



Foundation Phase Policy

This document was:

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Review date: June 2025

Signed: _____ Chairperson schools governing body, on behalf of the governing body

Date: _____

Signed: _____ Headteacher

Distribution: Staff, governors, pupils, parents and carers

School Rationale

Ysgol Ty Coch Special School is a Rights Respecting School. As a Rights Respecting School, we aim to embed children's human rights in our ethos and school culture. We base our practice on the principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation. Working within these principles not only empowers our children and young people, but also leads to enhanced learning, improved standards and better relationships.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the most complete statement of children's rights ever produced and is the most widely-ratified international human rights treaty in history. This policy relates to Article 28 and 29 of the UNCRC.

Article 28: Children have a right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Primary education should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 29: Children should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents and their own and other cultures.

Welsh National Curriculum Changes

On June 30th, 2015, the (then) Education Minister Huw Lewis accepted all of Professor Graham Donaldson's curriculum recommendations for a new Welsh National Curriculum (NC). The curriculum has been available to implement since 2018 and will be statutory requirement in Autumn 2022. In Ysgol Ty Coch, the systematic implementation of this curriculum began in 2015. This work has included:

1. A review of the curriculum arrangements in Ysgol Ty Coch which was undertaken in October 2015. This involved pupils, parents, staff, Governors and Multi-Disciplinary Agencies
2. A crucial recommendation from the curriculum review detailed a requirement to promote thematic learning to increase relevance for our pupils

3. Current NC subjects (curriculum 2008) have been aligned to the Donaldson Report and Successful Futures learning areas to form a holistic and thematic approach to learning (Appendix 1)
4. All staff have been involved in developing exciting and motivating teaching and learning activities which align to NC subjects but which fit broadly under the Areas for Learning (Appendix 1)
5. The LNF and the Digital Competence Framework are now embedded in curriculum delivery
6. This curriculum model incorporates the new Welsh Curriculum for Wales
7. Inset days have been held regarding the Curriculum and SLT held review of the Curriculum in May 2022
8. Assessments such as Connecting Steps have been implemented in line with the new Curriculum for Wales.



Core Purpose of the Curriculum

The curriculum at Ysgol Ty Coch Special School reflects the holistic needs of all the children. Its priorities are the learning outcomes for our children who experience complex, severe and profound learning disabilities. It has therefore been designed by staff, parents and pupils who have an acute knowledge of the learning needs of the children.

When designing the curriculum, staff have incorporated statutory and non-statutory guidance and the following broad range of principles. The curriculum has been designed for National Curriculum requirements, including the Literacy and Numeracy Framework with specialised consideration being given to the future of education in Wales, to ensure a curriculum which is flexible, reflective, takes into account stakeholder views and which will evolve to reflect the needs of the pupils. We ensure that the teaching of all curriculum areas is fully inclusive and all pupils irrespective of race, gender, colour or additional need have equal access and opportunity.

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for implementation of the Foundation Phase Philosophy at the school.

Within the new Curriculum for Wales, the principles of the Foundation Phase will remain, but will become a part of one seamless curriculum for children aged 3 to 16, providing more joined-up learning.

1. THE NATURE OF FOUNDATION PHASE EDUCATION

Children learn more before the age of seven than they do during the rest of their lives. The stage of development of the brain is such that if a child is not given the opportunity to benefit from certain experiences before the age of seven, he / she will lose the ability to benefit from them at all. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that all efforts are made to ensure that each child is introduced to experiences which will enrich his / her overall development.

Children most definitely learn by doing:

“I do and I understand” Nuffield 1960

This statement is as true now and, with this in mind, it is essential that the young child is active and through hands on experience learns through play: “play ... give joy, freedom, contentment ...”

“It holds the source of all that is good” Froebel 1887

The whole child must be considered, emphasising health, physical and mental development, the importance of feelings, thinking and spiritual aspects. It is essential that the starting point for these experiences is what the children can do. Concentrating on their strengths and building on these elements whilst simultaneously developing the child through encouragement and differentiated activities.

It is of paramount importance to the school and to the individual child, that the Foundation Phase approach is successful. The role of the staff at this stage is

critical and it is a great privilege as it is a responsibility to be involved with these young children.

2. ENTITLEMENT

All children in the Foundation Phase have access to the Foundation Phase Framework covering the seven areas of learning, namely:

1. Language, Literacy and Communication
2. Mathematical Development
3. Knowledge and Understanding of the World
4. Personal and Social Development, well-being and Cultural Diversity
5. Physical Development
6. Creative Development
7. Welsh Language Development

As part of the Foundation Phase curriculum, the children are introduced to important skills (literacy, numeracy, digital competence, thinking, health and wellbeing) which are planned to underpin the principles of the curriculum and continued right through the school to the post 16 curriculum.

Particular emphasis is given to the first two skills as in line with the Literacy and Numeracy Framework, children are given the opportunity to develop their language and numeracy skills in a cross curricular approach. Through all of the seven areas of learning children are encouraged to participate in learning in the outside area. The outside has been designed to facilitate learning in the Foundation Phase and is used to enrich experiences and awareness.

