



Curriculum Policy for pupils with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties PMLD

Mission Statement

*At St Giles we are passionate about learning. Our school community includes and values everyone, working together to achieve in a supportive, caring and professional way.
Our enthusiasm and positive energy makes St Giles a truly happy and vibrant place to be.*

Background

St. Giles is a school for pupils aged 4-19 with physical disabilities, complex medical needs, complex speech and language difficulties and associated learning difficulties, moderate (MLD), severe (SLD) and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD).

This curriculum policy is written for learners working within levels P1 to P4; these learners typically have profound and multiple learning difficulties.

Defining Characteristics of PMLD learners :

- Pre-verbal in terms of intent
- May communicate for needs and wants only
- Physically reliant on others
- Significant difficulty with understanding abstract concepts
- Limited understanding of cause and effect

Learning at this stage needs to

- happen throughout the day
- be interactive
- be cross curricular
- be person centred
- promote proactivity

Over the week there is a balance of learning opportunities across the core areas which are:

- ❖ My communication
- ❖ My thinking
- ❖ My body
- ❖ My feelings
- ❖ My world
- ❖ My creativity

This includes personalised learning, therapy programmes and group activities.

Pathways from Reception to Year 14

Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties typically enter St Giles when they are rising 5 and stay until they are 19 however pupils also enter and leave the school at different points in their school life.

Pupils at St Giles are educated in age appropriate groups with children of similar learning needs. Although learning is highly personalised each class links in to the department creative curriculum topic to give breadth of experience. Pupils join with their departments for assemblies, whole school events and WOW events.

Pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are part of the Early Years department and follow the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. They are typically working from birth to 11 months. Staff set next steps targets and record observations and digital evidence in each pupil's Learning Journal across the Early Years areas of learning and development.

Pupils transfer to Primary for Years 3 to 6. Progress continues to be recorded in each child's Learning Journal through observations and digital evidence with summative assessment recorded against P levels.

Pupils then move to secondary for Key Stage 3, 4 and 5. Again pupils link with their departments. Progress is recorded in Evidence Files and pupils work towards Unit Awards in core subjects. As pupils approach Year 14 they focus on life skills and prepare to move onto adult provision. Pupils have regular trips into the local community to learn to cope with different people, surroundings and situations.

Although learning remains between P1 to P4 pupils grow into teenagers and young adults. The curriculum content reflects this and stories, songs and equipment become more teenage appropriate. However many pupils will still have the same favourite activities throughout their time at school.

Planning and assessment

Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make very small steps of progress, and skills need to be consolidated across a wide range of contexts. Pupils need to revisit earlier skills in different contexts, with new people and with new resources before they are ready to move on. Pupils also need to feel secure, through working with familiar people, in familiar surroundings and with a high degree of routine to enable them to make their next leaps of progress. Some pupils may work very hard simply to maintain their skills, and some may lose skills, particularly those with regressive conditions.

The creative curriculum topics in each department provide a vehicle for learning for all pupils. In PMLD classes this helps to widen the experiences and resources that the pupils encounter and engage with, making learning fun and relevant for pupils and staff. Planning from observations of pupil development is more important than National Curriculum subjects. Pupils' next steps targets usually focus on communication, physical development and personal and social development.

To aid the teacher in planning appropriately for each learner St Giles has developed P level small steps assessment sheets. These are used from Year 1 onwards in conjunction with the 'Early Learning Development Bands', 'Routes for Learning' and the 'Scope' assessment to assess where a learner is and where they could go next. However P levels should not confine the curriculum or the learning. Planning

should focus on the individual, their longer term goals and the small steps to achieve them. Planning should also provide a wealth of rich experiences to make learning highly motivating and relevant.

All staff contribute to the continual assessment of each child through objective observations. These inform the planning for the pupil and the setting of next steps. Next steps targets are identified for each pupil to enable them to develop new skills or to consolidate learning and skills in new contexts.

End of year summative assessment gives a best fit judgement of the developmental band or P level a child is working within at that point in time.

Learning

Learning takes place across the whole school day – in the classroom, sensory rooms, hygiene room, hydro pool, in leisure activities, during lunch, inside, outside and off the school site. Much learning will be incidental - those unplanned moments when a learner demonstrates a skill or responds to a stimulus that show real learning and understanding.

Learning needs to be engaging so the creative arts play an important part in the delivery of a PMLD curriculum. Pupils participate in art, drama and music activities with the focus on process rather than an end product.

Technology is also used creatively to support learning – lights, switches, music, projected images, interactive toys, iPads, touch screens and sensory rooms all provide fun ways to develop exploration, shared attention and cause and effect. Some pupils also use eye gaze technology to develop early cause and effect and communication skills.

Pupils with PMLD all learn in different ways and because of their complexity of needs they need very personalised learning plans and high staff input to enable them to make the best possible progress. Pupils need 1-1 to facilitate high quality interactions, therapy programmes and medical interventions and 2-1 to support personal care and positioning. The adults need to follow the child's lead, providing routines and variations that facilitate and extend learning, as well as meet individual holistic needs. The pupil should be comfortable, happy and socially stimulated, in a safe environment.

Multiagency working

Class staff work with Physiotherapists, Occupational therapists, Speech and Language therapists and nurses to meet the needs of each pupil. They integrate each pupil's therapy and care programmes into the school day with training and support from the multiagency team. The therapists and nurses are based at school and are available to advise and review programmes as needed. Multiagency meetings are held each term for all those involved with the child to review their needs and programmes. Some pupils also have input from the Visual Impairment and Hearing Impairment Services and from other medical professionals.

Physiotherapy (Physio) – pupils' programmes are integrated into the day and week. Programmes are personalised and could include standing and walking programmes, stretches, bench sitting, orthotics, Rebound therapy and Hydrotherapy.

Occupational Therapy (OT) – OTs support pupils with specialist seating, sensory processing programmes, hand splints and individual programmes

Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) – communication plays a central part of the PMLD curriculum. Staff use touch signs, real objects and key words to cue children in to activities. They use Intensive Interaction and sensory and interactive approaches to work on shared attention, cause and effect, exploration, simple choices and other early communication skills.

By working together we provide a rich and meaningful curriculum which builds on the individual interests of all pupils and addresses their differing needs enabling them to engage successfully with their learning.