Learn through moving, doing and touching
- They learn best through a hands-on approach, actively exploring the physical world around them. They may find it hard to sit still for long periods and may become distracted by their need for activity and exploration.

Students with CLDD are usually tactile, kinaesthetic and auditory learners. Many CLDD students struggle to understand visual messages. The students do need to use all their
sensory channels for learning. It is paramount to assess students’ learning style in order to avoid either overloading students with stimuli or not using their potential for receiving information.

5.3. Multidisciplinary links

Parents

The relationship with the parents/carers of our students is incredibly important as it is for all schools in all areas of education. However for parents of children or young people with Special Educational Needs a good link to school can be more vital due to the vulnerability they feel for their child who may have difficulties communicating how they feel. For a lot of parents certainly of children with CLDD their main concern is that they are happy and well cared for at school. As teachers we understand the importance of this whilst still upholding the fact that we are a school and therefore education is at its core. This attitude may well alter with the introduction of this new curriculum as the areas of learning are more relevant for this group of students and therefore parents will be able to see the importance of their children’s development in these areas.

We communicate with parents daily through home school diary’s and also have an open door policy whereby parents are able to come into school and meet with staff if they need to discuss an issue. The school holds parents evenings each year and these are attended by the teachers and outside agencies such as speech and language therapist, occupational therapist and music therapist so parents are able to get a holistic picture of their child’s progress. Parents will also attend the Annual Review which looks at the student’s development in accordance with their IEP – Individual Education Plan, this will be attended by a member of Senior Management Team and the class teacher and provides an opportunity to discuss any concerns and also review the student’s statement, making amendments if required.

In order to deliver the best provision for our students and their parents we have established successful partnerships with the school nurse team and different therapy services. Therapies and specialist programmes are seen to be an integral part of students’ school days.

School nurse

The school nurse team consists of the school nurse and school nurse assistant. The role of the team is to ensure that healthcare needs of the students are met during the school day. This means for example administration of routine and emergency medication, enteral feeding and respiratory care. The school nurse team also monitors students’ general health and wellbeing.

The school nurse team ensures that designated class teams receive appropriate training enabling them to carry out healthcare procedures with the minimum disruption to teaching. The nurse team liaise closely with both educational and health professionals ensuring that students receive the care that they need whilst at school.

Music therapy

Music therapy offers an opportunity for complex needs students to take part in a therapeutic relationship in which emotions and difficult feelings are expressed and explored. Using music as the tool for communication and expression, students can learn skills such as turn-taking and also develop motor or vocal skills. By sharing and reflecting on the free musical improvisations, students can increase the strengthened sense of self and expand their skills of relating to others either in a 1:1 or small group situation.
Speech therapy
The Speech and Language Therapy Team at Birkett House School work with children to enable, develop and maintain their speech, language and communication skills. They work with classroom staff and children, either in groups or on an individual basis, as per the children's needs.

Children with complex needs benefit from a multi-sensory approach to learning and communicating and may use a range of alternative and augmentative forms of communication, including objects, body signing and switch use.

Another role of the Speech and Language Therapist is to assess and monitor children's eating and drinking needs and provide strategies and support as needed.

When the appropriate strategies have been implemented for an individual child, and their speech, language and communication needs are being met through the School environment, they will be discharged from the Speech and Language Therapy Service.

Physio- and Occupational therapy
The therapy team comprises of visiting Physiotherapist and Occupational Therapists and a Generic Assistant. The generic assistant is a school based therapy support worker.

When possible, pupils are seen in school to provide supporting information for hospital appointments such as orthopaedic consultations or wheelchair services. This minimises disruption to learning and the student is in a familiar environment so is more relaxed. The generic assistant can carry out minor repairs and alterations to equipment. For more major problems the repair service can come to school.

Physiotherapy and Occupational therapy reports are submitted to the Annual Reviews. Transition between educational settings and their therapists is managed smoothly with minimal stress to families and service users.

The generic assistant delivers training, induction and guidance to the class teams about how to use students’ equipment. Therapy programmes are drawn up by qualified physiotherapists and delivered in class teams supported by the generic assistant. This enables monitoring and rigorous assessment of changing needs. The communication between parents, class teams and visiting therapists is maintained in a timely manner.

