

CATHOLIC
BLIND
INSTITUTE


Ofsted
Outstanding
2008|2009

St Vincent's School
for Blind and Partially Sighted Children,
Liverpool.

Prospectus 2009

ST. VINCENT'S SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

“Inspired by the example of St Vincent, we work together in a safe and caring atmosphere, where a high standard of education and care are provided.

We encourage a sense of achievement, self worth, moral responsibility and mutual respect, honouring all faith traditions and beliefs. Each one of us in our community is special and unique. Gifts and talents are valued and nurtured through all our work.

We are outward looking in our approach to the wider educational and social community and we encourage all our young people to become independent and to integrate fully into society.”

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Introduction

St Vincent's is a non-maintained school of charitable status offering both day and residential provision for pupils from 4 -19 years of age. The school is approved by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and has a long and successful tradition, dating back to 1850, in the education and care for blind and partially sighted children and other disabilities.

We aim to provide an all-round education specifically planned to meet the needs of individuals to enable them to function as independent, well adjusted caring people in the adult world. We strive always to give our pupils a sense of their own worth and awareness of the contribution they can make to the school and the wider community both now and in their later life.

To achieve this we recognise that 'every child matters' and that in the course of their time at St. Vincent's they will:

- **Enjoy and achieve**
- **Make a positive contribution**
- **Stay safe**
- **Achieve economic well being**
- **Be Healthy**

We recognise that the partnership of pupils, parents, staff, governors, and other professionals as being central to our work. We see it as our duty to provide the best possible care and education and in a collective partnership we have achieved a great deal. Nonetheless, we continually re-evaluate our work and set new challenging targets, for all, as part of a process of continuing self improvement.

All our teaching staff complete a specialist university course in the teaching of visually impaired children which includes a Braille qualification. All other staff also undertake appropriate specialist accredited courses. The school has its own highly qualified and experienced mobility officers, who provide individual mobility and orientation sessions for all pupils.

Our most recent joint OfSTED education and care report (December 2008) found the school to be 'outstanding' as indeed did the RE inspection in June 2009.

We are also one of the government's flagship specialist schools for sensory impairment. This is a prestigious status for the school which reflects the benefits available to all the young people who attend.

Admissions

Application for admission is generally made to the Principal by the Local Authority. This normally follows, or, is part of the Statementing procedure, but parents are welcome to contact the school before or at any point in this process. Admissions take place throughout the year and are preceded by an assessment to determine an appropriately personalised education and care programme.

If you have any queries having read this documentation then please do not hesitate to contact the school.



Principal

CONTACTS AND GOVERNORS

Address: **St. Vincent's School for Blind
& Partially Sighted Children**
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Governor

T Bates	Trustee Governor (Chair)
E Jones	Trustee Governor (Vice Chair)
M Clayton	Trustee Governor
M O'Rourke	Trustee Governor
F Knight	Trustee Governor
Sr. Maria Robb	Trustee Governor
J Gardner-Poole	Parent Governor
B Buckle	Staff Governor
E Woolstencroft	Parent Governor
Capita	Sponsor Governor

Monitoring Responsibility

Numeracy, Science, Health and Safety
English, Geography, History, ExL, Media, Post 16, Primary Resources, Safeguarding/Child Protection and Staff Development, Curriculum Overview
Art, Design Technology, Food Technology, Health and Safety
ICT, Mobility and Partnership
Residential Care and Safeguarding/Child Protection
KS4 Curriculum, Modern Foreign Language, Music, PSHEE, Promotion and RE
SEN/Healthy Lifestyles
Link Governor
Careers, Leavers Curriculum, Physical Education and Outdoor Activities

Governors may be contacted via the school office

Curriculum Provision

At St. Vincent's we provide the opportunity for all pupils to have full access to the National Curriculum. In addition to this, our pupils have access to an extended/additional curriculum, which ensures that their particular visual impairment needs are met. It is therefore not only broad and balanced but focused precisely on each individual pupil's needs.

The Core Curriculum is the compulsory element of the National Curriculum and involves the study of English, Mathematics, Science and Information and Communication Technology. Being a faith school we also consider Religious Education as part of the core curriculum.

The Statutory Foundation Curriculum includes; Art and Design Technology, Citizenship, Food Technology, Geography, History, Music, Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education and Physical Education.

The Extended / Additional Curriculum offers our pupils individual programmes in Mobility, Physiotherapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Music Therapy, Individual tuition in Braille and Independence Skills as required. The extended / additional curriculum is a key factor in the delivery of our Specialist School Plan.

The 24 Hour Curriculum is provided to the young people who access the residential provision of the school on a full, part-time or sessional basis.

The Organisation of the Curriculum

In order to secure **entitlement** to the core, foundation, extended/additional curriculum needs of our pupils, we believe in:

Entitlement to a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum.

Needs are specific to individuals.

Trained and qualified specialist staff.

Independence, respect for others and development of self-esteem.

Thorough assessment, testing and the setting of challenging targets.

Learning and well being secured in a happy and caring environment.

Equality, equity and excellence for all.

Maximum engagement with parents and all stakeholders.

Effective learning strategies to help all pupils enjoy and achieve.

Notable achievements are routinely recognised and celebrated.

Total commitment to each child achieving their potential.

Close liaison with parents is encouraged throughout the school year, most importantly at Annual Review, but also in termly updates on individual care and education plans, ongoing monitoring and an end of year report.

