

We Look After Ourselves
We Look After Each Other
We Look After Our Learning
We Look After Our Environment

Our St Luke's School Curriculum



Introduction

Present and Future

We look after ourselves, each other, our learning and our environment.

The ethos of the school, its operational rules and intent are formed in and through these values.

Our pupils are unique, fabulous and proud of their differences. In a mainstream world that expects conformity, the challenges our young people encounter can be extremely difficult to navigate, but this can be possible with the right support.

Our school curriculum is designed to be flexible and responsive in order to meet the increasing complexity of needs pupils placed in our school, have. Our children now tend to have three or more diagnosed SEND needs and function cognitively at half their chronological age. In addition, mental health challenges are particularly difficult when understanding is impaired.

We see one of our most important aspects of our curriculum is to nurture each individual's human agency, building the self-esteem and resilience required to thrive through childhood into adulthood. Experiences, opportunities, relevant and meaningful teaching content, delivered by skilled adults are integral in our desire to provide a curriculum that illuminates our pupils' abilities.



As such, we have one curriculum that is structured through Tiers, which direct learning towards appropriate, age-related accreditation but taught accessibly in line with the young person's needs and cognition, driven in turn by the child's Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).

Alongside the embedding of essential skills and knowledge, we expand horizons by exposing pupils to new learning, experiences and to see themselves as having a voice; as full participants in our community, society and British culture.

Looking ahead, opportunities for employment for people with learning disabilities remain alarmingly low. Only 6% of adults with learning disabilities are employed. Cognitive disabilities are lifelong and many of our school leavers will require additional assistance to overcome barriers well into adulthood. That said, our pupils have many strengths and these skills require evidencing for employers to consider them favourably.

School, as a place for learning and experiencing real work, gaining accreditations that are understood by employers feels an essential aspect of what we now do as a special school. Our forthcoming farm and café development builds on this essential need to support our youngsters into gainful employment, developing confidence with communication, functional literacy and numeracy. Our school community feels the responsibility and importance in 'moving the dial' and changing the landscape for young people with SEND to ensure our children acquire the functional tools for an engaging and employable future. Our curriculum seeks to do just that.



Probably the most important aspect of our school's work is to nurture the individual's human agency; building the self-esteem and resilience required to thrive through childhood into adulthood.

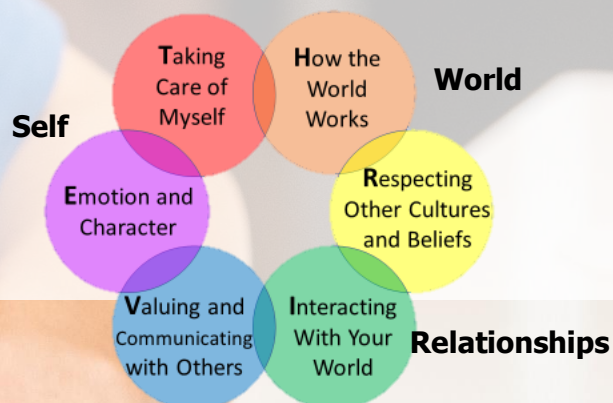
Intent

At St Luke's, we understand our children's different abilities and needs. In meeting these, our curriculum is designed to be flexible, responsive and cover essential knowledge and skills to support the young person's transition to adulthood.

Having considered a variety of new and, well-established curricula, ours is designed in-house and with the purposeful intent of progressing children from their individual starting points to outcomes that enable onward learning including the world of work.

As such, our curriculum format identifies what's needed to progress to more complex learning through a ladder of skills and knowledge, assessed with precision and used by pupils, parents and staff to communicate next steps.

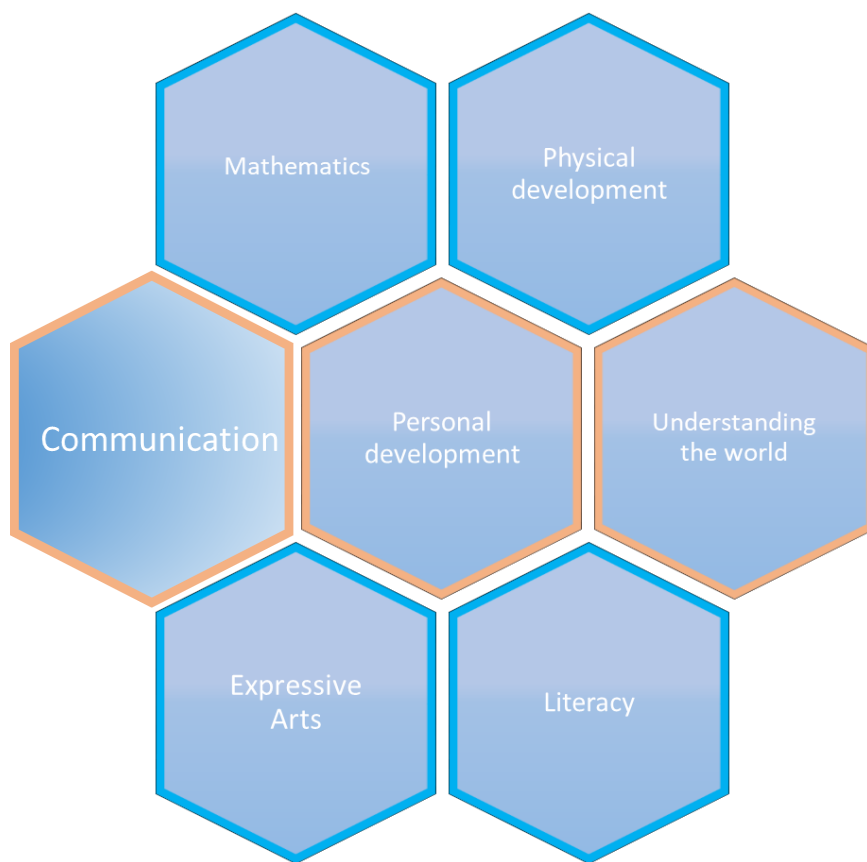
Our teaching addresses age-appropriate content at an accessible level for the individual. The three **prime areas** and **four specific areas** of our curriculum support our pupils' understanding of the 'self', 'relationships' and the world around them. These areas were developed through professional conversation, national research and in collaboration with therapists and all stakeholders within the school community.





