



Spiral School

Experiential Phase



Intent





Experiential Phase

How do the learners learn on this pathway?

Experiential phase learners are given time and opportunities to experience the world around them. Activities within each area of learning are planned carefully using a sensory approach so that learners are able to engage and begin their learning journey. The focus of the areas of learning is to teach the learners the skills they need to be safe, happy, healthy and able to experience as much of the world as possible around them.

Structure and repetition form the foundations of our day which is facilitated by our highly skilled team. We strive to ensure a personalised approach, where advice from therapists and healthcare plans are integrated into the school day, learners follow their own personalised learning plans, derived from the EHC plan.

Our learners are learning to learn and the smallest of steps are celebrated. Activities and sessions are planned carefully to engage the learners so that areas of exploration, realisation, anticipation, persistence and initiation can be observed.

Our curriculum is designed to meet the needs of the whole child beginning with those identified as a priority in the EHCP these include:

- My Cognition and Learning
- My Communication and Interaction
- My Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- My Physical and Sensory





Implementation and Impact



Curriculum Overview

Learners at Springside follow the curriculum as detailed below. Rather than lessons, we refer to the activities our learners undertake as 'areas of learning'. These areas of learning are delivered using a variety of approaches. This skeleton scheme of work is then adapted as appropriate to the learners' abilities and interests for each learning area, providing a broad, balanced and enriched curriculum. The curriculum is further enhanced through our Learning for Life themes and enrichment, these are established in Assemblies, embellished in 'Learning for Life' experience days and the areas within this are threaded throughout each area of learning, used as hooks for learning.

Although classes will personalise their approaches to the individual learners, to facilitate and ensure consistency within a phase, learners experience a number of phase specific 'non-negotiable' elements within each classroom these are the approaches to learning that will be similar within a phase.

PSHE, RSE, RE, SMSC (including British Values) underpins all practice and are taught throughout each area in an holistic manner. Some topics within these are taught, as appropriate in discrete sessions in the Investigative phase. Each area of learning is taught sensitively and inclusively, with respect to the backgrounds and beliefs of learners and parents while always with the aim of providing learners with the knowledge they need.

Areas of learning	
Experiential	Emerging Exploration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Cognition and Learning ▶ Communication and Interaction ▶ Social, Emotional and Mental Health ▶ Physical and Sensory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ My Independence ▶ My Communication ▶ My Sensory Play ▶ My Physical Well-Being
Approaches to Learning	
Skills delivered in a sensory and physical way.	

Progression within each area focuses on developing the thinking and problem-solving skills of our learners. Learners work towards their personalised objectives in a sequential way – developing independent achievement through adult modelling, sabotage and adult support which is reduced over time. Staff support learners through scaffolding to encourage independence in all areas. All learners' Personalised Learning Plans, derived from their EHC Plans, are woven through the day. Whilst our skeleton curriculum is derived from Equals, in the Springside at Littleborough hub, learners access a curriculum that includes elements of the National Curriculum as appropriate, whilst maintaining a focus on independent skills.