5.4. Supporting students’ communication

Body signing is a way of communication where adults sign key words on a student's body or together with them. It is particularly important to use body signing consistently whilst moving and handling. Body signing prepares and tells the student what is going to happen and helps him or her be an active participant in a situation. Body signing can be seen as a sensory cue that helps them to distinguish activities and people. Pupils need to be presented with a consistent routine to help them learn to anticipate what is going to happen to them.

Natural cues can be used to increase awareness and let students know that an action or event is about to happen. Such cues might be
- auditory; such as rattling keys for a car journey
- gestural; such as arms outstretched meaning “Would you like to come up?”
- smell; such as entering the dinner hall for lunch
- tactile; such as the feel of “gastro feed box” for food
- visual; taking out swimming bag for s swim session
- routine; such as following the set timetable with objects
- verbal; such as speech/intonation for a person or a course or action
With all cues it is important to communicate in a way that corresponds with learner’s cognitive development. Pictures and symbols are meaningless for students not yet at the symbolic level of understanding.

All routine activities should have a sensory cue of some kind. However it is important to think about the amount of sensory cues that are used with an individual student; having lots of different cues is not helpful.

When using sensory cues and body signs
- Use clear simple speech
- Always use speech as you sign
- Sign only the key words
- Continue to accept and respond to the child’s personal gestures while reinforcing their body signs through their consistent use
- Carry out coactively with the student at the start or finish point on their body
- Minimal intrusion into the student’s personal space
- Simplicity of movement
- Related to the activity it represents or a natural gesture

**Objects of Reference** are objects that have special meanings added to them. The meaning can be concrete (to drink) or abstract (weekdays). Objects of Reference are used to help a person understand what is happening in their environment and convey meaning/information. They are also tools to make choices.

**Guidelines:**
1. **Consistency:** Make sure that instructions are followed when each individual object is presented to the pupil. It is very important to look at each individual OOR plan. For guidance a Power Point presentation and individual videos are available on Birkett House VLE.

2. **Individualisation:** The list of OORs that each student uses will be documented in his/her OOR plan and will be kept in their red files; this plan will be reviewed at the Annual Review. The speech and language therapist prepares the plan.

3. **Timing is important:** Presenting an OOR ‘just before’ an activity supports students’ understanding and over a period of time helps them to learn that each object carries a meaning, this could be an activity an event or a destination.

4. **Destination OOR:** Students should “carry” their OOR to the destination, reinforcing where they are going, the object should be shown at the beginning and the end of the journey.

5. **Everyday OORs are important:** Let the student feel any relevant objects around him/her. Any everyday object can be used as an individual Object of Reference if it has significance to the student. (Must always be documented in OOR plan and discussed with speech therapist.)

6. **Hand under hand:** Let the student feel the objects whilst you are telling them what is going to happen next. When you are supporting the student to explore the objects, please support them with your hand UNDER their hand and not hand over hand.
To use an object of reference, in its purest form, does require a degree of symbolic understanding. Learners must be able to attach significance to an object other than its actual use. However many of our students with complex learning needs who have not attained symbolic understanding may see objects as ‘experiential signifiers’ rather than a object of reference in it purest meaning.

All students have a student profile, a communication passport and Object of Reference plan that summarise student’s communication needs and practice.
5.5. Activities

The following activities are methodological options when planning the teaching and learning for CLDD students;

- Intensive Interaction
- Dance / Music Massage
- Songs for Interaction
- Resonance Board
- Sound About
- TACPAC

Intensive Interaction

Intensive interaction is an approach to developing the pre speech fundamentals of communication for those students still at an early stage of communication development. The approach can be used with students of any age with a range of learning difficulties from students with complex learning difficulties and disabilities (CLDD) to students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

The fundamentals of communication can be characterised as such;

- Learning to give brief attention to another person.
- To share attention with another person.
- Learning to extend that attention, learning to concentrate on another person.
- Developing shared attention into ‘activities’.
- Taking turns in exchanges of behaviour.
- To have fun, to play.
- Using and understanding eye contact.
- Using and understanding facial expression.
- Using and understanding non-verbal communication such as gesture and body language.
- Learning use and understanding of physical contact.
- Learning the use and understanding of vocalisations, having vocalisations become more varied and extensive, then gradually more precise and meaningful.
- It is these skills that are developed through intensive interaction and can be built on to develop positive communication skills.

