

Windsor Park: Curriculum Rationale

Refreshed January 2025



Windsor Park School has been providing deaf education services since 1972. We aim to meet the changing needs of the deaf population. We endeavour to embrace new practices, technologies and work in partnership with other agencies in order to enhance learning opportunities of our learners.

This provision has been specifically developed to meet the needs of those deaf young people who require a Total Communication approach and intense, additional specialist support from Teachers of the Deaf Children and Young People (ToDCYP), Support for Learning Assistants and other deafness specialists such as Speech and Language Therapists. Typically, the Windsor Park school provision will be suitable for learners who use British Sign Language (BSL) as their first language or those where robust assessment has found the need for a Total Communication approach, including sign. These children especially benefit from a rich visual and signing environment in which speech and listening skills are promoted but where a visual language model is given a significant emphasis. Our children especially enjoy having friends who sign and provide a social communication group.

Rationale for the curriculum for Deaf pupils

In line with 'A Curriculum for Excellence', the aim is to develop the four capacities (confident individual, successful learner, effective contributor and responsible citizen). Each learner is subject to a biannual Wellbeing Assessment using the SHANARRI indicators and where it is deemed necessary, a 'Child's Plan' is devised to ensure we are 'Getting It Right For Every Child'. Our curriculum is designed to meet the bespoke learning needs of our deaf learners throughout their learning journey, from P1 to S6.

Here at Windsor Park, learners access a curriculum built on an experiential, vocabulary led approach. Curriculum for Excellence is the basis for the learning of all new knowledge and skills, delivered in such a way as to meet the bespoke language needs of our learners. The significant difficulties most of our deaf learners experience with acquiring, understanding and communicating language spontaneously, mean that it is essential that the curriculum we offer places a strong emphasis on pupils being involved in meaningful, functional, everyday experiences. This results in the explicit teaching of targeted vocabulary/signs and concepts, in a range of real life contexts, in order to aid contextual learning and generalisation through a Total Communication approach. Pupils experience a carefully planned curriculum, usually following the same themes of work as Bantaskin Primary/Falkirk High School, allowing our learners to be included in their mainstream classes where appropriate.

Deaf pupils at Windsor Park School present with a range of communication differences. In order to meet their bespoke needs we have an integrated approach to education. Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People work in partnership with highly skilled Support for Learning Assistants and Speech and Language Therapists (as required), using a range of deaf friendly strategies and resources in order to meet

pupil needs. Teachers who work within Windsor Park are additionally qualified as Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People (ToDCYP) or are currently working towards this mandatory qualification. All ToDCYP are also expected to hold or be working towards a minimum of Level 3 signing qualification, aspiring to Level 6 in line with Falkirk Council's BSL Plan. Support staff are supported to achieve a signing qualification at Level 2 or beyond. Our deaf BSL tutor supports the training of staff.

Communication

- A Total Communication approach is used, which involves using a variety of modes of communication, including signed, oral, auditory, written and use of visual aids, and is specific to the group of learners being taught. Learning and teaching is supported through the use of English, British Sign Language (BSL), signed supported English, use of visual images or concrete materials, experiential learning, use of digital technology and use of assistive listening devices such as Roger systems and Soundfield systems.
- The school has achieved a Gold Communication Award, which demonstrates our excellent communication strategies and ensures our learning environment is accessible for all learners.
- BSL lessons are provided to pupils, staff and families to develop communication and all are presented for formal accreditation from *Signature*. Where appropriate, learners should have achieved a minimum of *Signature* Level 2 before leaving school.
- Windsor Park staff are expected to achieve high standards of BSL qualifications, allowing for better communication and access to the curriculum for our learners
- Pupils are given support in using their listening technology (hearing aids and cochlear implants) and with their assistive listening devices (Roger systems and Soundfield systems) and encouraged to develop independence in being responsible for looking after these. Effective links are established with Forth Valley Paediatric Audiology Services and Crosshouse Cochlear Implant Centre, enabling staff to support pupils in school when required.
- Staff provide assistance with communication in mainstream classes by using BSL or Sign Supported English. Learners are also supported with communication out with the classroom when required (e.g. extra-curricular activities, assemblies).
- The school provides a language rich environment, which allows for language and communication to develop and strengthen.
- Social stories and social communication strategies are used to develop friendship and relationship skills.
- Teaching staff complete daily hearing checks (Ling sounds) and termly speech audiometry tests (e.g. BKB Sentences) to gain an understanding of what pupils can access in different listening environments, identifying any anomalies and sharing this information with other relevant professionals.
- Apps (e.g. Prologue2Go) are used when needed to support communication.