The importance of working with parents is recognised in the role of our Family Liaison Officer who provides a valuable link in maintaining continuity and consistency between home and school.

"Parents agree that their children enjoy school. They praise the quality of the teaching and the care the school gives." OfSTED. 2008

Care Provision

"The care provided is outstanding because staff are provided with a high level of training, support and supervision.

This enables them to maintain professional practice and review their own performance." OfSTED. 2008.

We have a dedicated multi professional team of Care Staff working in close collaboration with parents, teachers, Health Care Co-ordinator and ongoing excellent links with Local Authorities, Connexions and Social Services.

The residential groups provide a relatively modern environment that is homely, friendly and welcoming. All pupils have their own bedroom, most with en-suite facilities, in these settings the young people are encouraged to grow and develop to their full social and independent potential.

To this end all pupils have an individual care plan, with personalised targets, which are agreed between the young person and their key worker, to ensure challenging planned targets can be achieved.

"Pupils' personal development is outstanding." OfSTED. 2008.

In the residential setting the young people enjoy a wide range of extra curricular activities with a choice for all. Each evening the pupils have access to a homework club after which they are free to avail themselves of such activities as swimming, horse riding, sailing, dance and drama, along with youth club. Other options include group nights for relaxing – pizza, DVD and music night are a popular choice with older pupils.

"The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Boarders' rights are championed and respected." OfSTED. 2008.

These opportunities enable us to ensure that our young people become independent and realise the outcomes of the Every Child Matters agenda.

CO-ORDINATED LEARNING ACROSS THE KEY STAGES

Provision from Early Years to Post 16

Early years/Foundation Stage
KS1, 2, 3 & 4
Post 16 Provision with links with colleges of
Tertiary and Higher Education
Additional Education Programmes
Enrichment Programme
Connexions Service
Specialist Careers Advice
West Derby Network Learning Community
Community Partnerships

Individual Care Plan

Personal Development
Social Development
Independent Living Skills
Extra Curricular Activities

Student



Personalised Learning through:

IEPs
Braille
Mobility
Independence Training
Speech and Language Therapy
Physiotherapy
Educational Psychologist Consultant
Music Therapy
Visual Functioning Assessments
Access Technology
Modified Print

Progress monitored by Annual Review

National and Extended Curriculum
Individual Care Plans
Parental Consultation
Student's Personal Statements
Target Setting
Input from other Professionals
14+ Transitional Programmes
Careers and Vocational Planning
College Links
Work Experience

Access

Our Reprographics Department has the expertise to modify print and Braille texts, produce large print books and tactile diagrams for the individual need of all pupils, to enable access to a variety of information from different sources. They also provide support materials for visually impaired pupils in local schools, students in Further and Higher Education and work closely with industry to provide educational resources in both Braille and modified large print.

Braille

At St Vincent's, Braille is an important part of the curriculum. Blind children develop literacy skills through Braille from the earliest years. They begin to develop tactile skills through structured play and other pre-braille activities then move on to use recognised reading schemes specially formulated for young Braille users. Pupils with deteriorating vision are given individual tuition in Braille, working on one of the schemes assigned for pupils transferring from print to Braille.

"The specialised training they are given to develop alternative reading and writing methods, primarily Braille, is first rate." OfSTED. 2008

Assistive Technology

The school has and continues to invest heavily in Information and Communication Technology.

All pupils are encouraged to make full use of the wide range of specialist equipment and innovative aids to learning that are available throughout the school including;

- Desk and laptop computers with speech output and magnification software.
- Brailnotes – portable Braille and communication devices that have state-of-the-art Braille displays, can send and receive email, surf the web, take notes and share information with other devices and access Windows based PC's.
- Braille and text-to-speech technology
- Adapted Brailleurs
- Looky - state-of-the-art magnifiers
- Alternative Access keyboards - Intellikeys and XL keyboards
- Switch technology
- CCTV's
- Audio equipment and materials
- Purpose-built library resource centre.

"Excellent resources are available to help with educational tasks, especially those directed at developing communication and social skills."

OfSTED. 2008.

Vision

St Vincent's prides itself in offering provision across the whole range of visual impairment. Much of learning, approximately 80%, takes place through vision, so children who are blind or partially sighted can lack a crucial means of acquiring information and knowledge about the world in which they live.

Young people who are visually impaired need extra help and guidance in order to achieve their full potential. The breadth of experience and expertise of our well qualified staff enable our young people to experience the optimum opportunities for learning by tactile or visual methods of provision.

Each visual impairment presents a set of problems unique to that pupil. After seeking advice from ophthalmists, doctors, psychologists, therapists and other appropriate professionals, staff, pupils and parents work together to deliver a programme to meet that unique need. This affords the development of confidence and skills to achieve as high a degree of independence as possible.

Functional Vision Assessments

Functional Vision Assessments are carried out by experienced, specialist staff. These ongoing assessments are reviewed and developed on a personal basis to ensure each young person can grow in independence via optimum learning materials, viewing techniques and reading aids with both high and low technology. The assessments provide recommendations regarding adaptation of learning materials, use of low vision aids and visual training.

Additional Needs

Additional special needs are identified through baseline and ongoing assessment. All pupils have an Individual Education Plan and residential pupils have a Care Plan.

The curriculum includes individual lessons, as applicable, in braille, independent living skills and visual training. Care workers and learning support assistants work closely with pupil and teachers to ensure optimum access to the 24 hour curriculum.

