

## Our Curriculum Intent

Priestley Smith School caters for students aged 2-19 years from across the West Midlands region, all of whom have significant vision impairment. Many of our students have additional needs which impact on their learning.

At Priestley Smith, our curriculum is underpinned by our ethos and values. Our fully accessible curriculum not only reflects the needs of our VI students, but also promotes a love of learning and personal growth.

We do this through an experiential, creative and relevant specialist curriculum which inspires and motivates all students to develop as individuals and achieve their potential. We support our students and equip them with the skills and attributes they need to become confident, independent and respectful young adults, who have ambitious aspirations for their futures. We recognise the challenges faced by young people with vision impairments and help them to develop the strategies to overcome any barriers.

Our curriculum takes into account the fact that many of our students have additional needs which include learning, communication, physical and social and emotional difficulties. It is therefore essential that the curriculum we offer, while paying full regard to national guidelines, is fit for purpose in meeting this range of need.

We recognise that many, though not all, of our students are working below their chronological levels and that it is essential that the curriculum we offer provides a clear progression in learning and skills, geared at the individual learning level of each child rather than at age-related expectations. Our teachers therefore plan the curriculum for each child, ensuring that the learning they undertake is appropriate to their level of understanding and provides the correct level of challenge. Our curriculum is designed to allow teachers to draw from concepts within current and previous key stages and to provide regular opportunities to revisit and consolidate areas of learning. We follow a **stage not age** approach across all key stages of the school.

Through our teaching we aim to:

- Encourage independence for each student in both learning and personal development.
- Offer learning through first-hand experience so that students with vision impairment have a greater understanding of concepts which may otherwise prove abstract and remote.
- Dovetail their specialist VI curriculum in their everyday learning e.g braille, ICT accessibility, independent living skills and mobility.
- Actively involve students in their learning so that it is meaningful and enables them to take responsibility for their own progress.
- Develop the student's ability to work together as part of a team and to regard positively what other students offer. We strive to develop an attitude of tolerance and respect for all.
- Ensure that students understand that learning is not simply about acquiring knowledge but also about developing essential skills that can be related to new and future learning.
- Encourage students to have fun in learning and to be proud of their achievements.
- Help develop a positive attitude towards lifelong learning and prepare our students for adulthood.
- Develop in our students the skills and values to live in a diverse and ever changing modern world.
- Promote strong mental health and well-being in our students by building their resilience and coping strategies.

# THE CURRICULUM AT FOUNDATION STAGE AND KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

## THE FOUNDATION STAGE CURRICULUM

Foundation Stage pupils enter school from 2 years of age. They spend 2 years in this group and the curriculum has been created in order to utilise the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile in planning and assessment.

Children's learning is often at a very early stage in this phase, as a result of vision impairment, lack of incidental learning and a limited understanding of the world around them. It is frequently exacerbated by additional needs which include learning, communication, physical and social and emotional difficulties. It is essential, therefore, that the curriculum offered provides every opportunity for learning through first hand experiences in order to develop greater understanding, knowledge and independence. The curriculum takes into account all the needs of the child, in relation to learning, social, self-care, physical, emotional and communication needs.

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is based on the stage not age approach which reflects the individual learning levels of each child. Highly differentiated and holistic programmes are delivered in the core areas of

- Communication and language
- Mathematical development
- Literacy
- Personal and Social Development
- Physical Development
- Expressive Arts
- Technology

The topic matrix for Foundation Stage shows a 2 year cycle with themes which allow for children to use their individual knowledge of the world as a starting point and to gradually extend understanding through planned visits, activities and first hand experiences. (Please see the Foundation Stage topic matrix, Appendix 1)

Children's progress is tracked using the EYFS and the Development Matters profile as well as more detailed in-house assessment procedures which record emerging and developing skills in the early years, at the pace of the individual child.

Children are baselined on entry to the Foundation Stage, in liaison with parents/carers, and their progress is assessed daily by Foundation staff.

## THE KEY STAGE 1 AND 2 CURRICULUM

The Primary Department in Priestley Smith School has created a broad, balanced, rich and exciting curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 which not only meets national requirements but also meets the wide range of needs of its pupils. All students have severe vision impairment but many also have additional needs which include learning, communication, physical, medical and social and emotional difficulties.

Many of our students are working below their chronological levels and the curriculum we offer in the Primary Department therefore provides a **Stage not Age** approach, drawing upon concepts from previous key stages as necessary. Teachers plan student learning at an individual level and incorporate both academic and essential independence skills. Students study both the national curriculum and a VI specialist curriculum incorporating braille, mobility, Independent Living Skills and IT accessibility.

