

Hertfordshire Special Schools

Sector core offers

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Introduction

This core sector guidance was initially produced by special school head teachers involved in a project to re-commission special schools as part of 'Developing Special Provision Locally'. It was subsequently extended to include specialist provision in mainstream schools. It describes the core provision offered by each special school sector or type of mainstream special provision, and it is intended to help teachers, parents and other professionals understand what is offered by different types of Hertfordshire special school and mainstream specialist provision. This guidance should be used alongside the guidance for admission to Hertfordshire specialist provisions.

Parents or carers considering a special school or specialist provision for their child should always be encouraged to visit their local school. While it is acknowledged that, for example, no two special schools of the same type will be identical, nonetheless parents/carers should anticipate that the level of provision described in this documentation will be available at their most local school.

Primary schools for children and young people with learning difficulties (currently MLD)

Introduction

Primary learning difficulties schools in Hertfordshire enable pupils with a range of learning needs to access education and engage in learning in preparation for adult life. This is provided in a very safe and secure environment. The pupils in learning difficulties schools have barriers to learning, which may include a main need of moderate learning difficulty (MLD), autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and/or speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). They may also have secondary needs in the areas of behavioural and emotional, medical or physical and sensory difficulties.

Education from 5 to 11 years is enabled through a wide range of means which can be identified under some key headings:

Curriculum content, organisation and delivery

All pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum that is differentiated according to their personal needs and strengths and which includes a focus on the development of functional literacy and numeracy skills. Additionally the curriculum will focus on the development of functional speech, language and communication, social interaction and the development of life skills.

The curriculum includes a wealth of routes for learning, which may include lunch-time and after-school clubs, with high levels of skilled staff who continue to educate and support learners. There are planned integration experiences, for example with pupils from local mainstream schools, and educational outings as part of the curriculum.

Timetables and lessons are responsive to the needs of the children through the Key Stages. Small classes and favourable adult/pupil ratios, which vary according to the needs of the pupil, ensure that learning can be tailored to a child's individual needs. Included in this offer of a personalised approach is the assurance that intimate care and attention to all basic functions is guaranteed.

Teaching follows the Early Years Foundation Stage methods to teach abstract concepts in a cross-curricular and thematic way. Children learn in different ways so knowledge is delivered and skills taught using kinaesthetic, visual, practical and concrete approaches. Pupils are likely to require access to a high level of visual support, e.g. objects of reference, photographs, the use of symbols and appropriate signing strategies.

Pupils are given regular opportunities to learn new skills and to generalise those already learned through frequent repetition and the chance to practise skills in different situations. This will include a large range of curriculum

enrichment activities, such as visits to museums and topic-related facilities in the wider community.

Resources

Staff are the greatest resource in the school and they are expert in using strategies to overcome barriers to learning. Learning difficulties schools provide expertise in a number of associated areas which impact on the education of the pupils. Pupils have access to staff trained in alternative communication approaches, for example signing, symbols and IT-based alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) devices. Staff are trained in physical intervention as a matter of routine. Schools will support the development of pupils' levels of social functioning, through the PSHE curriculum and other routes. Visual aids such as schedules and social stories support social communication and learning.

Facilities to support teaching and learning include: access to soft play facilities, sensory resources, ICT facilities, adventure play equipment and minibuses. Additionally pupils may have access to sports areas, art areas, swimming and hydrotherapy pools.

Assessment

Targets are set in collaboration with parents and other professionals and reviewed together on a regular basis. Assessment is moderated across the county and regionally. Information and data is held at school, local authority and national level. A range of assessment tools are used to provide a picture of attainment and progression. These tools may include use of National Curriculum levels, P Levels, visual assessment tools, Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS), reading tests, receptive and expressive language tools and Teacher Assessment. Progress against P Levels and National Curriculum data may determine movement to different educational provision, but consideration is given to the needs of the whole child and is not just focused on assessment results. The functionality of pupils is as much an aspect of attainment within the assessment and placement process as assessment results.

Trans-disciplinary Approach

A range of professionals work with the pupils, parents and staff of the schools to ensure that the best possible guidance is provided to encourage and support educational development. These professionals may include Speech and Language Therapists, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Music and other therapists, School Nurses, Consultant Paediatrician, Educational Psychologists, Clinical Psychologists, counsellors and Advisory Teachers for Autism, Hearing Impairment and Visual Impairment.