Young people with recognised needs such as Aspergers or those on the continuum of Autistic spectrum are provided for at school with specifically tailored tuition and curriculum provision. Pupils with additional needs such as a hearing or speech impairment, mild physical disability, specific learning needs or deteriorating health conditions are also catered for at St Vincent's.

Mobility and Orientation

Our mobility department is made up of a team of qualified full time Mobility Officers. As safety is of paramount importance, each lesson is conducted on a one to one basis following completion of individual risk assessment. We also offer outreach services to all education authorities for pupils and staff within the inclusion setting. We currently collaborate with other learning providers in delivering accredited mobility training courses.

Levels of Ability

Although the aim is to keep the visually impaired pupil level with his/her sighted peers, whilst fully developing the child's potential and mobility skills much will depend on ability, maturity, degree of disability, additional disabilities and experience. Mobility training makes a significant contribution to the level of independence achieved by a young person.

Training

Mobility training is the development of two skills, **Mobility and Orientation**.

- **Mobility** is the ability to move efficiently in one's environment.
- **Orientation** is the use of the remaining senses to establish one's location in that environment.

Aims

The aim of the mobility programme at St. Vincent's is to provide the visually impaired young person with the skill and experience necessary to enable them to travel independently with safety and efficiency to the fullest extent of their own capabilities.

Method and Techniques

- Methods and techniques are tailored to suit the individual need of each pupil.
- Keeping parents well informed of pupil progress.
- Ensuring that those who have contact with pupils are aware of their mobility skills.
- For the pupil; as much hands on experience as possible in both indoor and outdoor travel methods.

Progression

The aim is for each pupil to achieve a similar level of independence, as closely as possible with their sighted peers. We do this by each pupil working through our own

Mobility Attainment Targets. Skills taught are as follows:

- Pre-cane skills
- Environment Concepts
- Sighted guide work
- Formal cane training long or symbol
- Residential Area Travel
- Quiet Shopping Area
- Busy Shopping Areas
- Bus and Train Travel
- City Centre Travel

Mobility has cross-curricular links with PE, Maths, English, Food Technology. See Accreditation Pathways for routes to qualifications.

Medical and Therapeutic Services

Health

St Vincent's has a qualified Health Care Co-ordinator who prepares health care plans and liaises with other medical agencies to ensure the health and well being of all our young people. Pupils are offered an annual medical assessment and dental checks. This is underpinned by the local Primary Care Trust with whom we have a service level agreement.

Physiotherapy

Pupils with physical difficulties are referred to our school physiotherapist who will devise an appropriate treatment programme. Programmes are implemented in school in close liaison with all staff, parents and local services. Physiotherapy is available on a weekly basis to identified pupils.

Speech and Language Therapy (SALT)

Pupils with speech, language or communication difficulties are referred to the Speech and Language Therapist. She devises individual programmes in liaison

Music Therapy

Music Therapy is offered on an individual and group basis, by a State Registered Music Therapist. Referrals can be made for pupils needing extra support. Music Therapy takes place on a weekly basis for identified pupils.

Psychological Services

An Educational Psychologist provides the following services, intellectual and educational assessment of pupils, behavioural assessment and management programmes, counselling for individual pupils and an advisory resource for staff.

Staff Development

'St Vincent's recognises that a highly qualified staff in both teaching and care is essential to provide the very best available education for our pupils.' Ofsted 2008

All members of the teaching staff hold the mandatory specialist qualification for Teachers of the Visually Impaired or are in the process of achieving this qualification. Staff are involved in local, regional, national meetings and conferences as an important aspect of staff development. Members of our highly trained and experienced staff contribute to the training of:

- Other teachers of the visually impaired
- Teaching assistants
- Nursing training
- Mobility training
- Disability Awareness

Staff also advise QCA (Qualifications Curriculum Authority) and GCSE examination boards on the production of Braille and large print test papers.

Our care workers hold recognised qualifications in residential care and learning support assistant's hold qualifications in Care and Support of Visually impaired as well as additional qualifications to the standard of NVQ Level 3 and 4.

Routine regular whole school INSET covers new DCSF initiatives as well as low vision awareness, additional disabilities, health and safety issues, raising student achievement, and effective teaching and learning. These are delivered both in-house and by outside agencies.

Mobility Officers provide an induction programme to help new staff understand the mobility aspects of visual impairment.

We have a strong commitment to continuing professional development of all staff. This ongoing investment serves only to further enhance the teaching and learning opportunities for all of our young people.

"All staff employed at the school are appropriately vetted. They receive an extensive induction and training programme." OfSTED. 2008.

Foundation Stage

Pupils aged 3 through to the end of the Reception year of school.

In this important stage of learning it is most valuable for teachers, the Pastoral Care Team and Learning Support Assistants to work in partnership with parents and carers, in order to promote children's learning. Other Early Years workers may also be part of the team.

The Early Years/ Foundation Stage Curriculum is divided into six areas of learning and development:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development.
- Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy.
- Communication, language and literacy.
- Knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Physical Development – including swimming.
- Creative Development.

These areas are each divided into smaller "stepping stones" which lead to Early Learning Goals.

To support children's learning we use a wide range of sensory and educational toys and equipment, which are available in our Early Years Base and Primary classrooms.

Key Stage 1 and 2

Key Stage 1 Pupils aged 5 to 7 years old, in Years 1 and 2 of the school.

