

Engage Pathway at West SILC

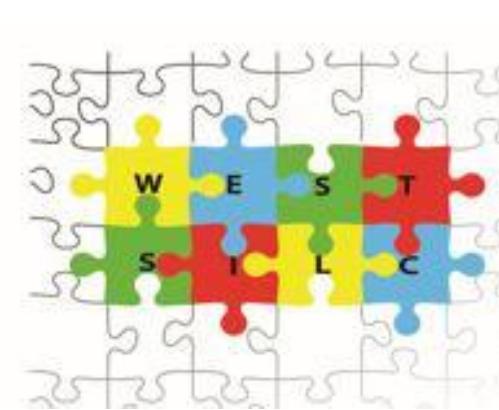
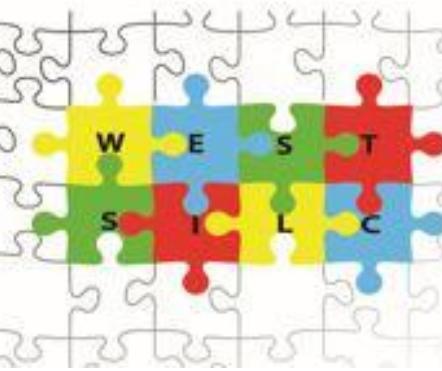


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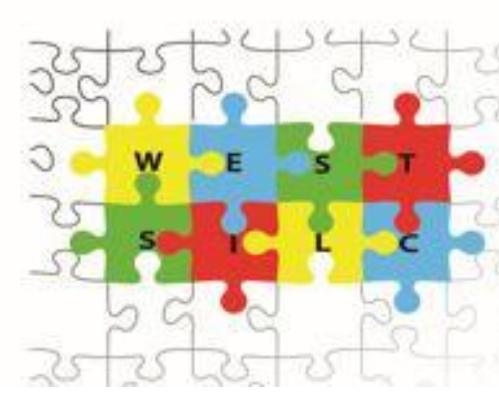
Pathway overview

Learners in our Engage Pathway are in Key Stages 2-5 and have Complex and Multiple Learning Needs (CMLN). Our curriculum is designed to prioritise engagement, enjoyment, and meaningful experiences. Teaching and learning is built around the Personalised Learning Plans of each pupil, which are adapted from EHCPs written in collaboration with families, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, nursing staff and specialist Visual and Hearing impairment teams. In this way our curriculum is highly personalised and adapted to the unique needs of each learner. Learning is based around the key areas of communication and interaction, functional mobility, cognition and sensory, and social and emotional development. Learners are supported holistically by a robust programme of health support, postural management and physiotherapy alongside other specialist input, to ensure learners are in the best place to access what our curriculum offers.

Teaching is process-based and always centres around learner engagement. In this way teaching focuses on the journey of acquiring knowledge rather than just the end result. It emphasizes the process of learning, understanding, and problem-solving and ensures that learner engagement, whatever form or direction that might take, is central to everything we do.

The aim of the curriculum is to be fun, exciting and captivating. Our staff team supports our learners to engage through interaction, play and responsive and highly individualised teaching approaches, which motivates our learners to respond and engage. We celebrate and nurture every learner's potential by providing a stimulating, responsive, and inclusive learning environment.

We recognise that any increase in amount of time engaging or a reduction in amount of support given is incredible for our learners, and is captured and celebrated using our assessment systems. In this way we aim to create a curriculum that truly enhances the quality of life for each learner, ensuring they feel valued, empowered, and excited to learn.