The approach can be used with students of any age with a range of learning difficulties from students with complex learning difficulties and disabilities (CLDD) to students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). It may be a student who is very ‘difficult to reach’, socially isolated or showing a range of self-stimulatory behaviours and not showing motivation to be with other people.

Equally, the approach is for people who may be highly social and have many successful interaction activities with other people. Yet may still need to develop their further knowledge and ability in areas such as: use and understanding of eye contact and facial expression, turn taking, developing and furthering vocalisations toward the threshold of speech. Some for whom the approach would have meaning may have some speech and language ability, but would still benefit from further learning the ‘fundamentals of communication’. Intensive interaction is based on the scientific research on human communication in the year of life.
What do I need?

‘First and foremost, Intensive Interaction is highly practical. The only equipment needed is a sensitive person to be the interaction partner.’ (Intensive Interaction.co.uk)

Intensive interaction can be done anywhere at any time. It does not need a stimulus free room although some student may find this beneficial. Some students may enjoy using a stimulus such as a toy, fabric or instruments to turn take with but others may not. Primarily intensive interaction is about building a relationship with someone. So use whatever you need to engage the person you are working with.

How does it work and what do we do?

Relax! Intensive interaction is difficult if you are self-conscious. The approach works by developing enjoyable and relaxed interaction exchanges between the adult and student that can gradually progress. As this happens, the fundamentals of communication are rehearsed and learnt in an enjoyable way. A central principle of intensive interaction is that the student leads and directs the interaction with the adult responding to and joining-in with the behaviour or sounds of the student. For example you might copy a student’s sounds, breathing or movements and pause to allow them time to respond. As this interaction develops the adult should change the pitch of their sounds or alter their movements slightly to see if the student changes their reaction. The focus is on exchange of communication which also include pauses and space. Don’t be deterred if the student needs a bit of space. Just wait and try again later. You don’t have to be next to someone to interact with him or her. The interaction can be more effective if you are further away or not look directly at the student. Try different things to see what works and what doesn’t. Remember to record this for other people.

The interactive sessions should be frequent, quite intense, but also fun-filled, playful and enjoyable. Both participants should be at ease with enjoyment as the main motivation. A session could be highly dynamic, with a great deal of vocalisation, sometimes with fun-filled physical contacts. A session could also be peaceful, slow and quiet it depends on the person you are working with. A session may be a 1 minute exchange over the dinner table or a 45 minute intense session in the classroom. Remember you are building a relationship with someone. The experience should be positive and enjoyable for you both. It is not a time to ‘work’ but to develop social and communication skills.

Research has shown that students may need ‘down time’ during an exchange to process the communication and respond. Don’t be discouraged if the person you are working with moves away from you. Give them time to respond to you and after a while move to where they are and re-engage. However if a student moves away or ignores you it may be that they want to finish. By getting to know the students and you will become a better communication partner.

3. How can I record progress?

Although intensive interaction is student led and therefore targets aren’t set, it is beneficial to record what occurred during a session. You can evidence progress made or particularly good interaction exchanges or you can highlight particular skills that could be a next step e.g. turn taking or pauses.
Dance/ Music massage
Dance and music massage use different speeds and intensities linked to different musical tracks.

Music massage works by linking movements to music. It can be rocking to a slow song, tapping arms and leg to an upbeat song, sitting up or lying down. Students are usually paired with an adult and the pair will work 1:1 throughout the activity with the adult doing the tapping etc. Depending on the student you are working with they may want to do it back to you.

What do I need?
Autism Outreach have a set listing of tracks that they use for Dance Massage. However you may want to find your own tracks and develop your own movements for the students you work with.

How can I record progress?
Progress can be recorded through lesson plans or setting personal targets linked to the activity that and are recorded.

Songs for Interaction
Songs for Interaction has been developed through a working partnership between Shiroma De Silva, Music Therapist, Caroline Knight, Speech and Language Therapist and Miranda Brookes, Teacher of Visually Impaired.

