



The Wagman research:
A study into the collaborative approach at
Frederick Hugh House

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Frederick Hugh House is an independent special school established in January 2010. Its aim is to provide the best possible school environment in which children with complex learning difficulties and/or physical difficulties can be taught a specially adapted broad-based curriculum while receiving the highest standards of individualised professional therapeutic support. Frederick Hugh House is governed and guided in all aspects of its work by its pupils' needs.

Meeting the specific educational and therapeutic needs of each individual child and facilitating personal development and growth are central to the ethos and vision of Frederick Hugh House. It is recognised that teaching and therapy, together with a supportive and caring school environment are integral to unlocking the potential of each child. Frederick Hugh House aims to extend the boundaries of what is considered possible in special needs education provision. It is committed to an approach that uses the best available means in terms of material resources, organisation and management, curriculum, teaching and applied therapy to stimulate and support the learning and development of each of its pupils. The determination to do what is best for each child is paramount.

The central tenet of the Frederick Hugh House approach to special needs education is based around using a specially developed whole-school multi-disciplinary multi-sensory fully integrated curriculum in which all aspects of teaching, learning and therapy are regarded as complementary and mutually supportive. Frederick Hugh House embodies the values and methods of this coordinated and integrated approach. Progress in any area facilitates further progress in other areas. Skills are taught as they are learned; building on existing knowledge and providing opportunities for further development.

In order to maximise the effectiveness of educational and therapeutic programmes, the teaching staff and full-time therapists work together as a fully integrated team which is attentive and responsive to each pupil's particular needs and challenges. This approach extends across professional disciplines and orthodoxies. Teaching and applied therapy are regarded as complementary and fundamentally interrelated

aspects of facilitating a child's progress. Consequently, therapists not only devise and implement specialist therapeutic programmes, but are also available to provide immediate expert and individualised assistance in the classroom for any child experiencing difficulties with particular aspects of a task. Therapists may also take the lead role in certain activities in which their professional expertise makes them the most appropriately qualified member of the staff team. Similarly, teaching staff use information and insights from the therapists to inform the planning and delivery of their lessons.

Teaching staff and therapists are provided with the time and opportunity to work with each child over an extended period. This has allowed productive relationships of trust to develop, and has enabled a more finely detailed knowledge of each child's challenges and progress to be observed, recorded and monitored. Staff are encouraged to share insights and understanding which may then be used to inform further interventions and programmes. All staff view every occasion in the school day, not just formal lessons or therapy sessions, as opportunities to initiate, consolidate or extend cross-curricular, multi-disciplinary and multi-sensory learning. This allows learning to be reinforced in a range of contexts and helps the children to integrate newly learned skills into their everyday routines, both at school and in other situations. This is central to the child-centred, coherent and structured approach of the whole school in all aspects of its work.

Parents and carers are actively encouraged to become closely involved in the programmes devised for their children. They are regarded as having an important role to play in supporting the work of the teaching staff and therapists through providing important observations of their child's progress away from the specialised context of the school, and through supporting and reinforcing work done at the school. Parents are invited into the classroom and therapy sessions so that they may expand their understanding of the overall approach of the school, and in particular how this is applied to the special needs of their child. Through this they may gain a fuller appreciation of the nuances of any work undertaken with their child. This understanding of how staff at Frederick Hugh House apply strategies and techniques helps to develop a consistency of approach towards the child's learning, development and behaviour within the school and in other settings. In order for

progress to be consolidated and promoted, it is important that parents and carers should regard their child's education as not just something that happens at school, but as a 24 hour, life-long experience.

It is emphasised that the school and parents need to engage openly and share information and insights. The three-weekly Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings with each child's parents allow progress to be discussed and evaluated. Parents are given an opportunity to voice their opinions and provide meaningful input into the school's work with their child. The meetings also enable parents to understand the value of detailed work on specific learning objectives in the broader context of the child's overall development. Frederick Hugh House is fully committed to supporting its pupils and their families, especially when any particular difficulties are being experienced. Open dialogue with parents makes it possible for the school and families to work in partnership to promote the learning and development that can unlock each child's potential.

The approach to teaching at Frederick Hugh House is based around its specially adapted curriculum. This has been designed to allow child-centred teaching and learning to take place within the framework of a broad-based education programme that promotes all aspects of each child's development. It has allowed standard practices of differentiation within the classroom to be extended to a fully individuated approach in which all aspects of the curriculum are adapted to the needs and aptitude of each individual child. The specially selected facilities in the classrooms and other learning spaces further promote the acquisition of sensory, behavioural, linguistic, physical, cognitive and occupational skills through work in classes and smaller groups, while also enabling focused individual interventions to occur within the class context. The professional skills and cooperative approach of all staff are key elements in enabling these objectives to be realised.

Education is aimed at providing learning for life through developing skills which can be used outside the highly contextualised environment of the classroom or therapy session. It is important that learning should be manifest in the broader contexts of

the whole school, the child's home life and the wider community.

Frederick Hugh House is showing a record of outstanding success in its work. This can be seen in objective measures of pupil performance, but is also evidenced by the observations of teachers and therapists, and by reports from parents and carers. The main difference between the approach to special needs education at Frederick Hugh House and that adopted in many other institutions is in the level of attention to detail and the thoroughness with which the school's fully integrated, cohesive and whole school approach to meeting the needs of its pupils is implemented in all aspects of its operation.

In the most recent inspection report, conducted by the Independent Schools Inspectorate on behalf of Ofsted in June/July 2014, Frederick Hugh House was adjudged to be excellent (the highest grade) in each of the inspection criteria;

- the quality of pupils' achievements and learning;
- the contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provisions (including community links of benefit to the pupils);
- the contribution of teaching;
- the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils;
- the contribution of arrangements for pastoral care;
- the contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety;
- the quality of governance;
- the quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians.

The research for this paper is based on a review of documents detailing the work of Frederick Hugh House, including those in the public domain such as inspection reports and school policies, and internal documents relating to the operating practices of the school. These data have been supported by written submissions from teaching and therapeutic staff, and from the school's founder. In addition, extended interviews were conducted with the Headteacher and a member of the Board of Trustees. A review of literature relating to national standards and accepted best practice regarding Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision

for children with learning and/or physical disabilities has made it possible to evaluate the work of Frederick Hugh in the context of more orthodox approaches.

This paper seeks to detail the collaborative approach taken by Frederick Hugh House. It is intended to show how the school's distinct approach to SEND provision is leading to remarkable progress by its pupils, and is setting new standards for what can and should be achieved by specialist schools.

1. INTRODUCTION

Frederick Hugh House is an independent special day school which opened in January 2010. It works with a small age-related cohort of children who have diverse special needs and/or disabilities and present complex behavioural and learning challenges. From the outset, meeting the educational, psychological, emotional, behavioural, social and physical needs of these children has been paramount. A clear determination to provide the best possible development opportunities for the pupils has been central to the way the school was conceived, the way it operates and what it hopes to help its pupils to achieve.

In order to meet its aims, Frederick Hugh House has developed an approach to special needs education which is unique among UK special schools. There is a whole school collaborative approach to each aspect of its work. Teachers and therapists form a fully coordinated and integrated team that works together to teach a specially adapted broad-based curriculum and offer the highest standards of professional therapeutic support. This approach is cross-curricular and multi-disciplinary. It is based on a deep understanding of the particular needs of each child and uses every appropriate means to assist each child to acquire and assimilate new skills. Each child is regarded as a separate individual, facing complex and inter-related challenges. Lessons, therapy sessions and other learning opportunities are regarded as similarly inter-related. All learning can be seen to complement and extend all other learning; This holistic, comprehensive approach is consistently supportive of each child and is centred on that child's needs.

Frederick Hugh House aims to extend the boundaries of what is considered possible in special needs education provision. It is committed to an approach that uses every appropriate means to help its children realise their full potential.

2 CONCEPT, VISION, ETHOS

Frederick Hugh House was founded with the intention of providing the best possible opportunities for its pupils to learn and develop. It seeks to offer the advantages associated with the highest standards of private practice with the benefits of being a fully functioning specialised school. The intention is to deliver a specially adapted school curriculum that promotes a multi-sensory approach to teaching and learning, supported by integrated multi-disciplinary therapy programmes using state-of the art facilities. Teaching and learning programmes and therapeutic support are based on a deep understanding of the child as an individual with specific needs and challenges. They are regarded as wholly complementary and integral aspects of promoting each pupil's development.

It is also central to the ethos of Frederick Hugh House that its pupils should benefit from the advantages of being part of a school community in terms of social interactions with staff and peers and the development of social skills through participation in diverse shared activities. The ISI inspection report (2014) makes reference to the 'rich, varied and highly nurturing environment' of the school, and its 'stimulating, happy and caring environment' (p2).

A further core value of Frederick Hugh House is that its work with children should instigate the learning of skills which can be assimilated by the pupils into their daily lives. The skills for life which are taught and learned at the school should not be context specific or dependent on the support of the school, but need to be transferable to other settings. The progress of pupils should be evidenced not just in the context of the school but in the pupil's home life and in the wider community.

The vision of Frederick Hugh House is to realise to the maximum the potential for each child to develop physically, intellectually, psychologically and socially. The

organisation and operation of the school allow the parameters of each child's learning experiences to be structured, controlled, monitored and expanded. Progress is demonstrable and quantifiable.

The vision that underpins every aspect of the organisation and operation of Frederick Hugh House stems from the experiences of its founder as the parent of a child with a disability. Faced with the frustration and distress caused by a delayed diagnosis and unduly pessimistic prognosis, she was introduced to an educational therapist with a background in psychology, who is now the Headteacher at Frederick Hugh House. This led to the organisation and delivery of a home programme of behavioural therapy for the child based on a multi-sensory, fully-integrated approach extending across all therapeutic interventions.