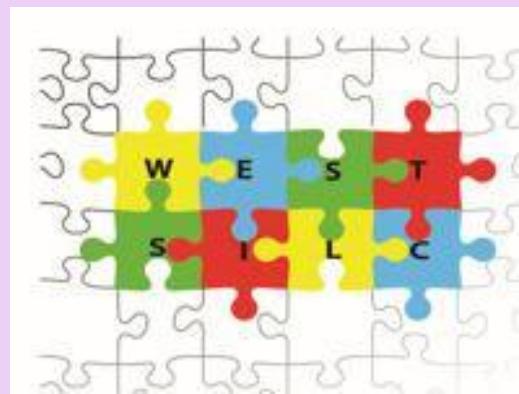
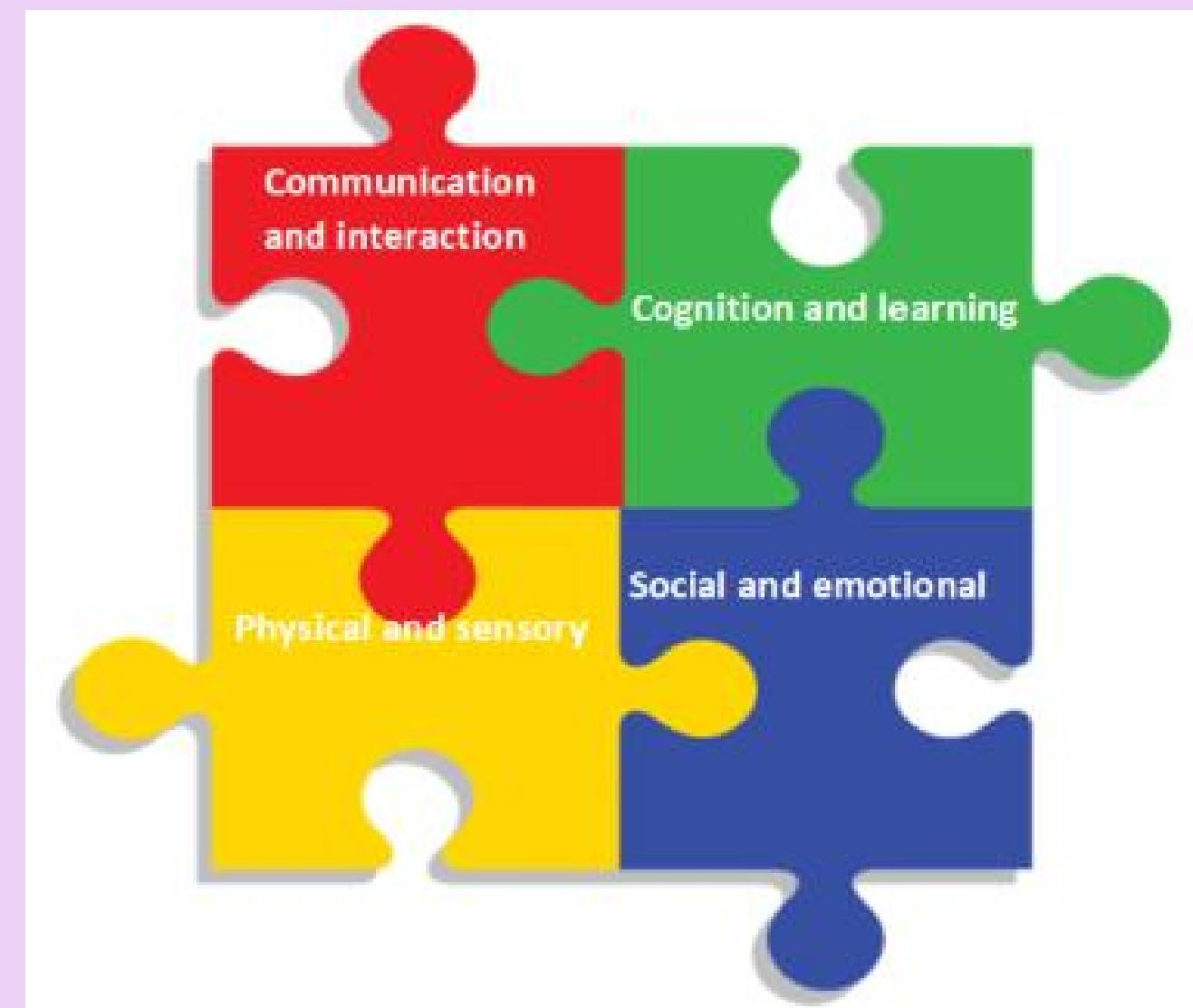


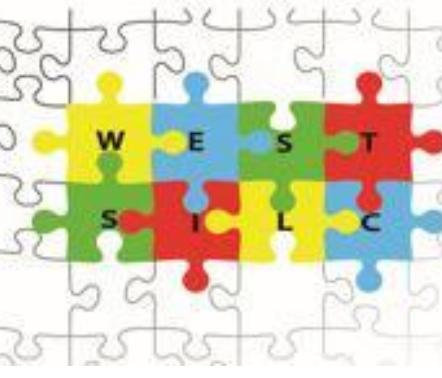
The intent of the Engage Pathway is to deliver an inclusive and bespoke curriculum that is tailored to meet the individual needs of each learner. Our curriculum is designed around engagement, collaboration, enjoyment and opportunities for meaningful experiences.

We aim to develop the fundamentals of communication and individual learner's ability to make choices and communicate their wants and needs using a wide range of personalised and motivating communication strategies. Additionally, we aim to develop, maximise, and maintain key physical abilities such as sitting, standing, and walking using the MOVE programme.

We are focused on creating exciting and engaging opportunities for learners to develop skills so that they can access and enjoy the wider world and their learning. Alongside this we provide a range of support around health and wellbeing to enhance and add to learners quality and enjoyment of life. Ultimately, we aim to promote engagement in a broad and varied curriculum that helps learners develop skills and independence that they can apply in meaningful and practical ways.

Curriculum Rationale



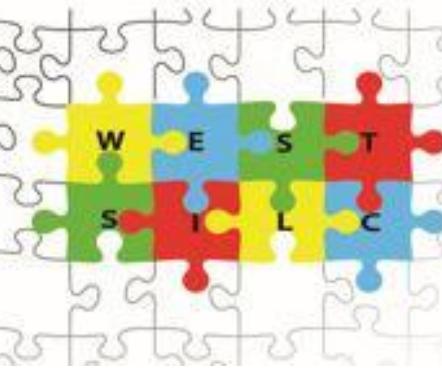


Curriculum Structure and Delivery- Communication and Interaction

Developing and improving our learner's communication skills is crucial to enable them to lead inclusive and meaningful lives. Through the use of Intensive Interaction techniques, we help our learners develop the fundamentals of communication, their ability to engage in social communication, express their emotions and communicate their wants and needs, including how to say 'no'!