Key Stage 2 Pupils aged 7 to 11 years old, in Years 3 to 6 of school.

The National Curriculum outlines the requirements for the subjects covered during Key Stage 1& 2. Adaptations are made depending on visual, physical and intellectual needs of the child.

These subjects may be taught in specific lesson times or during topic work. In addition to these subjects, pupils will have mobility lessons and swimming lessons.

At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are assessed using both Teacher Assessment and Standard Assessment Tests and Tasks (SATs) for English and Maths. At Key Stage 2 for English, Maths and Science. Literacy and Maths are taught using the revised Primary Strategies.

Braille is taught within Literacy and/or as a specific lesson, as needed. We have positive links with local mainstream schools to widen and enrich pupil experience.

Parents are encouraged to share their ideas and actively engage in their child's development.

Secondary Department

Pupils aged 11 to Post 16, in Year 7 to 13 of school.

A system of flexible learning is practised which gives opportunities for individual lessons, small group sessions, and the whole class approach using techniques based on discussion, class work, problem solving, individual study, resource base, practical work and teacher directed activities.

All work is enhanced by a programme of educational visits, field trips, residential activity weeks and involvement in the local community. This provides a stimulating wide range of learning experiences for each pupil.

Individual timetabling allows for the specific programmes such as Braille, mobility and independent living skills to be developed in addition to the National Curriculum Core and Foundation Subjects and vocational programmes in association with local colleges of further education.

" Whatever their capabilities or starting points, they make excellent progress. Across the age range they reach or exceed the challenging targets set for them." OfSTED. 2008.

Key Stage 3

Pupils aged 11 to 14

We strive to ensure that our pupils are not disadvantaged, and therefore, able to compete on equal terms in their end of Key Stage 3 assessments in English, Maths and Science. The Curriculum is modified to meet the specific visual and individual educational needs of each pupil.

Key Stage 4 /Post 16

Pupils aged 14 to19

A wide range of public examination courses are available according to a pupil's individual academic ability. These include GCE, GCSE, Entry Level Certificates, the Unit Award Scheme (in traditional school subjects) and BTEC at Entry Level and Levels 1 and 2 (in vocationally based areas.) Adult Numeracy/Basic Skills.

The 14 – 19 Curriculum recognises that careers education, work experience, college links and vocational training are vital elements in preparing young people for the diversity of life, in addition to offering academic qualifications.

All young people have individual meetings with the Connexions Advisor and timetabled Careers Education and Guidance lessons. Each young person undertakes a Work Related Learning Experience within their final two years of statutory schooling.

The varied secondary school programme allows our pupils to follow appropriate academic courses, make progress through flexible learning methods, participate in residential and experience a college environment. This is further supplemented by our close links with local mainstream schools as a member of the West Derby Networked Learning Community.

" Partnerships with local schools have expanded and become more effective, widening the horizons of pupils. " OfSTED. 2008.

English

English is an essential subject for every pupil because it allows for effective communication both in everyday life and in other school subjects. Confidence and skill in written and spoken English are necessary if pupils are to meet the demands of and respond to the opportunities offered at school and in their continuing education.

English teaching throughout the school helps pupils to use language, written or spoken, confidently, fluently and accurately and introduces them to the range and richness of English writing in all its forms.

We encourage sensitive listening, fluent speech, discerning reading, precise writing and independent study. We support the entitlement to effective literacy and confidence with ICT.

Every pupil leaves St Vincent's with full or part accreditation in English at GCSE, Entry Level or Unit Award.

Post 16

At Post 16 we offer pupils Key/Functional Skills and Communication Skills courses. Key/Functional Skills provide pupils with essential skills needed to succeed in education, extend their learning and improve their chances of training and employment.

Communication Skills improve the pupil's ability to interact in discussion, evaluate a range of materials and convey ideas and information either using the spoken word or presentation tools.

A Level Supported Study

We work with our partner school to offer opportunities to access 'A' level study, appropriate to need.

English Literature

The study of Literature extends and fortifies the imagination and provides insights into what other people think and feel. We aim to provide a basis of language skills that enable pupils to understand and interpret the world around them and to express themselves effectively and accurately in a variety of situations.

The exploration of different experiences through literature is central to this process. It is a demanding academic study that plays an important part in extending pupils' awareness of themselves and of their relationships with others in the world around them.

English Literature GCSE calls for a high degree of commitment: pupils should enjoy reading, be excited by the ideas and language of great writing, relish studying in detail and be prepared to work independently and co-operatively. See Accreditation Pathways.

Extra-Curricular Activities

There are many opportunities for pupils to extend their interest in English beyond the classroom and develop their social skills. Workshops and theatre visits are arranged whenever possible.

Mathematics

At Early Years/Foundation Stage one of the six mathematical areas of learning is taught in a daily focus lesson.

At Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils follow the Framework for Teaching Mathematics.

The Six strands of learning are:

1. using and applying.
2. counting and understanding number
3. knowing and using number facts
4. calculating
5. understanding shape measuring
6. handling data

Adapted as necessary for individual need, pupils are assessed by either their teacher or by external assessment at the end of each Key Stage.

At Key Stage 3 Pupils follow The National Curriculum and assessed by their teachers. The four attainment targets;

1. Mathematical processes and applications.
2. Number and algebra.
3. Geometry and measures.
4. Handling data.

Mathematical ideas are reinforced across curricular areas e.g. measurement in science.