Each child is seen as an individual and their individual needs will be incorporated in their Individual Education Plans (IEP). Independence will be fostered wherever possible, and each child will be encouraged to reach their full potential.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

Physical Development

At Ysgol Ty Coch Special School children have access to large and small apparatus to develop their gross motor skills, strength and flexibility. The development of these skills will be the responsibility of the class teacher, support staff and specialised Physical Education (PE) teacher.

In order to develop the children's fine motor skills they will be encouraged to use a wide range of materials ranging from pencils, crayons, paintbrushes, scissors and other art media; to a variety of construction equipment and toys aimed at developing their manipulative skills. Activities will be consistently developed to promote progression.

Personal and Social Development Well Being and Cultural Diversity

Pupils will have the opportunity to participate in activities as individuals, in groups, and as a whole class. They will be made aware of acceptable / unacceptable behaviour patterns. The emphasis will be on encouraging a positive self image, with each child receiving much positive praise. They will be encouraged to learn to share resources, ideas, thoughts and adult time. They must be encouraged to show consideration in their actions to others and animals, and to respond to a range of new cultural and linguistic experiences. Pupils will also be encouraged to develop life skills through activities such as; tooth brushing, dressing skills, relationships with others and feeding themselves and using the toilet.

Mathematical Development

Pupils will undertake a series of pre-math tasks, geared to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and concepts, to introduce them to this aspect of learning. A real interest in mathematical learning should be fostered at this early stage.

The mathematics curriculum will be delivered through a series of structured play activities, where the learning intentions are clearly defined in the planning stages. Experiences in this area will include:

- Sorting
- Matching
- Ordering number
- Money
- Patterns
- Measures
- Shape and Space

Activities will be accomplished throughout the year, being linked wherever possible to the class topic.

Language, Literacy and Communication

When starting school, pupils may have differing levels of language development. Where pupils are at a low level of language development this area needs to be considered specifically. If a pupil arrives with no understanding or use of language this is addressed through language activities throughout the curriculum and, where appropriate, a speech and language programme.

The school follows the Local Authority's (LA) policy of Total Communication and uses a number of methods of communication with pupils, depending on individual needs. Methods can be varied, following a total communication approach, and may include PECS, Signalong, gesture, demonstration and objects of reference.

In order to obtain an acquisition of knowledge, skills and concepts in main areas, a series of pre-reading and pre-writing tasks should be joined together with periods of structured and role play, in order to foster a real interest in language learning. A wide range of language should lead to mastery of language skills, which in turn will lead to the enhancement of the children's emotional and social learning.

Each Foundation Phase class has a listening area, reading area, language area and role play area which can be utilised daily by the children to assist in achieving the above aims.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

In order to develop the children's confidence in science and technology, they are given experiences in pulling and pushing toys, completing experiments, building and generally finding out how things work. They will also make simple comparisons between past and current experiences and are given the opportunity to experience special occasions and religious festivals. All of which will be achieved through structured play activities and other practical tasks.

Creative Development

Creative development activities should give children the opportunity to develop their music, drama, art and dance skills. This wide range of creative activities will help to continually develop pupils' imagination and creativity and, simultaneously, their communication skills.

The classroom environment should be stimulating, varied and well ordered. Wall displays should include a combination of children and staff work and should be subject or thematically based. Display needs to be a source of discussion and a place where each child's work is celebrated throughout the year.

Welsh Language Development

Young children in the Foundation Phase will be given an opportunity, through play, active learning, story and structured activities, to acquire sufficient familiarity with the Welsh language to encourage further language learning and positive attitudes towards Welsh language and culture.

Cwricwlwm Cymreig

Alongside all parts of the Foundation Phase delivery, pupils will be given opportunity to gain an understanding of their Welsh culture and heritage through activities to support Cwricwlwm Cymreig such as Eisteddfod and Welsh Heritage Projects.

Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC)

Pupils will also consider ESDGC and will begin to consider how the impact of their choices effects other people, the economy and the environment. ESDGC aims to challenge pupils to see how they can contribute to the lives of others. This element, although covered in Knowledge and Understanding of the World will be considered throughout Foundation Phase learning.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY

All school activities must comply with the Local Authority's /school's governing body policies relating to Health and Safety and Safeguarding.

Care must be taken to ensure that equipment is safe, and that the classroom / outside area is clean, tidy and meets the required standards/needs of the activity for which it is to be used (please refer to the above-mentioned policies for further information).

6. ORGANISATION OF RESOURCES

When organising the layout of a classroom the following guidance should be followed:

- It should be inviting
- It should be challenging and arouse curiosity
- It should provide a balanced range of activities
- It should be flexible
- It should have clearly defined areas
- It should be uncluttered and aesthetically pleasing
- It should reflect themes

9. ROLE OF PARENTS

The role of the parent as educators is acknowledged and a partnership based on understanding, mutual respect and discussion about the child is developed. This is achieved by holding frequent coffee mornings, continuous face to face discussion, the use of Seesaw, the use of the school's website, twitter feed, Annual Reviews, parents' evenings and telephone calls.

This strategy further underlines the school's open door policy.