As learner's progress in developing the fundamentals of communication, we introduce methods to help them make choices and express preferences using more conventional systems, such as objects of reference (OOR), photographs, symbols and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) high or low-tech systems.

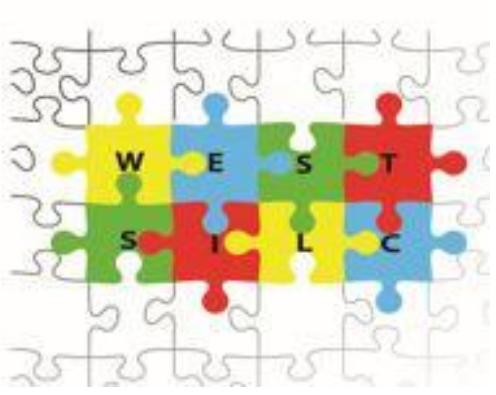
It is essential that learners in the Engage pathway are offered personalised, motivating and meaningful choices, and that they are able to initiate communication. Therefore, any attempt to communicate is prioritised and valued throughout all learning.

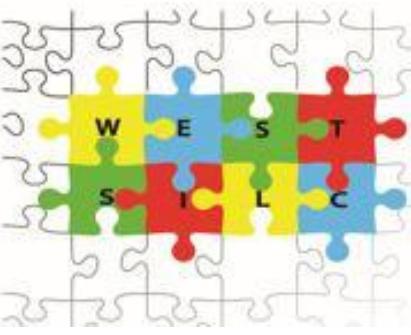


Curriculum Structure and Delivery- Communication and Interaction

Through the Engage pathway, communication systems we use with our learner include:

- Intensive Interaction is a practical communication approach used with people who are at an early stage of communication development. It promotes social inclusion and communication. It supports learner to develop the 'fundamentals of communication' such as learning to give and share attention, take turns, and use and understand eye contact, facial expressions, body language and vocalisations. It supports our learners to build relationships and enjoy being with other people.
- Objects of Reference (OOR) are tactile and visual symbols to help learners understand and anticipate routines or events. By associating an object with a particular activity or choice, learners can develop a better understanding of their world, improving communication and supporting their ability to make choices and express needs.
- AAC (low and high tech) can include learners using communication boards or books, or using e-trans boards to make choices through eye pointing or reaching out.
- Eye gaze refers to the use of eye movements to communicate or interact with high or low-tech communication grids. It can be used to select items, control devices, and express wants and needs. Eye gaze technology can help our learners engage with their environment, make choices and express preferences.
- The use of pictures or symbols (including high contrast symbols for VI learner) to support communication
- On body signing helps develop a young person's natural gesture and, in turn, helps them communicate better with their world around them.
- A 'Total communication approach' which includes using a range of and valuing all, forms of communication such as reaching, eye pointing, vocalizations, objects of reference, signing, photographs, and communication aids.



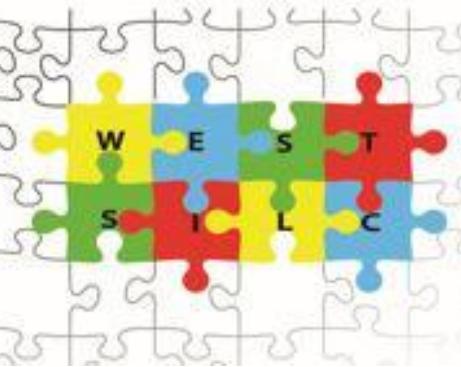


Curriculum Structure and Delivery- Cognition and Learning

Cognition and Learning in the Engage Pathway creates an environment where learners can progress at their own pace, building cognitive skills that support their communication, independence, and participation in the world around them. These sessions focus on developing awareness, engagement, anticipation, and an understanding of cause and effect.