Schools work with a variety of external professionals to provide for the holistic needs of children and young people.

Secondary schools for children and young people with learning difficulties (currently MLD)

Introduction

Secondary learning difficulties schools in Hertfordshire enable pupils with complex learning needs to access education and to engage in learning in preparation for adult life. This is provided in a very safe and secure environment. The pupils in learning difficulties schools have barriers to learning, which may include a main need of moderate learning difficulty (MLD), autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and/or speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). They may also have secondary needs in the areas of behavioural and emotional or physical and sensory difficulties.

Education from 11 to 16 years is enabled through a wide range of means which can be identified under some key headings:

Curriculum content, organisation and delivery

All pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum that is differentiated according to their personal needs and strengths. The curriculum focuses on the development of functional skills in literacy and numeracy, speech, language and communication, social interaction and independent living.

The curriculum includes a wealth of routes for learning, which may include lunch-time and after-school clubs, with high levels of skilled staff who continue to educate and support learners. There are planned integration experiences, for example with pupils from local mainstream schools, and educational outings as part of the curriculum.

Pupils will have access to a good range of nationally accredited courses in Key Stage 4, which can include Entry Level certificates of achievement, personal development and life skills courses, various vocational courses and GCSE courses. College Link courses in Key Stage 4 promote the development of independence and social skills, helping prepare pupils for moving on from school.

Timetables to date have mostly followed a traditional secondary model with pupils moving from class to class, taught by specialist teachers and/or teachers who developed expertise in a primary setting. However, school organisation is flexible to meet the changing pattern of pupil needs. Arrangements for some key stages and for some pupils may differ, e.g. smaller groups, mixed age groups or a primary-style classroom.

Organisation is responsive to the needs of the pupils through the Key Stages. Small classes, and variable adult/pupil ratios depending on the needs of the group, ensure that learning can be tailored to a pupil's individual needs. Included in this offer of a personalised approach is the assurance that intimate care and attention to all basic functions is guaranteed.

Teaching uses a wide variety of methods to teach key skills and abstract concepts through national curriculum subjects. Children learn in different ways so knowledge is delivered and skills taught using kinaesthetic, visual, practical and concrete approaches. Pupils are likely to require access to a high level of visual support, e.g. objects of reference, photographs, the use of symbols and appropriate signing strategies.

Pupils are given regular opportunities to learn new skills and to generalise those already learned through frequent repetition and the chance to practise skills in different situations. This will include a large range of curriculum enrichment activities, such as visits to museums and subject-related facilities in the wider community.

Resources

Staff are the greatest resource in the school and they are expert in using strategies to overcome barriers to learning. Learning difficulties schools provide expertise in a number of associated areas which impact on the education of the pupils. Pupils have access to staff trained in alternative communication approaches, for example signing, symbols and IT-based alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) devices. Staff are trained in physical intervention as a matter of routine. Visual aids such as schedules and social stories support social communication and learning.

Facilities to support teaching and learning include, for example specialist science, PE, sports, design technology and art, sensory resources, ICT, adventure play equipment and minibuses. Additionally pupils have access to swimming and appropriate outdoor spaces.

Assessment

Targets are set in collaboration with pupils, parents and other professionals and reviewed together on a regular basis. Assessment is moderated across the county and regionally. Information and data is held at school, local authority and national level. A range of assessment tools are used to provide a picture of attainment and progression. These tools may include use of National Curriculum levels, P Levels, visual assessment tools, Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS), reading tests, receptive and expressive language tools and Teacher Assessment. Progress against P Levels and National Curriculum data may determine movement to different educational provision, but consideration is given to the needs of the whole child and not just focused on assessment results. The functionality of pupils is as much an aspect of attainment within the assessment and placement process as assessment results are.

Trans-disciplinary Approach

A range of professionals works with the pupils, parents and staff of the schools to ensure that the best possible guidance is provided to encourage and support educational development. These professionals include Speech and Language Therapists, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Music and other therapists, School Nurses, Consultant Paediatrician, Educational Psychologists, Clinical Psychologists, Counsellors and Advisory Teachers for Autism, Hearing Impairment and Visual Impairment, Connexions Personal Advisers and FE College tutors.

Schools work with a variety of external professionals to provide for the holistic needs of children and young people.

