

Curriculum Rationale

In recent years we have visited several different schools and talked numerous colleagues from the ASN sector about what they do in their schools for their pupils. We have benefitted from working collaboratively with colleagues, sharing ideas and shaping our knowledge. A distillation of these ideas, our own collective experience of children with additional needs, along with new guidance from the Scottish Government, have led us to attempt to redefine our curriculum for our unique group of learners.

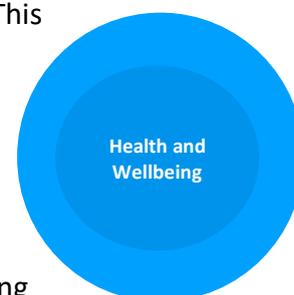


In Scotland 'Curriculum For Excellence' is our national guidance which helps educators to plan programmes and courses. The term 'Curriculum' is broadly defined as 'The totality of all that is planned for children and young people throughout their education'. This encompasses curricular subject areas, what children learn at home and incidentally from adults across the school day. Learning is not neat and tidy, it does not depend on a teacher, and it doesn't always happen in the classroom.

Like every other school in Scotland, we use this guidance to plan the learning experiences that we plan for our learners, taking into account their very individualised needs. At Kelbourne Park we have a mixed population of learners, all of whom have their own strengths, learning styles and challenges. We have to ensure that the curriculum is flexible enough to meet the needs of every individual and which is relevant and meaningful enough that our pupils want to engage with it. We do however, need a framework to work within, which outlines what we to consider to be the most important aspects of learning for our pupils as well as an explanation of why. This is what we refer to as our 'Curriculum Rationale'.

Health and Wellbeing

We have put Health and well-being at the very centre of our curriculum. We know that learning will not take place if a child feels hungry, is in discomfort or feels unsafe. Looking after our pupils' physical and mental wellbeing is therefore a priority. This section describes some aspects of health and wellbeing in a bit more depth.



This diagram was conceived by Abraham Maslow to describe human motivation. The most basic and fundamental needs are the bottom and it is only when these physiological needs are met that we are motivated, or willing, to focus on higher level needs. Given the nature of our pupils difficulties, being well rested, pain free and well hydrated are not taken for granted. Nutrition, hydration, digestion and sleep are often the focus of discussions with parents because these basic needs impact on our pupils' readiness to learn.

Postural Management

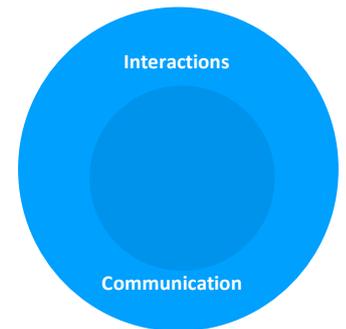
Pupils have neurological conditions are at risk of developing postural problems e.g. hip dislocation, scoliosis and pain, as well as difficulties with digestion. Implementing programmes of postural care where children have opportunities to be positioned well in appropriate equipment is life changing and will necessarily be a big part of their curriculum.

Self regulation

Self regulation refers to how people control their behaviour, how they inhibit or delay responses, and adapt to different situations or environments. This is another aspect of mental well-being which we consider to be fundamental to our curriculum and planning. We have allocated relatively large portions of time to activities firstly, which give children the strategies to cope in a variety of situations and secondly, to activities which we know will reduce anxiety or stress, such as being outside, sessions in hydro, music or yoga. Of course there are lots of other benefits to these activities however for some pupils they are a necessary part of their curriculum.

Communication and Interactions

Any visitor to the school should notice our focus on communication and relationships. Developing trusting relationships allows our pupil to feel safe and therefore to regulate their emotions and levels of anxiety. Having established trusting relationships and a feeling of safety, our pupils are more able to engage in more formal 'learning'. Literacy and numeracy are core curricular areas however we have put them on the outer ring because they rely on good levels of engagement in the first instance.



Literacy and Numeracy

Literacy and Numeracy are considered core areas of the Scottish Curriculum and schools have responsibility to track and monitor progress in these curricular areas. In Kelbourne Park we have to look at these subjects in their broadest sense. Some children will learn to read and write fluently; for some pupils decoding and understanding symbols will be most important for them; and for others, understanding the print they encounter in their environment is the most meaningful. Similarly, with numeracy, we have to consider what aspects will be most important to our pupils in the daily lives and make this subject relevant to our pupils' lives.

Social Subjects, Sciences and Technologies

The outer ring shows the other subject areas we cover as part of the wider curriculum. We appreciate that for some pupils the outcomes described as part of social subjects, sciences and technologies can be conceptually very difficult for our pupils, however they have an entitlement to experience these subjects like every other pupil in Scotland. We are lucky enough to be in the West End and surrounded by lots of parks, museums, shops and art galleries which provide rich learning environments which make history, geography, science etc as meaningful to our children as possible.