



# Castle Pre Formal Curriculum

A guide for parents and carers, staff and  
visitors



# Pre Formal curriculum

## Reactive and Proactive Pathways

### Overview

- Our pre-formal curriculum is unique to each individual pupil. The student/young person is kept at the centre of the teaching and learning process.
- Our pre formal pupils are on a learning spectrum that indicates that they have profoundly complex learning needs.
- Pupils require a high level of adult support, both for their learning needs and also for their personal care.
- They are likely to need sensory stimulation and will need a curriculum which recognises that all their senses need to be stimulated to access an activity.

## Our Curriculum

Our Curriculum is adapted to meet the changing needs of the students.

The curriculum offers a variety of experiences through a sensory approach, enabling students to use a range of senses; vision, touch, smell, taste and touch to access an activity.

There is a significant focus on specialist provision such as swimming, physiotherapy, massage stories, intensive interaction and physical development programmes and the staffing ratios within this specialist provision are generally higher.

This booklet will give you an overview of the different lessons carried out across the pre-formal curriculum.

# Our Curriculum:

- builds in sufficient time for learners to repeat, practise and consolidate skills
- recognises learners' need for consistency
- develops learners' levels of engagement by finding out what interests and motivates them
- places learners' targets at the centre of the curriculum with their interests as the teaching vehicle
- recognises learners' need for different levels of sensory stimulation
- recognises learners will need to be taught to transfer or generalise skills

# Progression

Your student may begin their Castle School experience in a Pre Formal Class. They will be observed and assessed with consideration given to physical and cognitive ability and may, therefore, change class during their time in school.

Our curriculum activities are used throughout the school and each Pre Formal class has its own topic cycle and long-term planning. Interventions may be the same, but the equipment used and the topic it is based on will be different according to the class and therefore different to help our students and young people to transfer and apply new learning in different settings.

Class resources will also vary according to the topic.

## Planning in the Pre-Formal Curriculum

Each pathway has a long-term plan based on a variety of creative themes or topics.

These topics change, termly. Within the long-term plan are suggested sensory activities and story books that are used to engage learners.

Teachers choose activities that are most applicable to the individual learning style of their group.

This planning allows us to incorporate 4 areas of learning

- Cognition and Learning
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Sensory, Physical and Life Skills
- Communication and Interaction.

# Assessment, Recording and Reporting

## Assessment

Ongoing assessment is at the heart of the pre-formal curriculum as it:

- Informs planning and teaching;
- Ensures pupils are making the best possible progress

We have developed our own bespoke Pre-Formal Assessment using 'Routes for Learning' and other specialist tracking systems such as 'AET'.

We also use the Engagement Model twice yearly to assess pupils' linear and lateral progress as well as their consolidation and maintenance of knowledge, skills and concepts in the following five areas of:

Anticipation, Exploration, Initiation, Realisation and Persistence.

## Assessment, Recording and Reporting

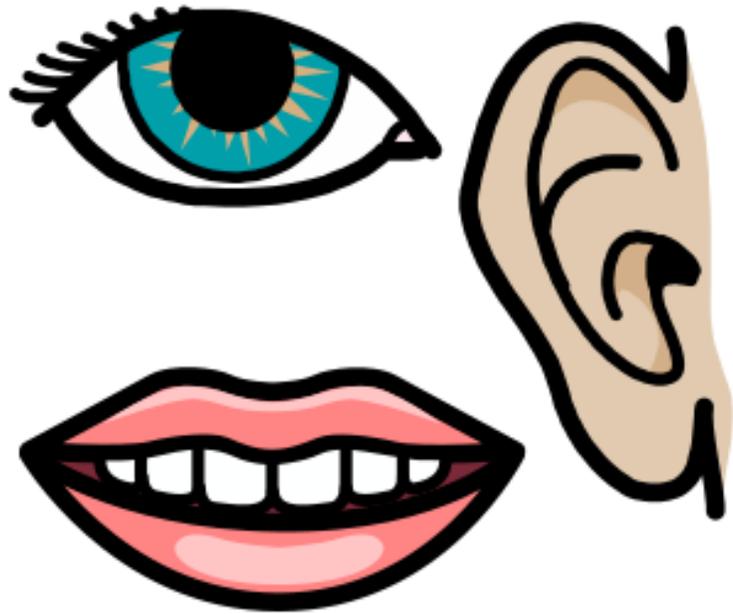
Evidence of pupil progress is uploaded to Evidence for Learning (EFL) and tagged against pupil's Personalised Learning Goals.