Our Curriculum Is Designed To

- **Be Pupil Centred:** The curriculum is developed with the learners at its centre. Each class' learning content and delivery is bespoke to the strengths, interests, needs and barriers of the pupils to encourage learning and maximize meaningful progress.
- **Support Generalisation:** Subjects can be delivered discretely though usually combined through thematic approaches that encourage and explain the application and combination of skills and knowledge.
- **Develop Independence:** Learners are progressively encouraged in their independence as young adults.
- **Focus on Real World Application:** We encourage every child at every age to develop an understanding of their place as an active participant in their own life with real life experiences, learning and contextualization.
- **Be Meaningful for Pupils and Parents:** Working with children and their families on the skills that matter most now, to have a shared understanding of what progress would look like and to make this visible to others beyond the school gates.



Our Curriculum Areas of Learning

The three primary learning areas in our curriculum are; **Communication**, **Personal Development** and **Understanding My World**.

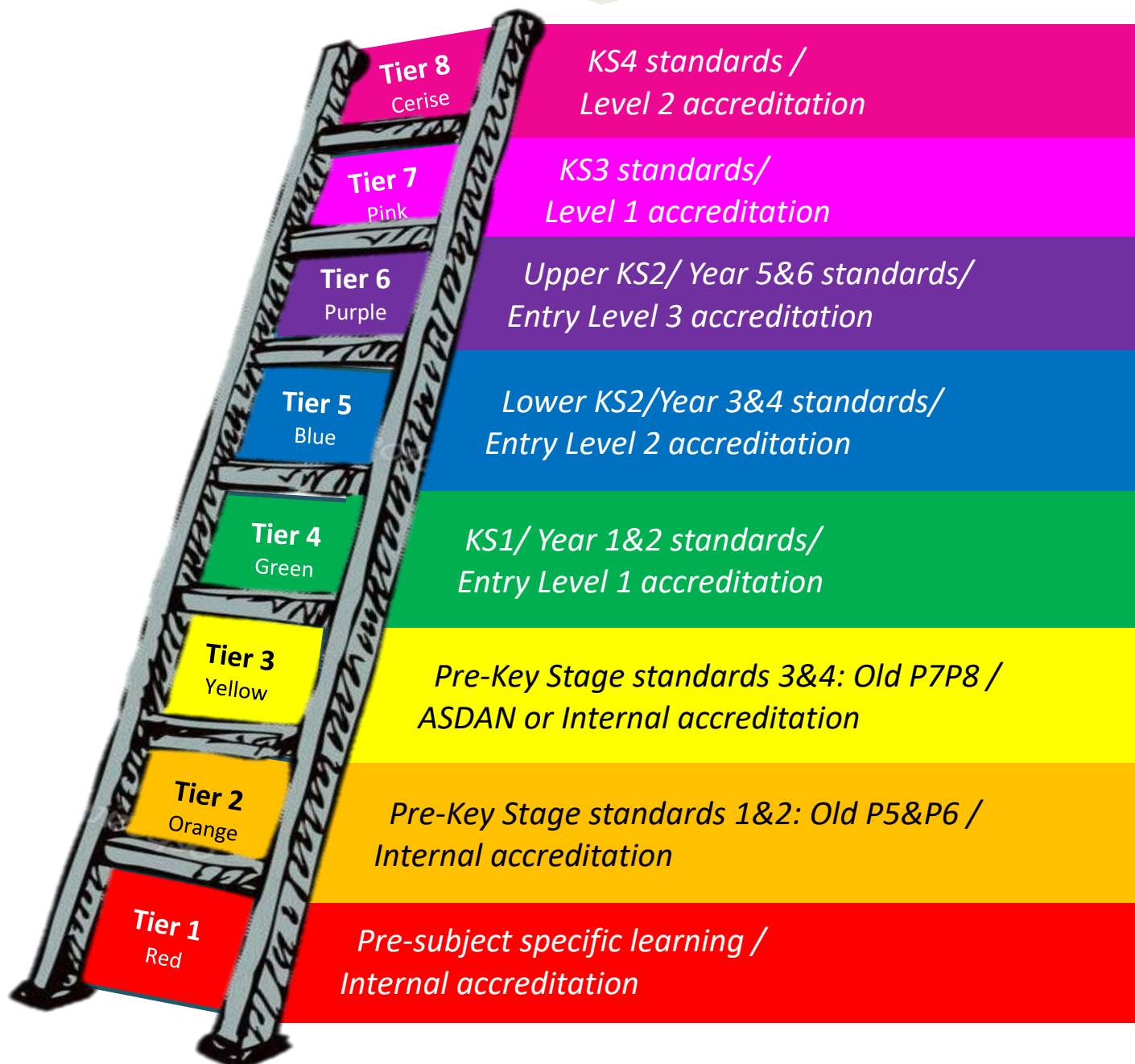
In addition, the areas of **maths**, **physical development**, **literacy** and **expressive arts** collate additional areas of learning to provide a holistic framework. This is more manageable for the pupils to grasp instead of the 24 different subject areas managed separately.