This therapy programme involved an imaginative and insightful engagement with the child. Understanding the child as a person was key to determining all aspects of the programme. This informed a detailed assessment of the child's needs, abilities and challenges and the development of a multi-sensory and fully integrated teaching and learning programme combined with therapeutic support. In this programme different modalities of sensory experience were used to help work towards specific and achievable aims and objectives.

A central tenet of this approach to therapy is attention to detail in all aspects of its focus and delivery. To work effectively it needs to be responsive, child-centred and individuated, and delivered with flexibility and imagination. It is designed initially to meet the immediate needs of the child, but sets no prescribed limits on what can be achieved. It recognises that progress is often the result of the interaction of different but fundamentally complementary techniques used by different specialists, working to find solutions to diverse but inter-related challenges. Different sensory experiences are used to help the child engage with learning and practice new skills in a way that maintains interest and focus. The child learns in a holistic way, incorporating and assimilating new knowledge so that it complements existing learning and leads to new opportunities. It is logical therefore for all professionals involved in such therapy programmes, under the direction of a lead therapist, to work closely together, share information and insights and harness their talents to work as

a cooperative team focused on facilitating all aspects of the child's development.

This approach depends on regarding each child as a unique individual, and adapting models of best practice to fit each child's needs as they are presented and as they develop. This requires high levels of professional expertise and experience, but also the flexibility to make timely adjustments to interventions based on detailed observations of the child's performance or behaviour. It is the role of the coordinator of the therapy programme to ensure that these detailed observations are collated and shared so that the work of each therapist and teacher can be aligned to provide a coherent and mutually supportive structure of interventions. In part this approach leads the child towards a desired goal, but it is also in part led by the needs and responses of the child. At all times it is child-centred, pragmatic and focused.

A key aspect of this approach, which has determined the ethos that is central to the operation of Frederick Hugh House, is the recognition that any progress made in therapy sessions or lessons is likely to dissipate unless it is consistently supported and reinforced at other times in the child's day. Conversely, with structured and focused support, almost every aspect of a child's day can provide opportunities to consolidate the progress that has been initiated in therapy sessions and lessons. Particularly with children who have special educational needs, it is necessary to take advantage of all opportunities to reinforce learning. This entails recognising when such opportunities occur and understanding how they can be used to further the child's progress. The integration of therapeutic and educational objectives into daily routines allows them to be practised in diverse manners and situations. The child does not become bored through repeated practice of the same skills in the same way in the same context, but specific learning may be continually reinforced, even when the child is focused on a different task. This helps to extend the learning beyond the context of the lesson or therapy session.

This approach led to notable progress in the educational and social development of the school's founder's child. In addition, the school's founder recognised that persuading the non-professional adults involved in the care of her child to take an active role in consistently reinforcing the learning initiated by the professional therapists contributed to this accelerated and tangible progress. When this level of

support was not provided progress appeared to stall. This was particularly evident when the child had developed sufficiently to attend half days at a specialist school for a trial period of assessment. At the end of this period it was decided that the approach of this special school did not meet the special educational and developmental needs of the child as fully as the multi-sensory fully integrated approach to therapy used in the child's home programme. However, it was recognised that the child could benefit socially and in other ways from being in a school environment.

This led to the idea of establishing Frederick Hugh House. At the time there were no specialist schools in the UK which offered a fully-integrated multi-sensory approach to teaching and learning. This approach had been shown to be exceptionally successful in home programmes and in schools overseas, but had not been used as the central tenet of teaching and learning within any institutional setting in the UK. It was envisioned to establish a school which would offer specially developed education programmes combined with the highest standards of professional therapeutic support within a fully integrated approach. The school would promote a holistic approach to meeting the complex needs of its pupils through acquiring detailed knowledge of each child's particular disabilities and challenges, and addressing these specific issues, rather than working on the basis of a general understanding of disabilities. This would allow more focused and child-specific interventions to be effected, and would better meet parents' concerns that everything possible should be done to help their child. Within a school context, learning objectives would be consistently reinforced by attentive and knowledgeable staff at all times during the school day. This vision was underpinned by a clear commitment to make the necessary material resources available to provide the highest quality of teaching and professional support.

The founder of Frederick Hugh House and the Headteacher decided that the vision and aims of the school could be best realised by working with a small cohort of children of a similar age with similar levels of disability, but diverse needs. It was felt that such a group would be most amenable to the approach at Frederick Hugh House, and that within such a group each child's developmental and educational needs could be best met by the approach to learning that underpins the work at the

school. It was also decided that the school should aim to work with the same cohort of pupils for the duration of their school careers, up to age eighteen and over. This would be made possible by continuing to adapt the curriculum and therapeutic support as the pupils developed, while maintaining the same style and approach throughout.

It was recognised that establishing such a school would entail developing and implementing a different approach to the provision of special education. A fully integrated approach to teaching and learning would involve cutting across demarcation lines between professional disciplines. It would therefore require educators and therapists to adopt different working practices. A different approach to the organisation and management of the school day and a specially devised curriculum would also be needed, together with a more detailed approach to the monitoring and recording of progress. In addition a more open and closer relationship between the school and the pupils' families would need to be fostered. This approach is significantly different from established practice in most SEND schools in the UK.

Frederick Hugh House has presented an opportunity to create a new school in which all aspects of its structure and operation have been selected specifically according to their utility in facilitating its work and purpose. Orthodox approaches and standard practices have been evaluated on the basis of how well they match the requirements of the school and its pupils. In all instances, the approach that has been adopted has been the one that is best suited to meeting the needs of the children. This clarity of purpose applies to all key areas of the school's work; teaching and learning, the provision of human and material resources and governance leadership and management. There is a clear rationale behind every decision that affects the school's provision of its services. Each decision has been thought through with careful attention to detail and a clear focus on doing what is best for the pupils. There is a recognition that the vision of the school can only be realised if it is applied in a thorough and consistent manner across all aspects of its operation. For Frederick Hugh House, vision is more than an ideal. Through dedication, clarity of purpose and hard work it has become an underlying principle that is manifest in every aspect of the school's work.

Frederick Hugh House would not have been possible without the determination and drive of its founder and its headteacher. Similarly, without the influence and financial resources that could be brought to bear to support the founding of the school, it is unlikely that the project would have come to fruition so quickly. However, the merits of all aspects of the organisation and operation of the school can only be attested by the quality of the progress made by its pupils. To date Frederick Hugh House pupils are showing strong progress in terms of cognitive, physical and social development. The vision and ethos of the school set no limits on the progress that can be achieved, and challenge all involved in the project to strive to work more effectively in facilitating the learning and development of the pupils.

3 GOVERNANCE

The governance structure and practices of Frederick Hugh House have been determined by the need to provide the best possible support to the operation of the school.

Frederick Hugh House operates as a charitable trust status school under the aegis of the Frederick Hugh Trust, a company limited by guarantee which is registered with the Charity Commission. This arrangement offers substantial fiscal advantages for the school, but also reflects its fundamentally charitable purpose as a non-profit entity dedicated to providing the best possible education to a group of children with learning disabilities, physical challenges and complex behavioural needs. In addition, the charity seeks to promote the distinct approach to teaching, learning and therapy that characterises the work of Fredrick Hugh House.

Charitable trust status also ensures that the vision and ethos of the school are central to its operation, as these are specified in the trust documents, which the trustees have a legal obligation to uphold. It is one of the strengths of Frederick Hugh House that its vision and ethos are clearly set out, and are actively promoted in the way the school is governed and managed. The school's vision and ethos

determine what is expected of the Headteacher and staff of the school and set clear standards that provide a framework within which the highest quality of professional work can be achieved.

The Frederick Hugh Trust currently has four trustees and a clerk. Each of these trustees is fully committed to the vision and ethos of the school, and to supporting and promoting the fully-integrated approach that characterises the school's working practices. This ensures a clarity of purpose in the way the school is governed.

The Frederick Hugh Trust follows a stewardship model of governance. This places it in a position of responsibility for determining the strategic direction of the school in order to ensure its continuing operation in a manner consistent with its stated core values. The trustees are also responsible for securing the necessary human and material resources to enable this to happen. Financial planning and auditing is rigorous and transparent. The trustees run effective audits of the school's operations and monitor the performance of the school as a whole to ensure that standards in all aspects of its work are being upheld or raised.

In addition, the trustees are responsible for determining the terms and conditions of employment of the senior staff and monitoring the performance of the Headteacher, offering support and guidance where appropriate. While being fully committed to the work of the school and its ethos, the trustees provide an informed and objective forum in which the Headteacher can discuss school issues in an open and constructively critical way. This allows ideas and suggestions to be thoroughly tested, and for existing practices to be questioned with a view to instigating improvements in the operation of the school. However, it is not sufficient for the trustees to act only in the role of a critical friend. They fully uphold their legal and professional responsibilities to examine in detail, and when necessary, challenge senior leadership judgements and decisions. All verbal and written reports including meetings of staff and of the senior management team are carefully reviewed and scrutinised. There is a culture of objective accountability and transparency in all the trustee body's operations. The trustees do not merely enable the school to function; they are actively and purposefully involved in driving up standards and improving the quality of the school's provision of its services. There is a clear understanding among

the trustees of the Frederick Hugh Trust that they are working collaboratively, but in an objective and professional way, to further the best interests of the school's pupils.

The trustees also fully discharge their obligations to ensure that all school policies are fully compliant with all relevant regulations and legislation, and that they are applied to all aspects of the school's operations. In addition, the trustees ensure that the suitability of all staff or others who have unsupervised contact with the pupils during the school day is thoroughly checked, and that a central register of all such people is accurately kept.

The trustees are a valuable resource for the school. Their roles parallel those of non-executive directors of companies. All trustees have extensive professional experience and expertise in areas related to the operation of the school, and can bring this experience to bear on the governance of Frederick Hugh House. Each of the trustees is also well-connected and can use professional and personal contacts to further the interests of the school. The high calibre of the individual trustees makes it possible for a small governing body to discharge all its statutory responsibilities successfully, but also to go beyond what is required by statute. The Trustees are able to provide objective, informed and expert support for the Headteacher and other staff through formal and informal channels.

