

Curriculum Policy



Oxlow Bridge school



Approved by: Hermann Farrington (chair of governors)
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Rationale

Oxlow Bridge is a new small special school (90 places), which will cater for pupils aged 3-19 with profound and multiple learning difficulties but not those with a primary diagnosis of ASD. The majority of pupils are likely to have complex health needs and will be working within a sensory engagement curriculum.

The Salt review 2010 describes pupils with PMLD as having: -

“Profound and multiple learning difficulties as well as complex learning needs. In addition to very severe learning difficulties, pupils have other significant difficulties, such as physical disabilities, sensory impairment or a severe medical condition. 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 a curriculum broken down into very small steps. Some pupils communicate by gesture, eye pointing or symbols, others by very simple language.”

In designing and shaping the curriculum for pupils at Oxlow Bridge, we recognise that all our pupils have unique abilities and ways of learning. There will be no one set curriculum pathway that will work for all. Each of our students will be making differing rates of progress which could be intermittent or working to maintain skills.

We are therefore designing this framework to be completely personalised and focus on the holistic needs of each individual.

We aim to offer each pupil a broad and balanced curriculum that is matched to their individual needs. We believe that our pupils learn by supporting and developing their strengths and abilities through engagement with the world around them, including social interactions and relationships. Our curriculum will be delivered in a completely integrated approach. We believe that every part of the pupils' day should be seen as an opportunity for learning, including times needed to meet their physical, care and medical needs. Everything that happens throughout the pupils' day is important.

Communication will underpin the curriculum for all our students, and for most of them, their personalised curriculum will be delivered in a very sensory based way. Pupil engagement will be the starting point of our curriculum.

The personalised curriculum will reflect the individual needs of each learner, and as such, it will be further developed and refined as a priority by the new staff team throughout the school's first year.

As a starting point we will be adapting the personalised curriculum model from similar local schools, using the baseline information that the pupils are coming in with from the Early years SEN team and referencing the EYFS framework.

Aims:

The Curriculum at Oxlow Bridge will :

- Be personalised and pupil-led using their interests
- Provide safe opportunities for pupils to excel with high aspirations for all

- Be ambitious and challenging for all pupils
- Provide a range of age appropriate, meaningful and exciting opportunities to develop pupils' strengths and functional skills from Early Years through to Post 16 and into adult life
- Provide an immersive, holistic, physical, multi-sensory approach to meet all learners' needs
- Involve a Total Communication approach to ensure the highest levels of engagement and achievement
- Be outward looking giving students' confidence, making them ready to embrace the world around them
- Encourage all staff to work closely with other professionals, parents, multi agencies and the local community to ensure learning is a continuous process
- Encourage all stakeholders to be as creative as possible in meeting the needs of all current and future learners
- Be fun and exciting!

Organisation and Delivery model:

The design of personalised learning for each pupil will start from the content and needs identified within their Education, Health Care Plan. This process will be co-produced with families, health and social care providers and include input from everyone who works with and is important to the pupil. The pupil voice will be at the heart of the EHCP and families and professionals will identify the next steps together. The objectives identified from the EHCP will be the starting point for the personalised curriculum and are used to plot each pupils "Bridges to Success" plan. Evidence and feedback generated from the Bridges to success plan, will form the basis of the school's assessment process, for which we will use the Earwig software programme.

Using all areas of the EHCP to generate the Bridges to success plan, will ensure that every pupil will be at the centre of their own personalised, holistic, broad and balanced curriculum.

We recognise that the majority of our pupils will be at very early stages of development and will all progress in different ways and at different rates. We have designed a focused curriculum which starts with their individual needs rather than a curriculum written for typically developing children. Pupils need to develop positive and secure relationships with familiar adults, to explore the world around them using their sensory and physical abilities and establish ways in which they can communicate with other people. Each pupils' Bridges to success plan, is continually evolving and next steps will be identified as they make small steps of progress. Skills progression will be different for each pupil.

As part of their planning, teachers will produce a "Curriculum Map" for each pupil per term, which will show the curriculum provision, personalised to each pupil. The "Curriculum Maps" will form the basis for teachers termly planning and show how the personalised bridges to success targets are embedded in each session. The content of each pupil's Curriculum Map and the activities used to facilitate their bridges to success targets will be designed around what motivates and engages each pupil. Each target will be able to be delivered within all curriculum areas shown on the pupils' Curriculum Map.

Teachers will further break down the provision content from the individual Curriculum Maps in their planning and show how each pupils targets are being worked on within each session, activity or part of their day. A topic-based approach is used and this is seen in the teachers planning and matched to the pupils' bridges to success targets.

The delivery of teaching will look different for each pupil throughout the day. Some lessons are delivered to whole or small groups whilst focusing on different outcomes for each pupil. Others are individual and focused on a very particular small step target.

Retrieval practice is embedded throughout the school. We recognise that most of our pupils need activities to be repeated multiple times to develop awareness, anticipation, engagement and consolidation of learning. This approach supports our pupils unique learning needs and pacing.

Once learning is secure, we will look at transferring skills into different contexts. Pupils develop different skills as the activities are repeated, allowing for gradual progress and re-enforcement. The curriculum is pupil-led and learning is negotiated and changed to reflect pupils likes, talents and interests and their engagement. If something is not working, we change it!