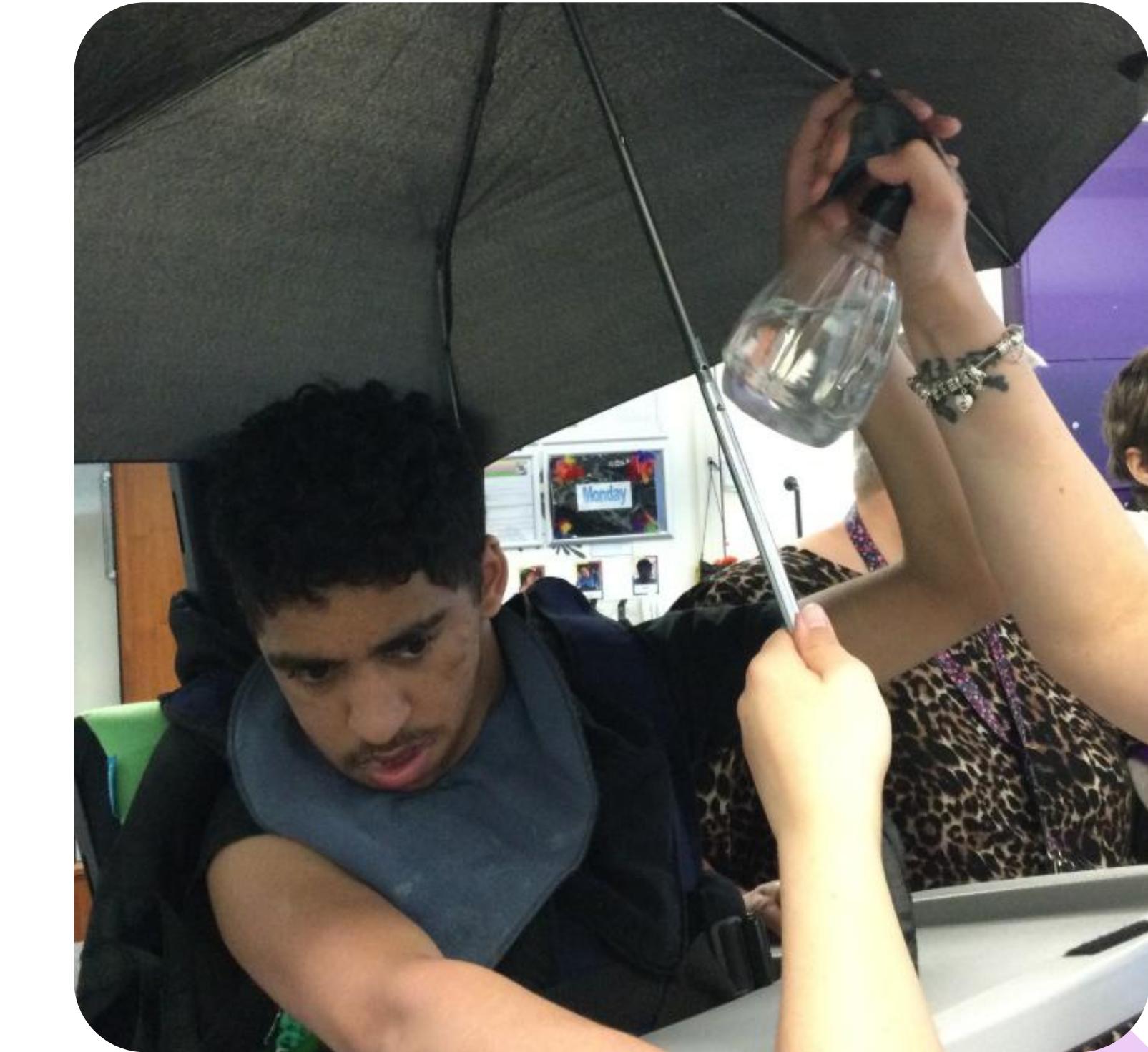
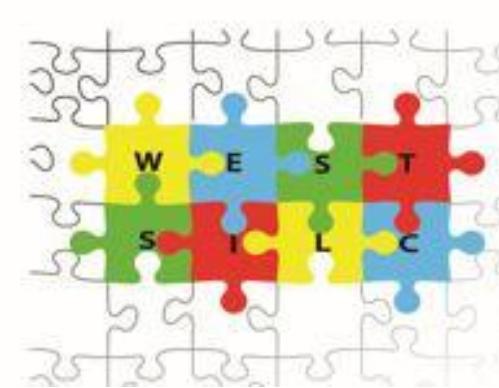
Through the Engage pathway, cognition-based activities and sessions we use with our learner include:

- Developing switch skills. Switches can provide a way for learner to actively engage with and influence their environment, offering them a means to make a choice or initiate an action. Switches are used for cause-and-effect learning and as tools for communication and interaction. A learner might press a switch to turn on a light, play music, or activate a fan, which builds understanding of agency and control. Over time, learners may progress from simple cause-and-effect to using switches for choice-making and communication.
- Cause and effect games help our learners to develop an understanding that their actions can create predictable outcomes. Eye gaze technology or adapted touchscreen games are used to promote engagement, attention, and control. Pupils learn that looking at or interacting with an item can trigger a response (e.g., a visual animation or sound).
- ICT resources are carefully selected to match each learner's cognitive and sensory profile. The Phyzz-Pod is an immersive sensory learning space which offers responsive visual and sound environments that react to movement or touch. Interactive whiteboards, tablets with accessible apps, and other assistive technologies further support personalised learning. These promote exploration, which helps to build engagement, anticipation, and understanding.
- Our sensory room provides experiences that can be both soothing and stimulating depending on each learner's needs, supporting sensory integration, body awareness, and focused engagement. In here our learners can engage with lights, sounds, vibrations, or textures, allowing for exploration, curiosity, and connection with their surroundings.



Curriculum Structure and Delivery- Cognition and Learning

- Creative expression sessions which include music and art, develop our learners choice-making skills, creativity, and sensory engagement. Creative sessions provide opportunities for our learners to express themselves, develop preferences, and engage with a variety of textures, colours, sounds, and rhythms. These activities encourage choice-making, fine and gross motor skills, auditory memory, and turn-taking. For example, learner may select a colour for painting or beat a drum in response to music.
- Anticipation games are repetitive, structured games which help learners build predictability. Games such as "ready, steady, go!" or familiar tickle games encourage learners to anticipate an action or event, fostering shared attention, engagement, and understanding of sequence and timing. Over time, learners begin to show excitement, recognition or initiate the next step, demonstrating growing awareness.
- Predictable and consistent routines are essential for building understanding of time, sequence, and transitions. We use objects of reference, visual timetables and/or auditory cues to prepare for upcoming activities. This helps to reduce anxiety, build anticipation, and develop early memory skills as learners begin to recognise these cues.