Key Stage 4 and Post 16

There are various routes to accreditation across Key stage 4 and Post 16 and mathematical skills are further enhanced through both the academic and vocational programme of BTEC Life Skills and Work Skills modules together with Functional Skills. See Accreditation Pathways.

" Their achievement in mathematics and information and communication technology skills is exceptional. " OfSTED. 2008.

Science

'Science is Everywhere'

The study of Science is not only concerned with the learning of scientific facts and information, but also with development of problem solving and reasoning skills, which are useful tools/skills for success and fulfillment in other areas of study.

Science has the potential to engage and inspire all students.'

Foundation Stage Science is incorporated into an area of learning called 'Knowledge and Understanding of the World'. Assessment at the end of the Foundation Stage is by the teacher and forms part of the pupils' Foundation Profile.

At Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, all pupils follow the National Curriculum in Science covering the four attainment targets:

Sc1 – Scientific enquiry – practical aspects of science such as equipment, fair testing, practical procedures, analysing results and drawing conclusions.

Sc2 – Life and living processes – plants and animals, and their environment.

Sc3 – Materials and their properties – the physical and the chemical nature of materials.

Sc4 – Physical processes – in this attainment target pupils learn about electricity, magnetism, forces and the Earth's place in the Universe.

Progress in key stages 1, 2 and 3 is monitored by teacher assessment. National Curriculum Tests (SATs) are used at end of Key Stage 2.

At Key Stage 4 all pupils follow courses leading to accreditation. A pre-requisite entry to GCSE is that pupils are working at National Curriculum Level 4 or above.

Our Post 16 pupils are also offered Science qualifications through both academic and vocational based options.

See the Accreditation Pathways for the full scope of qualifications offered.

ICT

Information and Communication Technology prepares pupils to participate in a rapidly changing world in which work and other activities are increasingly transformed by access to varied and developing technology. Pupils use ICT tools to find, explore, analyse, exchange and present information responsibly, creatively and with discrimination. They learn how to employ ICT to enable rapid access to ideas and experiences from a wide range of people, communities and cultures. Increased capability in the use of ICT promotes initiative and independent learning; with pupils being able to make informed judgments about when and where to use ICT to best effect, and consider its implications for home and work both now and in the future.

At Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, all pupils follow the National Curriculum in ICT, covering one Attainment Target and incorporating the following key processes:

1. Finding information
2. Developing ideas
3. Communicating information
4. Evaluating

Progress in key stages 1, 2 and 3 is monitored by teacher assessment.

At Key Stage 4 Study of ICT at Key Stage 4 leads to a variety of qualifications (see Accreditation Pathways) and includes the following range of content:

- a) use of increasingly demanding problems and more complex information from a wide range of sources in a variety of contexts
- b) use of a range of ICT tools to meet the needs of the user and solve problems
- c) developing an understanding of the need to:
 - employ safe working practices in order to minimise physical stress
 - keep information secure and minimise risks from computer viruses and other malicious practice
 - manage information, storage and access to secure content and enable efficient retrieval
- d) the impact of ICT on individuals, communities and society, considering the social, economic, legal and ethical implications of access to, and use of, ICT.

Our **Post-16** pupils make use of ICT across their BTEC units, and through study of the European Computer Driving License (ECDL). See Accreditation Pathways for routes to accreditation.

Religious Education

All pupils at St. Vincent's study Religious Education from **Early Years/ Foundation Stage** up to **Post-16**. We are a faith school and we seek to promote Gospel values.

Whilst we at St. Vincent's teach RE according to the Roman Catholic tradition, we also celebrate the faith traditions of other religions and highlight their special feast days so that the pupils gain knowledge and insight into other faiths and their teachings.

Early Years/Foundation and Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils follow the Religious Education programme known as 'Here I am.' The programme is adapted to take into account the vertical groupings of each class. However, work is differentiated to encompass all levels of ability. Formal assessment takes place three times a year – teacher assessment is ongoing. Each term a World Faith is given special focus for one week.

Key Stage 3 pupils follow the Religious Studies Programme 'ICONS', a complete Religious Education programme, providing a framework for Religious Education which allows young people to explore the key elements of Christian belief and teaching according to the Catholic tradition and to gain knowledge and insight into other world faiths. The Icons programme includes study units on Hinduism (Year 7), Judaism (Year 8) and Islam (Year 9).

The ICONS programme is differentiated and moderated in-house to make it accessible to pupils of all abilities and to meet the needs of pupils.

Key Stage 4 pupils work towards accreditation programmes at either Entry or GCSE level. Staff at St. Vincent's work closely with the advisory and inspection team of the Liverpool Archdiocese when planning the delivery and content of these courses.

Post 16 pupils follow a recently developed programme leading to the award of the National Open College Network Certificate in Sixth Form General Religious Education. This course has 8 learning outcomes and can be accredited at Levels 1, 2 and 3. See accreditation Pathways for routes to qualifications.

Art and Design Technology

Foundation Stage pupils are encouraged to express and communicate their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through creative activities. Creative development in art explores colour, texture, shape, space, form and line in both 2D and 3D, using a variety of techniques and materials.

At Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils follow the National Curriculum and develop their creativity and imagination by exploring the tactile, sensory and visual (if able) qualities of materials and processes. They will use many different materials and techniques including drawing, painting collage, print making, sculpture, textiles model making and ICT.

