

Foreland Fields School Curriculum Handbook

Foreland Fields School



Curriculum Handbook

2025-26

Foreland Fields School Curriculum Handbook

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Whole School Context

September 2025

- Foreland Fields School has 295 pupils on roll (September 2025). All pupils have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- Foreland Fields School is a good school, as evidenced by its most recent Section 8 Inspection in May 2023.
- The current Headteacher took up post in September 2015.
- The school has two Deputy Headteachers. One Deputy took up post in January 2016 and the second in January 2019.
- Foreland Fields School is part of a shared charitable co-operative trust named KsENT (Kent Special Educational Needs Trust) along with the majority of other Kent Special Schools. Foreland Fields School joined KsENT in August 2016.
- There are 295 pupils on roll from Year R to 14 (September 2025). 60% of pupils on roll have ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) as their primary need, 1% Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), 4% Physical Difficulty (PD), 14% Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD), 9% Speech Learning and Communication Needs (SLCN), 11% Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), 1% Sensory and Physical / Hearing Impairment (S&P/HI).
- The Foreland Fields School Curriculum pathways focus on developing key communication, cognition, independence and physical skills in order to equip our pupils and students to live happy and healthy lives beyond school.
 - From September 2025, the delivery of learning and development for pupils within Year R, and Yr 1 and Yr 2 pupils within the 'Foundation Pathway' is supported through the Equals Informal (for pupils with complex learning disabilities) and Semi-formal Curricula. 14% of pupils are on the Foundation Pathway.
 - Pupils with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties follow the Explorers Pathway, a pre-formal therapy-based curriculum that focuses on eliciting responses, health and well-being, postural management and mobility. Currently 16% of pupils/students are following the Explorers Pathway.
 - Pupils with Severe Learning Difficulties follow the Discoverers Pathway – a semi-formal, developmental, skills-based curriculum focusing on communication, early cognitive skills, relationships, independence and physical development. Currently 44% of pupils/students are following this pathway.
 - Pupils with more moderate learning difficulties follow the Pioneers Pathway, an adapted version of the National Curriculum with a focus on accreditation, work related experiences, relationships and health education and life skills, which prepares our young people for independent living and the world of work. Currently 14% of pupils/students are following the Pioneers Pathway.
 - Pupils with complex learning difficulties who are working at around P4/P5 follow the Adventurers Pathway – an informal curriculum focusing on communication, relationships, self-regulation and independence. Currently 12% of pupils/students follow this pathway.
- Foreland Fields has a Service Level Agreement with Kent Local Authority to provide an Early Years Outreach Service. The Foreland Fields Early Years Outreach Service provides support from a team of Specialist practitioners to mainstream settings across Thanet. The Support is for children aged 3-4 years

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who are accessing a mainstream setting and have been identified as having complex needs. They may have a diagnosis of Autism or be on the pathway for an ASD diagnosis or they may have other physical, medical and/or health needs.

- 70% of the current school roll are boys and 30% girls.
- Many pupils, particularly those with PMLD, have a range of medical conditions that require staff intervention – much of it from within the school. 19 children (7%) are classed as complex/unstable medical needs, 27 (10%) with moderate medical needs and 29 pupils/students (10.5%) have additional medical needs.
- The majority of pupils are transported to school by the Local Authority. A large proportion of these live outside the local catchment area.
- The school is in an area with significant social deprivation. 50% of pupils are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM).
- The school has a Family Liaison Officer to work with and support families and increase levels of engagement with 'hard to reach' families.
- 4% of the school population are Children in Care (CiC). The school has a further 1% of children who are adopted from care.
- 10% of pupils do not identify English as their first language (EAL).
- 45% of pupils in the school are currently in receipt of Pupil Premium funding (PP).
- Foreland Fields School runs successful offsite satellite classes for our pupils and students following the Pioneers Pathway. These classes operate out of Garlinge Primary School and Nursery (Year R/Key Stage and Key Stage 2), Hartsdown Academy (Key Stage 3) and 2 classes at East Kent College (Key Stage 4 and 6th Form). These pupils/students attend their satellite school full time, supported by staff from Foreland Fields School and follow either the Foundation Pathway (Year R/KS1) or Pioneers Curricula (KS2, KS3, KS4 and 6th Form).
- The school has Deaf/Hearing Impairment provision, containing a mixture of pupils with and without hearing impairment, but all of whom have shared communication needs. The class operates out of a specialist room (which benefits from soundproofing and an installed Soundfield system) with its own hub from which the Teacher of the Deaf (ToD) can take on some of the role of the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS).
- Due to increased need, the school has recently employed a trainee Teacher of the Deaf who is in the process of completing the Mandatory Qualification through the university of Birmingham.
- The Teacher of the Deaf and a Teaching Assistant, have completed the required training and are all set to start the delivery of the BSL Level 1 exams to pupils which means that our school will become a signature centre for BSL Level 1. Pupils can be entered into up to 3 exams, depending on how well their expressive and receptive communication develops. The school also has a number of staff trained to British Sign Language (BSL) Level 1 to 4.
- The school accesses a wide range of therapies – Physiotherapy (PT), Occupational Therapy (OT), Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) and Communication and Assistive Technology (CAT) delivered through the local NHS children's integrated service. The school also accesses the specialist teaching service for Visual Impairment (VI) and some support for its internal ToD for hearing impairment. Additional services, including those therapies relating to mental health, are commissioned privately as well as through the NHS and KCC as required. The school has a Speech Language and Communication lead, who works closely with NHS Speech and Language Therapists, trains staff in total communication and delivers interventions to staff groups.

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- The School has 2 part-time Health Care Assistants, who work either end of the week, who coordinate a wide range of NHS clinics held at the school site.
- The school has a Therapy Assistant (Occupational Therapy/Physiotherapy) who coordinates and liaises with the NHS Therapists to ensure the effective delivery of therapy programmes.
- The school has a Clinical Nurse attached to the school, who is part of the Kent Special School Clinical Nursing service.
- The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) awarded the school with the Gold Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) in January 2019 and again in January 2022 and January 2025 after successful re-accreditation visits from UNICEF representatives. Foreland Fields School was the first Kent Local Authority school to be awarded the Gold Award. The Rights Respecting School Award is presented to schools that have fully embedded children's rights throughout the school in its policies, practice and ethos.
- Foreland Fields School was awarded the Inclusion Quality Mark in 2022. Following successful re-accreditation in 2023, the school was awarded 'Centre of Excellence' status, which it maintained in 2024. By achieving the IQM Award, Foreland Fields School demonstrates its commitment to ensuring inclusive practice is at the heart of everything we do. From curriculum planning and behaviour management to staff development and community engagement.
- The school became a self-validated Healthy School in 2023.
- Foreland Fields School has a Makaton Sign Language Regional Trainer on staff who provides training and support for local schools, parents and families.
- Foreland Fields School achieved the Makaton Friendly Award in 2021 and following successful re-assessment, again in 2025. Makaton Friendly status is awarded to establishments that have invested in their staff and premises to meet key criteria and improve accessibility for anyone living with learning or communication difficulties.

Foreland Fields School Ofsted Report May 2023

Foreland Fields School had its most recent Ofsted Inspection (Section 8) on 10th and 11th May 2023, when it was found that the school continued to be 'Good'. *'This is a happy place. Pupils are welcoming to visitors. They are proud of their school, their achievements, and their teachers. Friendships are strong, particularly between older pupils. Students in the sixth form are noticeably confident, benefiting from the school's caring culture and excellent provision to support their personal development.'*

'Leaders have designed a curriculum that is fit for purpose and meets the needs of pupils well. Middle leaders responsible for different aspects of the curriculum are open minded in their approach. This is an outward-looking school. Much work is put into ensuring that the curriculum evolves as pupil cohorts change year on year. Governors also play their part in questioning senior leaders' decisions around the curriculum. This helps to ensure that pupils enjoy their learning across the five different pathways available to them.'

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School Vision and Rationale for Our Curriculum

‘Nurturing the unique personalities, talents and abilities of every child, so that they can be the best that they can be.’

School Ethos and Values

Our school vision, ethos and values are the drivers for our curriculum and can be seen as the “golden threads” that run through each pathway.

- Respect
- Positivity
- Independence
- Aspirational Personalised Learning
- Inclusivity
- Total Communication

A Rights Based Curriculum

Foreland Fields School is a UNICEF Rights Respecting School. We were the first Kent Local Authority special school to receive the Gold Level of this award in January 2019 and we were re-accredited in January 2022 and January 2025.

The UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) is at the heart of all our policy and practice and the UNCRC forms the foundations for our curriculum.

- The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children. *(Article 3)*
- Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them and to have their views considered and taken seriously. *(Article 12)*
- Every child has the right to meet with other children and to join groups and organisations. *(Article 15)*
- Every child has the right to reliable information from a variety of sources. *(Article 17)*
- Children with a disability have the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and as far as possible independence and to play an active part in the community. *(Article 23)*
- Every child has the right to the best possible health. *(Article 24)*
- Every child has the right to an education that develops every child’s personality, talents and abilities to the full. *(Article 29)*
- Every child has the right to relax and play and to take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities. *(Article 31)*
- Every child has a right to be safe. *(Articles 19 and 32-40)*

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SEN Code of Practice 2014

Our curriculum reflects the principles of the SEN Code of Practice 2014, emphasises the importance of considering:

- The views, wishes and feelings of the child and the child's parents
- The importance of the child or young person and the child's parents participating as fully as possible in decisions and being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions
- The need to support the child or young person and the child's parents, in order to facilitate the development of the child or young person and to help them achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, preparing them for adulthood ...including independent living and employment.

The Number of Pupils with SEND continues to increase Nationally

Over 1.7 million pupils in England have special educational needs (SEN)

This is an increase of 93,700 (5.6%) pupils since 2024. This includes the number of pupils with an education, health and care (EHCP) plan and the number of pupils with SEN support, both of which continue the trend of increases since 2016. The number of children with an EHCP has doubled in this time.

- The percentage of pupils with an EHC plan has increased to 5.3%, from 4.8% in 2024.
- The percentage of pupils with SEN support (no EHC plan) has increased to 14.2%, from 13.6% in 2024.

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england>

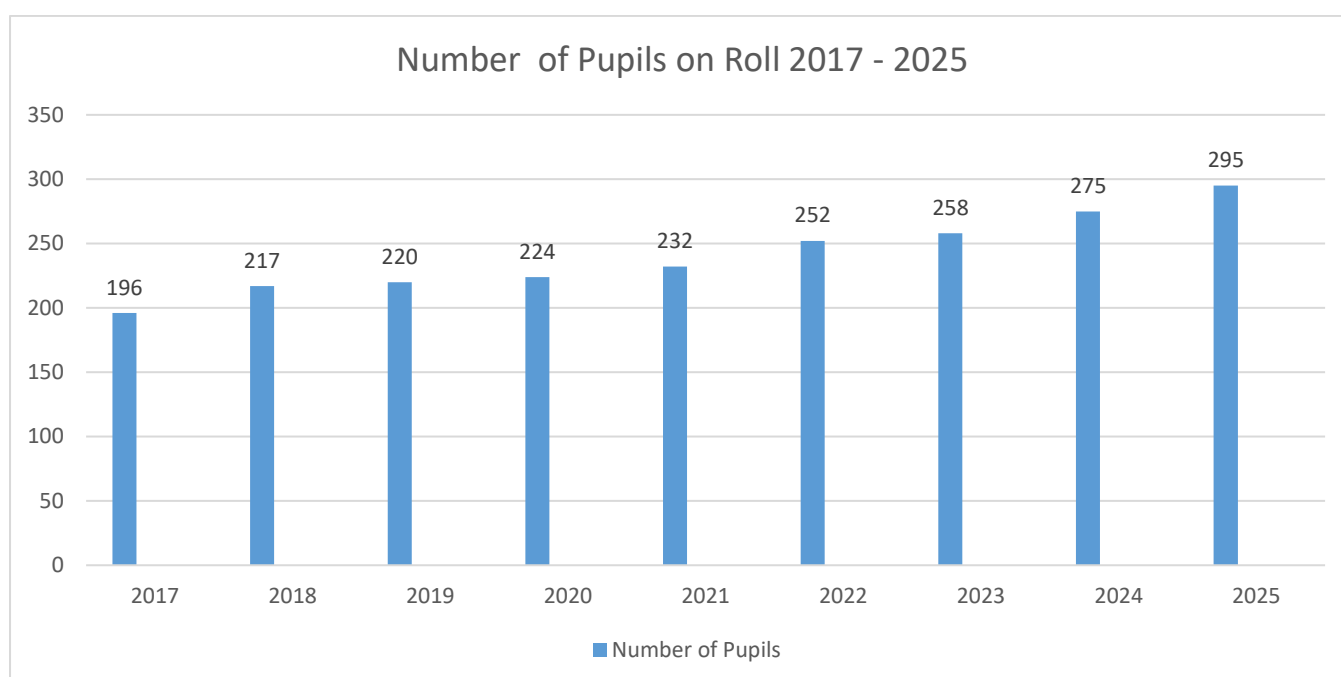
The number of premature babies born before 28 weeks that survive is increasing. In 1980, babies born before 28 weeks' gestation were not deemed "viable", compared with a survival rate of 89% in 2019. 10% of all premature babies will have some form of permanent disability, whilst 50% of babies born before 26 weeks, will have a disability and 30% will have a later diagnosis of autism (*World Health Organisation*). We have already seen an increase in the number of pupils with complex medical and physical needs in school and this is likely to continue.

The 2020-21 COVID 19 pandemic is likely to impact the number of children with additional and complex needs in the future. Barnardo's report a 44% increase in the number of children needing foster care during the pandemic; The Lancet (June 2020) predicts a further rise in the number of babies born with foetal alcohol syndrome. The pandemic has also had an impact on levels of poverty in Thanet. Pre-pandemic figures (gov.uk/government/statistics/disability-facts-and-figures) show that 21% of families with a disabled family member live in poverty, compared with 16% where there are no disabled family members. The combined impact of disadvantage and deprivation, when combined with disability, has a significant negative impact on the potential outcomes for many of our children.

Our Pupils Needs Are Changing

The number of annual referrals to Foreland Fields School, far outstrips our capacity to provide places. Most Year R pupils admitted to the school, now have either PMLD or ASD as their primary need type. The percentage of pupils with PMLD is increasing and pupils with a primary need type of ASD are presenting with increasingly complex co-morbid conditions, such as sensory impairments, epilepsy or ARFID.

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Following changes in the political landscape, including the KCC review of special schools we have begun to see increasing numbers of pupils with less complex SEND being educated within mainstream schools. As from September 2024, we no longer offer a formal curriculum to primary aged pupils. It is expected that we will no longer have any cohort of pupils accessing a formal curriculum by September 2030. It also means that our Explorers Pathway (for pupils with profound and multiple learning disabilities) and Adventurers Pathway (for pupils with complex learning disabilities) will continue to grow.

We are aware that our curriculum needs to adapt to reflect the increasingly complex needs of our learners.

*‘Our children are at the **earliest** stages of development – cognitively, emotionally, psychologically and communicatively. **It is imperative that we get their activities ‘right’ for them in developmental terms.** Failure to do so will be failure. We will fail to reach them, fail to give them activities which they understand, fail to give them relationships and connections with the people immediately around them. The effects of this will be emotionally and psychologically catastrophic for our children.*

Very much of what we term ‘challenging behaviour’ may be seen as the potential results of a child at an early level of development who is embodying these catastrophic effects on their well-being.’

(Dave Hewett: Intensive Interaction Handbook)

Teaching different things differently

Following the Rochford Review (2016) there was a movement within special schools catering for pupils with profound, severe and complex needs towards a more personalised approach to curriculum, within needs led pathways.

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In January 2019 Foreland Fields School began to move away from the mainstream National Curriculum Model towards a bespoke and aspirational curriculum design, that would meet the diverse needs of our pupils through 5 curriculum pathways.

Our curriculum design was been influenced by other outstanding special schools such as Swiss Cottage School in London, Ash Field School in Leicestershire and The Dales Special School in North Yorkshire. We are also working in partnership with Peter Imray and Equals, to ensure that we provide a first-class education for all our pupils.

From our assessment data, we know that our pupils currently do not attain levels beyond the Year 3 curriculum and that the majority of our pupils will continue to work below National Curriculum stages for their entire school career. We know that the cohort of pupils working within National Curriculum levels is diminishing and that these pupils are within our secondary Pioneers classes. We know that the National Curriculum was designed for neuro-typical children and that it does not take into account the very different starting points, rates and ways of learning that our pupils have; it assumes that pupils will have met the developmental milestones of a neuro-typical 5 year old child prior to beginning school; it assumes that pupils will continue to make linear progress throughout their school career, within a curriculum that is subject specific and relies on pupils building upon prior knowledge and understanding abstract concepts. We know that this is not the case for the vast majority of our pupils.

