

Sensory Curriculum at Ravenscliffe High School

Purpose of this Document	This document has been written in order to provide Sensory Pathway Curriculum information to all key stakeholders, including teaching staff, school governors, parents and other interested parties. Ravenscliffe identifies sensory learners as having complex learning needs; in addition to severe cognitive impairment they have other difficulties such as physical disabilities, sensory impairment, medical conditions and mental health issues which impacts their ability to learn (Male, 2015, p.10). The impact of the multiplicity of these conditions results in them working at very early levels (Welsh Assembly Government, 2006, p.51), requiring hands-on multi-sensory learning opportunities presented in accessible ways. They have been dis-applied from the national curriculum and will follow Ravenscliffe Flourishing Sensory Curriculum The document seeks to address the individual learning needs of our young people and sets out a framework within which teaching staff can operate and provides guidance on planning, teaching and assessment. It outlines the following: • The Intent – The purpose of the Sensory Curriculum at Ravenscliffe. • The Implementation – How we meet this purpose through the delivery of a broad, balanced and robust Sensory Curriculum • The Impact – Our intended outcomes for each learner in the Sensory Pathway and how we assess, evaluate and monitor these over time. This document also contains key information about Leadership, Cross Curricular Opportunities, Extra Curricular Opportunities and links to other relevant documentation
Intent	Intent Statement The Sensory Curriculum is underpinned with the philosophy of how to live a ‘Good Life’ from Martha Nussbaum’s capabilities approach alongside pedagogy’s appropriate to the teaching of people at early cognitive levels. The policy seeks to address the individual learning needs of our young people and sets out a framework within which teaching staff can operate and provides guidance on planning, teaching and assessment. <i>“Education requires us to devote great efforts to trying to get people on the inside of and able to communicate within the many modes of discourse that we need in order to be able to cope with and make sense of the world, Aspin, 1982, p.121.”</i> ...in other words to Flourish. Aspin declares this is achievable through autonomy. Thus, putting the person to the forefront within education rather than knowledge or curriculum. Autonomy is a journey, rather than a destination, and an appropriate curriculum makes this journey successful and enjoyable. As a school we aim for the flourishing of all in our community, however, our sensory learners, particularly, require us to get it right for them to flourish in the here and now. The Capabilities Approach • In 2000 Feminist Philosopher Martha Nussbaum defined the capabilities approach. • She identified 10 central human functional capabilities needed for flourishing.



Life

Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length.



Bodily health

Being able to have good health, including reproductive health.



Bodily integrity

Being able to move freely from place to place.



Senses, imagination and thought

Being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason.



Emotions

Being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves.



Practical reason

Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life.



Affiliation

Being able to live with and towards others, to recognise and show concern for other human beings; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others.



Other species

Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants and the world of nature.



Play

Being able to laugh, to play and to enjoy recreational activities.



Control

Having control over one's political and material environment.

- Each of these capabilities is of equal importance and it is not possible to satisfy the need for one of them by giving people a larger amount of another (2000, p.233).
- It is a recognised approach with people with disabilities in society (Parry Hughes et al., 2018, p.32).
- Please see the matrix in any topic overview which demonstrates how Ravenscliffe intends to apply each of Nussabaum's capability aspects to the provision for sensory learners.
- It is through the student's engagement with Nussabaum's 10 capabilities that supports their flourishing.

Outcomes and Next Steps

- Students practice autonomy by being offered personalised learning opportunities towards their next steps and outcomes.
- Each student has bespoke outcomes in all the areas decided by families, educators and wider professionals at their EHC review meetings. These are shared with any respite or hospice provision where students attend.
- Personalised next-steps support each student in working towards and ultimately achieving their outcomes which are written by the Sensory Teachers and linked with their ongoing Routes for Learning assessment.

