Rowan School is a special school for primary aged children who have complex speech, language and communication difficulties. All our children have an autistic spectrum profile and some present challenging behaviours. Many pupils have special educational requirements in areas such as

* motor skills
* sensory difficulties
* emotional and behavioural difficulties; such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
* the development of social and communication skills

The school is located on Durvale Court, just off Furniss Avenue in Dore. It is on a pleasant site surrounded by with playing fields and a small area of woodland. The original school was built in 1976. There is a multi purpose hall, a well equipped food technology room, a specially adapted, sensory room; designed to promote calm, focused behaviour; and a library.

We currently offer 97 places with children grouped into 12 classes. Each classroom has access to outside play areas and includes a quiet room; where children can be taught individually or have time to calm.

A teacher and a minimum of two teaching and learning assistants staff each class. Additional teaching and learning assistants are allocated to classes according to need, with higher staffing ratios in classes with children with more complex needs.

The school provides a curriculum that is broad, balanced and relevant. The range of subjects is the same as that of mainstream schools, and includes English, maths, science, design technology, information communication technology, music, art, history, geography, RE and PE. Delivery is through a bespoke creative curriculum with cross-curricular topics. Specific attention is also given to personal and social education, health education and education for safety.

Central to our whole curriculum is an emphasis on developing the skills our children find most difficult: communication, social interaction and independence.

Staff at Rowan school work together to support one another in joint planning meetings and through regular development sessions. Teachers new to the school are well supported through a thorough induction programme, approachable accessible mentors, a developmental appraisal system, CPD opportunities, both PPA and NQT non-contact time. Colleagues at Rowan are welcoming and friendly.

Our teaching approaches are multi-sensory and each child has an individual programme of work, carefully planned to meet his/her needs. In planning for the specific needs of each child there is close liaison between teaching staff, speech and language therapists, parents/carers and educational psychologists to create a co-ordinated approach.

We also regularly evaluate, reflect and update to recognise and meet changing needs.

For many of our pupils visual support is key to their understanding and learning. We use whole school communication systems such as Makaton signing and symbols to support and encourage speech and to help children understand information and instructions. We provide individual visual interactive timetables to establish routines, aid transition from one activity to another and to help children understand and feel safe in the school environment.

We aim to develop the ability of the children to express, understand and reflect upon their needs, feelings, experiences, ideas and choices, and to interact effectively with other people in social settings.

A key part of our curriculum is the aim to develop pupil involvement in concrete learning experiences. This means that we need to make regular visits to give children direct experiences that support their learning.

We place great emphasis on outdoor education for all areas of the curriculum. The school grounds include a woodland with an outdoor classroom, a yurt, raised garden beds, some outdoor and others in a large polytunnel, a sensory garden with a covered teaching area and a variety of play areas including adventure equipment and a climbing boulder. There are many visits outside the classroom to places such as parks, libraries, museums, shops, transport centres, etc. so that children can learn in practical ways, experience a variety of social situations and learn how to behave and interact appropriately in those settings. For the older children there are exciting opportunities for field trips and residential holidays.