



SEND POLICY

Priestley Smith Specialist VI School

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1. Aims and values

Priestley Smith School is committed to the rights of the child as outlined in the UN Convention and is working towards Rights Respecting Schools silver award. This belief influences everything the school does and impacts upon all our policies.

Article 28 Every child has the right to an education.

Article 23 A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence and to play an active part in the community. Governments must do all they can to support disabled children and their families.

Article 29 Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full.

Article 31 Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

The School's beliefs and values

The school's objectives in educating our pupils are to ensure maximum academic and social development and independence.

Our Vision

To be an outward-looking centre of excellence in the education of children with visual impairments.

Our Mission

Through high quality teaching, learning and pastoral care, to develop confident, caring and independent young people who are able to succeed in the world in their chosen field.

Our Aims

At Priestley Smith School we aim to provide:

- A safe, caring and supportive learning environment which enables all students to achieve to their maximum potential and encourages them to be as confident, resourceful and independent as possible
- High quality first hand learning experiences for all students, delivered by specialist teaching and support staff
- Full access to a broad, balanced and highly differentiated mainstream curriculum, modified to meet the visual, learning and social needs of each child
- Opportunities for both academic and social inclusion throughout all phases with campus and local schools
- Small groups with a high teacher-student ratio
- Consistently high quality resources and materials for all students, including specially adapted Information and Communication Technology
- Individualised training in mobility and Independent Living Skills, delivered by specialist, on-site habilitation staff
- A range of additional extra-curricular activities to supplement class-based learning
- An environment in which diversity is celebrated and in which all barriers to inclusion are challenged
- A close working partnership with parents and carers, which enables them to be fully involved in their child's learning

Students are taught to challenge any barriers placed before them and to realise that, while they might tackle a task in a different way to their peers, all things are possible. Their visual disability does not define who they are. It is with these principles in mind that this document should be read.

The purpose of this document is to briefly describe the specialist support and teaching adaptation for visually impaired children and adaptations for those children who have additional difficulties.

2. Identifying individual needs

Admissions: Priestley Smith Specialist School provides a specialist education for children and young people who have vision impairment.

Children are admitted to the school through Birmingham LA Provision Panel. All have an Educational, Health and Care Plan for visual impairment or are in the process of being assessed. Occasionally, a pupil will be admitted prior to the completion of the assessment process if it is clear the pupil is very likely to be placed at Priestley Smith and the parents have named Priestley Smith as their preferred school or if the pupil is a recent entrant to the UK and a full assessment is required at the same time as providing an urgent educational placement.

Priestley Smith will then make their own detailed assessment of what the child or young person can do and the areas where they need support. This assessment will be discussed with parents at a meeting in the first term. Class teachers assess achievement and progress in all lessons and complete detailed records which are used to identify any further needs and to identify the next steps for learning. Parents are invited to two meetings each year to discuss their child's progress. Education, Health and Care Plans are reviewed every year, taking account of the assessment made throughout the year.

Many students have additional needs e.g. hearing impairment, learning disability, physical disability, medical needs, communication difficulties, Autistic Spectrum Condition, social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The degree of pupils' attainment is assessed before and on entry to placement. If it is felt that the school's curriculum cannot meet their needs, a placement elsewhere is considered. It is exceptional for a child to be admitted to the school and then relocated shortly after recent entry for this reason as it is hoped that the original assessment and Educational, Health and Care Plan will have confirmed accurately their specialist needs. In cases where pupil needs change over time, it may be appropriate for a child to transfer to mainstream school or college or an alternative special school or resource base during their school career.

The School's catchment area is a regional one covering all of Birmingham, plus other local regional authorities e.g. Walsall, Sandwell, Dudley, Solihull, Wolverhampton, Warwickshire.

Parents who think that Priestley Smith Specialist School may be the right place for their child are welcome to make an informal visit. If they then decide that they would like their child to attend Priestley Smith, they need to ask their local authority to make an official referral. There is a link to the Admissions Process on the school websites for further information.

3. Core provision

Priestley Smith School is committed to making outstanding provision for all children and young people placed in its care. In doing so it takes account of the learning environment, the curriculum and teaching approaches, staffing and partnership working as set out below.

3.1 The learning environment

Priestley Smith Specialist School works to create an environment where children and young people can be themselves and enjoy learning. Achievement is consistently celebrated through positive comments, rewards and certificates. Displays in classrooms and around the schools recognise achievement and progress.

All adults seek to build strong relationships with the children and young people in their care and to create a safe and nurturing ethos.

Children and young people are supported to recognise and celebrate diversity.

Within this environment children and young people are supported to build confidence and self-esteem and to make progress in every aspect of learning from their individual starting points.

