



# The Exploratory Pathway



The Exploratory Pathway sits between the Immersive and Questioning Pathways. With one class sitting between Exploratory and the more formal curriculum of the Questioning Pathway. The semi-formal curriculum on offer to students consists of a wide range of subjects and therapeutic based sessions tailored to suit the needs of individual students and the classes they sit within.

## The design of the semi-formal Exploratory Curriculum - Intent

**What is our Exploratory Pathway vision?** Students learn best in an environment where they feel safe, able to take risks, learn from exploration and from trying again. Exploration is curiosity put into action. The curriculum on offer to students in the Exploratory Pathway is designed to ensure that they lead a happy, fulfilling and as fun-filled life as possible. EHCP targets drive the curriculum offer, which is a semi-formal curriculum that is broad and balanced with an emphasis upon Preparation for Adulthood and accreditations for those that it is appropriate for. It has the Golden Thread of PRIDE running through it that embodies our school motto and weaves into all that we do. For some students it prepares them for a move into the Questioning Pathway.

Learning through exploration will help students to problem solve, experience concrete activities, explore functional literacy and numeracy and develop their confidence, social skills and independence. By being classroom based with one consistent teacher for a large part of their timetable allows for a smooth transition from Primary to Secondary for the Y7s and a nurturing approach in preparation for their move into a higher group and potentially different Pathway.



### Overview of our Curriculum Pathways

|   |  |   |   |   |  |
|---|--|---|---|---|--|
| <b>Our Golden Thread</b><br><b>PRIDE</b>    | <b>P</b><br>Pride in our appearance<br>and all we do | <b>R</b><br>Respect for ourselves<br>And others | <b>I</b><br>Independence                | <b>D</b><br>Determination               | <b>E</b><br>Enjoyment                                    |
| <b>Four Areas of Need</b><br><b>In EHCP</b> | Cognition<br>And Learning                            | Communication<br>And Interaction                | Physical/<br>Sensory Needs              | Social Emotional<br>Mental Health       |  |
| <b>Preparation</b><br><b>For Adulthood</b>  | Employment   | Independent Living                              | Friends, relationships<br>And community | Health and<br>Well Being                |  |
| <b>Our School</b><br><b>Anchors</b>         | <i>Year One</i><br>Identity<br>Celebration           | <i>Our World</i><br>Belonging                   | <i>Year Two</i><br>Signs +<br>Symbols   | <i>Journeys</i><br>In the beginning     | <i>Year Three</i><br>Leaders and<br>Followers<br>Stories |
| <b>PSHE Framework</b>                       | Self Awareness                                       | Self care, support<br>and safety                | Relationships - Managing<br>feelings,   | Relationships - Changing<br>and growing | Healthy Lifestyles<br>The World I live in                |

# Implementation (Coverage)

Due to the broad needs in the Exploratory Pathway, we draw on different sources to define our semi-formal curriculum offer. The Education and Health Care plans are the main drivers in curriculum design. Dependent on the needs of students in the class, a broad and balanced range of activities are delivered centred around the four key areas which are: cognition and learning, communication and interaction, physical, and sensory, and social, emotional and mental health. In addition, each student has an annual Preparation for Adulthood Plan based upon smart targets under the four key areas of employment and volunteering moving towards independent living, friends, relationships and community and finally health and well-being.

Last, but not least, the classes, where appropriate, follow the national curriculum for subject specific lessons, for example, our three year rolling programme for history comprises the key areas of study in the Key Stage Three National Curriculum.

Obviously, in a school that caters for such a vast range of needs, it is important that there is a “glue” that coheres each of the different pathways and the classes within them. This is why we have 'anchors' that ground everything that we do. Each anchor, taught over a term, provides an opportunity to explore issues and questions that are absolutely fundamental to our students making progress. The first term of every year has an anchor that enables us to explore who the students are, where they live, who they live with, what is important to them et cetera. The anchors can be as basic as necessary, for example ‘what is my name?’ or as complex as ‘do I identify as just one gender? ‘



The  
Anchors:



| Year / Term | Autumn           | Spring                | Summer    |
|-------------|------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| Year 1      | Identity         | Celebration           | Our World |
| Year 2      | Belonging        | Signs and symbols     | Journeys  |
| Year 3      | In the beginning | Leaders and Followers | Stories   |

In the Exploratory Pathway, anchors are used as inspiration for what the students explore during a term. We also provide students with the opportunity to explore key calendar events and themes which are relevant to their lives.