Curriculum Structure and Delivery- Physical

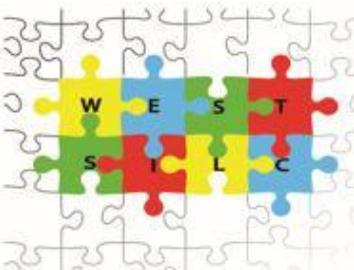


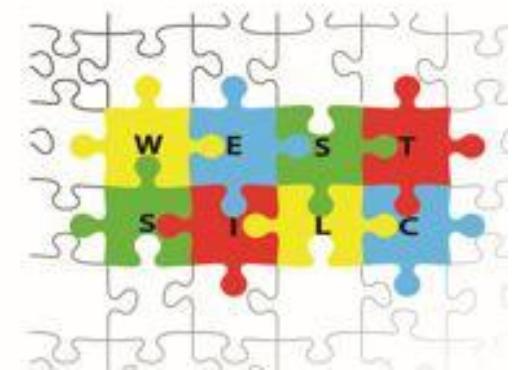
A high proportion of learning time is allocated to meeting the physical needs of our learners following a three-pronged approach; supporting the postural management needs of the learner, developing functional mobility and providing physical development activities. Our physical curriculum is supported by a highly specialised team of NHS physiotherapists. Through the Engage pathway, physical development activities include:

- Postural management; all learners have regular changes of position throughout the day using a variety of specialist equipment. Postural management is fundamental to ensuring that learner have the best possible access to learning and participation in school experiences. All staff are trained to understand the importance of postural management and how to assist learners in adjusting their positions throughout the day.
- Hydrotherapy ; a therapeutic practice which uses warm water to support physical, sensory, and cognitive development. Hydrotherapy improves muscle tone and strength and improves joint mobility. It can also help improve flexibility, as the warmth of the water allows muscles to relax, making stretching and movement exercises easier and more effective. Hydrotherapy also creates an immersive environment that engages multiple senses (touch, sight, sound, and temperature) in a way that can be both soothing and stimulating, depending on the needs of the learner.
- Rebound therapy; uses gentle bouncing on a trampoline to facilitate movement, enhance balance, regulate muscle tone, promote relaxation, and support sensory integration. Rebound can also promote communication where learners may demonstrate positive reactions, such as smiling or vocalising, in response to movement and interactions with familiar adults.

Curriculum Structure and Delivery- Physical

- The MOVE programme; aims to enhance independence and participation in daily activities by focusing on developing core functional skills such as moving from sitting to standing, walking and transferring between positions. Through using the MOVE principles, we aim to help our develop independence and greater mobility.
“Learn to move and move to learn”
- The Motor Activity Training Programme (MATP) is a sports programme for people with Complex Support Needs. It provides a high-quality PE session for learners with complex needs supporting the development of motor skills.
- Annual Sports Week gives us the opportunity to celebrate our physical development. Learners can try new experiences such as adapted bikes, inclusive games and challenges that support participation at every level. It is a wonderful week with a range of collaborative activities that encourage confidence and joy in movement. These events support social inclusion and reinforce the importance of physical activity in every learner's life.

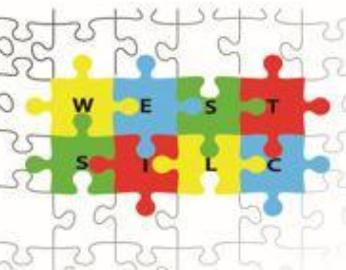


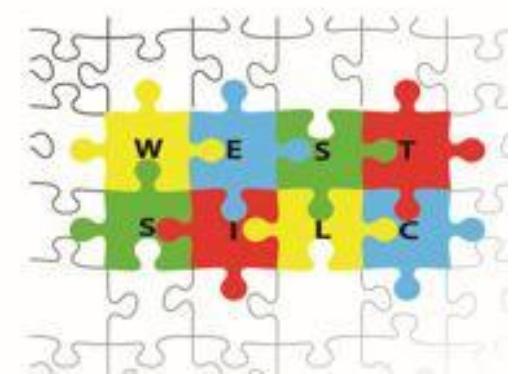


Curriculum Structure and Delivery- Sensory

Within the Engage pathway, we strive to support each learner's sensory needs. All of our work in this area is supported by specialist Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment and Multi sensory impairment teams. We aim to provide a curriculum which is rich in discovery and exploration and promotes and encourages the use of all of the learners senses in a wide variety of contexts. We do this through;

- Specific sensory sessions, such as sensory exploration, sensory massage and sensory story
- Targeted VI activities that develop visual skills such as tracking, light perception, and visual attention. Activities may involve light-up toys, contrast boards, tracking objects, or using switch-activated visually stimulating resources. These are carefully tailored to each learner's vision level, ensuring they can access learning and develop visual awareness.
- Hearing impairment support including the use of music, rich sound environments and the provision of communication support such as visuals, objects of reference and sign, as well as the consistent use of individual hearing supports such as hearing aids and BAHA devices.
- Outdoor environments which provide learners with the chance to engage in movement, exploration, and sensory experiences in a more natural setting. This nature setting offers rich, multi-sensory input (e.g., wind, grass textures, sounds), which supports regulation, alertness, and wellbeing. Outdoor play also promotes physical development and opportunities for interactions.