The School uses its funding efficiently to provide excellent facilities in terms of a purpose built school with wide accessible corridors for the vision impaired as well as specialist resources to deliver the curriculum through specialist teaching areas, developing provision for ICT and classroom equipment. The Specialist VI curriculum is also delivered alongside the National Curriculum and includes Habilitation, access to specialist reprographics, Braille teaching and specialist assistive technologies.

Priestley Smith Specialist School has benefitted from improvements to its playgrounds and secondary play area and the installation of new sensory garden and a sensory room.

3.1.1 The Building

Priestley Smith is sited on a purpose built mainstream campus. Attention is paid, in all areas of the building, to adaptations which control natural and artificial light in order to provide a good, glare free level of ambient light.

Raised boards on tables in the classroom are of a specialist design, which bring the work, if necessary, closer to the child, thus affording magnification and ease of posture whilst working. Corridors are wide enough to allow the use of long canes and equipment is permanently located to increase pupil independence.

Particular attention is paid to decor to give suitable light and contrast and to ensure that the pupils can locate themselves and work happily in the environment. All necessary information signs are produced in braille or other tactile forms as well as large print.

Ramps, lifts and evacuation chairs have been installed throughout the school and ensure safe exit and entrance. Specialist attention has also been paid to the playground which has tarmac and markings that provide contrast. Safety material, which is absorbent, is placed under swings and play apparatus.

The Foundation Stage playground is separately enclosed from the main playground to afford protection to pre-school pupils.

The school uses a swimming pool sited at Wilson Stuart School. The pool is one of the first purpose built pools in the world for the visually impaired. It possesses specially designed lighting to minimise glare when children are not wearing glasses. It also contains non-slip ramps and specialist acoustics.

The building is reviewed regularly for accessibility.

4 Equipment

The school has a considerable bank of specialist enlarging and lighting equipment for partially-sighted pupils as well as a variety of brailers and braille operated computer devices for blind students.

The school's specialist equipment is supplemented by distance and near low vision aids provided by the Area Health Authority and Focus. These are prescribed for individual children and to classroom and working areas in the School.

Specialist equipment, including computers with specialist magnification and speech software for the visually impaired and specialist braille equipment is maintained by school-based, specialist LA technicians for the visually impaired and by additional ICT technicians. This specialist technical service is managed and organised by school staff but is delivered on a city wide basis to all students with visual impairment.

In addition Local authority reprographics staff are employed by and based within the school. The school is equipped with print/braille embossing units which provide transcribed Grade 2 braille from a typed input or scanned print. Braille transcribers are based in a specialist resources area and produce work for visually impaired students within the school and across the city, as necessary.

Equipment List Includes:

- 1 Closed Circuit TVs-static and mobile
- 2 Specialist Furniture, Ramps, etc.
- 3 LVAs: Near/Distant
- 4 Anglepoise Lights
- 5 Speaking Thermometers/Scales/Microwave/Jugs etc.
- 6 Tactile Diagrams/Map etc.
- 7 Jaws and Zoom Text screen readers and large print displays
- 8 CCTV Enlarging specialities for science
- 9 Braille Notes (Laptop Braille Computer)
- 10 Portable CCTV
- 11 Video/DVD Equipment
- 12 Specialist backlit interactive whiteboards
- 12 Braille/Print Machines/Embosser
- 13 Minolta Heat Copiers

3.2 Curriculum

Priestley Smith Specialist School is committed to a curriculum which can be adapted for individuals, which develops the whole person and equips children and young people to take their place in the community.

The curriculum across both the primary and secondary schools is supported by research and practice in the fields of vision impairment as well as additional learning difficulties. It is designed to provide experiences which are fun, engaging and challenging and structured so that all children and young people can make progress from their individual starting points.

As part of the current School Improvement Plans, senior leaders are reviewing the curriculum and assessment in order to ensure it continues to prepare children and young people for the next stage in their lives in a changing world. Details of the Curriculum and Assessment can be found in the relevant policies.

Key areas of the curriculum across the Primary and Secondary departments are:

- the development of effective communication with other people in school, home and community through a range of systems including the use of assistive technology and Braille.
- the development of reading and phonics.
- the development of functional skills in literacy, numeracy, science and ICT.
- the use of Braille and other specialist approaches for vision impaired children.
- the development of strategies for social behaviour and working alongside other people.
- the development of strategies to support mental health and emotional wellbeing eg self-expression, sensory regulation, understanding emotions.
- the development of physical skills for functional movement, life skills and sport.
- the development of independence skills including mobility and orientation skills for children and young people with vision impairment.
- the development of life skills on site and in the community.
- enriched extracurricular activities with access to a range of experiences including clubs during lunchtimes.

