

Communication, Language and Literacy overview

Our Vision

At Stocklake Park Community School, we are committed to providing an ambitious, inclusive curriculum that enables every student, regardless of their starting point or learning profile, to develop essential communication, language and literacy skills. We recognise that effective communication is fundamental to accessing learning, building relationships, expressing needs, and achieving independence. Our curriculum is designed to meet the diverse needs of students with PMLD, complex behaviour and communication needs, and those working at pre-formal, semi-formal and formal levels across Key Stages 3-5.

Statutory Requirements and Legal Framework

Our curriculum is designed to be "balanced and broadly based" and promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life, as required by section 1A of the Academies Act 2010 and section 2.1 of the National Curriculum framework.

While Stocklake Park School is not required to follow the National Curriculum, we must still teach English, and we ensure our curriculum is at least as ambitious in breadth and depth as the National Curriculum.

We adhere to our duties under the Equality Act 2010, the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Regulations 2014, and the SEND Code of Practice, setting high expectations for all pupils, quickly identifying areas of difficulty, and removing barriers to allow pupils to achieve those expectations through accessible resources, differentiation and reasonable adjustments.

Our curriculum supports safeguarding requirements by teaching students about how to keep themselves and others safe, including online, with education tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual young people with SEND. This includes teaching about healthy and respectful relationships, boundaries, consent and kindness in relationships, and how to recognise and report concerns. Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Intent

Our communication, language and literacy curriculum intends to:

1. Develop functional communication skills that enable students to express their needs, wants, feelings and preferences using their most effective means of communication
2. Build foundational language skills including understanding, vocabulary development, and receptive language appropriate to each student's developmental level
3. Promote literacy development from early mark-making and symbol recognition through to functional reading and writing skills
4. Foster independence and self-advocacy through communication that supports students to make choices, participate in decision-making, and develop their voice

5. Prepare students for adulthood by developing communication and literacy skills necessary for employment, independent living, community participation and maintaining relationships
6. Support access to the wider curriculum by ensuring communication and literacy skills underpin learning across all subject areas

Our curriculum is designed to give pupils the knowledge they need to take advantage of opportunities, responsibilities and experiences in later life. It clearly identifies and prioritises the foundational knowledge and skills pupils need for later learning.

Implementation

We have adopted a **spiral curriculum** approach that revisits previous learning and adds new knowledge that is age- or stage-appropriate. This ensures regular repetition and consolidation while building complexity over time. The Key Leaders

Our curriculum operates as a **3-year rolling programme** across KS3-5 to ensure:

- **Skills repetition and consolidation:** Students encounter key communication and literacy skills multiple times across the three years, with increasing complexity and in varied contexts
- **Skill acquisition through spaced practice:** Regular revisiting of skills supports long-term retention and mastery
- **Appropriate challenge:** Mixed-age classes can access differentiated content within the same thematic framework
- **Preparation for adulthood:** The three-year cycle allows progressive development towards post-16 outcomes

Personalised Pathways

We recognise the diverse needs of our students and provide differentiated approaches:

Pre-formal learners (PMLD):

- Focus on early communication through body language, vocalisations, eye gaze, and responses to sensory stimuli
- Use of objects of reference, sensory stories, and intensive interaction
- Development of intentional communication and cause-and-effect understanding
- Multi-sensory approaches to early mark-making and symbol awareness

Semi-formal learners (Complex behaviour and communication needs):

- Development of functional communication using AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) systems including PECS, symbols, signing, and communication devices
- Building vocabulary and understanding through visual supports and concrete experiences
- Phonics teaching adapted to individual needs
- Functional literacy including environmental print, personal information, and sight words

Formal learners:

- Systematic synthetic phonics teaching
- Development of reading fluency and comprehension
- Functional writing for real purposes
- Digital literacy skills

We ensure that pupils with SEND have access to a suitable curriculum that builds on their knowledge and is adapted to their needs. Reasonable adjustments or adaptations to the curriculum or teaching for specific pupils' needs are well targeted and effective in reducing barriers, focusing on pupils' long-term success rather than short-term fixes. Ofsted State-Funded School Inspection Toolkit

Teaching Approaches

Staff engage pupils in high-quality interactions to develop their knowledge and vocabulary across all areas of learning. Staff help pupils to articulate what they know and understand by scaffolding, modelling, extending and developing their ideas. Staff provide enough teaching and practice for pupils to be able to develop communication skills, with additional teaching and practice for those who need it. Ofsted State-Funded School Inspection Toolkit

Our teaching includes:

- **Total Communication approach:** Using speech, signing, symbols, objects, gestures, and technology simultaneously
- **Intensive Interaction:** Building pre-verbal communication skills through responsive, playful interactions
- **Structured teaching:** Using visual schedules, work systems, and clear routines to support understanding
- **Functional application:** Teaching skills in meaningful, real-life contexts
- **Repetition and overlearning:** Ensuring sufficient practice for skill acquisition and generalisation
- **Multi-sensory learning:** Engaging all senses to support memory and understanding

Teachers present information clearly, check pupils' understanding systematically, identify misunderstandings and adapt teaching as necessary. Teaching is sequenced so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught before and pupils can work towards clearly defined end points. Ofsted State-Funded School Inspection Toolkit

Link to Preparing for Adulthood (PfA)

Our curriculum ensures that all secondary-age pupils are well prepared and supported to progress in education, employment or training. Pupils with SEND develop independence, contribute to their community, make positive friendships and are supported to be as healthy as possible. Ofsted State-Funded School Inspection Toolkit

We explicitly link our curriculum to the four PfA outcomes:

1. **Employment:** Developing communication skills for workplace interactions, following instructions, asking for help, and working with others
2. **Independent Living:** Communication for self-care, managing daily routines, accessing services, and expressing needs
3. **Community Inclusion:** Social communication, understanding social rules, using community facilities, and staying safe
4. **Health and Wellbeing:** Communicating about health needs, understanding health information, and building relationships

Skills Repetition and the 3-Year Rolling Curriculum

The rationale for our rolling curriculum includes:

Why repetition is essential:

- Students with SEND often require significantly more practice to acquire and retain skills
- Repetition in varied contexts supports generalisation of skills
- Regular revisiting prevents skill regression and builds confidence
- Overlearning ensures skills become automatic and functional

How the 3-year cycle works:

- **Year 1:** Introduction and initial teaching of core skills
- **Year 2:** Consolidation and application in new contexts
- **Year 3:** Mastery, generalisation and extension

Students may enter at any point in the cycle, with baseline assessment determining their starting point. The spiral nature ensures that foundational skills are revisited while new learning is introduced.

Impact

How we know our curriculum is effective:

Assessment and Evidence of Progress

We consider the progress that pupils make across the curriculum from their starting points, so that they know more, remember more and are able to do more. We take particular care in gathering evidence on the progress over time of pupils with SEND, including evidence from learning walks, pupils' work, discussions with pupils and case sampling. Ofsted State-Funded School Inspection Toolkit

Our assessment approaches include:

Baseline and ongoing assessment:

- Communication profiles identifying current skills and preferred communication methods
- Engagement scales for pre-formal learners
- Phonics screening and reading assessments for formal learners
- Regular formative assessment through observation and task analysis

Evidence of progress:

- **Video evidence:** Capturing communication attempts, interactions, and skill development over time
- **Learning journeys:** Documenting progress through photographs, work samples, and annotations
- **Data tracking:** Using appropriate assessment tools (e.g., B Squared, Engagement Profile, Routes for Learning)
- **Student voice:** Gathering views through accessible methods including symbols, photos, and observations
- **Functional application:** Evidence of skills used in different contexts and with different people

Progress measures:

- Small steps of progress clearly defined and celebrated
- Progress from individual starting points, not age-related expectations
- Evidence of skill generalisation across settings and people
- Increased independence in communication and literacy tasks
- Development of preferences and self-advocacy

Pupils develop age- and phase-appropriate knowledge and skills they need to progress to the next stage of learning, including language and communication skills that enable them to access the full curriculum. Where published attainment and/or progress data is not available, including for pupils with SEND, pupils generally make suitable progress from their starting points. Ofsted State-Funded School Inspection Toolkit

Outcomes

Our curriculum impact is demonstrated through:

- Students developing their most effective means of communication
- Increased engagement and participation in learning
- Greater independence in expressing needs and making choices
- Development of early literacy skills appropriate to individual abilities
- Successful transitions to post-16 provision with appropriate communication support in place
- Students who are well-prepared for adulthood with functional communication and literacy skills

Pupils have the necessary knowledge, skills and/or qualifications for the next stage of their education, employment or training, including a strong grounding in communication and literacy appropriate to their needs. Ofsted State-Funded School Inspection Toolkit

Monitoring and Review

We continuously evaluate the effectiveness of our curriculum through:

- Regular lesson observations and learning walks
- Student progress data analysis
- Staff feedback and professional development needs
- Parent/carer feedback
- Annual curriculum review

This ensures our curriculum remains ambitious, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of all our students