Key Stage 3 Art provides pupils with the opportunity to extend their creativity by working with a greater variety of materials and techniques, individually and collaboratively. Pupils learn about ideas, methods and approaches used by other Artists making connections to their own work.

Pupils will work on different modules each half term using drawing, painting, textiles, sculpture, pottery, collage, print making, model making and ICT processes. Work can be on a large scale and may be developed through a number of stages, from planning through to completion, over a long period of time.

Post 16 pupils follow the BTEC course in Life and Work Skills related to the Design and Make Component. Emphasis is placed on practical involvement, although a degree of planning and recording is necessary. We try to relate to the young persons understanding of everyday objects and experiences.

Topics covered include:

- Safety and orientation
- Basic construction techniques
- Decoration and Finish' including the application of colour, texture and protective layers.
- Computer Aided Design

Further modules are offered through the enrichment programme at Post 16 and the Specialist School Partner Work activities. See accreditation Pathways for routes to qualifications.

Careers and Transition

Careers Education and Guidance (CEG) and the Work Related Learning Curriculum is an educational entitlement for all pupils from Year 7 to Post 16.

At St. Vincent's School we are currently following the guidance as laid out in *The National Framework for CEG 11-19* to review and develop the existing programme of study in this subject area.

The Framework offers guidance on how schools, colleges and work-based training organisations can develop improved programmes of CEG which better prepare young people for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

The aim is to raise achievement by helping individuals plan and manage their progression through learning and into work.

As many of our pupils need a differentiated approach to learning, the CEG programme at St Vincent's encompasses a great deal of experiential learning, workshops, visits and group sessions.

From Year 7 we aim to:

- Prepare and equip individuals for present and future transitions;
- Develop employability;
- Enhance key skills;
- Contribute to raising achievement, through increasing motivation;
- Raise pupil aspirations.

Pupils are advised on how they can gain maximum benefit from the guidance provided by the school, the Connexions Service and their parents or carers.

All pupils will participate in a Work Related Learning Experience within the final two years of statutory schooling supported by St. Vincent's school staff. These sessions, include placements, workshops and visits that cover areas in preparation for college and working life. Liaison with form teachers, mobility and the pastoral care team is essential to ensure that each pupil achieves as much independence as possible from this experience.

Exploring Learning

Exploring Learning (ExL) is a new cross-curriculum subject introduced in September 08 for KS3. It currently embraces the foundations subjects of Geography and History, and contains elements of Literacy and Numeracy.

Pupils will study a number of themes throughout the year. The lessons aim to develop team building and leadership skills through various group work activities. Pupils will develop a sense of self and their ability to work together, using a variety of learning styles, to enhance their approach to their learning across the curriculum.

There will be opportunities for individual and collaborative work, which will include the use of music, ICT and art to enhance their work.

Pupils will be assessed using the 'CLIPS' competencies. In ExL there are five categories of competence. Each category contains a number of individual competencies, which are expressed in terms of what a pupil could achieve having progressed through the curriculum:

- C Citizenship**
- L Learning**
- I Information**
- P People**
- S Situations**

CLIPS are 'competencies' needed for learning and they permeate through all aspects of the curriculum.

At present we combine the content from several subjects and teach in a combined lesson format to develop the competences. There is strong emphasis on the pupils taking responsibility for managing and measuring their own competence development (C.L.I.P.S), incorporating Assessment for Learning strategies (Formative Assessment) and Personalised Learning.

Food Technology and Independent Living Skills

This subject is offered to all pupils across all of the Key Stages.

The programme is planned and personalised to the individual need of each pupil and covers:

- Health and Safety
- Purchase and Choice
- Healthy Eating
- Preparation and Planning
- Cooking Methods
- Self Help and Independent Living Skills

These skills are reinforced across other curriculum areas and are transferred into the residential setting and the 24-hour curriculum.

The work covered enhances basic skills and the emphasis is on working towards independence.

Post 16

There are further opportunities within Post 16 to extend the personalised programme of study. In addition the pupils are given wider opportunities to gain accreditation through the BTEC Framework. See Accreditation Pathways.

Geography

Geography requires both knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils with visual impairment need specific learning skills to understand the world around them.

- Geographical knowledge and experience must be based on a pupil's perception of the environment and their place in it.
- Building on this, pupils broaden their experiences of the world around them.
- Pupils are encouraged to recognise and develop their preferred learning styles, and to extend their learning to encompass other skills.

Primary Foundation/Early Years/Key Stage 1 and 2 Geography is delivered following the National Curriculum Programme of Study. Topics are chosen for their relevance in broadening the experiences of visually impaired pupils. Work is modified to ensure full access to geography concepts in preparation for the work that pupils will do at Key Stage 3.

Key Stage 3 Geography is currently incorporated into ExL..

Key Stage 4 pupils are working towards GCSE Geography. The programme of study is differentiated and modified to meet individual needs. Map work is an important part of geography and is the most difficult area for our pupils to access. Pupils use LVAs, ICT and CCTV to enhance mapping skills and tactile map work is also available. Ordnance survey work is a specific skill in itself, and requires designated teaching time throughout the secondary curriculum. Field trips enable pupils to have a residential experience to enhance and develop their wider understanding of the subject.