Curriculum Themes



Springside School Curriculum Theme Mapping

Term	YEAR A (2024-2025)			YEAR B (2025-2026)		
	Experiential	Exploratory	Investigative	Experiential	Exploratory	Investigative
Autumn 1 Learning for life day	<i>Families and People Who Care For Me RRS ARTICLE 5</i>			<i>Who am I? RRS ARTICLE 12</i>		
	Superheroes: - Super worm - Super me	Superheroes: - People who help us - Our local community - My favourite things - My hobbies/interests/talents	Superheroes: - People who help us - Super me - Super fiction	Our world: - Recycling fun - What a wonderful world	Our world: - Exploring the local community - Exploring senses relating to seasons - Families - Favourite foods	Our world: - Our community - Recycling in our school
Autumn 2 Springside's got talent	<i>Religions RRS ARTICLE 30</i>			<i>Changing Bodies RRS ARTICLE 16</i>		
	Celebrations: - Christmas	Celebrations: - Christmas	Celebrations: - Christmas	Colours and light: - Over the rainbow - Christmas	Colours and light: - Exploring light on different materials - Colour sorting/mixing - Christmas	Colours and light: - Glasses and lenses - Christmas
*Teachers to meet across phases to agree which festivals to be covered to ensure breadth of experience over phases and time.						
Spring 1 Learning for life day	<i>Who am I RRS ARTICLE 12</i>			<i>Caring Friendships & Respectful Relationships RRS ARTICLE 31</i>		
	Around the world: - but we get stuck in the ..jungle? (Each class to choose a country explore in more detail)	Around the world: - Explore a country. (Each class to choose a country explore in more detail)	Around the world: - Local geography - Park - Holidays - Post cards - Travel	Tell me a story: Each class to choose a story to experience in more detail	Tell me a story: Each class to choose a story to experience in more detail	Tell me a story: Each class to choose a story to experience in more detail
Spring 2 Film Festival	<i>Changing Bodies RRS ARTICLE 16</i>			<i>British Values RRS ARTICLE 29</i>		
	Changes: - Colour and texture - The colour monster	Changes: - Spring changes - Baby animals - Easter	Changes: - Art - Poetry - Colour /food (irreversible changes)	Circus: - The big top	Circus: - Clowning around. - Having fun/telling jokes - Circus skills - Bright colours - Dressing up - Magic - Dumbo	Circus: - Colour - Circus skills/acts - Circus animals - Jokes - Co-ordination/balance
Summer 1 Beach Party	<i>Online Relationships RRS ARTICLE 13</i>			<i>Internet Safety RRS ARTICLE 17</i>		
	On the move: - The Magic Train ride	On the move: - Explore of the differing types of transport – car, bus, train, truck, aeroplane, boat. - Thomas the Tank Engine - Transport	On the move: - Transport - PE - Exercise - My independence - My travel planning	The Great Outdoors: - Oh I do like to be beside the seaside	The Great Outdoors: - Exploring animals from a place you can visit e.g. farm, zoo, great outdoors (mini-beasts). - Bug houses - Sand play - Weather - Outdoor sports - Favourite places to visit in the Summer	The Great Outdoors: - Safe outdoor exploration
Summer 2 Health and wellbeing week	<i>Being Safe RRS ARTICLE 6</i>			<i>Being Healthy (including drugs, alcohol, tobacco) and basic first Aid RRS ARTICLE 24</i>		
	Water: - In and on the sea - Slippery fish	Water: - Seaside - Exploring water play - Floating/sinking - Sea life animals - Exploring pond life	Water: - Oceans and seas - Water cycles - Investigating water and its properties	Explorers: - To infinity and beyond	Explorers: - Hunts (Treasure/Bear/Bird/Easter egg) - Forest exploration - Rumble in the Jungle - Den/Bird house building - Mud play	Explorers: - Map reading - Treasure maps - Dinosaurs - Outdoor learning activities - Space

*PSHE, Relationships Education, SMSC (Including British Values) themes

Learning for Life enrichment

*RRS article links – celebrated through assemblies

Example Timetable



Experiential Example Timetable	9.00- 10.00 Session 1	10.00- 10.30 Snack	10.30- 11.00 Sensology	11.00 – 12.00 Session 2	12.00- 12.45 Lunch	12.45- 1.15 Sound Bath	1.15 – 2.30 session 3		2.30 – 2.45 Star of the Day	2.45- 2.55
Monday	My Physical and Sensory - Physio Programme (Classroom)	My Physical and Sensory, Lunch (Classroom)	My Physical and Sensory, Sensology (Classroom)	My Communication and Interaction, My Drama (Classroom)	My Physical and Sensory, Lunch (Classroom)	My Social, Emotional and Mental Health, Sound Bath (Classroom)	My Social, Emotional and Mental Health, My Music (Drama Room)	My Social, Emotional and Mental Health, Phase Assembly (Classroom) 2.15pm	My Social, Emotional and Mental Health	Physical and Mental, preparation for Home time
Tuesday	My Physical and Sensory - Physio Programme (Classroom)			My Cognition and Learning, My Outdoor School (Outdoor learning environment)			My Communication and Interaction, My Art (Classroom)			
Weds	My Physical and Sensory - Physio Programme (Classroom)			My Communication and Interaction, Rebound (Classroom)			My Cognition and Learning, TAC- PAC (Classroom)			
Thursday	My Physical and Sensory - Physio Programme (Classroom)			My Cognition and Learning Sensory Cooking			My Communication and Interaction, Sensory Story (Classroom)			
Friday	My Social, Emotional and Mental Health - Whole School Assembly (Main Hall)			My Cognition and Learning/ My Physical and Sensory - My Dance (Small Dining Hall)			My Communication and Interaction, Sha-bang (Drama Room)			

Approaches used

What approaches and teaching styles are used to deliver our areas of learning?

- On-body signing (directional cues)
- Tactile cues
- Objects of reference
- Signalong
- Communication boards
- Messy Play (incl. messy food play)
- Sensory Stories
- Story Massage
- Sensology
- Outdoor experiences
- Sensory Pre-Phonics/ Pre-reading skills based on Rocket Phonics (incl. story massage, sensory stories and DEAR (drop everything and read – daily!))
- Rebound Therapy
- Hydrotherapy
- Tac Pac
- Parachute Play
- Positive Looking
- Musical interaction & dance (inc. wheelchair dancing and dance massage)
- Intensive interaction
- Hanging out Program (HOP)



Experiential and emerging exploration Non-negotiable elements

What does our provision look like?

