Teaching Stanton Learners

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Signed – Headteacher: ………………………….

Signed – Chair of Governors: ………………….

Pupils at Stanton Vale who have complex needs access the Stanton Curriculum. Stanton learners are likely to have significant and muliple needs, in the areas of communication, cogntion, personal, social and emotional development and sensory, and usually in physical devlelopment. The Stanton curriculum reflects our pupils needs to access learning opportunities at a sensory level.

Learning areas in the Stanton curriculum are:

1. **Communication**
2. **Personal Social and Emotional Development**
3. **Cognition and Learning**
4. **Physical Development**

Teaching strategies and approaches
Pupils at Stanton Vale will benefit from personalised learning programmes, designed to meet their individual needs. However there are several general strategies and approaches to consider:

Encouraging intentional communication
Pupils accessing the Stanton Curriculum will be at the pre-intentional stage of development so staff need to observe behaviours carefully so that they can respond appropriately. For example, a member of staff may notice that a pupil always raises his eye brows when he is enjoying an activity. This will then be shared with all who support the pupil so that everyone is aware of how he expresses pleasure. Staff will then respond consistently and as if the pupil is purposefully communicating this pleasure in a move towards this. While the behaviours of some pupils may be pre intentional, by acknowledging them and responding to them, pupils can learn much about communication. This method of 'noticing' and responding to the subtle behaviours of our pupils is often called *Intensive Interaction*.

Intensive Interaction
The Intensive Interaction approach works through the development of enjoyable and relaxed interaction
sequences between two people. These interaction sequences are repeated frequently and gradually grow in duration, complexity and sophistication. As this happens, pupils are:

- Learning to give brief attention to another person
- Learning to focus on and share attention with another person
- Taking turns in exchanges of behaviour
- Learning that interaction is fun
- Using and understanding eye contact
- Using and understanding facial expressions
- Using and understanding gesture and body language
- Learning about safe, appropriate and enjoyable physical contact
- Learning to use and understand vocalisations

Intensive interaction sessions are not planned for or timetabled and should happen naturally at frequent points throughout the day. For more information visit the Intensive Interaction website (Dave Hewett).

Supporting pupils with sensory processing difficulties
Sensory processing refers to the way that the nervous system receives messages from the senses and turns them into appropriate motor and behavioral responses.

Sensory Processing difficulties exist when sensory signals are either not detected or don't get organized into appropriate responses. Sensory processing difficulties have been likenend to a neurological "traffic jam" that prevents certain parts of the brain from receiving the information needed to interpret sensory information correctly. Some pupils find it difficult to process and act upon information received through the senses, which creates challenges in performing countless everyday tasks. Some pupils require activites that will help them to either become more alert or more calm. Any one or a number of the seven main sensory systems can be affected (vestibular, proprioception, visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory and gustatory) and strategies need to be tailored to the need. Some pupils will need only a small amount of sensory regulation work before they are ready to learn, while others will require large amounts throughout the day.

MOVE – Mobility Opportunities via Education
MOVE provides a systematic way of developing motor skills and independent mobility focussing on the practical and functional skills that are required for adult life.
We have our own MOVE consultant within school who considers whether it is appropriate for individual pupils to participate in the MOVE Programme. Pupils who may benefit are assessed individually. A programme of activities designed to improve independent mobility is then developed. School staff and professionals from health collaborate to establish programmes that are appropriate to the needs of the individuals and their families and carers.

MARBLE programmes
The majority of our learners experience many barriers to their learning. Some need a sensory work out, either to calm then down or to stimulate their senses before learning can take place. Some have additional medical and physical needs that have to be addressed before learning can take place. Some pupils may need a drink or snack before work can take place while others might need to be in a particular position or piece of equipment to give them the best chance to learn. Some pupils will need activities to be presented in a very particular way, before they are able to learn. For example, a new resource may need to be presented on the left, 30 cms in front of the pupil and 10 cms above their eye line. When appropriate, our learners have MARBLE (Maximising Achievement by Reducing Barriers to Learning and Enjoyment) programmes, stating what needs to happen before, during and after learning to make sure that barriers are reduced as far as they can be.

Personal Profile

Many of our learners have a Personal Profile. This is a brief, positive document that highlights each pupil's strengths and needs, likes and dislikes. It will also contain information about how a pupil communicates with others.

