



Learning@Silverdale

Being ready for the next stage of education, training or employment

2022 – 2023

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is Thrive offered in Primary?

Thrive is an approach where pupils are given time with a skilled practitioner to talk and play to build resilience and resourcefulness and reduce the risk of mental illness. It helps pupils to re-engage with learning and enhances emotional and social skills which in turn will improve their emotional wellbeing.

Key pupils are identified and are given designated sessions and other pupils are welcomed into the Thrive room on a needs met basis each day. If staff are worried about a child or feel the child needs some extra time and attention a Thrive session will be made available on that day and sometimes as soon as the child comes into school in the morning.

Why is nurture embedded into the curriculum?

At Silverdale we believe the quality of the relationship with students is key to achieving successful outcomes. A nurturing approach to interactions meets basic needs to feel safe, comfortable and recognised. From this foundation all things are possible in changing children's lives.

Why do staff offer corridor support?

Children who are not ready to learn and engage in the curriculum need someone sympathetic but assertive to support them in working through their worries. When they leave class corridor staff help them to manage their worries and frustration (co-regulation) until students are able to manage their own behaviour choices (self-regulation). Students can then return to class and focus on learning instead of being trapped in their distress and frustration.

Why is Outdoor Education a key part of Silverdale curriculum offer?

Students are encouraged and supported to take part in activities outside of their comfort zone to widen their 'window of tolerance' to enable them to manage adversity in preparation for the world of work. They are also taught skills in coaching, leadership, team building, peer support, giving feedback and self-reflection. They also have fun and experience success, this makes them ready and keen for more learning adventures. Many of our students excel in outdoor sessions and this allows them to showcase a skillset that may be missed in academic lessons.

Why do pupils have a virtual bank account?

Students are rewarded for good choices and good attendance. Financial recognition allows them to set goals, save and manage money, make financial choices, (e.g. new goalkeeper gloves or trip out) and also allows all students to buy things they may not be able to afford outside of school. It develops the ability to plan towards a goal and not expect immediate gratification. This encourages a sense of appreciation and helps students to see the reward of a good work ethic.

Why is there access to food throughout the day?

It is very hard to concentrate when you are hungry, not all students have access to food at home. Eating together is a great opportunity to talk, nurture and also role model positive social behaviours and table manners. Medication also affects appetite which means students are not hungry at typical meal times.

Why is everything based on praise and rewards?

We believe punishment does not work, it failed to change behaviours when students attended other settings. Consistently exposing young people to experiences that move their self-image further away from their ideal self, causes more harm than good and damages relationships. We believe in building individuals up and helping them to see the skills and strengths we see in them, supporting self-belief so that they are ready to learn.

Why do the Link Workers offer an Open Door policy all day?

Because sometimes humans just need to talk, share and connect to feel ok. Listening is a big part of the Silverdale offer. Students can then return to class and focus on learning.

Why are there so many trips and experiences out in the community and further afield?

Pupils are placed at Silverdale because they struggle to manage socially in their mainstream school. Often they struggle with basic skills such as listening, taking turns or working as part of a team. The curriculum is designed to overcome these difficulties and build up the skills needed, social skills cannot be taught solely in the classroom and need to be developed and tested in the community so we expose them to experiences that help them to build confidence, self-esteem and develop social skills so that they are equipped to take their place in society. We also believe that positive and rewarding experiences help them to combat the adversity experienced so far in their lives. Our students often come with a feeling of worthlessness so we combat this by giving them the best of everything and showing them they are valued.

Will my child go on trips to help their learning?

In Primary trips are planned specifically to support a key area of learning and Outdoor Learning is also used to support learning in other subjects. For example, pupils may use their experience of trips to a forest to help them think about how a forest feels and smells, they will then be able to write descriptions from first-hand knowledge.

In Secondary, residential and trips are planned specifically to enhance learning in key areas such as the London trip. Pupils complete a module of work in English about travel writing and the trip supports and enhances their learning in this area.

We risk assess every child to make sure the trip is safe and if children miss an opportunity due to concerns about risks and safety, we then work on helping them to access the next trip.

What does 'personalised curriculum' mean for Silverdale students?

We assess students and then plan a programme of support from their baseline. This includes pastoral support as well as academic provision. Every child is unique and deserves a tailored package that works for them based on interests and building on their strengths.

Why is there a family room and a programme of events for families?

Silverdale is a community. We want to work with our families in partnership and offer support and opportunities for everyone to have better lives. We want our families to feel educated, informed and supported so they are empowered to manage adversity and move from endurance to resilience.

Why is equipment provided for all students?

Students should be focussing on learning opportunities not worrying about finding money for equipment, trips and activities.

Why are World of Work and Careers lessons included in the curriculum?

We want to give our students as much information, experience and support as possible to give them the best chances to be ready for work, training or further education. We start this work in Key Stage 1 to help pupils dream big but be realistically aspirational.

Why do staff meet students as they come in?

We value and accept our pupils and celebrate their difference. A simple way to make a good start to the day is to greet each other. This simple social ritual supports the development of social skills in preparation for working life. It also allows staff to 'check in' and make sure each student is well and feeling ready for the school day, any worries can be identified and addressed promptly from that first interaction.

Why are students allowed to sleep in school and choose clothing from school?

Some of our families do not have the financial resources to equip their children so school co-parent where it is appropriate. We value our partnership with parents and carers and see it as a mutually supportive relationship. We have worked hard to sensitively poverty proof our school so that energy and focus is always directing at learning not worrying.

