

# PORTFIELD SCHOOL & SATELLITE CENTRES



## POLICY DOCUMENT FOR CURRICULUM



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**Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed and amended on an annual basis to take account of any local and national initiatives, changes in the curriculum, developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school. Amendments will only be made after full consultation with staff and governors.

(Headteacher) ..... Date .....

(Chair of Governors) ..... Date .....

# Mission Statement

Working together    Learning together    Achieving together

At Portfield School we strive to

- Create a happy, safe, supportive and stimulating learning environment
- Value everyone
- Develop everyone's personal, social, emotional health and wellbeing
- Promote relevant academic and vocational skills
- Meet individual needs through an imaginative and flexible approach
- Enable all learners to achieve their full potential

## UNCRC United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

- Portfield School places the values and principles of the UNCRC at the heart all policies and practices
- Portfield School is a Rights Respecting School

Portfield School caters for pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties and within its curriculum framework provides learning opportunities for all its pupils at different stages of their development. This includes pupils with severe, profound and complex learning difficulties, hearing and visual impairment and physical disabilities. For pupils on the Autistic Spectrum Continuum we recognise that this is a developmental disorder consisting of a triad of impairments

- A communication impairment
- A social impairment
- A rigidity and inflexibility

We also accommodate the particular style of autistic learners, acknowledging the:

- Effects on learning of extreme delay in attention switching
- Way in which difficulties in understanding spoken language arise
- Fundamental nature of communication problems in autism
- Lack of "common sense" which may occur in autism
- Difference in the way in which autistic children use memory
- Problems experienced by autistic children in intentionality
- Different sources of stress and anxiety experienced by autistic pupils
- Need to balance within the curriculum the practice and consolidation of skills against the danger of activities becoming compulsive, this failing to extend the pupils
- Need for individual schedules that include objects of reference, words and symbols

- Need for consistency, including consistent strategies for managing behaviour and the use of visual approaches to learning
- Need to use positive behaviour management strategies and to organise the curriculum delivery so that autistic pupils are given the opportunity to learn new skills, followed by the opportunity to rehearse old ones
- Underpinning the delivery of the curriculum with pupils who have autism is the use of the TEACCH philosophy

For children with physical difficulties we recognise that the children have complex and sometimes profound physical and learning difficulties ranging through mild and moderate to severe. The majority of these pupils are wheelchair dependant and have conditions such as cerebral palsy.

We recognise that many of our pupils have:

- Communication difficulties: expressive and receptive difficulties that require technological communication aids, symbols, computer technology etc.
- Feeding and toileting issues/difficulties: some of our pupils are totally adult dependent and will remain so for the whole of their time at Portfield. Feeding and toileting programmes are in place for these pupils and these form part of the school's PSD scheme of work.
- Short concentration spans: some of our pupils are easily distracted and have poor short-and long-term memory.
- Poor hand function: needing alternative methods to record their work e.g. various specialised switch access, advice from the occupational therapists etc.
- Challenging behaviour due to frustration and emotional factors connected with their conditions. Positive Handling Plans (PHP) are in place for these pupils.
- Life limiting diseases affect a small group of children. Regression and loss of skills are monitored and problems addressed where possible.
- Social communication difficulties and requiring visual support for learning

The pupils benefit from the multi-disciplinary approach, using therapist, nursing, teaching and care staff working together to maintain or improve their conditions. Some pupils are frequently absent from school due to illness, medical appointments and hospitalisation and this affects delivery of the planned curriculum, timetables and progress through topics.

Flexibility is also needed to accommodate the interruptions in classroom routine, necessary for toileting, care and therapy, much of which is carried out in the classroom setting.

We strive to enable the pupils to reach their full potential in all areas, educational and social. All opportunities are seized for learning, including break/snack times, lunch-times, visits out of school etc all of which are included within the school's PSD or subject area schemes of work. +

## **Aims and Values**

- To provide a curriculum which is broad, balanced, relevant and purposeful
- To build upon our children's prior experiences, skills, knowledge and understanding
- To establish clear and thorough planning in order that each child may realise their potential
- To strive for our pupils to experience and demonstrate continuous progress and achievement
- To provide a curriculum which is dynamic and flexible to changing needs
- To make explicit what is to be taught and how the intended teaching and learning takes place
- To ensure provision for equal opportunities and cultural diversity
- To make provision for the individual learning needs of each of our pupils as identified by the Statement of Educational Needs.