We know that our pupils:

- • have difficulties with communication
- • have difficulties with attention
- • have difficulties with short term and long-term memory
- • have difficulties with working memory
- • have difficulties with abstract concepts
- • have difficulties with generalising concepts
- • may have sensory impairments
- • may have complex medical needs
- • may have physical impairments
- • are mainly working below the earliest levels of the National Curriculum

We know that our pupils do not succeed within the academic model that the National Curriculum provides due to their difficulties. We know that they do not simply learn at a slower rate – otherwise they would continue to make progress and eventually reach National Curriculum stages. We also know that our pupils do make progress, but that their progress often looks very different from the linear progress required by the National Curriculum. They may make lateral progress over time – improving existing skills or concepts, increasing independence, fluency or the range of contexts in which they are able to demonstrate the skill.

*“For a pupil with complex needs, this can be a significant achievement and demonstrate real progress”
(Rochford Review 2016).*

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We know that our pupils' complex needs are often beyond the scope of the National Curriculum – for example many of our pupils may need to learn early skills such as sitting, standing, walking or eating and drinking. We also know that the difficulties that our pupils have with communication, abstract concepts, working memory and generalisation mean that we need a very different approach to teaching and learning. We know that our pupils require a “different” curriculum; a curriculum that recognises their distinct needs and learning styles and that equips them with the skills that they will need for a happy, healthy and safe life with as much independence as possible beyond school.

If they learn very differently, we ought to be teaching them very differently and teaching them different things”. (Imray and Hinchcliffe 2014)

Guidance supports schools that choose adapt the National Curriculum in order to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that is aspirational and meets the needs of its pupils.

The Rochford Review 2016 recognises that pupils with the *“most severe or profound difficulties, frequently do not make progress in a linear way”* and that assessment should be *“tailored for the individual child”* and *“aligned with a curriculum that is appropriate for that child’s needs”*. It also acknowledges that, *“Schools already have the freedom to use any curriculum they feel is appropriate for the needs and requirements of these pupils.”*

SEN Code of Practice states that, *“All pupils should have access to a broad and balanced education”*; it states that *“In many cases pupils with SEN and disabilities will be able to study the full National Curriculum”*. (6.12) In January 2019 3.1% (DFE June 2019) of all pupils had an EHCP. As all pupils at Foreland Fields School have an EHCP, with the majority having a diagnosis of severe or profound learning difficulties, we know that they fall outside the category of the *“many”* that are able to access the *“full National Curriculum”*.

Ofsted has said that leaders should, *“adopt or construct a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all learners, particularly the most disadvantaged, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.... (and that) the provider (should have) the same academic, technical or vocational ambitions for almost all learners. Where this is not practical – for example, for some learners with high levels of special educational needs and/or disabilities – their curriculum is designed to be ambitious and to meet their needs”* (Ofsted 2019)

Curriculum Aims

Our curriculum design reflects a range of guidance and research including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, SEN Code of Practice (2015), Rochford Review (2016), Ofsted Inspection Framework (2019), Curricula for Teaching Children and Young People with Severe, Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (Imray & Hinchcliffe), Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities Research Project (specialist schools and academies trust 2011).

Our curriculum caters for pupils, who are in many ways the “most disadvantaged” in society. They have a right to an education that develops their personalities and talents to the full and one that enables them to

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“succeed in life” beyond school. “Success in life” will look very different for our students; for some, success will mean happiness, health, and employment; for some independent living will be an ambitious, yet achievable outcome; for other students maintaining health and mobility, being able to communicate needs and feelings and being as independent as possible will be a priority; for our most complex pupils we are aiming for self- regulation and inclusion in the community.

We aim:

- to ensure that the child is at the centre of all learning
- to ensure that parents, carers, families and therapists are fully involved in each student’s learning journey
- to provide a personalised learning journey with aspirational outcomes for each student.
- to equip our students with the skills to access the community and to be valued within it.
- ensure that every student develops a “voice” and that they are listened to and to provide a curriculum that develops the individual talents and abilities of students to enable our students to lead a safe, healthy and happy adult life with as much independence as possible.

Golden Threads

The following “golden threads” reflect our school values and run throughout our curriculum, regardless of Key Stage or the pathway that the pupil follows:

Personalised Learning and Preparation For Adulthood

Our curriculum begins with the child and ends with the adult. Every pupil at Foreland Fields School has a unique personality and set of talents. They all learn differently and they learn at different rates. Working with families, partner agencies and the pupils themselves we create each pupil’s individual learning journey by looking ahead to adulthood and their life beyond school, devising personalised aspirational outcomes that ensure that they lead happy and healthy lives and that they have as much independence as possible. We consider the pupil’s individual needs and capabilities, their motivators and ambitions and the existing opportunities in the local area, to determine what our pupils will need to learn. For some pupils this will mean the world of work and independent living; for others it will mean being able to communicate wants, needs and feelings and being able to access the community.

The ‘Big Idea’ (Schema Theory)

Staff observe pupils carefully to discover their motivators and repeated patterns of play. We call these ‘Big Ideas’. They tell us about a child’s prior knowledge and their current point of learning. We use these to carefully plan next steps that build on this prior learning.

Total Communication

We provide a “Total Communication” environment to enable every pupil to “have a voice”. A wide range of communication strategies are utilised in every classroom. Class teams will use speech, Makaton signing

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and/or BSL, visual supports, PECS, communication boards or communication aids to enable all pupils to access learning.

Therapy

Therapy, including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy and therapies provided by other professionals are an integral part of the curriculum. Therapists work closely with class teams and families and are familiar faces in our classrooms.

Life Skills

We need to place an emphasis on life skills and independence in our curriculum in order to prepare our pupils for adulthood and life beyond school. Eating and drinking skills, dressing skills, personal care skills, social skills, travel training, shopping and cooking are some of the skills that our pupils will need when they leave school. Lunchtimes and playtimes are all lessons, where these skills can be taught in context and these times have as much value as more traditional learning such as reading or writing.

Community Involvement

We want our pupils to be valued members of the community now and when they leave school. We want them to be familiar with their local area and to be able to access local facilities including leisure opportunities. This is particularly important for our Deaf pupils who are part of the local Deaf community. Regular offsite visits to shops, local facilities and Deaf community events supports our pupils to achieve this.

Some pupils will have opportunities to participate in the Learn to Ride Scheme and then Bike-ability training – a cycle training programme to enable them to develop practical skills and to understand how to cycle on today's roads. This will give them greater independence and access to the community.

Play/Leisure

Our curriculum recognises that children develop all areas of learning holistically through play and that play should be a core provision for all pupils regardless of age or stage.

Rights of The Child and British Values

Pupils at Foreland Fields School learn about their own rights and how to respect the rights of others throughout the curriculum, within a rights respecting environment. They also learn how they can have a “voice” to campaign for their own rights and the rights of others. Pupils also learn British Values throughout the curriculum, including assemblies.

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Curriculum Pathways

Providing equal opportunities is about meeting individual needs – not treating everyone in the same way. In order to achieve the best possible outcomes for every pupil, we need to provide specialist environments, specialist resources and specialist teaching. Our pupils have a diverse range of learning needs ranging from P1 to the beginning of Year 3 National Curriculum stages; they also have a wide range of complex medical, physical, communication and social needs. In order to be truly inclusive – to meet all the needs of all our students, we need to adapt different pedagogical approaches to the different need types within our school. This can only be achieved by creating “needs-led” classes throughout the school.

5 Curriculum Pathways



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Curriculum Structure

Explorers Pathway (Pre-formal)	Adventurers Pathway (Informal)	Foundation Pathway (Informal/Semi-formal Curriculum)	Discoverers' Pathway (Semi-Formal)	Pioneer's Pathway (Formal)	Therapy
Communication	My Communication	My Communication My Reading My Writing	My Communication My Reading My Writing	English Computing	SALT Lego Therapy
Cognition	My Sensory Play My Outdoor School	My Number My World Around Me My Thinking and Problem Solving My Outdoor School	My Number My World Around Me My Thinking and Problem Solving My Outdoor School	Maths Science DT Culture (Geography, History, RE, Art, MFL) Horticulture	
Social Emotional & Mental Health (including Relationships & Sex Education)	My Physical Well-being My Independence	My Independence My Play My Relationships and Sex Education	My Independence My Play My Relationships and Sex Education	PSHE (Including Relationships & Sex Education) Citizenship Deaf Studies (Deaf/HI students)	Aromatherapy Sensory Massage Counselling (as appropriate)
Enrichment		My Creativity	My Art My Drama My Music My Dance Duke of Edinburgh Award	Music Duke of Edinburgh Award	
Physical Development	My Physical Well-being	My Physical Well-being	My Physical Well-being	PE	PT OT MOVE Hydrotherapy Horse-riding

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Foundation Pathway



Some Infant pupils (Year R, Year 1 and Year 2) are educated within the Explorers, Adventurers or Pioneers Pathways, but the majority of these pupils are educated within the Foundation Pathway – either in Year R classes, or mixed Year 1 and Year 2 classes. Pupils follow a personalised learning journey within the Equals Informal or Semi-formal curriculum – according to their needs.

Principles of The Equals Informal Curriculum (Equals 2021)

Informal Curriculum

For pupils and students with complex learning difficulties (CLD) who are working consistently to the early reaches of the severe learning difficulties spectrum.



'Equals Informal Curriculum' is comprised of six schemes of work (SoW), namely, My Communication, My Sensory Play, My Creativity, My Outdoor School, My Physical Well-Being and My Independence. Confining the whole curriculum to six SoW may on the surface seem thin, but the concept of broad and balanced should not automatically apply if the breadth and balance added are meaningless to the learner. We believe in other words, that we have put quite a lot into small packages.

The Learning To Be Approach is based on the principles of **Process Based Teaching and Learning** (Collis and Lacey, 1996; Hewett and Nind, 1998; Nind and Hewett, 2001; Hewett, 2006; Imray and Colley, 2017). This is a holistic approach which can be defined as the process of the teaching becoming the objective. **The teaching emphasis rests on maximising the quality of that process.**

Learning is taken as a whole rather than through teaching specific skills through individualised targets. Intensive Interaction (Nind and Hewett, 2001) is perhaps the best example of Process Based teaching and learning where 'tasklessness' is at the centre of the interactive process. Interactors are urged to follow, celebrate and extend; 'tune in' to the learner and look for communication moments; creating the communicative flow being the objective of the session. **Although the teacher may prompt and try different**

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strategies to encourage a communicative interaction, and the most skilful and experienced teachers will have many strategies for achieving this, **it is not up to the teacher to decide specific targets; the learner decides where the interactive process will go. The pace and direction of learning, and therefore the pace and direction of teaching will be decided by the learner.**

The assumption of Process Based Learning provides a platform for varied and disparate learning to take place, and individual progression may only be recognised in retrospect, at the end of each session, week, half-term, term and/or year. This retrospective target setting is legitimated by the tendency of objectives based teaching to narrow the learning opportunities offered to those with complex learning difficulties whose learning cannot be guaranteed to be either linear or conventional (Ware, 2003; Hewett, 2006, Lacey, 2009, Carpenter, 2011; Rochford Review, 2016; Imray and Colley, 2017).

Staff/Learner Relationships. Mindful of the extreme and very real dangers of learned helplessness (Seligman, 1975; Crombie et al, 2014; Imray and Hinchcliffe, 2014) this curriculum rejects any didactic, staff led model of education which sees members of staff, whether they be teachers or TAs as being in control of learning or mere imparters of knowledge.

In practice, this leads us to putting the learner at the centre of the curriculum and listening to each learner's behaviours and what this can tell us about their interests, motivations and potential for engagement. **We emphasise 'listening to behaviours' as another VERY IMPORTANT POINT, because we recognise that those with CLD are likely (by definition) to have poor verbal communication skills and will therefore communicate most effectively through their actions.**

In practice, how we are (as people who are essential facilitators in learning) directly affects how our learners are and how well they learn. Crombie et al (2014) conducted an analysis of a serially Ofsted rated 'outstanding' school in Lancashire, England and their staffs' interactions with their learners with CLD. They believed that much of the value within the work of the school went unidentified by their existing approaches to planning, monitoring and evaluation, and sought to find the essential, but very often unnoticed and unconscious, professional practices rooted in a process-based way of teaching; that is teaching by doing rather teaching by instruction. **It should be noted that such an approach demands time, both in each individual session to allow for individual processing time and in the way timetables are organised, as well as the bravery to allow it. When waiting for something to happen, it can sometimes appear that nothing is happening, when in fact, everything is happening!**

We believe that the learner is central to his/her own education. We believe that in addition to the learners' education the learners' health, happiness and wellbeing have equal importance and should be reflected through all activities, events and situations throughout the day. The Equals Informal Curriculum is based on a deep understanding of what the individual learner needs. Comfort, security, stimulation and motivation have to be accounted for in any situation. Having a good relationship with staff members is paramount to the learners' learning experience. Through intensive interaction learners can learn to trust the adults and the adults can learn about the learners' abilities and preferred communication approaches, their feelings, their likes and dislikes. Once a relationship is established we can understand what the learners' interests are. If they have not yet built up a repertoire of interests we can then find objects and activities of interest through the safe and secure 'friendship' that has developed through the intensive interaction sessions. When these have been established, they can be used to motivate the learners to communicate, express themselves and develop independence.

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A learner with CLD will spend a large proportion of the day maintaining and consolidating what s/he has already learnt so as not to lose skills and understanding. The objectives, targets, sessions and evaluations will reflect this repetition. New concepts and understandings will be taught, when appropriate, in the framework of a familiar and structured session or activity.

Our starting point is not the core areas or specific objectives but the social interaction of the learners within the activities. Everything is happening at once, and the chances for learners to learn are multiple, provided that the basic elements are always present; the right communication approach, the repetition of routines, the motivation, the comfort, an appropriate physical environment, enough time etc. Ensuring these essential basic elements allows learners to take control of their learning, encourages communication, social relationships and real choice. ***We cannot stress enough that if we allow ourselves to be constrained by specific objectives or timetables, the natural pattern of interaction will become didactic (staff led) and disempowering for the learners.***

Making the connections necessary for learning through Play. We know that the complexity of the learning difficulty will make learning without support incredibly difficult, if not impossible, and cognition (understanding) is likely to be initially gained by engaging in play. Staff members may facilitate such play (Vygotsky, 1978) but they cannot and must not, direct it. ***Play MUST be done WITH the learner rather than TO the learner,*** with the learner's interests and the learner's motivation, at the centre, otherwise it would be all too easy for staff make the learner powerless, voiceless, not in control of their own lives. Those with CLD may be working within early developmental levels but developing their voice, their sense of agency, their sense of control, must be at the centre of the curriculum model. We can teach a learner the skill of posting a small square brick into a preformed square hole, but if this is only for the purpose of following a much repeated and well know routine and doesn't actually lead to anything because the learner is not in control, and therefore does not have agency, what would be the point? We can teach a learner to press a switch, but if this doesn't immediately lead to something the learner is really motivated by (a person to talk to, an instrument to play) then what would be the point? Connections need to happen in real time, with real things, otherwise we are working in abstracts.

The teacher (whether s/he be a Teacher, TA or therapist) is responsible for setting up a social situation where the learner(s) and the member(s) of staff work together on a task. The teacher decides what to do based on what the learner can already do and is interested in doing. The teacher's role is to provide routines that are predictable and certain, to enable the learners to be secure, where they can predict what will happen next. But this is not enough, because crucially the teacher's role is also to introduce the option of variation (and by definition, inherent challenge) so that learners are encouraged to make decisions, encouraged to experience variations controlled by themselves which will then lead to connections.

Our aim is to put the learners in control by giving them an environment that they can understand and that they are allowed to keep changing in order to encourage development. Once the learners know how a simple routine works, they can introduce variations, and once they are doing that, they are in control. The learner is now the one developing the routine so that it becomes more complicated. We are essentially trying to create the conditions in which our learners can explore and create through the activity of play, where the play is 'freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated' (Dorey, 2015).

This is likely to be quite a difficult and challenging concept for both teachers and TAs, but is central to the effectiveness of Equals Informal Curriculum. Staff must firstly establish routines in which learners can work safely, securely and repeatedly, but once established learners need to be offered the opportunity to change the routine so that new learning can take place. For example, a Sensory Exploration session might see the

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regular setting up of the classroom space, so that a number of tables (depending on the size of the classroom and the number of learners in it) would be laid out with individual large builders' trays of sand, water, uncooked rice, feathers etc. The list is almost endless but what you lay out will depend on the known interests of your learners. Chairs can be placed around each table to allow more than one learner and staff members to access the trays, and learners are 'invited' to participate through a regular Sensory Exploration musical introduction for a minute or so – perhaps something dramatic like Richard Strauss' The Ride of the Valkeries!

Invited to participate is a VERY IMPORTANT phrase, because with learners with CLD we are aiming to learn through play, and through having fun whilst playing. No-one can be forced to play, and no-one can be forced to have fun! They either want to or they don't and if they don't we have to accept that fact.