Priestley Smith Specialist School works to prepare young people for the future through the above curriculum and through:

- Employment-based routes available to some young people at the end of their time in school, teaching job skills and providing career opportunities then supporting students in the workplace.
- Vocational courses in local colleges, work experience in the community and with charitable organisations.
- academic courses to study Level 3 courses in a supported placement at a Sixth Form
- mini-enterprise projects.
- identifying appropriate routes to examinations and accreditation.
- supporting children and young people to be as independent and self-reliant as possible and to take responsibility within school.
- working with young people and their parents to identify the activities which they will enjoy once they have left school and to find placements which will provide the right care and occupation and further and higher education where appropriate.

Teachers, Teaching Assistants and Habilitation Officers work with young people and their parents and with professionals from the local authority to plan for adulthood.

3.2.1 The Specialist Curriculum

The curriculum offered at Priestley Smith School is similar in most respects to the curriculum offered in mainstream schools as laid down by law, but it has significant additions and differences as it has been modified to meet the needs of children with visual impairment and is personalised to each and every child's level of learning. Specialist VI curricula ensure that each pupil has full and appropriate access to the National Curriculum and Key Stage 4 and 5 programmes of study and has the opportunity to gain the skills necessary to lead an enjoyable and purposeful adult life. The Specialist Curriculum is not always taught in isolation but underpins all learning experiences. The scope of the Specialist Curriculum is briefly summarised below:

a Habilitation Training

Each child is assessed by a qualified Habilitation specialist and a programme of training devised to meet the child's individual needs. The training can be as simple as basic road safety through to long term programmes teaching long cane technique, and developing body and spatial awareness through the use of hearing and tactile clues. The school aims to make students as independent as possible and some students, including those without vision, learn to be independent travellers, commuting to and from school on public buses independently.

Training begins in the nursery and continues throughout the child's school life, building confidence and independence. Parents play an important role in reinforcing the training at home supported by home visits from Habilitation Officers. The aims are to equip the child with the skills to travel to college or work independently and to lead a full social life.

The Habilitation Officers are employed by the school but provide support on a city wide basis to resource bases, mainstream provision and colleges under a Service Level Agreement with the city.

b Communication Skills

Touch typing is taught in small groups, to pupils over seven years of age. It involves the use of computer systems.

Braille tuition is provided for pupils whose deteriorating vision, or lack of sight, prevents them from reading and writing print. Teaching is on an individual basis and the scheme used is dependent on the child's age and level of language development. Braille books, work sheets, tactile maps and diagrams are provided to enable the child to study the same concepts as other pupils.

Specialist ICT skills are taught to all students to enable them to access fully all aspects of ICT such as word processing, databases, Internet, email, social networking etc. Specialist ICT is used across all areas of the curriculum as a principal medium of access for many students. E-safety is taught to all students.

In addition to keyboard skills a child can be taught to use different approaches to literacy, if needed, as an alternative to braille or handwriting e.g. Moon, Clicker 6 etc.

Great emphasis is placed at all ages in the school on training pupils to maximise their use of attentive and discriminating listening.

Some pupils also require alternative communication systems due to additional needs e.g. a visual timetable and use of picture symbols, now and next box etc. may be used by students with autistic spectrum condition, objects of reference may be used for children with more complex needs.

c. Low Vision Services

Among the many low vision aids used by the children in the school are optical aids, hand held and free standing magnifiers, telescopes and binoculars. These are provided by Focus whose personnel hold clinics within the school.

All classrooms are provided with Closed Circuit Televisions (CCTVs). Also available are specialist microscopes for science work.

Training and the use of these aids is seen as an essential element in the visual rehabilitation of pupils and has enabled many to take part in wider aspects of the curriculum and life outside school that would otherwise be inaccessible to them.

d Perceptual Training

Research makes it clear that children should be trained to use their vision as much as possible. In the primary department of the school visual perceptual assessment and programmes of perceptual training are followed on a regular basis so that the child makes the greatest possible use of his or her sight.

Tactile perceptual training is also provided for those children who are blind. Skills are developed and maintained in both Primary and Secondary department through the use of specialist individual lessons and are subject to regular review.

e Independence and Daily Living Skills

The term 'daily living skills' refers to those skills which the child will have to learn in order to cope with the activities of normal life and independent living. These include being able to use a knife and fork and eat independently, being able to dress themselves, a knowledge of personal hygiene, and being aware of the importance of personal presentation. In addition, daily living skills include practical activities such as cooking, washing up, using the washing machine, ironing, being able to use telephones, shopping, budgeting, food preparation etc. This subject is covered in both departments of the school. In the Secondary Department it features strongly in the ASDAN Personal Development Scheme and is also taught, where appropriate, in separate individual and group lessons.

f Physical Education

The Physical Education of children at Priestley Smith is valued very highly because of the need to encourage blind and partially sighted children to be confident and skilled in movement and to be physically fit. All children, including Nursery children, have one lesson a week in the swimming pool in addition to their P.E. lessons.