## **A Curriculum Policy Statement – The Whole Curriculum**

The curriculum at Portfield School reflects the 4 core purposes of enabling and promoting pupils to be:

- **Ambitious, capable learners** who are ready to learn throughout their lives.
- **Enterprising, creative contributors** who are ready to play a full part in life and work.
- **Ethical, informed citizens** who are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world.
- **Healthy, confident individuals** who are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

We are committed to provide access to a broad curriculum for all of our pupils. Alongside this we recognise that the curriculum must be relevant to pupils' individual needs and there must be in-built flexibility in order to ensure continued relevance for all pupils at the various stages of their time at Portfield. This will mean that not all of our pupils will experience all aspects of the curriculum all of the time, but rather that a balance in the whole curriculum will be reflected in pupils' individual experiences according to the various age related stages of their school life. For example, children in the Foundation Phase Classes will regularly experience various aspects of play and outdoor education while those in the 16 plus age group will participate in accredited learning; team enterprise; work experience and life skills work

Balance across the curriculum will also be dictated by the diverse and complex individual needs of our pupils. We recognise that our pupils benefit from a wide variety of sensory activities and the many forms of therapy which are offered to them and that some of our pupils with very challenging behaviours will need an even greater degree of flexibility in their learning and social programmes.

All of our pupils where appropriate, have access to the full range of subjects in the National Curriculum, alongside Religious Education. All of our learning experiences stimulate the senses and promote personal and social development.

At Portfield the core curriculum consists of Literacy, Numeracy, Science, PSD, Digital Competence Framework and ICT. These core subjects form the basis of our whole school curriculum and are taught in appropriate ways for all of our pupils. Schemes of work for each of these core subjects have been developed after full consultation with staff and have been written in such a way that shows progression towards and within the early levels of the National Curriculum.

Welsh, as a language to be learned and spoken, is offered through Curriculum Cymreig and designated lessons as appropriate. This involves many aspects of the Welsh culture: the music/songs of Wales, simple Welsh greetings etc. Welsh legends and folk tales, Welsh places, artists and people, along with the food of Wales. These year-long celebrations culminate in a Welsh Week including St David's Day. The many aspects of Curriculum Cymreig are reflected in teachers' termly planning, ensuring that all pupils have access to the particular features and culture of Wales. Second language Welsh is taught at levels appropriate to pupils development – see SOW

However, standing alone, the National Curriculum cannot provide the necessary balance, breadth and relevance for all of our pupils. We aim to overcome this by providing a range of other experiences which include access to multi-sensory stimulation, cross-curricular activities, and extra-curricular experiences, such as visits and trips to local shops, parks, places of interest etc to practise social skills and develop independence. These valuable learning opportunities are delivered through schemes of work including Personal and Social Development, Science and Geography.

Pupils also have regular access to therapies provided by our colleagues from health and social services. These therapies include: physiotherapy, speech and language therapy and occupational therapy. Other therapies include music, aromatherapy, rebound therapy and RDA.

The nature of the balance between the various components of the whole curriculum will vary between individual pupils. The process will involve meeting individual needs, as identified at the pupil's Annual Review and also the curriculum plans devised by class teachers to meet the more common needs of pupils at the different stages of development in any one class.

Approaches to planning and recording are consistent throughout the school. Staff meet regularly to discuss approaches, assessment and the learning outcome of classes and of individuals within a class.

### **Curriculum Access**

Due to the diverse and complex needs of our pupils we need to provide additional support in order for the whole curriculum to be accessible to them. With this in mind, we will

continue to maintain the conditions most likely to facilitate learning for all of our pupils through:

- The provision of appropriate digital technology resources – computers, relevant software, switches, eye gaze and tablets
- Appropriate use of mobility and aids for positioning – standing frames, specialist seating, adapted wheelchairs etc
- An environment which supports total communication using signs, speech, symbols, objects of reference, communication aids, Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), AACs etc
- Consistent and sensitive use of programmes to moderate challenging behaviours and enable pupils to self regulate their emotions
- Our commitment to essential therapeutic activities – speech and language, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, hydrotherapy, music therapy etc
- The use of strategies to minimise or alleviate sensory impairments, such as access to the sensory areas, specialist equipment such as sound enhancement systems and the use of sensory integration strategies
- Our commitment to collaboration with parents, professionals and agencies, with the community and with the pupils themselves.