The Environment
Providing the right learning environment is crucial for our pupils. Some will benefit from a quiet, distraction free environment while for others, a busy, more vibrant classroom may be more conjucive to learning. Wherever possible, staff should ensure that the learning environment (or a part of it) is appropriate to each pupils needs.

TaSSeLs
Pupils at a very early stage of development are likely to need sensory clues in order to prepare them for the routines of the day. TaSSeLs is a system of touch-speech cues which promotes effective communication. Members of staff support pupils to make particular movements (signs) which alert them to the fact that something is about to happen – such as receiving a drink, being moved or being hoisted. Pupils need to experience a consistent routine to help them begin to learn to anticipate that something is about to happen.

Other sensory cues
Pupils can be cued into particular people through the use of personal signifiers. Individual members of staff will present a particular, consistent sensory experience which will give a pupil the opportunity to identify them, for example a bangle with a personal item attached to it, a hair slide or a broach.

Natural sensory cues are built into activities, for example when pupils are going out on the bus, they may hear the jingle of the keys, smell the engine and experience the vibration of sitting on the bus. These are all vital clues that pupils may eventually remember and associate with going out on the bus.

Objects of reference
Sometimes pupils need more than natural sensory cues to anticipate what is about to happen. Objects of reference are objects which are associated with particular activities and where possible, have some association with it, for example an arm band could represent swimming. Objects should be offered as a cue, just before an activity begins so pupils may eventually learn to anticipate a particular activity. All routine activities should have a cue of some kind. It depends on the activity as to what the cue should be but once an object is decided on, it should be presented consistently and every time that activity is about to happen.

Symbols and photographs
Some of our pupils use photographs and symbols to interpret what is about to happen. The number of photographs or symbols that are used will gradually be built up over time.

Makaton
Makaton is a language programme using signs and symbols to help people to communicate. It is designed to support spoken language and the signs and symbols are used with speech, in spoken word order. Makaton signs are highly visual and concrete.

This makes them more motivating for pupils to look at and sometimes easier to understand than spoken words alone. Makaton signing can help to develop attention and listening skills, as well as encouraging engagement at all levels.

Tac Pac and Sensory Stories
Tac Pac is an activity that pairs music and touch to promote communication, personal and social and cognitive learning. Similarly sensory stories pair a song, rhyme or some words, to a sensory experience. Pupils are encouraged to 'notice' and interact with the experiences and resources involved. Adults ensure that the experiences are delivered consistently (same action/resource to a particular piece of music) and sensitively offered.

Write Dance
Music and dance is used to guide and aid children's imagination and language development, so that pieces of music, with the corresponding movements, are structured into 'narrative' themes that can be developed as stories or enjoyed as separate and 'stand-alone' sessions. Rhythm is closely linked to rhyme and pupils are encouraged to use their voices to describe the actions as they move and dance. Mark-making and 'movement drawings' ensure that the pupil's progress from whole body dance moves to fine- motor movements with fluency and speed. This provides the crucial learning environment, the most appropriate resources and the most motivating and stimulating programme to support and develop mature physical skills more quickly.
Children's individual expression, pace or learning and preferred mark making style are recognised within this approach. It is apparent that children's confidence, motivation and self-esteem can be seen to develop.

Sound Bath
This approach is based on sound therapy and focuses on communication, interaction and well being. A range of instruments are played in sequence to creat a rich sound scape that is relaxing and engaging. Pupils are encouraged to communicate their awareness and to respond to each sound. Whenever possible, pupils are given the opportunity to play the instruments with support.

Structure and routine
Pupils usually benefit from the security of knowing what is about to happen and how it will happen. With this in mind, while ensuring that experiences remain challenging and exciting, some activities will follow particular routines that are not usually deviated from. For example, classes have bespoke 'welcome' sessions at the beginning of each day. Where appropriate these will be used to explain the order of the day. Other routines such as 'what happens at lunch time' and 'what happens at the end of the day' are bespoke to each class and over time, will become familiar to particular pupils.

Repetition
Many of our pupils need to practice a particular skill over and over again before they are able to master it. Similarly they may need to experience a particular routine many times before they learn to anticipate it. The challenge for staff is to find different ways to teach the same skill so that pupils remain motivated and excited by their learning.