Pupils take part in a wide range of sporting activities and compete with other visually impaired children as well as with sighted peers. Such events include athletics, five-a-side football, goalball,

cycling, judo, trampolining, horse riding and swimming. Some games and equipment are modified where necessary to encourage full participation of all children, whilst ensuring their safety.

Whole day activities and residential programmes allow pupils to undergo the challenge of outdoor pursuits such as camping, orienteering, canoeing and climbing, as well as practical experience of daily living skills.

Students take part in a wide variety of extra-curricular physical activities such as dance, gym, football, judo, rock climbing. These take place predominantly at lunchtime due to after school transport issues.

[g Additional Educational Needs](#)

Visual impairment can engender considerable problems in acquiring the skills to read and write accurately, in either braille or print, as well as affecting concept development across the curriculum.

Some pupils in the school also have additional difficulties that further affect their acquisition of skills and learning e.g. hearing impairment, learning disability, physical disability, medical needs, communication difficulties, Autistic Spectrum Condition, Social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

Over 75% of our present pupil population have additional difficulties and both departments of the school have skilled teaching and support staff who carefully differentiate work to meet the specific needs and learning styles of each child. The school also works closely with LA and specialist advisory staff to meet the specific needs of pupils e.g. Steve Brown Autistic Spectrum Condition Advisors, VI Counsellor, Hearing Advisory Service, Speech and Language Therapy Team, Physiotherapy staff, Health professionals, Music Therapist etc.

3.3 Teaching approaches and strategies

Within Priestley Smith Specialist School class groups are small (typically between 6 and 12 children or young people depending on their needs). Each class teacher works with one or more teaching assistants. Teachers and teaching assistants are trained to use a range of teaching approaches. Key approaches are:

- children and young people are supported to develop effective communication through speech, objects, pictures, braille and photos, the use of technology and direct communication.
- specific, targeted teaching of key skills. learning objectives are broken into small steps and each small step is celebrated.
- The building of new knowledge on solid foundations through thematic units.
- specific interventions for English and maths where children are developing their reading and numeracy skills through a structured, consistent approach tailored to their individual needs.
- the sensory curriculum, where children and young people learn to use their senses and to explore the world through direct experience.
- functional learning, where key skills including mobility and orientations skills and independent living skills are taught in the context of activities on site or in the community which are meaningful to the children and young people concerned.
- Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) where behaviour is seen as a form of communication. Adults interpret what the child or young pupil's behaviour is telling them and work to avoid reaching a situation where the child or young person feels anxious, angry or distressed. Children and young people are helped to understand boundaries and to express their needs. Staff are trained in the use of safe physical intervention strategies
- learning through play, tactile experiences and practical activities, where children and young people are supported to learn 'hands on' in contexts which are interesting and meaningful to them.
- intensive interaction, where children and young people learn fundamental communication skills with individual support through Speech and Language Therapy where necessary.

- small group and individual work which enables children and young people to focus on new learning with close support from an adult and in a way that is highly tailored to individual needs. this may take place within the classroom as part of a class lesson or may involve working away from the classroom.

The School's view of quality teaching is set out at Appendix 3

3.3.1 Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning at Priestley Smith School; academic progress and visual functioning are continuously monitored and information is shared with both the students themselves and with their parents/carers through Parents' Evenings and annual review meetings. The school has a bespoke assessment system which records progress in small steps in National Curriculum subjects to the end of Key Stage 3, a Key Stage 4 and 5 tracking system and assessment systems in Specialist Curriculum subjects.

3.3.2 Standard Assessment Tests

Where appropriate, students participate in national standard assessments. Sometimes pupils are working below the levels of the tests and cannot therefore access them.

The papers and materials used in these tests are prepared in large print/braille and modified nationally. Extra time is also allowed for children with visual impairment to complete the tests. Outcomes of these tests are reported to parents, Local Authority and national data collection agencies.

3.3.3 Examinations/Adaptations

Specialist arrangements are made for visually impaired pupils sitting examinations e.g. General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE), BTECs and Entry Level Examinations. Papers are prepared in modified large print and braille where needed. Extra time may be given for the examination, dependent upon the pupil's needs e.g. a totally blind child using braille is allowed 100% additional time in examinations. This time allowance varies depending on the nature of the subject and the pupil's means of access e.g. braille, modified large print, magnification etc.