Songs for interaction is a CD of music and activities which aims to encourage communication for children and young people with complex needs and a visual impairment. Professionals, parents and carers can use the activities. It provides a framework which can be adapted to reflect the age, abilities and interests of the learner, meeting P Levels attainments at all levels from P1 – 5 encounter, awareness, attention and response, engagement, participation, involvement and gaining skills.

As long as Shiroma De Silva is acknowledged as the musician/composer the CD is available to sequence, share and modify to suit the learner. Suggestions are provided to facilitate and encourage the learner to practise and enrich their communicate skills. Musical ability is not required – just a willingness to share musical experiences with the learner.

A consistent approach, with regular sessions is recommended. This will help the learner develop a feeling of security as the sessions become familiar. It is important to set the environment for the sessions by minimizing distractions in and outside the working space and considering the temperature and lighting.

The learner should be helped to achieve a good, comfortable position to enable them to give their full attention to the activities. Supportive seating or side lyers could be used where appropriate.

The adults should adapt their communication to enable the learner to gain the most from the sessions

- Build in long pauses to allow the learner time to process your input and organize a response
- Make your communication interesting to the learner - use a range of communication including speech, facial expression, intonation, volume, eye contact and touch
- Keep your speech simple and your sentences short
- Use repetition as directed in the CD notes
- Be consistent for example when naming instruments (For example, shakers or maracas?) This is especially important if more than one adult is working with the learner.
- Watch the learner and respond to their responses. Treat their contribution as communicative and give feedback to the learner.
- Remember – you are helping the learner create a dialogue, not a monologue.
- Take a nondirective approach, enabling the learner to become an active participant in the session.

Above all the sessions should be a fun and enjoyable experience for both the adult and the learner.

What do I need?

You will need the Songs of Interaction CD and one of the interaction sets. During the activity each student will need his or her own set of resources.

How can I record progress?

Each song is linked to a set activity such as tracking, anticipation or listening skills. As the music plays the lead adults share the activity with the class and then adults support students, a 1:1 basis. Complete each activity responding to the students own communication and adapting where appropriate to meet the individual needs. You may want to work through the tracks and identify the students favourite songs and only repeat these. You don’t necessarily have to do the whole disk you may want to use only a few of the songs as part of your lesson and repeat as appropriate.

Progress can be recorded through lesson plans or by setting personal targets linked to an activity that is carried over period of time.

**Resonance Boards**

Resonance board activities stimulate communication, learning and self-expression. Resonance board sessions are playful, intuitive and student-led activities and all those who are involved are able to join in at a level that suits them. Nearly all pupils respond to and enjoy the activities, rhythms, songs and music demonstrating engagement and motivation. Resonance board sessions are usually delivered using only the resonance boards, rhythm and voice.

Sessions need to be well structured providing opportunities to anticipate, communicate and listen. Resonance board sessions benefit from repetition, conscious use of silence, rhythm and changes of intensity, tempo and pitch. The nature of the sessions is based on intensive interaction and students’ contributions to the sessions.

How Do You Start Using the Board?

David Brown (2002) advises that a student can be placed alone on the board or he/she can use it with another child or with an adult in any safe, desired, or useful position. Standing and walking on the board barefoot can be fun, as well as sitting and lying down. Some children might enjoy being on their own on the board. For some pupils being placed in an horizontal position on the board can be scary and therefore it is recommended that a towel is spread over the board, so that it acts as a muffler to sounds and vibrations. The towel can be repositioned as the child gets used to the sound and vibro-tactile qualities of the board, so that at first bare feet touch the board, then legs, torso and shoulders, and finally, if the child is happy and interested, you can remove the towel and place their head on the board.

Some children may need days or weeks to complete this process, but others cope with it over the space of half an hour or so. Another idea is to begin with the child lying on the carpet with
only his or her feet on the board. If sensitive feet are a problem you might want to reverse this position or just leave the child’s shoes or socks on. You can place the board on carpet to minimize the resonance or move it to a hard floor surface like linoleum, tiles, or concrete to produce much more dramatic feedback. Sometimes a child in a chair, or in a wheelchair, or standing might like to interact with the board held vertically next to them.

**What Can You Use on the Board?**
You can use resonance boards without any equipment making rhythms and sounds using your hands to tap, scratch, pat etc. the boards. Any toys and equipment can be used on the board depending on availability, safety considerations, and personal preferences.

