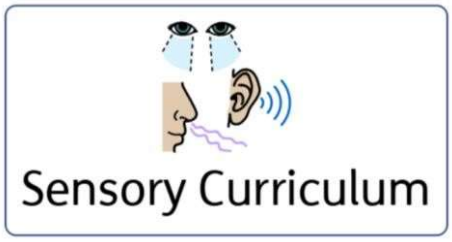
Hollywater School

Inspire. Believe. Achieve.

Hollywater Informal Curriculum

Pink Class (KS2)
Purple Class (KS2 and KS3)
Red Class (KS3)



September 2026

Rationale

The intent of Hollywater's curriculum is to prepare pupils for adulthood. Succeeding in life for our pupils means living as an independent life; not just having a voice but having the skills to make their own choices and have control over their lives.

Our curriculum equips pupils with the essential life skills, knowledge and cultural capital that they will need to become the most independent and happy versions of themselves that they can be.

We aim to :

Inspire, motivate and challenge our children to be curious learners.

Develop aspirational, independent and resilient learners who **believe** they can.

Enable our children to **achieve** their full potential, that is individual to them.

Intent

Children with Complex Learning Difficulties (CLD) learn very differently from neuro-typical children (Imray 2018) and therefore require a different pedagogical approach. At Hollywater all pupils have different needs and these can vary widely across the school. To support all pupils needs effectively Hollywater adopts a different curriculum pathway for cohorts of pupils. Pupils are placed on a pathway dependant on their cognitive, communicative, social/emotional and sensory needs. At Hollywater School we have 5 curriculum pathways and they are :

Pre-Formal Curriculum	Informal Curriculum	Semi-Formal Curriculum	Formal Curriculum	National Curriculum
PMLD	Complex SLD, SLD/Autism	SLD, SLD/Autism	SLD/MLD Autism	
Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities	Working consistently and over time at the most complex end of the SLD spectrum	Working consistently and over time at or below the earliest reaches of the NC	Working consistently and over time significantly below age related expectations	Working within typical or near typical age related expectations

Each class follows a curriculum pathway that best suits the learning needs of the pupils in the class. Pupils may remain in a pathway during their time at Hollywater or they may move between pathways dependant on their needs and development.

Hollywater School has pupils that operate within all curriculum pathways. We use the EQUALS curriculum model as a basis for our curriculum but we also use EYFS, the National Curriculum and Preparation for Adulthood.

How we approach teaching is influenced by our pupils' complex needs and will be determined by the individual's level of learning difficulty; their preferences and motivations and their ability to and willingness to follow instructions or engage in adult led learning.

The Equals curriculum for Informal learners has been specifically designed for students with complex learning difficulties and complex needs. Pupils working within the informal curriculum are learning to be.This means that learners must:

- be allowed (and indeed, be positively encouraged) to be comfortable with activities and states of being that are important to them, as part of the process of being given opportunities to discover other activities and states of being that may become important to them;
- be free to like who and what they wish and be encouraged to learn how to express such preferences positively;
- be free to reject experiences and people not liked and encouraged to learn how to express such preferences positively;
- be positively encouraged to take total control of their own behaviour so that self-regulation (rather than being regulated by others) becomes a major part of their learning;
- be given constant opportunities to communicate positively and to have both voice and agency (that is, be always listened to with preferences always acted upon) within the confines of a safe and secure environment. There may be occasional times when voice and agency are denied, but these will only be in exceptional circumstances when the safety of the learner or those around the learner is in question.

