

The Quality of Education: Foundation Pathways



St Christopher's:
A Church of England Academy

That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither-
whatever they do prospers.

Psalm 1:3

The Purpose of Study

In 2018-19, national figures show that 5.9% of people aged 18 – 64 with a learning disability were actively employed. In Lancashire the figure was 1.8%. Prospects for young people with a learning disability are staggeringly deficient. The overriding purpose of the Pathways programme is to provide an opportunity for students with additional learning needs to prosper by championing and supporting them on a journey into discovering skills and capabilities that may not have been previously recognised or explored.

Foundation Pathways is a full time, structured, challenging Study Programme that is individually tailored for every student to ensure maximum development and progression towards career goals. It combines the elements of:

1. Substantial qualification (BTEC Introductory Vocational Award at either Entry 2/3 or Level 1) to prepare for further study, supported internship or employment.
2. English and maths for those students who have not achieved a Grade 4 at GCSE (Edexcel Functional Skills English and Maths at Entry 1 – 3, Level 1 & 2 or GCSE study if appropriate).
3. Work experience in Year 13 to give the students the opportunity to develop their career choices and to apply their skills in real working conditions.
4. Personal and social development activities to develop students' character, broader skills, attitudes and confidence. (Courses include: Accessing the Community, Independent Living, Enrichment, Enterprise, BTEC Home Cooking Skills).

The course far exceeds the recommended 600 hours per year (approx. 1000 hours) to ensure full coverage and maximum opportunities for progression in all areas.

Complementing the School Purpose

Foundation Scripture

God shows no partiality towards those with exceptional academic talents; all are equal and deserve equal chances to flourish and prosper. The tree planted by the streams of water does not grow rapidly, but slowly and steadily; its strong foundations and established roots providing the nourishment required to yield fruit. Through love, patience, reassurance and guidance staff provide students with the necessary tools to bolster them against barriers and difficulties encountered during classes and beyond which extends comfort zones and drives academic and social progress.

Key Themes

Securing Wisdom and Understanding

Learning how to Live Well Together

Knowing what it is to be fully alive

Students arrive on the course with various needs, difficulties and issues. These can sometimes be in direct opposition to each other; for example, one student may need to move constantly or have great difficulty not shouting out and another may have sensory processing issues which requires total silence. These students have to learn how to 'cope' with each other in the classroom. By encouraging open, honest conversations students can often, with support, come to an agreed compromise on how to move forward and learn to live together. This leads to an increased wisdom and understanding of both their own and others' needs and provides practical support on how to self-manage difficulties more effectively in everyday situations.

An engaging programme of activities with numerous teaching and assessment methods closes gaps and helps students to recognise and explore prospective career paths. They begin to appreciate their potential to make a valued, valid contribution to their families and communities, whether through paid or voluntary employment opportunities. Progress files containing qualification certificates gained, overwhelmingly positive references from employers, excellent examples of completed work and photographs of the students 'in action' demonstrates how they are beginning to recognise what it means to be fully alive.

Christian Virtues

Students engage in form time worship tutorials where discussion and self-expression are actively encouraged. Christian virtues are explored alongside those of other beliefs; discussion 'rules' are devised by students and then displayed to act as a reminder of the need for empathy, self-control and respect. Kindness towards others is demonstrated and modelled by and between staff and students at all times.

Students complete enterprise activities and organise events (MacMillan Coffee Morning, for example) where money is raised for a charity of their choosing. Some students also choose to participate in the sixth form enrichment Charity Committee with those from the A level cohort where events and fun activities are organised to raise money for local groups and causes.

Achieving a greater degree of independence is a frightening prospect for many Pathways students as they may have had 1:1 support during their school careers. A high degree of trust between students and staff is critical to facilitating the high levels of academic and social progress expected; encouragement and reassurance from staff bolsters the students and gives them the courage to try new, challenging learning experiences.

Curriculum Aims

Provide opportunities for all students to learn and achieve

By providing courses and teaching support that is tailored to their academic levels and individual needs, students learn and achieve qualifications that will support them in their preparedness for further study or employment.