Learning and Teaching

- Teaching staff hold an additional mandatory qualification in deaf education, or are currently working towards this qualification. Support for Learning staff are highly skilled in order to support learners in class.
- Learners are taught in 1:1, small groups or integrate into mainstream classes supported by a member of Windsor Park staff. In the Windsor Park classroom, learners can be pre-taught new concepts, provided with specific teaching of vocabulary or new concepts, or receive reinforcement of concepts recently taught. Learning and teaching is planned around the specific needs of each learner.
- Structured and visual programmes are used to build the skills of reading, grammar and spelling. We use the Colourful Semantics resource to help structure sentences and Word Aware strategies to develop vocabulary.
- Resources are adapted when necessary in order that pupils can access them. Visuals or concrete materials are used. Subtitles are added to videos. There is a focus on experiential learning.
- Learning in context and use of digital resources make learning more purposeful and motivating.
- Effective use of digital technology is embedded in learning and teaching at Windsor Park. All staff and pupils have iPads and Apple Pencils and staff receive ongoing training to further develop their use of the technology.
- Staff and learners make excellent use of Microsoft Teams to communicate with learners, set work and provide resources for lessons. Instruction can be provided in a variety of ways – text, images, using videos to sign, links to websites etc.
- Vocabulary books (either jotters or online via Microsoft OneNote) are used to support learning and retention of new vocabulary.

Holistic Support/Development

- The curriculum can be personalised, adapted where necessary for each learner, ensuring equity in teaching.
- Areas of difficulty are identified and staff provide learner centred teaching, where work is differentiated to make it accessible and appropriate for all learners.
- Learners are viewed holistically, not only academically, and supported in developing emotional literacy, deaf identity, social skills and in building confidence both in and out of school.
- Learners are supported in both curricular and extra-curricular activities e.g. lunchtime clubs, school trips.
- Enhanced transition takes place at all stages, including school to college/work place.
- The Emotion Works programme is in place throughout the school, with staff trained to deliver lessons to improve emotional literacy by developing vocabulary through targeted sessions and then embedding the language throughout the curriculum.
- Fine motor/gross motor programmes are used to support curriculum access and develop independence.

- Child/Young Person plans are created and reviewed each term in conjunction with discussions with learners and their parents/carers. Targets are unique and tailored to each learner. These targets mainly focus around health and wellbeing.
- Learner and staff achievements both in and out of school are recognised and celebrated.
- Staff encourage a growth mindset in supporting learners to persevere and develop a 'can do' attitude.
- The school has, in the recent past held Nurture School UK status and the Nurture Principles remain embedded within all aspects of school life.
- Staff understand the importance of building positive relationships with learners and have a knowledge of attachment theory. This allows them to better support learners in a wider context.
- When appropriate, learners have access to the sensory room. Learner sensory profiles are used to identify areas of need and strategies that work for the individual.
- Boxall profiles are used to identify particular needs and targets are set accordingly.
- Windsor Park is a safe environment, with clear Child Protection and safeguarding protocols and procedures in place.
- Staff are aware of learner entitlements as regards the curriculum and advocate for their rights. In June 2024, Windsor Park became the first 'school for the deaf' in Scotland to achieve Gold Rights Respecting School status.

Learning for Sustainability/Learner participation

- Learners participate in regular Outdoor Education sessions and attend residential trips. These sessions allow for the development of skills linked with cooperation, communication and problem solving outside of the classroom.
- Learners have the opportunity to represent the school in the Eco/Changemakers group, ensuring inclusion for all learners. There is also a Windsor Park representative in the Falkirk Children and Young Person's group, which enables the school to be included in the wider school community.
- Learners are part of the school's Student Improvement Group and RRS Steering Groups, which facilitate learner participation in a variety of ways, e.g. enabling learners to adopt a leadership role, develop confidence in presenting skills, participate in debates and in decision making. Staff listen to the learners' points of view and opinions.
- Each year, one learner is elected to be the Windsor Park ambassador in Bantaskin Primary School
- Learners, their families and other stakeholders are always consulted about any changes the school want to implement.
- Windsor Park has been recognised as a Gold, Rights Respecting School and rights based language is embedded across all areas of school life.
- Learners help to look after the school garden, planting bulbs, and creating bug hotels using woodwork skills. The school has links with community organisations who support the work in our garden.
- All these activities provide opportunities to enrich learners' vocabulary in addition to developing confidence, resilience and self-esteem.

- Learners participate in a wide variety of activities and competitions run by local and national organisations (Big Bird Watch, Rotary Club Eco competition, Keep Scotland Beautiful).
- The school works with specialist teachers (e.g. Music), and encourages visits from a wide variety of positive deaf role models.
- Learners have the opportunity to take part in various initiatives (Columba 1400, John Muir, Duke of Edinburgh, Outward Bound) and are supported in these activities.
- Learners attend a variety of sports events (FV Disability Sports, West of Scotland Deaf Children Society Football Tournament, Central Para Sports festival, Scottish Disability Sport)

Planning/Monitoring/Tracking/Assessment

- Staff liaise and plan with mainstream staff to ensure learners can access and engage with the mainstream classroom.
- Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People make use of a variety of formative and summative assessment strategies and use the results of these to help plan next steps.
- Each learner has an assessment folder which contains evidence of all assessments throughout their learning journey.
- Regular assessments are carried out to track and monitor the development of our learners. In addition to curricular assessments (maths, spelling, reading etc), we also make use of specialist assessments (e.g. NDCS Oxford assessments for spelling and reading, BPVS for vocabulary, speech testing, audiological tests).
- Suitable Alternative Assessment Arrangements are provided to ensure equity
- Robust quality assurance procedures are in place to allow staff to continually gather evidence of progress and highlight areas in need of further development. HGIOS 4, Falkirk's Council's Learning to Achieve and How Good Is Our Sensory Service? inform and guide these procedures.

