

The iASEND curriculum was trialled within the HI cohort at Northern Counties School from September 2017 as the curriculum provided an opportunity to consider the specific learning needs of our pupils and the assessment framework used in order to support their learning. The assessment framework needs to effectively underpin the curriculum in school and support teachers to target learning opportunities precisely to maximise attainment and progress.

iASEND is the assessment framework used within Northern Counties School (from September 2017) and maps directly onto both the National Curriculum and our curriculum offer. The assessment statements can be used as learning objectives which target learning opportunities for our hearing impaired pupils at the next steps on an individualised basis. In addition to capturing ‘vertical progress’ (new learning and skills), iASEND captures ‘horizontal learning’ (depth of learning and understanding).

Hearing impaired pupils at Northern Counties School may reach a point in their learning journey where acquiring new knowledge or skills interferes with, or degrades, their prior learning and attainment. By teaching for understanding and the ability to generalise knowledge and skills, we deepen pupil’ learning and this leads to functional understanding. Approaching learning in this way ensures that pupils can apply what they know across many contexts.

The HI curriculum is designed to meet the learning needs of our pupils. It differs by Key Stage and iASEND stages of attainment, and the method of delivery varies according the age and ability of each pupil. The curriculum is based on the National Curriculum but also reflects and supports three key areas – **Communication, Wellbeing** and **Functionality and Independence**.

In key stages one and two, pupils access a curriculum based on a topic based, vocabulary led approach. The National Curriculum is the basis for the learning of new knowledge and skills but is modified specifically to needs the needs of each individual child. The significant difficulties out hearing impaired pupils experience with acquiring, understanding and communicating language spontaneously, mean that it is essential that the curriculum that we offer places a strong emphasis on the pupils being involved in meaningful, functional, everyday experiences resulting in the specific teaching of targeted vocabulary/signs and concepts, in a range of contexts in order to aid contextual learning and generalisation through a Total Communication approach. Pupils follow a two-year topic cycle that is closely linked to the detailed

teacher/therapist assessments. At Key Stage three the curriculum becomes more subject specific and this leads to accreditation into key Stage four and Post 16.

Hearing impaired pupils at Northern Counties School present with a range of communication difficulties. In order to meet their very specific needs we have an integrated approach to teaching and therapy. Speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and teachers work together with skilled support staff, using a range of recognised strategies in order to address pupils' highly specific and individual needs. The majority of teachers who work within the hearing impaired cohort are additionally qualified as Teachers of the Deaf. All staff are expected to hold a minimum of a Level 2 signing qualification.

Therapists may work with pupils individually, in pairs or small groups or lead whole class sessions supported by teaching staff. Therapy objectives and targets are seen as an integral part of curriculum delivery and are embedded within the daily programme for each pupil. This joint responsibility and collaborative way of working allows for each pupil to receive an individualised approach to their learning which can be immediately responsive to their changing needs.

Approaches include:

- Structured work on understanding and using language including vocabulary development through a Total Communication approach that focuses on both English and British Sign Language
- Use of other means of communication e.g. symbols, photographs
- Structured and visual programmes to build the skills of reading, grammar and spelling e.g. shape coding
- Social stories and social communication strategies to develop friendship and relationship skills
- Sensory integration programmes
- Fine motor/gross motor programmes to support curriculum access and develop independence
- Programmes to develop phonological cognition and speech production
- Work in the community to promote communication, independence and personal safety