There may be a number of reasons for this lack of engagement:

- i. The wrong play materials for the individual have been put out
- ii. Insufficient time has been given for the learner to engage on the day
- iii. Insufficient time has been given for the learner to become comfortable with the process

We are however, looking for learners to be aware that exciting (to them) things are on offer; **we are looking to create irresistible opportunity to learn.** Such a routine could quite easily be repeated a couple of times every week for a term or more in order to allow it to be firmly established, and perhaps **we could then provide opportunities to extend the routine by offering variations.** All sorts of things could be offered for the learner to take or touch or taste or smell or add to the tray should the learner choose. This is only limited by your own imagination and should not be confined to the main element of whatever constitutes the tray. If it's a water tray, there are the obvious boats or at least things that float, as well jugs (or at least, things that pour), including sieves and water wheels; if it's a sand tray there are the obvious buckets and spades, but any pourer or digger would be good and then there's the less obvious like a jug of water, or some lego bricks, or a toy car or **whatever the learner might have shown an interest in during other sessions.**

ESSENTIAL HERE IS HOWEVER THE NOTION THAT THE NEW INGREDIENT IS OFFERED, NOT FORCED. The learner is free to choose it should they wish and equally free to reject it should they wish. The learner **MUST** remain in control of the extension. Although on a practical note, floor surfaces and cleaning regimes need to be considered, there really is no limit as to what might be mixed with what. This is after all, learning through play.

Play, the ability to play, having the opportunity to play, enjoying play for its own sake, is not age related and is not confined to small children. It is how we all learn.

To do this we have to listen to the learners' requests and choices. Allowing learners to control the way play develops gives voice to their autonomy. When they state a preference and they get it, they are empowered. They decided, they tried to affect the world and were successful. Spontaneity comes out of learners knowing the structure of the routine and being empowered to make variation and thereby connections to new areas of understanding.

We have to create learning opportunities. The best way to do that is to

- i. **embed broad enough demands**
- ii. **in easy enough language or ways of communicating and**
- iii. **easy enough routines to engage the learners.**

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*These are the principles, they don't change, but how we translate them into practice will vary according to the learners. Any technique that does not give them a structure, any technique that does not allow them freedom, any technique that does not create certain cognitive demands, any technique that creates too great cognitive demands, will not work and will in the end, be useless. **We must aim to set up situations that are secure AND challenging and which thereby enable new connections to be made.***

Learners are a priority. We must be sensitive to their likes and dislikes, preferences and needs. We should take time to get to know the learners and sensitively plan appropriate support.

All learners should be treated as intentional communicators. *All attempts at communication (vocalising, eye contact, gestures, touches, a shiver, a cough, a laugh) should be responded to immediately in order to strengthen their understanding of communicative intentionality. The fundamental principles of Intensive Interaction (Hewett and Nind, 1998; Nind and Hewett, 2001; Nind and Hewett 2006) should be used throughout the day with all learners as a matter of course and as a 'way of being'. Be anticipatory; be positive – projecting a feeling of happiness; be calm; be aware of the learner's moods and feelings; use pauses; follow the learner's lead; give control to the learner wherever you can – you can always do this more than you think! – give eye contact; smile; vocalise along with the learner or in turn-taking, mirror bodily movements.*

*We should keep learners informed about what is happening in their day and daily routines as they are happening. Learners are not just passive but should be **encouraged to participate** in and know as much about their own routines as you do.*

Repetition and Variation. *Whilst there is always room for creativity, we need to keep in mind that for someone with CLD the most important element to their education is repetition. A learner with complex difficulties will tend to be very comfortable within a repetitive framework, wanting to repeat favoured activities many hundreds or even thousands of times, and appearing to not get bored with this process.*

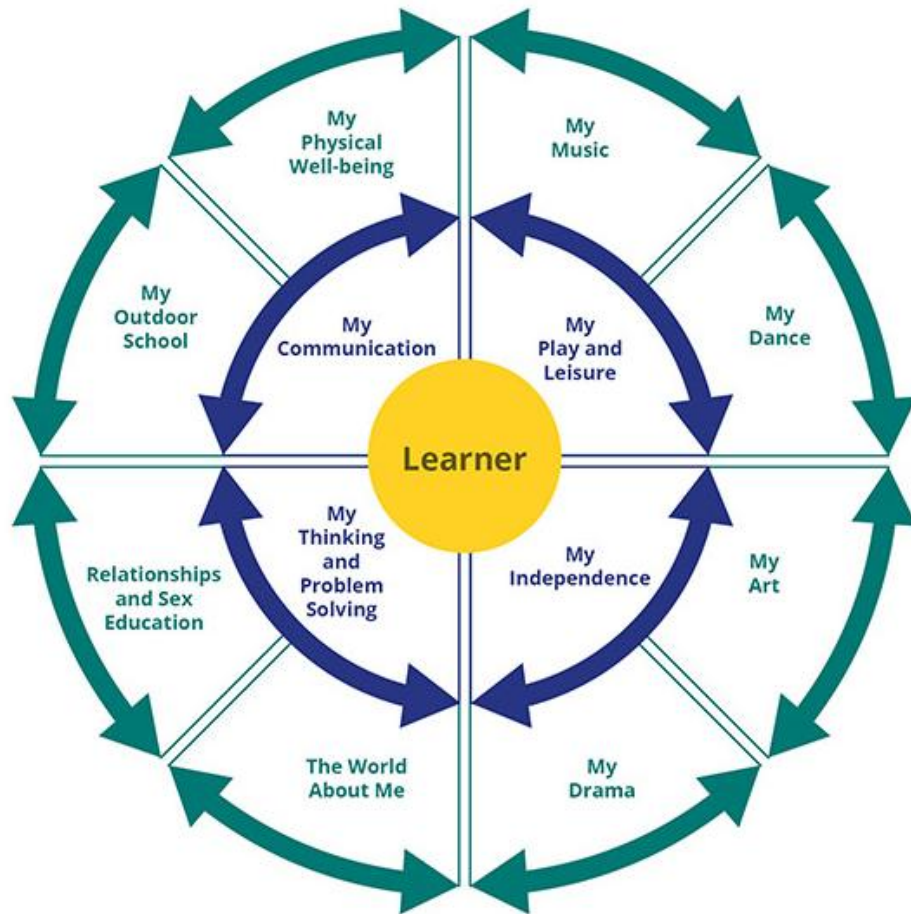
If following a rolling cycle of 'learning opportunities' or when thinking about age appropriate sessions, we might want to offer the learners opportunities for variation. We have to be sure however that this 'breadth' doesn't become tokenistic and meaningless to the learner. If a particular learner gains a lot of enjoyment from a familiar activity and can anticipate, participate, communicate preferences and make requests during the session, we would be foolish to put an end to it just because he/she has been exposed to it for many years or because we feel that it is not age appropriate.

*Variation and extension are very important, but we can only offer such opportunities and wait for each learner to follow them up. The learner may not however, wish to take them up, either within an individual session, or over an extended period of time. As long as the learner is engaged and continues to maintain high levels of engagement we must be patient and wait for the learner to decide to extend the play. **The learner must be in control, and even more importantly, know that they are in control of the process.***

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Equals Semi-Formal Curriculum

This builds on the Informal Curriculum by developing independence and life skills, through the semi-formal schemes of work (see below).



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Explorers Pathway



Explorers' Pathway

A Curriculum for Learners with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD)

Aiming for Greater Independence

Definition of PMLD

"Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have complex learning needs. In addition to very severe learning difficulties, pupils have other significant difficulties, such as physical disabilities, sensory impairment or a severe medical condition. Pupils require a high level of adult support, both for their learning needs and also for their personal care. They are likely to need sensory stimulation and a curriculum broken down into very small steps. Their attainments are likely to remain in the early P scale range (P1-P4) throughout their school career."

(DfE definition of PMLD)

Explorers Curriculum Design

The development of the Explorers curriculum at Foreland Fields has been driven by the specific needs and abilities of pupils working within P Levels 1-4. The difficulties and challenges faced by these pupils means that they require a separate, specialised curriculum to other pupils at Foreland Fields School whose attainments range from P5 - National Curriculum Stage 3. These pupils, who are working at the earliest levels in all areas of their development, need specific teaching and learning experiences in order to reach their potential and maximise their school learning experience.

Explorers pupils experience significant barriers to their learning. They have a profound learning difficulty as well as additional sensory or physical difficulties. This means that they:

- Have great difficulty communicating basic wants, needs and feelings
- Have profound physical impairments, that limit their ability to explore their environment
- May have sensory impairments, that distort their view of the world
- Have complex medical needs, that impact on health and well-being and their ability to engage in learning
- Need total support to meet everyday care needs
- May have behaviour that challenges us.

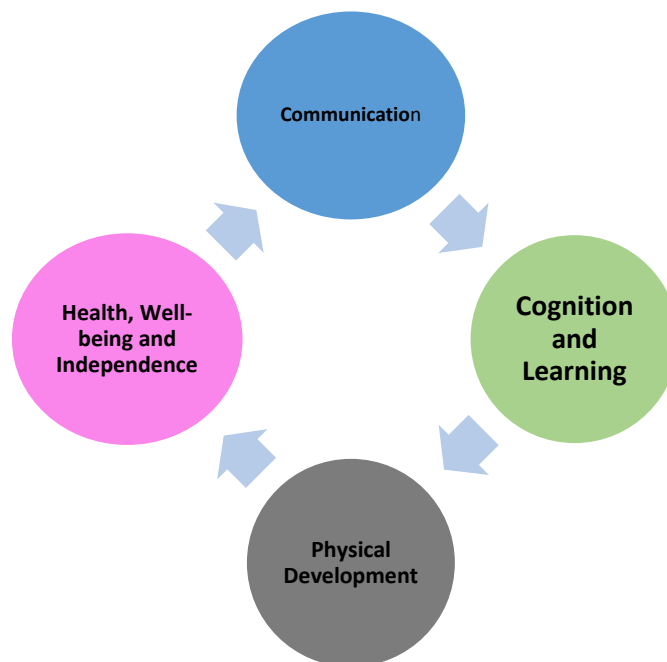
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Our Explorers' pupils need:

- A significant adaptation to the curriculum
- A personalised approach – starting with the needs of the child
- A therapy centred approach with a high level of involvement from partner agencies
- A modification of the physical environment
- Specialist resources
- Staff with a high level of expertise in PMLD strategies
- A high level of individual support and care

In order to address and minimise the effects of these barriers, the Explorers Curriculum at Foreland Fields School focuses on developing pupils' skills and abilities in four core areas of learning – communication, cognition and learning, health, well-being and independence and physical development. This core curriculum is supported by a fifth area – enrichment. The Explorers curriculum is driven by the identification of individual personal learning intentions, agreed by class teams, families and partner agencies. These are the priorities for each child and form the framework for each child's personalised curriculum. A rolling programme of termly topics provide a rich and concrete context for learning.

Explorers' Curriculum Areas



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Explorers' Pathway

A pre-formal curriculum for learners with profound and multiple learning disabilities
'Aiming for Greater Independence'

Area of Need	Communication & Interaction	Cognition & Learning	Social Emotional & Mental Health	Physical & Sensory Development
Areas of Learning	Responding Interacting Communicating	Awareness Exploration Control	Relationships Independence Health & Well-Being	Body Awareness Gross/Fine Motor Skills
Focus on	Eliciting responses, postural management, health & well-being			
Provision	• Small (6-7 pupils) needs led classes • High staffing ratio (5:6+) • Direct partner agency support (SALT/CAT Team/OT/PT/HI/VI) • Support from Health Care Team (School Nurse/Therapy Assistant/Health Care Assistant) • Highly adapted classroom environment with appropriate therapy equipment • Access to physical development room, sensory room, hydrotherapy pool • Highly personalised learning journey			
Assessment	• Pupil Progress Records • Evidence for Learning • Personal Learning Intentions/MAPP Assessment • MOVE and Therapy Goals • Life Skills and RSE Tracker • Engagement Model			
Outcomes	• Progress and achievement – greater independence • Engagement and well-being • Good attendance • Health • Access to the community			

Personalised Learning

For Explorers' pupils the child is the curriculum. Each child has a unique set of abilities, needs and interests and they will need highly personalised learning opportunities to make progress towards greater independence. Each pupil has their own Pupil Passport, which provides details of the priorities for that child and how they learn best, and forms the foundation for their personal curriculum. Families, therapists and the class team work together to agree Personal Learning Intentions 3 times a year for each pupil in all 4 curriculum areas (communication, cognition, health and well-being and physical development). These are the priorities for each child in all aspects of their lives. Opportunities to practise these skills repeatedly in different contexts are woven into the curriculum.

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Explorers' Long-Term Plan

Explorers Pathway Long Term Plan						
Cycle/Term	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Block 1	Enchanted	Bright Sparks	Lights, Camera Action	Best in Bloom	Go Wild	Big Top
Block 2	Let's Move	Tactile Treasures	Green Planet	Hop about	Splash Around	Daydreamers
Block 3	Wheels in motion	Let's Party	Into the Deep	Out of this World	In our Garden	Cast Away

The Learning Environment

'Routes for Learning' states that creating an effective learning environment is fundamental for being able to systematically extend and change students' learning experiences. Many children with profound disabilities also have physical and sensory impairments and the learning environment needs to consider:

- Equipment for positioning – lying, sitting, standing, moving
- Frequent changes of position
- Regular therapy exercises, hydrotherapy, swimming and movement
- Multisensory activities in the classroom
- Sensory stimuli that enable the integration of senses
- Range of interesting objects, activities and events that can be appreciated through the senses
- Range of resources for exploration and early problem solving (including technology where appropriate)
- Concrete objects and materials to accompany stories and songs
- Low and high tech aids for communication
- Opportunities for inclusion
- Activities based on children's individual preferences
- Time to respond to objects, materials, activities, events and people
- People working with them to remain within arm's length
- Sensory cues, on body signing, objects, objects of reference, signs, photos for routine activities
- Generally, a slower pace in lessons and routines to give pupils time to process what is happening around them, to think and to respond

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- Lots of repetition
- Clear cues for the beginning and end of activities
- Sensory cues for different learning spaces and for moving around the school
- Safe space to move arms and legs when lying on the floor
- Space to move around the room safely
- Safe space and activities for relaxation
- Multi-sensory environment where children can focus on one stimulus at a time
- Outside sensory area
- Little visual and aural clutter in the learning spaces with a good light source on person or object that is the focus of attention and/ or good quality sound sources; the ability to darken the room for visual impairment programmes
- Repetition of a small number of activities and routines for learning to anticipate (increasing with the level of understanding)
- Burst-pause of activities (on-off) so children can insert their responses in the gaps
- Interactions based on individual children's communication behaviour (as in Intensive Interaction)
- Small number of adults who know the pupils and their Personal Learning Intentions well
- Their 'voices' heard, responded to and interpreted by people who know and understand them
- Adults to video and photograph pupil progress towards Personal Learning Intentions; evidence to be shared between home and school using Evidence for Learning
- A multi-agency approach to learning and care based on a holistic view of the child
- Therapists and support teachers to work alongside classroom staff
- A family partnership approach which makes good use of two-way communication based on knowledge, skills and experience.

Strategies for Teaching Explorers' pupils

Intensive Interaction

Intensive Interaction is an approach to help people at early levels of development learn the "fundamentals of communication".

These are:

- enjoying being with another person
- developing the ability to attend to that person
- concentration and attention span
- learning to do sequences of activity with a person
- taking turns in exchanges of behaviour
- sharing personal space
- learning to regulate and control arousal levels
- using and understanding eye contacts
- using and understanding facial expressions
- using and understanding other non-verbal communications
- using and understanding physical contacts

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- vocalising and using vocalisations meaningfully (including speech)

(Nind & Hewett 1994, 2001, 2005)

Learning the fundamentals of communication is the first learning in typical development and underpins all subsequent learning, development and well-being. Intensive Interaction is therefore a core part of the Explorers Curriculum.

The Equals guide to the English Curriculum (2015) describes the importance of Intensive Interaction within the Explorers curriculum.

“When working with learners who are at a very early developmental level it is almost impossible to separate out the learning of communicative skills from the actual process of living and to this degree, communication can be seen to be perhaps more than any other area of development, an almost entirely process based activity. That is, children learn through the process of actually doing it, in much the same way as we learn to dance. We cannot learn to dance theoretically; we have to do it to learn it. We cannot learn to communicate theoretically; we have to do it to learn it. It is the process of doing it that is key.

There are of course specific skills involved in the art of communicating which we can attempt to teach, such as pressing a Big Mack or other simple VOCA (Voice Output Communication Aid) in order to indicate the desire for something, or looking at a preferred object to indicate choice, but the success of this will undoubtedly be entirely dependent on the motivation of the child (to gain the ‘something’), the context of the activity (is it familiar enough, rewarding enough, with people s/he knows and trusts enough?) and of course the ability of the pupil to understand cause and effect in a refined manner, and to be at least contingently responsive. In P level terms, such cause and effect abilities are only likely to start to appear around P2 or P3, but should be established by P4 or P5 at the latest.

Intensive Interaction (Nind and Hewett, 1988; 1994; 2001; 2006; Hewett and Nind, 1998; Kellett and Nind, 2003; Caldwell, 2005; Caldwell, 2007) has proved to be one of the most significant advances over the past 30 years in the development of an effective communication curriculum for those with complex learning and communication difficulties.