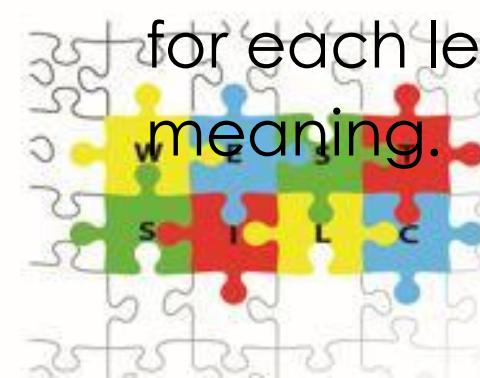


Curriculum Structure and Delivery- Social, Emotional and Mental Health

Meeting the social, emotional and mental health needs of our learners is a core responsibility and a fundamental aspect of providing holistic, person-centred education. Our learners often experience complex physical, cognitive, and sensory needs, and they can rely heavily on others for communication and engagement with the world around them. We ensure that their emotional wellbeing is met through the development of their ability to connect with others, feel safe, and develop a sense of self-worth.

We create responsive, nurturing environments where trust, consistency and meaningful interaction are prioritised. This includes attuning to learner's non-verbal cues, using consistent routines, and fostering strong relationships with key adults. This ensures our learners feel secure, reduces anxiety, and enables them to participate more fully in learning experiences.

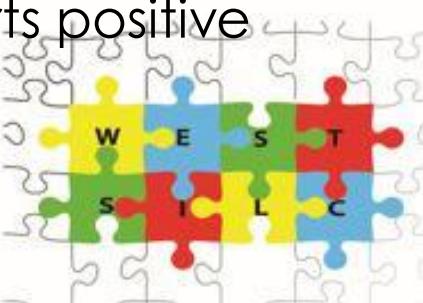
Without a strong foundation of emotional wellbeing, our learners are less able to engage with sensory experiences, develop communication strategies, or form positive relationships, all of which are essential for their personal development. We promote dignity, inclusion, and the opportunity for each learner to live a life that is rich in connection, comfort, and meaning.



Curriculum Structure and Delivery- Social, Emotional and Mental Health

Through the Engage pathway, physical and sensory development activities we use with our learner include:

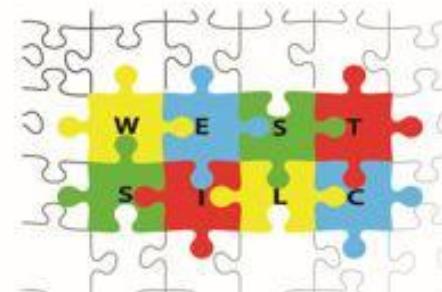
- Building positive relationships - we know the importance of establishing secure, consistent relationships with trusted adults is the cornerstone of emotional wellbeing for learners with complex needs. These relationships provide a safe base from which learner can explore and engage with the world. Staff respond sensitively to each learner's communication style by attuning to their cues, offering predictability, and demonstrating respect and patience. Through repeated, meaningful interactions, learners begin to build trust, feel valued, and develop an emerging sense of self.
- Creative and expressive activity sessions include music, movement, art, and drama-based activities that encourage self-expression, enjoyment, and emotional release. Activities are adapted to support learners to make choices, show preferences, and explore their identities.
- Peer interactions – we ensure we facilitate opportunities for peer interactions, recognising that these interactions are essential for developing early social understanding and a sense of belonging. Structured and supported peer engagement such as shared sensory play, co-active activities and morning groups allows learner to experience being with others in safe, enjoyable ways.
- Sensory and exploratory play opportunities which are linked to the topic, learner interests and/or personalised learning outcomes. Learner's are supported to actively engage with materials and environments that stimulate their senses such as water, sand, lights and textured objects. These activities are personalised to each learner's sensory profile and are often used to reinforce comfort, reduce anxiety, and encourage curiosity and enjoyment.
- Feelings sessions – we use intentional, responsive strategies to help learner recognise, process, and express their wide range of feelings. This can involve the use of emotion symbols, OOR, mirrors, touch cues, facial expressions and consistent routines that help learner anticipate what is coming next. Staff offer naming and validation of emotions to develop learner's emotional literacy.
- Independence – we enable our learners to make choices about activities, express preferences, and contribute to routines using accessible communication strategies (e.g. eye gaze, switches, objects of reference). Encouraging small acts of independence not only boosts self-esteem but also enhances learner' ability to influence their environment, which is empowering and supports positive mental health.