In addition, candidates can have the use of a reader and amanuensis (a person who can write for the candidate) when required by particular circumstances e.g. if they have recently lost their sight and have not yet learnt braille. They can also have the use of a practical assistant e.g. in science and art.

All examination arrangements are determined and agreed beforehand by the Examinations Officer, in liaison with exam agencies.

3.3.4 Careers

The school provides specialist, impartial careers education for the pupils, bearing their visual impairment firmly in mind. This work incorporates preparation for further education in either specialist or mainstream colleges with specialist support.

It provides preparation for the world of work through work related learning activities, the ASDAN Youth Award Scheme, a specially organised work experience for pupils in Year 10, support from Wragge's solicitors to prepare for interviews and the world of work, supplemented by careers advice from teachers and careers officers in Connexions. Links with the business community are provided through Connexions and Work Experience. In Year 13 all students with the exception of those carrying out A level studies, take part in weekly work placements linked, wherever possible, to their chosen career routes.

Careers work at Priestley Smith School seeks to ensure that wide ranging but realistic advice is given to visually impaired students regarding further education, careers and employment, bearing the students' abilities, ambitions and interests in mind as well as their disabilities. Staff work closely with students and parents throughout this work.

3.4 Staffing

Priestley Smith Specialist School is committed to recruiting the highest quality staff with the values, attitudes and skills which will enable them to provide an outstanding education. It funds professional development so that staff are well equipped for their roles.

The School maintains positive staff: pupil ratios to meet the needs of children and young people. Every effort is made to provide consistency and continuity of staffing so that the children and young people can establish strong and positive relationships.

Staff in the school:

- are committed to their role.
- are committed to keeping children and young people safe.
- have high expectations of all children and young people within the schools.
- listen to what children and young people are saying, however they express themselves, act as their advocates and support those who can to advocate for themselves.
- provide a high level of care.
- undertake training and other types of professional development to improve skills and expertise.
- work together to share expertise and ideas.
- work in partnership with parents and other professionals maintain high standards of professional conduct.

3.5 Partnership working

Priestley Smith Specialist School recognises the benefits of a team approach. As well as the crucial partnership with parents (see section 6), the school make every effort to build strong partnerships with other professionals.

Priestley Smith Specialist School works with other mainstream and special schools and colleges to provide inclusion programmes and to enhance the curriculum as necessary. The School also works with other groups such as musicians and sporting organisations to provide a rich experience beyond the classroom.

The school enjoys unique support from the medical services in Birmingham.

Children are seen by the consultant ophthalmologist, Mr Parulekar, at least once a year but often more regularly. Parents are always invited to these clinics. The children are also seen by Mr Andrew Miller, the principal optometrist from Focus. He tests the children's eyes, prescribes glasses, contact lenses and low vision aids as required.

There are trained staff at the school who can administer medication and insert and remove contact lenses on a daily basis, if required.

Physiotherapy, audiological screening and speech therapy is provided on an individual basis at school without the child having to attend clinics and miss lessons. This also applies to educational psychology.

Senior staff liaise with various medical personnel including the school's visiting doctor and allocated nurse who is based on the Wilson Stuart site. The nurse arranges regular school medicals and inoculations etc. The Headteacher organises the ophthalmic clinics directly with Birmingham Children's Hospital.

4. Supporting individual learners

Teachers within Priestley Smith Specialist School personalise the curriculum to meet individual needs so that all children and young people are able to take part in activities which challenge them and ensure that they make progress.

In planning the curriculum, teachers take account of each child or young person's developmental level, sensory and physical needs, the nature of their communication and the kind of activities to which they respond.

Teachers identify personal targets for all children so that they can work on the knowledge, skills and activities which are most relevant or important for them. Children who are able to do so will identify their own personal targets.

Children and young people with medical needs are supported to gain full access to the curriculum and take part in activities with the rest of their class (see section 5).

Staff build a detailed knowledge of the children and young people with whom they work and adapt activities for them and record key information in assessment and progress files.

Children and young people benefit from activities beyond the classroom including lunchtime clubs, work experience and sports activities, trips and visits. These are chosen to meet individual needs.

5. Supporting children and young people with medical conditions

Priestley Smith Specialist School can meet the needs of children and young people whose primary need is a Vision Impairment with some additional medical conditions. The school has access to nursing support and staff are able to seek advice from a member of the Special School Nursing Team. Paediatric Community Consultants run clinics from the school once per half term reviewing case management and providing healthcare advice. Specific school staff are trained to administer and record medication during the school days. The primary and secondary departments have first aiders.

