

Welcome to Brackenfield School

We are an area special school for the South of Derbyshire We cater for a wide range of pupils with varying levels of need of communication and cognition. We recognise the importance of personalised outcomes for each of our young people and supporting all pupils to have as independent life as possible.

Pathways and Classes

In order to achieve this Brackenfield School adopts a Pathway Approach. The Pathways are designed to allow each pupil to become their best version of themselves. Each Pathway aims to develop functional lifeskills so that pupils leave Brackenfield ready to transition to the next stage in their lives. Pupils are placed in a pathway dependant on their cognitive, social/emotional and sensory needs. Each Pathway has 3 classes which are not necessarily in age groups. Pupils may remain in a pathway during their time at Brackenfield or may move between Pathways dependant on their needs and development. Each Pathway is overseen by a middle leader (Pathway Lead), classes are all teacher led with a team of STLAs (Specialist Teaching and Learning Assistants). All classes are classed based with access to toilets and their own kitchenettes, this is to remove the need for transition around the school buildings which our young people find challenging.



Communicate

- Developing our skills to express needs, share opinions and obtain information.
- Developing our competency to independently navigate familiar settings.



Comprehended

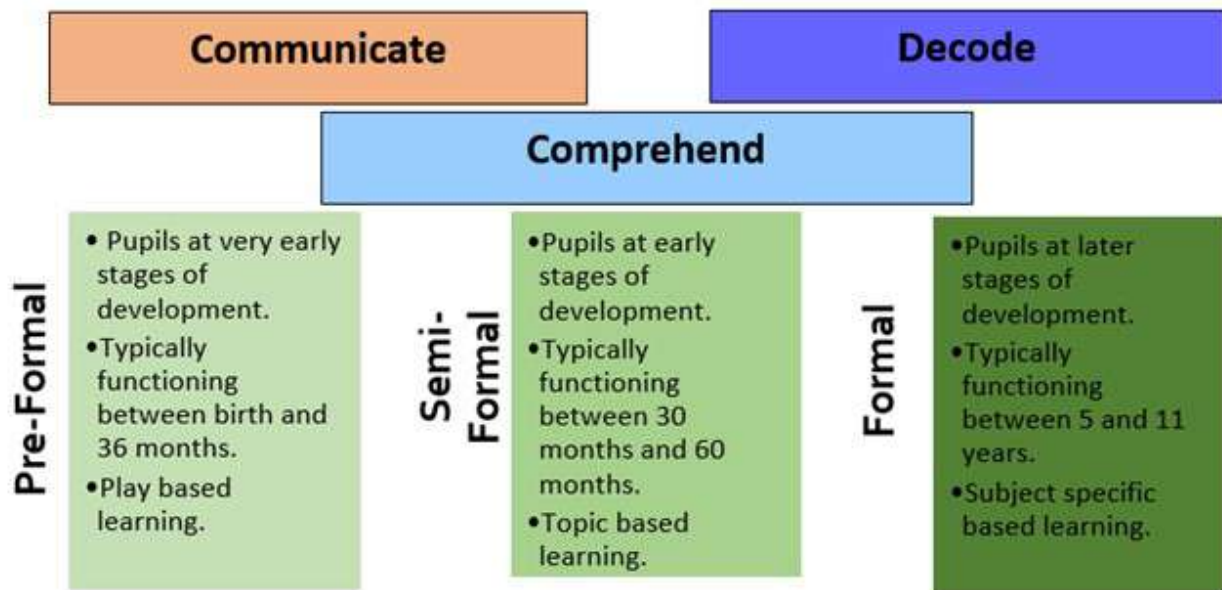
- Developing our skills to generalise, contextualise and problem solve.
- Developing our competency to independently navigate our world.



Decode

- Developing our purposeful and transferrable functional skills.
- Developing our competency to independently explore our world.