The teaching experiences/activities which are detailed in our school curriculum and accompanying schemes of work reflect the programmes of study from Foundation Phase for 3-7 year olds and KS2 and 3 of the National Curriculum and for KS4 & 5 accredited units and modules.

The activities have been developed in detail to allow for continuity and progression as well as to provide age appropriate experiences for our pupils working at the earliest levels of the Curriculum across the entire age range.

Our curriculum plans present a carefully considered view of the relevance, breadth and depth of study appropriate to the current school population, with all teachers providing individually targeted programmes for all pupils in their class.

Some of our pupils will need to revisit fresh interpretations of the same programmes of study, in addition to having regular opportunities to consolidate skills, which have been already acquired throughout their time at Portfield. For some of our pupils the challenge to achieve will be difficult. It may be that in some cases certain aspects of work will remain inaccessible and in these cases pupils' individual statements and annual reviews will need to reflect the situation.

We also recognise that from time to time there may be other pupils whose achievements will go beyond the level of the activities in our programmes of study. These pupils will be offered a range of individual enrichment opportunities based upon programmes of studies from each of the Key Stages utilising National Schemes of Work and where necessary upon other priorities from within the whole curriculum. Where possible arrangements will be made for pupils to access local mainstream schools for particular aspects of their curriculum development.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- A Policy for Teaching and Learning
- A Whole School Policy for Assessment, Recording and Reporting
- A Policy for the Development of LNF Skills Across the curriculum

### **Partnerships**

At Portfield the curriculum is founded on a principle of partnership involving all staff/pupils within the school as well as parents, the governing body, other professional and agencies.

All work together for the benefit of the pupils. For example, teachers plan co-operatively and advise each other according to their expertise.

Parents are regularly consulted and their involvement is sought in the learning process. Parents also receive a termly topic/unit programme so that they are fully aware of the learning opportunities being offered to their child.

Pupils where appropriate contribute towards their next learning objective through AFL strategies.

When appropriate, advice is sought from outside agencies and the LEA advisers who visit the school on a regular basis.

The governing body exercises overall responsibility for the curriculum and members have particular subject interests. An open invitation exists for governors to visit the school at their convenience. Learning walks are used to allow Governors to observe the curriculum in action.

### **Curriculum Management and Organisation**

The governing body exercises the responsibility for the curriculum. The headteacher has responsibility for the planning process and the day-to-day implementation of the curriculum.

Most teachers have co-ordinator responsibilities, which include policy development and review, drawing up the scheme of work, advising at the planning stage, assessing resources and the learning, teaching and standards in the subject, which is supported by the Senior Leadership Team.

Wherever possible staff are allocated responsibilities which match their qualifications and expertise, although this is not always practicable.

The curriculum in all primary classes is delivered through topics and units based on the Foundation Phase and the National Curriculum. In secondary classes the curriculum is thematically taught linking units together as appropriate. In all classes the TEACCH



philosophy underpins the delivery of the curriculum. The 14-19 curriculum is based on accredited units and modules. Cross-curricular opportunities are sought but the learning objectives for the individual subjects are not neglected. A variety of teaching and learning methods are employed in the delivery of the curriculum, including group work, and at times, whole class teaching. The curriculum is based around the development of the key skills communication, numeracy, ICT and thinking skills and these are embedded across the subjects.

The timetable for each class is drawn up to ensure that there is appropriate balance between the Foundation Phase Areas of Learning, National Curriculum, as well as taking account of the sensory/development curricula. The headteacher ensures that each class has a timetable which provides appropriate breadth and balance.

### **The Planning Process**

The following structure of the school's curriculum planning process derives from Welsh Assembly guidance.

