

TRANSCRIPT: REACh: Delivering a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum

Jen Angelini, Catherine Bernie, Jackie Harris

Jen Angelini: Within the term plans we try and arrange a breadth of activities that cover all the different areas of the curriculum and we would encourage the pupils, as much as we can, to be involved in those activities in their own way and using their own interests.

Catherine Bernie: We divide the day into different parts. So, for example, the first session in the morning was based on literacy, the following session will be more sensory-motor or creative activity and then, in the afternoon, we had a numeracy session.

We chose the activities we were doing this morning because the children are quite difficult to engage in activities that they don't see as having any meaning, and because the children are all developmentally quite low, we need to find something that's sensory-motor usually, but that could be linked into curriculum as well, hence autumn and leaves, and colour's our topic this term.

When the child reaches Level 4 of the *Affective Communication Skills Checklist*, we work much more on peer relationships. It's a thread throughout, but that's where the child's usually ready to take on board someone else's point of view, which again can often be difficult for children with autistic spectrum disorders. We're still looking for the activities to start from the child's interests and also to pursue their leads within that but it becomes very much more the national curriculum delivered through a different way, rather than a completely different curriculum.

So, for example, if we were looking at literacy in key stage 3 then, typically, you might be looking at things like the format of the story, whether it's a legend or a myth, the structure of the story, the beginnings, the middle, the ends, and the sentence construction. To do that using the REACh style, we'd start by looking at something completely different within the story, like the emotional content of it the motives for the characters to do what they did. So they have to begin to take on somebody else's point of view which, again, is something children with autism typically find difficult.

Jackie Harris: It's around a theme of grannies because you want to get them thinking, 'How would that make me feel?' If you can get somebody feeling it internally, then they're able to draw on that and to use that skill and then to generalise it and then they can begin to learn the effect that they have on other people, not just their peers and their adults, but in the wider community. So sometimes it's quite hard. Sometimes they genuinely are quite upset about something and we just acknowledge that and work through it, rather than try to hide it or make it all alright, because you can't make everything alright, that's not reality. It's not the real world.

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