10.ADMISSIONS

Children are admitted to the school by the Local Authority who are the Admissions Authority. Prior to starting at the school children/parents/carers will establish links with the school through well-structured transition programmes.

These links are continuously being developed via engagement with the Family Centre on the Tonteg site. Where possible, children prior to school age will attend 'Ty Coch Tots', which is a pre-school group which holds weekly sessions for parents and children from 0-3 years of age. This group helps children and parents to become familiar with the school and they take part in a range of Foundation Phase activities appropriate to the cohort.

9.ASSESSMENT

All children will be assessed according to the Reception Baseline, which is submitted to WG and through continual teacher observation.

Practical work will be recorded in photographic or video form and is updated using Seesaw which provides the journey through time of the child's progress. Connecting Steps testing in Language, Literacy Communication, Mathematics and Health and Wellbeing will be undertaken in the Autumn Term and Summer Term. This will enable the school to track progress and can be used to provide targets which will be addressed and assessed until the child reaches Year 11. P Scale assessment is used to track progress in Welsh, PSE, ICT, RE and Science. The P scale assessment will serve to set targets in the areas of PSE, ICT, RE and Science.

Pupils in Form 6 will be assessed using Steps4Life, which will assess their functional literacy and numeracy , also their independence and life skills.

10.SUGGESTED RESOURCES FOR THE CLASSROOM AND OUTSIDE AREA

Resources will be many and varied to meet the needs of each area of learning (as indicated below) and may include the following:

Imaginative Play

- Home corner

- Dressing up clothes and hats
- A variety of dolls in different size, sex and colour
- Telephones
- Puppets
- Farm and animals
- Cars, road mat and garage
- Railway track and train
- Dolls house and play people
- A shop and till

Creative and Messy Play

- Paints and brushes
- Playdough, plasticine etc.
- Sand and water
- Glue
- Card and paper
- A variety of tools
- Scissors
- Resources for collage
- Stencils
- 3d modelling materials

Large Construction Toys

- Lego
- Large bricks
- A variety of construction materials

Reading / Quiet Area

- A variety of books including stories, poems, rhyme and picture books
- Puppets
- Class made books
- Welsh books

Table Top Activities

- Pencils, crayons, chalks
- A variety of paper
- Stencils and templates
- Jigsaws and inset boards
- Games e.g. lotto
- Sorting materials
- Beads to thread
- Sewing cards
- Sequencing activities
- 2D and 3D shapes to handle and sort
- Peg to Paper resources

Investigative Area

These will be linked to the themes such as:

- Natural objects
- Magnifying glasses
- Mirrors

Listening Area

- Listening centre
- Headphones
- Good quality story, song and sound CDs

Technology Area

- Computer
- Switch access
- Roller ball
- Appropriate software
- Ipad work
- Eye Gaze and assistive technology
- Animation

Outdoor Play

- Plants
- A selection of bikes and cars
- Climbing equipment and slide

Equal Opportunities

The school operates a policy of equality for all pupils regardless of gender, ethnicity, religious beliefs or culture.

Pupils identified as Children Looked After (CLA), More Able and Talented (MAT) and those on the child protection register are supported in line with their particular needs to afford them equal access to the curriculum.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding of pupils is of utmost importance. The school understands its duty to keep learners safe and adheres to the PREVENT agenda and broader safeguarding guidelines. Regular and well planned lessons are taught in e-safety and Sex and Relationship education to ensure our pupils are given the very best advice on how to keep themselves safe.

Staff Development

Staff will have access to in-service training as and when appropriate. This is in accordance with the school's policy for staff development. Any new developments in the requirements relating to the foundation phase policy will be disseminated to all staff by the Senior Leadership Team.


Role of Head teacher






- To keep abreast of the legislation/directions from the Welsh Government and the Local Authority relating to the curriculum and foundation phase
- To ensure that all appropriate information relating to the foundation phase is disseminated to school staff.
- To ensure budget provision for staff training on the foundation phase
- To ensure budget provision for resources for the foundation phase and continuous provision

Links to other relevant policies

- Safeguarding
- Teaching and Learning
- Curriculum
- Assessment for Learning
- Augmentative Communication
- ICT
- Educational Visits
- Online Safety
- Marking
- Skills
- ESDGC
- Sex Relationship Education
- Healthy Schools

Appendix 1

Successful Futures Area for Learning	Current Foundation Phase Alignment	Current National Curriculum Alignment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creative Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Art• Drama• Music• Dance• Film• Digital Media

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal and Social Development, Wellbeing and Cultural Diversity • Physical Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PE • PSE - Healthy Eating and Cooking, Substance Misuse, Mental, physical and emotional wellbeing • SRE & E-Safety • Work related learning, learning for life.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and Understanding of the World 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History • Geography • RE • Business Studies • Social Studies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language, English and Communication Skills • Welsh Language Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English – Reading, Writing and Oracy. • Welsh • Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) • Digital Communication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematical Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maths – Arithmetic, mathematics, statistics and logic
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and Understanding of the World 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science – Physics, Chemistry, Biology • Design @ Technology – Food, Textiles, Resistant Materials • Computer Science/ICT • Craft, Design, Graphics • Engineering