EFL is a safe online platform that captures achievements using multimedia evidence. This is shared with parents, carers and families daily, and allows parents to upload significant events if they wish.

Parents and/or carers receive a school report with their child's EHCP.

At the end of the academic parents and carers receive and a summary celebrating their child's successes over the year.

# Communication and Interaction



Communication



communication

# Communication

## Intensive Interaction

### What it is:

Intensive Interaction is an activity that enables the students to become aware that they are communicating with another person. The student's movements and vocalisations are copied, and their awareness is noticed.

### How it is carried out:

The activity can be carried out with close body contact to enable the student to feel secure, or adults can work away from the adult and their movements and vocalisations are copied.

Objects may be then be added for the students to experience shared attention in object-based activities.

### Outcomes for the activity:

Intensive Interaction enables the students to become more aware of themselves and others around them and therefore they can begin early communication with the world around them.



# Communication

## Massage story/poem

### What it is:

Massage story is a mixture of words and pressure, moving your hands in different shapes so that the student experiences different sensations on different body parts with each touch.

### How it is carried out:

Massage story is carried out with a short story of around 6 sentences. Each sentence has one touch and is repeated three times.

### Outcomes for the activity:

From carrying out Massage stories in this way the students begin to anticipate what is coming next. They may begin to link a certain word with an action and may begin to communicate for 'more'.



# Communication

## Sensory story

### What is it:

Sensory Story is a mixture of sentences and objects to explore. The students' responses to the objects and sentences are observed.

### How is it carried out:

The sentence is read, and the students are given time to explore the object whilst the sentence is repeated a further two times.

Sometimes, students are encouraged to reach out for the objects or watch as they are moved across in front of them.

### Outcomes for the activity:

While working through the sensory story the students can communicate their preferences for different objects.

They are working on anticipating throughout the story and experiencing how to use familiar objects.



# Communication

## Attention Building

### What is it:

Attention building time is time given for the students to develop their shared attention with an adult.

During this time the adult explores the object while the student watches what the adult is doing.

### How is it carried out:

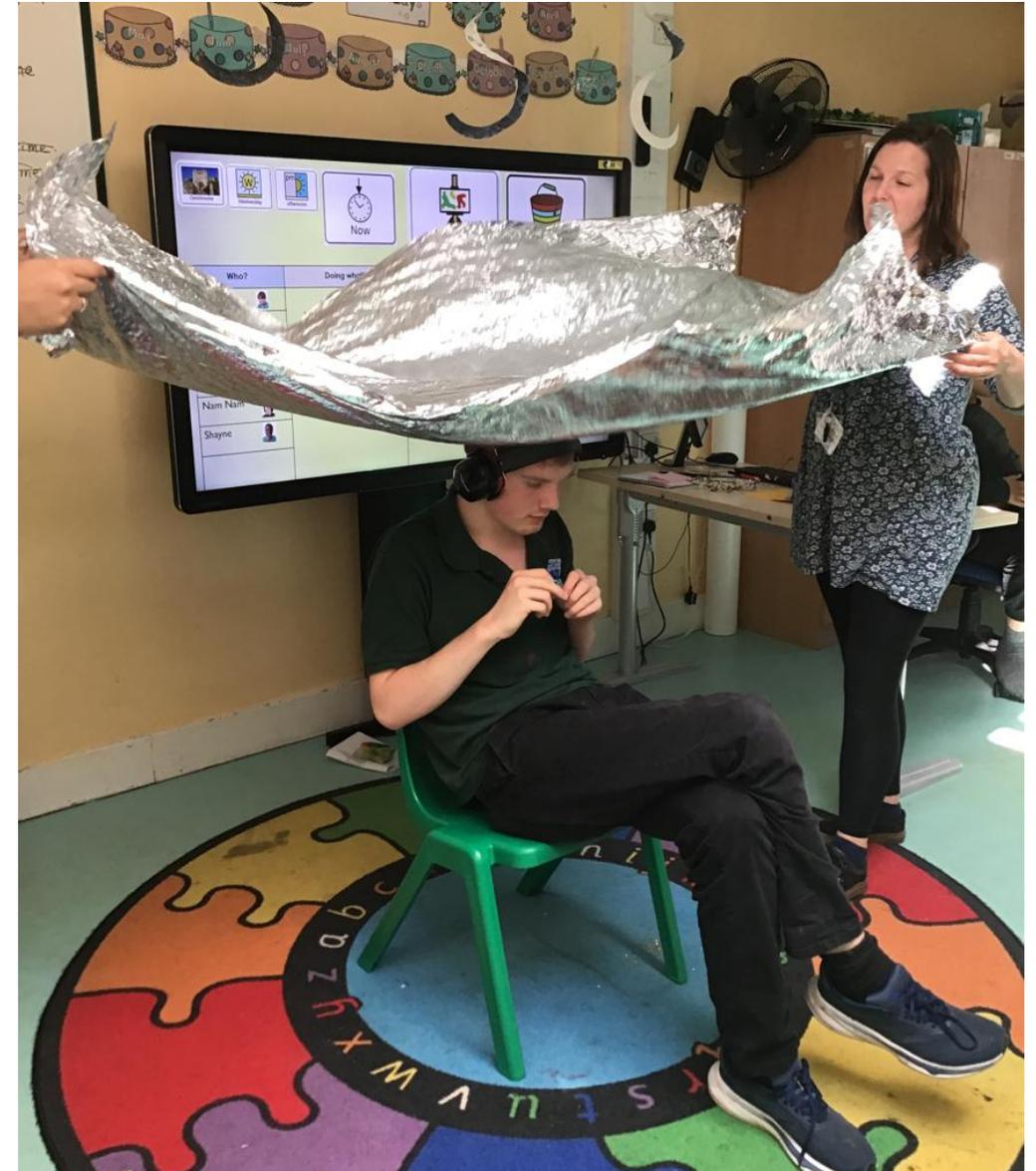
During this time the adult sits in front of the student with a bucket and sings a simple song. They then explore an object from the bucket trying to draw the student's attention to the toy without giving them time to explore it.

