Learning at River View

Resource Provision

**Introduction**

This document is intended to support adults at all levels working with children with complex needs including autism and developmental language disorder.

The impact of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and DLD (Developmental Language Disorder) on children’s development and learning can be pervasive and complex. This document recognises these complexities and describes how the curriculum at River View Primary School supports all children’s learning and understanding. This is not a ‘stand alone’ document and should be viewed alongside all other policy documents produced by River View.

**What is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?**

ASD is a term used to describe a neurological difference in brain development that has a marked effect on how a person develops; it can be described as a spectrum of conditions because individual needs vary greatly. ASD can occur with other comorbid conditions; for example, up to a third of those on the spectrum also have epilepsy and a quarter have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

**What is Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)?**

DLD is a long term condition that can have a significant impact on a child’s learning and achievement at school. Children with DLD are at risk of reading difficulties when they reach school age; sometimes DLD can affect children’s social interaction skills and their ability to make and keep friends. Children with DLD often learn and understand better through visual and /or practical methods, rather than verbal methods. For example they would understand a story better if they watched it being acted out and drew it rather than being told verbally. Children with DLD may not talk as much and find it difficult to express themselves verbally. Their language may sound immature for their age and they may struggle to find words or to use varied vocabulary. Children with DLD may not understand, or remember, what has been said and older children may have difficulties reading and using written language.

**Resource Provisions at River View**

Pupils attending the resource provisions at River View present with a combination of layered needs e.g. communication, cognitive, mental health, relationships, behavioural, physical, medical and sensory. They need informed, specific support and strategies which may include transdisciplinary input to engage effectively in the learning process and to participate actively in classroom activities and the wider community. Their attainments may be inconsistent, presenting an atypical or uneven profile. An understanding of these atypical development patterns ensures that emphasis is placed on conducting appropriate assessments and providing relevant and personalised learning experiences all within the context of curriculum for excellence. At River View, pupils may be working at any educational level, including the pre-formal (engagement model), semi-formal curriculum and the formal (national) curriculum.

**Supporting the Curriculum: The River View Primary School Mission Statement**

Our ethos and vision for the school includes the whole community. River View is known as an inclusive school which values diversity and treats each child as an individual. We provide an environment that enables all of our children to develop academically, socially, physically and emotionally to reach their full potential by removing barriers. Our resource provisions are fully embedded within the educational continuum.

**Teaching and Learning**

Teaching and learning are fundamental to River View Primary School. Learning is the process through which the pupils can develop their knowledge, skills and understanding to the point where they have retained and generalised what has been taught. This is achieved through a context which is relevant and meaningful to all pupils with ASD/DLD to ensure effective learning. Our pupils with ASD/DLD have a wide range of complex needs which requires us to adopt and develop a range of appropriate teaching and learning strategies. All staff work in such a way that the learning environment is calm and consistent, visually structured, with clear communication to pupils about what is expected of them, both as individuals and in small groups. This ensures maximum information processing throughout each day allowing pupils to realise their full potential.

We believe pupils learn best when they:

* Are happy
* Are interested and motivated
* Achieve success and gain recognition
* Are given tasks which match their abilities and experiences
* Clearly understand the task and what is expected from them
* Are confident, feel secure and aware of boundaries

**The Enrichment Curriculum**

We are not only concerned with the gaining of knowledge and skills but also with the development of the whole child. We believe in the importance of giving our pupils a positive self image and the confidence to enable them to function effectively in their environment and as citizens in their own communities. The enrichment curriculum is a supportive structure that promotes the development of individual resources and capabilities. It enables pupils to apply knowledge, understanding and skill in a manner that enables success in society and facilitates patterns of life-long learning and active citizenship. Examples of enrichment activities may include:

* Life skills programmes
* Work-related learning
* School council
* Participation in the local community
* Links with high schools
* Enterprise programmes
* Healthy eating programmes
* SMSC focused activities
* Citizenship programmes

**Professional Support**

Professional colleagues have a significant role to play in the curriculum of our pupils and may include:

* speech and language therapists
* occupational therapists
* physiotherapists
* art therapists
* educational psychologists
* medical and health professionals
* respite services
* local authority professionals
* social services and key workers

**The Semi-Formal Curriculum**

River View’s Semi-Formal Curriculum recognises that some children have a range of complex learning difficulties and disabilities. We support children to access the National Curriculum within their year groups through a personalised learning approach which is matched to pupil learning and developmental needs; lessons are fun, engaging, practical and meaningful. Regardless of the physical, emotional and learning challenges faced by the pupils due to their special educational needs and disabilities, teaching through our semi-formal curriculum captures the interest and imagination of our pupils.