As a brief guide, Intensive Interaction is designed to foster early communication skills and is widely used in the UK across both child and adult services with people often described as pre-verbal, pre-linguistic, pre-intentional and/or difficult to reach, often those with profound or severe learning difficulties and/or autism. It is based on conventional parent/infant models of interaction and largely follows the communication process from birth involving a shared two-way enjoyment. We become the flexible and responsive partners – reinforcing the child’s engagement – and the child’s ability to understand that s/he can affect the actions of those around them. Meaningful engagement with a more competent partner reinforces understanding.

The core principles are those of tackles-ness, that is, a deliberate lack of agenda or any specific target or objective. Adults follow the child’s lead, celebrate any action or vocalisation as an intentional act of communication – whether it is or not – and try (in the long-term) to extend knowledge and understanding of communicative interactions. The adult therefore needs to ‘tune in’ to the learner and look for communication moments, so that the act of creating the flow (the process) becomes the objective of the session.

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Intensive Interaction is fundamental not only as a primary means of fostering meaningful communicative opportunities with those who might otherwise be considered difficult to reach, but also as one of the best exemplars of the process-based teaching approach.

As a series of broad brushstroke rules, Intensive Interaction is likely to work best when the interactor:

- *allows the learner to take control and for the most part, lead the session;*
- *is seen by the learner to enjoy the experience of the interaction;*
- *gives his/her total attention to the learner;*
- *treats all actions and vocalisations made by the learner as positive attempts to communicate;*
- *uses as little language as possible – often hello and goodbye are sufficient;*
- *does not give up too early, either in the session itself or over time – it may take many years to maximise a learner’s communicative abilities;*
- *gives the learner time – pauses, when nothing is apparently happening are really ok;*
- *use pause – burst – pause sequences during periods of nothing happening to give the learner time and opportunity to respond;*

All Explorers’ class-based staff have had training in intensive interaction and there is a lead teacher for Explorers’ intensive interaction, who is qualified as an Intensive Interaction Mentoring Practitioner.

Sherborne Developmental Movement

Movement experiences are fundamental to the development of all human beings and are particularly important to people with special needs. The input or ‘feeding in’ of movement experiences has to be concentrated and more continuous if people who are challenged in special ways are to realise their potential.

Sherborne Developmental Movement is an approach to teaching and working with movement that is based on the philosophy and theory created by Rudolf Laban (Pioneer and founder of Modern European Dance and movement analysis) was devised by Veronica Sherborne after having worked closely with Laban for 2 years. Her approach to teaching movement is firmly rooted in both observation of how children play in the normal course of their development and then grounding these observations in the philosophy and theory of Laban’s movement analysis.

There are 2 basic objectives within Sherborne Developmental Movement:

- Awareness of self
- Awareness of others

Adults work closely with pupils to experience a range of reciprocal movements.

Touch

Touch is the first and most basic form of communication. Touch is essential in the development of communication abilities and for emotional well-being. Babies fail to thrive if deprived of positive touch experiences and they learn to communicate through interactions that involve a lot of touch.

Where many Explorers pupils may have visual or hearing impairments, touch becomes a vital sensory tool in the learning process. It is also important for pupil’s well-being and engagement that touch is not limited

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to “functional” touch as part of care routines. Explorers’ pupils often have little “body awareness” and have yet to develop a sense of “self”. They may be unaware of how their body parts are connected and where their bodies are in relation to the space around them (proprioception). their sense of proprioception and their awareness of external stimuli stopping and starting.

Touch is an important part of the Explorers’ curriculum, but it will be a planned approach for each pupil. Where pupils are tactile defensive and can communicate to adults that they do not consent to touch, the adults will need to plan carefully, how touch can be introduced gradually in a way that is acceptable to the pupil.

Sensory Massage

Sensory massage supports early communication, cognition and well-being. Massage can relax pupils’ joints and muscles, where they have become tight over time. Adults can massage using their hands or other sensory objects such as a soft cloth or a textured sensory ball. This can be done, with or without sensory massage oils (Parental permission is needed to use oils). Sensory massage can be incorporated into story telling sessions.

Sensory Cues

Pupils at a very early stage of development, particularly those with sensory impairments, are likely to need to start with ‘sensory cues’. Pupils need to be given a consistent routine to help them begin to learn to distinguish activities and people so eventually they can begin to learn to anticipate what is going to happen to them. Some cues will be particular to individual pupils, for example, singing a particular song. Some sensory cues are built into the activity, for example, the smell of lunch or a coat for home time. Use natural cues wherever possible, maybe exaggerating them, for example, jingling the bus keys or knocking the spoon against the bowl; anything to help children to associate that cue with what is going to happen next. Make sure the cues happen just before the activity begins so there are only a few seconds between the cue and the activity.

Object Cues

From these sensory cues, pupils can begin to increase the number of cues for the different activities about to take place. These can be the objects that are part of the activity, for example, an object that is a cue for dinner should be the spoon that the child usually uses. It should be offered as a cue as lunchtime begins. It is hoped that the pupils will eventually learn to anticipate food by opening their mouths as the spoon is presented. This is a skill that many of our Explorers pupils learn successfully.

Objects of Reference

Some pupils may make symbolic use of objects of reference where the object used is representative of the activity. For example, being shown a swimming costume before going to hydro. Pupils need to be around number 41 on the Routes for Learning (expresses preference for items not present via symbolic means) for objects of reference to make sense. Objects of reference may be personal to the learner, they should be limited to a small number and used consistently to communicate activities and events. Objects of reference should move with a pupil as they progress through the school.

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Repetition

Most pupils with PMLD need a huge amount of repetition before they are able to anticipate even a very familiar activity. Those pupils at the very early levels of the Routes for Learning map are likely to need an activity repeated literally thousands of times before they can begin to anticipate what is going to happen. Where possible, choose a small number of activities to repeat over and over again, rather than give continually new experiences.

Proximity

It is important that staff working with Explorers' pupils work at close proximity. It is unlikely that any event or activity happening beyond arms' reach will have any impact on the child.

Processing Time

Learners with complex needs are often slow to respond to stimuli. Waiting time is needed to process the information. Giving students adequate time and space to respond and process information enables them to share control and have equal interactions. By building pauses into familiar routines and activities, we create opportunities for learners to 'fill the gap', for example, to make a response that indicates their wish for a desirable activity to continue. Adults should resist "filling the gap" for the learner. This will teach the pupil to expect an adult response in a gap.

ICT

Switches

Switches give pupils with limited mobility the opportunity to develop their cognitive skills, in particular their understanding of cause and effect. Explorers' pupils may use a Big Mack switch to activate a pre-recorded message, to enable them to gain attention from adults or to participate in an activity; they may also use switches to cause effects with switch activated toys or equipment such as bubble tubes and projectors in the sensory room. We are able to adapt a range of switches and accessories, to meet the different physical needs of the pupils.

Augmentative and Alternative Communication

Pupils who develop contingency awareness (knowing that one action produces one particular response and a different action produces a different response) may learn to use a range of strategies to communicate wants and needs. These include eye pointing or finger pointing at symbols on a communication board or communication devices with speech output, such as tech talks, go-talks or VOCAs. Speech and language therapists from the CAT Team would usually recommend these devices for individual pupils.

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Eye Gaze

Eye Gaze technology allows pupils with very limited movement to cause effect by tracking eye movements. It is an excellent tool for gauging anticipation. It enables class teams to recognise and assess cognitive abilities, which may previously have been masked by a pupil's physical disability. Eye Gaze technology can be used to aid communication and also to control the environment.

MOVE (Movement Opportunities Via Education)

MOVE is a therapeutic personalised programme designed to improve pupils' mobility skills of sitting, standing, walking and transitioning, through purposeful and motivating activities. The benefits of this programme are improved health, independence, dignity and inclusion. We also know the benefits that physical activity has for cognitive development. The MOVE programme is embedded in the physical development section of the Explorers Framework. Opportunities for pupils to practise their individual MOVE goals are built into the curriculum via personal learning intentions. These goals focus on developing skills that enable pupils to achieve personal ambitions, such as joining in with their peers at playtimes, as well as developing independence in daily routines. There are also regular focussed MOVE sessions in class as well as a weekly cross phase themed MOVE session for all Explorers pupils. Pupils access a range of equipment recommended by therapists during the day including therapy benches, standing frames, walkers and side layers. This equipment is essential for health, postural management and maintaining strength, control and mobility.

Water-based Activities

Explorers pupils with physical needs may access weekly water based activities in the hydrotherapy pool. Some pupils may follow hydrotherapy programmes devised by physiotherapists. Water based activities provide a unique opportunity for our Explorers pupils to experience freedom of movement away from their equipment. The buoyancy of the water assists pupils to move their limbs and movement in water combined with water pressure assists lung function and reduces the risk of chest infections. Water based activities also play a vital role in pupils' well-being and engagement and provide a positive environment for Intensive Interaction.

Messy play

Sensory stimuli such as natural materials, paint, playdough, pasta, gloop, jelly, cornflour and water etc. can encourage pupils to engage in purposeful activity such as reaching out or grasping. It enables pupils to engage in early play activities, rather than self-stimulating behaviours which may be harmful.

Sensory cooking

As with messy play, sensory cooking enables pupils to experience a wide range of smells, tastes, texture, temperatures and colours. Adults need to bring these sensory experiences to the pupils, as they have limited opportunities to explore the environment independently.

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Sensory stories

We have an extensive range of sensory story sacks and “Bag Books”. These are an excellent vehicle to engage pupils in story telling activities, where they can participate by engaging with sensory props, or by responding to the voice of the story teller.

Hanging Out Programme

Explorers’ pupils rely on the adults around them to be the “bridge” to the world around them. Adults need to remain “tuned in” to the child to support their learning. This strategy is designed to maximise learning opportunities between teacher directed sessions, for example during personal care, or whilst pupils are changing position. These times are an ideal opportunity for pupils to enjoy intensive interaction or parallel play with an adult and to practice the skills that they have been learning. These times are also an ideal opportunity for adults to let the pupil lead the learning and to observe new skills emerging. The hanging out programme is timetabled in all Explorers’ classes, but the strategy may be used throughout the day.

Explorers Pupils working around or above P4

Some of our Explorers pupils’ cognitive abilities may begin to overlap the Discoverers Pathway. As there is a strong emphasis on personalised learning, their curriculum will still be sufficiently challenging to meet their needs, but it may draw on elements from the Discoverers’ Pathway. Explorers’ teachers will use the Equals semi-formal schemes of work where appropriate to ensure that all pupils have an ambitious and appropriate curriculum.

Assessment

Progress for Explorers pupils will look very different from that of their mainstream peers. As they are at the very earliest stages of development and not yet engaged in subject specific learning, it is unlikely that they will make regular steps of linear progress. Evidence of progress for Explorers’ pupils will show that they can do more, with more fluency and frequency and in a greater range of contexts. We will capture this lateral holistic progress, using a range of indicators using video, photographic and observational evidence on the app Evidence for Learning.

MAPP Assessment Tool

Each pupil has their own highly personalised curriculum with personal learning intentions for each of the 4 curriculum areas. Progress towards these will be assessed using the MAPP assessment tool, which has 4 assessment aspects:

- independence – the level of support that the pupil needs to perform the skill
- fluency – how well the pupil performs the skill
- maintenance – the frequency with which the pupil performs the skill
- generalisation – the range of contexts in which the pupil performs the skill

Judgements around progress will also be personalised and all adults supporting the pupil, including families, the class team and partner agencies will agree whether a pupil is making expected or exceeding expected progress at pupil progress meetings held in terms 4 and 6.

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Engagement Model

The Engagement Model of assessment is statutory for all pupils in Key Stage 2 working below P5. Teachers will assess pupils' engagement using 5 indicators:

- exploration – how a pupil responds to stimuli
- realisation – how a pupil begins to control or change a stimulus
- anticipation – how a pupil predicts what is coming next
- persistence – whether a pupil continues an activity over a period of time
- initiation – how a pupil acts independently during an activity

Life Skills Tracker

Evidence of the acquisition of life skills is captured on the Life Skills Tracker for pupils on all curriculum pathways, throughout their school career. These skills include:

- eating and drinking
- dressing
- shopping
- cooking
- travel training
- independence

Relationships, Relationships & Sex Education Tracker

Evidence of the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding around Relationships and Relationships & Sex Education is captured on the Relationships, Relationships & Sex Education Tracker for pupils on all pathways, throughout their school career.

Evidence For Learning

Video and photographic evidence of progress will be captured using the app Evidence for Learning. Teachers are able to link this evidence to personal learning intentions, the Explorers Framework, Life Skills Tracker and Engagement Model. Teachers may use other indicators such as Routes for Learning where they feel that this will support their assessments for learning.

Explorers' Levels

These will be used as a “descriptor” for learning levels. There is no expectation that pupils should make regular linear progress through these levels.

Welsh Routes for Learning

Pupils will be assessed against the Route Map to assist teachers and class staff to plan next steps for cognition and communication.

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Adventurers' Pathway



Adventurers' Pathway

A Curriculum for Learners with Complex Learning Difficulties (CLD)

Learning to Be and Learning to Do

Curriculum Design

The Adventurers Pathway is an informal curriculum for pupils with complex learning difficulties (CLD*) who are working at P4/P5. Some pupils on this pathway may work, in a few areas, at levels above P5. However, in many cases, due to their complex difficulties, they are not able to consistently work at this level or across all areas'. These pupils may have a very 'spikey' learning profile or have the ability to achieve some aspects of learning, but struggle to access formal or semi-formal learning opportunities. The majority of Adventurers' pupils will have a dual diagnosis of SLD and ASD. Having difficulty in memory formation, development of language and impaired social understanding can make their world a confusing and unpredictable place. This can mean these pupils will often struggle to communicate with those around them, have raised anxiety levels and consequent difficulties in self-regulation. Therefore, the primary aim for our Adventurers is 'learning to be'.

**Complex learning Difficulties (CLD) should not be confused with Complex learning difficulties and Disabilities (CLDD)*

Rationale

We have, for a number of years, identified a growing number of learners who struggle to access either a formal or semi-formal curriculum due to their Complex Learning Difficulties. These pupils with CLD have all the difficulties associated with Severe Learning Difficulties and many will (some may not) have a diagnosis of ASD. Typically, these learners are ambulant and have relatively well developed gross and fine motor skills. They have the capacity to follow instruction and are able to follow a model, but may choose not to due to a range of further complex learning difficulties such as; impaired social communication and interaction, sensory sensitivities rigidity of behaviour and restricted interests, a tendency towards social isolation and behaviours that challenge authority. Due to their impaired social understanding, communication and capacity to form short and long term memories it can be considered that pupils with CLD may act and react in a 'sensory manner' and be regarded as 'sensory beings' as opposed to 'linguistic beings' (Grace 2017). Pupils with CLD are likely to live in the moment, in the here and now. This understanding of our pupils has some fundamental ramifications for a curriculum that is fit to meet their needs.

"These learners with CLD are noted for their eagerness to do what they want to do and their disinclination to do what their teacher wants them to do...such pupils are effectively disengaged with and from the education system"

(Peter Imray 2021)

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Learners with CLD are;

“Presenting with new profiles of learning needs that the teaching profession struggle to meet through existing teaching styles of curriculum frameworks. We need to be honest about this – for the sake of our professional practice, and, even more so, for the sake of the children”

(Carpenter et al 2015)

Historically the response of the education system to meeting these needs of pupils who behave in a manner deemed inappropriate has been to utilise a behaviourist approach. Using the behaviourist approach, the teacher’s job is to modify the behaviour of the child (but not necessarily the child’s thinking or internal state) through rigid application of rewards for ‘positive’ (as defined by the teacher) behaviours and ignoring inappropriate behaviour.

Our belief and understanding is that rigid behaviourist approaches fail learners with CLD in a two ways. Firstly, this approach can be viewed as dehumanising as it assumes that the child needs to change rather than the adult or the environment/curriculum. It can be seen as a process of normalisation, of shaping learners to fit into society. Inherently this also means it risks ignoring the difficulties that these learners face. In many ways behaviouristic approaches can be likened to the neurotypical teaching styles employed by an effective parent, the problem being, pupils with CLD are not neurotypical and fail to learn successfully in this way. Secondly, for these pupils, for whom many are either non-verbal or who have very limited expressive communication, their behaviour is their voice.

“It is an eternal truth that all behaviours are communications and we cannot help learners if we ignore what they have to say”

(Imray and Hewett 2015)

All Adventurers learners are regarded as intentional communicators. All communications, including those that are non-verbal, should be responded to by staff, this further develops and reinforces learner understanding of intentionality.

Therefore, at the centre of the Adventurers curriculum is a philosophy of listening to the child and understanding their needs in order to deliver an effective, ‘fit for purpose’ curriculum. This means maximising opportunities to develop learners’ ability to communicate, interact and self-regulate as the necessary and fundamental step on the way to accessing wider independence skills. It is also a curriculum of learner self-advocacy and therefore ‘opt in’. It is worth noting, that just because we reject the application of a rigid behaviourist approach as an over-arching philosophy, this does not mean that we don’t utilise rewards. Getting to know pupils and their interests is vital to the process of engaging, motivating and the development of communication skills.