Promote the moral, cultural, mental and physical development of all students

Part of the programme of personal and social development includes a series of lessons developed by the British Army from the DfE Character Education Framework Guidance (Nov 19) on 'Respect, Resilience, Integrity, Courage and Compassion'. These sessions focus on promoting positive moral attributes and virtues through interactive, engaging, age appropriate activities.

Prepare students for the opportunities and responsibilities of adult life

On entry to the programme, all students are audited using the Preparation for Adulthood Outcomes toolkit which focusses on the skills necessary for adult life. During 1:1 weekly tutorials with their keyworker, students will track where they are currently, where they want to be and what they need to be able to do to get there. Termly targets based on individual outcomes are developed in conjunction with the student which may focus on personal care, independent travel, meal preparation, sleep or organisational ability. Students have their own area of the 'board' in their form room where 'speech bubbles' are written detailing achievements, successes and positive steps towards achieving their personal targets.

BTEC Pre-Introductory / Introductory Vocational Studies (12 hours per fortnight)

After gleaning information from a student's previous school, qualifications gained, communicating with parents and during interviews with the student themselves, students are placed into a vocational group appropriate for their academic level. This can be either Entry 2, 3 or Level 1. The BTEC qualification provides the opportunity to identify learning goals and develop research and employability skills through the completion of two mandatory units along with completion of units dedicated to specific vocational sectors.

The portfolio-based approach to assessment supports the development of communication skills such as extended writing and drafting, critical skills of analysis, teamworking, working from a prescribed brief, working to deadlines, presenting information effectively, accurately completing tasks and processes and study skills such as research and time management.

Reformed (2019) Functional Skills English & Maths (6 hours each per fortnight)

The reformed functional skills qualifications provide a foundation for progression into employment or further technical education and develop skills for everyday life. There is now a much greater emphasis on employment and educational progression within these qualifications, which are accredited from Entry Level 1 to Level 2. For those students for whom GCSE study is deemed not appropriate, functional English and maths is delivered in small, intensively supported, ability streamed groups and final exams can be paper-based or online.

On entry students complete initial diagnostic assessments in both English and maths which provide information on level of academic ability, strengths and areas for improvement.

Functional English (Entry 1, 2, 3, Level 1, 2)

Functional English gives students the opportunity to demonstrate their ability at an appropriate level to read, write, speak, listen and communicate in English. The curriculum is planned in such a way so that students can apply these skills to a range of purposes in a workplace and in other real-life situations.

Entry Level 1 – 3 qualifications give students the opportunity to:

- listen, understand and respond to verbal communication in a range of familiar contexts;
- acquire an understanding of everyday words and their uses and effects and apply this understanding in different contexts;
- read with accuracy straightforward texts encountered in everyday life and work, and develop confidence to read more widely;
- write straightforward texts and documents with clarity and effectiveness and demonstrate a sound grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Level 1 and 2 qualifications given students the opportunity to:

- listen, understand and make relevant contributions to discussions with others in a range of contexts;
- apply their understanding of language to adapt delivery and content to suit audience and purpose;
- read a range of different text types confidently and fluently, applying their knowledge and understanding of texts to their own writing;
- write texts of varying complexity, with accuracy, effectiveness and correct spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Edexcel Functional Maths (Entry 1,2,3, Level 1, 2)

Edexcel Functional Maths qualifications give students the opportunity to demonstrate a sound grasp of the underpinning skills and basics of mathematical problem-solving skills appropriate to the level, and the ability to apply mathematical thinking to solve problems in familiar, real-life situations. Exams consist of non-calculator and calculator assessments of various lengths and can be paper based or online.

Students at Entry Level work towards being confident in their use of fundamental mathematical knowledge and skills and demonstrate this by applying their knowledge and skills to solve simple mathematical problems or carry out simple tasks.

At Levels 1 and 2 students demonstrate their ability in mathematical skills and their ability to apply these, through appropriate reasoning and decision making, to solve realistic problems of increasing complexity. They will also be introduced to new areas of life and work so that they are exposed to concepts and problems which, while perhaps not of immediate concern, may be of value in later life. They also develop an appreciation of the role played by mathematics in the world of work and in life generally.