Trustees visit the school frequently, and are known to all staff and many of the pupils. The relationships between the staff at Frederick Hugh House and the trustees are cordial and professional. There is an understanding of a shared commitment, ethos and vision, but also a recognition of the frameworks of accountability and responsibility that underpin their different roles. The trustees are able to use their personal knowledge of the school and its operation, in conjunction with their professional expertise, constructively to promote better practice within the school. One trustee is actively involved in staff appraisal and in observations of different aspects of the daily operation of the school, whilst another is particularly concerned with all aspects of safeguarding (child protection, e-safety and safer recruitment). The trustees are fully committed to discharging their duties concerning the annual review and audit of safeguarding procedures. There is also trustee representation on the school's health and safety committee.

In light of the particular provenance of Frederick Hugh House, the Frederick Hugh Trust has had an important role in ensuring that Frederick Hugh House should operate as, and be perceived as a fully-functioning school which meets all its responsibilities and obligations as a school, rather than as an extended therapy centre. The trustees have ensured that Frederick Hugh House embodies the application of the principles of a fully-integrated, multi-sensory approach to the education and development of children using a whole school approach in a school setting.

It is often a criticism of the governance of charitable trust status schools that compliance with charity legislation and adherence to the strictures of charitable trust documents can make it difficult for a school to respond quickly to unforeseen events which may have significant effects on its operation. The small number of exceptionally able individuals who comprise the Frederick Hugh Trust allow its decision-making processes to be focused and purposeful. Trustees take an active interest in the work of the school, and are well-informed about all aspects of its daily operation. Because the trustees know the school well, they are in a position to offer informed support and guidance. Communications between the Board of Trustees and the Headteacher are clear and focused. This is based around mutual professional respect, trust and confidence in each other's' abilities.

The Board of Trustees of Frederick Hugh House meets once per term. Its deliberations are pragmatic, specific and direct. All meetings are attended by the Headteacher, who reports to the trustees on the operation of the school. The Headteacher is also fully involved in any discussions relating to the operation of the school. This recognises her essential role and unmatched expertise in structuring and delivering fully integrated educational and therapeutic programmes within a school setting.

In September 2013 the school's founder stood down from the role of Chair of Trustees although she continues to be a trustee, with specific responsibilities for health and safety, welfare and safeguarding. The new Chair of Trustees has worked as the Director of Children's Services for different local authorities and as Chief

Executive of a major children's charity. The range of personal qualities and professional experience of the trustees is a significant factor in the governance of Frederick Hugh House. The trust comprises individuals who can provide drive and determination to uphold the school's vision and ethos, in addition to financial acumen and extensive professional experience of working in different areas of the UK education system. The recent changes to the composition of the Frederick Hugh Trust exemplify the ethos of the school. From the top down and from the bottom up its work is based on doing what is best for the children in its care. The needs of the pupils determine all aspects of its structure and operation.

4 FACILITIES

Ground floor	First floor	Second floor
Three classrooms	Outdoor, covered playground	Physiotherapist's room
Multi-purpose hall	Dining hall	Journey room
Outdoor courtyard	Food technology kitchen	Science lab
Whole staff admin/working room	Art/DT room	Two music rooms
ICT suite	Occupational therapist's room	Library
Headteacher's office	Speech and language therapist's room	Girl's and boy's toilets
Staff room	Girl's and boy's toilets	
School office	.	
Boy's and girl's changing rooms and toilets and disabled toilets		

Frederick Hugh House occupies a specially re-fitted building of about 15,000 square feet spread over three floors.

The importance of the learning environment in enhancing and promoting the work of

the school was recognised from the outset, not just in terms of the provision of facilities, but in all aspects of shaping the space in order to support and facilitate the school's fully integrated multi-sensory approach.

The opportunity to start a new school allowed a re-assessment of the way a special needs school should be designed. As with all aspects of the work of Frederick Hugh House, choices about the planning and design of the building were based on considering how best to realise the vision and ethos of the school rather than following established practice elsewhere. These decisions were informed by the experiences of the school's founder and its Headteacher, and an imaginative assessment of how the children would experience the school.

The design of the school has been important in establishing its tone and atmosphere. It is intended that it should help the pupils feel at ease in the school environment. The school should provide an atmosphere of openness and accessibility in which the children feel a sense of belonging and ownership in all parts of the building. It should feel like their school and their space. In addition, the health, welfare and safety of the pupils have been fundamental considerations in all design decisions.

Putting this child-centred approach into practice required attention to detail in all aspects of planning and design. This included determining the overall structural and interior design of the building, its layout and the choice of its facilities, fixtures and fittings. All decisions were based on creating the best environment and providing the best available facilities so that the pupils and staff at Frederick Hugh House should have the best possible facilities and resources to support their work together.

The building now occupied by Frederick Hugh House was chosen as its basic design is compatible with the needs of the school. It is a building with a wide vista. This is appropriate, as children with special needs often find broad lateral spaces more inviting and comfortable than vertical ones. In addition, stairs may present practical difficulties for children with physical disabilities.

It was decided to have a glass front to the building. This helps to generate the

atmosphere of openness and accessibility which is central to the ethos and operation of the school, in addition to allowing a lot of natural light, thereby connecting the school to its outside environment.

The ground floor entrance area comprises mostly a large curved open plan space. This area is inviting and clear. It affords greater freedom of movement to the children, which is especially important for those with mobility difficulties. In addition, the children feel at ease in the space, allowing natural but purposeful interactions with staff to occur.

The Multi-Purpose Hall, next to which is an outdoor play area, occupies one end of the ground floor of the building. This space has been designed so that it can be converted to serve many different functions, using equipment which can be set out or stored away quickly and easily. The Multi-Purpose Hall can be used as a gym, a theatre, a cinema or a dance studio. It is also used for the sensory/physical circuit, a series of physical challenges using soft play equipment in the form of a circuit, which is a key part of the beginning of each school day. The equipment is age appropriate, and can be adapted to suit the particular needs of each pupil.

There are three classrooms and an ICT suite at the centre of the ground floor. This layout embodies the importance of teaching and learning in the work of the school. The classrooms have been specially designed and equipped to meet the needs of the pupils. The three classrooms have glass walls, in keeping with the atmosphere of openness that is central to the ethos of the school. The capacity for children and staff to see and be seen promotes the principles and practice of cooperation that underpin the work at Frederick Hugh House. However, it is possible to smokescreen the glass walls if a higher level of focus within the classroom is needed and carefully controllable mood lighting can be used to regulate the sensory experiences of the children in order to facilitate learning.

The furniture in the classrooms has been especially chosen to allow the teaching of fully individuated programmes within a class setting. Each child has their own customised chair in each classroom. This ensures that they consistently adopt an appropriate posture for extended periods of sitting. This consolidates the work of the

Occupational Therapist in addition to helping the children to maintain effective concentration for longer periods. Each classroom also has a mobile cubby corner, a type of curved partition on wheels which can be used to create a separate space within the classroom without completely isolating the enclosed area from the rest of the room. This can help support the high level of differentiation and individuation that the pupils require. Work with individual children or small groups can take place within the classroom setting while maintaining the overall structure of a whole class teaching session. The equipment can also be used by children to allow them to take a form of sensory break while remaining in the classroom if they should feel overstimulated. The cubby corner can also be used to enhance the experience of role play or dressing up or other activities that may require the imaginative use of a separate space.

All classrooms are fitted with height-adjustable interactive whiteboards. These support learning in a way which is accessible to the children, while also extending the range of options available to the teachers and assistants within the classroom. The whiteboards can be connected to electronic media which has been used in other activities in the school. This can link learning across the school, thereby reinforcing and consolidating work initiated elsewhere. Interactive whiteboards are also an important way for children to become used to working actively and purposefully with information technology.

The ICT room features computer keyboards which have only lower case letters to allow greater ease of recognition for the children, most of whom are at an early stage in their reading development. The keyboards are also colour coded to facilitate multi-sensory learning. In addition the keyboard mice have been especially chosen to be suitable for children who have difficulties with fine motor skills.

The choice of equipment for the classrooms has been determined by the needs of the children. New technology is regarded as complementary to more traditional methods of delivering teaching and learning. This is especially important within a multi-sensory approach in which different modalities of sensory experience are used to initiate and consolidate the development of skills. The classrooms are designed to be child-friendly, offering an environment which can be regulated to provide

appropriate levels of stimulation and which can allow fully integrated and differentiated teaching and learning programmes to be delivered.

The Headteacher's office is situated at one end of the ground floor. It also has glass walls. This is to emphasise the close level of involvement of the Headteacher with all aspects of the operation of the school. The Headteacher is the leader of the professional team at Frederick Hugh House, but is also a member of that team. Consequently, it is important that she should be accessible and visible, and be in a position to maintain a close contact with what is happening in the school.

The full-time professional therapists all have specially fitted rooms on the first floor. This acknowledges the importance of their professional expertise to the fully-integrated multi-sensory approach of the school. They are key members of the professional team and their work is integral and complementary to all other teaching and learning activities that occur in the school. Each therapist's room is large, offering sufficient space for individual or group work to be managed comfortably and safely. All rooms are fitted with a comprehensive range of equipment specially chosen to meet the developmental needs of the current cohort of pupils. The safety of the children has been an important factor in determining the design and layout of the therapists' rooms. All equipment can be safely and easily stored. In addition, each room has facilities and products for cleaning and sterilising equipment after use.

The physiotherapy room is specially equipped to allow a full range of specifically targeted interventions and support programmes appropriate to the age group and needs of the pupils. The room is bright and appears uncluttered. There is sufficient space to allow the range and diversity of physical exercises and activities that can help children to engage with and enjoy focused therapeutic programmes.