## The key elements of school life will focus on :



- Literacy and numeracy skills are developed in a variety of meaningful and engaging cross-curricula topics/anchors and real life activities; enabling students to explore reading, recording and maths in practical familiar situations. Numbers, quantity, times and money may be further investigated through play and exploration. We are developing their skills to be able to follow the national curriculum and for some students to move onto doing accreditations in the future. Lexia is used to develop their Literacy skills and Maths Whizz for numeracy and baselines them and sets work at a level that is appropriate for them.
- Students explore subjects in a way which is adapted and purposeful to their learning experience.
- A key aspect of our curriculum offer is preparing our students for adulthood. Within this we develop key knowledge, skills and understanding in communication, social interaction, health needs, independent living and potential employment or volunteering.
- Twinkl Phonics is used across the Exploratory Pathway for those that it is appropriate for based on their ability. Those that need more of a challenge are using Guided Reading where their comprehension skills are developed.
- Some students will experience time in the Exploratory pathway as a stepping stone into the Questioning Pathway once their resilience, confidence and social skills have developed.
- Students will be potentially working towards an accreditation appropriate for them
- Supporting students with Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) where necessary, encouraging them to listen, through modelled speech, and be listened to giving them the freedom to ask questions and communicate key information from home, the school day and topic related vocabulary
- Encouraging students to take ownership in developing their independence and learn skills for life—with support they learn social skills such as self care and looking after their appearance; why it is important to use good manners and how to greet people; discovering how they can help with simple tasks around the home and how to prepare simple drinks and snacks. The PSHE Framework is embedded in all the work we do with students and is delivered in a way that is appropriately pitched for them and helps to develop skills that keeps them safe.
- Students are encouraged to take part in and enjoy a wide range of physical activities – including swimming, sensory circuits, yoga & relaxation which helps develop their confidence as well as fine and gross motor skills. Students also follow programmes advised by the physiotherapist or OT.

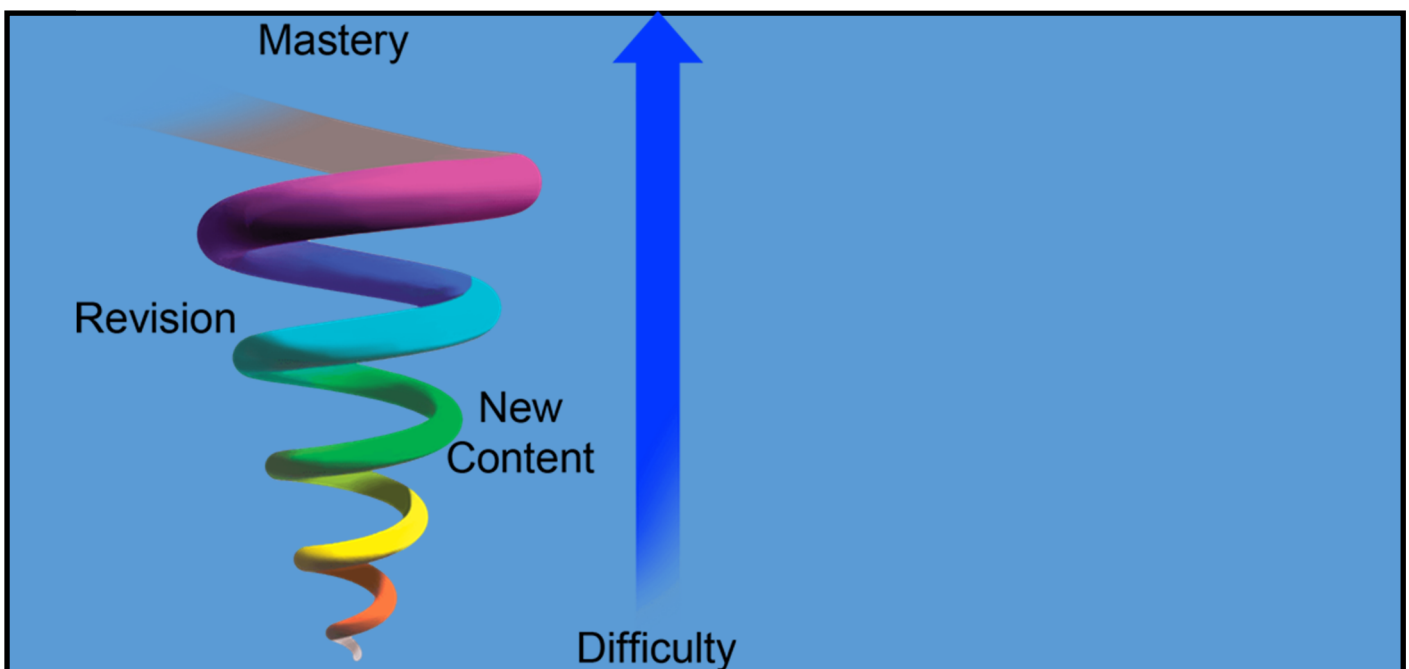
The semi-formal curriculum is delivered in a nurturing, purposeful and enjoyable environment. There is a breadth of ability across the Exploratory Pathway and students are grouped according to their academic and emotional needs. Classes are led by teachers who are experts in teaching students with SEND and accompanied by teaching assistants. In addition, some classes depending on needs and abilities are also taught by subject specific teachers. This team approach ensures that pupils receive a bespoke education and learning experience personalised to their needs. Assessment is on-going throughout their journey in the Exploratory Pathway, providing a direction for learning that is relevant to the individuals' needs.