Phase 1 : Overall curriculum policy

Phase 2 : – The National Literacy, Numeracy & Digital Competence frameworks and ICT & Thinking skills form the basis for teaching and learning. Clear policies are developed by relevant subject leaders in consultation with the staff team and Governing Body.

Phase 3 : Programmes of Study – these are taken from the Foundation Phase Areas of Learning/National Curriculum for each subject within the context of the whole curriculum and cover the whole school age range; accredited qualifications.

Phase 4 : Schemes of Work – these demonstrate long, medium and short term planning based on key skills and subject skills as appropriate. They document the knowledge and skills concepts to be promoted through specific activities/lessons or half term blocks.

Phase 5 : Teachers will develop medium term planning from Schemes of Work appropriate to the particular needs of the class. Teachers will record short term weekly/daily plans, appropriate to the particular needs of the class which include:-

- Assessment and recording opportunities related to the Programmes of Study
- Resources, access issues and differentiation strategies
- Evaluation criteria
- Annual target setting

Phase 6 : IEPs are written and reviewed three times a year with targets based on the priorities for individual pupils linked to their statements of education. These targets are generally focussed on the skills of communication, numeracy; Personal and Social Development and physical development. They may also include an objective to improve a particular aspect of a pupils behaviour

Phase 7 : Assessment and recording – teachers and pupils monitor and record responses and progress. This evidence will be recorded in the child’s Record of Achievement as part of the process of every day teacher assessment. Samples of pupils work are maintained as evidence of progress in Maths, English, Science and Digital Competence where appropriate as well as evidence for Foundation subjects

Phase 8 : Review and Evaluation – this will involve a review and evaluation of:

- Short term targets – child’s individual education plan
- Short, medium and long term planning
- Policies and guidelines

### **Continuity and Progression**

At Portfield School it is our aim to ensure continuity and progression across the curriculum. To ensure this, all teachers are involved in planning and teaching the curriculum.

Continuity and progression is matched to the attainment targets and programmes of study for the appropriate key stage of the National Curriculum and Areas of Learning in the Foundation Phase.

Curriculum workshops are held on a regular basis to discuss aspects of the curriculum and to ensure consistency of approach and of standards.

### **Modifications and Disapplications from the National Curriculum**

Any modifications will be reflected within the child’s statement of special educational need and supporting annual review documentation. Disapplications are discouraged at Portfield School as we strive to deliver meaningful experiences in all subject areas.

### **Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

Assessment, recording and reporting are considered to be an integral part of the curriculum. All aspects of this work are regularly monitored by members of the Senior Leadership Team in conjunction with the Assessment, Recording and Reporting Co-ordinator.

Assessment informs the teaching and learning process so that tasks can be attached to the individuals’ needs and abilities. Assessment is both formative and summative.

Records are kept of a child’s progress, not only as a matter of reference, but also to inform teachers’ future planning.

Where relevant, pupils are encouraged to review their own achievements and discuss with their teacher their success and future learning objectives.

Staff at Portfield School will:-

- Provide a baseline view of pupils' strengths and areas for development as a starting point in planning for individual pupil priorities and class priorities
- Develop annual targets and individual education plans showing termly goals and anticipating progress
- Identify termly targets and priorities for individual pupil's learning to be pursued across the whole curriculum
- Maintain a record of achievement and experience, showing the learning opportunities skills which pupils have achieved.
- Note significant new responses, wherever they occur so that progress and achievement can be assessed
- Generate information that can be used to:
  1. Define new short term targets
  2. Review and evaluate curriculum plans and policy
  3. Report achievement
  4. Define whole school targets

For further details see the school's separate policies on Assessment, Recording and Reporting and where appropriate, the individual schemes of work.