As such, you will find topic work that brings together discrete learning areas to provide relatable learning. From this, specific areas can be looked at in more detail for subject accreditation in Upper School, where relevant and meaningful.

Curriculum Tiers

We have used the many mainstream benchmarks to correlate linear progress expectations. These are used to support our communication of a child's ability, programme of learning and progress over time. Balanced with age-related curriculum content, the Tiers of Learning support the communication of the neuro-typical learning standards and expected outcomes for our SEND learners at 16 years. Within and across the curriculum there is flexibility in terms of the content delivered, how it is taught in order to encourage innovation and a specific response to the class cohort dynamics. Skills and knowledge are sequential and anchored to assessment in order to ensure coverage and entitlement.

Dependent on the child's age and starting points, children are supported to develop breadth of learning within and, up the tiers of skills and knowledge

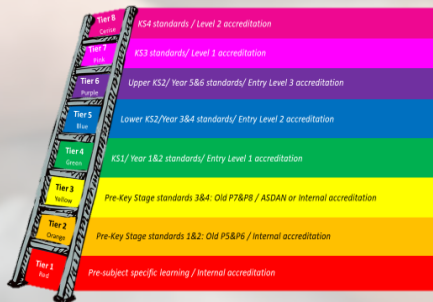


Planning for Learning, Using 'Tiers'

Teachers use medium and longer term planning to create activities that ensure sequential learning. The focus of the lessons is always the learning and skill rather than the activity, which is merely a vehicle for understanding the learning in a fun, vibrant and meaningful way.

As pupils join St Luke's with differing needs and abilities, so our planning changes to reflect the pupils' understanding. Clear assessment leads to accurate planning with appropriate challenge and ambitious end points.

The learning areas are deliberately broad to allow them to be taught in a variety of ways. For example, in 'Understanding the World', some children might learn about well-known geographical features in the world (in a subject specific way), while others might learn about different parts of the school. Content is mapped across the different tiers of learning for ability, relevance and extending their understanding of their immediate and, wider world.






Presence and Futures

Work Related Learning

Functional skills and work-related learning are essential aspects of our curriculum and provision at St Luke's. Knowing the importance of communication, personal development and an understanding of the immediate and wider world, our pupils need to apply these to the working world in order to have better chances of thriving.

Our planning development of a farm and café on site seeks to ensure the real-life experiences of retail, farming, horticulture and service industries are embedded in the curriculum. The interaction with the public ensures functional skills and improved communication are seen by our mainstream world and our pupils understood for their *abilities*.



Mat

	St	S	Objective	Autofit
3	TI	-	Know the number of days i	
3	TI	-	Know the number of week	
3	TI	-	Read time to the nearest m	
3	TI	-	Use the language of half-h	
3	TI	-	Use the language of quarte	
3	MO		Compare amounts of mone	
3	MO		Calculate the combined tot	
3	MO		Calculate change within £2	
3	MO		and pence separately	
3	MO		Carry out money calculatio	
3	ST	-	Take information from a ta	
3	ST	-	Read scales labelled in two	
3	ST	-	Present data using bar char	
3	ST	-	Solve one-step and two-ste	
4	NP	-	Count in multiples of 6, 7, 9	
4	NP	-	Find 1000 more or less than	
4	NP	-	Count backwards through 2	
4	NP	-	Order and compare numbe	
4	NP	-	Identify, represent and est	
4	NP	-	Read and write numbers up	
4	NP	-	Recognise the place value	
4	NP	-	Round any number to the r	

Maths Reading V

Assessment that Shows Progress

St Luke's Assessing Pupil Progress System (STAPPS)

Each area within the curriculum has its own STAPPS assessment sheet. Areas of learning are sequenced into '*I can*' statements that build sequential learning and knowledge. The *I can* statements are organised in 'Tiers' that group sequential learning towards achievable outcomes. Each STAPPS statement describes a specific skill, piece of knowledge, behaviour or ability that children should learn to progress in the subject.

Teachers use a combination of assessments including STAPPS, EHCP Outcomes, standardised national tests (e.g. reading ages) with the Tiers frameworks to ensure learning remains pitched at an appropriate level. Accurate assessment is used to measure progress throughout the year and STAPPS is used to support the identification of gaps in learning and areas for potential interventions.