When a child or young person with medical needs is offered a place at Priestley Smith Specialist School, their needs are discussed with the Special School Nursing Team who may carry out a nursing assessment. The Nursing Team and school staff will work together to put a plan in place so that the medical needs are met.

School staff may undertake training relating to individual medical conditions (e.g. how to respond to seizures or how to support children and young people with asthma). Occasionally a child with a specific condition will require 1:1 support from people other than school staff in respect of significant medical needs. Teachers plan to include children and young people with medical conditions in all aspects of the curriculum, adapting lessons as necessary as part of individual planning.

6. Working with parents

Priestley Smith Specialist School believes strongly that children and young people are happiest and make the best progress when parents and school work together and maintain strong channels of communication. It is the responsibility of all staff to work in partnership with parents. Parents' views are constantly sought by staff and information is exchanged between parents and staff on a regular basis.

In order to maximise links between parents, the school publishes regular half termly newsletters, invites parents to all school events, productions, open days, learning together events, sporting events and annual review meetings. Parents take part in consultation on school practice and policy.

In addition, the school has a Friendly Society - The Friends of Priestley Smith - which is a registered charity raising funds which support the educational and social needs of the students.

Of value to parents too is the opportunity to talk to the parents of other children in the school and to talk whenever they wish, to staff, medical staff and, on occasions, pupils, about the effects of visual impairment.

For children requiring medical or intimate care support, a care plan is agreed with students and parents, detailing precisely what support is required, when and how it will be delivered etc. in accordance with the School's Medication Policy and Intimate Care Policy.

The school seeks to work with parents in order to:

- establish communication between home and school.
- identify shared priorities and educational goals for school and home.
- work with parents in planning for the future.
- share key information about individual needs and strengths.
- enable them to meet the professionals working with their children.
- provide specialist training (e.g. Healthy Minds).
- provide practical and emotional support for parents on an individual basis.
- assist parents to build networks and support one another.
- encourage parents to join in class activities and special events.
- meet the cultural and religious needs of all children and young people.

Where necessary, the school will arrange an interpreter so that parents can take a full part in meetings and workshops.

6.1 Multicultural Support

At the time of writing approximately 78% of the School's population come from ethnic minority groups, principally British Pakistani and British Indian. A growing number of students (8.2%) come from Eastern European countries.

A significant number of students have entered the school with very severe visual impairment and no spoken English at all. Additional support packages are put into place for such students to enable them to become familiar with the routines of school and to develop a basic grasp of English in a very short period of time. Interpreters in languages such as Urdu, Russian, Romanian, Polish, Punjabi and Latvian have been used to support such packages. These students have made superb progress in very short periods of time.

The School also employs a number of staff who share the same languages as some of our families. At review meetings, the school seeks to ensure that families have full understanding of all issues concerned by providing interpreters for families with very limited spoken English.

6.2 Social Care Support

The school follows all Birmingham's policies and procedures with regard to safeguarding, as outlined in the school's Safeguarding Policy 2017.

As part of this practice, the school provides a high level of early intervention to address low-level concerns and enable families to meet their own needs effectively, wherever possible. The school records all low-level interventions and support provided, together with impact, on each child's Ongoing Story.

Where Social Care support is provided to families at a higher, level e.g. Family Support Workers, Social Workers etc., the school works closely with these professionals to ensure a robust, consistent approach and to maximise resources and opportunities.

7. Staff Training and Professional Development

The [Specification for mandatory teacher qualifications - vision impairment \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk) lays down regulations regarding teachers teaching classes of visually impaired pupils in specialist settings. They have to be qualified teachers of the visually impaired, or qualified within three years of appointment, or be in the process of training. Failure to qualify will lead to dismissal.

The school respects these regulations and ensures this training takes place.

Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) and Nursery Nurses are not required to obtain specialist qualifications but all are expected to gain or have an NVQ3 qualification and GCSEs in English and mathematics or the equivalent. The school also encourages four specific areas of additional training:

- Knowledge of Visual Impairment and how help can be given to pupils
- Grade 2 Braille Fluency
- Supporting learning and promoting independence.
- Additional special needs, including Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Hearing Impairment. Learning Disability, Communication Difficulties, medical and physical need.

Training is provided by the school, Birmingham University, the LA and the Health Authority, as appropriate.

The school enjoys excellent relations with Birmingham University and teachers training to be teachers of the visually impaired from across the country visit and work in the school regularly.

Local universities including University College Birmingham, Birmingham City University, Birmingham Metropolitan College and Wolverhampton University also use the school as a training resource for students.

Priestley Smith Specialist School has high aspirations for all its staff and therefore seeks to provide the highest quality of specialist professional development so that all staff, whether classroom based, school leaders or members of the admin, site and finance teams, can develop their knowledge and expertise within the field of Vision Impairment. This increases job satisfaction for staff and contributes to outstanding provision for children and young people.