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Adventurers' Pathway Curriculum Structure

An informal curriculum for pupils with complex learning disabilities

'Learning to Be' and 'Learning to Do'

Area of Need	Communication & Interaction	Cognition & Learning	Social Emotional & Mental Health	Physical & Sensory Development
Equals Schemes of Work	My Communication My Independence	My Sensory Play My Physical Well-being	My Outdoor School My Music	
Focus on	Communication, self-regulation, engagement, positive relationships, life skills & independence			
Provision	- Needs led classes - High staffing ratio - Direct partner agency support (SALT/CAT Team) - Support from Health Care Team (School Nurse/Therapy Assistant/Health Care Assistant) - Highly adapted classroom environment with access to outdoors - Access to sensory development room/soft play/sensory room - Highly personalised learning journey			
Assessment	- Pupil Progress Records - Evidence for Learning/MAPP Assessment - Personal Learning Intentions - Life Skills and RSE Tracker - Engagement Model - AQA Unit Awards - Pre-Key Stage Standards (KS2)			
Outcomes	- Progress and achievement – greater independence - Engagement and well-being - Good attendance - Health - Access to the community			

Learning to Be and Learning to Do

Foreland Fields School follows the Equals Informal Curriculum and as such adopts a 'Learning to be Approach'.

"This takes as its fundamental basic principle that children with Complex Learning Difficulties must learn how to be (themselves) as a necessary precursor to learning how to do.

(Imray 2021)

This means that Learners with CLD must:

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- Be allowed to be comfortable with activities and states that are important to them and be facilitated in discovering activities and states that may become important to them.
- Be free to like or reject who they and what they wish and be encouraged to express that wish positively.
- Be given time and opportunity to communicate positively having both voice and agency (except when safety/security dictates otherwise).
- Have a curriculum which adapts to the needs of the learner.

In this approach demand is taken away, this means learners are free to do what they want, as long as it does not harm others or themselves, this might also include doing nothing. This is vital to enable the development of positive relationships based in trust and a willingness to 'listen' to the learners' behaviour (communications). The staff role is then to facilitate opportunities to communicate, interact, play and engage at the learners' level. It also means motivation is key, knowing the pupil's interests and preferences provides a window of opportunity for progression. This approach also requires patience, observation skills and carefully planned communication/interaction (including intensive interaction).

Play has a central role in this approach. It is how we all learn. It enables us to create 'irresistible opportunities to learn'. In order to maximise these opportunities, we do not force learners into play, but provide a range of opportunities and then adapt these based on our observations of the learner. It is important for staff to have a developed understanding of the level and social dimensions of play at which each learner is currently working in order to gauge any interactions.

The efficacy of this approach is evidenced by action research at an Outstanding school (Imray 2021) and from our own experience (we have trialled this approach). We have found that observing and understanding the needs and communications of our learners and responding to this has led to a reduction in challenging behaviour and improvements in learner well-being, communication and interaction, self-regulation, and independence. Learners progress is evidenced through holistic, ipsative assessment, producing high quality qualitative data/information in the form of case studies (pupil progress records and Evidence for Learning as well as life skills tracking).

Process Based Teaching and Learning

"The Learning to Be approach is based on the principles of Process Based Teaching and Learning. This is a holistic approach which can be defined as the process of teaching becomes the objective. The teaching emphasis rests on maximising the quality of that process".

(Nind and Hewett 2001, Imray 2021)

Rather than teaching specific skills to predetermined targets, process-based teaching and learning provides a range of opportunities for pupils, who decide on the pace and flow of the learning. Staff members then look to 'tune into' learners and look for opportunities to communicate/interact/engage/extend based on a detailed understanding of the pupils' abilities and needs. These means that target setting is 'scruffy' and retrospective, this approach reflects the non-linear learning of pupils with CLD.

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Intensive Interaction <https://www.intensiveinteraction.org/>

The use of intensive interaction (Nind and Hewett 2001) is at the centre of communication and interaction with pupils who have CLD. Therefore, Foreland Fields school is committed to the development of excellent intensive interaction across the Adventurers' Pathway.

"Intensive interaction is used to support early interaction abilities – how to enjoy being with other people – to relate, interact, know, understand and practice communication routines... it develops the 'fundamentals of communication', attainments such as; use of and understanding of eye contacts, facial expressions, vocalisations leading to speech, taking turns in exchanges of conversation and the structure of conversation"

Dr Dave Hewett OBE

Breadth and Balance

It may be that, due to our learners' complex needs, that their curriculum is relatively narrow. This enables our pupils the time they need to develop the skills they need. These learners may need thousands of opportunities to learn a skill.

Classroom Organisation and Staff/Learner Relationships

A major focus of this curriculum is building a detailed understanding of our complex learners and the development of trust between learners and staff. Therefore, it is essential that these pupils are supported by a consistent class team and that at times it may be necessary to hold these groups together over a number of years.

Equals Informal Schemes of Work

The Equals informal schemes of work are developmental and not related to age or Key Stage. The pupil begins at their point of learning and each learning journey will be personal.

The Equals informal schemes of work do not follow the traditional subject model of the National Curriculum. Our pupils with CLD find it difficult to access teacher led learning and are still learning how to communicate/interact with others, play and self-regulate. The schemes of work are tailored to meet these needs, they are; My Sensory Play, My Communication, My Physical Wellbeing, My Independence, My Outdoor School and My Creativity.

The table below shows, where the learning in each National Curriculum subject can be found in the Adventurers' Pathway.

NC Subject	Where is this learning for Adventurers' pupils ?
English	My Communication My Sensory Play My Physical Wellbeing My Independence My Outdoor school My Music
Maths	My Communication My Sensory Play My Physical Wellbeing My Independence

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	My Outdoor school My Creativity
Science	My Sensory Play My Physical Wellbeing My Independence My Outdoor school
Geography	My Independence My Outdoor school
History	My Communication My Independence
Art and Design	My Sensory Play
Design Technology	My Sensory Play
PE	My Physical Well-Being My Sensory Play
RE	Whole School Faith Celebration Days (termly)
PSHE/Citizenship	My Communication My Sensory Play My Independence – My Dressing and Undressing
Music	My Music
Computing	My Independence My Communication

My Sensory Play

Many of our pupils with CLD may be regarded as ‘sensory beings’ and consequently it is critical that we utilise non-linguistic methods of teaching such as learning through play. This scheme of work describes how pupils may work across (but not necessarily progress in a linear fashion) the 5 levels of play (sensorimotor, relational, functional, symbolic and socio-dramatic) and the 5 social dimensions of play (Solitary, parallel, shared, turn taking and Cooperative). A range of learning opportunities are then provided, these include, sand and water play, play with food stuffs, heuristic (discovery) play, conventional toy-based play, kinaesthetic play, physical play and swimming

My Communication

This scheme of work is intended to be delivered holistically throughout the curriculum, rather than as a discrete subject. It focuses on 6 areas of communication:

- Imperative communications
- Declarative communications
- Formal social interactions with familiar and unfamiliar people
- Non-verbal behavioural communications
- Peer to peer communications
- Augmentative and alternative communications (AAC)

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My Physical Wellbeing

This scheme of work maximises opportunities for functional movement throughout the day and has an emphasis on learners choosing to be active, in order that this choice continues outside of school. It includes:

Sensory integration and sensory circuits

Rebound therapy (yet to be fully developed at FFS)

Play based physical activity

Aquatics

It also includes a focus on mental health and wellbeing.

My Independence

Opportunities to develop life skills are delivered holistically throughout the Equals Informal schemes of work. The philosophy of teaching this scheme is one which relies on Process based teaching that is contextualised and enables development of thinking and problem-solving skills. It recognises that the process of becoming more independent is a lifelong journey. It allows for approximate accuracy, that is praising 'approximations' of skills in order to generate confidence and reduce learned helplessness. The scheme includes:

- My Dressing and Undressing
- My Travel training
- My Shopping
- My Cooking

My Outdoor School

Outdoor learning is an excellent vehicle for engagement as well as the development of independence and communication skills. It also widens the world of pupils with CLD. There is also the opportunity for cross-curricula groups. Foreland Fields School has a qualified Forest/beach School teacher and has also trained teachers in risk assessment and core skills to enable the delivery of beach and forest school activities.

Activities include:

- Getting to know the natural environment
- Learning how to use key equipment
- Shelter building
- Using an open fire
- Cooking outdoors
- Orienteering

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My Music

The Equals Informal Curriculum does not provide a scheme of work for My Creativity. Certainly, there is a danger in creating a scheme that is too prescriptive and that steers away from the child-led approach described in the rest of this curriculum. The central message to staff supporting pupils in creative activities is that it is the process that is important, not the end product. It is fine to model a product (particularly for some of our higher functioning Adventurers), but the product will need to be sufficiently engaging, motivating and relevant to the pupils. Importantly, those pupils who wish to continue exploring materials in a sensorimotor fashion should be allowed to do so and staff should be on hand to observe this and take any opportunities that present themselves for communication and interaction.

Due to its sensory, exploratory, engaging and concrete nature creative activities have huge potential as 'learning vehicle' for our pupils. Planning creative activities should take account of the approaches, activities and pedagogy associated with the My Sensory Play scheme. There are opportunities for sensorimotor play as well as being able to take part in activities in a parallel fashion or to begin sharing resources or even turn taking. There are also opportunities for promotion and development of independence skills (notably getting dressed for messy play, getting resources ready and putting them away) which pupils will access at different levels based on their needs and abilities. Motivation, means and mate.... Creative activities and resources are likely to be highly motivational for Adventurers, due to their physical and sensory nature, what a wonderful opportunity for intensive interaction and self-expression.

We have a number of higher functioning (P6-7) pupils who are Adventurers and whom, given the opportunity to participate in creative activities, which are relevant to them will be able to access aspects of the semi-formal My Creativity scheme of work. This scheme describes the creative process, where pupils might move through a 3 stage process from encountering, to exploring to creating. The semi-formal My Art scheme of work uses this model to describe a range of Art teaching activities. We encourage teachers to carefully identify those Adventurers who are 'crossing the bridge' and whom may have a strength in this area in order to enable their potential.

Adventurers have adopted the new My Music scheme of work from Equals as it perfectly fits our approach. The focus is on engagement and using music as a vehicle for communication and interaction. We use recorded music with all of the pupils' favourite hits which is supplemented by a range of accessible instruments and for some of our pupils a microphone encourages sound production. There is no wrong way to play instruments in these sessions, but pupils are observed and likes/preferences are built upon, as are talents and strengths. Many of our pupils thrive when music is played and have a good sense of rhythm which can be expressed in a wide variety of ways including dancing.

Functional Literacy

As many of our Adventurers are not 'linguistic beings' and have great difficulty with abstract concepts and working memory they are unlikely to become fluent readers and many may never "read" in the traditional sense of the word. Some pupils on the autistic spectrum (ASD) may be able to demonstrate a level of decoding ability far higher than their level of understanding and this will not prepare them for being "readers" in later life. A few Adventurers' pupils however will attain a level of functional literacy and

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should be given every opportunity to achieve this, by accessing schemes of work and strategies from the Discoverers' pathway including All Aboard phonics where appropriate. Access to books, stories and text will however be a daily part of the curriculum for all pupils as a means of developing expressive and receptive language skills and social interaction.

Phonics for Adventurers' Pupils with Functional Literacy Skills

These pupils will be taught to read using a combination of visual (pictures, whole word, phonic) and non-visual (context) cues. Sound discrimination – or early phonics will be introduced at the earliest stages, but more formal teaching of phoneme/grapheme correspondence will only be taught once the pupil has developed a sight vocabulary of familiar words and they have demonstrated that they can “hear” the initial sound in words. This may not happen at all for some pupils. For some pupils, “reading” will be the ability to recognise key words and signs in the environment. Where pupils are able to access formal phonics teaching they will follow the All Aboard Phonics Programme adopted by the whole school (see below in the Pioneers' section of this handbook). We will also provide a daily, “Drop everything and read” session for pupils to enjoy and share books.

Writing

As previously stated, the majority of our Adventurers' are not 'linguistic beings' and are still developing early communication skills. It is unlikely that these pupils will understand the abstract nature of communicating in writing – that marks on paper have meaning. However, as with reading, there will be some Adventurers' pupils who are able to develop some writing skills.

Writing will present huge challenges for our pupils following the Adventurers' Pathway:

- Composition – pupils may find it difficult to generate ideas - to “know what to say/write”
- Grammar – pupils may find it difficult to translate and sequence their ideas into sentences, or meaningful grammatical structures
- Narrative – pupils may find it difficult to sequence a series of ideas into a coherent narrative
- Phoneme/Grapheme correspondence – pupils may find it difficult to match the sound in a word to a letter shape and may not be able to produce words in a written form
- Fine motor skills – pupils may find it difficult to form letter shapes, or to use a keyboard
- Motivation – some pupils may not engage with writing activities as they do not understand the purpose.

We will need to think about what writing could look like for each pupil. What will be important and meaningful for them to be able to write and how might that look?

- Some pupils may be able to make marks that have meaning to them and assist with their communication
- Some pupils may be able to represent ideas in simple drawings – again to assist with their communication, or as a means of recording events or feelings that are important to them
- Some pupils may use VOCAs to communicate and therefore are able to produce text in this way (through symbol, whole words or keyboard input)

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- Some pupils may use symbol support at a key word or sentence level to record their 'writing.' A wide range of AAC can be used to show 'writing for a purpose' – this is often linked to assessments and understanding of reading skills as a physical piece of writing is often not produced
- Some pupils may learn to write their own names, or versions of their own names. This is valuable in that they can sign a form, or write their name on their work or possessions, or sign their name in a card. This is likely to be meaningful for them
- Some pupils may learn to write personal details, such as their address and their date of birth. This will enable them to fill in forms as adults
- Some pupils may "learn" to type familiar, text to access motivating apps, computer programs or websites that provide leisure activities
- Some pupils may be able to produce phonetically plausible, or readable single words to label pictures or to write a list for shopping – or for Santa!
- Some pupils may learn to write "readable" captions for their own drawings or work – or they may be able to write short messages – for example in a card, or a note to an adult
- Some pupils may learn to use IT, including voice activated software to communicate ideas that would lead to them being able to send a text or email.

It is important that we know why we are teaching a particular writing skill, where this is leading to and whether this will be meaningful, or useful to the pupil in their life beyond school.

It may be useful to consider the following points:

- Does the pupil understand that text has meaning?
- Can the pupil make the pre-writing shapes independently?
- Does the pupil have a purpose for writing? Who are they writing to/for?
- What is this pupil likely to need to be able write in the future?
- What writing skills would the pupil need to access leisure activities, or to enhance their life experiences?
- Are you asking the pupil to write words that are not part of their everyday vocabulary?
- Can the pupil read and understand the words that they are writing?
- Overwriting/tracing – what is the purpose of this?
- Hand over hand mark making – does this have a purpose?
- Spelling and punctuation – is this a priority for this pupil?
- Would the pupil be able to communicate in writing better, using IT? What will they need to write by hand as an adult?

Functional Maths Skills

Mathematical skills and knowledge are integral to all our daily activities and opportunities to develop these functional skills holistically, are included in the Equals Informal schemes of work. Some Adventurers' pupils may develop an interest in counting and pattern and demonstrate an ability to count by rote, or to sequence numerals, without having any concept of number or quantity.

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Difficulties with developing mathematical skills and concepts faced by pupils following the Adventurers' Pathway

Pupils following the Adventurers' Pathway will have difficulties developing mathematical skills for the following reasons:

- **Difficulties with abstract concepts** – virtually all number is abstract
- **Difficulties with communication** – number names and mathematical language in general can be difficult for our pupils to understand and remember
- **Poor working memory and attention** – holding multiple pieces of information in your head, is necessary for counting and calculations
- **Difficulties with sequencing** – vital for counting and calculations
- **Poor general knowledge** – pupils require constant references to real life contexts for learning to occur
- **Difficulties with generalisation** – pupils will need a context for mathematical understanding and to apply mathematical skills to problems.

Principles for teaching number for pupils following the Adventurers' Pathway

- Functional mathematical skills and concepts, should be delivered holistically throughout the curriculum in a meaningful context
- Pupils who demonstrate some understanding of number should use the Foreland Fields *My Number* scheme of work to develop their skills and knowledge

Assessment

Each pupil has their own personalised curriculum with personal learning intentions for each of the 4 areas of need – communication, cognition and learning, social, emotional and mental health and physical development. Progress towards these will be assessed using the MAPP assessment tool, which has 4 assessment aspects:

- independence – the level of support that the pupil needs to perform the skill
- fluency – how well the pupil performs the skill
- maintenance – the frequency with which the pupil performs the skill
- generalisation – the range of contexts in which the pupil performs the skill

Judgements around progress will also be personalised and all adults supporting the pupil, including families, the class team and partner agencies will agree whether a pupil is making expected or exceeding expected progress at pupil progress meetings held in terms 4 and 6.