History

Pupils will be taught how the past influences all aspects of our lives and how history shapes the customs and beliefs of the communities to which we belong. Learning about the past through different methods of study helps young people make sense of the world in which they live. There are two main aims:

- To help pupils develop a sense of identity by learning about the development of Britain, Europe and the World;
- To introduce pupils to what is involved in understanding and interpreting the past.

The social dimension of History gives opportunity to support progress in Citizenship. The programmes of study encourage skills linked to participation and responsible action in the life of a community and to reflect upon the nature of governments with regard to individuals and groups.

At Early Years/Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and 2 The National Curriculum Programme of Study is followed.

Key Stage 3 Historical component study is incorporated into the programme for ExL.

Key Stage 4 All pupils can gain externally recognised accreditation and credit for the units of study followed. The syllabus followed allows for transition between accreditation levels.

See Accreditation Pathways for routes to qualifications.

Media

Media is the study of the impact of mass media (and its technologies) on contemporary society. It encourages the development of critical thinking and decision making skills in addition to providing practical, creative learning opportunities.

The subject is offered at GCSE as a two unit module over one year. Four major concepts are studied:-

- Media language: forms and conventions
- Institutions
- Audience
- Representations

Success at the single award can lead to further option choices leading to a double award over a two year block. As part of the second year of study, candidates complete a case study module that highlights media codes and conventions through exploring topics such as reality TV, issues of representation and bias, along with the practical aspects of selection, editing and story boarding.

See Accreditation Pathways for routes to qualifications.

Modern Foreign Languages

Pupils are given the opportunity to study a Modern Foreign Language from Early Years/Foundation Stage to the end of Key Stage 4. In all Modern Languages lessons there is an emphasis on using the target language and on the fact that languages primary purpose is to communicate. Pupil's access and produce work using the 4 skill areas of Speaking, Listening and Responding, Reading and Responding and Writing

Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 Pupils follow a programme of study developed in-house. The content of the course is planned to provide a sound foundation for the work that pupils will do at Key Stage 2.

Key Stage 2 Pupils follow the QCA programme of study for Modern Foreign Languages. The MFL teacher and Learning Support Assistant have attended courses to explore and develop suitable materials and teaching/learning strategies for this Key Stage.

Key Stage 3 Pupils use the **Equipe** programme of study, which includes reinforcement and extension work. This course has been written in line with the QCA Programme of Study for MFL.

Key Stage 4 Pupils continue to study French as an entitlement subject. According to their individual needs and abilities, pupils will either follow a GCSE or an Entry Level course. We are currently considering possibilities for pupils continuing their language studies post-16. See accreditation Pathways for routes to qualifications.

Music

From Foundation Stage to the end of Key Stage 3 pupils receive one lesson of music a week; they then have the option of following a BTEC in Music Technology at Key Stage 4.

Pupils follow the National Curriculum, with every lesson differentiated to their individual need. It has a very creative foundation, with emphasis on the pupil composing their own music.

Ultimately we see music as a life skill, which will help our young people make a bridge into the sighted world. For this reason we encourage pupils to “play by ear”, and where appropriate, we teach Music notation in both Print and Braille so that they can take their music anywhere.

“However, we also recognise

music as a communication skill, which helps our pupils develop in many other areas. These include listening skills and teamwork as well as it being a creative outlet.”

Lessons are always practical and pupils can use the full range of resources available: Keyboards, percussion, guitars as well as up to date Music technology provision, including our Recording Studio where pupils can record their own compositions.

BTEC First Certificate in Music Technology

Pupils are able to study for this qualification from Key Stage 4 onwards. It is a one year programme that follows coursework guidelines with no end of year examinations.

Pupils complete three units of work for this qualification. They have a choice from 12 units with one being compulsory. Most pupils complete a research unit on one influential musician and another unit about making a CD. Pupils have the option to choose an additional qualification at Level 2.

Extra Curricular

We have a number of concerts within school, notably, the Christmas Nativity and a summer concert which is in collaboration with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.

Pupils have the opportunity to learn a variety of musical instruments, including, Piano, Cello, Voice and Violin. Every week we have a folk club that pupils may wish to join in, and pupils are always encouraged to put their own groups together.

Performing Integrated Arts

Integrated Arts is a combination GCSE programme of study incorporating music, drama and theatre studies. See Accreditation Pathways for the full scope of qualifications offered.

PE

In PE we aim to promote pupil independence and self-confidence by engendering a positive 'can do' approach. We aim to encourage an awareness of the benefits of leading an active and healthy lifestyle whilst having fun.

We will always seek to identify individual pupil needs, recognise strengths and weaknesses and endeavour to assist individuals to maximise their full potential.

We recognise the importance of developing and promoting personal aspects such as independence, social skills, self-esteem, team spirit, physical skill, relaxation and a sense of achievement.

We deliver a broad range of physical challenges and endeavour to provide pupil support and guidance to enable all pupils to achieve their potential. In this we liaise closely with other specialist disciplines such as Mobility and Physiotherapy.

All children follow the National Curriculum. Most pupils work within assessment levels 1-4 and for some, P-Levels are appropriate.

Extra Curricular Activities

All pupils are encouraged to participate and compete in a wide range of events and competitions in both mainstream and special settings.

To date such events have included:

- Local/National Swimming Galas
- Local/National Athletic Competitions
- Integrated Sailing Weekends
- Everton & Liverpool Soccer Coaching
- National 5-a-side Football Tournament
- European Activity Events
- Indoor Rock-climbing
- Introductory Judo Coaching
- Activities Club at local Sport College

The residential component of our Outdoor and Adventurous Activities course based at the specialist Calvert Trust Activity Centre in the Lake District. Each year our Year 8 pupils benefit from this exciting opportunity.