If students are tired, hungry, worried or cold they are not 'ready to learn. We want them ready to learn and with positive mental health so they are able to tackle the challenges and make the most of the opportunities the day brings.

What kind of support will my child have in class for their academic learning?

Across the whole organisation a flexible approach is used to support children to feel safe and secure in school so that they are ready to learn. In the Commissioned Service the classes of 10 pupils are supported by one teacher and two support staff, in Primary there is one teacher and one support in each room. Additional staff support pastorally as needed.

In KS3 and 4, including the ASD department each class is supported by one teacher and one support staff. Some lessons are led by Instructors. Children who need additional support can be taught 1:1 or within a smaller group as needed. Some of the support staff are Higher Level Teaching assistants and lead small group sessions.

What will happen if they are struggling with their learning?

We understand that children may have experienced lots of barriers to their academic learning before they come to Silverdale. We will take time to get to know your child, build relationships and trust with them so that we can better understand what they need to be successful in their learning. We will assess your child's skills in reading, writing and maths and set this as a baseline to be measured from, throughout the rest of the academic year. Once we know what they can do and what they need help with we will deliver a curriculum designed to teach basic skills, make progress and hopefully close gaps in their learning as needed. If your child needs extra help in any areas of their academic learning we will tailor support for them, this could be an intervention of smaller group sessions, personalised activities or 1:1 work. We work with partnership services and agencies to ensure academic provision and needs are met.

What if they have missed learning in their previous school?

We will work with your child in all areas to help them achieve their best outcomes. If they have missed learning we will do our best to help them to catch up where this is possible and to make progress from their starting point once they become part of Silverdale school family.

How do teachers know what my child needs to learn?

Our academic learning offer follows the expectations of the National Curriculum in Early Years, KS1, KS2 and KS3 and programmes of study relating to exam boards in KS4. Teachers also incorporate the personal interests of students where possible to promote engagement and interest. Our aim is that every child leaving Silverdale will become a tax payer so we have a high emphasis on all students leaving with functional skills in English and Maths. The academic curriculum on offer builds on basic skills following the expected learning outcomes for each year group.

The baselines and ongoing assessments ensure staff understand and can evidence what students can do independently and then staff plan lessons for progression.

We follow learning links based on the Bloom's Taxonomy Model to support children with their learning and to plan lessons. We use the following in our school across all subjects:

Prepare, Know, Understand, Apply, Analyse, Evaluate and Create.

To give an example, Primary aged pupils at the start of their learning about what makes a good story could **prepare** by exploring different types of writing so that they can recognise and **know** the features of a story, they may compare this to the features of a letter or a poem or a shopping list so they can see differences, once they know what a story looks like they can then **understand** the elements needed to create a story. They may look at stories as good models, pick them apart and then **apply** those ideas to make their own story up. Once their basic skills are secure they can then **analyse** the work of other writers, this starts in KS2 and is consolidated in KS3 upwards. Pupils can then **evaluate** their work and the work of others and go on to **create** independently.

Why are children not taught the curriculum they should be for their age, at Silverdale?

Many children who come to Silverdale have missed important concepts of their academic learning because of barriers and previous experiences. We find out what they securely know and then deliver lessons to help them move forward and make good progress. Sometimes a child may have missed many months of learning and not completed a curriculum for a given year group.

For example a pupil in Year 5 may have missed large parts of the curriculum learning for Year 3 and Year 4. This means they may not have the basic skills from Year 3 and Year 4 to be able to understand the concepts taught within the Year 5 curriculum in reading, writing or maths. This is why baselines are so important for us to best understand how to help a child. We will deliver the appropriate year's curriculum to support where the child's learning is at, so a Year 5 child may be working within Year 5 in maths but working within Year 3 concepts for their reading and writing. Where a young person is not working within the age appropriate curriculum we will do our best to help them catch up where possible.

How do teachers know my child is making good progress?

We measure progress across the academic year by delivering assessment tests. We try to offer reassurance to the children and make it as comfortable as possible but the test has to be completed independently. Adults can support with reading in some Primary Maths tests. Older students can access additional time and a scribe, school will arrange that as needed. If you would like further information about how the tests are delivered please contact school. Within the Primary age range we currently use White Rose for Maths, Rising Stars for reading and Twinkl to assess understanding of sentence, punctuation and grammar. We also use Read Write Inc assessments to track progress in reading and writing skills. Progress in writing is assessed by teachers and moderated by the Local authority.

In KS3 we use White Rose and Rising Stars tests followed by AQA Functional Skills Papers for Reading and Writing and Pearson for Functional Maths.

Students in KS4 are assessed through Exam Board past papers and then sit the formal exam for that year.

The baseline is completed in September or when a child arrives at Silverdale and follow up assessments are delivered end of November/early December, March/April depending upon where holidays fall and July. In addition teachers track progress in their subject using assessment grids which ensures that if a child is falling behind we can promptly pick that up and put support in place.

How can I find out about my child's progress in their academic learning?

Parents and carers are welcome to contact school to arrange a meeting to discuss academic progress as needed, however, each term school offers an event where families are welcome to come in to look at books and discuss the learning of their child. Sometimes these events are also linked to celebration days and special events. Whilst the majority of phone calls made home are by Link Workers there is an option for families to talk to teachers as and when needed, on request.