Evidence For Learning

Video and photographic evidence of progress will be captured using the app Evidence for Learning. Teachers are able to link this evidence to personal learning intentions, the Discoverers Framework and the Life Skills Tracker. Teachers may use other indicators such as the Engagement Model, Routes for Learning or EYFS (for Year R pupils), where they feel that this will support their assessments for learning.

Key Stage 2 Statutory Assessment

Pupils on the Adventurers' Pathway are working below National Curriculum Levels and pupils working at P5 or above in Key Stage 2 are required to use Pre-Key Stage Standards in reading, writing and maths for statutory assessment. Pupils in Key Stage 2 working below P5 are required to use the Engagement Model

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for statutory assessment. This will be used as a descriptor of learning level. There is no expectation that pupils will progress through levels in a linear fashion.

The Engagement Model of assessment became statutory for all KS2 pupils working below P5 from September 2021. Teachers will assess pupils' engagement using 5 indicators:

- exploration – how a pupil responds to stimuli
- realisation – how a pupil begins to control or change a stimulus
- anticipation – how a pupil predicts what is coming next
- persistence – whether a pupil continues an activity over a period of time
- initiation – how a pupil acts independently during an activity

Welsh Routes for Learning

Teachers may use Welsh Routes for Learning to assess pupils' communication and cognition where they are working below P5.

Life Skills Tracker

Evidence of the acquisition of life skills is captured on the Life Skills Tracker for pupils on all curriculum pathways, throughout their school career. These skills include:

- eating and drinking
- dressing
- shopping
- cooking
- travel training
- independence
-

Relationships, Relationships & Sex Education Tracker

Evidence of the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding around Relationships and Relationships & Sex Education is captured on the Relationships, Relationships & Sex Education Tracker for pupils on all pathways, throughout their school career.

Evidence For Learning

Video and photographic evidence of progress will be captured using the app Evidence for Learning. Teachers are able to link this evidence to personal learning intentions, Life Skills Tracker, Routes for Learning and Engagement Model.

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Discoverers' Pathway



Discoverers' Pathway

Aiming for Independent Living

Discoverers Curriculum Design

The Discoverers Pathway is a semi-formal curriculum for pupils with severe learning difficulties working from the beginning of P5 to the beginning of the National Curriculum. We aim to equip our Discoverers pupils with the skills that they will need to lead happy, healthy, safe and independent lives beyond school.

The focus of this curriculum is on developing communication, cognitive skills including functional literacy and numeracy, social and emotional development, physical development and life skills through the Equals semi-formal curriculum schemes of work and some additional Foreland Fields schemes of work.

Holistic Process Based Learning

“Process based teaching is the philosophy that process – the way we do things – is more important to long term learning than product – getting things right.

It is defined as learning holistically rather than in a narrow, compartmentalised fashion as when for example, you’re teaching addition or subtraction or statistics etc.”

(Peter Imray 2020)

We know that our Discoverers pupils have difficulties with memory, abstract concepts and generalising skills. Therefore, we aim to provide a skills-based curriculum (rather than a knowledge-based curriculum), with repeated opportunities to practise and develop the functional skills that pupils will need to succeed in adulthood.

This approach means that skills that are traditionally taught in discrete subjects such as maths and English are practised and learnt over time in contextualised activities. For example, weighing and measuring are traditionally taught as part of maths. These skills will be taught through specific cooking and shopping learning opportunities on the Discoverers pathway; they will learn how to measure the amount of milk that they need to make angel delight – rather than learning how to measure 300mls of any liquid;

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Discoverers' Pathway Curriculum Structure

A semi-formal curriculum for pupils with severe learning disabilities

'Aiming for Independent Living'

Area of Need	Communication & Interaction	Cognition & Learning	Social Emotional & Mental Health	Physical & Sensory Development
Equals Schemes of Work	My Communication My Play My Outdoor School My Independence My Thinking & Problem Solving My Physical Well-being My Creativity My Sex & Relationships The World About Me			
Focus on	Communication, Life Skills & Independence			
Provision	• Needs led classes • High staffing ratio • Direct partner agency support (SALT/CAT Team) • Support from Health Care Team (School Nurse/Therapy Assistant/Health Care Assistant) • Highly adapted classroom environment with access to outdoors • Access to sensory development room/soft play/sensory room • Highly personalised learning journey			
Assessment	• Pupil Progress Records • Evidence for Learning/MAPP Assessment • Personal Learning Intentions • Life Skills and RSE Tracker • Engagement Model • Pre-Key Stage Standards (KS2) • AQA Unit Awards • Duke of Edinburgh Award			
Outcomes	• Progress and achievement – greater independence • Engagement and well-being • Good attendance • Health • Access to the community			

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Personalised Learning

Each pupil has a unique set of talents, abilities and interests. They also have a wide range of needs in all areas of the curriculum and they will need highly personalised learning opportunities to make progress towards independent living. Families, therapists and the class team work together to agree Personal Learning Intentions 3 times a year for each pupil in all 4 areas of need on their EHCP (communication, cognition, health and well-being and physical development). These are the priorities for each child in all aspects of their lives. Opportunities to practise these skills repeatedly in different contexts are woven into the curriculum

Equals Semi-Formal Schemes of Work

The Equals semi-formal schemes of work are developmental and not related to age or Key Stage. The pupil begins at their point of learning and each learning journey will be personal.

The Equals semi-formal schemes of work do not follow the traditional subject model of the National Curriculum. Our pupils have difficulties with generalising skills and concepts and in order for learning to be meaningful and successful, opportunities for holistic development are presented in real life contexts, where pupils can learn by “doing” and practising the skills that they will need to be happy, healthy, safe and successful in their life beyond school.

We have identified some gaps in the Equals schemes of work for our pupils and we have written additional Foreland Fields semi-formal schemes of work, for *My Number*, *My Reading*, *My Writing* and *Where I live*. These schemes of work are intended to complement the Equals schemes of work and it is not expected that these will be taught as separate “subjects” for most pupils. The Foreland Fields schemes of work indicate where it may be appropriate for higher ability pupils to begin learning in this way. Some pupils may access the Equals Formal Curriculum English and maths schemes of work.

The table below shows, where the learning in each National Curriculum subject can be found in the Discoverers’ Pathway.

NC Subject	Where is this learning for Discoverers’ pupils?
English	My Communication My Play and Leisure My Reading – FFS scheme of work My Cooking My Writing – FFS scheme of work My Shopping My Drama Equals English Formal Scheme of work – for higher ability Discoverers’ pupils
Maths	My Number – FFS scheme of work My Shopping My Cooking My Art The World about Me – Seasons My Thinking and Problem Solving My Outdoor School

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Science	My Cooking The World About Me – Life Cycles of Plants and Animals, Weather, Seasons, Food, Recycling My Physical Well-Being – My Healthy Eating and Healthy Lifestyle My Outdoor School
Geography	The World About Me – People My Travel Training My Outdoor School Where I live – FFS scheme of work
History	The World About Me - Change
Art and Design	My Art
Design Technology	My Cooking My Thinking and Problem Solving
PE	My Physical Well-Being – PE, Sport and Aquatics, Physical Activities My Dance My Play and Leisure
RE	The World About Me – Festivals, Food Whole School Faith Celebration Days
PSHE/Citizenship	My Relationships & Sex Education The World About Me – Food My Physical Well-Being – Healthy Eating and Healthy Lifestyles, Mental Health and Well-Being My Play and Leisure My Independence – My Dressing and Undressing
Music	My Music
Computing	The World About Me – Digital Photography My Writing

My Communication

This scheme of work is intended to be delivered holistically throughout the curriculum, rather than as a discrete subject. It focuses on 10 areas of communication:

- Imperative communications
- Following instructions
- Declarative communications
- Dynamic communications
- Narratives
- Formal social interactions with familiar and unfamiliar people
- Personalised reading and writing
- Non-verbal behavioural communications
- Peer to peer communications
- Augmentative and alternative communications (AAC)

My Play and Leisure

Play is crucial in child development and has many functions:

- It supports pupils to learn about social interaction and communication
- It supports pupils to make friendships and to learn to work co-operatively with others

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- It supports pupils to learn new skills in a safe environment
- It encourages physical development
- It encourages pupils to explore and to learn about the world around them
- It supports pupils to develop Theory of Mind
- It supports pupils to develop thinking and problem-solving skills

Play will be (at least) a daily discrete session for all Discoverers pupils, regardless of Key Stage. It will either be structured play, (games) or free play.

Pupils may be working at different levels of play:

- Sensorimotor
- Relational
- Functional
- Symbolic
- Socio-dramatic

Pupils' play may be further categorised by the following social dimensions:

- Solitary
- Parallel
- Shared
- Turn-taking
- Co-operative

If our pupils are to become happy and healthy adults, it is vital that we provide a range of opportunities for them to discover what they like to do in their spare time i.e. leisure activities. Pupils will be given time within the curriculum to experience different leisure activities, and to develop and practise the skills that they will need to enjoy these as independently as possible.

My Thinking and Problem Solving

In preparing (Discoverers') learners for life beyond school and greater opportunities for independence it is vital that they are able to function in a range of situations and contexts. In order to be able to do this they will need to be able to apply knowledge, skills and understanding to circumstances that may be unusual, unexpected and unpredictable.

(Equals semi-formal scheme of work – My Thinking and Problem Solving)

Most of our pupils have needed a great deal of adult support to accomplish basic skills. If we want them to become independent adults, then we need to equip them with the skills to identify and solve problems independently. This scheme of work is a process-based approach, which can be applied across the curriculum. Pupils should be given the opportunity and the time to do things for themselves and to work things out for themselves. When adults step in too quickly, it deprives pupils of valuable learning opportunities.

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My Independence

Opportunities to develop life skills are delivered holistically throughout the Equals semi-formal schemes of work. *My Independence – My Cooking, My Dressing, My Travel Training and My Shopping* are particularly focused on developing the life skills that pupils will need in adulthood beyond school.

The table below lists the all life skills that are delivered holistically through the Equals semi-formal scheme of work. We have added earlier and higher order skills to create a Life Skills Tracker that will follow pupils on all pathways throughout their learning journey in school.

Foreland Fields School Life Skills Tracker	
Eating and Drinking Skills	
Cutlery Skills	
I can co-operate with totally supported oral feeding	
I can feed myself with hand under hand support	
I can feed myself with my fingers	
I can feed myself with a spoon	
I can feed myself with a fork	
I can use a fork and spoon together to feed myself	
I can use a knife to cut soft foods such as fish fingers	
I can use a knife and fork together to feed myself	
I can use a knife to cut firmer foods such as meat	
I can hold a knife and fork correctly to feed myself independently	
Drinking Skills	
I can drink from bottle with teat	
I can drink from non-spill cup	
I can drink from open cup	
I can drink using straw	
I can hold cup or bottle with support	
I can hold cup or bottle with 2 hands without support	
I can drink from an open cup independently using one hand	
Dining Hall Skills	
I can identify my own lunchbox and carry it down to the hall	
I can communicate my lunch choices to an adult	
I understand how to make healthy lunch choices	
I can communicate "finish"	
I can collect my own lunch from the servery and take it to my table	
I can clear my own plate, or put my packed lunch waste in the correct place	
I can identify and reach out for items of cutlery, plates and cups on the table, when asked by an adult	
I can follow instructions to collect items of cutlery, plates and cups from the cutlery/plate station	
I can set a place with cutlery, cup and plate	
I can set the whole table for my class	
I can pour myself a cup of water from a jug	
Dressing Skills	
Undressing	
I can co-operate with dressing and undressing	

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I can remove socks, slip on shoes, gloves and hats
I can take off my jumper and loose trousers or leggings
I can undo velcro to take of my coat
I can undo velcro to take off my shoes
I can undo a zip to take off my coat
I can undo buttons to take of my coat or shirt
I can undo fasteners on my trousers or skirt
I can undress independently
Dressing
I can identify items of clothing
I can put on simple items of clothing, such as my hat, coat or jumper
I can put on all items of my school uniform apart from shoes and socks
I understand the sequence of dressing/undressing
I can put on shoes and socks
I can fasten velcro
I can fasten my zip
I can fasten my buttons
I can fasten buckles and laces on my shoes
Organising Clothing
I can organise my clothing in different ways, such as hanging up my coat, or putting my jumper in my bag, or packing my swim bag
I can choose appropriate clothing for different occasions and weather
I understand the link between clothing and hygiene
I can sort clean and dirty clothes
I can use a washing machine and tumble dryer to wash my clothes
I understand the need for privacy, when dressing and undressing
Shopping Skills
Using and Managing Money
I understand that money is a means of exchange
I can recognise a £1 coin
I can count out the correct number of £1 coins on request up to £3
I can count out the correct number of £1 coins on request up to £5
I can count out the correct number of £1 coins on request up to £10
I understand the value of £5, £10, £20 notes
I can read a price tag/label
I can give the cashier the correct number of £1 coins to cover the cost of shopping
I can give the cashier the correct note to cover the cost of shopping
I know to expect change at the end of a shopping transaction
I can use my debit card to pay for items using contactless
I can use my debit card to withdraw cash
I know not to share my pin number or bank details
I know what to do if I lose my debit card
I know what to do if the cash point swallows my card
Preparing for Shopping
I can identify the items needed to go on a list
I can create a shopping list
I know which shop to visit, to buy the items on my list
I can collect the items that I need to go on a shopping trip
In the Supermarket

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I can select and use a basket or trolley as appropriate
I can find the items on my list in the supermarket
I know how to wait in the queue
I know how to order my items on the conveyor belt and put the divider at the end of my shopping
I can use the self-service checkout
I can pack items correctly in the shopping bag
I can put the items away in the appropriate place (cupboard/fridge/freezer) when I return to school
Other Shopping
I can shop in a café or restaurant
I can shop for clothes
I can shop for birthdays and festivals
Cooking Skills
Pre – Cooking Skills
I can follow simple instructions
I can read and follow a simple recipe
I can wash my hands and put on an apron
I can locate and collect the ingredients and utensils needed
I can weigh ingredients in grams
I can measure liquids in mls
I know that bacteria in food can cause illness and I understand the kitchen rules for food hygiene for example using the correct coloured chopping boards
I know how different foods should be stored
I recognise when food is mouldy, or not fresh
I know how to check the use by dates on food packaging
Using a Knife
I can use a blunt knife to slice and chop soft foods, for example a banana
I can use a blunt knife to spread butter, jam or other spread on toast
I can use a blunt knife to make a sandwich
I can use a sharp knife to chop and dice fruit or vegetables
I can make salads
I can use a sharp knife to cut, or dice raw meat
Using Other Kitchen Utensils
I can use a grater to make a cheese sandwich
I can use a ring pull or a can opener to open a can
I can use a potato peeler
I can use a potato masher
I can use a rolling pin to roll out dough or pastry
I can use pastry or cookie cutters
I can use a colander to drain pasta or vegetables
Pouring
I can make and pour a drink of squash or milk
I can prepare a bowl of breakfast cereal
I can make instant whip
I can pour hot water from a kettle
Using Electrical Equipment
I can make a smoothie
I can make toast independently
I can make a toasted sandwich

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I can use a kettle to make a cup of tea or other hot drink
I can use the hotplate or hob to warm a pan of tinned food such as soup or beans
I can use the oven
I can use a frying pan to make pancakes, stir fried food or other fried foods
I can use a microwave
I can use a grill
I can use an electric whisk
I can use a blender
Simple Meals to Cook Independently
I can cook beans or spaghetti hoops on toast
I can cook fried egg on toast
I can cook scrambled or boiled egg with toast
I can make an omelette
I can cook pasta and add a ready-made pasta sauce
I can cook a jacket potato with butter, or beans, or cheese
I can make cheese on toast
I can use the oven or grill to cook fish fingers, potato waffles, chicken dippers, or similar foods
I can make a stir fry
I can make chilli and microwave rice
I can make curry and microwave rice
I can make spaghetti bolognese
Accidents in the Kitchen
I am aware of the hazards in the kitchen, such as hot objects or surfaces or sharp, or electrical objects
I know how to deal with minor burns to the skin
I know how to deal with minor cuts
I know what to do if there was a major accident
Clearing Up
I know how to check that everything is turned off
I know how to recycle waste food and other rubbish correctly
I know how to wash up and dry equipment and put it away in the correct place
I know how to wipe down surfaces after cooking
I know how to clear up after spills on surfaces and on the floor
Healthy Eating
I understand about portion size
I understand which foods are healthy and which foods are snacks and I know that I should only have 1 snack per day
I understand about a balanced plate
Travel Training
Walking and Road Crossing
I can transition to different locations around school with supervision
I can travel to different locations around school without supervision
I can walk outside school safely with an adult
I can stop at a kerb and look for traffic
I can cross a minor road with support
I can use a zebra crossing to cross a major road with support
I can cross a T junction or crossroads
I can travel outside school in my electric wheelchair
I can cross the road using my electric wheelchair
I can identify landmarks on regular routes

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I know what to do if I get lost
I can walk/use my wheelchair a short route independently
Using Public Transport
I can flag the bus to stop and I know how to communicate my destination to the driver
I can purchase a ticket
I can get onto a bus and find a seat – I know what to do if all the seats are occupied
I know where to get off the bus and how to alert the driver of my stop
I know what to do if I miss my stop
I can travel a route on a bus independently
I can travel several routes by bus independently
I know where to get on and off the train
I know how to purchase a train ticket
I know how to use the ticket barrier
I can find the correct platform
I know how to wait safely for a train
I can get on and off a train safely
I know what to do if a train or bus is late or does not turn up
Cycling
I know that I need to wear high visibility clothing and a safety helmet
I know that I will need lights if I travel after dark
I know what to do if I have a puncture
I can travel a familiar route safely by bicycle
Independence
I can co-operate with personal care routines
I can indicate when I need changing or cleaning
I can stay dry during the day with minimal accidents
I can use the toilet and wash my hands with supervision
I can use the toilet and wash my hands independently
I can wipe my own face after meals
I know when I should wash my hands
I can brush my teeth with support
I can brush my teeth with supervision
I can brush my teeth independently
I can shower or bathe with support
I can shower or bathe with supervision
I can shower or bathe independently
I know how to use deodorant each morning and after exercise
I can brush my hair with support
I can brush my hair with supervision
I can brush my hair independently
I can tie my hair up for PE, cooking or to create a different style
I can wash my hair with support
I can wash my hair with supervision
I can wash my hair independently
I can manage my periods with support
I can manage my periods with supervision
I can manage my periods independently
I can manage my own medication/enteral feed with support
I can manage my own medication/enteral feed with supervision

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I can manage my own medication/enteral feed independently
I can cut my own nails

Reading

Early reading skills are taught holistically throughout the Equals semi-formal schemes of work and also the Foreland Fields *My Reading* scheme of work. As our Discoverers have difficulty with abstract concepts and working memory they are unlikely to become fluent readers and some may never “read” in the traditional sense of the word. Some pupils on the autistic spectrum (ASD) may demonstrate a decoding ability far higher than their level of understanding and this will not prepare them for being “readers” in later life. Some pupils however will attain a level of functional literacy and should be given every opportunity to achieve this. Access to books, stories and text will however be a daily part of the curriculum for all pupils as a means of developing expressive and receptive language skills and social interaction.