Implementation	Implementation Statement
	For Sensory learners the breadth and balance of the curriculum is addressed through personalised timetables. This enables them to work towards their outcomes and next steps alongside the 10 elements of the capabilities approach. Sensory learners spend about 90% of their timetable in Sensory Lessons and experience mixed ability lessons in wheelchair dancing (if a wheelchair user), character education and assembly. In addition the following may be timetabled in: • Use of postural equipment and mobility aids • Physiotherapy, occupational exercises and sensory diets • A weekly swim/hydrotherapy slot • Rebound Therapy • Sherborne Movement Sherborne Developmental Movement is an approach to teaching and working with movement that is both accessible, especially by people with minimal movement experience, and yet relevant at a very sophisticated level, particularly to people with a background in P.E or dance. The approach to teaching movement is firmly rooted in both observation of how children play in the normal course of their development and then grounding these observations in the philosophy and theory of Laban's movement analysis. It has two key objectives; awareness of self and awareness of others. (Sherborne movement.org) Opportunities for socialising with peers including attending Spring Hall The personalised timetabling also has to take into account any gastro-enteral feeding and meeting student's personal care needs which is recognised as taking a significant amount of time to ensure they are comfortable and able to learn. Learning continues at these times as learners are supported through objects of reference/on-the-body-signing and keywords/signs to anticipate, and where possible, lead these experiences. Learners are encouraged to be interdependent with the people supporting them. Meeting the needs of all learners within the Sensory Curriculum Sensory learners are a heterogeneous group and may have a range of difficulties and impairments, are very likely to use a wheelchair and other mobility aids, have sensory impairment(s) and medical conditions including epilepsy, brittle bones, scoliosis and dysphagia. It is recognised that as learners grow and experience puberty that conditions may exacerbate. Learners may have recognised life-limiting conditions and/or receive palliative or hospice care. The impact of an individual's impairments may affect the rate of a learner's progress and their lateral learning as well as linear is recognised and celebrated. Learners' progress are tracked using the Routes for Learning for learning Assessment Tool designed by the Welsh Assembly Government. The assessment feeds into choosing appropriate outcomes and Next Steps at their EHC meetings. Students work on their next Steps towards their EHC outcomes each lesson and often at lunch and personal care times. Using this personal approach, teachers can devise activities in all areas of the capabilities approach, which are planned specifically at the appropriate level of need and ability for all learners, which also allow learning outcomes, recording and assessment to be directly linked to learning objectives. Appropriate pedagogies, interventions and resources are used by the curriculum deliverers as identified in the Sensory Curriculum Topic Plans and Lesson Planning. The Sensory Curriculum uses a thematic approach to ensure learners have broad and rich learning experiences throughout their Ravenscliffe career. The topics will cover a

	variety of real life, imaginary and cultural themes tying in with local, national and international events: The Sensory Google Doc completed by all curriculum deliverers is used to ensure that students are working towards all their outcomes. Teachers indicate in their planning which of the 10 elements in Nussbaum's capabilities approach they are covering within their lessons – this is shown in the topic planning overview document. Select Sensory students participate annually in the Yorkshire Association for Music for Special Educational Needs (YAMSEN) Special Music Days with students from different special schools in West Yorkshire When in KS5 students participate in the John Muir Award which encourages connection with, enjoyment of and care for wild places. This involves travelling out of school and into wild places in the community e.g. Cromwell Bottom in order to work towards the nationally recognised award. They will also be offered a place on the outwards-bounds residential. Additionally, all students participate in activities as part of the school community e.g. Children in Need, World Book Day, 6th Form Prom etc.					
	Links to (list in each column)					
	Reading Sensory Curriculum is non-subject specific as learners are working at pre/emerging symbolic levels	Maths Sensory Curriculum is non-subject specific as learners are working at pre/emerging symbolic levels	British Values British Values underpin the school's recognition of behaviour and achievement. Sensory has adapted the categorisation to acknowledge Sensory Learner's areas of Achievement – Appendix A	Character Education The Flourishing Curriculum intends learners to flourish as individuals regardless of their abilities and challenges. This includes building resilience and advocating for self.	ICT Learners have access to adapted technology and weekly contact with the AAC specialist to support them to access ICT such as voice output communication aids (VOCCAs) and environmental controls.	SMSC Wide variety of topics enables exposure to national and international events.
Impact	Impact Statement As a result of the Sensory Curriculum, Sensory Learners should be flourishing in school. This would not only be evidenced and assessed by teachers/deliverers but observable in their engagement with the curriculum. Work is ongoing to develop engagement indicators so that this can be evidence and progress tracked. Assessment, Recording and Reporting of Pupil Progress At RHS, we have a good knowledge of the strengths and areas for development of individual learners. From this, accurate judgements can be discerned to ensure targets are sufficiently challenging to meet staff's high expectations through: - Continuous Teacher assessment based the Routes for Learning Assessment Materials					

