

Needs of the students

The children in Sowe class all have a diagnosis of autism. This means that they tend to use their object processing pathways within the brain to try to process people. Consequently, people can be unpredictable 'objects' and very confusing to them. In some aspects of social and emotional development, some pupils are functioning at around 6 – 12 months and are totally self-directed. Some pupils are functioning at an object level, others at a photograph level or a symbol level. All students experience additional sensory issues. Some are hyper-sensitive in one or more channel, some are hypo-sensitive and some swing between the two. They all require a multi-sensory curriculum.

Outline of the curriculum

Within Sowe class we offer a rich and stimulating curriculum, which is individually tailored to each child and reflects outstanding autism practice in an environment that supports the student's learning. We offer a range of sensory interventions such as TACPAC, Rebound Therapy, Attention Autism Programme and daily access to our new sensory room. Intensive Interaction forms a central part of our curriculum and is used to teach the pre-speech fundamentals of communication. There is a caring yet purposeful atmosphere within Sowe class, with a clear balance of focus between student welfare and achievement for all.

We use a very clear structure (as recommended by TEACCH – Mesibov) to organise time, work, the environment and communication to make the school day and environment more predictable and to reduce student anxiety levels. The outcome of this is less behaviour issues and removal of barriers to learning. We strongly believe that if we meet the autism needs first, children can learn.

Student outcomes

- To have access to a highly individual programme of learning in order to support every child to achieve beyond their potential.
- To have access to a range of opportunities to extend their life experiences and to improve each child's overall wellbeing.
- To progressively develop the fundamentals of communication through the use of Intensive Interaction and furthering vocalisations toward the beginnings of speech.
- To further develop abilities in the areas of social communication and interactions such as the understanding of eye contacts and facial expressions and taking turns in exchanges of behaviours.
- To become more 'flexible' in their thinking and develop an ability to cope with unplanned changes.