Areas of Learning

Personal Development

To be able to form positive relationships, manage their own emotions, staying safe & healthy



Personal Development

In our curriculum, 'Personal Development' covers a range of learning topics that are focussed on the individual developing skills and understanding about what matters to them and, how they can interact with the world. Dependent on their needs, the information covered in Personal Development will cover statutory requirements and ensure relevance.

Our Personal Development Planning Framework identifies the essential extension of knowledge along identified categories/areas of learning.

Areas of Learning

Understanding My World

To develop an awareness of the physical world around us, and of diversity in all of its forms.

Understanding My World

Understanding My World is a prime area in St Luke's curriculum. We believe the combination of discreet subject areas forms the basis for pupils' learning about the world around them and beyond. Our teaching and curriculum content supports the pupils' knowledge about their immediate context and how this fits into the wider world.

Pupils learn about morals, politics and different languages, what it is to be British and our rule of law. The emphasis on spiritual, moral, cultural and social aspects of what it is to be an active participant in their learning and community is necessary for building resilience and starting to craft and shape early adulthood.

As children move into Upper School, they will have the opportunity to pursue accreditations in areas that match their interests. Critical thinking, problem solving and reflective skills are focussed on throughout as these skills are those that can be transferred to many other areas of learning.

Areas of Learning

Communication

To be able to communicate effectively with members of their community.

SCERTS

This multidisciplinary framework directly addresses the core challenges faced by children and persons with ASD and related disabilities. SCERTS focuses on building competence in Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transaction.

TEACCH

The TEACCH approach tries to respond to the needs of autistic people for educating and teaching autonomy. It is not a single method and can be used alongside other approaches.

INTENSIVE INTERACTION

We use Intensive interaction approaches with pre verbal children whose communication is at an early stage of development. The purpose is for children to enjoy communicating, improve their understanding of non-verbal and verbal communications and strengthen emotional connections and bonds with others.

PECS

For children with limited verbal language, Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) is an approach used to develop the child's ability to initiate communication.

VISUAL SUPPORTS: OBJECTS OF REFERENCE, OBJECTS; PICTURES; SYMBOLS

Objects, photographs and pictures are used throughout school and during all lessons to support CYP understanding and communication. Pupils use the objects, pictures or symbols to make their needs known and to share their ideas. Like, signs these are used alongside the spoken word.

MAKATON

Staff use signs and /or gestures to accompany the spoken word to aid the child's understanding of what is being said. Most children use signs and gestures along with speech. A small number of children use only gestures, signs and symbols to communicate.

Communication

At St Luke's School we use a total communication approach that supports staff and pupils to communicate with each other in the most effective way.

We create a total communication environment by responding to the needs of individual children through amending our approaches to communication and by using a combination of methods and approaches.

St Luke's School uses a range of evidence-based teaching strategies and pedagogies (teaching styles) including SCERTS, Attention Autism, PECs, Makaton, Intensive Interaction, TEACCH, and Assessment for Learning.

This means that through every learning opportunity, communication and emotional regulation is our main focus and priority for all our pupils.



Areas of Learning

Physical Development

To be able to function as successfully and, as independently as possible.

Physical Development is an area of learning in our curriculum that includes essential teaching and understanding of our physical needs, wellbeing, growth, exercise, fitness, food and health. Often specific interventions around sensory integration activities are taught to help with self-regulation.

Physical education, experienced in a safe and supportive environment is vital and unique in its contribution to our pupils' physical, emotional development and health. Our teaching aims to increase self-confidence through an ability to manage successfully in a variety of situations. Outdoor education is an integral part of this.

Aims of PE and Physical Activities at St Luke's:

- To develop an ability to plan a range of movement sequences, organise equipment and apparatus, and begin to design and apply simple rules.
- To develop an ability to remember, adapt and apply knowledge, practical skills and concepts in a variety of movement based activities.
- To promote positive attitudes towards health, hygiene and fitness.
- To develop psycho-motor skills through a range of relevant movement based activities.
- To develop a sense of fair play and sportsmanship.
- To develop communication skills, encouraging the use of correct terminology, to promote effective co-operation.
- To foster an enjoyment, and positive attitude to, the subject in school.
- To enable pupils where possible to work towards independence and to communicate positively towards others
- To give our pupils the opportunities to develop and practice leadership skills.

Areas of Learning

Literacy

To be able to read and write in everyday contexts.

Across the whole of a child's schooling here, pupils develop skills in literacy to develop proficiency in communicating. Literacy skills are embedded and overlearning a feature of the work to develop strengths in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

In turn, improving literacy supports skills and understanding across all other areas of learning, improving functional and life skills towards greater independence. Our focus on functional literacy supports preparation for the relevant accreditations of Upper School and, greater access to our society throughout adulthood. Reading and writing activities are often linked to experiences and activities children have or will experience their everyday life. This helps provide pupils with context and meaning to their studies.

Reading activities take place daily in every class in addition to daily phonics activities. Phonics teaching follows the programme of *Read, Write Inc* to ensure consistency between classes and this is consolidated through the reading books schemes we use. Support for whole word readers and those children requiring a different approach is provided by in-class differentiation.