Schools for children and young people with severe learning difficulties

Introduction

Severe learning difficulties (SLD) schools in Hertfordshire enable pupils with severe learning needs to access education and engage in learning in preparation for adult life. This is provided in a very safe and secure environment. The pupils in SLD schools have significant barriers to learning, which may include medical, sensory, physical, behaviour and emotional needs with the potential of regularly putting themselves and others at risk.

Education from 2 to 19 years is enabled through a wide range of means which can be identified under some key headings:

Curriculum content, organisation and delivery

A far reaching and broad curriculum enables pupils from Early Years through to Foundation Learning, including Accreditation, to engage in education. The curriculum offers clear and extensive differentiation and personalisation, which enables all pupils to engage in the learning process. It follows a primary- based model with some specialist teachers, typically in PE, Science and Music.

The curriculum style, model and delivery includes a wealth of exciting routes for learning and far-reaching opportunities, including lunch-time and after-school clubs, which provide high levels of skilled staffing who continue to educate and support learners. A feature of the style of curriculum coverage is repetition, which enables pupils to capture and assimilate the information and skills taught through kinaesthetic learning. This approach includes the development of community life skills through personalised work-related learning, accreditation, travel training and transition to Further Education.

Timetables and lessons are responsive to the needs of the children from Nursery through all four Key Stages to the Foundation Curriculum, up to and including Year 14. The full National Curriculum offer is achieved through a flexible approach to delivery, style and creative organisation of the two elements of both lessons and timetables. A highly personalised approach achieves this goal. Included in this offer is the assurance that intimate care and attention to all basic functions is guaranteed.

Pupils make significant progress on entry to school and, more often than not, continue to achieve and leave school as confident young people. Teaching is solution-focused and responsive to the identified needs, conditions and interests of the pupils. Due to degenerative conditions and diagnosis some pupils may lose skills and progress may be hampered.

Resources

Staff are the greatest resource in the school and are expert in using strategies for overcoming barriers to learning. SLD schools provide expertise in a

number of associated areas which impact on the education of the pupils. There are fully trained staff in Moving and Handling, TEACCH, Physical Intervention, and emergency medical interventions (including the management of gastrostomy feeds, oxygen and near death incidents). These are routine aspects of training for school staff and not considered to be unusual or extreme.

All staff are skilled in the use of a wide range of communication systems to include Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), signing, Alternative Augmentative Communication (AAC), objects of reference and a variety of visual support systems to learning, in order to match and provide each child with access to functional communication.

SLD schools are unique in their provision of a wide range of resources, which include a swimming pool with specialist expertise in the teaching of swimming, sensory room / area with qualified or experienced staff with knowledge of sensory impairments.

Assessment

Targets are set in collaboration with parents and other professionals and reviewed together on a regular basis. Assessment is moderated across the county and regionally. Information and data is held at school, local authority and national level. A range of assessment tools are used to provide a picture of attainment and progression. These tools may include use of National Curriculum levels, P Levels, visual assessment tools, Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS), reading tests, receptive and expressive language tools (e.g. REEL) and Teacher Assessment. Progress against P Levels and National Curriculum data may determine movement to different educational provision, but consideration is given to the needs of the whole child and not just focused on assessment results. The functionality of pupils is as much an aspect of attainment within the assessment and placement process as assessment results.

Trans-disciplinary Approach

A range of professionals works with the pupils, parents and staff of the schools to ensure that the best possible guidance is provided to encourage and support educational development. These professionals include Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists (including wheelchair services of technicians, engineers and associated professionals), Music Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Psychologists, Clinical Psychologists, School Nurses, Consultant Paediatricians, Orthotists, plus Advisory Teachers for Autism, Visual Impairment and Hearing Impairment. The Educational Audiologist adds to the rich and expert advice that is available in an SLD school.

The interventions and experience of a variety of professionals enable families to be fully supported and consulted, which provides an inclusive wrap around service model.

Schools and unit for children with physical and neurological impairment

Introduction

Children and young people will have severe physical difficulties as a main presenting need. They may also have a range of other associated needs including sensory impairments, an additional neurological impairment such as epilepsy, difficulties with speech, language and communication, feeding and drinking, and complex health needs which require regular or continuous medical intervention. They may require specialist equipment to access learning and be dependent on others for some or all of their personal care and transport needs.