Semi-Formal learners require a high level of adult support, both for their learning needs and their care, and are likely to need some sensory support, with their curriculum broken down into small steps. Some of our pupils communicate by signing, eye-pointing, simple evolving language, or with symbols, pictures, objects and PECS.

Approaches which can be used and adapted to provide personalised learning opportunities for children at River View include:

* speech and language therapy
* occupational therapy
* art therapy
* sensory processing assessments
* total communication including intensive interaction, Salford signalong, picture exchange communication (PECS), visual supports (objects of reference, photographs, pictures, and symbols)
* structured teaching and Visual Supports
* individual education plans (IEP’s)
* individual behaviour support plans
* social stories
* low visual and auditory environments
* access to spaces to enable pupils to withdraw to if they are experiencing sensory overload or are sensory seeking (sensory and movement rooms)

**Intent - What we want to achieve through our Semi-Formal Curriculum**

The Semi-Formal Learning Pathway aims to provide a curriculum that:

* provides explicit instructions and sufficient time for learners to repeat, practise, maintain and consolidate skills to develop independence
* develops learners’ levels of engagement by finding out what interests and motivates them
* provides meaningful contexts for learning that use real-life materials and experiences, concrete resources and practical every day activities so that learners link experiences and make connections
* supports learners to develop an awareness of, and interest in, themselves and their immediate surroundings and environments
* recognises the importance of play and games as motivational curriculum activities that allow repetition and consolidation of skills
* recognises that when using imagination and thinking of something that is not immediately present, children may need prompts to recall an experience
* Includes activities that move beyond memory building to take part in supported thinking and problem-solving activities
* provides opportunities for generalising and applying skills and knowledge across curriculum areas
* acknowledges that physical well-being and development of our pupils is important
* recognises that some of our pupils may not be physically able to complete practical processes without full support, but that they must be involved in choice and decision making about the process

**Impact - The difference is our curriculum making**

Progress for learners following the semi-formal curriculum pathway is currently assessed using descriptors from WS P Steps and through formative assessment of progress towards individual EHCP outcomes. Children are initially baselined to ascertain which P step they are secure in and typically make approximately 1-2 steps progress across an academic year. For those children participating in subject specific learning, their progress is recorded within their corresponding P Step for their year group as well as their developmental P step. This progress is recorded on Solar. The Engagement Model was introduced into River View during 2020-21 and may be used to assess some Semi-Formal learners alongside existing planning, assessment and recording systems.

The developmental profile of pupils with ASD/DLD can be mixed or spikey. All children with spiky learning profiles show significant developmental inconsistencies between different areas of learning. For example, they might be working at national curriculum level 4–5 for literacy, yet at P6 for numeracy; or at level 3 for science, but at P5–6 for PSHE. Children may also have strengths and abilities in keeping with or beyond their developmental age. For pupils with ASD/DLD, it is therefore essential to establish an accurate pupil profile on which to base educational targets. Assessment for pupils with ASD/DLD is bespoke to each pupil and is carried out in a range of environments. Pupils may perform well in a given situation but may not transfer or use the skill in another; such inconsistencies may be attributed to changes and variations in the environment, personnel or resources used.

The assessment process is based upon careful observation and the identification of concepts or skills which require further exploration as well as a combination of information from different sources. Information from home and parental perspectives is vital to form a holistic profile. Parents have a great deal to contribute to both the informal and formal assessment process and may face quite different challenges to the adults in the education setting. A range of professions may be involved to supplement the knowledge and information gathered by classroom staff.

**The Formal Curriculum (The National Curriculum)**

River View ensures that there is fluidity between the Semi-Formal and Formal Curricula, allowing for a personalised approach that enables pupils to move between them as appropriate to their development. Pupils whose learning pathway is predominantly within the formal curriculum complete assessments within their chronological age year group.