In addition to physical reading materials (books etc.) children also have individual logins to *Reading Eggs* which provides them with access to a virtual library of books, including books with audio support and additional online content. This is used to support reading at home as an essential aspect of our home-school relationships.

Maths

To be able to use mathematical skills functionally.

Areas of Learning

As with literacy the different areas of numeracy are repeatedly revisited, consolidating and building on the learning that has gone before. The focus is on the practical application of mathematical skills to real life with the aim of ensuring pupils go on to be as independent as possible in their adult lives, as well as preparing them for the accreditations they will take in Upper School.

Practical activities linked to pupils' interests are key in ensuring engagement and motivation, which leads to progression. Life skills such as cooking, shopping, budgeting and using public transport all rely heavily on numeracy skills. As such numeracy lessons are often combined with other aspects of the curriculum to show pupils where the skills learned in school directly impact them. Systematic thinking and problem solving are also a key focus, particularly in the context of the worded problems children are likely to encounter during their accreditations.

In Key Stage 4 some pupils follow a Nationally recognised accredited course of study and occasionally individual pupils may study for a GCSE.

Throughout the year, cross-curricula topics allow teachers and pupils to explore and spend focused time on the maths and numeracy involved in that particular topic.





Expressive Arts

To be able to express themselves, and pursue their own interests.

Areas of Learning

The arts are an extremely important aspect to our pupils' learning, where creativity and immersion in expressive, observational and interpretive work is challenging and rewarding.

At St Luke's we have a vast array of activities and events that develop a sense of wonder amongst our pupils as well developing talents and skills.

Art

Art is taught across Lower and Middle School as discreet lessons as well as through topic work. Each year, the pupils develop skills and understanding of colour, drawing, painting, texture, pattern and form. Within these areas, the pupils will learn about the history of art, culture and the works of different artists. In Upper School pupils can choose Art as an option as part of an accreditation from Entry Level 1 to Level 2

Music

In Lower and Middle school, music is taught through various learning areas in the curriculum to support and enrich learning. External providers come in and run various sessions across the week such as drumming. In Upper School Music can be chosen as an option as part of accreditations from Entry Level 1 to Level 2

Drama

In Lower and Middle School, drama is taught as a way of enriching Communication, Literacy and Personal Development. Pupils enjoy acting out scenarios, role playing difficult situations and taking part in shows throughout the year. In Upper School Drama can be chosen as an option as part of an accreditation from Entry Level 1 to Level 2.

Interventions



What are school interventions?

In educational settings, interventions are often used to describe a **focused teaching session, which is a deviation away from existing teaching practice**. Interventions in our schools can be one-to-one, or delivered as a group. The aims of the programme will have been carefully created by a specialist practitioner, teacher or teaching assistant based on a key area of need. Interventions are delivered alongside Quality First Teaching. Here at St Luke's school quality first teaching includes, but is not restricted to, visual strategies, multi-sensory teaching, over-learning and repetition, Makaton, visual coding, increased processing time, social stories, comic strip conversations, small class sizes and increased adult to student support in class.

Many issues children face in their learning are interconnected. It might be that a child is displaying concerning behaviour, and is falling behind academically, so each intervention needs to address each individual's specific areas of need.

As a result, some interventions are targeted, and are put in place to address a certain weakness. These interventions are likely to be more formally monitored in order to track the child's progress, whereas other interventions are more flexible, and adjust according to the changing needs of the student.

Some students may need further support to enable them to develop their language and social skills, ability to self-regulate or develop self-confidence and self-esteem. These may be delivered in-house or through the support of external professions through what we call 'Waves of Intervention'.

Through the promotion and use of individualised enablement strategies the Intervention Team support the whole child in striving for excellence and securing positive relationships within our school community. This in turn support them in working towards a safe, independent life.

Our Services are:

- Sensory and OT intervention
- Student Wellbeing
- Speech Language and Communication
- Behaviour support and regulation

Through these services, we can offer the following interventions:

- Sensory Play,
- Sensory Regulation
- Advice re Sensory Circuits and Sensory Diets
- Lego therapy
- Talkabout
- Sensory Stories
- Speech, Language and Communication groups
- Rebound Therapy
- Yoga and guided relaxation
- Speed Up (kinaesthetic handwriting programme)
- Ready Set Remember (auditory memory programme)
- Fine and Gross Motor Intervention (NHS OT programmes)
- Various emotional and Mental Wellbeing Groups
- Smart Moves (Motor Skills Development Programme)

Interventions

We call our Interventions area and team the 9 ¾ - a name taken from the Harry Potter books where magic begins!