	- The monitoring and evaluation of EHCP Outcomes with evidence provided by all sensory curriculum deliverers and identified teachers completing termly RPS grading on Onwards and Upwards In addition, summative information can be found through: - Their Communication Profile - The Annual Review of a learner Education, Health & Care Plan. - Through the annual End of Year Report. Additional supporting comments can be gathered through: - Regular Parents' Evenings. - Comments and input from parents and other professionals. These contribute to supporting the staff team to fully monitor, evaluate and record pupil's progress. Sensory students mostly leave Ravenscliffe to attend Social Care settings such as Next Step. School work alongside the new setting over a prolonged time to support the transition, producing and sharing documentation such as Moving and Handling Plans, Personal Profiles, AAC and Communication Passports.
Leadership and Review	Julia Barnes is the Sensory Manager. There are currently 3 Core Groups run by a teacher and 2 HLTAs. Other specialists e.g, Music, AAC, swimming teachers deliver their specialist area. The PCA team meet personal care needs and support positioning. The termly topics are chosen annually and planned by all the deliverers. In the Summer Term the strengths and weaknesses of the timetable and curriculum are reviewed in preparation for the next academic year. Staff have continual professional development once a week with a few subject specialist trainings a year. In addition to statutory training staff working in the Sensory Pathway should receive specialist medical training (e.g. enteral feeding and suctioning) alongside AAC, vision loss and blindness, hand-under-hand prompting, whole body communication approach and Intensive Interaction. Teachers HLTAs attend termly Sensory Twilight sessions. Alongside the termly lesson observations (SLT/Peer/OFSTED-Style) there is a drop-in/open door policy within sensory where people can request support.
Linked documents	This document should be read in conjunction with the whole school curriculum and assessment policy. The Sensory Curriculum Development Plan supports the Intent, Implementation and Impact of the Sensory Curriculum into the future. More information about the John Muir award can be found here: https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/award

Nurture, Believe, Achieve, Succeed

Example Topic Overview

Seaside Topic Overview

Summer 2026

- The traditional seaside holiday/day out started in the 18th Century and Brits tend to feel nostalgic about it despite the unpredictable weather.
- Seaside towns are more than tourist destinations they are often steeped in fishing traditions, art scenes and hubs for conservation.
- The tactile qualities of sand and water create environments for play and curiosity.

Key Concepts:

- Wet and dry
- Sand and water play
- Collecting and grouping items together
- Ecosystems around or in the sea.

Lessons – planned by deliverer and planning shared for each core group to experience

- **Hall** – seaside conservation, exploring environments where sea creatures live and beachcombing.
- **Classroom** – multisensory exploration of the Storm Whale story including washing whales
- **Large Sensory Room** – An immersive storytelling experience exploring a trip to the seaside
- **Small Sensory (Cats Only)** – vision/tactile session exploring resources found at the seaside.
- **Craft** – creating seascape weavings and knitting/ reclaimed bunting / preparing T-shirts for YAMSEN
- **Sensology/Messy Food Play** – Picnic preparations
- **AAC** – seaside sensory story with an element of crafting
- **Music** – exploring the sounds of the sea, engaging with different tempos, rhythm and pitch and participating in call and response.
- **Outdoor Exploration (Biscuits Only)** – sand and water play
- **What's in the Box** – discovering differing items related to the seaside and crafting with seaside materials
- **Life Skills (Biscuits Only)** – using a washing machine/tumble dryer, Henry Hoover and cleaning mirrors/windows
- **Wheelchair Dancing** – maypole dancing and Disco Morris

Story Massage:

- 'Three Little Birds, Bob Marley and the Whallers - Seaside Conservation (hall)
- 'The Food Train' poem by Julia Donaldson - craft
- 'A Sailor Went to Sea' – Large Sensory Room
- 'Orninoco Flow' by Enya – The Storm Whale

Each of the ten areas required for flourishing can be linked to the topic giving the students across the timetable experiences connected to Superheroes and People Who Help Us.