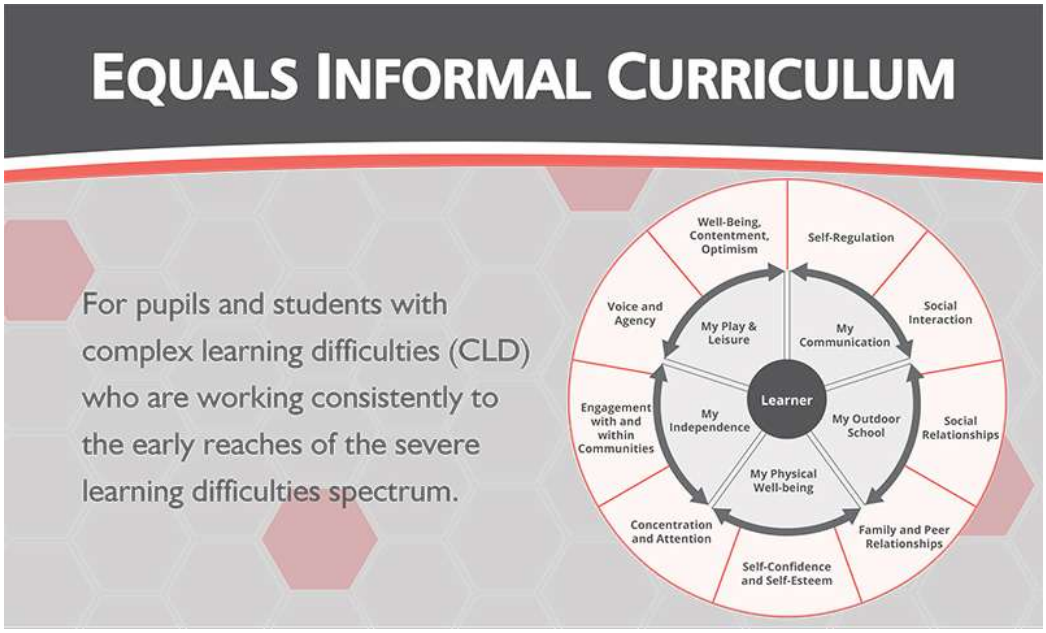
Implementation

The informal curriculum is for our most complex students. Students are primarily non-verbal with complexities around processing, memory retention, personal care and forms of communication that can be expressed through behaviour. They do not yet have a preferred form of communication.

The informal approach enables pupils to engage and make choices. Staff use various assessment tools to assess and recognise what pupils enjoy and structure the environment to extend engagement and widen preferences. Exploration opportunities are provided to supports pupils to notice and

engage with the world around them, building upon their realisation. Routine and a total communication approach support pupil to develop their ability to anticipate familiar activities or events. Staff model and play alongside pupils enabling them to build upon their persistence and sustain attention. This approach used provides a structure for pupils to learn to initiate play, communication, and interaction.

The informal curriculum has 5 key aspects as outlined in the diagram below. Pupils will experience a range of activities within each of the 5 key areas that will enable them to build on their engagement, interactions, concentration, confidence and well-being.



The adult to student ratio in these classes are higher, so that the right level of support can be provided.

Students follow individualised timetables with an emphasis on EHCP outcomes, including speech and language and occupational therapy targets.

They work in a low arousal classroom, with easy access to an outdoor space. Transitions are kept to a minimum and teaching approaches are tailored to suit their needs.

Learning engagement is promoted through high interest activities and resources. Sensory-based tasks form a key part of the learning process.

Impact

The aim of the informal curriculum is to enable pupils to :

- Develop as individuals ready to access the world around them.

- Retain and develop transferable skills that will help them throughout their lives and prepare them for adulthood.
- Make connections and build upon powerful accessible knowledge concepts.

We measure the impact of the curriculum in a number of ways.

Progress is recorded within Earwig – generalisation, fluency, independence and maintenance of skills and knowledge measured. Baseline data is gathered in the first half term and progress is recorded through evidence collated as well as data harvest points throughout the year. Termly assessment meetings are held between DHT and class teacher to discuss pupils making little, good or excellent progress. Pupil progress meetings are held with parents throughout the year.

Personalised targets outlined in EHCP targets across the areas of Cognition and Learning, Communication and Interaction, Sensory and Physical Development and Social, Emotional and Mental Health Development. Pupils have EHCP targets set each year which focus particularly on what they need to learn. EHCPs targets are written taking into account progress already made and consideration of what they now need to learn, and what they may be able to achieve. Ensuring that they have challenging but realistic targets which allows them to make progress. Achievement of these targets are also recorded via Earwig.

Plenty of photographs are taken of what the pupils are learning and achieving in school and these are shared with parents through Earwig. Records of Achievements are compiled for each pupil with pupils work as well as photographs.

Rebound therapy progression is tracked against the Huddersfield Functional Index for Rebound Therapy.