**What Do You Do with the Board?**
This is where all that hard work pays off and things get exciting! Use your imagination and the sky is the limit! You can work on a range of skills and activities using a board, including math, communication, large motor skills and mobility, fine motor manipulation, use of vision and hearing, tactile and visual search, turn-taking, anticipation, encouraging vocalizations and speech, problem-solving, sequencing, cause and effect, rhythm etc. The special quality of the board is that any movement on its surface will produce an amplified sound and matching vibration, it will vibrate to music or voices aimed at it even if the sound-maker is not in direct contact with the wood.

In particular for students who are deaf-blind the amplified sound coming through the board might be important, but the vibration that accompanies the sounds will have an immense impact if the child is in direct contact with the board’s surface, this might be very motivating for them.

**TacPac**
The name TacPac stands for ‘Tactile Approach to Communication’, it was created by Hilary Wainer. TacPac consists of tactile activities using touch combined with music. There is TacPac One that consists of sets 1, 2, and 3. TacPac Two that consists of sets 4, 5 and 6 and HandyPac.

As identified, TacPac is based on the notion of tactile play. The skin is the largest sensory organ. For a student with complex needs and sensory impairments, touch may be their primary means of contact. TacPac associates stimuli with music, we learn to associate sounds with touch, taste, smell, emotion and people. For students with hearing impairment, they will access the sounds through vibrations, these can be felt across their whole body.

TacPac works as a partnership between 2 people; this would usually be an adult and a student. In TacPac terms, we would refer to the adult as the ‘giving partner’ and the student would be the ‘receiving partner’.

TacPac is an experience that integrates touch, sound, pattern and the interpersonal relationships between partners. The level at which the student experiences TacPac can vary, the RNIB identified levels that can occur during the TacPac process, these are:-

- **Awareness;** becoming aware of a stimulus, in this case, touch or sound.
- **Variety;** the process of differentiation between touch and sound.
- **Pattern;** repetition of single sounds, or sets of sounds or physical patterns. Over time, students can learn to anticipate these patterns.
- **Association;** through repetition, touch and music, stimuli can become associated with certain objects. When repeated students can learn to anticipate and control their responses to these stimuli.
How to use TacPac

- Allow enough time: TacPac takes an hour to set up, play through and complete. It is important not to rush. The session can be shorter than 1 hour, it very much depends on the needs of the students you are teaching.
- Make sure your group will not be interrupted.
- Put out the equipment, making sure there is a set of TacPac resources for each student. Allow each student enough space to be comfortable.
- Before you start TacPac, it is important to find out about your partner. Greet the student you are working with, make eye contact or touch and sing a group hello song.
- Maintain contact with the student during the entire session. Being careful to work along their body, not to jump from place to place.
- It is essential the focus is on the music and touch during the session – therefore, it is absolutely necessary that adults do not talk amongst themselves whilst the session is taking place.
- As each piece of music is played, select the accompanying object and move it across the student’s body. It is necessary to be consistent, i.e. starting at the feet and working up or vice versa – this presentation will allow the student to make sense of patterns and learn to anticipate movement.
- Listen to the music – you will need to identify key elements, such as the beat, rhythm, speed, volume and timbre. You can then match your touch to the student via the stimuli to all or some of the musical elements. The ability to do this effectively makes TacPac sessions successful.
- It would be seen as good practice to deliver a TacPac session using the same set once per week, for 8 – 10 weeks. This will allow students opportunities to develop responses to the session.

TacPac can be used across the Curriculum, for example:
- Cognition: encountering objects, materials and sounds
- Cognition: encounters experiences of up, down, forwards, backwards, right and left
- Mobility: vocal and physical activity produced via touch
- Social: anticipates events
- Emotional: shows pleasure at comfort and displeasure at discomfort

Additional Information; what is not TacPac"

Within school, you may see Class teams using different objects to different music; they shouldn’t refer to this as TacPac. The official TacPac resources within school are those listed in paragraph 1.

Swimming hydrotherapy

Swimming with CLDD students can be divided into four different programmes, which are delivered in the swimming pool.