The occupational therapy room is bright and welcoming. It has the full range of equipment needed for specifically developed occupational therapy programmes to be devised and delivered. There is extensive storage space to allow equipment be

kept out of sight when not in use. This helps the children to maintain their focus on their current task. There is a table top area against a blank wall to minimise distractions when completing fine motor tasks, along with giant whiteboards and mirrors which can be used to engage the children in practising handwriting and other key sensory-motor skills.

The speech and language therapist's room is intentionally plain in order to promote an atmosphere of calm which can enhance concentration and reduce the potential for a child to be distracted from the intense focus needed for developing communication and language skills. The extensive storage space allows a full range of equipment to be kept out of sight. This equipment can be used to create an individualised space that enhances learning in individual sessions, or to facilitate group sessions.

The first floor features a large room which can be adapted for different group activities. It is currently used as the food technology room, the art room and as the children's dining room. This room has been designed to provide a large inviting space that promotes interaction and communication. There is space for the different furniture and equipment that is needed for these purposes to be stored when not in use.

The first floor leads to a large partially covered outdoor play area. This features a range of different equipment and facilities chosen to promote imaginative and creative play involving multi-sensory activities and experiences. There is a glass roof that allows the area to be used in all weathers. In common with the ground floor play area, the floor is covered with a soft sponge material for safety. The space is open and accessible, and feels like an integrated part of the school in its structure and function. The open aspect of the play area also allows activities to be carefully supervised and monitored, with a view to pupil safety and to guiding play so that it should have the maximum benefit for the children.

The second floor of the school features a specially designed multi-sensory theatre known as the journey room. This room features technology developed by

SpaceKraft. It enables a fully sensory event to be devised, presented and experienced. The walls, floor and ceiling can all be used to project moving images. There is a surround-sound system that allows directional auditory experiences. The temperature can be regulated. There is a smoke machine and an interactive floor area. Other physical prompts can enable sensations of touch, smell and taste to be integrated into the experience.

This room represents a departure from conventional multi-sensory environments. Like them, it can be used to provide a calming or stimulating environment, but it offers greater levels of control than other systems. The main advance is that it allows a fully-integrated, multi-sensory interactive experience to be created and managed specifically to meet the needs of the children. The content, the form and the levels of sensory input of the experience can be controlled carefully to focus on specific learning objectives in a way that is fully engaging and fun.

The journey room is not a toy. It can be used to initiate learning, consolidate work or assist in developing specific cognitive and affective abilities. Work initiated in the journey room can be extended and developed through using the electronic whiteboards in the classrooms. The journey room is also used to assist children to learn to manage their responses to upsetting environmental prompts through a process of regulated exposure to the stimuli in a controlled and safe setting.

There is also a specially designed science lab on the second floor. This reflects the key role that science is to play in the curriculum as the pupils develop. It is intended that the science lab should be the place where the study of science brings together the different strands of the curriculum and related therapeutic support through stimulating multi-sensory activities that promote the integration of skills and learning. It is intended that the science lab should have equipment which allows the teaching of science in an accessible manner that is appropriate for the age and developmental level of the pupils. It is expected that as the pupils develop, different equipment will be needed to continue to enable this to happen.

In addition there are two soundproofed music rooms on the second floor. These have a range of specially selected musical instruments that can allow the children to

express themselves through making music, but which are also key tools in facilitating the school's multi-sensory integrated approach to teaching and learning. The range of instruments has been chosen to match the specific needs of the pupils. It is intended to offer them the fullest opportunities to learn through engaging with music.

There is also a library on the second floor. The colour scheme, décor and furniture of this room have been especially selected to promote an interest in reading. It has the atmosphere of a traditional library, with a wide range of age-relevant books displayed on wooden shelves especially designed to be accessible to the children. There are comfortable chairs to encourage sitting and reading and beanbags on the floor for story-telling activities.

The availability of modern equipment and facilities helps to generate a different approach among the professional staff. Rather than working within constraints of limited resources, staff are faced with the challenge of using the greater range of opportunities provided by the facilities and equipment to work imaginatively and constructively to devise and implement the best possible teaching and therapy programmes for each individual pupil. This challenge is seen by staff as professionally stimulating and personally motivating.

The building and facilities at Frederick Hugh House reflect the coherent, exact and integrated approach that is central to the ethos of the school. They promote and facilitate the professional practices which can significantly enhance the learning opportunities available to the children. All decisions regarding the building and its facilities, from functional and practical choices to aesthetic and architectural considerations have been made with a view to enhancing the way the school functions as a wholly integrated entity in its mission to offer the best educational provision to its children.

5 STAFF

In addition to the Headteacher, the full time staff at Frederick Hugh House comprise a specialist therapists; a physiotherapist, who is also the Deputy Head, an

occupational therapist and a speech and language therapist), specialist teachers, teaching assistants, an administrator and a caretaker. Additionally there are part time and voluntary staff.

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for realising the vision and ethos of the school in all aspects of its operation. Key to this is devising and overseeing the delivery of the multi-sensory fully-integrated programmes of education and therapy that characterise the work of the school.

The Frederick Hugh House approach to teaching and learning is largely based around the Headteacher's personal experience as a behavioural and educational therapist. This led to a deep conviction that a multi-sensory and fully integrated education and therapy programme, based on knowledge of the child and centred on the child's needs, affords the best opportunity for the child to develop specifically targeted skills which are intrinsic to learning and development. These are also necessary skills for life, and it is important that the child should be able to apply them in a range of contexts away from teaching or therapy sessions. An important aspect of this is the participation of parents and carers in reinforcing the work of the professional therapists through consistently reinforcing the newly acquired skills using the same approach and terminology. This will allow these skills to be generalised across contexts and practised in real life situations.

In order to instigate and implement the Frederick Hugh House approach to teaching and learning it has been necessary to find a team of therapists and educators who are fully committed to the school's values and practices and who have the professional expertise and personal qualities to be able to adapt their own professional practices accordingly.

Initially this task did not prove easy. A difficulty was that many specialist therapists, especially those working mainly within the UK education system, have become used to a high level of independence, professional deference and clear demarcation of distinct areas of professional practice. This is contrary to the approach taken at Frederick Hugh House, in which working as a fully integrated, cooperative and coordinated team is central to the processes of teaching and learning.

The high level of involvement with the pupils that is essential to the approach taken at Frederick Hugh House may also have been a problem. At Frederick Hugh House a great emphasis is placed on using every part of the school day as an opportunity for purposeful interaction with the children with a view to consolidating or extending their learning. This requires high levels of concentration throughout the school day, not just in lessons or therapy sessions, and an intensity of focus and commitment which is difficult to sustain.

In addition, professional staff at Frederick Hugh House are expected to work in a flexible, pragmatic and constructive manner, but to work towards clearly specified aims and objectives. This necessitates compiling detailed lesson plans which are fully differentiated and task specific. However, professional staff are also expected to have the skill and judgement to be able adapt their lesson plans when necessary. When this occurs, it is essential to record what has happened, and to what effect. This demands more specific, more detailed and more informative records of lessons, therapy sessions and interventions than is standard practice elsewhere. In addition, the compilation of reports at Frederick Hugh House goes beyond standard practice in many SEND schools. Reports detail the learning aims and objectives and the extent to which they have been met, giving precise data as evidence and using videos and photographs where appropriate to enable records to be as informative and clear as possible. Lessons are reviewed and reflected upon daily in order to make changes for the following day, if necessary.

The Head Teacher of Frederick Hugh House is also the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), and has the lead role in determining the aims and objectives of the pupils' individual programmes as well as being actively involved in many aspects of their delivery. This highlights the importance of the role of SENCO and the fundamental importance of coordination and cooperation in all aspects of the school's work with its pupils.

The role of the Headteacher has developed into that of a 'first among equals'. Professional expertise is acknowledged and respected, but there is also a clear understanding among all staff that this is most useful for the school and its pupils when it can be used collaboratively to inform a fully integrated approach that is

focused on the needs of each child. Close cooperation between all staff also promotes a spirit of teamwork, collaborative professional involvement and mutual support, which in turn facilitates a consistency of approach towards the pupils. Through leading and directing the therapists and educationalists over time the Headteacher has been able to establish important relationships of trust among the staff and has their confidence in the lead she takes regarding all aspects of the school's operation. In situations where there has been a potential conflict of interests between the Head Teacher's role as an active member of the teaching and therapy team and her role as leader and manager with overall responsibility for all aspects of the operation of the school, the Headteacher has determined that the interests of the children are paramount, and has had to make sometimes difficult decisions on that basis.

The departures from orthodox professional practice may have led initially to a high turnover of staff. A view was taken by the Headteacher, fully supported by the trustees, that it was essential to the working practices of the school that the ethos of teamwork and close cooperation among key staff should not be compromised; neither should compromises be made regarding record keeping, data collection and the way the curriculum is conceived and delivered. The disruption caused by changes in staff was felt to be less damaging than keeping members of staff who were not fully committed to implementing all aspects of the Frederick Hugh House approach.

Professional staff at Frederick Hugh House have difficult and demanding jobs. They need to be experienced and knowledgeable, but open to adapting their professional practices to the Frederick Hugh House approach, and imaginative in the way they apply the underlying principles of this approach to their professional disciplines. Staff are also expected to act as examples to the children through their conduct and demonstrate how friendly, respectful and productive relationships can be managed within an educational setting. They are expected to be friendly and open, with an engaging disposition but professionally focused on their work. This both reflects and generates the warm and purposeful atmosphere of the school.

Appropriate time is allocated each week for meetings, preparation, planning and

record keeping. This reflects the value attached to these responsibilities, and how the integrated approach of the school depends on keeping accurate and detailed records which allow high quality information to be shared.

