

What is Carousel Day?

Carousel Days were developed at St Margaret's School as an opportunity for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) to take part in a range of structured, whole class multi-sensory experiences linked to a central theme.

How does it work?

Once a term each classroom is transformed into a complete multi-sensory environment. Each class has a specific focus but is part of an overall theme such as *Light and Dark*, *Ancient Civilisations* or *Folklore*. Sessions are repeated in each classroom throughout the day with groups of students moving from one class to another at pre-determined times.

Here are two brief examples of themes and classroom experiences:

Carousel Day theme: *Light and Dark*

- a journey on the night train
- Hindu temple for Diwali, the festival of lights
- a story: 'The Owl Who Was Afraid of the Dark' by Jill Tomlinson.

Carousel Day theme: *Folklore*

- the story of Hansel and Gretel
- morris dancing
- fortune telling.

What might a multi-sensory classroom experience be like?

Each room will be different, but they should all give each student the chance to enjoy a full multi-sensory experience. The example below was used during our *Light and Dark* Carousel Day:

The Night Train

1. Students arrive at the door of the classroom beside a large model of the front of a train
2. They are supported to press a switch to activate a light and listen to the sound of the train whistle
3. They 'purchase' a ticket and are pushed into the classroom and into a 'tunnel' which smells of smoke and coal
4. An announcement is made that the train is about to leave and a tape of train sounds is played as students start their 'journey'
5. Staff gently move the students' wheelchairs to simulate the movement of the train
6. On arrival at 'Edinburgh Station' the students alight from the train and hand in their tickets
7. Bagpipes are playing and they move to a table area where refreshments including shortbread and haggis are available to taste or smell
8. The students are supported to produce a postcard which is stamped and placed in a posting box

9. The poem 'This is the Night Mail' by WH Auden is read during the return 'journey'
10. The experience ends and the students move on to the next classroom.

One to one support

It is essential that each student is supported by someone who can ensure that they are involved in all aspects of the Carousel Day.

Students will often need to be supported to touch, explore, listen, smell and taste what is offered to them and to take part in any physical activities. They will need to have situations explained to them by talking, using touch cues and objects of reference. Friends and family, carers, volunteers and mainstream peers often join us on the day to support our students in these ways.

Staff are always available to offer support and guidance if needed.



About St Margaret's School

St Margaret's is a special school for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties and complex health needs. The school offers both day places and residential placements for up to 52 weeks a year.

Carousel Days are just one aspect of the educational experiences offered at St Margaret's. All students access the school's own specially developed multi-sensory curriculum, which focuses on developing the learner's understanding of the world around them, social interactions and relationships. The curriculum uses a wide range of multi-sensory activities, therapies and experiences.

Staff at the school provide support in order to ensure that learning experiences are meaningful for the students and that they understand and engage with the activities presented to them.



More information

For more information about Carousel Days and the St Margaret's School Developmental Curriculum, or to enquire about joining us on a Carousel Day, please contact:

- Head teacher, **Jan Cunningham**
- Deputy Head, **Val Hobbs**
- Teachers **Jan Yerrell** or **Joy Stanton**

Carousel Day resource packs are available to purchase at a cost of £20 per pack.

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**St Margaret's School
Carousel Days**