The range of opportunities for professional development is matched to staff roles and career stages.

- Staff new to the school have an induction programme which includes training in curriculum, Positive Behaviour Support (the use of regards and praise), safeguarding and communication strategies.
- The School offers initial teacher training.
- All teachers will eventually undertake the Mandatory Qualification for teachers of children and young people with a Vision Impairment (QTVI).
- Learning Support and Teaching Assistants have the opportunity to complete NVQ courses at levels 2 and 3 and courses relevant to their role

- Continuing professional development includes refresher training in key areas, information on teaching strategies and the curriculum, support to learn Braille and opportunities to share good practice.
- Teachers have annual appraisal meetings and other staff agree targets for their professional development annually.
- The quality of teaching and learning is monitored through a regular programme of lesson observation followed by developmental feedback.
- Staff who are not class based also attend training which is relevant to their roles.

8. Monitoring and evaluation

Class teams monitor the progress and wellbeing of the children and young people in their care on a daily basis. A homework diary in secondary, and in primary a home-school book, is used to share information unless parents are in contact with the school team in other ways.

The Senior Leadership Teams evaluate achievement and progress across the school by reviewing the records of individual children and young people and by monitoring the outcomes of assessment. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored through lesson observation and informal visits to classes and through reviewing records.

Other data which is used to monitor the wellbeing of children and young people within the school includes safeguarding notes, the Ongoing Story, attendance levels, records of challenging behaviour and accident reports.

Class teachers and members of the Senior Leadership Teams will also follow up any information from parents which suggests that a child or young person is not making sufficient progress or may require additional or alternative support.

Every year parents, children and young people are asked to complete surveys to show whether they are satisfied with what the school has to offer. The information given is followed up by the Senior Leadership Teams.

Staff have the opportunity to share their views through the staff appraisal process, through focus groups and staff meetings which discuss key issues for the schools including the School Improvement Plan.

Summaries of all the above information are shared with Governors to support them in evaluating the school.

9. Roles and responsibilities

The **Governors** of the school take overall responsibility for making sure that all policies are followed and that the schools meet their legal duties by providing the right education for children and young people with special educational needs. The **Senior Leadership Team** monitors the quality of education in a number of ways including reviewing achievement and progress, reviewing the School Improvement Plans and discussing the curriculum offered within **Teaching and Learning Committee** and as part of the SLT agenda.

The **Headteacher** is supported by the **Senior Leadership Team** and are responsible for monitoring a high standard of teaching and learning, monitoring practice and making sure that individual needs are met.

Teachers are responsible for planning to meet the needs of the children and young people whom they teach, for assessing progress and liaising with other professionals to ensure that all children and young people in the class make as much progress as they can.

Teaching Assistants work as part of teams to help the children and young people enjoy learning, achieve outstanding progress and develop self-confidence and a sense of wellbeing. All members of the team are expected to act as advocates for children and young people so that their voices are heard clearly.

All members of the school communities are expected to work in the best interests of the children and young people in their schools, using resources wisely and providing the highest quality support for children, young people and families. They are expected to take advantage of opportunities for professional development and to use their growing skills within their roles in school.

10. Storing and managing information

Priestley Smith Specialist School collects and uses personal information about children and young people in order to provide a high standard of education and care which is matched to individual needs. Every effort is made to ensure that information is stored safely and only shared with people who need to know it. Where information is stored electronically it is protected by passwords. Staff are expected to maintain confidentiality. See the Schools GDPR policy for further information.

11. Responding to complaints

If parents have any concerns about the quality of teaching, learning and progress or any other aspect of their children's experience at Priestley Smith Specialist School they should approach the class teacher or Head of Primary or Secondary in the first instance. If needed a meeting will be arranged. Most concerns and complaints can be dealt with at this level.

If parents feel that the issue has not been fully dealt with, they should write to the Headteacher of the school or ask for a meeting with them. They will make every effort to find a way forward.

If parents continue to have concerns and wish to take the matter further they should make a written complaint to the Chair of Governors at the Priestley Smith School address. They will investigate the issue and meet parents to share their findings and work towards a resolution.

For full information on how to make a formal complaint and the process that the school follows, please see the Complaints policy document, available on our Web site at www.priestleymith.com

APPENDIX 1 EARLY HELP

This may be achieved at one of four levels.