The toy then goes back in the bucket and different object is explored.

During the next stage, the adult completes a simple activity while the student watches and begins to anticipate the outcome.

### Outcomes for the activity:

The activity gives the students opportunities to develop their shared attention and the length of time they can concentrate on an activity that is not their choosing.



# Communication

## Soundbeam

### What is it:

Sound beam is an auditory communication activity. An invisible beam is projected within close proximity to the student, and a sound is produced when a student breaks the beam by moving or by pressing a switch.

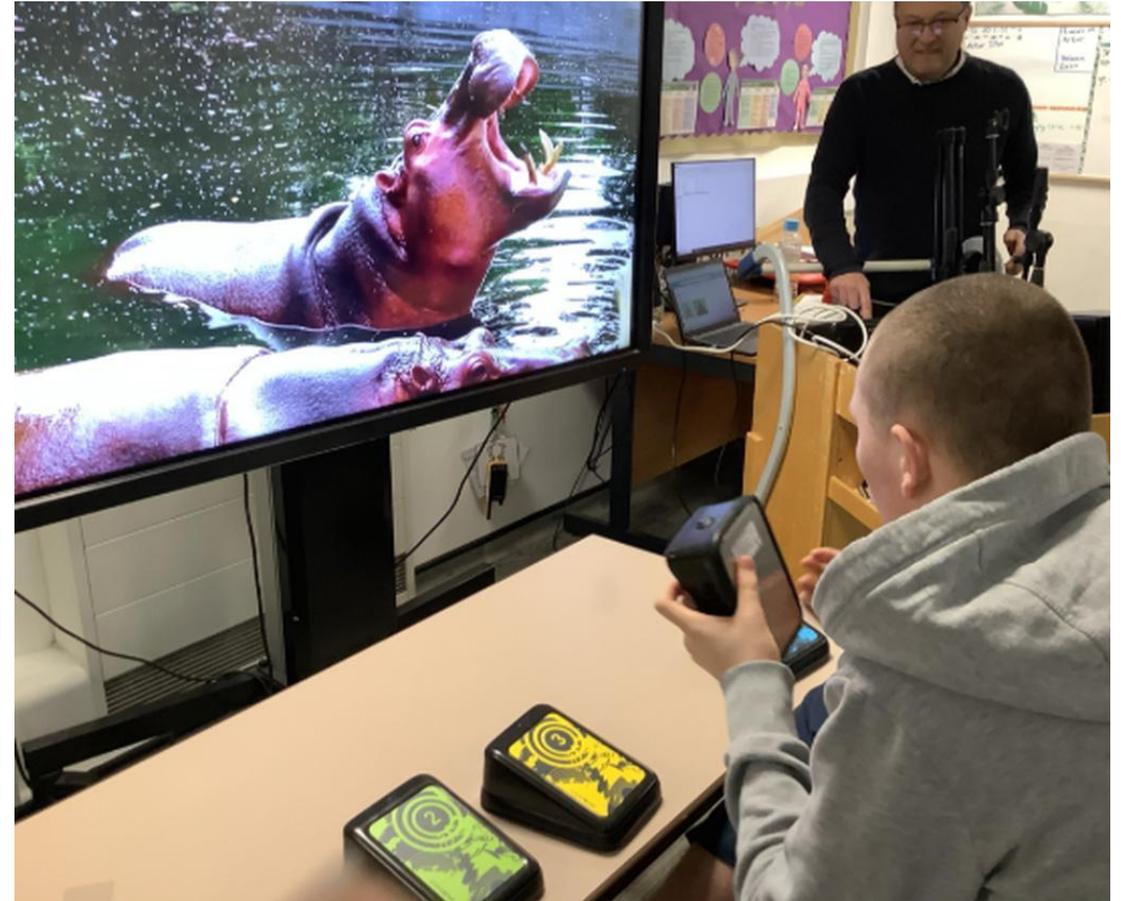
### How is it carried out:

During the activity a student is placed near the beam or switches and given time to move and listen to the sound created.

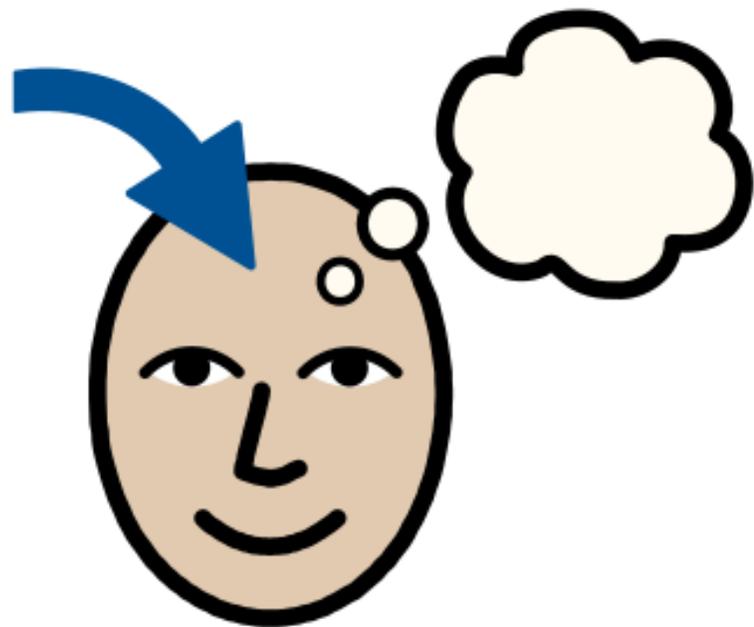
Initially students explore their understanding of how their movement creates the sound they hear. Following on from this students may be supported to take turns to hear the sound they are making and then listen to a friend making a different sound with a different beam or switch.

### Outcomes for the activity:

This activity has been designed to develop the students' awareness of different sounds and their movements in relation to the sounds happening



## Cognition and Learning



Learn



Learn

# Cognition and Learning

## Vision

### What is it:

Vision activities are designed to develop vision through different stages of visual development.

### How is it carried out:

The stages of visual development contain different activities which the students progress through as they show they are able to use these skills across their day.

### Outcomes for the activity:

When carrying out these activities we are looking for how the students respond to different environments.

We are also careful to take into account their vision needs and the distances they are able to see.



## Cognition and Learning

### Resonance Boards

#### What is it:

Resonance board is a time where students can experience different sounds and vibrations of the sounds whilst sitting or lying on a resonance board.

#### How is it carried out:

During the activity the adult will place different objects onto the board for the students to explore. The students will be encouraged to move their feet or hands to make the objects move.

The adult will also support the experience by moving the objects around slowly on the board, near to different parts of the student's body. Songs are also sung when using different objects to allow the student to recognise the link between the song and the object being used on the board.

#### Outcomes for the activity:

The students are given the opportunity to feel different vibrations through their body without the object touching them.



# Cognition and Learning

## Sensory Exploration

### What is it:

Sensory investigation is an activity which offers the students a chance to investigate different textures and using their hands or feet.

### How is it carried out:

During the activity the students are given time to investigate the object in different forms. An activity can start dry and then water can be added or start cold and be heated.

This gives the students opportunities to experience the object in many different ways and could enable the student to respond in different ways.

