

Case Study:

'No limits, just possibilities' - Magic Carpet in St Joseph's Special school

Staff at St Joseph's Specialist School and College decided to purchase a Magic Carpet in October 2014 as they felt that it would make a fantastic addition to the school's Nurture Room.

We caught up with Karen Bratchell and Jess Kerbey who are in charge of Sensory Rooms at the school, to find out how the experience has been and whether, three years on, the Magic Carpet still meets their expectations?



Why did you choose to purchase a Magic Carpet?

We decided to purchase Sensory Guru's Magic Carpet back in 2014, with the aim of enhancing the sensory experience for learners that use the schools Nurture Room.

Sensory Guru manufacture, install and support the Magic Carpet system and so they seemed like the best company to purchase an interactive floor from.

We also loved the extra features that the Magic Carpet provides when you compare it to other systems. For example, you can create your own apps and personalise the content to suit your learners needs.



Sessions in our school's Nurture Room are entirely learner led, as this encourages participants to make their own decisions, which can help to promote independence.

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As a result of this, being able to personalise the applications to our learners needs, likes and dislikes is massively important to us.

In September 2016, Sensory Guru offered our school, along with the rest of their customer base, a complimentary upgrade to our Magic Carpet system so that we can get access to the latest Magic Carpet software and App Store.

The new App Store and Easy App Builder have made it much quicker and easier



for us to create our own apps. There is also a massive range of content that we are looking forward to exploring which is additional to the wide range of sensory and calming applications that we have focused upon so far.



The content on the App Store is also constantly updating and evolving.

This is important to St Joseph's because the school is constantly changing and developing to suit our learners needs. Our learner's moods and ability to do things can also change on a day-to-day basis, which means that we need products that can meet these varying needs.

There are also lots of new students joining St Joseph's in September and all of them will be individual in what they like and enjoy.

The fact that the Magic Carpet is always developing and has new applications and features introduced is extremely useful in this respect.

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What is the Nurture Room and how is Magic Carpet used within it?

The Nurture Room is a very low demand environment where learners from all key stages can access a variety of different activities during timetabled sessions.

The room has a number of purposes. It can be used to help take learners through the stages of play to aid their social interaction skills; enable learners to become more independent by helping them to make their own choices and decisions; and provide learners with time to relax and reflect.

Learners that use the Nurture Room may have had an incident during the day, or they may need to come out of the classroom environment, where there is lots of noise, to relax.

The Nurture Room provides a holistic, relaxing space and safe environment where our learners can be calm and self-regulate.

Many of our learners now look forward to coming into the Nurture Room and having a quiet, relaxed time on the Magic Carpet.

One of our learners is constantly on the go. He likes to run around everywhere and finds it very hard to remain still. However, when he comes for his session in the Nurture Room he immediately makes a beeline to lie down on the bean bag with the Magic Carpet.

For half-an-hour he will lie still with the Magic Carpet, which is absolutely amazing. People actually come and watch his sessions because it is so amazing to see.



We also have one girl who is very verbal and can communicate her emotions well.

She has a Magic Carpet session every Thursday and every time I see her she says "Thursday, Thursday! Magic Carpet!" Even when I see her on a Tuesday she says "two days left, two days left!"

She made a fantastic game using the Magic Carpet and a white tent to create a portal which transported us to a magical wonderland. For the entire time she remained in the wonderland and at the



end of the session she would not leave the room until we had gone back into the portal and been transported back to school.

It was a fantastic session and high achieving for our school.



This highlights some of the different ways that the Magic Carpet is currently used.

Some of our learners use the Magic Carpet as a means to relax.

They enjoy lying down on a bean bag with the Magic Carpet and watching or gently interacting with the projection, when in their everyday lives, they are constantly on the go and unable to unwind.

Feedback from one of our learners has even been "it makes me feel calm".

Other learners use the Magic Carpet as an opportunity for role play and escapism. The possibilities are endless.

St Joseph's specialises in speech and language development, communication and interaction. Does the Magic Carpet help to make improvements in these areas?

Yes, while we originally purchased the Magic Carpet for sensory and relaxation purposes, the scope of the Magic Carpet extends far beyond this.

Now our Occupational Therapists and Speech and Language Therapists have scheduled sessions during the week when they also use the Magic Carpet.

We have also made some personalised apps that have communication symbols on them.

This means when learners use the apps they are listening, answering, signing and learning the new symbols.

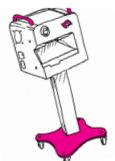
Our learners also love the Peter Rabbit story book app. They like to listen and watch the pages turn as the story is read out, they also repeat parts of the story back to us.

Are there any other success stories that stand out for you?

Recently a girl who has been diagnosed with autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder came for an induction at the school.

She had a half-an-hour session in the Nurture Room and worked through as many apps as she possibly could on the Magic Carpet during this time.

She kept saying "this is just amazing, this is amazing for me, I love this" which was wonderful.



We have another learner who started imaginatively playing games with props when using the Magic Carpet.

She became different woodland animals, such as a mouse and a bear, and even used a tent as a cave to hibernate.

The teacher's feedback from the following class was that it was the first afternoon that week that she had been calm and didn't have an incident.



This has led us to carry out a research project to explore whether the Magic Carpet has a positive impact on behaviour.

We wondered whether it had been a 'one off' that there were no incidents after the Magic Carpet session, or if this was a technique that we could use to help with managing behaviour in the future?

★ Over the past two terms we have analysed learner's behaviour patterns:

★ In class for an hour before learners had a session with the Magic Carpet

★ During their session with the Magic Carpet

★ In class for an hour following their session with the Magic Carpet

The sessions took place at the same time each week and every participants behaviour was scored on a on a red, amber or green rating.

The results are still being collated.

“ We can't express enough to other people that, if they wanted to purchase an interactive projection system, they should get Sensory Guru's Magic Carpet.”

However, preliminary research found that behaviour was always best while learners were using the Magic Carpet.

In the majority of cases behaviour also often improved in class following the session with Magic Carpet.

In the few circumstances where behaviour was worse in class than during the session with the Magic Carpet, we felt that this might be because the learner had not wanted their session with the Magic Carpet to end, however this is something that we need to explore further.

What has feedback been like from parents and teachers?

We show parents the Magic Carpet when they are shown around the school and they absolutely love it, as do teachers.



We also had a school improvement officer working with St Joseph's and she loved the Nurture Room and the Magic Carpet.

There has been no negative feedback.

How was working with Sensory Guru?

It has been amazing!

In fact, I think they probably have an order on us to stay away and stop making a nuisance out of ourselves!

Everyone is so friendly, lovely and helpful.

We can't express enough to other people that, if they wanted to purchase an interactive projection system, they should get Sensory Guru's Magic Carpet!

The help and feedback from everyone in the team has been absolutely amazing!

We are not the best with computers, but we can work the Magic Carpet and if we have ever need any help, or something has gone wrong, Sensory Guru have fixed it from their end.

They are always helpful and willing. I can't express enough how brilliant it has been!



Do you think the Magic Carpet is value for money?

Yes, I would say that the Magic Carpet has been good value for money.

This is accentuated by the free software upgrade that Sensory Guru provided us with.

I don't think many companies would offer something so valuable to their entire customer base for no extra fee.

St Joseph's Specialist School and College is a co-educational residential and day school, that caters for children between the ages of 5 – 19 with complex and severe learning difficulties.

We would like to thank the school for working so closely alongside our organisation and for letting us carry out this case study.

We are always excited to hear the results of your latest research project and are proud that the Magic Carpet plays an important role within the schools magical Nurture Room.