Level 1

As Keeping Children Safe in Education reminds us, all school staff have a duty to identify and support children and young people in need of early help. It is the responsibility of all staff to work in partnership with parents to support children's progress and wellbeing. To this end, classroom staff may, for example;

- share any concerns with parents regarding eating, medical issues, mood etc.
- work with families to provide a healthy diet, teach self-care, skills or encourage self-occupation.
- put a programme in place to help with any difficulties at home e.g. where families find it difficult to take their child into the community.
- share strategies to encourage learning in the community.
- share strategies to develop effective communication.
- use Pupil Premium to buy resources with which to teach self-occupation.
- liaise with healthcare staff – occupation therapists, speech and language therapists, nurses, physiotherapists.

The school also provides Lunchtime Clubs and Holiday clubs and mental health support as part of its early help offer.

Level 2

The Family Support Team may offer additional support to families who face particular issues but do not meet thresholds for social care. This may be offered on an - 1:1 basis or as part of training and may include:

- support to liaise with school staff.
- advice and support around housing/social benefits.
- signposting to other agencies e.g. Housing and helping them to engage – advocacy – 'middle man'.
- encouraging families to engage positively with social care.
- helping families to understand their children's special needs and support them.
- understanding of children's needs e.g. Healthy Minds training.
- providing a listening ear.
- guiding/supporting parents through difficult situations and key decisions.
- advice on supporting behaviour.
- liaising with the short break service.
- advice on accessing Forward Thinking Birmingham and support to work with them and follow their recommendation.
- liaising with healthcare staff – OT, SALT, nurses, physio.
- providing opportunities for parents to meet, discuss their children's needs and support one another.
- encouraging and supporting parents in the challenges of raising a child with SEND.
- sharing and celebrating achievements of children, young people and families
- increasing parents' self-confidence and self-esteem so that families can build resilience

Level 3

Where the school feels that a family needs support above and beyond what the school can provide we will seek advice from the Early Help Coordinator before making a MASH referral for help and support if appropriate.

The FST will also work in partnership with the local authority Early Help service to access services available through the local offer.

Level 4

Where there is evidence that a child or young person is at risk of serious harm the school must make a MASH referral for care and protection. We will inform the family (unless there is reason to think this may put the child at further risk) and support the family through the process.

APPENDIX 2 – POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY

- We are here to improve the quality of children and young people's lives – to help them enjoy life, learn things which are useful to them and feel good about themselves
- We see behaviour as a form of communication. It is our responsibility to work out what it is telling us
- We talk calmly and positively to children and young people
- We use what we know about children and young people to think ahead and avoid reaching a place where they feel anxious, angry or distressed
- We celebrate success and help children and young people to do the same
- We offer activities which children and young people enjoy and where they will want to learn
- We give children and young people real choices which matter to them
- We help children and young people to contribute to the school and the community
- We respect and value all members of the school community equally
- We make decisions based on the evidence, not on our feelings or opinions
- After a difficult incident we move on and help the child or young person to do the same
- We work as a team to support one another and help the children and young people in our care ☒ We are willing to ask for help and to help other people

APPENDIX 3-QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

In high quality teaching, every child and young person is enabled to make exceptional progress because:

- They are safe, and feel safe, both physically and emotionally.
- Their communication is enabled, understood and respected.
- They are fully included in activities personalised to their needs and their level of development.
- They enjoy the activities, focus on the tasks and are motivated to do what is asked of them.
- They experience success and are aware of their achievements.
- They become more independent.
- They work towards challenging curriculum goals.
- They practise and consolidate the skills they have learnt.

In order to support children and young people, adults use the following strategies:

- Teachers identify clear objectives and challenging curriculum goals, built on sound assessment, knowledge of prior learning and knowledge of the curriculum. They share them with other adults, children and young people.
- Teachers plan a mixture of group and individual activities, paced appropriately, to meet individual targets, deliver an appropriate curriculum and promote inclusion.
- Teachers structure activities so that children and young people are aware of what is expected and have opportunities for full engagement.
- Teachers identify every opportunity to promote learning, using resources that children and young people find interesting and are suited to their needs.
- Teachers plan their use of staff to maximise opportunities for children and young people to learn.
- Resources and strategies reflect and value the diversity of children and young people's experience. Adults support them to understand and interact with people and communities beyond their experience. Adults are quick to challenge any stereotypes and use of derogatory language.
- Adults interact and communicate positively and effectively with children, young people, their families and each other according to their individual needs
- Adults understand individual needs (cognitive, communicative, physical, sensory, medical and mental health) and use this understanding to personalise learning
- Adults' practice is underpinned by positive behaviour support (PBS).
- Adults ensure the environment is safe and set up to maximise pupil engagement and progress.
- Adults engage in professional dialogue with their teams and with development. opportunities to ensure they have the skills, knowledge and understanding to support the needs of the children and young people.
- They continually assess progress towards their understanding and achievement of the outcomes.