The curriculum offered provides every opportunity for learning through first hand experiences in order to develop greater understanding, knowledge and independence. The curriculum takes into account all the needs of the child, in relation to learning, social, self-care, physical, emotional and communication needs.

Our curriculum is based upon a thematic approach, delivered over a two year cycle at Key Stage 1 and a four year cycle at Key Stage 2. Topics have been chosen to ensure maximum access for VI learners and incorporate a range of

subjects including history, geography, art, technology and science. While literacy and numeracy skills are practised and included within topic areas, they are also taught as separate subjects, following a progression of skills and concepts in accordance with each child's individual learning level. Literacy teaching includes speaking and listening, reading, writing and spelling. Numeracy includes number, shape and space, measures, data handling and using and applying. Literacy and numeracy are taught on a daily basis within the Primary Department. Music, PE, Modern Foreign Languages, RE and PSHE are also taught as discrete subjects.

Pupils are fully involved in all their learning and are offered opportunities to re-visit and embed previously learned skills. In subjects such as geography and history, the concepts of which are sometimes difficult for vision impaired pupils to understand fully, increased attention is paid to making learning come to life, using visits, field trips, role play and artefacts.

The following aims are incorporated into all subjects of the curriculum

Aim	How we do this in Key Stage 1
Encourage independence for each student in both learning and personal development.	Children are encouraged to have greater independence over their belongings i.e. self-registration, hanging up their coats, putting their folders ready. We focus on developing skills to become independent learners, sitting in a group and listening to others, talking at appropriate times, following instructions and asking for help, collecting own equipment and carrying out familiar tasks independently.
Offer learning through first-hand experience so that students with vision impairment have a greater understanding of concepts which may otherwise prove abstract and remote.	At every opportunity students are presented with real objects to examine and explore. We also make sure that where necessary there is a range of objects. For example, when learning about seeds the children are not just given one type of seed but a large selection of different seeds. Children are also taken out into different environments to further gain an understanding and real experiences.
Dovetail the specialist VI curriculum in their everyday learning e.g braille, ICT accessibility, independent living skills and mobility.	We use adapted equipment within each lesson, sloped desks, tactile diagrams, enlarged print, lined paper, pre braille resources, use of ICT, big keys keyboards. Each child has 1:1 habilitation sessions and group skills sessions.
Actively involve students in their learning so that it is meaningful and enables them to take responsibility for their own progress, so that they know how to improve.	Children are supported in their transition from a play-based learning environment to a more formal way of learning. Children partake in verbal feedback of their work and are rewarded for good work, attitude and behaviour. Children are also encouraged to share their learning with home and will be given homework to further their learning.
Develop the student's ability to work together as part of a team and to regard positively what other students offer. We strive to develop an attitude of tolerance and respect for all.	Children are taught about the feelings of others, how their behaviour can affect others and having respect for other people. This is something that is continually reinforced and promoted across the curriculum. Students are taught to take turns, and to work in pairs and groups.
Ensure that students understand that learning is not simply about acquiring knowledge but also about developing essential skills that can be related to new and future learning. Children are taught to generalise specific skills.	Students will be encouraged to transfer new skills to other areas, such as, phonics skills that can be used in every other subject. Through developing speech and language skills children are more able to verbalise their ideas, knowledge, asking questions and increasing their desire to learn new things.

<p>Encourage students to have fun in learning and to be proud of their achievements. They are encouraged to 'have a go' and to enjoy their own achievements.</p>	<p>A variety of learning activities are used including practical sessions, games, roleplay, experiments and group activities. Each child has a reward chart, they receive stickers, they are involved in a weekly celebration assembly and home school diaries are used to communicate achievements with parents.</p>
<p>Help develop a positive attitude towards lifelong learning and prepare our students for adulthood.</p>	<p>Children are encouraged to ask questions about why and how and also to develop their enthusiasm to learn. The children are taken into the wider community to develop their understanding of the world and their role within it. For example, during harvest week the children were taken to visit Acorns where they made donations and bought items with the knowledge that they were helping others by doing so. Children are provided with lots of opportunities to develop their independent living skills and are encouraged to use these skills on a daily basis.</p>
<p>Develop in our students the skills and values to live in a diverse and ever changing modern world.</p>	<p>Children are encouraged and supported to try new things, to take risks and involve themselves in different aspects of life. Children are encouraged to use aids and technology that will assist and help them.</p>
<p>Promote strong mental health and well-being in our students by building their resilience and coping strategies.</p>	<p>Children are encouraged to talk about their feelings. They are assured that it is ok to feel angry or sad and they are given coping strategies for when they feel this way. Children are encouraged to speak up and have their opinions heard and to listen to and respect what their friends are saying. Children are also encouraged to be good friends and to help their peers and understand if they are upset or angry.</p>

