

St Margaret's School for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties

St Margaret's School is a non-maintained residential special school for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and complex medical needs. Recognising that the small but very significant achievements of its pupils are not sufficiently recognised by National Curriculum attainment targets, the school has developed and published its own curriculum.



The St Margaret's School curriculum brings together learning, care and therapy to develop pupils' understanding of social relationships and the world around them. It draws on over ten years of input from the multi-professional team at the school, including

teachers, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists. The aim is to provide the means to assess and develop skills and learning opportunities in all aspects of a young person's life – in school, residential and leisure settings.

Pupils at the school generally function developmentally at up to 12 months. In order to meet their learning needs, the school's curriculum extends and develops the National Curriculum P Scales 1-3, covering five core areas: Communication, Sensory Cognitive, Social, Motor and Life Skills.

The curriculum is multisensory in focus and flexible. This ensures that every pupil can be individually assessed and that relevant, meaningful and achievable learning targets can be set. Professionals are able to identify individual, specific, relevant and motivating learning aims for pupils and the achievement of those aims can then be evaluated and recorded and future aims identified as appropriate.

Because the curriculum is delivered in an integrated manner (incorporating learning, therapy and health needs), pupils are given the opportunity to practise and achieve their learning goals in a wide range of settings. This is



important because factors such as the time of day, the presence of different members of staff, the intrinsic motivational attraction of the activity or positioning may affect a pupil's ability to concentrate and learn.

Measuring progress

The curriculum is used to record as much information about the learner as possible so that achievements can be recognised and celebrated. Rather than simply providing boxes to tick, comments may be included to describe how the learner performs activities or tasks, charting information such as how long the task takes, how much effort is involved, what level of support was given, and if there were any delays in response.



Analysis of assessment across all curriculum areas identifies focus areas for learning and allows IEP (Individual Education Plan) aims and linked objectives to be set. Pupils are assessed in one-to-one sessions and in class groups. Discussions are also held with key workers, parents and others who know the student to back up or challenge these observations, which may lead to further assessment. Progress is recorded and reviewed every 12 weeks by the class teacher and achievements are recorded for 6 month interim meetings and annual reviews.

Copies of the curriculum are on sale from the school office for £250.00. Professionals are welcome to attend the school on first the Tuesday of the month to gain first hand experience of the curriculum in action and to talk with one of the professionals responsible for a curriculum area. A small charge of £25 per person is made for this service. Bookings can be made by contacting Elaine Lush on the number below.

For more information about the curriculum, please contact Elaine Lush at St Margaret's School, The Children's Trust, Tadworth, Surrey KT20 5RU, telephone 01737 365810 or email elush@thechildrenstrust.org.uk