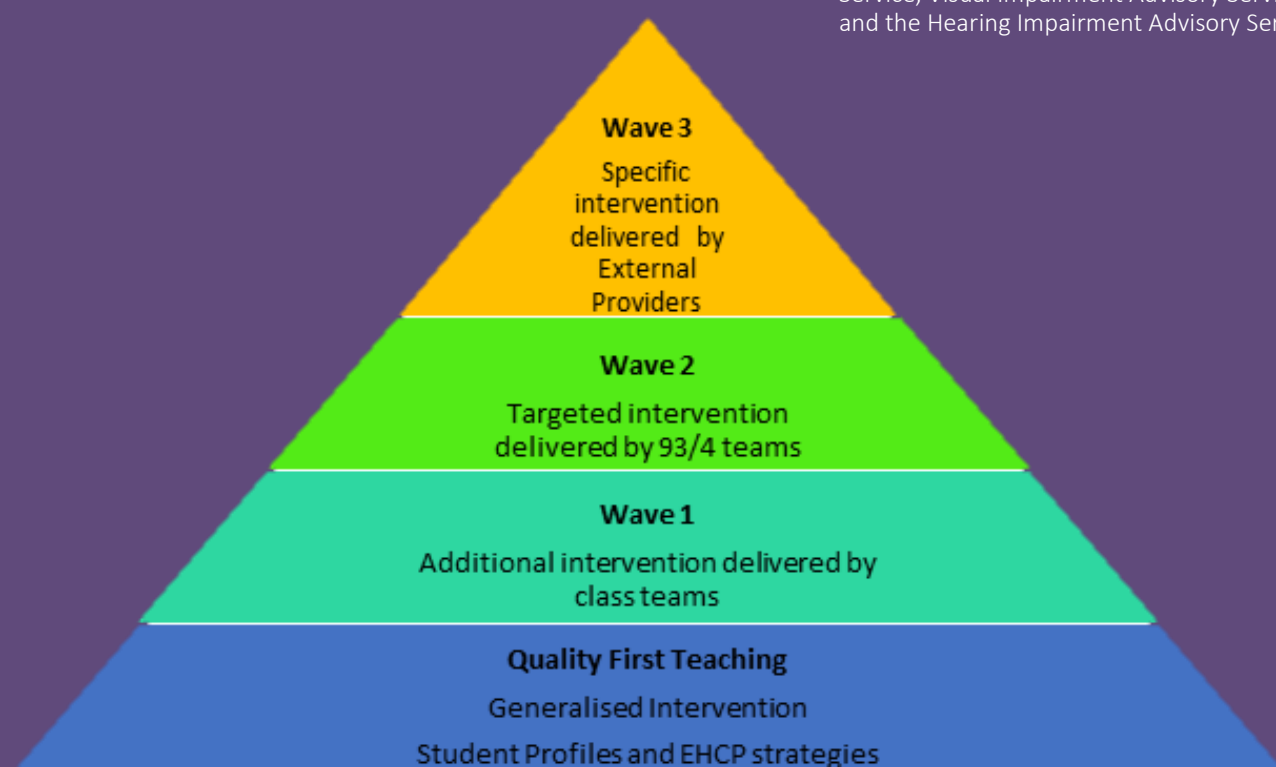
Our interventions operate on a 'wave' model. These waves of intervention cater for a range of escalating need and seek to enable our learners to access the curriculum effectively in order to make maximum progress. After the referral process, the students will access the appropriate intervention if needed.

Quality First Teaching form the basis of interventions in our special school.

- **Wave 1** covers those additional interventions provided by the class teacher and teaching support in the classroom.
- **Wave 2** interventions are delivered by the 9 ¾ Interventions team and,
- **Wave 3** are those provided by external professionals.

NHS Integrated Therapy Services' visits to the school include Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy, Educational Mental Health Practitioner, Music Therapy, Play Therapy.

We also coordinate other services' visits to the school including Down Syndrome Advisory Service, Visual Impairment Advisory Service and the Hearing Impairment Advisory Service.





Learning Outside the Classroom

LOtC

Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) is a significant and valuable part of the curriculum for all children here at St Luke's School.

It provides our children with challenging, exciting and different experiences to help them learn. LOtC is proven to raise attainment, bolster social, emotional and personal development and contribute to the health and wellbeing of children and young people

Learning outside the classroom is a tool for teaching and learning which has been proven to raise attainment and achievement, improve behaviour and improve the engagement of all groups of pupils, including those who are hard to engage inside the classroom environment.

LOtC takes part in various locations from the high street to the local park, from woodlands to the countryside. It can include anything from den building to visiting local shops. It is not just restricted to the summer months. It is an all year round activity.

We believe that young people should have access to frequent, continuous and progressive experiences in the school grounds, educational visits further afield and that these experiences should be utilised as a tool for teaching, learning and delivering the curriculum across all subject areas.



Learning Outside the Classroom

Horticulture

Horticulture covers all things from growing plants to identifying wildflowers and trees, and how to encourage beneficial bugs into our gardens. It is a way of learning outdoors, to discover how to enjoy nature and a way to understand ourselves and the world around us. We have a number of different gardens to learn in.

The Vegetable Garden

Rich with fruit and vegetables, we also have a large greenhouse that we sow and nurture seedlings and many raised beds that we can set our young plants in. We also have a huge bug hotel to encourage lots of mini beasts into the garden to help with pollination.

The Sensory Garden

Here we learn about our senses and how we can use them to our advantage. We learn how to channel our anger, how to calm ourselves and how to relax. We have a chamomile lawn and herbs for scent, we have grasses, water, trees and musical instruments for sound. There are plenty of bright flowers and a wormery to look at, we have edible plants to taste and lots of different grasses and plants to feel.