Staff training in areas such as health and safety is contracted out to external providers. Each staff member is allocated a budget to be used, with the agreement of the Headteacher, to fund further training or professional development. However, the Headteacher takes the lead role in training staff in the multi-sensory fully integrated approach used at Frederick Hugh House. This involves more of an ideological and conceptual shift in professional parameters than any specific training in techniques and methodology. The Headteacher is also responsible for training in effective classroom management strategies and for ensuring that staff receive training in positive behaviour management strategies where necessary. Staff training is fully supported by the school and the Headteacher, and is regarded as a key area in which personal, social and emotional development can be promoted. The professional knowledge and experience of the staff are essential components of the work of the school. Frederick Hugh House would not be able to meet its objectives without the contributions of a fully informed and appropriately trained staff team.

This team has grown together and has become used to working in a mutually supportive and integrated way. Among the professional staff at Frederick Hugh House there is an attitude of competitive cooperation in which members of the staff team are challenged and challenge themselves to move beyond the orthodox provision of special needs services. As a group, and as individual practitioners, they are expected to adopt a positive and self-motivated work ethic which seeks to use the opportunities at Frederick Hugh House to extend their professional knowledge and expertise. They are expected to engage insightfully and constructively with the needs of the pupils, and to use the advantages offered by the resources of the school to the maximum to enhance and extend the specialised support they can provide to the pupils through their work. The current professional staff team has embraced this approach fully. Therapists and teachers have recognised that they can learn from each other's approaches and techniques. The staff are keen to make suggestions for improvements and are receptive to suggestions about their own work.

There is a mutual respect for each other's' professional expertise which allows different therapists or teachers to take the lead in activities based around their own specialisation and for the other therapists or teachers to adopt a supporting role. In addition to specific sessions in which therapists or teachers are timetabled to offer support to colleagues in sessions and lessons, the staff have shown a greater interest in spending more time in lessons in order to assist teaching and learning through offering specialised support to pupils who may be experiencing problems with certain aspects of a task. Appropriate, practical and focused assistance can allow a child to overcome barriers to learning that would have led to frustration and disappointment without expert and timely intervention.

The staff at Frederick Hugh House enjoy their work. The atmosphere is cordial and informal, but highly professional. The requirement to incorporate many different aspects of learning into professional practice, and monitor responses in different sensory modalities at different levels in different contexts throughout the school day is very exacting. However with strong and informed professional support and a fully professional approach to practice, preparation and record keeping it is possible to meet the challenge of working at this high level of intensity.

6 PUPILS

All children at Frederick Hugh House can be assessed as having complex learning difficulties. However, each pupil has diverse special educational needs and or disabilities and presents different behavioural and developmental challenges. The pupils form a single age and ability related cohort. New pupils are admitted on the basis of their compatibility with the current cohort of children. Whilst some pupils at Frederick Hugh House are privately funded others receive funding from their local authority. In such cases, the fees of pupils may be supplemented by the Frederick Hugh Trust.

Class lessons, therapy sessions and other activities can be focused on the whole group, smaller groups or work with individual children. The school's curriculum and

its teaching strategies have been designed to make learning accessible to all the children. Different levels of therapeutic and learning support during lessons and carefully devised and implemented differentiation strategies enable all pupils to participate in lessons in ways that are relevant to their specific needs at a level which is appropriate for their stage of development.

The exceptionally high staff to pupil ratio allows detailed observations of each pupil to be made and recorded. The staff know the pupils and understand them as individuals. This allows constructive relationships to develop which inform the teaching and therapy that takes place in the school. It also give the pupils a sense that they are valued and validated as people with complex but real physical and psychological needs. This reflects the values and ethos of the school.

Frederick Hugh House encourages parental involvement in all aspects of the child's education and stresses its importance. Research has shown a clear correlation between the level of parental involvement in home programmes and institutional programmes and the progress of children across a range of developmental criteria. It is seen as a responsibility of the school to empower parents and other carers through helping them to understand how to help their child. This has practical advantages for all concerned.

Parental involvement and support are key components in each child's progress. If parents are informed about the specific behaviour and learning strategies that are being used at the school, they are in a position to implement these with the child at home. This support is crucial to providing a clear and consistent message to the child regarding aspects of behaviour management and reinforcing and consolidating learning initiated during the school day. The benefits to the child of this support are substantial. New learning can be applied in a consistent way across different contexts, and new skills are assimilated and integrated into the child's daily life away from the school.

This approach may also have advantages for the parents. Parents of children with special needs can often feel a sense of frustration at not being able to help their child. Cooperation with the school and participation in their child's developmental

progress can be very empowering. Involvement with the work of the school can also equip the parents with an understanding of best practice regarding the regulation and management of complex behaviours. This can lead to greater self-confidence in their ability to manage the child's behaviour in potentially difficult situations, thereby extending the range and variety of activities they feel able to participate in with their child.

This approach benefits the school, as new learning is consistently practised and reinforced. Close liaison with parents also gives the school an essential source of feedback about the progress of the child away from the school setting. This information is used to inform decisions regarding learning objectives and strategies.

It is also central to the approach of Frederick Hugh House that the Headteacher should be accessible to parents. Communications with parents are open and the Headteacher is willing to discuss with parents the rationale behind every decision that affects the school's work with their child. The pre-inspection questionnaire issued to parents prior to the 2014 inspection indicates that parents are 'extremely satisfied with the provision for their children and with the education and support their children receive' (ISI inspection report 2014, p12)

7 REGISTRATION AND COMPLIANCE

Frederick Hugh House is registered as an independent school with the Department for Education. It is currently registered to teach pupils aged five to sixteen.

Frederick Hugh House complies fully with all legislation and regulations regarding the organisation and management of a school as set out in the Independent Schools Standard Regulations.

The school has rigorous policies regarding pupil achievement, pupil behaviour and personal development, the quality of teaching and of the curriculum, pupils' welfare, health and safety, and leadership and management. These show that the operating

practices of Frederick Hugh House, although different from other special needs schools, meet or exceed the standards expected of those schools.

Frederick Hugh House had a successful final registration inspection conducted by an HMI under Ofsted Section 162A in May 2011. Following the outcome of this inspection, Frederick Hugh House has joined the Independent Schools Association (ISA). The trustees felt that membership of the ISA better served the interests of the school. ISA membership gives the staff access to in-service education and training which is likely to aid continuing professional development. In addition ISA membership provides the Headteacher with opportunities for contact with colleagues in other independent schools, which may lead to opportunities to further the interests of the school.

As a result of ISA membership, future inspections of the school are to be conducted by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The ISI provides extensive training and advice on preparation for inspections, which will be of benefit to the school in ensuring compliance with inspection criteria.

In addition the trustees have taken the view that the interpretation of the Independent Schools Standard Regulations (ISSR) used by the ISI in its inspection criteria and its conduct of inspections may allow a fuller critical appreciation of the work of Frederick Hugh House and its distinct approach to meeting the educational and developmental needs of its pupils. However, there were concerns that the ISI inspection criteria, which are based on the operation of different methodologies and approaches, might not be sufficiently flexible to provide a fully valid assessment of the effectiveness of the multi-disciplinary multi-sensory approach to special needs education taken at Frederick Hugh House.

These concerns proved to be unfounded. The ISI conducted a full inspection of Frederick Hugh House in June/July 2014. The inspection team had an exceptional level of experience and understanding of special needs education, and conducted the inspection with rigour and attention to detail. They showed a willingness to understand how the school approaches its work and a commitment to making a fair and objective assessment of its performance. The resulting inspection report found

Frederick Hugh House to be 'excellent' in each of the inspection criteria (ISI 2014).

While acknowledging the necessity and value of a rigorous and independent inspection process, Frederick Hugh House is determined not to compromise its collaborative fully integrated approach. Central to this is the practice of using the most appropriately qualified staff member to lead different activities, with support from other members of the staff team, rather than the standard practice of placing a teacher in charge of all lessons with support from other staff.

Frederick Hugh House has rigorous standards in all aspects of its work. It has established new standards of best practice in many areas of its operation and has delivered exceptional results for its pupils.

8 CURRICULUM

Teaching and learning at Frederick Hugh House are based around an especially adapted curriculum which is appropriate for the special educational needs of the pupils and which facilitates the multi-sensory fully integrated approach that characterises the work of the school. The curriculum is broad-based and features lessons in Literacy, Numeracy, ICT, Food Technology, Science, Art, Design and Technology, Physical Education, Humanities, Music and Drama and diverse extra-curricular activities as part of its weekly timetable. In addition, there is an emphasis on integrating the values of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) into all lessons and activities. In the June/July 2014 ISI inspection report it is stated that; 'The curriculum is tailored to meet all the pupils' sensory, behavioural, language, physical, cognitive and self-care needs' (p5).

Currently the pupils at Frederick Hugh House are learning at a curriculum level that is beyond Foundation stage but is not yet at National Curriculum level one. Progress is measured using the Performance Indicators for Value Added Target Setting (PIVATS) scale. Specifically targeted interventions are assessed using a standard

Goal Attainment Scale (GAS). In addition, progress charts, workbooks, photographs and videos, teacher evaluations and classroom observations attest to the aptness of the curriculum through recording the progress of the pupils.

Attainment goals for each child are individualised to match the child's needs and abilities. Detailed records are kept of each stage of learning and development which form base points from which further progress can be measured. These show that progress by Frederick Hugh House pupils usually exceeds the generally accepted expectations for children with similar learning difficulties and challenges at similar levels of development.