1. Physiotherapy
This can be carried out in the swimming pool and the targets are set by the Physiotherapist. The Physiotherapist or Physio assistant models exercises before the staff use them with students. The water enables the students to move more freely and work through their exercises whilst being supported by the water.
2. Swimming
When teaching swimming we refer to the Halliwick concept that is a therapeutic approach to swimming. Halliwick is based on principles of hydrostatics, hydrodynamics and kinesiology. It is a holistic approach, bringing together knowledge about: the water and the body; teaching and learning; motivation; challenge; activities, games and music; group dynamics; disability equality issues and swimming strokes. (2002 Halliwick AST)

The early stages of the Halliwick Concept stages 1-2 talks about the relaxation of the students, moving onto disengagement and becoming independent in the water, these would be the main stages that students with CLDD would work towards. Some students may work towards the next stage that encompasses rotation in the pool and then towards intentional movements.

The Halliwick concept is based on the fact that no floatation aids are used. However CLDD students at Birkett House School use floatation aids. They are often vital for safety and/or to access this activity. Therefore Birkett House School do not strictly adhere the Halliwick concept.

Floatation aids enable some CLDD students to swim independently, moving around the pool under supervision but without being held. This is a very important aspect of swimming for a student who cannot usually move unaided outside the pool. This type of independence can increase a student’s self-esteem as well as stretch and exercise muscles that would usually be unused.

3. Water Mobility
The use of movements in the water that the student is unable to do out of water. The weightlessness that the students feel in the water can enable them to move more freely and sometimes with more intent. Walking for instance can be done with little support in the pool when a walking frame is needed outside the pool. Standing is another skill that can be practised whilst in the pool.

4. Hydrotherapy
The use of a swimming pool with CLDD students provides relaxation and the ability to be weightless and supported by water, which enables students to have some independence and feel free. Hydrotherapy may strengthen and widen their intentional movements.

Relaxation, feeling of weightlessness and the freedom of movement can be achieved through the four uses of hydrotherapy. Imaginative, fun and developmental sessions can take place in the swimming pool. This can range from a sensory story to developing reaching and grasping skills. We should try to minimise disorientation that can be caused by the time taken for moving and handling, changing and unnecessary waiting. The length of the time the students stay in the pool is individual.

Equipment available:
In Birkett House swimming pool there are two hoists that run directly from the changing beds to the pool so students can be transferred straight into the water. There are showers available over the changing beds so students can be showered after swimming. There are a number of different floats including neck supports and noodle floats that can be used in a number of ways. Also there is a range of floating toys that the students can hold, throw or reach and grasp. The pool is also fitted with a large switchboard, which operates different light and music sequences to enhance the atmosphere in the pool area.
5.6. Environment

Multi sensory environments are used successfully at Birkett House to promote learning in alternative and appropriate ways. It is important to enable students use all their senses for learning. Stimulation that focuses and targets each sense is a valuable method to encourage exploration and learning. These multi sensory spaces offer light, auditory and physical sensory stimulation and this provides opportunities to explore engage and connect with the world around us. At Birkett House we have a fully equipped multi sensory room, a soft play area, a discreet sensory garden, classroom spaces with blinds and lighting for small group work and sensory outdoor learning play area.

MSI

The Multi sensory Integration room is designed to facilitate looking, gazing, tracking and focussing on a variety of lights in a relaxed calm environment with minimal distraction.

We have moving and stationary light that is projected around the space for students to follow. Bubble tubes, mirrors, fibre optic and ultra violet light, scanners and picture wheels can be used to attract gaze. These would not all be used at once, but put on separately to focus on specific activities avoiding over stimulation. We use careful judgement about how many of the multi sensory stimuli are used simultaneously.

Students have individual VI programmes devised with their VI teachers, these are practised and monitored for progress, and then updated. The exact specifications using lights are followed to enable students to repeatedly find and trace light in a darkened area. Students are encouraged to move freely, come out of their chairs or work in a dark area where we are fully aware of their best field of vision. The MSI space is also invaluable to promote focused listening skills.

Many curriculum-learning outcomes can be achieved in the multi sensory room.