The Wildflower Meadow

We can look for wildlife and signs that they have been there. We have different types of wildflowers and use this space for bug hunts and plant identification, as well as photography and art.

The Woodland Area

This is where we can learn about trees, wildlife and most importantly how to climb trees safely and make dens.

The Pond Area

Where we can learn about water plants, wildlife homes and the safety around water.

Whichever garden we are in we learn valuable lessons in life - how we need to be hygienic and how everything needs food and water to survive, even ourselves. Not only do we offer horticultural lessons but we also offer Horticultural therapy, also known as Social and therapeutic horticulture, and BTEC qualifications in horticulture or land-based studies to improve physical and mental health, whilst working on communication and social skills and the ability to think clearly.

A vertical photograph on the left side of the page shows three budgies perched on a wooden branch. Two are in the upper left, one blue and one green, and one is in the lower left, yellow and green. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

Learning Outside the Classroom

Animal Care

St Luke's are one of the few SEN schools that incorporate animal assisted therapy into their curriculum.

What Is Animal Assisted Therapy?

Animal-assisted therapy can improve young people's mental, physical, social and emotional functioning. Depending on the needs of the child many different animals can be used in therapy, including horses (also called equine-assisted therapy), dogs (also called canine-assisted therapy), guinea pigs, rabbits and reptiles to name but a few.

It is more than simply spending time with an animal, animal-assisted therapy involves specific therapeutic goals, strategies and outcomes measures. Therapeutic experiences can include walking, brushing, petting and caring for an animal, as well as processing the experience of trying to achieve a given task.

What are the benefits of animal assisted therapy ?

There is a strong bond between animals and people. Animals are accepting, non-threatening and non-judgmental, making it easier for people to open up. Some benefits of animal-assisted therapy include:

- Improved fine motor skills
- Improved balance
- Increased focus and attention
- Increased self-esteem and ability to care for oneself
- Reduced anxiety, grief and isolation
- Reduced blood pressure, depression, and risk of heart attack or stroke
- Improved willingness to be involved in a therapeutic program or group activity
- Increased trust, empathy and teamwork
- Greater self-control
- Enhanced problem-solving skills
- Reduced need for medication
- Improved social skills

Because many children and teens enjoy working with animals, animal-assisted therapy can be particularly beneficial for individuals who have difficulty accessing their emotions or expressing themselves in talk therapy.



Learning Outside the Classroom

Cookery

At St Luke's, we believe cookery is a vital life skill and is taught to every child. We believe the experience of creating their own meals helps to build self-confidence, supports healthy eating habits and incorporates essential functional literacy and numeracy skills.

Cookery lessons aid our children in many ways:

It encourages an adventurous palate. Children are notoriously picky eaters and for some special needs children, this can result in stressful meal times for the child and family. Cooking can help to build a tolerance of disliked foods and a willingness to try new tastes and textures when working alongside their peers.

Each week we prepare food together and usually sit together, share the food and discuss our dishes and other matters. This is an essential part of our lesson; encouraging reluctant eaters and have a go to try the food.

Cookery teaches functional skills and communication in a fun environment. The lessons help practice maths concepts, time, fractions, basic number, weighing and measuring. Practical maths language is used; more, less, equal, grams, volume etc. Following recipes to gain information, learning how to read the recipe in a sequential manner and understanding science in a meaningful way (melting, freezing, evaporation, changing form after baking etc.) builds a greater understanding of the world we live in.

Our older pupils can gain accreditation for cookery through ASDAN and BTEC home cooking qualifications; **skills for employability and life.**



Lower School

The Lower School's curriculum focus is on developing classroom readiness, as many pupils come to school having been on a reduced timetable or only having attended a pre-school. Communication and language form the basis of their curriculum either through language, or communication supports such as PECS.

Many of the pupils have significant sensory needs and time is built into planning to facilitate their sensory diet, including working towards O.T. targets. Younger children often struggle to rationalise their emotions and as such, the curriculum has an emphasis upon developing emotional regulation.

There begins a focus on understanding number such as counting and one to one correspondence so that the basic blocks are set up. Lessons around phonics and spelling strategies occur daily, which develop an understanding of the text and an excitement and love for reading. For many of our pupils, the art of writing begins with the ability to mark make, form letters and then basic sentences. Writing is cross curricula as repetition of skills is the key to progress. The pupils study history, geography and science as part of a series of topics, mainly centred on their own community.

STAPPS ensures there is progression in skills. As with the other departments in school, maintaining a healthy lifestyle and values such as friendship, kindness, respect, happiness and respecting each other remain high on the agenda.



Middle School

The skills within lower school continue, to be built upon. Communication and language becomes more functional, such as writing a list for shopping. Pupils are encouraged to question and form opinions. They begin to understand responsibility, democracy and tolerance and strategies are explored to teach empathy.

Maths has a stronger focus on time, money and number skills such as times tables. Strategies for problem solving are key and in particular, how these relate to the outside world e.g., How many rolls of wallpaper are needed. Writing takes on a more functional role. For instance, completing a form to join the library, sending an email.

Basic spelling, punctuation and grammar remain as a focus so that the skills become embedded. Although staff still teach through topic, there is a greater emphasis upon specific subjects such as history and science. This way, the subjects can be explored at a deeper level. Personal Development including life skills is a curriculum area given significant time. There are so many skills that our pupils need to learn to be independent citizens that the focus has to increase in the middle school.