Pupils are now using a narrative programme called ‘Tales Toolkits’ which will run alongside ‘My Narrative’ from the Equals Semi Formal Curriculum. Together these programmes will develop our pupils’ narrative and conversational skills as well as their critical thinking skills.

Phonics

Pupils will be taught to read using a combination of visual (pictures, whole word, phonic) and non-visual (context) cues. Sound discrimination – or early phonics will be introduced at the earliest stages, but more formal teaching of phoneme/grapheme correspondence will only be taught once the pupil has developed a sight vocabulary of familiar words and they have demonstrated that they can “hear” the initial sound in words. This may not happen at all for some pupils. For some pupils, “reading” will be the ability to recognise key words and signs in the environment. Where pupils are able to access formal phonics teaching they will follow the All Aboard Phonics Programme adopted by the whole school (see below in the Pioneers’ section of this handbook). We will also provide a daily, “Drop everything and read” session for pupils to enjoy and share books. Participating in story telling is also an important part of the curriculum.

Writing

Mark making and early writing opportunities are taught throughout the Equals semi-formal schemes of work and also the Foreland Fields *My Writing* scheme of work. Although many of our Discoverers pupils may develop effective communication, they still face some specific difficulties. They are likely to have language processing difficulties, due to reduced attention and listening, a slower rate for processing auditory information, problems with short term memory and difficulties generalising their learning to other contexts. They have difficulty with developing vocabulary, recall and using grammatical structures. They may be able to make requests or comment using facial expression, gesture or symbols, without using words.

Some pupils with ASD do not understand the need to communicate verbally and may use behaviours to do this, rather than spoken words. Some pupils are echolalic and do not produce spontaneous words with meaning.

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Those pupils who are able to communicate verbally, will still have difficulties with abstract concepts such as text. They may not understand that marks on paper represent ideas. Many pupils' expressive language skills are better than their receptive language skills. They will still have difficulty communicating simple ideas clearly in a sentence.

Writing will present huge challenges for our pupils following the Discoverers' Pathway:

- Composition – pupils may find it difficult to generate ideas - to “know what to say/write”
- Grammar – pupils may find it difficult to translate and sequence their ideas into sentences, or meaningful grammatical structures
- Narrative – pupils may find it difficult to sequence a series of ideas into a coherent narrative
- Phoneme/Grapheme correspondence – pupils may find it difficult to match the sound in a word to a letter shape and may not be able to produce words in a written form
- Fine motor skills – pupils may find it difficult to form letter shapes, or to use a keyboard
- Motivation – some pupils may not engage with writing activities as they do not understand the purpose.

We will need to think about what writing could look like for each pupil. What will be important and meaningful for them to be able to write and how might that look?

- Some pupils may be able to make marks that have meaning to them and assist with their communication
- Some pupils may be able to represent ideas in simple drawings – again to assist with their communication, or as a means of recording events or feelings that are important to them
- Some pupils may use VOCAs to communicate and therefore are able to produce text in this way (through symbol, whole words or keyboard input)
- Some pupils may use symbol support at a key word or sentence level to record their ‘writing.’ A wide range of AAC can be used to show ‘writing for a purpose’ – this is often linked to assessments and understanding of reading skills as a physical piece of writing is often not produced
- Some pupils may learn to write their own names, or versions of their own names. This is valuable in that they can sign a form, or write their name on their work or possessions, or sign their name in a card. This is likely to be meaningful for them
- Some pupils may learn to write personal details, such as their address and their date of birth. This will enable them to fill in forms as adults
- Some pupils may “learn” to type familiar, text to access motivating apps, computer programs or websites that provide leisure activities
- Some pupils may be able to produce phonetically plausible, or readable single words to label pictures or to write a list for shopping – or for Santa!
- Some pupils may learn to write “readable” captions for their own drawings or work – or they may be able to write short messages – for example in a card, or a note to an adult
- Some pupils may learn to use IT, including voice activated software to communicate ideas that would lead to them being able to send a text or email.

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It is important that we know why we are teaching a particular writing skill, where this is leading to and whether this will be meaningful, or useful to the pupil in their life beyond school.

It may be useful to consider the following points:

- Does the pupil understand that text has meaning?
- Can the pupil make the pre-writing shapes independently?
- Does the pupil have a purpose for writing? Who are they writing to/for?
- What is this pupil likely to need to be able to write in the future?
- What writing skills would the pupil need to access leisure activities, or to enhance their life experiences?
- Are you asking the pupil to write words that are not part of their everyday vocabulary?
- Can the pupil read and understand the words that they are writing?
- Overwriting/tracing – what is the purpose of this?
- Hand over hand mark making – does this have a purpose?
- Spelling and punctuation – is this a priority for this pupil?
- Would the pupil be able to communicate in writing better, using IT? What will they need to write by hand as an adult?

Maths

Mathematical skills and knowledge are integral to all our daily activities and opportunities to develop these skills holistically, are included in all Equals schemes of work. For example, *My Shopping* provides opportunities to learn about money, *My Cooking* provides opportunities to learn about capacity, volume, mass and fractions and *My Art* provides opportunities to learn about shape, size and measures etc.

Foreland Fields *My Number* scheme of work aims to provide a skills-based progression pathway to support teachers to identify next steps for developing individual counting and number skills, throughout the other Equals schemes of work. It is also intended to support teachers with pedagogy – how we should teach number skills to our pupils with severe learning difficulties. It is not intended that *My Number* is taught as a discrete lesson for the majority of pupils on this pathway. There may however be some pupils, whose mathematical abilities overlap with the Pioneers' Pathway and it might be appropriate for these pupils to begin to access some subject specific learning in this area. The Equals formal curriculum English and maths schemes of work provide further guidance for these pupils.

Difficulties with developing mathematical skills and concepts faced by pupils following the Discoverers' Pathway:

Pupils following the Discoverers' Pathway will have difficulties developing mathematical skills for the following reasons:

- **Difficulties with abstract concepts** – virtually all number is abstract
- **Difficulties with communication** – number names and mathematical language in general can be difficult for our pupils to understand and remember
- **Poor working memory and attention** – holding multiple pieces of information in your head, is necessary for counting and calculations
- **Difficulties with sequencing** – vital for counting and calculations
- **Poor general knowledge** – pupils require constant references to real life contexts for learning to occur

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- **Difficulties with generalisation** – pupils will need a context for mathematical understanding and to apply mathematical skills to problems.

However mathematical knowledge is integral to everything that we do throughout our daily lives and if our pupils are “*aiming for independent living*”, then we need to teach them to be able to solve the type of practical real-life mathematical problems that they will encounter beyond school.

For our pupils to grasp the concept of number, they will need to understand the following principles:

- **The one-to-one principle** – one unique number tag must be assigned to each single item counted; items are counted one at a time
- **The stable order principle** – count words must be produced in the same order for each count
- **The cardinality principle** – the final word in the count denotes the total number of items counted

Due to the nature of the difficulties our pupils have (see above) they are likely to make the following errors with these principles when learning to count:

- The pupil does not correspond pointing to individual objects (one –to- one)
- The pupil says the count words (numbers) at a different rate to the pointing (one –to- one)
- The pupil misses an item out when counting (one –to- one)
- The pupil counts an item more than once (one –to- one)
- The pupil says the same number twice during the count (stable order)
- The pupil does not sequence the number words correctly (stable order)
- The pupil “forgets” where they are up to mid count (stable order)
- The pupil carries on saying number names, after the last object has been pointed to (cardinality)

Principles for teaching number for pupils following the Discoverers’ Pathway

- Mathematical skills and concepts, should be delivered holistically throughout the curriculum in a meaningful context, rather than as a discrete timetabled subject in order to achieve deep learning (although teachers have also developed *My Play* sessions that specifically target mathematical skills)
- Pupils should grasp the 3 principles of number (see above), before they move onto higher order skills.
- Number activities should be concrete – using real life contexts and real-life objects – Numicon is an abstract representation of number and should be used with caution.
- Written calculations should only be introduced for the higher ability pupils, who have mastered number to 10.
- Agreed mathematical vocabulary should be used consistently.

Science

Science is taught through the Equals *The World about Me*, *My Cooking* and *My Play* schemes of work. They aim to give pupils a holistic understanding of everyday events and experiences in their world – for example water, weather, food, animals, plants, seasons and materials.

Geography

Geography skills are taught through concrete learning experiences in *My Travel Training* and *The World About Me* Equals semi-formal schemes of work. If our Discoverers’ pupils are “*aiming for independent living*”, it is important that they develop language, knowledge and understanding related to their local community, where they will live and possibly work. We have developed our own scheme of work, *Where I*

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live to supplement the geography content in the Equals *World about Me* scheme of work. This focuses on pupils becoming familiar with their local environment and surrounding areas.

History

History skills are taught through *The World About Me – Change and the Passing of Time* Equals semi-formal scheme of work. The aim of this scheme of work is for pupils to understand that change occurs over time and that life has not always been as it is today. History topics will be themed, rather than historical eras. Themes include changing homes, changing transport, changing technology, changing clothing and changing music.

PE

Opportunities for physical activity are maximised throughout the day. Pupils are encouraged to develop active habits from an early age, so that they continue to be physically active in adulthood. PE is taught through the *My Physical Well-being* and *My Play and Leisure* Equals semi-formal schemes of work. Pupils access swimming in termly blocks and some pupils with physical impairments access water-based activities in the hydrotherapy pool. Pupils access offsite physical activities such as sailing, or using the facilities at the local leisure centre.

RE

RE is taught through *The World About Me – Festivals* Equals semi-formal scheme of work. Pupils learn about how families worship and celebrate in a meaningful context. Pupils are also encouraged to understand that festivals may have a spiritual meaning for families and individual reflection – as far as pupils are able.

PSHE/RSE

PHSE (including RSE) skills are taught daily throughout the curriculum. *People, My Physical Well-being – Healthy eating and healthy lifestyle and Mental Health and Well-being* and *My Relationships & Sex Education* Equals semi-formal schemes of work aim to teach pupils the skills to be happy, healthy and safe in adulthood.

Relationships, Relationships & Sex Education Tracker

Relationships & Sex Education	
Knowing my Body	
I am aware of my body parts	
I can name my body parts	
I know that I am a boy or a girl	
I know that others are boys, girls, men or women	
I can identify male/female underwear	
I can communicate how our bodies change over time	
I understand that menstruation happens to all girls/women and is a normal part of adult life	
I can manage my own periods	
I am able to manage my own personal hygiene	
Knowing Me	
I can recognise myself in the mirror	

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I can recognise things that I am good at and things that I like about myself
I can communicate my likes and dislikes
I am confident about my likes and dislikes
I can accept that others will have different likes and dislikes from me
I have good levels of self-esteem
Private and Public
I know which body parts are private
I can recognise a symbol for private
I know which places are private or public
I demonstrate consistently appropriate behaviour in public
I am aware of behaviours that are private
Touching and Allowing Others to Touch Me
I demonstrate appropriate touch of others
I can accept appropriate touch from others
I recognise where it is inappropriate for others to touch me without permission
I understand that I am free to make choices about my own body and that I may choose for others to touch me
I understand that I should not touch others without their permission and that others may choose not to let me touch them
I know that I should tell an adult if someone touches me in a way that I do not like; I know who I would tell
Forming Relationships
I can recognise and respond to family members
I can communicate that I love members of my family
I can communicate about ways in which family members care for each other
I know that families can look different to my family
I can describe the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children
I know that there are different types of stable relationships, including marriage
I can recognise and respond to my peers
I can name or indicate a friend
I can make and maintain friendships
I can describe "a good friend"
I know that a friendship needs to be a 2 way relationship
I have a developing understanding of "care" and "empathy"
I know that people can look different from myself and that they may have different beliefs or make different choices
I know what to do if I have a disagreement with a friend
I am beginning to understand the term "respectful relationship" and how to treat others with respect; I expect to be treated with respect.
I can describe different types of bullying/abusive behaviour and where to get help
I know that having a boyfriend or girlfriend relationship is reliant on building a strong friendship
I know that it is inappropriate to have a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship with staff
Sexual Intimacy with Another Person
I understand the term "consent"
I know that the sexual act is between 2 consenting people
I know that love, care and empathy are key components of any sexual act with another
I know that penetrative sex between a man and a woman could result in pregnancy
I know that penetrative sex between persons of the same sex will not result in pregnancy
I know how to have safe sex and the possible consequences of unsafe sex

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Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing

Healthy Eating

- I can communicate likes and dislikes
- I can experience or handle or taste healthy foods
- I know why we need to eat and drink
- I know how to store different foods (fridge, cupboard, freezer)
- I can identify food as either “healthy” or “snacks”
- I know that I should have only one “snack” per day
- I am familiar with making healthy food choices
- I am familiar with making healthy drink choices
- I can prepare a number of healthy meals or snacks independently
- I can describe the potential consequences of an unhealthy diet, including tooth decay
- I have an understanding of portion size

Healthy Life Style

- I know that I need to do these things well to stay healthy :MOVE, EAT, SLEEP, RELAX
- I can describe some of the risks of smoking
- I know that some medications/drugs are good for us – but that some are harmful and illegal
- I know that I should not take other people’s medication
- I can describe safe levels of alcohol consumption and some of the risks associated with drinking too much
- I have good sleep routines
- I know that I need to stay active in order to keep healthy
- I join in with physical activities in school that keep me healthy
- I join in with physical activities beyond school that keep me healthy
- I know how to get help with my physical health

Mental Health

- I can recognise myself in the mirror
- I can describe the things that I am good at (my strengths)
- I will join in with a range of activities, with a range of people
- I can communicate my interests and favourite activities
- I have established hobbies and/or leisure activities
- I have developed an emotional vocabulary and I can express how I am feeling
- I can identify when I am feeling low, or anxious
- I can use relaxation techniques that calm me when I feel anxious or stressed
- I can describe activities that help me to relax or calm
- I know what I can do and how to get help when I am feeling sad, or unhappy
- I can self-regulate my own emotions
- I can show resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge

Staying Safe

- I can communicate when I feel unwell, or in pain
- I can communicate when I am unhappy, tired, hungry, thirsty or frightened
- I can identify hazards or risks in a range of familiar environments
- I know how to get help when I feel unwell, unhappy or scared
- I know when and how to make an emergency call (999)
- I can describe how to stay safe in the sun and the risks of getting sunburnt
- I can cross the roads around home and school safely
- I can describe some of the risks of the internet
- I know how to get help if I see something that I do not like on the internet

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I know what information is personal and how to keep this private
I demonstrate appropriate behaviour online
I can communicate safely with my friends online

DT

Design and Technology skills are taught through the *My Art, My Cooking* and *My Play and Leisure* Equals semi-formal schemes of work. Pupils develop designing and making skills, such as cooking and using simple tools through process-based learning opportunities. There is a focus on developing skills that pupils will need in everyday life, such as using scissors, sharp knives, glue or tape.