Education is enabled through a wide range of means which can be identified under some key headings:

Curriculum, content, organisation and delivery

PNI special schools enable children and young people to learn and achieve within a broad, balanced and relevant physical curriculum –which develops children’s physical functioning, communication skills and independence through their daily educational experiences. To achieve this, education and health professionals work closely together to ensure:

- a relevant, stimulating and enjoyable physical curriculum which enables children and young people to question, challenge and explore, make choices and take decisions, participate as partners in their own learning, develop and sustain positive relationships, develop an understanding of their communities, the world and themselves as social beings, and prepare for the opportunities, challenges and responsibilities of a world beyond school
- the intervention of therapy and healthcare professionals to support physical development through physical activity, exploration of environments, and the building of stamina, resilience and endurance, to support the development of personal communication skills, to facilitate access to learning and the curriculum, and to promote good health and healthy lifestyles

In the early years and primary years, the curriculum is guided by the Early Years Foundation Stage and National Curriculum. In the secondary years, the curriculum follows personalised learning pathways leading to appropriate accreditation at a level commensurate with learners’ abilities. Additionally, the curriculum sets out to promote self-esteem by enabling learners to develop a strong sense of themselves as children and young people with disabilities. It

also teaches children and young people about their rights and responsibilities as young citizens with disabilities and prepares them for the opportunities that lie beyond their time at school.

Children and young people enjoy small classes with high adult / child (young person) ratios.

A mainstream unit enables children and young people with severe physical difficulties to learn and achieve within a full, broad and balanced curriculum.

- Pupils will access the full range of mainstream subjects and will attend all lessons. With support they can learn to make choices and take decisions, participate as partners in their own learning and develop self-esteem and a strong sense of themselves as children and young people with disabilities. They can learn to sustain positive relationships with others and work alongside other children and young people who do not have their level of disability. They develop an understanding of their communities, the world and themselves and their rights and responsibilities and prepare for the opportunities and challenges of a world beyond school.
- Physical needs are met through the intervention of therapy and healthcare professionals who advise on how the school can support physical development. This facilitates access to learning and the curriculum, and helps to promote good health and healthy lifestyles.

Resources

The education professionals have considerable experience and expertise in managing the needs of children and young people with physical and neurological impairments. They are trained in daily physical management programmes, moving and handling, resuscitation and poolside safety, managing children's gastrostomy tubes, feeding pumps and nutritional feeds, the administration of emergency medication, first aid and child protection and safeguarding. Education programmes are personalised and motivating.

Therapy colleagues provide support, advice and training for education staff in the development of children's gross and fine motor skills, mobility, co-ordination and orientation skills, sensory and perceptual skills, positioning and seating, and the use of upper and lower limb orthoses (for example a brace or splint). They also provide support, advice and training in access to the curriculum and educational resources, the development of functional communication skills, oral and written language development, the use of alternative and augmentative communication resources and eating and drinking.

Pupils have access to a wide range of equipment such as specialist seating, standing frames, touch-screen computers, interactive whiteboards and augmentative communication devices. In special schools they also have

access to specialist resources such as sensory rooms, soft play spaces and hydrotherapy pools.

The provision of Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy is a shared responsibility between the Local Authority and the National Health Service.

Assessment

Assessment sets out to motivate learners and value their achievements, give children and young people a sense of success and promote their self-esteem, provide feedback which involves children and young people in their own learning, identify strengths and areas for development, inform the planning of next steps in learning, support the setting of clear and realistic targets and support the effective and appropriate personalisation of curriculum planning. A range of assessment tools is used to provide a picture of attainment and progression – National Curriculum levels, P levels, teacher assessment, and receptive and expressive language development and physical development tools – with moderation of standards of attainment within and across schools.

Schools and units for children and young people with hearing impairment

Introduction

Hearing impairment (HI) special schools and mainstream units in Hertfordshire enable pupils with a hearing impairment to access education and engage in learning in preparation for adult life. This is provided in an acoustically appropriate environment with a focus upon the development of language and communication.

Education from 3 to 18 years is enabled through a wide range of means which can be identified under some key headings:

Curriculum content, organisation and delivery

All pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum that is differentiated according to their personal needs and strengths, and which includes a focus on the development of listening and communication skills alongside literacy and numeracy skills. Additionally the curriculum will include social interaction, independent learning, personal understanding of deafness and the ability to manage and individual's audiological needs including equipment. Listening programmes will be delivered to all pupils. Where appropriate, this will be in collaboration with Cochlear Implant Centre professionals.

The curriculum includes a wealth of routes for learning, which may include lunch-time and after-school clubs, with skilled staff who continue to educate and support learners. There are planned inclusion programmes, for example with pupils from mainstream classes and schools and with an emphasis on full transition planning to the next phase of the pupil's education or training.