Curriculum



All our pupils receive a broad and balanced educational offer whilst providing opportunities for progression by giving access to experiences that are relevant, interesting and challenging. Curriculum delivery is centred around opportunities for online safety and safeguarding so these skills and knowledge are fully embedded. Our curriculum content is drawn from the Early Years Foundation Stage, EQUALS Semi-Formal Curriculum, The National Curriculum and the Preparation for Adulthood Framework. The curriculum content has been designed in order to facilitate progression at all levels. However, this with the understanding that some pupils may remain at a developmentally early stage throughout their life and therefore may not progress to formal learning.

Our curriculum is completely based around functional lifeskills for our pupils. For that reason it is carefully structured to ensure that we teach and fully embed the skills needed for our pupils to be as independent as possible in adulthood. We use all opportunities to embed functional lifeskills from independent travel training on school trips to ordering/preparing class breakfasts in the morning.

CURRICULUM CONTENT										KS4	
Pre-Formal (developmentally 0 – 36 months)	Subject Areas										Preparation for Adulthood Aim Awards - PSED
	Literacy	Maths	Learning to Learn						Communication and Language		
			Personal, Social and Emotional Development		Physical Development						
Semi-Formal (developmentally 30 – 60 Months)	Subject Areas										
	Literacy	Mathematics	Lifeskill Subjects				Physical Education	Expressive Art & Design			
			Independent Living	Community Participation	Employment	Good Health					
Formal (developmentally 5– 11 years)	Subject Areas										
	Literacy	Mathematics	Lifeskill Subjects				Physical Education	Expressive Art & Design	Additional College D of E Forest Schools		
			Independent Living	Community Participation	Employment	Good Health					

Thematic Approach to the Curriculum

As a school we recognise the importance of embedding learning and supporting our pupils to be able to contextualise and generalise information. We use a thematic approach to support this. The themes are based on the four lifeskill subjects.

The theme provides the context of the learning but the delivery supports pupil's being able to generalise and embed their understanding. For example: The Great Fire of London falls under the Independent Living area. The primary lifeskill function of this theme is that fire is hot and dangerous. However this theme can also be used to teach about: the history and geography of London at this time; people who can help us when there is a fire; how fire can be represented through Expressive Arts & Design and Dance and how communities respond to fire.

SMSC (Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural) and British Value annual events are also covered within the curriculum; it is not the expectation that every SMSC & British Value event is taught or celebrated each year; rather that the SMSC & British Value events are taught to best suit the needs of our population and to give them a depth and breadth in the curriculum.

Communication across the Curriculum

All of our pupils have significant communications needs due to their learning difficulties. Being able to communicate is one of the most important functional lifeskills. Brackenfield adopts a total communication approach to effectively support all our pupils. Dependent on need this may be in the forms on signs and symbols such as Makaton Communication or augmentative communication such as PECs or hi-tech aids.

Makaton is designed to support spoken language and the signs and symbols are used with speech, in spoken word order. With Makaton, children and adults can communicate using signs and symbols. Many learners drop the signs or symbols naturally at their own pace, as they develop speech. Makaton Symbols can also be used to support Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). Makaton is extremely flexible as it can be personalised to an individual's needs and used at a level suitable for them.





Play within the Curriculum

Play is an essential part of a child's development. Play is a critical aspect of a child's development as it provides them with opportunities for social interaction, to think creatively and allows them to make sense of the world around them.

"Nearly everything the growing child needs to learn is developed and practiced in play, including concrete skills, such as counting, motor co-ordination, speech and abstract skills, including imagination, problem-solving, planning, and 'learning how to learn'" (Goldstein 2003).

From birth almost all neurons are present but most are not connected in networks. The synapse formation (connecting process) is rapid during the first 12 months; with the greatest growth areas being sensorimotor, visual cortex and later the frontal lobes. For our pupils many early developmental stages have been delayed or restricted by the nature of their needs in those early months and years. Therefore we have to help these children learn to play for without our interventions they do not develop those communication, social and emotional skills typically developing children acquire through play. We have to create the opportunities through our learning environments, interactions and activities for pupils to play; they will not learn to play passively.