

Owl Class Rationale 2024-25

The Unique Learner: In Owl Class we are 11 pupils (5 girls and 6 boys) aged between 10-14 years, in year groups 7,8 and 9. We are an Upper Phase class, and our curriculum is designed to meet the needs of young people with severe learning difficulties, complex communication requirements and Autism. The curriculum is designed to meet the requirements of young people who have varied learning styles, abilities and to celebrate the things that make us individuals.

Positive Relationships: There are 7 supporting adults in Owl Class, 1 of which is part time and two who cover our very busy lunch/break times.

We nurture our friendships in class, being kind, listening to, and respecting each other. Adults in class act as role models, make learning fun and engaging, support us to communicate with each other and encourage independence.

We seek to create good working relationships with other professionals and agencies involved, these include SaLT, OT and physiotherapists. Each pupil has a keyworker in class, who liaises with professionals and families and feeds back to the teacher. They also assist the young people to develop independence and look after their own belongings.

The input from families is important to us, we encourage good communication between home and school and ask that regular contact be made either through the class email address, school life or by telephone. We do like to know of any medical appointments, dentist, optician etc. We like to help to prepare for these by talking about it or watching a short film so that we can see what will be expected. We also like to know in advance of any overnight stays, we can then offer reassurance and understanding when pupils are experiencing a different routine. Homework is set termly with a variety of activities to choose from, this enables pupils to transfer skills and involve parents in what we are learning. We are always happy to hear news from home.

Engaging Environments: In class we like to sit together around the whiteboard for group learning, daily greetings, reflection and to share news. We also learn in small groups. We use a quiet area for small group or individual learning. When in class we all use group tables and a physio mat for our learning. We have a workstation where we can develop the skills to work independently.

Outside learning is important to us, if we are not in the classroom, you may find us in the playground following a learning trail or doing activities in the garden outside the classroom. We have P.E in the gym or MUGA, we use the library for individual reading and the computer room each week. Swimming is a highlight of our week. We strive to provide an un-cluttered, calm environment with daily routines that assist learners to develop anticipation and independence.

Learning and Development: Our curriculum is designed to be a holistic one that considers individual learning styles and special interests. Within it we seek to ensure that the four areas of the EHC are delivered. Communication is key to everything we do and a variety of systems

are used to support progression. We have a standardised symbol set to support each area of learning, symbols/PECS to support independent communication, we sign, gesture and use differing levels of communication aids. Each pupil has personal targets. Some pupils in Owl Class engage in learning through experiences, discovery and play and are assessed using the Engagement Model criteria of Exploration, Persistence, Realisation, Initiation and Anticipation, others have a subject specific curriculum with individual targets. All enjoy a breadth of learning under a termly theme. Individual learning targets are written into lesson plans.

Sensory and physical requirements are met as part of the curriculum and on an individual basis. Some of us have a sensory diet prescribed by an Occupational Therapist, we may need to move and do activities that help us to regulate our bodies. This might be, a walk, bouncing on a physio ball, or other deep pressure activities. Some of us are prescribed physiotherapy exercises and require support to change position throughout the day, e.g. using a work chair or time on the physio mat. As a class we take part in daily sensory circuits, this helps learners to ready themselves for learning.

Emotional and social well-being is extremely important, adults in class actively encourage self-expression and self-advocacy. Part of this comes from getting to know our pupils and their often, almost unnoticeable, responses. We hope to encourage the skills and vocabulary that enables pupils to indicate how they are feeling, to ask for the things they want or need, and to say 'no' or 'finished' at times. We encourage pupils to think about the needs of others too. Learners are encouraged to use the 'Feeling board'. This supports them to recognise emotions, what they look like and gives choices of activities that help them to regulate.

We celebrate the 'high' days and holidays throughout the calendar e.g., birthdays, Easter, Chinese New Year, Ramadan and annual awareness days.

We are hoping to have an enjoyable year, filled with motivating learning experiences, get to know each other, form good friendships, grow in independence, and have fun!

September 2024