A variety of lessons are taught in the MSI room focusing on
- Communication and language: looking and listening skills
- Mobility and movement: movement and physical stretching programmes to develop fine and gross motor skills
- Cognition: exploration and searching
- Creativity: listening and turn taking
- Drama: props and sound for story engagement and anticipation
- Social and Emotional: stimulate and involve social interaction

How to use MSI; It’s a learning opportunity!
- Use the OOR or reference to inform the student where we are going.
- Arriving at the MSI room and leaving to a consistent musical cue may be beneficial.
- Move to your usual working area.
- Make sure your group will not be interrupted.
- Before you start greet each other, introduce the lesson and say what we will be learning today.
- Use body signing.
- Enable the student to locate the stimuli.
- Make sure the student is comfortable for optimum learning.
- Focus on one stimulus at a time.
- Minimise visual and aural clutter.
- Staff to give the right level of stimulation for each individual.
- Adults who know the students and their key targets well.
- Lots of repetition and a slow pace, allow enough time.
- Use concrete objects and materials if accompanying stories.
- Be very sensitive to reactions and responses so students “voices” can be heard.
- Finish session clearly with body signing.
- Use OOR or situational cues for return to class.
- Annotate VI programme and update if appropriate.

**Soft Play**

Our soft playroom is designed to cater for students requiring physical play and interactive experiences. This is a rewarding softly furnished visual space with an emphasis on fun and engagement where gross and fine motor skills are focussed on. The space is less neutral than MSI and is defined into a soft lying rolling space, a shallow ball pool, and clambering areas of varying heights.

Staff may use soft play for intensive interaction purposes, calling, hiding and engaging in playful exchange. Light, soft cushioning, large soft structures and switch operated sounds are used to facilitate movement, exploration and engagement with adults and peers. This is a lively area in which students may fully access different surfaces and planes for repositioning, body awareness and motor programmes. Our physio programmes are practised in this room and individual targets are worked on and developed in this room.

A variety of lessons are taught in the soft play room, for example

- Communication and language: attention and intensive interaction
- Cognition: shape, space and measure, using and applying
- Creativity: engaging in the world around us and play skills
- Cognition, social and emotional: working with peers and exploring environments
- Movement and mobility: body awareness and physio programmes
- Social and emotional: free time for relaxation, choice making and independence
- ICT: activating the large interactive switch toys
- Creativity: both MSI and soft play are equipped with CD players and speakers

**How to use Soft Play? It’s a learning opportunity!**

- Use the OOR to inform a student where we are going.
- Arriving at Soft play and leaving to a consistent musical cue may be beneficial.
- Some students really enjoy being sociable and can cope with a busy room, consider if the student is gaining something from this environment, if not could a more positive experience be provided else where
- Students to come out of chairs and positioned using moving and handling guidelines.
- Make comfortable and safe adhering to individual positioning guidelines.
- Greet the student and tell them what we will be learning. Use body signing.
- Focus on one stimulus at a time
- Use the soft environment for movement and stretches.
- Lots of repetition and opportunities for movement. Persist in making simple fun actions for engagement.
- Use pauses waiting for the student to ask for more.
- Make things move deliberately with gross movement, i.e. knock down a brick. Praise movement and attention.
- Make things move with fine motor movement.
- Adults who know the students and their targets well.
- Press switches to cause something to happen.
- Learn to explore and move around their world, they will need support for this and may reach for motivating objects.
- Finish session clearly with body signing.
- Use OOR or situational cues for return to class.
- Reseat in chairs adhering to moving and handling procedures.
- Annotate physio programmes and update if appropriate.

Classroom Environments

We create learning environments in the classroom for individual and small group work. Indoor multi sensory environments are made in the classrooms to create an interesting and stimulating space for learning. These “semi- permanent environments” may be stationary for some time to promote a curricular theme or quickly fashioned to focus attention in an intimate space with novel resources, sounds or lighting. A space is defined by using a screen, umbrella, material, or physical change. This encourages looking, listening and exploration of the senses. It may eliminate other possible distractions, create a feeling of intrigue and stimulate different targeted sensory channels.

Ideally students may have their own personalised environment for optimal learning. When a student has very little vision a darkened area will enable objects to be specifically lit and is free from extraneous distractions.