Aim	How we do this in Key Stage 2
Encourage independence for each student in both learning and personal development.	Children are encouraged to have greater independence over their belongings i.e. hanging up their coats, putting their home-school diaries and folder ready, using lockers. We focus on developing skills to become independent learners, sitting in a group and listening to others, talking at appropriate times, following instructions, asking for help, building a 'have-a-go' attitude, working without adult support.
Offer learning through first-hand experience so that students with vision impairment have a greater understanding of concepts which may otherwise prove abstract and remote.	At every opportunity students are presented with real objects to examine and explore. We also make sure that where necessary there is a range of objects for sensory needs. Children are also taken out into different environments to further gain an understanding and experiences e.g. visiting a Roman fort, the Black Country Museum. Visitors are arranged to support learning in school.
Dovetail the specialist VI curriculum in their everyday learning e.g braille, ICT accessibility, independent living skills and mobility.	We use adapted equipment within each lesson, sloped desks, tactile diagrams, enlarged print, lined paper, pre braille resources, use of ICT, big keys keyboards, CCTVs, Braille Notes, Perkins brailier. Each child has 1:1 habilitation sessions, touch typing, specialist ICT (JAWS and Zoom Text) and group skills sessions, including independent living skills and Brain Gym.
Actively involve students in their learning so that it is meaningful and enables them to take responsibility for their own progress and next steps.	Children receive verbal feedback during the lesson and written and verbal feedback of their work after the learning has taken place. EHCP targets are referred to and discussed with the children, including by the learning mentors. Children are also encouraged to share their learning with home and will be given homework to further their learning.
Develop the student's ability to work together as part of a team and to regard positively what other students offer. We strive to develop an attitude of tolerance and respect for all.	Children are taught about the feelings of others, how their behaviour can affect others and having respect for other people. Children have the opportunity to work together, in pairs and in small groups, in a variety of subject areas. Residential and day trips provide an opportunity for team-work activities, for example at the West Bromwich Albion SEN Festivals. Children are encouraged to peer-assess their work, sharing positives and areas for development.
Ensure that students understand that learning is not simply about acquiring knowledge but also about developing essential skills that can be related to new and future learning.	Students will be encouraged to transfer new skills to other areas. Specialist ICT skills are used across all subject areas, for example using JAWS to research a historical topic on the internet or using an iPad to scan items.
Encourage students to have fun in learning and to be proud of their achievements. Parents are informed about achievements daily through Marvellous Me.	A variety of learning activities are used including practical sessions, games, roleplay, experiments and group activities. Achievements are celebrated in a variety of ways, including: weekly Golden Book assemblies, end of term assemblies, positive praise, written comments in home-school diaries and on social media.
Help develop a positive attitude towards lifelong learning and prepare our students for adulthood.	Children are encouraged to ask questions about why and how and also to develop their enthusiasm to learn. The children are taken into the wider community to develop their understanding of the world and their role within it. Children participate in breakfast club, supported by Greggs, twice a week to support the development of their independent living skills. Opportunities are arranged for children to engage with visitors with whom they can relate and discuss relevant issues. Classes work closely with the

	habilitation team officers. Transition activities are planned to support the move through school.
Develop in our students the skills and values to live in a diverse and ever changing modern world.	Children are encouraged and supported to try new things, to take risks and involve themselves in different aspects of life. Children are encouraged to use aids and technology that will assist and help them.
Promote strong mental health and well-being in our students by building their resilience and coping strategies.	Children are encouraged to talk about their feelings. They are assured that it is ok to feel angry or sad and they are given coping strategies for when they feel this way. Children are encouraged to speak up and have their opinions heard and to listen to and respect what their friends are saying. Children are also encouraged to be good friends and to help their peers and understand if they are upset or angry. Children may receive additional support from their learning mentor and or designated mental health lead.

### Assessment at Priestley Smith

Assessment can take a variety of forms.

It may be summative or formative.