Timetables and lessons are responsive to the needs of the children through the Key Stages. For the majority of the timetable in the special schools, HI pupils are taught in small classes with high adult/pupil ratios by teachers of the deaf. The unit timetable is organised by teachers of the deaf around the personal learning needs of the pupils; this will include 1:1 sessions, small groups and inclusion in mainstream classes.

The delivery of the curriculum for hearing impaired pupils will be either through a total communication approach or an auditory /oral approach

A Total Communication approach includes:

- use of English and BSL
- speaking
- listening
- lip-reading
- use of visual resources and ICT

An auditory / oral approach includes:

- spoken English
- listening and speaking
- lip-reading

Resources

All specialist teachers are qualified teachers of the deaf or undertake that mandatory qualification within three years of appointment. Teaching assistants and communication support workers receive specialist training.

Facilities to support teaching and learning include: specialist audiological equipment, acoustically-treated classrooms, sensory resources, and ICT facilities.

In addition, the special schools have an audiology room, speech and language therapy room and sensory gardens. Both schools have partnership arrangements with neighbouring schools to broaden educational and social opportunities.

Assessment

Targets are set in collaboration with parents and other professionals and reviewed together on a regular basis. A range of assessment tools are used to provide a picture of attainment and progression. These tools include use of National Curriculum levels, P Levels, reading tests, receptive and expressive language tests, listening and speech discrimination assessment and Teacher Assessment. Information and data is held at school, local authority and national level.

Trans-disciplinary Approach

A range of professionals works with the pupils, parents and staff of the schools to ensure that the best possible guidance is provided to encourage and support educational development. These professionals include Educational Audiologists, Speech and Language Therapists, Advisory Teacher Deaf/ Blindness, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Educational Psychologists, School Nurses, plus other Advisory Teachers as required.

Schools for children and young people with social emotional and behavioural difficulties

Introduction

Pupils with severe SEBD require the stability of a structured and predictable environment, small classes and good staff ratios. Such pupils depend on this type of specialist provision to be able to function effectively in a school setting. Many pupils with SEBD have elevated levels of anxiety and as a result they require high levels of structure and direction that is consistently applied.

Resources

Both our primary and secondary SEBD schools are structured in such a manner that consistency, predictability and high expectations are paramount. Pupils are encouraged to develop responsibility for their own actions, and evaluate the impact of their behaviour on others. Pupils benefit from small group sizes that facilitate strong working relationships essential for pupils to develop trust and confidence.

School systems are specifically designed to reward positive behaviour, encouraging tolerance and providing alternative strategies that allow pupils to manage their emotions. Subsumed within all subject areas is a strong ethos that promotes respect towards others, property and themselves. This is frequently reinforced by a token economy system that both monitors and encourages positive social values.

Experienced staff employ a range of behaviour management systems that are tried and approved. A collective approach ensures firm boundaries. To support this, staff receive training in behaviour management; this includes de-escalation techniques, managing group situations and post-crisis support. Staff are also trained in the appropriate use of physical intervention to prevent injury to self, others or property. These skills are constantly updated to ensure that our pupils are professionally and safely cared for. The high level of support staff provides a security and a level of supervision that is frequently required to maintain a positive and calm working environment. This often requires staff to work individually with young people who struggle in a whole-class situation.

Staff are experienced in managing a range of behaviours and associated disorders that includes working with young people on the ASD spectrum, Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD), Obsessive Compulsive disorder (OCD) and Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). More commonly our pupils have a range of learning and behaviour difficulties and associated disorders that are managed by staff with the appropriate expertise.

Communication between school and home is thorough and proactive with many schools employing a home-school liaison manager. Behavioural and social issues can be addressed quickly, averting potential crisis situations.

Information is always dealt with sensitively, by staff who have considerable skills in liaising with families and where necessary the appropriate agencies.

All of our SEBD schools liaise with a range of external services that work collaboratively with the schools. Initially this is to enable the pupils to access the curriculum but also subsequently to prepare the pupils for the next phase in their lives.

Intervention programmes are regularly employed to address specific areas of a pupil's learning or behaviour.

Assessment

SEBD schools have expertise in assessing the individual needs of pupils that will best enable them to access the curriculum.

All schools baseline the social, emotional and behavioural aspects of their pupils, identifying triggers and strategies to manage the most challenging of behaviours. Individual behaviour plans are regularly revisited and updated to reflect the current issues in a young person's life.