- Therapy plans are integrated into the school day.
- Small group or individual teaching input throughout the day
- A safe environment to begin our exploration journey
- Encouraging engagement through the Engagement model
- All learners' Personalised Learning Plans, derived from their EHC Plans, are woven through the day.
- Opportunities to interact with peers in own and other phases as well as the wider community (where possible and meaningful)
- Access to appropriate continuous provision,
- Routine/repetition,
- Opportunities for 1:1 shared experiences,
- Fostering of good mental health through a variety of means, including a daily sound bath.
- Wellbeing walk.
- Total communication approach with an emphasis on 'on body signing', tactile cues and Objects of Reference may be appropriate.
- Individual plans for all learners, including intimate care plans as well as eating and drinking plans.
- Personal Care Assistants are based within the classroom.
- Multi Sensory/ single sensory approaches
- Multi-agency teamwork





Interventions

In order to further personalise our offer to ensure we fulfil the needs of our learners we undertake various interventions as appropriate for the individual learner.

Wilderness Therapy - Learners take part in therapeutic activities, in natural environments, designed to meet developmental milestones.

Emotional support e.g. Therapeutic Inclusion (Th.Inc®) - Learners participate in nurturing and transformative play activities to support their emotional development.

Rebound Therapy - Learners with profound and complex needs benefit from stimulation of the digestive system, also used for Learners who require physical development.

Animal Assisted Therapy - We utilise a range of animals to support the mental well-being of our learners.

Barriers to Learning Plans - Learners who require additional personalised support to communicate appropriately will have Barriers to Learning plans.

Curriculum based interventions - Delivered by our Gateway team and Learning Mentors to develop a learners' skills in a specific curriculum area.

Jabadao - Learners who are at the earliest stage of communication can benefit from this child-led approach to use movement as communication.

Liquid Listening - Learners who will benefit from a fully immersive, whole-body experience of sound that is intensely detailed and deeply immediate, often resulting in a profound sense of relaxation for learners.





Lunchtime clubs

What are lunchtime clubs in the Experiential Phase?

Our experiential learners experience lunchtime in different ways, some need time and quiet to practice safe eating, others are beginning to self feed, whilst others don't need to eat as they receive all their nutrients in different ways.

Lunch club is on offer for those learners, they have a varied timetable of activities which focus on wellbeing with opportunities for inclusion with learners from other phases.

Inclusive Opportunities

What are inclusive opportunities in the Experiential Phase?

It is important that our learners have planned and incidental opportunities to mix with their peers across school and where possible the wider community. Some learners may join for assembly whilst others may share a story together.





Physiotherapy

What does physiotherapy look like in the Experiential Phase?

Physiotherapy is an integral part of our day. Most of our learners require a 24 hour postural management programme. It is paramount that we look after and maintain our learners bodies so that they are able to grow and thrive.

Learners in the Experiential phase will follow their individual physiotherapy programmes which may include a stretch programme, exercises and the practise of skills such as sitting, standing and walking.

Occupational Therapy

What does Occupational therapy look like in the Experiential Phase?

For many of our learners, specialist seating systems are needed, these form part of the learners 24hr postural management programmes and allow active learning with hands to happen.

Occupational therapists may look at hand function and sometimes assess the need for hand splints.





Speech and Language

What does Speech and Language Therapy look like in the Experiential Phase?

Learners in the Experiential phase are often at the very early stages of language development and their understanding of spoken words. Our learners are exposed to a range of strategies which are developmentally appropriate.

Learners experience tactile signs, objects of reference, auditory cues and a repetitive routine. All of these things help our learners to predict what is happening right now and what is going to happen next.

Approaches such as intensive interaction and Tac-pac are used to help our learners to interact with people and the environment around them.

Speech and language therapists provide advice and write individual programmes; where needed they also assess and offer advice for safe eating and drinking. Our staff then implement these programmes.

Barriers to Learning and SMART Plans

What role do barriers to learning and SMART plans have within the the Experiential Phase?

Barriers to learning plans and SMART plans are devised for our learners who require more specific support to communicate their emotions.

The key principle of the plans are to help the learners to communicate positive and negative emotions in an appropriate way; this is to reduce and remove barriers making it difficult for them to access the world around them.

Plans are key to ensure learners receive a consistent response from all those adults working with them.

All plans are individualised, focus heavily on what the learner is feeling at different times and during different experiences and activities.

They then set out known supportive strategies to help regulate a learners emotions to help prevent them becoming unregulated.