Lessons in all curriculum areas are tailored to suit each child's ability, and classroom goals are adapted to match each child's individual progress. There is extensive differentiation within each lesson, both in subject material and in teaching approach which shows detailed understanding of each child as a learner and as an individual. Individual targets are very carefully refined to set the right level of challenge for each pupil. Lesson plans detail the expected and actual learning outcomes for each child for each activity. The importance of achieving each stage of a task when working towards a specific learning goal is emphasised. It is recognised that mastery of each learning objective is as much a part of the learning process as achieving the stated overall aim. The progress of each child towards achieving specific learning objectives is continually monitored during lessons, and at other times during the school day. Fully differentiated questioning strategies are used to establish each child's level of understanding. Because teachers and therapists work as a fully collaborative team at Frederick Hugh House, each pupil's particular learning and developmental challenges are well-known to all staff. Problems are managed in a consistent way and progress is recorded and shared. This cooperation, combined with the high level of support in the classroom provided by teaching assistants and therapists in supporting roles, allows obstacles to learning to be anticipated. Specific problems a child may face can be effectively forestalled and countered by the use of appropriately targeted interventions. However, learning in the classroom, and in the broader school context, remains child-centred. The curriculum has been designed to allow each child to be challenged to extend their learning and development in a way that is appropriate for their particular needs while maintaining a focus on the

fundamental importance of the acquisition of key skills for personal and intellectual development.

The teaching of reading, writing and numeracy is an essential part of the Frederick Hugh House curriculum. This takes place within a whole-school approach in which learning that has been initiated in the classroom is reinforced and practised throughout the school day. Literacy and numeracy are taught in carefully planned lessons that allow a necessarily high level of differentiation within the framework of each teaching session. Targets are continually set, monitored and when necessary adjusted, during lessons and between sessions. As all staff work as an integrated team, each child's learning style is understood and information is shared about the progress of the child and the targets that have been set for that child. This allows learning to be practised and consolidated throughout the school day, in social interactions with staff during breaks or play times and in other lessons and therapy sessions. Numeracy practice is incorporated into the sensory circuit. Sight words are displayed around the school and are even used as part of the warm-up for the weekly horse-riding sessions. Skills are continually practised and reinforced in ways which are supportive and engaging as part of the cohesive, whole school approach to teaching and learning. This approach also helps to connect teaching and learning within the classroom to all aspects of the child's experience of the school, and may help the child to extend the application of new skills to aspects of life away from the school setting. The attention to detail in the application of the curriculum is central to its effectiveness in shaping and developing learning.

The cross-curriculum approach of Frederick Hugh House means that the teaching and learning of specific skills are not confined to particular lessons or sessions. The curriculum has been designed to promote the development of specific skills in the context of all other aspects of learning and development. In this regard, the structure of teaching within the school reflects the way the pupils learn and helps them to learn more effectively.

Frederick Hugh House is unusual for schools working with pupils of its age range in its use of dedicated rooms or spaces for teaching each aspect of its curriculum. The children move to different rooms for different lessons or activities. This has many

advantages. The pupils associate each room or space with a particular activity. Moving to a different space brings to mind the activities and learning that have occurred there. This assists with the retrieval and recall of relevant learning and associated memories which can help the pupil to be receptive to new but similar learning experiences. Pupils have a clear idea of what to expect in each room.

Further advantages for the pupils are that moving between rooms promotes independent movement and allows pupils to self-regulate through expending energy between lessons. As none of the current pupils is able to read a clock, movement between rooms is one way of marking time and adding structure to the experience of the school day, allowing the children to feel a sense of expectation and achievement. The use of dedicated areas also has practical advantages. Rooms or spaces can be especially equipped and a specific atmosphere conducive to a particular activity or lesson can be more easily generated and maintained.

Over the school year the teaching programme is divided into half-termly periods in which a particular topic provides the focus for all lessons. This helps to extend the pupils' capacity to learn about a subject in greater depth within the framework of the broad-based curriculum. Themed teaching also improves the capacity of the pupils to link and integrate the different strands of the curriculum, helping memory and consolidating learning. The end of each half term is marked by a project or presentation concerning that period's topic, a period of reflection on the topic theme and a revision of the key learning that occurred. This is used to inform a summative description of the performance of each child, and to help evaluate the targets for the next teaching period.

The teaching of literacy is a key aspect of the curriculum at Frederick Hugh House. It embodies the school's multi-sensory approach to teaching and learning. In addition sessions with the speech and language therapist often focus on literacy-related difficulties.

Initially the literacy curriculum was based solely around the principles of synthetic phonics. However, in the light of the capacity for sight reading evidenced by some pupils, it was decided to incorporate this approach into the literacy strategy to run

alongside the use of synthetic phonics. Different applications of these principles such as Jolly Phonics and Read Right are used in conjunction with multi-sensory materials and methods to initiate and support learning. These materials may be tactile or visual or based around sounds or movements. The approach is by necessity eclectic. It is centred around an understanding of how each child learns and how each child responds to different learning experiences. The multi-sensory approach also allows the extensive repetition and over-learning that are essential to the acquisition of skills for many of the pupils. Lessons are varied, diverse and continually stimulating. A further advantage is that the teaching of literacy, like that of all subjects and all activities, is part of the whole-school integrated approach to teaching and learning. Other learning objectives are incorporated into each lesson. The focus is on improving reading and writing, but the development of other related skills is integral to achieving these objectives.

The literacy curriculum is often extended beyond the confines of the classroom or the specific literacy lesson. Reading aloud to the pupils, often in the school library, is used to promote an interest and enjoyment of books, but is also an opportunity to consolidate targeted learning and support literacy teaching strategies. Reading and writing skills can be seen as integral to achieving other developmental targets, and as fundamental skills for life.

In a similar way the numeracy curriculum feeds into and feeds from all other work in the school. The importance of numeracy as a generalisable skill that is essential for life in the world away from the school is consistently emphasised and reinforced by the curriculum. Numeracy, like literacy, is taught through a multi-sensory approach based on a standard school numeracy programme. Different activities involving different sensual modalities make the numeracy syllabus accessible to each child. Numeracy skills can also be developed in many other lessons and activities throughout the school week. The teaching approach at Frederick Hugh House recognises these opportunities and uses them to reinforce numeracy objectives, particularly when the lesson is ostensibly focused on a different activity. This is especially evident in ICT lessons and food technology lessons.

Music and drama are an important part of the curriculum. They play an important role

in improving concentration, confidence and self-esteem. Pupils can learn specific skills and develop new ways of self-expression, but they are also continually practising and consolidating the learning of skills taught in other areas of the curriculum. The pupils stage a performance for family and friends twice a year. This performance gives each pupil a sense of achievement and self-worth as an individual and also helps them to bond with other children as part of a group.

The acceptance and validation of a pupil's emotions and moods is very important to understanding the child as a whole person, and to developing effective strategies to support pupil development. Children are encouraged to find ways to articulate their feelings. Expressions of emotion and affect are always attended and validated. This can occur in special sessions such as 'Circle Time' and 'Show and Tell' but it can also occur during any interaction with an adult. There are no specific lessons teaching PSHE and SEAL, but values relating to these concepts are embedded into each lesson and embodied in the whole approach of the school and in the conduct of all members of the school community.

The curriculum places a strong emphasis on the need for pupils to develop skills for the real world and have experience of using them in the real world. This can be seen in the weekly visit by all the pupils of Frederick Hugh House to a nearby mainstream school. They have lunch at the school and interact with the other pupils. This helps them to place their school life in a broader social context, and to develop skills in dealing with other children. The importance of the social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) aspect of all the children's' learning is stressed. It is incumbent on all staff to ensure that SMSC is integral to learning outcomes and not an adjunct to the curriculum.

Physical Education is a key element of the curriculum. Many children have physical disabilities which need specific therapeutic interventions and require remedial exercise programmes. Other children may use physical exercise as a way to self-regulate or expend excess energy. Physical Education (PE) sessions are carefully structured under the direction of the physiotherapist, who sets appropriate physical challenges for each pupil in which identified areas of weakness can be targeted and worked on. There is one specific PE lesson each week, but each day begins with a

PE session. After arriving at school, all pupils spend fifteen minutes on the 'sensory circuit'; a form of obstacle course using soft play equipment. Each pupil has a different set of physical tasks, designed by the occupational therapist, who is a specialist in applying a sensory integration approach to target the pupils' sensory needs. The sensory circuit promotes gross and fine motor skill development along with sensory regulation and allows the pupils to expend excess energy in preparation for their lessons. The sensory circuit also gives staff an opportunity to observe the physical and psychological condition of each pupil at the start of the school day.

In addition to the sensory circuit there are timetabled sessions of swimming and horse riding. These are very beneficial to the pupils' physical self-confidence and improve balance and coordination. Like all lessons at Frederick Hugh House, specific and detailed objectives are reinforced and consolidated, often while the pupils' concentration is directed at other aspects of a task.

The food technology lesson illustrates the inter-relatedness of all aspects of the Frederick Hugh House curriculum. The lesson focuses on working with the preparation of food. In anticipation of the food technology lesson, the pupils go on a shopping trip to a local supermarket to buy the ingredients they will work with. This trip involves creating a shopping list, walking to the shop, selecting the ingredients, queuing and paying and returning to the school. This preparation task involves literacy, numeracy, physical exercise, the use of real life skills in an authentic setting, adapting to a different external environment, task specific interactions with unfamiliar adults as well as social interaction with staff and peers. The task is interesting, fun and leads to a sense of achievement.

The food technology lesson itself is led by the occupational therapist, who incorporates a multi-sensory cross curriculum approach to learning throughout the lesson. This may involve counting strategies when transferring food items, letter recognition when matching phonics to food items (ingredients) or knowledge of the world when relating a recipe to a specific topic and learning about the different food groups. Pupils get the opportunity to experience and learn about different textures, colours, smells, sounds and shapes. The lesson promotes the development of motor skills. Bilateral integration can be practised through using cooking utensils such as a

rolling pin or grater. Bilateral coordination can be exercised when using a knife and fork or scissors. Tearing herbs and using plastic tweezers and finger tips to transfer food practises fine motor skills and aids the development of functional and writing grasps. Self-care is also promoted through teaching the children to use a knife and fork and to wash hands before and after handling food. During food technology sessions the speech and language therapist facilitates communication and language goals and creates a visual schedule to aid the children's understanding and attention. This also helps to improve their ability to follow a sequence of instructions, enabling them to complete tasks such as following a recipe with increased independence. The lesson can engage the imagination or be focused on very specific objectives. The learning objectives are carefully planned and multiply differentiated within the lesson to allow each pupil to participate at an appropriate level and practice specific skills that have been identified in individual education plans.