Individual targets are given to pupils. These focus on the areas that encourage improvement in their social, emotional and behavioural aspects of their lives. The targets form the basis of every pupil's programme of education and assists with the personalisation of curriculum content necessary to narrow the gap between potential and achievement.

Assessment is moderated both regionally and nationally. The local authority actively tracks and monitors assessment levels, accreditation and attendance.

Curriculum content, organisation and delivery

Our pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum that is appropriate to their respective Key Stage of development. We cater for a broad range of academic ability, and always ensure that the pathways to a mainstream placement are achievable at every appropriate opportunity.

Where appropriate, timetables are personalised to best meet the academic and social needs of the pupils. This sometimes involves offsite activities and the use of external providers to broaden the range of possibilities. These resources also help in preparing pupils for a more successful transition and placement at post-16 level.

Recognition is given to different learning styles and the pace of lessons. This is vital in ensuring that concentration spans are maximised. SEBD school staff are skilled in designing appropriate programmes. They constantly review the needs of their pupil intake, the nature of the behaviours and as a result put into place a curriculum that best engages pupils who previously have struggled with any form of academic engagement.

Summary

Pupils will have experienced significant problems in socially integrating with other children. Their understanding of the conventions of social interactions is likely to be impaired, often leading to the misinterpretation of social situations. Inability to control their emotions leads to confrontational, hostile and

sometimes violent behaviour. Pupils' inability to connect their behaviours to a consequence pervades many of their actions. It is also likely that pupils will be proactive in initiating aggression, and some will display distorted and entrenched social values.

Our SEBD schools directly address these issues and work towards a situation where these children and young people can successfully integrate both socially and academically.

Secondary mainstream visual impairment base

Introduction

Students attending the Visual Impairment (VI) base at Barnwell School in Stevenage will have a statement of Special Educational Needs detailing significant visual impairment as the main presenting need. The base is available to secondary-age students across the county, although the majority of pupils with significant visual impairment, in both primary and secondary phases, have their needs met at their local mainstream school, supported by the specialist VI team.

Education from national curriculum years 7- 11 is enabled through a wide range of means which can be identified under some key headings:

Curriculum, content, organisation and delivery

Students are allocated to a tutor group with their peers and are placed in teaching groups for each subject. They attend mainstream lessons and are provided with the resources necessary for them to participate in the lesson alongside their sighted peers. This requires a high level of liaison and co-operation between Base and mainstream staff who are requested to provide information about lesson content in advance. Base staff work in liaison with the school's Special Needs Department to follow recommended strategies. All pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum that is differentiated according to their personal needs and strengths. The principles underlying the provision of classroom support include:

- **Visual Access:** Adaptation and modification of teaching material, preparation of large print, Braille, tactile diagrams and differentiation of components that are particularly difficult to access, e.g. maps, graphs, tables etc. Support in accessing work on boards and in the general environment.
- **Safety:** Support in areas of the curriculum where safety is an issue e.g. Technology, PE, Science practicals.
- **Individual Student Needs:** Base staff identify and respond to the needs of individual students in aspects of the curriculum which they find challenging, such as literacy, numeracy, personal organisation and revision.

Base tutorial time provides:

- Extra time for completion of work tasks. This is frequently necessary as VI students need more time to read, scan, make notes etc.

- Support in working on tasks which are difficult for individual students, such as clarifying visually complex material or reinforcing concepts.
- Alternative activities when mainstream is not suitable e.g. PE options sometimes need to be varied by providing alternatives.
- A Life Skills programme, which covers important skills that are not easily acquired, e.g. cooking, ironing and making hot drinks.
- An ICT certificate for VI users
- Mobility training provided by trained mobility officers.
- Additional skills such as Braille and touch typing.

The curriculum includes a wealth of opportunities for learning, which include trips to museums or the theatre with audio-described performances, involvement in lunch-time and after school clubs and the opportunity to be involved in sports and holidays for visually impaired young people.

Resources

Base students have access to and training in the use of a wide variety of specialist equipment appropriate to their needs, including magnifiers, CCTV, speech packages, audio equipment, pocket memos and Brailleurs. Most students use laptops which allow them to record subject notes, edit tasks and expand work more easily. This is particularly important for revision purposes.

There are many curriculum-based resources available for students to use. These are offered in a variety of media to suit the needs of individual students.