### **Review and Evaluation**

Our planning process is subject to ongoing scrutiny. The following questions help to focus our review and evaluation

- Are individual pupils needs being met?
- Does planning ensure continuity for individual pupils over the time and across the whole curriculum?
- Are the curriculum requirements being met?
- Is there progression across the years?
- How do the curricular areas relate to each other?
- Is there balanced coverage of all areas of the curriculum?
- Are there adequate opportunities for practical work and problem solving?
- The activities relevant to the pupils needs

### **Time Allocation**

Planning will take account of the teaching time available during the week. The basic child management tasks of daily life e.g. moving from place to place, transport, effects of medication, management of seizures, time it takes for a child to complete a meal or be tube fed, concentration span, positioning, time it may take for a child to respond etc. These routines which address personal needs are viewed as learning opportunities within the whole curriculum. Any routine such as toileting and meal times is recognised as a teaching opportunity and in the context of high quality interaction will not be rushed. For some pupils with behaviours that challenge or anxiety issues significant teaching time will focus on PSD, thinking skills and problem solving.

### **Pupil Grouping**

At present pupils are predominantly based in age-related class groups. We acknowledge that some children require a unique setting offering predominantly sensory and therapeutic approaches to access the curriculum and the school is, therefore, committed to sustaining resource bases for those children. Class sizes may vary. The school adopts a policy of inclusion for many of our pupils who may spend time in mainstream units/classes.

### **Environment**

Our planning will ensure our pupils experience a wide range of environments in order to motivate their interest and encourage generalisation of skills. Indoor and outdoor settings are included. Use of all settings is managed taking into consideration pupils sensory differences.

### **Role and Responsibilities**

Planning is a collective responsibility taking into account staff expertise, subject knowledge and experience. The Governors and Senior Leadership Team assume overall responsibility for leading planning and ensuring links with school development planning, professional review and staff development. Members of the school's teaching staff work within teams for each area of learning experience as leaders for the whole school. In consultation with the whole staff they are responsible for:-

- Providing advice, support and training opportunities for staff
- Supporting curriculum working parties
- Providing guidelines for curricular implementation with specific reference to the Programmes of Study, the development of schemes of work
- Ordering and maintaining resources and equipment for the subject
- Managing their curriculum area action plan in the School Development Plan and produce an annual report to inform future school development planning
- Monitoring of the delivery of the curriculum through all key stages
- Keeping up to date with developments in the subject and passing on relevant information to colleagues.
- Analysing data

### **Pupil Involvement**

The need to involve pupils in planning, assessment, recording and reporting is well recognised. Staff provide opportunities for pupils to be involved in planning their learning to be made aware of why they are doing an activity, what they are expected to achieve and in the evaluation of their work. Assessment for learning is actively promoted throughout and particularly with KS2 and above SLD classes.

### **School Improvement Planning**

School Improvement planning provides the context for evaluating the planning process in the school. It provides the focus within which the curriculum evaluation informs school management, organisation and policy making. Planning priorities are identified through an audit of current curriculum practice and pupils' needs.

### **Resourcing the Curriculum**

It is the responsibility of each curriculum leader to ensure that the resources of the subject are adequate and up to date. Resource requirements are passed to the senior leadership team and a budget allocated accordingly. A general audit of resources is undertaken regularly. This takes the form of an annual co-ordinator's report. These in turn help to inform the school development planning process.

### **Monitoring and Evaluating the Curriculum**

All aspects of the school's work, that is the curriculum, teaching and learning, continuing professional development, finance, buildings etc are monitored and evaluated regularly. Evidence from this process is incorporated into the school's self-evaluation report.

### **The Role of the Curriculum Leader**

- Advising and discussing with colleagues
- Supporting colleagues in their planning, selection of activities, resources and evaluation
- Using co-ordination time to monitor and develop aspects of their subjects, look at data and agree areas of strength and development with SLT and develop a written action plan
- Attending LEA training and that provided by outside bodies and providing feedback and support to staff
- Produce a written report on work completed and aspects for development

### **Role of Individual Teachers**

Through monitoring and evaluating their own teaching plans on a regular basis

### **The Role of the Senior Leadership Team**

- Observing lessons and producing a written report
- Examining samples of IEPs, mid-term, short term planning, schemes of work and discussing continuity and progression during staff meetings
- Analysing data with Co-ordinators to agree strengths and areas for development
- Responsibility for standards in subjects

### **Governors**

Through discussion with the headteacher and curriculum co-ordinators for specific subjects and through the co-ordinators' annual report

All governors are linked to curriculum areas; see "Governors Curriculum Responsibilities" for further details in the School Development Plan.