

Knotty Ash Deaf Resource Base (DRB)

The provision is commissioned by Liverpool Local Authority to provide 17 places for deaf pupils aged from 3-11. Children attend from Liverpool and its surrounding authorities (Halton, Warrington, St Helens, Sefton, Cheshire East and Cheshire West.) Admission to the DRB is administered by Liverpool Sensory Team.

Context of Knotty Ash DRB

Most deaf children in Liverpool and neighbouring authorities attend their local mainstream school with support from peripatetic teachers of the deaf. There is no school for the deaf in the area. The criteria for allocation of a place in the DRB are set out in the Service Level Agreement. In other areas of the country, the criteria for intake into resourced provision will be different if there is also a local school for the deaf. The children placed within the DRB here may meet criteria for admission to a school for the deaf in other parts of the country. They are pupils who are deemed to need more specialist provision than can be provided in a mainstream setting, even with an individual support package or 1:1 communication support. Over the last two years, all three leavers from y6 have moved to a secondary school for the deaf.

Whereas in other parts of the country there is a further tier of specialist provision for deaf children, this is not the case in Liverpool and neighbouring authorities. The implication of this is that for primary age deaf children, Knotty Ash DRB provides the most specialist setting available. We also cater for the most complex deaf children. Within the current cohort, four children have a diagnosis of ASD; five have complex medical needs; all have entered the DRB with some level of language delay (the majority come to us with no functional language at all) and many exhibit social, emotional and behavioural difficulties associated with lack of language.

Key Features of Knotty Ash DRB

- Inclusion is a whole-school priority. Successful inclusion means each child getting the support they need to thrive educationally, socially and emotionally. It is not determined by geographical location or percentage time spent in mainstream class, in DRB class or engaged in individual support.
- Knotty Ash provides an enabling environment for all children. Pupils from Nursery to Year 6 have BSL (British Sign Language) lessons. All events are fully signed in BSL. Deaf children take part in Breakfast club, After-school provision, clubs, sporting events etc. Deaf children develop a strong, positive deaf identity within a sign-bilingual setting and a fully inclusive environment.
- Personalised provision for children attending the DRB is highly responsive to individual need. This includes the level of adaptation of the curriculum, the pace of progress through key concepts, the pitch of BSL tuition, the programme of specialist speech and language support, social scaffolding or support, emotional and therapeutic work etc.
- Teachers of the Deaf and Mainstream teachers plan together weekly in order to determine how the curriculum will be delivered to all the children: hearing, deaf, SEN. There are a variety of options:
 - Whole-class input through team-teaching
 - Pre- and post- tutoring in BSL

- Differentiated input, adapted to the language needs of the cohort
- Mixed (hearing and deaf) group teaching

The combination of teaching options are selected according to the concepts being taught, the nature of the activities and the complexity of language. Timetabling throughout the school is flexible to meet the needs of children and the curriculum. We do not operate fixed timetables and the percentage of time deaf children spend learning in a mainstream classroom and/or learning alongside hearing peers varies weekly. We continue to work hard to ensure this meaningful level of inclusivity. Inclusion Quality Mark assessment (Dec 2019) observed:

“One of the evident strengths of Knotty Ash school and its inclusion ethos is its ability to be flexible. Arrangements for all children are reviewed and modified to suit need, particularly those within the DRB, where a mix of specialist provision and mainstream inclusion is practised.” (Full report available on school website)

Core Package

The basic provision package for children in the DRB consists of:

- Teaching by a qualified Teacher of the Deaf on a ratio of 1:6 (in accordance with NDCS guidelines for standard resourced provision)
- Teaching of BSL daily (group and individual) by a specialist Deaf Educational Instructor (DEI)
- Access to support from a specialist Teaching Assistant on a ratio of 1:6
- Highly Specialist Speech and Language support weekly (and practise with TA daily as appropriate)
- Specialist leadership of the DRB by a highly experienced Teacher of the Deaf
- Specialist school leadership by Headteacher with Certificate in Deaf Education
- Inclusion in school which is a Centre of Excellence for Inclusion (IQM)
- Enabling whole-school environment with children and whole-school staff who adopt a sign-bilingual approach

Children with significant additional needs may require additional 1:1 support from a specialist TA with appropriate qualification/expertise in BSL. This level of support is dependent on High Needs Top-Up funding from Liverpool Local Authority.