The following outlines how each area of need is reflected within our sessions:

<u>Communication and Language</u>	<u>Cognition and Learning</u>	<u>Physical and Sensory</u>	<u>SEMH</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Making Choices - Sensory Stories - Continuous Provision - Intensive Interaction - Total Communication - Makaton Core Signs - Play and Exploration - Music - On body singing - AAC including eye gaze, switches - Art - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attention Time - Cooking - Art - Music - Sensory Story - Continuous Provision - Cause and effect - Play and exploration - Switches - Anticipation Games - Sensory room - Phizz Pod - Functional Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feeding skills - Outside play - Hydrotherapy - Rebound Therapy - MATP - MOVE – walkers, standers, skills - Physiotherapy programmes - stretches - Postural Management - Positional Changes - Food Technology - Provision - Regulation – meeting sensory needs - TACPAC - Art 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Snack - Hygiene - Continuous Provision - Massage - Sensory Massage Stories - Pamper - Feelings - Interactions - Assembly - Choice making - Morning group - Goodbye group - Zones of regulation - Regulation supports



Teaching and Learning approaches- Community visits

Our curriculum enables our learners to have meaningful community access, and learners regularly participate in life skills-based activities such as shopping, café visits, enterprise projects, and trips to local parks. These community visits are carefully planned to provide multi-sensory, real-world learning experiences that support communication, independence, and personal development. Engaging with familiar community settings helps learners to build confidence in navigating the world beyond school. Activities are tailored to individual needs and interests, promoting social interaction, functional mobility, and the generalisation of skills learned in the classroom. These experiences also foster inclusion and a sense of belonging within the wider community, while supporting learner's emotional wellbeing and preparing them for greater participation in everyday life.



Teaching and Learning approaches- Discovery Days

Our Discovery Days are predominantly focused on Celebrations and are designed to provide rich, meaningful experiences that foster emotional wellbeing, cultural awareness, and a sense of connection. These immersive days allow learner to engage with broader concepts through personalised, engaging activities that reflect their communication styles and sensory needs. They include exploring seasonal celebrations, religious festivals, and world cultures in ways that promote inclusion, diversity, and belonging. These days support SMSC development by creating opportunities for curiosity and shared experiences, ensuring all learner are actively included in the life of the school.

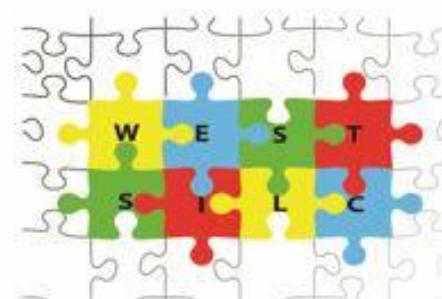


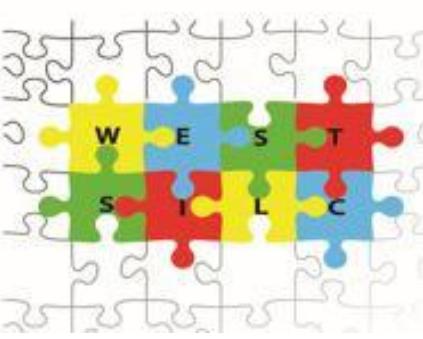
Teaching and Learning approaches- The Engagement Model

The Engage curriculum and assessment system has been designed around the principles of the Engagement Model. This helps us to celebrate our learner's achievements and progress in their physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. We plan for engagement to be a focus within our sessions e.g., sensory exploration, anticipation games, turn taking. We know that our learners are more likely to engage when activities are relevant, enjoyable and capture their engagement. We record how the learner demonstrates engagement within familiar activities, that may also relate to their EHCP small steps. We collect evidence by taking photos or videos to capture a learner's engagement level across different contexts and within different activities, or within the same activities over a period of time to show progress within the levels of engagement.

Our focus is on the five key areas of Engagement which show how a learner is engaging with the world around them.

- Exploration – We encourage our learners to interact with a range of experiences and activities which promote curiosity and give time and space to show an interest in them.
- Realisation – We provide lots of opportunities for our learner to explore and begin to understand cause and effect using people and / or resources.
- Anticipation – We have familiar routines and repetitive sessions in place so that our learners can begin to predict or expect something to happen. We also play lots of fun anticipation games where learners can show and express anticipation through being still, showing they are waiting, wide open eyes, alertness, smiling etc.
- Persistence – We give our learners time and space to show they can sustain their attention or effort for long enough that they can actively try to find out more and interact with it.
- Initiation – We celebrate all efforts that our learners make to try do things on their own, to be spontaneous and to independent as possible.





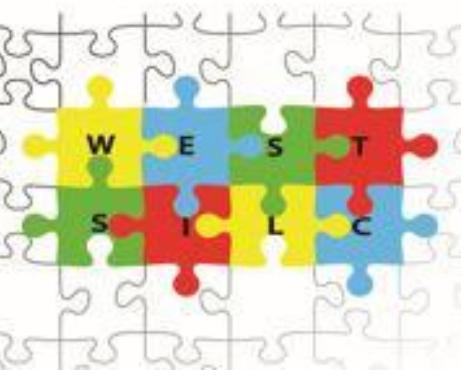
The Engagement Model

Our pupils need to be given **time and opportunities** to become familiar with activities and to process how they want to interact with them. Adults need to be highly responsive and know what active engagement looks like. We must be patient and remember how much effort it takes for our pupils to actively engage.

Don't take over!