Involvement in the Schools Sports Partnership enables us to extend our qualifications framework to offer the BTEC in Sports Coaching, a double award equivalent to 2 A Levels, for those interested in pursuing a sports related career and t wider enrichment opportunities. See Accreditation Pathways for routes to qualifications.

PSHEE/Citizenship

The aims of Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education and Citizenship are linked to our school Mission Statement:

- To recognise the individuality of each member of the school community;
- To encourage mutual respect, a sense of achievement and self worth;
- To enable all our young people to become independent and fully integrated into society.
- Developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities

PSHEE is taught from Early Years to Key Stage 4. In addition, Citizenship and aspects of PSHEE are delivered on a cross-curricular whole school basis at Post 16.

The PSHEE/Citizenship scheme has been devised specifically for the needs of our pupils and the topics have been carefully chosen from those recommended and outlined by the DCFS. These recommendations have been carefully adopted by the Examination Boards.

PSHEE/Citizenship also covers the 24-hour curriculum and aims to fulfil four main areas:

- Education for Personal Relationships
- Social Education
- Health and Pastoral Education
- Economic Wellbeing

The school also provides opportunities for:

- School Council
- Collaboration with the wider community
- Anti-bullying Campaign
- Pro-active action against 'Bystander Apathy'
- Whole School policy making

Post 16 BTEC

Our post 16 provision includes a number of option study modules encompassing the programme of study BTEC Entry Level in Skills for Working Life and BTEC Work Skills from Entry Level through to Certificate Level or Diploma.

BTEC modules provide all of our young people with the opportunity to gain accreditation across a range of provision. We offer supported study units at a local college, in house and through wider agency work programmes. The BTEC qualification framework enables our young people to carry their accreditation points study at local level and to further education study and beyond.

The options within the BTEC framework range from Self Help and Independence Skills units to Higher Level Work Skills equivalent to A Level Study.

The suite of Work Skills on offer meets the demand for work related and vocational skills in preparing young people for the world of employment.

A Level plus

We offer a range of supported 'A' level study programmes in partnership with our network specialist schools. Pupils gaining 5 or more GCSEs at A-C can apply for a supported study programme at 'A' level. Pupils are given tuition and study support from St. Vincent's but access 'A' Level and Higher Level BTEC courses at neighbouring mainstream schools. See qualifications framework for the scope of qualifications offered.

Accreditations Pathways

The Accreditation Pathways grid demonstrates the range of qualifications, Page 31 that may be available at the school. This can be found on the following page. The final page is a description of the National Qualifications Framework which shows where this accreditation fits in the National Picture.

Subject	TA/NC	Unit NQF Pre- Entry	ELC NQF Entry Levels 1-3	GCSE NQF Levels 1 & 2	BTEC Awards & Corticates NQF Entry Level 1-3 NQF Level 1,2 & 3	Other
English	✓	✓	✓	✓		Basic skills in Adult Literacy NQF Entry Levels 1&2
English Literature	✓			✓		GCE (NQF Level 3)
Mathematics	✓		✓	✓		
Science	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Additional Science	✓			✓		
ICT	✓	✓	✓	✓		ECDL
Religious Education	✓		✓	✓		National Open College Certificate
Citizenship/PSHEE	✓	✓				
Art and Design	✓					
Food Technology / Independence	✓	✓				
Geography	✓	✓	✓	✓		
History	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Media				✓		
Mobility	✓	✓				
Modern Foreign Language - French	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Music	✓	✓		✓	Level 2 (First Cert)	
Music Technology		✓			Level 3	
Performing Arts				✓		
BTEC Award in Health Eating					Level 1	
BTEC Award in Nutrition Awareness					Level 2	
BTEC Certificate in Living Skills					Entry 1, 2 & 3	
BTEC Award in Sports Coaching						BTEC Level 3 Double Award
BTEC Award/Certificate in Work Skills					Entry 3 & Level 1& 2	
BTEC Award/Certificate in Business Administration (FLT)					Entry 3 & Level 1& 2	
BTEC Award/Certificate in - Health and Social Care/Childcare (FLT)		✓	✓		Entry 3 & Level 1& 2	

Key to abbreviations: TA/NC = Teacher Assessed & National Curriculum Levels

FLT = Foundation Learning Tier

Outline of NQF and FHEQ

National Qualifications Framework		Framework for Higher Education Qualifications	
Level	Examples	Level	Example
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialist Awards 	D (doctorate)	Doctorates
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level 7 - Diploma 	M (masters)	Masters degrees, postgraduate certificates and diplomas
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level 6 – National Diploma 	H (honours)	Bachelor degrees, graduate certificates and diplomas
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level 5 – BTEC Higher National Diploma 	I (intermediate)	Diplomas of higher education and further education, foundation degrees and higher national diplomas
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level 4 	C (certificate)	Certificates of Higher Education
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Levels BTEC Awards at Level 3 (Workskills) 		
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GCSEs Grades A* - C BTEC Award in Nutrition Awareness Level 2 		
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GCSEs Grades D – G BTEC Award in Healthy Eating Level 1 		
Entry Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELC in History ELC in Adult Literacy BTEC Entry Level in Living Skills 		