Ethos

- Windsor Park has a strong identity – a new school badge and uniform has been created. Our *aims, vision and values* were relaunched in 2021 and are embedded in school life.
- The school has a culture of respect. Windsor Park is an environment that respects all forms of communication and promotes inclusion. Learners' chosen communication preferences are acknowledged and respected.
- The school values diversity and celebrates differences.
- The school has a positive staff ethos, fostering effective collegiate working.
- All staff and partners are ambitious and have high expectations in what all learners can achieve and attain. Learning experiences are tailored to maximise success and achievement for all.
- Regular staff meetings are held at both whole school and department levels.
- All staff are encouraged to take on leadership roles and are supported in their development.

- Staff are highly specialist and committed to a quality educational experience for all learners.
- Staff are always learning and extending their knowledge, and have access to appropriate and relevant CLPL opportunities.
- Windsor Park has a specialist Head Teacher/Educational Audiologist who advocates for staff, families and learners both locally and nationally.
- There are positive relationships between staff and learners – learners have reported feeling happy at school.
- There is effective liaison with mainstream staff to plan, evaluate and improve learner experiences. Staff work to ensure that presentations, assemblies etc are accessible to learners.
- Access is available in mainstream to resources and resource staff (e.g. Skills Development Scotland, career advisors, FHS Sensory Room)
- Staff provide deaf awareness training for mainstream staff and work with class teachers to provide an optimal learning environment for learners. Deaf awareness lessons are also arranged for mainstream classes to develop an understanding of what it means to be a deaf learner and ways in which they can support their deaf peers.
- Staff organise and run extracurricular activities (e.g. BSL club, bowling trips) to which mainstream attend.
- Christmas carol singing and signing raises awareness and promotes the use of sign in the community.
- Strong relationships with other professionals (e.g. Speech and Language, Educational Psychology, CAMHS, British Deaf Association, audiology) allows support to be put in place for learners as required. Staff are proactive in fostering links with other agencies to enhance learner experiences (e.g. Deaf Action/BDA arranging workshops to support student understanding of deaf rights, money, health, careers).
- Staff enjoy positive relationships with families, fostering strong partnerships which help support learning and health and wellbeing. There is a high level of communication through SeeSaw, as well as frequent updates on Twitter. Parents are contacted regularly via phone call, email and in face-to-face or video meetings to discuss learner progress.
- Annual TAC meetings are held to ensure all professionals working with learners are connected and able to provide the support required. Parents/carers and learners are also included in these meetings, allowing for a joined-up approach to meeting needs.
- There is an open-door policy for our families to enable us to work in partnership and to share specific approaches and strategies.

Positive Destinations

- Learners are supported in their journey towards a positive destination, whether that be college, university, an apprenticeship, or employment.
- Staff work closely with the Falkirk Transition Team to identify appropriate and engaging opportunities/pathways for individual learners.

- Learners can attend information workshops organised by the British Deaf Association (e.g. Taste my Future, Apprenticeship Fair) which are fully interpreted and provide information on careers and the support available.
- Learners have access to support from Deaf Action in applying and interviewing for a job.
- Learners are given different opportunities to build on their life skills.
- From an early age, learners are aware of the different jobs and careers on offer to them and the skills required for them through 'World of Work' focus days, contextual play and experiences, and also by highlighting the jobs held by visitors to the school. 'Work Place Visits' have been added to the annual calendar of events since 2022/2023.
- Staff support learners in organising work experience placements, and help learners develop their independence through these placements. Some work placements allow learners to work with other deaf people.
- Learners can access support from Falkirk's Employment and Training Unit (ETU) as appropriate
- Learners and their families have access the Compass transition tool for support with transitions

Deaf Studies

- Learners have weekly Deaf Studies lessons which focus on relevant topics relating to deaf learners. Topics include issues surrounding identity, deaf history, communication, technology and deaf community and culture.
- Staff support learners to foster their own identity, be that part of the deaf community, hearing community, or both.
- Learners are given many opportunities to engage with positive deaf role models, helping to foster and promote a positive deaf identity in learners. 'Positive Deaf Role Model Week' was added to the annual calendar in 2022/2023.
- Links have been established with other schools and educational provisions for deaf learners (Hamilton School for the Deaf, St Roch's, Garvel) and visits between schools have been established. Learners also meet at externally organised events and are encouraged to socialise with their deaf peers.
- Learners often visit the Forth Valley Sensory Centre to socialise with other deaf people. This also helps widen their understanding and experience of a deaf community.
- Learners are encourage to attend the Forth Valley Sensory Centre Youth Club to share experiences out with school with deaf peers.
- There is a focus on supporting positive mental health in deaf learners through the Emotion Works programme and targeted interventions via Decider Skills
- Information about events organised by deaf organisations are shared with learners and their families.