### Outcomes for the activity:

This activity will encourage students to investigate different textures they may not normally handle. They investigate the different ways the object can be presented, enabling them to show preferences to different textures or smells.



# Cognition and Learning

## Music

### What is it:

Music is an activity which encourages the students listen to the adults singing and offers opportunities to vocalise as well as explore different instruments.

### How is it carried out:

Students are given time to anticipate through repetitive songs. Students are also encouraged to ask for 'more' periodically through songs or at the end of songs. They are encouraged to make vocal sounds at certain points through the songs and are given time to anticipate what is coming next.

### Outcomes for the activity:

This activity gives the opportunity for the students to experience singing and how their vocalisations can join in with this.

They are encouraged to explore different musical instruments and how they can sound and feel when held in different ways.



# Cognition and Learning

## Contingency Awareness and Responding

### What is it:

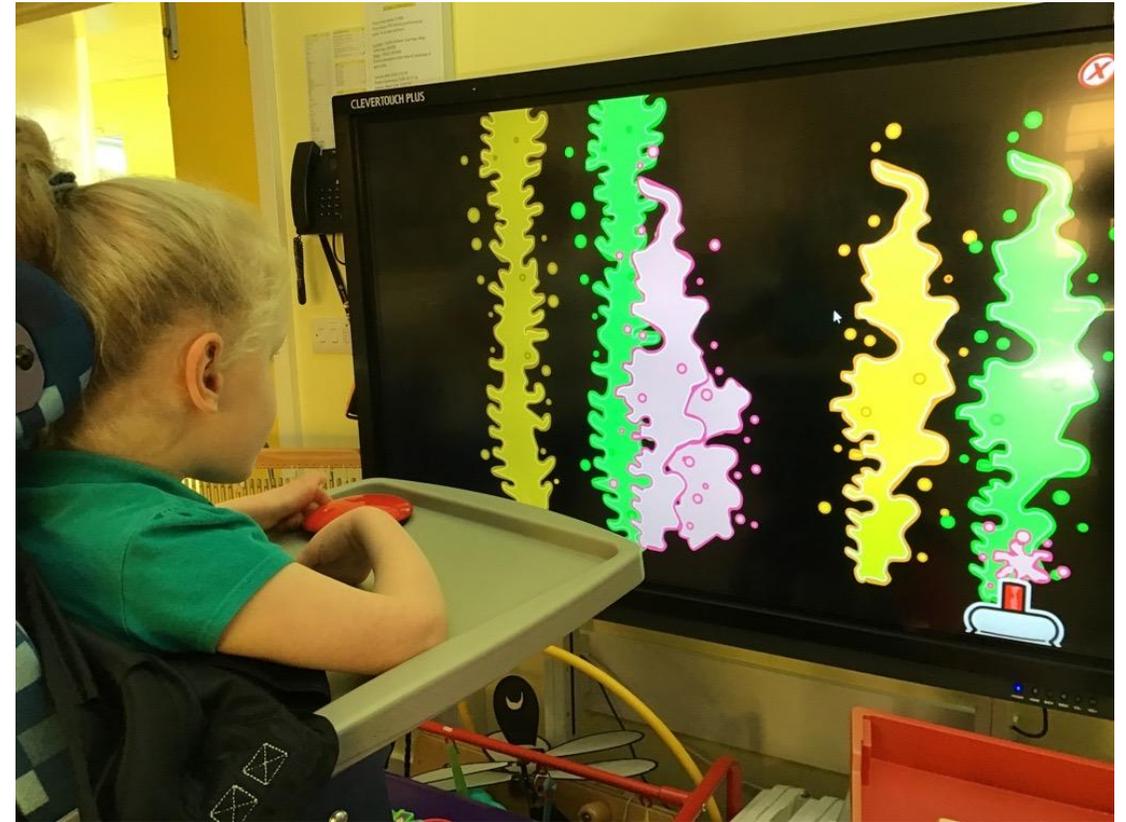
Contingency awareness and responding is when students learn about cause and effect activities. We use any objects which allows the student to make something happen and understand that they can cause an effect by using their body.

### How is it carried out:

During this activity the students are given objects with which they can cause an effect. They could use objects with switches or where they have to use their hand to move something, like a marble run. Through the use of touch the students can begin to learn that they control what happens with the object.

### Outcomes for the activity:

This activity encourages the students to become aware that they have an impact on the world around them. They begin to experience that through their controlled actions, they can an effect on different objects.