As our pupils start to become more independent and start to use technology more readily, internet and social media safety is paramount to their well-being, so safety features highly in the curriculum. There are more opportunities to engage with the community, develop leadership roles and engage in events to support local charities. Children continue to develop creative skills applying these to projects such as designing Christmas cards.



Upper School

The skills in Upper school build upon the skills from middle school. Whilst it is important to study for accreditation, there is a greater focus on the skills and knowledge needed to support our pupils when they leave to go on to the next stage. This includes drug education, protection from extremism, online safety and sex and relationship education. Functional maths and literacy remain high on the agenda.

Communication is also a skill to be developed, particularly in relation to the world of work. E.g., Interview skills. As part of the curriculum pupils experience the world of work, volunteering, travel training, charity work, being a prefect and representing the school council. There are opportunities to experience competitive sport and to develop coaching skills. There is a focus on practising the skills that may be used in the place of work such as barista training and food preparation and safety.

Pupils gain a greater understanding of themselves in relation to their community as well as the cultures that determine it.

What Does this Look Like for My Child?

Our pupils are placed in groups that stay together for the school day. These classes are collated within Lower, Middle and Upper school departments, which support teachers and TAs to share planning and learning activities in accordance with age-related learning requirements.

Class makeup takes several factors into account – age, personality, friendships, EHCP requirements, sensory and learning needs to create the best dynamic group. As such, children from different year groups are often placed together where we feel this will support learning best. In creating learning groups in this way, we can support individuals to be in the best place to support behaviours for learning unlike a system of year group classes as in a mainstream school.

With the wide range of abilities within each class (including children with very spikey learning profiles) pupils will likely follow different Tiers of Learning programmes within the same class. Topic work brings together thematic approaches to learning, whilst our assessment and coverage ensure personalization and differentiation of learning materials to reach our challenging progress targets and, ensuring the child's EHCP requirements are met.

For pupils with complex needs that require interventions, some groups work collectively well with these forming part of the holistic curriculum for that class. In other groups, specific interventions take place both in and outside the classroom setting.

Teachers work together to make learning fun and engaging. Classes often work together and timetable days are collapsed for specific projects and activities for learning.

Where specific age-related learning is required, such as relationships and sex education, these subjects are taught in separate gender age groups. With children identifying as non-binary, we work closely with these pupils and their families to ensure the child's needs are met.

Year 11 pupils are taught together where possible, in order to support their diverse interests through subject-specific classes they can choose options from. In addition, a significant amount of additional work takes place around the transition to college as a cohort.

Reading is an integral part of all our teaching – ensuring opportunities for increasing vocabulary are embedded in children’s speech and language. Where over 90% of our pupils have Speech and Language Communication Needs (SLCN), this takes place every lesson, every day. We encourage parents/carers to read with their children at home and take every opportunity to support their child’s understanding of the written and spoken word.

You will find many different and bespoke communication aids in the classrooms, supporting some children through picture exchange communication tools towards proficiency with the written and spoken word, whilst others are supported in their understanding of routine with associated expectations. Our work supporting children with Autism is embedded and endorsed through the National Autistic Society’s accreditation of the school.

As a school with children aged 7 to 16, it is fantastic to see the progress in learning and social skills our children develop. Ensuring opportunities to take risks in their learning as well as develop a personal view increases their resilience to getting things ‘wrong’ and the negative impact this can have over time.

Children in our setting have such a diverse range of needs and the ‘lenses’ of identified special educational needs are used to see the individual child, using strategies and research to continually reflect and develop learning in accordance with such findings. Our teachers and TAs continue to develop their own professional development in line with the needs of the children they teach and personal, professional interests in order to make an impact on their pupils’ progress.

What's the Impact of our Curriculum?

We track and monitor the impact of our curriculum throughout the year. Checking pupils' understanding of what they are learning occurs throughout each lesson. Most feedback is verbal, leading to extension activities to push the child's understanding and abilities of the skills/knowledge taught further forward.

Ongoing formative assessments are formally reviewed termly using our in-house assessment system, STAPPS. The results from these moderated assessments (with our school, with other special schools and, some mainstream settings) are analysed against expectations, drawn from national data sets and neuro-typical learners' attainment. The impact of interventions is assessed and reflection as to 'what next' is also judged against the effectiveness of teaching and any additional training needs required. Alongside this, the child's EHCP Outcomes – what's the most important aspect of learning the individual child requires – forms clear directions for further travel.

Planning, assessment and statutory requirements are assessed in several ways. The Heads of Department ensure the age-related activities are managed effectively, the development of learning and pathways pupils follow are regularly reflected upon. In addition, teachers, TAs, governors and non-teaching school staff are involved in teams that check, judge and evaluate the Tiers of learning for content coverage, sequential learning and bring different views, insights and suggestions for continued improvement. With the flexibility and personalization of the curriculum and assessment systems, we can respond quickly with changes for improvement.

We Look After Ourselves
We Look After Each Other
We Look After Our Learning
We Look After Our Environment



St Luke's School
'Thrive in Life'