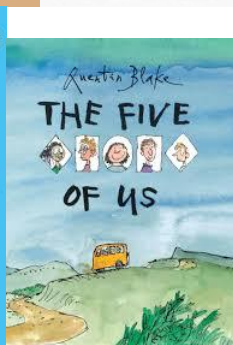
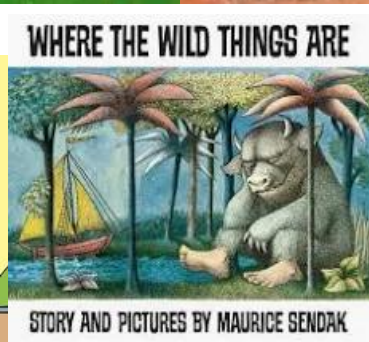
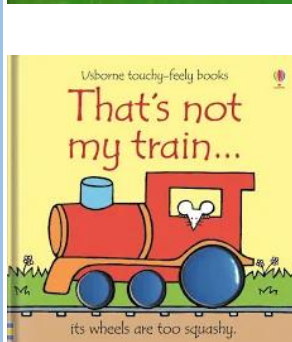
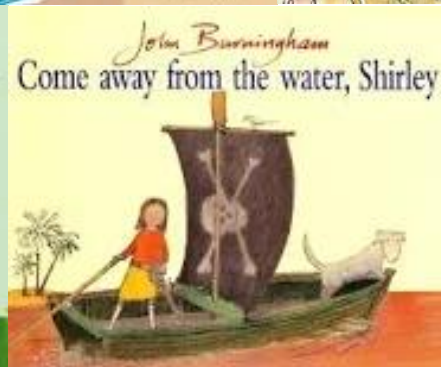
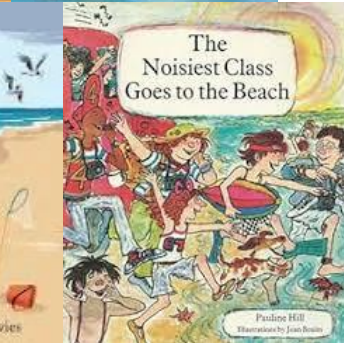
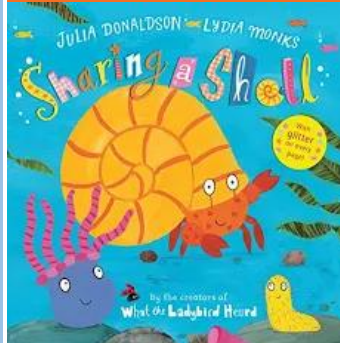
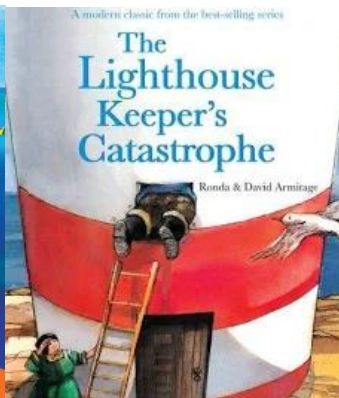
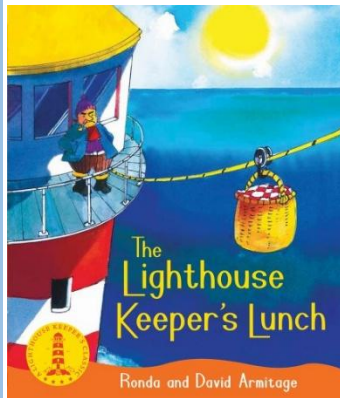
Below are suggested ideas to link the topic to each area of flourishing from Nussbaum's capabilities approach:

Nussbaum's Capabilities Needed for Flourishing	Practical learning activities
--	-------------------------------