Activities associated with **summative assessment** result in an evaluation of overall student achievement in a subject- for example, allocation to a level or standard or allocation of a letter or numerical grade e.g. Stage 2b, Level 2 Merit, GCSE grade 4 etc. These summative assessments might appear in reports, the school's achievement trackers or the school's assessment record system-Classroom Monitor.

In the classroom we focus mainly on **formative assessment (Assessment for Learning)**.

Activities associated with **formative assessment** do not result in an overall evaluation or grade. Instead they focus on establishing what a student knows, understands and is able to do. Formative assessment (Assessment for Learning) is used by both the teacher and the learner to determine where learners are in their learning, where they need to go next and how best to get there.

### What Assessment for Learning strategies do we use in the classroom?

Research has identified a number of classroom strategies that are particularly effective in promoting formative assessment practice.

Assessment for Learning strategies involve:

- **The Strategic Use of Questioning**

Questioning is used not only as a pedagogical tool to extend pupil learning but also as a deliberate way for the teacher to find out what students know, understand and are able to do.

- **Effective Teacher Feedback**

Effective teacher feedback focuses on established success criteria and tells the students what they have achieved and where they need to improve. Importantly, the feedback provides specific constructive suggestions about how those improvements might be achieved. Effective teacher feedback does not simply state that a piece of work is good, excellent or poor but explains why this is the case and how a student can further improve their work- the exact steps they need to take to reach set criteria. At Priestley Smith School all staff follow an agreed marking policy which promotes effective feedback.

- **Peer Feedback**

Peer feedback occurs when a student uses agreed success criteria to tell another student what they have achieved and where improvement is necessary. Again, the feedback provides specific suggestions to help achieve improvement.

- **Student Self-assessment**

Student self-assessment encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning. Students assess their own work against explicitly communicated learning objectives and decide their own next steps. They discuss this self-assessment with their peers, teaching and support staff. As part of this process students may also decide whether they think they have understood the work fully or whether they need further intervention and support. This decision is discussed with their teacher.

- **The Formative use of Summative Assessment**

Summative assessment is a necessary aspect of education. Formative use can be made of summative assessment, both before and after the assessment event. Students may for example discuss with their teacher the standards required to reach a particular stage, grade or level.

### **How do we measure progress?**

In the Primary Department each child's progress is measured in small steps across all subjects.

In the Foundation Stage, progress is recorded using Development Matters. In Key Stage 1 and 2 progress can start from P Scales (Pre Stage 1) and then go through Stages 1 to 8.

#### **Ps1 through to Ps8**

Pupils beyond P levels will be assessed in Stages

#### **Stage 1 through to Stage 8**

Each stage is broken down into small steps and your child will progress through the following pathway:

**Beginning, Beginning +**

**Developing, Developing +**

**Secure, Exceeding**

### **Assessment for our pupils.**

VI students take longer to complete tasks so this must be allowed for when setting assessments. For Braille users questions often need to be modified so there is less reliance on visual cues. SATS papers available in large print and Braille. It may be necessary to provide tactile diagrams separate to the question paper.

At Key Stage 1 and 2 we use summative assessment throughout the year to in the following ways

**Regular homework** that is marked and assessed according the stage descriptions above, for example –

- How many different ways can 50p be made using coins?
- Add the correct punctuation to this paragraph.

**Class tests** used at key points in a topic to assess knowledge and skills according the stage descriptions above, for example

- Starter quiz/practical activity on previous learning such as which of these animals are herbivores?
- Worksheet to check pupil can match information, for example matching antonyms.

**End of topic test** to assess knowledge and skills according the stage descriptions above

### **Formative Assessment**

- **The Strategic Use of Questioning**

- Higher-level open questions – Explain how some changes can result in the formation of new materials and that this kind of change is not usually reversible.
- Factual recall questions - Name different types of rock and describe the differences

- **Effective Teacher Feedback**

Marking of work will identify what they have achieved and set a small step target to improve such as

- You have used full-stops and capital letters well in your sentences, next you need to think about adding question marks and exclamation marks at the end of a sentence.
- Explain your answer using the words, plant, stem, leaves and roots.

- **Peer Feedback**

In Key Stage 2 students will read each other's answers to see if they agree, and discuss. This encourages pupil communication and positive interactions too. They will also positively comment on student presentations.

- **Student Self-assessment**

Pupils will

- Set own objectives for the lesson based on previous feedback.
- They mark quizzes and mini tests against a mark scheme.

They complete regular self-assessment target sheets and discuss their progress with their Learning Mentor.