We recognise that with our cohort of pupils it is not always possible to remain within the boundaries of SMART targets and we may also refer to the thinking behind the Scruffy targets approach (courtesy of Penny Lacey): -

Student led, Creative, Relevant, Unspecified, Fun, For Youngsters

A large number of our pupils have complex medical and degenerative conditions. We recognise that that for these pupils there may be a focus on maintaining skills rather than an expected level of progress. Their Bridges to success plans will be sensitively adjusted to reflect this.

Rigorous induction and ongoing CPD will enable all staff to understand the thinking behind the holistic curriculum and form an integral part of recognising that every interaction is a learning opportunity. Care and medical needs will be seen by all as an integral part of pupils learning.

We will be using Earwig as the basis for our personalised assessment and this will be matched to the pupils' targets and linked to the engagement model.

Although pupils may be working at the same developmental level throughout the school, the delivery style will vary as they go through the school, with a greater emphasis on community-based learning and experiences as they get older. The curriculum at the moment will focus solely on Primary aged children. The development of this model, and the change in focus to reflect the different age-related needs as pupils move through the school, will form part of the Development Plan. This will include embedding Preparing for Adulthood and enabling pupils to have as much choice and control over their lives as possible so that they are ready for new adventures when they leave Oxlow Bridge.

Curriculum Organisation

Oxlow Bridge will include an assessment nursery offering part time, full time and split placement places for children from the age of 3-4 in the year before Reception.

Stay and play sessions will be initially offered, where parents will be invited to join their child for their first few sessions whilst we get to know them.

New children will start with an offer of 2-3 sessions. These may be morning/afternoon sessions or a combination of both. The number of sessions will vary depending on individual need and will increase as they become more settled and confident.

The first 2 classes in the primary team at Oxlow Bridge will open in September 2025. They will contain predominantly reception aged pupils. From the current known cohort, no pupils have previously attended any school. There will be an intense personalised induction for all pupils, using parents and professionals who are known to the to support this transition. Once established, it is envisaged that most of the learning will be class-based and the 2 classes will be roughly grouped into similar learning needs.

The Secondary and Post 16 model will develop as pupils join and move through Oxlow Bridge and this will form a detailed focus area for the Development Plan. It is envisaged that as pupils move into the Secondary Team in the school, they will remain grouped into base groups, but there will be lots more opportunities for students to choose activities that they are more interested in and to learn in mixed groups across the Key Stages. They will become familiar with a wider range of staff and peers and there will be a greater emphasis on learning beyond the classroom. Relevant specialist entry 1 qualification and awards that can be accessed by this cohort will be explored at this point.

A Post 16 provision will be the final development and the focus of learning will change significantly to look at preparation for adult life, however, the principles of the curriculum will remain the same with a personalised provision, based on the EHCP. We will develop partnerships with providers to transition to opportunities for students beyond school.

Wider curriculum opportunities and entitlement

Offsite Opportunities and Outdoor Learning:

At Oxlow Bridge, we regard opportunities for learning in different environments, outdoors, onsite and through visits off site as an integral part of our curriculum and an entitlement for all.

We will try to build these opportunities in for all pupils across the year, linked to the topic-based themes and their individual bridges to success plans.

This will offer the chance to develop skills such as play, collaborative-working, communication, gross and fine-motor development in real life contexts and are an impactful way to engage with the real world. We will actively seek daily opportunities to get our students out and about accessing their local community and using their learning in the real world, such as shopping, visiting cafes, green spaces, libraries and arts venues.

The opportunities for off-site learning for all pupils will increase as they go through the school, linked to the Preparing for Adulthood agenda, with the aim that they are able to achieve maximum choice and control over their lives and play a meaningful part in their community when they leave school.

Opportunities offered could include extended day and residential experiences.

Cultural enrichment

We will aim to provide access to a wide variety of different cultural experiences, linked to the topic-based themes, both through off site visits and invitations to cultural partners to lead activities on site. All pupils will be given the opportunity to access these throughout their school career and we will aim to give all pupils the opportunity to share in activities alongside their peers from mainstream schools.

We will meet our requirements for a daily act of worship through class reflection times including circle time and our weekly whole school celebration assembly.

Things that are important to each individual pupil will be reflected in this and all celebrations will be shared. We will hold whole school themed days and weeks that also help to celebrate and reflect our cultural diversity.

In addition, we will hold whole school events to recognise other citizenship events such as Red Nose Day, Children in Need and World Book Day.

Inclusion and Accessibility

Equality is a fundamental right that must be allowed to all children regardless of race, culture, gender, sexual orientation or special educational needs.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all children will play a full and active part and that no child will be excluded from accessing the curriculum on the grounds of race, culture, gender or special educational needs or disability. Despite the complex nature of the pupils at Oxlow Bridge, we are committed to finding a way to deliver this entitlement to all.

Professional Development

The curriculum offer will be enhanced and supported by regular training and professional development for staff. This will be delivered through a staff development model that links the new team at Oxlow Bridge into existing PMLD expertise through a shared professional network. This will develop and build on best practice, encourage staff collaboration and develop exciting learning conversations. Oxlow Bridge aims to be at the front and become leaders in new developments and curriculum approaches for PMLD pupils. Long term we will develop close links with special school colleagues regionally and nationally to achieve this.