The Forest Pathway at Southgate

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Introduction

Within the Forest Pathway we try to create a need led curriculum to match each pupil's key learning needs.

Our curriculum aim is to develop skills essential to meet the challenges of everyday academic life and beyond. Throughout their learning journey we observe and reflect on how we can support our learners to achieve their maximum potential through developing meaningful skills for life. It is important to us to develop self-esteem, so acknowledging learner's achievements is important, recognising the smallest steps as well as large steps in their learning.

Nurture

Southgate is a Nurture school and as a result the Forest Pathway, as with the other Pathways, concentrates on three key areas in varying degrees. These are the original curriculum principles developed by Marjorie Boxall:

1. Development of Self-Esteem. Communication and the development of communication is very important. Many of the pupils have significant language difficulties and social and emotional developmental delays. Social and emotional development delays and low self-esteem directly impacts the way our learners act and communicate every day. By developing self-esteem, we are better equipping our learners to cope with peer interaction, their ability to deal with strong emotions, (both good and bad), and to cope with challenges and frustrations when they arise.

2. Play and role play is an important factor in the Forest Pathway. As through experiencing real life representations in their play our aim is to develop our learners understanding of their world around them. Play also teaches social skills such as turn taking, sharing, cooperating and appreciating the feelings of others.

3. Within the Forest Pathway AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) is used, this includes simple systems such as symbols, signs, words and pointing, and more complex techniques involving ICT where appropriate. (Communication Matters, 2015) Support is provided from SALT (Speech and Language Therapy) where different approaches are used, for example Lego Therapy; this develops hands-on, thinking and problem solving skills. The students are more open try different things without fear of failure as mistakes can be quickly rectified as creativity is developed. Personalised targets are developed and shared with the class teachers to ensure the continuity.

ICT & Learning Strategies

AAC is used throughout the day. Words, signs and symbols are used to support and reinforce the learning.

The students have a well-established daily routine based on events, not time, (e.g. breakfast), the students know what to expect now and what is next so this has a calming effect.

ICT is used also as part of AAC supporting our learners with their communication. ICT supports our learners' ability to develop their reading, writing and numeracy and skills enabling them to express themselves more clearly. Using and developing ICT skills in school develops the

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confidence of our learners to use ICT at home for schoolwork and leisure both safely and securely.

Accreditations

Our school offers a range of accreditation. The accreditation that our learners will undertake is tailored to the individual needs and aspirations of that learner, ensuring our learners achieve their full potential to access their chosen post 16 provision.

Bibliography

Boxall, M. (2002) Nurture Groups in schools: Principles and Practice. Sage Publications.

Lego therapy information: http://asdaid.org/lego-and-asd/lego-therapy accessed December 2016

Lego therapy information: www.bricks-for-autism.co.uk, accessed December 2016.