For those students that have achieved a Grade 4 in English or maths, the flexibility of the timetable allows for alternative, accredited courses to be completed. Currently, two students on the programme have achieved their GCSE Maths so they, with the support of a TA, are completing Coding and Web Design courses offered by the Institute of Coding in collaboration with the University of Leeds. These will underpin their present knowledge and skills and better prepare them for the IT based programmes they wish to complete at FE college. One student that held no previous English qualifications but showed a particular aptitude for the subject joined GCSE classes in main school and despite difficulties with the COVID situation achieved a Grade 5.

Complementing the School Purpose

Other accredited courses completed by all students:

BTEC Level 1 and Level 2 Home Cooking Skills (3 hours per week)

BTEC Level 1 Planning and Participating in Work Experience (3 hours per week)

BTEC Entry 3 / Level 1 Performing Arts (3 hours per fortnight)

These courses assist in the academic and social progression of students and lead to improved outcomes for all, particularly in the areas of independence, social skills, working with others and speaking, listening and communication.

Complementing the School Provision

Teaching Approaches

Teaching approaches within Pathways are flexible, adaptable and inclusive by design. Prior to any teaching taking place, teachers are armed with information on specific student needs through the EHC plan provision requirements, previous qualifications achieved, transition information gathered from past teachers or the school SENCO and taster session attendance.

Learning outcomes are presented in a multi-sensory manner with differentiated tasks, visual aids or scaffolding resources provided as required. Sensory considerations are taken where necessary and students are given the time they need to formulate written or verbal responses. Careful consideration is given to how information and instructions are presented in order to prevent cognitive overload and increase anxiety, which has often been a barrier to learning in the past for many of our students. Modelling or the demonstration of both academic and practical tasks as well as behaviour expectations allow for greater understanding, and role plays within a 'safe space' provide practice opportunities for real-life scenarios. Close reading strategies and active listening are taught explicitly throughout the curriculum to improve comprehension and ability to follow increasingly complex instructions. Metacognitive approaches are encouraged to facilitate the recognition of learning style, needs and the transferability of newly acquired skills and knowledge to other areas of the curriculum and 'real-life'.

Individual feedback against specific learning criteria is provided for all students to progress and the small teaching groups allow this to happen regularly in both verbal and written format.

Trips, Visits and Enrichment Opportunities

Along with the personal development opportunities within the Pathways timetable, students are also encouraged to participate in sixth form enrichment activities to develop wider skills, increase their social circles and learn to communicate with peers outside their immediate friendship groups. Students are currently part of various groups, including Charity Committee, Craft Club, Photography Club (lunchtime) and Sport and Recreation.

Trips, visits and residential are a valuable component of the Pathways curriculum as they promote independence and increase self-esteem and confidence. Past trips have included visiting Harry Potter Studios, YHA Mankinholes and Bradford Film Museum, Kielder Forest (Calvert Trust) 3 day residential and smaller trips such as visits to local supermarkets and shops to buy ingredients or supplies for enterprise activities.

Transition: In and Out


Students are often recommended for the Pathways programme by the SENCO at their school or parents discover it through word of mouth. They, along with their parents or TA, are given the opportunity to visit the sixth form and see classes 'in action'. If a student decides to apply and it is decided that the programme is appropriate for them, they will participate in a number of taster sessions that are offered after they have left school, where discreet testing and observations take place. As much information as possible is gathered from the student, their parent or carers, school staff and EHC plans to inform future curriculum planning. Regular parent group meetings and parents' evenings provide the opportunity to discuss any concerns, issues and to give or receive feedback regarding student progress.



On transition out of the programme Year 13 students are given careers advice, guidance and information about opportunities available to them locally in their weekly 'Transitions' session. Parents or carers are given local college open evenings and events dates and times and they can discuss any concerns or issues at a dedicated parent group meeting that is held in the autumn term of Year 13. Through extensive conversations, supported taster visits and providing up to date information through the annual review process, students have the confidence, skills and abilities to take the next advancing step towards their chosen careers.

Ad Gloriam Dei

To the Glory of God



 **Queens Road West**
Accrington
Lancashire
BB5 4AY

 **01254 232 992**
 **01254 355 215**

 www.st-christophers.org