1.life 2.bodily health	Movement, physiotherapy, hydrotherapy, rebound therapy, postural equipment, personal and intimate care, nutrition, medication – advised and supported by the relevant professionals.
3. bodily integrity *	Self-feeding: messy food play, snacks, drinks, tasters, sensology, Exploring Food traditionally taken on trips to the seaside. Body awareness: locating/naming/experiencing different sensations on different parts of the body. Dancing and feeling the movement & stretch of our bodies. Discovering tension in our bodies and exploring ways to release tension. Sherborne Movement Rehearsing wearing clothes for different weather or situations (Biscuits to learn to dress in and tolerate wearing waterproof trousers) Self-care: hair brushing, face washing, make up/facial, products, awareness of bodily needs. Self-recognition – self in mirror, self in photographs/video footage, recognising differences to appearance. Recognising personal identifiers and scents. Learning embedded in routines, e.g Story Massage, with a focus on choosing to take part and how. Topic Story Massages to be prepared alongside the Story Massages used for the days of the week.
4. senses, imagination and thought	Multi-Sensory approach (objects, sound, movement, smells, touch, taste) to all activities. Stories, poems, songs, drama. – all will access ‘The Storm Whale’, multisensory stories, Julia Donaldson’s poem ‘Food Train’, call and response rhythms in AAC. Rhythmic and tactile exploration of ‘That’s not my Train’. Selection of topic related books in Rm10. Creativity, arts and craft – weaving, use of a sewing machine, creating T-shirts to celebrate 200 years of the railway and reclaimed bunting to use on celebratory occasions in school Use of repetition for students working at early levels repetition is key so reintroduce items in the same ways over multiple lessons so students can form memories around them and then demonstrate preferences/anticipation/curiosity. Dark Room/VI sessions – vision/tactile session exploring resources found at the seaside. Music sessions - exploring the sounds of the sea, engaging with different tempos, rhythm and pitch and participating in call and response.
5. emotions	Friendship – recognising others, working together, knowing and understanding each other’s favourite things, building individual responses to each other. Model and acknowledge of emotions: • In the moment (respond and be with student in their emotion) • Explore emotions through real life situations • Stories with emotions • Role play emotions including; sad, happy, hilarity, worry, scared, jealousy, love, frustration, pain/discomfort, upset, distress, excitement, joy, calm... Topic focus with emotional links – joy and anticipation when recreating trips to the seaside. Anticipation with exploring familiar resources of sand, water, ooblek and topic objects within them such as buckets, sands, spades etc.
6. practical reason	Routines: with keywords e.g. last time, first, then, later, ready steady go, stop, go, Countdown to finishing activity ‘....3,2,1 finishing’. Multi-sensory cues to routine activities. Cause and Effect learning: anticipation, control and affect over environment, affect over others AAC call-and response through AAC

	Object permanence games: hiding objects in plain view, under things, different room, keeping objects in a consistent place (support students to make requests for items looking/pointing/gesturing). Object permanence – locating items in materials related to the seaside, considering floating and sinking and the action of gravity on water. Joint attention: • passing objects, sharing stories with cues • Space to fully explore object/story/action • Laughing together • Awe together – shared wow moments Sharing experiences with others including splashing
7. Affiliation	Belonging: as part of the school community, peer group, pastoral group and lessons. Part of the wider community locally and nationally. Acknowledgement of student achievement through the behaviour points system, personal developments certificate and acknowledgement of participating through Facebook posts. Intensive interaction: 1:1 no object, 1:1 with two paired objects (copy how student uses object), 1:1 shared object – student lead. ‘speed dating’ swapping staff on rotation Participating in wheelchair dancing in sports day and possibly Summer Sounds. Visit to YAMSEN very special music days. Achievement celebrations: shared video, sounds and photos of achievement in assemblies and pastoral/lesson groups. Wheelchair Dancing: dancing with others, responding to pusher, partner, other dancers, high-fives, collaborative writing of dances.
8. other species	Access to nature: seasons, weather, animals, insects, birds, plants, horticulture The Storm Whale – story considering a Whale’s needs. Exploring different ecosystems in rock pools, beaches and the need to conserve them.
9.play	Playfulness: sharing objects, space, excitement building, jokes, toys, laughter, group play, solo play, choice and exploring play. playful sabotage: knocking down students’ towers, finding objects in unusual places, hiding & seeking Messy play with sand, water and picnic food. Opportunity for Biscuits to use the emergent outdoor play area.
10.control over one’s environment	Functional communication: like/dislike/more/no-more (get object/get rid of object) AAC controlling recreated seaside environments including wind, waves etc. Cause and effect over environment: on/off: lights, vibration, movement, sounds, switch toys, soundbeam, people, Stop and go,. Musically: controlling musical instruments, switches, soundbeam, voice, words, actions to make music. Providing roles: pass on messages, story cues, purposeful interaction: turn music off/on for group, controlling tools e.g whisks/paper shredders.

The following texts are available in Room10.



Appendix A – Ravenscliffe’s Adapted British Values and Recognition of Sensory Achievement.

British value	Ravenscliffe’s Interpretation	Sensory Learner’s Behaviour
Democracy	‘Working Together’	Communication Turn-Taking Sharing
The Rule of Law	‘Keeping Safe’	Interdependance Co-operation, co-active exploration Physical skills e.g. standing, stepping, reaching
Individual Liberty	‘Ready for Learning’	Focus Vision/hearing/Sensory Skills Cognitive skills e.g. problem solving
Respect	‘Mutual Respect & Tolerance’	Sense of Community and world Involvement in Charity Events Out of School Achievements