## Cognition and Learning

### TACPAC

#### What is it:

TAC PAC provides a structured, framework for students to make contact with their own bodies, their environment and other people.

#### How is it carried out:

TAC PAC is a combination of familiar textures / objects e.g. a sponge, accompanied by a piece of music specifically to match the texture of the object.

The activity and object is announced before each piece of music starts. The student hears the music while they feel the texture on their skin.

#### Outcomes for the activity:

As the session is repeated over several weeks or months , students work on recognising the music and showing anticipation for their favourite objects or music.



## Cognition and Learning

### Touch and Groove

#### What is it:

Touch and groove is a tactile and auditory activity. A range of songs and rhythms related to the term's topic are curated alongside a combination of soft and hard textured objects.

#### How is it carried out:

During the activity, a song is played, and objects are explored on the student's body.

Students explore one object for each piece of music. The object is rolled or tapped along their body to the beat of the music; different body parts are used for different objects and songs.

#### Outcomes for the activity:

This activity has been designed to develop the student's awareness of different songs and objects.

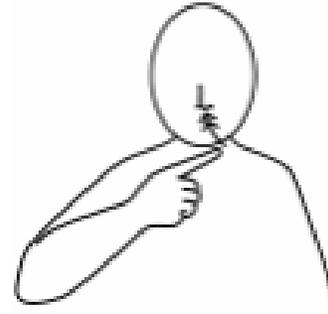
The students can show anticipation and communication skills throughout this activity.



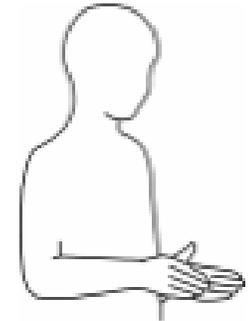
# Sensory, Physical and Life Skills



**Sensory**



**Smell**



**Touch**



**Taste**



Formation moves  
forwards and down.  
Directional

**Look**

# Sensory, Physical and Life Skills

## Sensology

### What is it:

Sensology is the work of Flo Longhorn and Richard Hirstwood. It embraces the importance of the theory of early learning through sensory stimulation, sensory experiences and multisensory environments.

It covers the five basic senses (see, hear, touch, smell, taste) but also movement- related sensory systems: the vestibular (balance, head movements and gravity) and the proprioceptive (body positions, body mapping and planning movements). In a Sensology workout, these senses are literally given a warm-up.

### How is it carried out:

Sessions can be in groups or 1:1.

Classes may have daily or weekly sessions that follow the same format as one by one, the senses are worked through. Each one is named and indicated (e.g. "I have eyes") and then put to work.

### Outcomes for the activity:

Students awaken their senses and respond to sensory features of items and activities. They make choices and decisions and begin to develop and communicate preference.



# Sensory Physical and Life Skills

## Sensory Circuits

### What is it:

Sensory circuit works on alerting, organising and then grounding their sensory systems to help their readiness for learning.

### How is it carried out:

Each morning our students are invited to take part in a sensory circuit. We recognise that some students may benefit from this input at different times, so the sensory circuit is available to use outside throughout the school day.

**Alerting:** Energy Lifting section - The aim of the alerting activities is to provide vestibular and proprioceptive stimulation. This prepares the brain for learning and the demands of the day.

**Organising-** This section includes activities that require motor sensory processing, balance and timing. The child needs to organise their body, plan their approach and do more than one thing at a time.

**Calming** -Finishing the circuit with calming activities ensures that as the child leaves the circuit they are feeling calm, centred and as ready for the day as possible.

### Outcomes for the activity:

Sensory circuits supports the pupils sensory processing skills to ensure they are regulated and ready to learn.



# Sensory Physical and Life Skills

## Sherbourne Movement

What is it: Sherborne Developmental Movement is a method of working in which the movement is securely based in normal developmental movement experiences. It was developed by Veronica Sherborne in the later part of the twentieth century. It is an inclusive approach to teaching and working with movement and one that is well grounded in Laban's Movement Theory, which has been developed over a period of 40 years.

How is it carried out: students participate in Sherbourne movement within their PE sessions supported by staff and led by Sherbourne trained.

### Outcomes for the activity:

**Awareness of self** This is gained through movement experiences that help the student concentrate so that they become aware of what is happening to their body, listening via touch and by feeling of inner physical sensations rather than by our usual way of looking and thinking. This helps lesson self-criticism and allows students to grow in terms of self-esteem and confidence both a physical and emotional level.

