



Woodend Farm school
Kindness comes in many forms

Laurel pathway curriculum intent.

At Woodend Farm School, our Laurel Pathway is designed to provide a communication-rich, inclusive environment that nurtures each pupil's ability to understand, express, and interact with the world around them. We aim to reduce barriers to communication through a curriculum that is responsive, structured, and embedded with evidence-based speech and language strategies. Our vision is for pupils to grow in confidence, develop their voice, and become active participants in their learning, relationships, and wider community.

The Laurel Pathway is crafted to foster a safe and supportive environment where every child feels heard, valued, and understood. Through personalised learning, visual supports, and consistent communication strategies, we aim to build pupils' self-esteem, emotional resilience, and independence. Utilising approaches appropriate for children with speech and language difficulties (such as pre-teaching vocabulary, chunking information, SCERTS model, Makaton, narrative therapy, social skills groups, PECS and AAC devices, amongst others), we ensure that all pupils can access the curriculum and make meaningful progress in both academic and personal development.

The pathway is structured into progressive stages that align with pupils' communication profiles and EHCP targets. In the informal stage, the focus is on developing functional communication through play-based and sensory-rich activities. Pupils are supported with visual aids, signing, and structured routines to build understanding and expressive language. As pupils move into the semi-formal stage, the curriculum blends structured learning with continued use of speech and language strategies such as Blank Level Questioning and pre-teaching of vocabulary. The formal stage has a focus on academic learning supported by targeted speech and language interventions, both direct and indirect, ensuring pupils can access and engage with the curriculum confidently. Across all stages, communication targets are embedded into daily routines and learning, with continuous speech and language assessments and therapy, and close collaboration with families.



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Implementation and teaching styles.

Informal

Play-based learning is central to the informal stage, providing a natural and engaging context for developing communication. Pupils are immersed in language-rich environments where they can explore, interact, and express themselves using a range of communication methods. Visual supports, signing, and sensory activities are used consistently to support understanding and reduce anxiety. This stage builds the foundation for receptive and expressive language, social interaction, and emotional regulation.

Semi-formal

In the semi-formal stage, pupils experience a blend of structured teaching and interactive learning. Short, focused sessions are used to introduce key concepts, supported by visual scaffolds and repetition with a high emphasis on vocabulary. Speech and language strategies such as narrative therapy, vocabulary mapping, and collaborative dialogue are embedded across subjects. Pupils are encouraged to use their communication skills in group tasks and real-life contexts, promoting generalisation and confidence.

Formal

The formal stage introduces more structured academic learning, with continued emphasis on communication support. Lessons are adapted to include visual prompts, structured questioning, and opportunities for verbal and non-verbal expression. Regular speech and language interventions are delivered in class or in small groups, ensuring that pupils continue to develop their communication skills alongside academic progress. Movement and sensory breaks are incorporated to support regulation and engagement.

Assessment

Assessment within the Laurel Pathway (informal stage) is a comprehensive blend of teacher assessments, communication-focused observations, and interactive play-based evaluations. This multifaceted approach ensures that each child's progress is captured holistically, reflecting their communication development, academic engagement, and social-emotional growth. Teacher assessments provide insights into pupils' understanding of key concepts and their ability to engage with structured and unstructured tasks. Observations during play and interaction

Assessment within the semi-formal stage of the Laurel Pathway is a comprehensive blend of teacher assessments of curriculum learning, book learning, and observations of learning through play. This multifaceted approach ensures that each child's progress is evaluated holistically, capturing their academic achievements, practical skills, and social-emotional development. Teacher assessments provide insights into students' understanding and mastery of core subjects, while book learning reflects their ability to engage with and retain structured content. Observations of

Assessment within the formal stage of the Laurel Pathway is a comprehensive blend of teacher assessments of curriculum learning, book learning, and evaluations of EHCP targets and One Plan targets. This multifaceted approach ensures that each child's progress is evaluated holistically, capturing their academic achievements and practical skills. Teacher assessments provide insights into students' understanding and mastery of core subjects, while book learning reflects their ability to engage with and retain structured content. Additionally, assessments are conducted



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offer valuable information about pupils' expressive and receptive language, use of communication aids (e.g., visuals, Makaton), and their ability to initiate and respond in social contexts. Book learning, where appropriate, supports the tracking of early literacy and concept development. Alongside these, communication profiles and Thrive assessments are used to monitor emotional well-being and resilience, ensuring that each child's development is nurtured in a balanced and supportive way. This integrated assessment strategy informs personalised interventions and ensures that every child's voice and progress are recognised and celebrated.

learning through play offer valuable information about children's problem-solving abilities, creativity, and interpersonal skills in a natural setting. Additionally, assessments are conducted to monitor and support the achievement of EHCP targets and One Plan targets, ensuring that each child's individual needs are addressed. Alongside these methods, Thrive assessments are conducted to monitor and support each child's emotional well-being and resilience, ensuring that their overall development is nurtured and balanced. This integrated assessment strategy helps create a complete picture of each child's growth, guiding personalised support and interventions.

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Impact

The impact of the Laurel Pathway on pupils is evident through their progress in communication, emotional resilience, and academic engagement. Within the Thrive framework, pupils have shown significant improvements in self-awareness, confidence, and the ability to express their needs and emotions. This development is supported by a nurturing, communication-rich curriculum that integrates visual supports, structured language strategies, and consistent emotional support.

Academically, pupils have made measurable progress in core subjects, as demonstrated through teacher assessments, book learning, and communication-focused evaluations. The curriculum's blend of structured academic content and personalised communication interventions enables pupils to access learning meaningfully and achieve their individual targets. Additionally, pupils have made strong progress towards their EHCP and One Plan outcomes, particularly in speech, language, and interaction goals, due to targeted interventions and ongoing monitoring.

This holistic and responsive approach ensures that each child's unique communication profile is supported, fostering an environment where they can thrive both academically and personally, and where every voice is heard and valued.



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