The Frederick Hugh House curriculum covers the foundation skills needed to allow further learning to be initiated and developed. Considering the special needs of the pupils, it is essential that the teaching programmes should instigate learning that has value to the pupils away from the school context, and which they can apply effectively to new and unfamiliar situations.

All pupils are given homework tasks for each weekend. This is to consolidate the learning achieved during the school week. The pupils are also asked to complete a diary entry which details their activities over the weekend. This aids their communication skills, but also gives staff an opportunity to understand how effectively the teaching and learning which takes place at the school is being transferred to the child's life away from the school.

In addition, before each holiday each child is given a specially compiled holiday pack which details tasks and exercises to be completed and practised during the school holidays. This emphasises the summative and inter-related quality of the learning promoted at Frederick Hugh House, and the importance of reinforcing learning in all contexts.

The timetable for each day at Frederick Hugh House has been carefully organised to regulate the level of sensory input to the children during the course of the school day. Lessons or activities with low sensory input are followed by activities or lessons that have a higher level of sensory stimulation. The intention is not to overstimulate or under-stimulate the pupils, but to achieve a balance that allows pupils to maintain focus throughout the school day. An important part of this process is the end of day session. This often combines an act of worship with a contemplative evaluation of the day's work. This allows the children to wind down from the energy of the day and go home in a state of relaxed equilibrium.

The duration of lessons has been carefully considered in the curriculum and timetable. The length of each lesson is determined by the subject and the anticipated energy levels of the pupils. Lessons must be long enough for meaningful teaching and learning to occur, but they must not stretch beyond an appropriate time and leave the pupils tired and under-stimulated. In addition, the layout of the school, in which each subject has its own dedicated teaching area and each therapist their own room, means that the pupils have a natural break between learning or therapy sessions as they move to a different part of the building. This gap is used purposefully to help the children adopt an appropriate frame of mind for the next part of their day. It is carefully regulated and monitored time that provides a necessary transition between sessions.

The value of the hidden curriculum is also emphasised. This is the progress that can be instigated and reinforced through the way the pupils are treated and are expected to behave. Pupil behaviour is very carefully observed and monitored at all times during the school day. Good behaviour is actively promoted within the school through a structure of rewards that is applied consistently throughout the school. Similarly, negative behaviour is challenged and a structure of sanctions is used consistently throughout the school.

The behaviour of the pupils within the school and on trips away from the school is usually excellent. All staff take a lead in setting standards of behaviour for the pupils. Preferred/desired language is used in all interactions involving staff or pupils which are connected with the work of the school. Relations between all staff, and between

staff and pupils are at all times friendly, courteous and warm. The energetic, and engaged approach of the staff sets a positive example for the children. This both reflects and promotes the informal, open but focused atmosphere that characterises the school. Children are always praised for effort, irrespective of levels of achievement. Praise is always given in a way which makes it clear to the child exactly which aspect of their behaviour has met with approval. This recognises the importance of consistent but focused encouragement and support in maintaining the pupils' motivation and self-esteem, and reinforces their desire to learn. The 2014 ISI report (p9) comments that the 'consistent modelling of expected standards and language strongly promotes the development of good behaviour and manners amongst the pupils'.

However, many pupils at Frederick Hugh House present complex behavioural needs which can lead to challenging or unacceptable conduct. This requires the development and application of individual behaviour management strategies for each child, based on observations, insights and understanding of each child's needs as well as knowledge of best professional practice. Behaviour management is regarded as a key element in unlocking the potential of each child to learn and develop. It is seen as a way to support and empower the child, not as a method to enforce or maintain control. The behaviour management strategy for each child is carefully developed and applied by all staff consistently throughout the school day. It is designed to help each child to develop their own moral code, based on understanding and respecting the rights and needs of others and accepting responsibility for their own behaviour. This is fundamentally linked with the need to teach appropriate social skills and coping strategies to each child, based on each child's developmental and educational challenges, personality and temperament. The fully individualised and detailed approach to behaviour management has helped the children to understand and respect boundaries of acceptable behaviour, and has led to notable improvements in behaviour at the school and in other situations. The behaviour of each child is discussed in detail during a staff meeting each week. During these meetings the strategies used to manage individual behaviour are reviewed, and any necessary changes may be instigated.

Similarly, the system of rewards and sanctions applied to pupils' behaviour in the

school is differentiated according to the needs of each pupil and the particular challenges they face. The basic principle, that intentional good behaviour will be noted and rewarded in a way that is consistently applied by all staff across the whole school, is understood by the pupils. Similarly, the pupils understand the principle that sanctions will be consistently applied to intentional unacceptable behaviour. The structure and nature of the rewards and sanctions depend on the particular behaviour, its context and the individual child who is being rewarded or sanctioned. The good behaviour that has merited a reward is specifically identified and the reasons for the reward are emphasised to the pupil. Likewise, negative behaviours are challenged. This involves assessing the antecedents of any unacceptable conduct and understanding it in the context of the child's needs, abilities and challenges. The pupil is led to understand why the behaviour is not acceptable, even if the feelings and impulses that gave rise to it are valid. Consequently staff members will encourage children to reflect on instances of challenging conduct, and encourage them to think of alternative behaviours which would be acceptable. Due to the particular behavioural challenges some pupils face, the actual sanctions and rewards that are used may be differentiated in order to for them to be meaningful and appropriate. The implementation of the whole school behaviour management policy sets out clear guidance to the pupils and helps to establish patterns of conduct that are essential elements of social life, both within the school and in the child's broader social context.

The attention to detail in the way behaviour is managed is an important element in promoting each child's individual development, and has contributed to improvements in the pupils' behaviour, within the school setting and in a wider context. This is evidenced through the pupils' progress. It is now common for lessons to be completed without any episodes of challenging behaviour, and regular outings such as the visit to the supermarket, swimming and riding lessons and the Friday lunchtime visit to a local mainstream school mostly occur without any incidents. In addition parents frequently comment on their child's improved behaviour, both in general terms and in relation to specific contexts which had previously presented serious challenges.

Pupils and staff can also reflect on behaviour during the end of day sessions.

'Candle Time' and 'Show and Tell' allow pupils' conduct to be revisited and for messages which can be drawn from it to be clearly indicated.

It is essential for Frederick Hugh House that all its pupils feel safe at school. The school rules emphasise the importance of physical safety, and all staff have extensive training in securing the physical safety of the pupils. It is also recognised that SEN pupils particularly need to be taught about potential dangers and need to learn strategies to ensure their own and others' physical safety.

In addition, potential social dangers, which are especially relevant for vulnerable children, are identified. Discussion opportunities such as 'Circle Time' are used to teach awareness of stranger danger and promote behaviour strategies such as talking only to people you know. Story telling is also used as an opportunity to reinforce these ideas, as well as to promote good behaviour and develop insights into character and motivation.

Frederick Hugh House has not experienced problems with bullying, but is aware of the potential dangers of this behaviour developing as the children become older. All staff are fully aware of these dangers, and are fully aware of the school's anti-bullying policy.

Frederick Hugh House has carefully devised and clearly established school rules. These define statutory responsibilities as well as specifying standards of conduct for the children. Pupils are expected to behave with courtesy and respect, to show concern for others and to accept responsibility for their own conduct. Punctuality and politeness are valued. School uniform plays a part in promoting a sense of identity with the school, and also in indicating that certain standards of behaviour are expected in the school. The role of parents in supporting and reinforcing the behaviour management strategies used in the school is emphasised and understood.

The benefits of the hidden curriculum are not recorded in the PIVATS scales, but are tangible and significant. Children at Frederick Hugh House become more confident, outgoing, self-aware and aware of others. Levels of concentration are better, and

there is a sense of a positive cycle of achievement, accomplishment and reward.

The design of the curriculum at Frederick Hugh House demonstrates the level of detail that is involved in the planning and delivery of its education programmes. The curriculum offers a framework within which multi-sensory and fully integrated learning can be initiated and promulgated in all lessons, sessions and activities. Within the framework of the curriculum, specific aims and objectives can be determined in individual education plans, schemes of work and lesson plans. The curriculum gives a structure to the fully integrated approach to teaching and learning. It offers a variety of learning experiences in diverse contexts involving different levels of sensory input. It enables learning to be differentiated, engaging, and focused and affords opportunities for that learning to be reinforced and consolidated throughout the school day. The ISI inspection report 2014 (p5) has commented that 'The curriculum provides exceptionally well for all the pupils' needs and abilities'.

9 THE FREDERICK HUGH HOUSE APPROACH

The main difference between Frederick Hugh House and similar schools is in the overall approach to teaching and learning.

Frederick Hugh House has adopted a fully multi-sensory approach to helping its pupils. This is based on research findings in cognitive psychology and applied research in therapeutic and educational settings. Children with developmental difficulties often need extensive and diverse sensory inputs to stimulate patterns of learning. These need to be repeated and reinforced consistently before they become assimilated and integrated into the child's cognitive processes. Combinations of different sensory stimuli can also make learning a more diverting and engaging experience for children, allowing them to concentrate for longer and engage more fully with learning tasks.

The fully integrated approach to teaching and learning also recognises that every part of a child's day contains opportunities for consolidating learning. To make

effective use of these opportunities it is necessary to know what tasks the child has been attempting to learn, and how these tasks have been approached. If a similar approach is taken by all adults involved with the child's learning, the consistent re-presentation of information and guidance makes it more likely that real learning can be assisted. Within a school setting these opportunities occur with every interaction with a staff member, both inside and outside the classroom.