# Implementation: The Spiral Curriculum

## How is this done in the Exploratory Pathway?

### Learning to cross the road:

- Talk about rules of road safety
- Re-visit rules in 4D room
- Visit 'road' on yard and practice
- Go out on a trip to Seabridge road and observe what the cars are doing (new learning)
- Apply new knowledge to old
- Practice crossing road



What this means in the classroom is that a student is taught the knowledge, then...

(1) The student revisits a topic, theme or subject several times throughout their school career; (2) The complexity of the topic or theme increases with each revisit; and (3) New learning has a relationship with old learning and is put in context with the old information.

The benefits for our students are that (1) The information is reinforced and solidified each time the student revisits the subject matter; (2) The spiral curriculum also allows a logical progression from simplistic ideas to complicated ideas; and (3) Students are encouraged to apply the early knowledge to later learning.

**Implementation:** All lessons in the Exploratory Pathway begin with the student. We use each student's EHCP as the basis of teacher planning when developing sessions and routines. We teach skills both explicitly in formalised sessions as well as implicitly through everyday opportunities as they arise. An example of the types of activities and adapted sessions exploratory students may have access to:

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| English and Maths              | ICT   |
| Sports and swimming Yoga       | Physical management, speech programmes, OT exercises for those it is appropriate for. |
| Sensory Regulation             | The Arts  |
| Preparation for Adulthood      | News sharing  |
| Community visits               | Breakfast club  |
| Social stories/sensory stories | Enrichment clubs  |
| Land based studies             | Curriculum subjects with specialist teachers  |

### Exploratory Pathway Semi-Formal Curriculum

**What is our Exploratory Pathway vision?** The curriculum on offer to students in the Exploratory Pathway is designed to ensure that they lead a happy, fulfilling and as fun-filled life as possible. EHCP targets drive the curriculum offer, the curriculum is a semi-formal curriculum that is broad and balanced with an emphasis upon Preparation for Adulthood and accreditations for those that it is appropriate for. It has the Golden Thread of PRIDE running through it. For some students it prepares them for a move into the Questioning Pathway. Learning through exploration will help students to problem solve, experience concrete activities, explore functional literacy and numeracy and develop their confidence, social skills and independence.

|                        |   |                  |  |           |  |                        |  |                       |   |
|------------------------|---|------------------|--|-----------|--|------------------------|--|-----------------------|---|
| Whole School           | Identity  | Celebration      | Our World  | Belonging | Signs and Symbols  | Journeys               | In the beginning   | Leaders and Followers | Stories   |
| Approach               | Identity  | Celebration      | Our World  | Belonging | Signs and Symbols  | Journeys               | In the beginning   | Leaders and Followers | Stories   |
| Anchors from RSE       |   |                  |  |           |  |                        |  |                       |   |
| PSHE Framework         |   |                  | Preparation for Adulthood  |           |  |                        | PRIDE  |                       |   |
| Area of Need           | Communication and Interaction<br>Having a voice, making choices<br>Having control<br>Expressing need/emotion<br>Following instructions<br>Turn taking<br>Talking to an audience |                  | Cognition and learning<br>Attention, Concentration,<br>Independence, increase reading age<br>Reading, writing, inference<br>Recognition and formation of numbers, problem solving, place value, addition, subtraction, timetables etc. |           | Social and emotional<br>Regulation—behaviour<br>Sense of security, trust<br>Confidence and self esteem<br>Skills out in the community<br>Friendships and relationships |                        | Sensory and physical<br>Maintain and develop skills<br>Stamina<br>Resilience<br>Being active<br>Independence<br>Fine motor |                       |   |
| Approaches to Learning | Scaffolding<br>Modelling<br>Clueing<br>Prompting<br>Reduction of support<br>Structure and repetition.   |                  | Mobility, postural management, exploring the environment and personal care to enable them to be comfortable and ready to learn. Physio programmes.   |           | Medical needs met through Care plans and trained staff to keep them healthy and safe in order to engage and participate.   |                        | Sensory diet<br>Lexia<br>Maths Whizz<br>Access to ipads and laptops<br>Outdoor learning<br>Community visits                |                       | EHCP outcomes, reviews, communication profile, guidance from outside agencies. Weekly reflection. Mapping against Skills Grids and Recorded on Evidence for Learning. |
| Components             | Personalisation   | High staff ratio | Multi Professional Collaboration   |           | Care and Mobility  | Behaviour for Learning | Environment  | Outdoor learning      |   |

# Impact

- When students join Blackfriars, we baseline their current knowledge, skills and understanding in key areas against our Skill grids.
- From there, we create a potential flightpath in the areas of maths and English, which shows a students predicted progress throughout their time at our school
- We continually assess students against their Key Stage EHCP targets and Preparation for Adulthood plans. This helps to ensure our teaching is relevant and personalised to the students needs.
- We use a multi-faceted approach to assessment including, observations, videos, photographs and professional judgements and progress is documented on Evidence for Learning.
- Students work on nationally accredited programmes where appropriate and every student will receive either a Bronze, Silver or Gold Blackfriars Baccalaureate when they leave.
- Expectations are aspirational and results are strong with students working at or above expectations.
- Destinations beyond Blackfriars include:
  - Newfriars College
  - Strathmore College
  - Regent College