### **Awareness of others**

The next step is to begin to learn to move around and interact with others in ways that encourage the further development of trust and the building of positive relationships. These movement experiences enable the student to be appropriately supported while being encouraged to explore their unique creativity through shared movement activities.



# Sensory Physical and Life Skills

## Move and Groove

### What is it:

Move and groove is an activity which encourages body movements to music. It is based on Sherborne and works on the students becoming aware of their different body parts and how they can be used.

### How is it carried out:

The students listen to music whilst they are encouraged and supported by an adult to move different body parts in different ways.

Moving on, the students are also supported to work together with a friend.

### Outcomes for the activity:

This activity encourages the student to begin to link words to their body parts making them more aware that when the adult says 'head' they know where their head is.

It also encourages them to explore the movements they can make independently.



# Sensory Physical and Life Skills

## Yoga

### What is it:

Yoga is an opportunity to support students to move their bodies in different ways and become aware of their ability to put their bodies into different positions.

### How is it carried out:

Yoga is carried out in small groups with 1:1 support, where needed. With relaxing music, students are supported to move their bodies through the yoga sequence.

Over time, students are encouraged to hold the position themselves, copy an adult or repeat the position with less support .

### Outcomes for the activity:

Students become more aware of their bodies and their position in the environment.

Over time, students may become familiar with the sequence of positions and show anticipation of the next position or when repeating a position.



# Sensory Physical and Life Skills

## Physiotherapy

### What is it:

During physiotherapy sessions, students work through the programmes set by their physiotherapist. Across their day the students are positioned in different ways and work on their programmes whilst carrying out tasks, they also take part in stretches with an adult to maintain their flexibility.

### How is it carried out:

The students work 1:1 with an adult to carry out different stretches and positions. They can have breaks between different positions allowing them to relax before being asked to carry out another task.

### Outcomes for the activity:

This activity is encouraging the students to build up their body strength whilst using positions for a purpose throughout the week.



## Sensory Physical and Life Skills

### Swimming

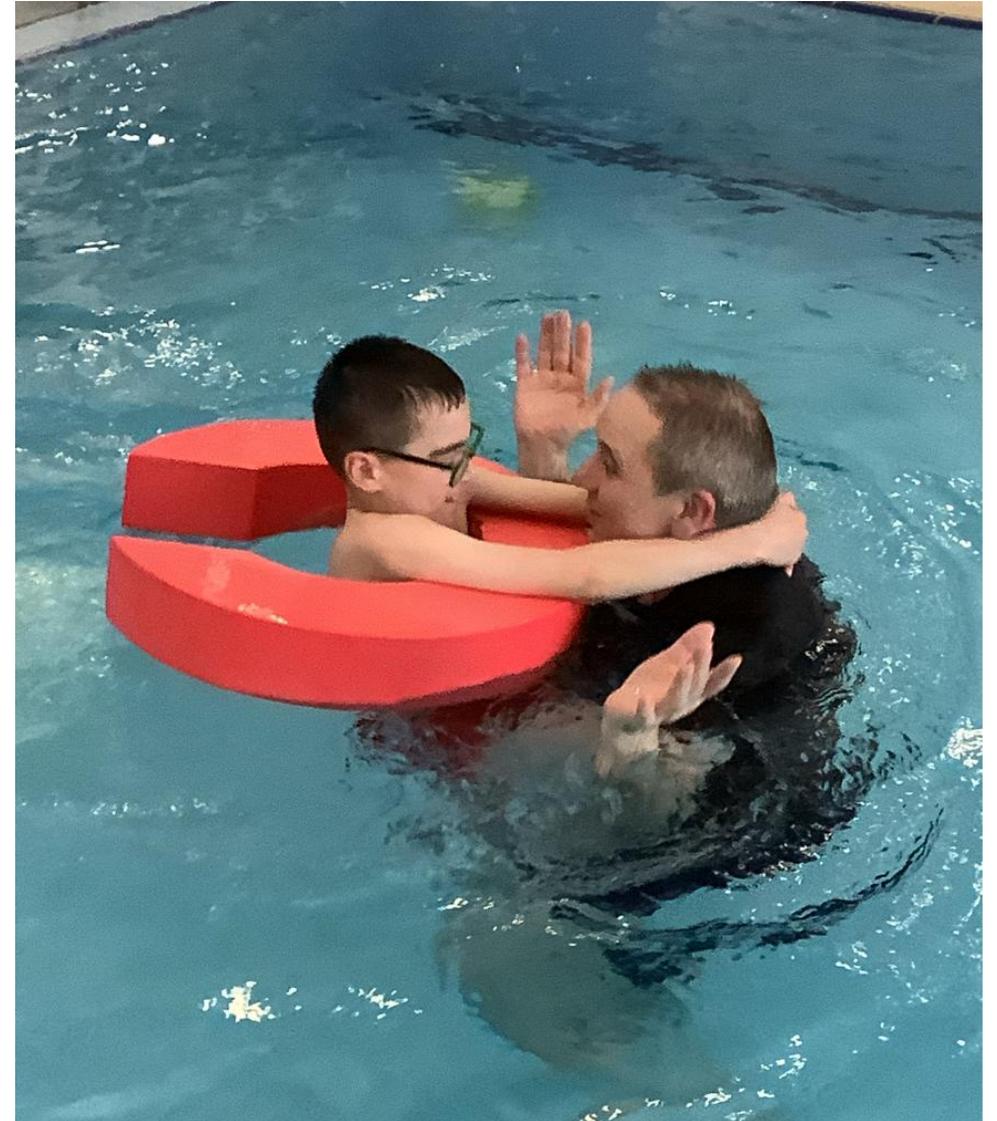
What is it: Hydrotherapy enables students to experience and learn about the impression the water and the pool environment has on their body. They also feel and begin to understand, the basic actions involved in swimming such as kicking legs, floatation and rotating.