Outdoor Learning Environment and Sensory Garden

These areas are invaluable as they provide therapeutic and holistic learning spaces. The outdoor playground is designed by an architect to include different textures, planes, materials that are both man made and natural. There are raised and lower levels to provide opportunities to move up down around and under. Glass, wood, metal, chimes and water feature in this area. A range of interesting objects, activities and events can be provided here and appreciated through the senses. Through use of material it is possible to change the appearance of the area for different programmes of learning, therefore the playground has a minimalist feel for staff to adorn with resources appropriate to the teaching theme. This is a really special playground that makes it possible to enjoy learning in an open area with natural light and fresh air.

The sensory garden is situated in the large top field playground that all students are able to access. Raised beds are planted with sensory plants chosen for their smell and safety for handling. There is a permanent seating area around a large tree and large mirrors are fixed on the fence to encourage looking and reflection. This is a working space and is also used for enjoyment of the garden and the elements.
A variety of lessons are taught in outdoor environments;
- Creativity: environment and materials
- Communication: receptive and expressive language skills
- Cognition: the world around us
- Movement and mobility: moving through and engaging in different spaces

Our outdoor sensory play area is carefully planned to provide various opportunities to explore and experience, use all senses, develop motor skills and consolidate socio-emotional skills. It is a learning area and although all equipment has a specific purpose and way how to use them, the area can be used creatively and in a personalized way. The key aim when planning the area was to make it accessible for all students who have the most complex visual, sensory and physical needs.

The area has three highlighted colours; yellow, blue and red that create a contrast to the white wall, mirror effected black wall and timber structures. The materials of the equipment provide different sensory experiences. We have used steel, wood, perspex, plastic and metal to create opportunities to explore different temperatures, textures, reflections and sounds. The area comprises of two water features and an opportunity to use different electrical appliances for music and lights.

Multipurpose use of the sensory play area was a significant consideration. Equipment can be used for its core purpose but it also creates opportunities to use ‘add ons’. There are two metal ropes that can be used to create closed spaces. Throughout the environment there are holes in timber structures and hooks to hang separate materials such as chimes, reflectors, scarves to grasp and collect etc. These additional resources are stored in a small shed in the yard.

The equipment comprises of;
- ramp
- white fence
- pole area
- tactile wall trail
- water features
- island; tree and sound box
- mirror
- sphere
- ropes
- small space built from steel and plastic tubes
- rumble strips
- tactile tables

How to use the area:
- Familiarise yourself with the risk assessment for the area (see VLE).
- Learn about possible ways to use the equipment.
- You can use the area with the whole group or with individual students.
- The environment gives many opportunities to encourage social skills when working with an other student or an adult.
- The sensory play area is a learning environment and it is crucial that the staff familiarize themselves with the environment and how to use its resources before taking students there.
- It is not recommended to use all the equipment during one session.
- It is possible to plan a sensory environmental trail that is rigorously followed every session.
- Only use the gate to enter the area (bell as an environmental object of reference) to maximise students’ anticipation.
- Allow plenty of time for students to complete and repeat their activities.
- Know your students and choose activities and resources that are relevant and exciting for them.
- The area gives many opportunities to deliver individual VI and physio – programmes.
- It can be used for teaching and learning in all curriculum areas.

Enjoy and have fun with your students!
6. Reference

Acknowledgement

School Curriculums
- Whitefield Curriculum
- Bridge House Curriculum
- Vale of Evesham School Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) Curriculum
- Castlewood School

National Curriculums
- Wales Curriculum
- Northern Ireland Curriculum
- Scotland Curriculum

Publications
- A curriculum for all learners. Guidance to support teachers of learners with additional learning needs. Gymry Ifanc Young Wales.
  Deaf-Blind Perspectives Link: http://www.tr.wou.edu/tr/dbp/index.htm

Government

Books
- Ayres A. (1979) Sensory Integration
- Dave Hewett, Mark Barber, Graham Firth, Tandy Harrison. The Intensive Interaction Handbook. Edited by Dave Hewett, with chapters by: Mel Nind, Penny Lacey, Suzanne Zeedyk, Lydia Swinton, Mark Barber, Graham Firth and Cath Irvine
- Intensive Interaction: Theoretical Perspectives.
Graham Firth and Mark Barber. Using Intensive Interaction with a Person with a Social or Communicative Impairment.


Online: www.intensiveinteraction.co.uk