During exams students are allowed special consideration, such as extra time, individual supervision and modified papers (large print and Braille).

Assessment

Targets are set in collaboration with parents and other professionals and reviewed together on a regular basis. A range of assessment tools is used to provide a picture of attainment and progression. These tools include use of National Curriculum levels, reading tests (including, where appropriate those relating to Braille) and Teacher Assessment. Information and data is held at school, local authority and national level.

Trans-disciplinary Approach

A range of professionals works with the pupils, parents and staff to ensure that the best possible guidance is provided to encourage and support educational development. These professionals include Educational

Psychologists, School Nurses and Paediatric Mobility Specialists plus other Advisory Teachers and NHS professionals as required.

Students who also have a degree of other needs (such hearing impairment, physical impairment, specific learning difficulties, speech, language and communication disorder, medical difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties and / or moderate learning difficulties) are further supported through the work of the school's Special Needs Department. In such cases, Base staff work in liaison with the Special Needs Department and with other agencies (e.g. specialist teachers, school behaviour unit, specific learning difficulties unit, Social Care, Connexions etc) to address these issues.

Mainstream Schools with Bases for children with Specific Speech and Language Impairments (SSLI)

Introduction

Speech and Language bases in mainstream schools in Hertfordshire enable pupils with specific speech and language impairment to access education and develop their functional speech, language and communication whilst engaging in learning in preparation for reintegration full time into their local mainstream school, where possible. There is also focussed intervention for the development of functional literacy and numeracy skills.

Education from 5-16 years is enabled through a range of means which can be identified under key headings:

Curriculum, content, organisation and delivery

All pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum that is differentiated according to their individual needs and strengths and which includes the development of their communication skills alongside their self-esteem and social skills. There is a focussed intervention for the development of functional literacy and numeracy skills.

The Bases offer a flexible approach which recognises a pupil's requirement for support and his/her need to become an independent learner and develop appropriate social skills. Pupils are supported in mainstream learning environments by the Base staff and come to the Base for learning activities which focus on development of language and communication. Timetables and lessons are designed and responsive to the needs of the children through the Key Stages. Small classes/groups and favourable adult/pupil ratios, which vary according to the needs of the pupil, ensure that learning can be tailored to a child's individual needs.

Children with specific speech and language impairments are taught vocabulary and concepts in a cross curricular and thematic way. Children are taught in different ways using a multisensory approach i.e. kinaesthetic, visual, practical and concrete approaches. Pupils are likely to require a high level of visual support e.g. photographs, the use of symbols and appropriate signing strategies.

Pupils are given regular opportunities to learn new skills and to generalise those already learned through frequent repetition and the chance to practise skills in different situations.

At Key Stage 4 pupils have access to a good range of nationally accredited courses, which can include Entry Level Certificates of achievement, various vocational courses and GCSE courses.

Resources

The provision in Speech and language bases consists of intervention which is delivered by both Speech and Language Therapists and Base class teachers. Both the teachers and the therapists jointly plan to enable curriculum and therapy targets to be integrated into the child's learning. These are delivered by Base staff through individual teaching, small groups or support during full class integration. The staff within the Bases are highly skilled in the use of a range of different teaching strategies and approaches to support the development of language and communication skills e.g. symbols, signing, pre-teaching, forced alternatives, colour and shape coding and self-help strategies.

Assessment

Targets are set in collaboration with parents and other professionals and reviewed together on a regular basis. Assessment is carried out both formally and informally and provides information for future targeted intervention work. A range of assessment tools is used to provide a picture of attainment and progression. This may include the use of the Herts Ratings Scale, National Curriculum assessment, visual assessment tools, reading tests, and speech, receptive and expressive language tools. Progress in their measurable speech, language and communication skills may determine their reintegration into their local mainstream school, but consideration is given to the needs of the whole child and is not just focussed on assessment results. The functionality of pupils' communication skills is as much an aspect of attainment within the assessment and placement process as assessment results.

Trans-disciplinary Approach

A range of professionals work with the pupils, parents and staff of the schools to ensure that the best possible guidance is provided to encourage and support educational development. The professionals may include additional Specialist Speech and Language Therapists, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Music and other therapists, School Nurses, Consultant Paediatrician, Educational Psychologists, Counsellors and Advisory Teachers for Speech and Language Impairment.

Schools work with a variety of external professionals to provide for the holistic needs of the children and young people.