How is it carried out:

We focus on experimenting, with support, how we can travel through the water at different speeds, in different directions and adhering to various positions in the pool such as, moving on our front, back and standing. Lessons focus on increasing confidence in the water and encourage each student to move their arms and legs as independently as they can.

Outcomes for the activity:

Hydrotherapy enhances the student's physical, emotional and cognitive skills in the pool and incorporates physiotherapy programmes



# Social, Emotional Mental Health



**Social**



**Social**

# Social, Emotional and Mental Health

## Snack/Lunch time

### What is it

Mealtimes focus on communication and personal hygiene, using cutlery and practicing self-help.

### How is it carried out:

During mealtimes students are encouraged to communicate in their preferred way, with vocalising, PECS or individualised snack communication mats. Students practice indicating their choice of food or if they want to have 'more' or are 'finished'.

Life skills, such as personal hygiene, tidying up and appropriate social interaction are also encouraged during snack and lunch time.

### Outcomes for the activity:

Students work on making independent choices and indicating their wants and wishes to the adult in an appropriate manner.



# Social, Emotional and Mental Health

## Outside / Social Time

### What is it:

During times of outdoor experiences, from accessing and experiencing the Castle and playground to courtyard camping, that is linked to the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh, students have the opportunity to explore their environment and interact with peers.

### How is it carried out:

Play and interaction opportunities are set up and students are engaged in the activity using a range of strategies such as touch, interaction, experiencing different movements on the equipment.

Students are given time to anticipate events and interactions with each other as well the environment around them.

### Outcomes for the activity

Students work on their awareness of the world and people around them. The students are able to show anticipation, realisation and initiation through their communication skills



# Social, Emotional and Mental Health

## Independent Exploration

What is it: during times of sensory exploration students have the opportunity to explore independently.

How is it carried out:

Exploration opportunities are set up and students are engaged in the activity using strategies appropriate to the student; this may be with adult support, modelling or visual or verbal cues.

When the student is engaged, the adult will step back from the activity, allowing time and space for independent action and discovery.

Outcomes for the activity:

During this time, adults will be looking for behaviour indicating discovery or realisation and also looking for independent exploration, demonstrating



# Social, Emotional and Mental Health

## Touch and Taste / Cooking

### What is it:

Touch and taste / Cooking allows students to become familiar and confident with new foods by looking, smelling, touching and tasting in a familiar environment .

### How is it carried out:

Touch and taste is carried out as a group activity where each student has the opportunity to touch, smell and taste or lick if appropriate, different foods. They are then supported to weigh, chop or mix to complete a simple recipe.

### Outcomes for the activity:

When the activity is repeated over several weeks, students begin to recognise the foods and become more confident to explore independently.



# Social, Emotional and Mental Health

## Community Outings

### What is it:

Outings takes learning into real life, sparking excitement, curiosity and increased motivation and engagement.

Students use their preferred means of transport, wheelchair, buggy, walking or school minibus.

### How is it carried out:

Places visited can link to classroom topics or are local places of interest.

### Outcomes for the activity:

Outings benefit students in many ways and can be inspiring, positive experiences. They enhance learning and develop social, communication and life skills.