Plans are written based on previous incidents or observations of communication. They regularly reviewed by the class team with input from any relevant professionals and most importantly the family of the learner.

These are then reviewed regularly and updated as required.





Hydrotherapy

What does Hydrotherapy look like in the Experiential Phase?

All learners in the phase are assessed by the Physiotherapists, guidance is then provided and a list of activities planned for the learner.

Learners access our hydro pool which is located on site, and are supported in the water with a member of the class team.

The lovely warm water allows learners muscles to relax and stretch, learners work hard in the water and are often exhausted when they get out!

Visual Stimulation

What does visual stimulation plans look like in the Experiential Phase?

Many of our learners will have a visual impairment, this may or may not have been diagnosed.

Therefore we look at how to develop learners visual skills through a range of activities both in a classroom environment or in the light stimulation room.

Some learners will have a visual passport and targets are set by Rochdale Additional Needs Service (RANs) - Visual Impairment team for these learners.





Rebound Therapy

What does Rebound therapy look like in the Experiential Phase?

Rebound therapy is the controlled use of a trampoline for physical exercise and therapy.

Learners lay or sit on the trampoline, supported by experienced, trained and familiar staff.

Often the learners physiotherapy programmes can be practised on the trampoline, learners are able to develop their core strength and head control in a very fun and sensory session.

Rebound has many other benefits and can be used to develop areas such as communication as well as height and depth perception.

In addition there are many physical benefits, Rebound stimulates the digestive system, can improve bowel function and help clear toxins from the body.



Therapeutic Inclusion

What does Th.Inc® look like in the Experiential Phase?

The Therapeutic Inclusion Room is part of a whole school approach which has allowed it to develop over time and become a successful, supportive intervention for our learners at Springside School.

It aims to meet the needs of our learners who require additional support in fully accessing school through supporting both social and emotional needs.

The Th.Inc. Room is a specially allocated and developed room which offers a comfortable and nurturing environment.

At Springside School we have allocated staff members who are trained in the use of low-level therapeutic approaches to support learners in both individual and group sessions.

The Th.Inc. Room combines therapeutic, nurturing and educational approaches.

Throughout each session learners participate in nurturing and transformative play activities to support many aspects of emotional development. Resources created can be used to support each learner in all aspects of their school day, as well as home life, to ensure generalisation of the many skills developed.



Swimming

What does swimming look like in the Experiential Phase?

At Springside we have 2 pathways for our learners who are learning to swim. Some of our learners require individualised sessions to familiarise themselves with the water and develop their confidence and competence. This generally takes place using our in house Hydrotherapy pool.

In addition we utilise the local swimming baths at Castleton where qualified swimming teachers work with our learners to increase their independence within the pool.

Music

What does Music look like in the Experiential Phase?

Within the Experiential phase we may utilise Music to improve the physical and emotional health and well-being of our learners.

The music session may include listening to music; vocalising along to the music; moving to the beat of the music; feeling the vibrations of the instrument; meditating or playing an instrument.

In many cases within the Experiential phase this takes the form of a 'sound bath' whereby our learners listen to singing bowls and experience the different tones, pitches and vibrations this brings.

We also encourage our learners' communication through music and often find it is a motivating activity.





Wilderness Therapy

What does Wilderness Therapy look like in the Experiential Phase?

Wilderness therapy is an outdoor, capacity building, developmental intervention programme for small groups of learners.

Within the Experiential phase our learners who access this are experiencing the nurturing element of the intervention, experiencing their environment and the relationships with their peers and the staff supporting them.

The aim of the intervention is to allow the learners to feel safe and special; focusing on their mental well-being.

Within the intervention they will explore the concept of "I am being"; knowing they are safe and their needs are being met.

Jabadao

What does our Jabadao intervention look like in the Investigative Phase?

Jabadao is an intervention that uses movement as a powerful form of communication.

This child-led approach allows learners to guide the interaction through their own emerging subject matter, while adults respond to whatever spontaneous movement unfolds.

Jabadao is designed to support learners in the earliest stages of communication development.





Liquid Listening

What does Liquid Listening look like in the Investigative Phase?

In liquid listening, speakers are placed in the water of a hydrotherapy pool while learners are gently supported to float at the surface. Buoyant and relaxed, they feel sound vibrations travelling through the water and experience the music whenever any part of their head is submerged.

Because these vibrations reach the inner ear directly, the listener perceives the sound as if it originates from within their own head.

This creates a fully immersive, whole-body experience of sound that is intensely detailed and deeply immediate, often resulting in a profound sense of relaxation for learners.

In the Investigative phase, we also use these principles to develop our learners' knowledge and understanding of phonics.