Exploration	Realisation	Anticipation	Persistence	Initiation
Interest, curiosity, the same response in a different context time/place/person, finding a different way to explore than the 'typical'	Want to 'have a go', shows surprise, excitement, amazement, fear, recognition, prediction, 'what if I do this?'	Predicts, expects, associates, responds to cues e.g. 'ready, steady' 'more' etc. A response in advance based on a cue, can be routine and environmental based	Actively interacting, a longer period of time, determined effort, motivators, solution focussed, patience.	Spontaneous, independent, investigates, achieving a desired outcome, self-direction
What are we looking for? How might our pupils respond? What are our expectations of our pupils?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using their eyes to look Using any body part - not always with hands Mouthing Smelling Wide looking Facial expressions – frowning, concentration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giggling Smiles Surprise Looking away Refusal Pushing items away Beginning to express likes / dislikes Appropriate responses that are consistent over time with specific items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subtle cues Turn of their head Kicking legs Excitement dance Arms up Shaking Being still, showing they are waiting Wide open eyes Alertness Smiling Giddiness before it happens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repetition of actions Physical skills – hand actions, crawling etc Problem solving Eye gaze Change of position A want / desire / drive to keep going Determination – not giving in Keep trying over and over 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showing they want more – vocalisations, expressions, eye gazing, reaching Taking the lead Independence Motivation Choice making Self-direction Making requests Preference for certain items/objects/activities

Assessment and progress in Engage



Progress for our learners is recognised and celebrated through highly personalised, small-step achievements, that are closely aligned with each learner's EHCP outcomes and the five areas of the Engagement Model. This approach helps us to understand and track how each individual is connecting with and responding to the world around them.

Our focus remains on the five key areas of engagement: Exploration, Realisation, Anticipation, Persistence, and Initiation. These areas give us a meaningful way to recognise when a learner begins to show curiosity, respond to familiar routines, or sustain attention during a preferred activity. We place high value on those moments when a learner takes the first step towards independence, makes a choice, or attempts something new.

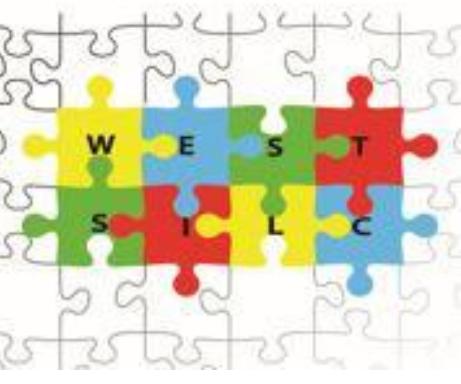
The Engagement Model supports us in identifying and celebrating those powerful, meaningful 'WOW' moments—whether it's showing interest in a new stimulus, increasing time spent in an activity, or requiring less adult support.

These moments are significant for our learners and represent important steps forward in their development.

Progress is tracked through:

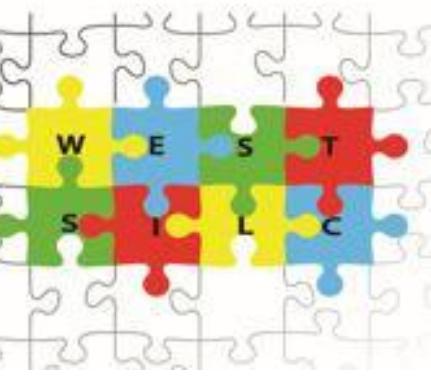
- Ongoing small step targets
- Detailed observations from Teachers and Support Staff which includes annotated video and/or photographic evidence
- Capturing and celebrating our learners WOW moments that reflect genuine engagement and developmental progress.

Assessment and progress

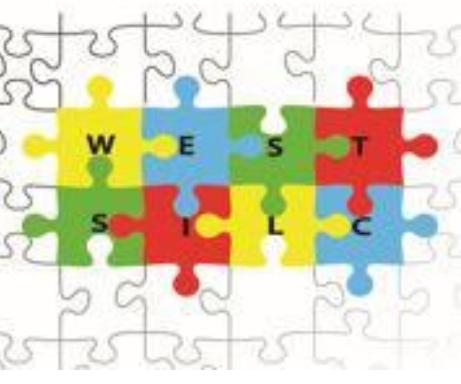


Through the Engage curriculum, learners are able to:

- engage in mutually pleasurable social interactions in ways that are meaningful to them.
- attract and maintain the attention of others to form and sustain relationships with family, peers and care givers.
- make their needs and wants known.
- develop functional head control, sitting, standing and walking skills to the best of their abilities enabling them to participate in family, school and community activities enriching their quality of life.
- be supported to be as independent as they can be.
- have their health maximised to allow them to reach their full potential.
- demonstrate their exploration, realisation, anticipation, persistence and initiation skills within a range of activities.
- develop appropriate self-occupation and leisure skills to provide stimulation at home and in the community.



Preparation for the future



Our Post 16 provision continues to focus on the four key areas of each learner's EHCP, with an increased emphasis on Preparation for Adulthood. We support learners in developing independence skills, both within the classroom and through practical, real-life experiences. Regular community visits provide meaningful opportunities to engage with the wider world, build confidence, and practise essential life skills in everyday settings.

Our learners have opportunities to access The Powerhouse, our West SILC Post 16 provision, where they access Enterprise sessions and spend time with peers their own age in a new environment, supporting their social interactions. We also maintain strong transition links with Post 19 providers such as The Vine and Future Horizons, ensuring that our learners are well-prepared for their next steps and supported in making a smooth, person-centred transition into adulthood.



***Further information available by
contacting Kat Simpson,
Pathway Leader***