At Frederick Hugh House there is a consistent whole school approach to teaching and learning. All staff form part of a fully integrated team in which teachers and professional therapists use their skills to support each others' work in a coherent and structured way. These collaborative work practices recognise the fundamental inter-relatedness of all teaching, learning and therapy. They allow a cross-curricular approach in which specific aims and objectives can be reinforced in every contact with the child. In addition, each member of the teaching and therapy team learns to view the pupils from multiple professional standpoints. This may inform their approach to their own work through using insights gained from other professional disciplines. It also helps each professional to see each child from a broader perspective, emphasising that each child is a whole individual rather than an amalgam of needs, challenges, targets and achievements.

The principles that determine the Frederick Hugh House approach are difficult to realise in practice. They require extensive planning and clear leadership and direction. The ISI inspection report 2014 (p11) comments that the school's leadership is; 'open, consultative, dynamic and dedicated to the well-being and development of the pupils. It leads by example and inspires all staff to put the best interests of the pupils at the heart of their work'.

The Headteacher at Frederick Hugh House is also the Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO) of the school. It is her responsibility to devise the teaching and therapy programmes and ensure that the staff work in a coherent and integrated way to deliver them.

Within the broad structure of the curriculum, and involving the multi-sensory fully collaborative and integrated approach to teaching and learning, attention to the

specific needs of each child in a detailed and focused way is key to promoting and securing learning. Targets need to be set for each child which are realistic and challenging. They also need to be focused on the specific requirements of each child in the short term and take into consideration the developmental aims for the child in the medium to long term.

This is achieved through producing lesson plans for each week which detail the learning objectives and expected learning outcomes of each lesson for each child. An important aspect of this is the specific planning of the differentiation strategies to be used in the lessons, ensuring that each child has specific and appropriate targets for each learning session.

The basis for working with each child's specific needs in the short term is the individual education plan. At Frederick Hugh House IEPs are reviewed for each child every three weeks. They set out aims and objectives for the child in relation to class activities, behaviour, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy. These can be rated according to specified task achievement criteria set out on a goal attainment scale. The progress in regard to each objective is normally assessed after eight weeks.

The IEPs are detailed and specific. They are based on detailed records of progress and behaviour which are made by professional staff after each lesson, session or activity. These records relate to planned activities, but also include records of any unexpected events that may have some bearing on the performance of the child. Note taking and record keeping is extensive. However, care is taken to record only information that is useful and usable. Accurate and apposite notes can lead to a greater understanding of a pupil's specific challenges, and consequently to more appropriate and effective interventions.

There are also formal and informal meetings of staff. The fully engaged professional ethos among the staff at Frederick Hugh House means that staff frequently discuss their work and share insights and opinions about the children and their work with them. Although these discussions are informal, they are often informed and informative and can lead to the development of ideas and strategies relating to

possible future practices.

There are two formal meetings each week for professional staff, chaired by the Headteacher. One meeting is dedicated to whole school business, while the other focuses on the specific progress and behaviour of each child. Targets are reviewed, progress is evaluated and new areas for work are identified. These meetings are formally structured. Agendas are produced in consultation with the staff, and minutes are kept. Any member of staff can raise an issue or make suggestions. All ideas are discussed openly and impartially and assessed on their merits. A clear rationale is always given to support any decision that is made in response to a suggestion by a member of staff. Normally there is a clear consensus among staff about how to proceed. The teaching, therapeutic and support staff team have been working together at Frederick Hugh House for some time, and fully understand how the school operates and how its pupils learn. However, when there is disagreement, the Headteacher has the final say. On the basis of meetings and discussions specific instructions are given to individual staff members or to the whole team.

Teamwork at Frederick Hugh House is key to its success. Informal and formal meetings help generate mutual respect and a shared interest in doing more to meet the specific and general needs of the pupils. Staff are self-motivated and positive about their work and committed to extending their professional knowledge and raising their professional standards. They also have the confidence of the Headteacher, and have confidence in her ability to lead and direct the team. In this regard the Headteacher's background as a therapist may have helped establish this community of best practice at Frederick Hugh House. The Headteacher is able to engage with therapists at a professional level. They feel that they will be heard and understood when they discuss issues with her, and they are able to appreciate how she manages the school and to understand the thinking that underpins her approach to leadership and management.

Communication with parents is also very important. In addition to parent/teacher evenings every term, the Headteacher meets with each child's parents every three weeks for up to an hour. This meeting allows the Headteacher and the parents to review the child's progress over the past three weeks and to discuss the objectives

and aims for the next three week individual education plan. It is also an opportunity for the school to receive informed feedback from the parents about the effectiveness of its programmes away from the school setting. Parents are normally very keen to cooperate as they can understand how this facilitates their child's development. The importance of parental involvement during school holidays is also emphasised. All parents are issued with holiday packs in which specific activities are recommended for their child and suggestions are made as to how to extend and apply the learning engendered in the school to other settings and contexts.

Contact with parents is not restricted to formal meetings. The school operates an open door policy, and encourages parents to communicate with the school over any matter that involves their child's education and development. Parents often see teachers when delivering their children to school in the morning or collecting them in the afternoon. In addition, parents are invited to the school sports day and drama and dance events in which their children are participating. The small size of Frederick Hugh House means that a representative parents group is not practicable. However, it allows the development of productive and collaborative relationships between the Headteacher and all parents. The interests of parents are represented on the trustee body of the school by the school's founder, who is also a parent of one of the pupils.

At present in Frederick Hugh House written records are stored in hard copies in files. This allows information to be shared, but the physical communication of this information is often a cumbersome process. As a result, Frederick Hugh House plans to introduce a paperless record-keeping system in 2014. Under this system any information about a child's performance or behaviour can be noted on a tablet and instantly communicated to all members of staff. This is likely to improve the staff's understanding of the specific situation of a child, leading to a more effective and consistent approach, particularly in regard to unexpected events or behaviours. It should also be easier to access previous records. This may help to identify certain patterns of behaviour or learning and inform future interventions. Information should also be more easily available in meetings and discussions. Reports could become even more detailed, and feature embedded photographs or videos to help illustrate specific points.

Report writing is central to understanding the specific achievements and challenges of each child. The reports produced by the professional staff at Frederick Hugh House are unusually detailed and specific. They reflect the level of knowledge and understanding of the child and the attention to detail that has informed the planning and delivery of all parts of the curriculum. The format used for reports is based on an assimilation of best practice in report writing used in different professional disciplines. The reports present assessments of each child's progress relative to specified aims and objectives outlined in the curriculum or in individual learning programmes. Where possible, objective measures of progress are given. Reports contain specific therapeutic and educational assessments, but also look to the development of each child as an independent individual.

The Frederick Hugh House approach can be characterised by its meticulous attention to detail in all aspects of its work with its pupils. It has made the school a place in which personal and institutional structures of support sustain and promote intense, constructive and focused work which is setting new standards for the provision of special needs education.

CONCLUSION

Frederick Hugh House is showing a record of outstanding success in its work. This can be seen in objective measures of pupil performance, but is also evidenced by the observations of teachers and therapists, and by reports from parents and carers. This would suggest that Frederick Hugh House is meeting its stated objectives of providing learning for life which enhances the confidence and independence of the pupils and enables them to meet more of the challenges they face due to their learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

This success stems from strong leadership. The Headteacher sets high standards for herself and for the staff, and continually emphasises the primacy of doing what is best for the children. There is a constant challenge to do more and work more effectively in every area of operation. This has led to the generation of a team of committed, motivated and highly skilled professional staff who work collaboratively to deliver fully integrated multi-sensory teaching and learning programmes. The staff

have established a sense of a community of best practice in which high expectations and high levels of professional performance can be applied across traditional professional divisions.

The fully integrated approach to teaching and learning based on detailed and specific assessments, aims and objectives, has been outstandingly successful when combined with a multi-sensory broad-based curriculum. Part of this success is due to recognition of the opportunities to promote and enhance learning that are inherent in all aspects the school's operation and in the daily lives of the pupils. The continuing and purposeful reinforcement of therapeutic and learning aims and objectives at school and, with the cooperation of families, at home has resulted in tangible and sustained progress. A further factor in the success of the school's approach is its focus on working from a child-centred perspective; at all times considering what is best for the child.

The success of Frederick Hugh House may have implications for the provision of SEND services in specialist schools and within mainstream schools. The intensity of focus and clear direction bring new energy and purpose to widely accepted ideas in special needs education provision. The professional staff work together as a fully coordinated and integrated team, not just within their own disciplines, but within a cross-curricular approach that informs all activities and relationships within the school and focuses them on maximising benefits to the pupils

The role of the SENCO includes leading and coordinating a team of expert professionals. This demands a full understanding of the potential and limitations of therapeutic interventions in order to set challenging but realistic targets. This holds individual staff to account for their work, and also provides a structure to professional practice within the school. This can serve to drive up standards, enhance teamwork and motivate professional staff.

Similarly, differentiation in lessons can be seen not as an aim in itself but as the consequence of carefully planned and targeted teaching strategies focused on the needs of each pupil. The value of such strategies depends on the accuracy of this focus and the skills with which lessons and therapy sessions are devised and

delivered.

The three week individual education plans also show that attention to detail is central to fostering progress among special needs pupils. As pupils learn and develop, their skills evolve and their specific needs change. Individual education plans need to be specific and detailed and to set clear objectives relating to learning criteria. This is not possible if they are not revised frequently.

The cooperative approach of the staff at Frederick Hugh House may have implications for the training and working practices of professional therapists. Therapeutic interventions have been shown to be more effective if they are part of an integrated approach in which shared objectives inform purposeful and instructive collaboration.

The role of the Headteacher has been central to enabling Frederick Hugh House to realise its vision. Strong and purposeful leadership which is focused on meeting the needs of the pupils in all aspects of the school's work generates an atmosphere in which striving to raise standards and expectations is embedded into the working practices of all at the school.

The 2014 ISI inspection report states that;

'The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.....The school is highly successful in achieving its aims to support all pupils to develop their unique qualities and talents' (p4)

Frederick Hugh House has become a school in which the vision of its founder is now a reality, with the benefits being realised for all its pupils.