Art, Music, Drama, Dance

Skills in these areas are taught through the Equals semi-formal schemes of work *My Creativity - My Art, My Music, My Drama* and *My Dance*.

Computing

IT and computing skills are taught holistically throughout the curriculum as well as through The World about Me – Digital Photography Equals semi-formal scheme of work. Pupils learn to use technology in a range of functional contexts as well as for play and leisure purposes and to support learning in other curriculum areas. Pupils may learn to use technology to support their communication. There are a range of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices that pupils learn to use in different contexts throughout the day. Pupils develop their awareness of cause and effect, using touch screens, switch toys or Eye Gaze technology. Pupils learn basic skills such as sending emails, using a search engine, or using social media. They learn how to stay safe online.

Crossing the Bridge - Discoverers' Pupils Working Within National Curriculum Stages

The core principle of Foreland Fields School Curriculum is that every pupil has a unique set of needs, abilities and talents and as such should follow a personalised curriculum with each individual learning journey beginning with the child.

We know that many of our pupils have “*co-existing and compounding disabilities, which do not just include cognitive impairments, but also physical and mental health needs*” resulting in “*spiky learning profiles*”

Although we now have 5 curriculum pathways, tailored to different needs groups, there are a small group of pupils who present with needs that “cross the bridge” between the Discoverers’ and Pioneers’ pathways.

These pupils are likely to be approaching, or “dipping into” National Curriculum levels in one or more areas of learning. Pupils entering Key Stage 2 may not be ready for a formal curriculum due to their age, or difficulties associated with their diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder, but may have the ability to develop their skills and knowledge further than their peers on the Discoverers’ pathway. These pupils may move to the Pioneers pathway in Key Stage 3.

There are some secondary aged pupils, who are able to access National Curriculum levels in some areas of learning, but continue to have additional needs met within a Discoverers’ class.

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These pupils should be identified by class teachers and the Pathway Leads for Discoverers in discussion with parents and partner agencies where appropriate and adaptations from the Crossing the Bridge Curriculum should be documented within their provision plans in their EHCP.

Teachers should then plan a personalised curriculum, considering each child's individual strengths and challenges, identifying the approaches from the Crossing the Bridge Curriculum that will ensure the best outcomes for each pupil.

Assessment

Each pupil has their own personalised curriculum with personal learning intentions for each of the 4 areas of need – communication, cognition and learning, social, emotional and mental health and physical development. Progress towards these will be assessed using the MAPP assessment tool, which has 4 assessment aspects:

- independence – the level of support that the pupil needs to perform the skill
- fluency – how well the pupil performs the skill
- maintenance – the frequency with which the pupil performs the skill
- generalisation – the range of contexts in which the pupil performs the skill

Judgements around progress will also be personalised and all adults supporting the pupil, including families, the class team and partner agencies will agree whether a pupil is making expected or exceeding expected progress at pupil progress meetings held in terms 4 and 6.

Evidence For Learning

Video and photographic evidence of progress will be captured using the app Evidence for Learning. Teachers are able to link this evidence to personal learning intentions, and the RSE and Life Skills Tracker. Teachers may use other indicators such as the Engagement Model or Routes for Learning where they feel that this will support their assessments for learning.

Key Stage 2 Statutory Assessment

Pupils on the Discoverers' Pathway are working below National Curriculum Levels and pupils in Key Stage 2 are required to use Pre-Key Stage Standards in reading, writing and maths for statutory assessment where they are working at P5 or above.

The Engagement Model of assessment became statutory for all Key Stage 2 pupils working below P5 from September 2021. Teachers assess pupils' engagement using 5 indicators:

- exploration – how a pupil responds to stimuli
- realisation – how a pupil begins to control or change a stimulus
- anticipation – how a pupil predicts what is coming next
- persistence – whether a pupil continues an activity over a period of time
- initiation – how a pupil acts independently during an activity

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Life Skills Tracker/RSE/Phonics Tracker

These trackers follow the child throughout their school career and capture video or photographic evidence of progress (see above).

Accreditation

Pupils will work towards accreditation that builds on their individual talents, interests and aspirations.

Most pupils will gain range of functional AQA Unit Awards. Some pupils will access Pearson Entry Level Certificates in maths and English, City & Guilds Horticulture and Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

Work Experience

Pupils access work related experiences that build on their individual talents, interests and aspirations including Horticulture, animal care, retail, child-care and hospitality.

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Pioneers’ Pathway – a satellite stream



Aiming for The World of Work

The Pioneers’ Pathway is designed for pupils who are approaching, or working within National Curriculum levels, but at a lower level than their chronological peers. We aim to equip our Pioneers with the skills that they will need to access the work of work such as communication and social skills, literacy, numeracy, computing skills and skills specific to the workplace. Pupils may need to develop skills for specific careers, such as in horticulture or catering.

From September 2022, provision for pupils on the Pioneers’ Pathway will be based within satellite classes at Garlinge Primary School (Primary aged pupils), Hartsdown Academy (KS3) and East Kent College (KS4 & KS5).

		
Primary (KS1/KS2)	KS3	KS4 & KS5

Pupils and students are still part of Foreland Fields School and follow Foreland Fields Curriculum, taught by Foreland Fields staff. They do however benefit from a wealth of social and educational inclusion opportunities which prepares them for greater independence in adulthood and the world of work.

Expected Changes to the Pioneers Pathway

Kent County Council (KCC) has recently completed a review of special schools (July 2024). It is felt by KCC that there has been an over-reliance on special schools. The consultation document states that KCC must place children with an EHCP in a mainstream school and that special school places should be planned to provide education for children with the most complex levels of SEN. This means that we are unlikely to admit further pupils that are able to access formal learning and the cohort of pupils accessing this will get smaller over time.

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In order to meet the changing needs of the Pioneers pupils, we will be revising Pioneers curriculum with the intention of developing a more semi-formal approach, with individualised access to formal learning as appropriate.

Revised Key Stage 2 Curriculum Areas

From September 2025, Primary aged pupils within the Pioneers Pathway follow a personalised learning journey within a semi-formal curriculum with formal elements of maths and English. They have a Key Stage 2 rolling Long Term Plan, which is implemented through themes – rather than subjects.

Pioneers' Secondary Phase Curriculum areas

Secondary aged Pioneers pupils are able to engage in traditional subject specific learning. They follow a formal curriculum which has been adapted from the National Curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with severe learning difficulties. They engage in traditional National Curriculum subjects, the exception being the subject *Culture* – which combines aspects of geography, history, RE, art and MFL into cross curricular meaningful topics. There is an emphasis on developing life skills and independence throughout the curriculum.

Pioneers' Pathway Curriculum Structure A curriculum for pupils and students who are able to access formal subject specific learning <i>Aiming for The World of Work</i>				
Area of Need	Communication & Interaction	Cognition & Learning	Social Emotional & Mental Health	Physical & Sensory Development
Subjects	Primary (KS1/KS2)		Secondary (KS3/KS4)	
	• My Communication • My Thinking & Problem Solving • My Independence • My Play & Leisure • My World About Me • My Outdoor School • My Creativity		• English • Maths • Science • Culture • Music • Careers • PSHE/RSE • DT • Duke of Edinburgh • Horticulture	
Focus on	Communication, functional English and maths skills, life-skills and independence, work related experiences & skills			
Provision	• Needs led classes • High staffing ratio • Direct partner agency support (SALT/CAT Team) • Support from Health Care Team (School Nurse/Therapy Assistant/Health Care Assistant) • Highly personalised learning journey			

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Assessment	• Pupil Progress Records • Evidence for Learning/MAPP Assessment • Personal Learning Intentions • Life Skills and RSE Tracker • Engagement Model • Pre-Key Stage Standards (KS2) • AQA Unit Awards • Duke of Edinburgh Award • Entry Level Certificate Maths/English • Level 1 Horticulture
Outcomes	• Progress and achievement/Accreditation • Employment or Further Education • Greater independence • Engagement and well-being • Good attendance • Health • Access to the community

Secondary Pioneers' Long-Term Plans and Schemes of Work

Secondary Pioneers pupils are grouped in mixed year groups within a key stage. Long term plans for each subject contain rolling programmes of blocks of learning, to ensure that each pupil accesses the full curriculum during each key stage, so that they are prepared when they transition to their next phase of learning. Prior learning and next steps are included in each block of learning.

Medium term plans (schemes of work) contain blocks of lesson plans detailing clear learning objectives and success criteria, teaching and learning opportunities, key vocabulary and cross curricular links. Schemes of work also refer to specific resources and websites to support learning. Prior learning and next steps are included in each block to ensure that pupils are prepared for each phase of learning. Medium term plans are differentiated, so that learning is appropriate for all stages. Blocks of learning are delivered through a rolling programme of termly topics.

It is expected, that the secondary Pioneers Curriculum will need to be adapted to a combined semi-formal/formal curriculum from September 2026, as the current cohort of Primary Pioneers moves through the school.

English

The secondary Pioneers long term plan has been revised to reflect the Pie Corbett Talk for Writing Approach. Cross-curricular opportunities for developing spoken language, reading and writing have been identified in the long-term plan. Set texts have been selected for their genre – rather than their topic related content. There is a set termly focus on a particular feature of the genre (such as character, setting, openings etc) as well as a focus on spelling, punctuation, grammar and vocabulary. The plan identifies Big Write Foci each term and these skills are identified and repeated in other curriculum areas such as DT and science.

English skills and knowledge build from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 and again to Key Stage 4.

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Communication and Spoken Language

Communication and spoken language are a priority in the formal curriculum. Opportunities should be sought during all English lessons and indeed across the curriculum to develop skills in communication and spoken language.

Pupils should be taught to:

- Listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers
- Re-tell a story in their own words to a partner or adult; a group or the class
- Express emotions using symbols, signs or speech
- Begin to build a wider vocabulary
- Accurately follow instructions
- Accurately convey a message
- Accurately report learning using whole sentences
- Provide a description or an explanation in their own words to a group or the class
- Ask and answer relevant questions
- Engage in conversational turn-taking

(National Curriculum English Programmes of Study for Years 1 to 6)

This curriculum requires direct teaching of communication and spoken language skills through whole lessons (e.g. role-play), parts of lessons (e.g. recap/plenary) and one to one teaching (e.g. cued articulation.)

Specialist teaching for the pupils on the Pioneers Pathway is as follows:

- Teaching of Listening Skills. Children should be taught what is required for listening. These include eye contact, focus, concentration and taking turns.
- Teaching of Makaton signs relevant to everyday activities and topic work
- Teaching of Speech sounds and speech sound production through cued articulation.
- Specific teaching of the vocabulary required for each topic
- Provide opportunities to talk in pairs, groups and to the whole class
- Provide opportunities for speech during role-play and drama activities
- Opportunities to articulate choices, descriptions of activities, feelings and thoughts

My Narrative (Equals)

Pioneers teachers draw on the semi-formal scheme of work My Narrative to support oral story telling as a precursor to reading and writing.

Reading

Word Reading

Pupils should be taught to:

- Apply phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words
- Respond speedily with the correct sound to graphemes (letters or groups of letters) for all 40+ phonemes, including, where applicable, alternative sounds for graphemes
- Read accurately by blending sounds in unfamiliar words containing GPCs that have been taught
- Read common exception words, noting unusual correspondences between spelling and sound and where these occur in the word
- Read words containing –s, –es, –ing, –ed, –er and –est endings
- Read other words of more than one syllable consistent with phonic knowledge

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- Read words with contractions [for example, I'm, I'll, we'll], and understand that the apostrophe represents the omitted letter(s)
- Read aloud accurately books that are consistent with their developing phonic knowledge and that do not require them to use other strategies to work out words
- Re-read these books to build up their fluency and confidence in word reading.



Phonics to support reading and spelling

Phonics at Foreland Fields School is taught following the DfE validated "All Aboard Phonics" systematic synthetic phonics programme.

Phase One activities from the original Letters & Sounds documents are used across all pathways to support early literacy skills.

Phase	Phonic Knowledge and Skills	
Phase One <i>Letters & Sounds</i>	Activities are divided into seven aspects, including environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, body sounds, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds and finally oral blending and segmenting.	
Phase Two <i>All Aboard Phonics</i>	Learning 19 letters of the alphabet and one sound for each. Blending sounds together to make words. Segmenting words into their separate sounds. Beginning to read simple captions. Tricky words the to and is I go no of	Set 1: s, a, t, p Set 2: i, n, m, d Set 3: g, o, c, k Set 4: ck, e, u, r Set 5: h, b, f, ff, l, ll, ss
Phase Three <i>All Aboard Phonics</i>	The remaining 7 letters of the alphabet, one sound for each. Graphemes such as ch, oo, th representing the remaining phonemes not covered by single letters. Reading captions, sentences and questions. On completion of this phase, children will have learnt the "simple code", i.e. one grapheme for each phoneme in the English language. Tricky words We me be he she was my live you they are all what	Set 6: j, v, w, x Set 7: y, z, zz, qu Consonant digraphs: ch, sh, th, ng Vowel digraphs: ai, ee, igh, oa, oo, ar, or, ur, ow, oi, ear, air, ure, er
Phase Four	No new grapheme-phoneme correspondences are taught in this phase. Pupils learn to blend and segment longer words with adjacent consonants, e.g. swim, clap, jump. Tricky words: said so have like some come were there little one do does when out here says love	
Phase Five	Pupils will learn new graphemes, alternative phonemes and alternative graphemes. Some of the alternatives will already have been encountered in the tricky words that have been taught. Pupils will be taught word endings.	Alternative spellings Split Digraphs Word endings – s/es/ies/er/est/ed/ing

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	High Frequency words: see All Aboard manuals for details	Prefix un
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Reading Comprehension

Pupils should be taught to:

- develop pleasure in reading, motivation to read, vocabulary and understanding by:
 - listening to and discussing a wide range of poems, stories and non-fiction at a level beyond that at which they can read independently
 - being encouraged to link what they read or hear to their own experiences
 - becoming familiar with key stories, fairy stories and traditional tales, retelling them and considering their particular characteristics
 - recognising and joining in with predictable phrases
 - learning to appreciate rhymes and poems, and to recite some by heart
 - discussing word meanings, linking new meanings to those already known
- understand both the books they can already read accurately and fluently and those they listen to by:
 - drawing on what they already know or on background information and vocabulary provided by the teacher
 - checking that the text makes sense to them as they read and correcting inaccurate reading
 - discussing the significance of the title and events
 - making inferences on the basis of what is being said and done
 - predicting what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far
- participate in discussion about what is read to them, taking turns and listening to what others say
- explain their understanding of what is read to them through drama, written and pictorial accounts.

At Key Stage 2 reading is developed through a range of activities.

- Daily phonics sessions.
- Structured reading sessions using a reading scheme.
- Story-time: adult sharing a story with the whole class.
- Daily reading for pleasure session with a range of fiction and non-fiction books available.
- Discrete teaching of High frequency words.
- Pre-teaching of topic vocabulary.
- Book Study. A book is the focus for whole class teaching of English. From this book, activities are derived over three or four weeks.

Writing

Spelling

Pupils should be taught to spell:

- words containing phonemes already taught through phonics progression
- common exception words
- the days of the week
- name the letters of the alphabet

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- naming the letters of the alphabet in order
- add prefixes and suffixes:
- using the prefix un–
- using –ing, –ed, –er and –est where no change is needed in the spelling of root words [for example, helping, helped, helper, eating, quicker, quickest]

Handwriting

Pencil control can be developed through fun activities such as mazes, dot to dots, drawing, colouring etc. Activities should be provided for times when children have their own choice of activity.

Handwriting requires discrete and direct teaching. Pupils should be taught to:

- Sit correctly
- Hold the pen or pencil using a tripod grip
- Lowercase letters
- Capital letters
- Digits 0-9
- Write their name clearly

Handwriting is taught alongside phonics sessions. Additional sessions can be added as required.

Students are encouraged to write and record to their best of their ability using a range of tools and materials. There is no expectation for students to progress to cursive writing.

Vocabulary, Grammar and Punctuation

Pupils should be taught to:

- Develop their understanding of the following concepts:
 - leaving spaces between words
 - joining words and joining clauses using ‘and’
 - beginning to punctuate sentences using a capital letter and a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark
 - using a capital letter for names of people, places, the days of the week, and the personal pronoun ‘I’

Writing Composition

Pupils should be taught to:

- write sentences by:
 - saying out loud what they are going to write about
 - composing a sentence orally before writing it
 - sequencing sentences to form short narratives
 - re-reading what they have written to check that it makes sense
- discuss what they have written with the teacher or other pupils
- Read aloud their writing clearly enough to be heard by their peers and the teacher.

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Pupils should be taught that there are a variety of purposes for writing and be given every opportunity to express their own thoughts and ideas through writing. Pupils will have opportunities to develop creative writing through sentence writing and longer extended pieces of work.

Examples of writing opportunities: Labels, Captions, Letters, Cards, Speech, Story maps, Storyboards, Phrases, Sentences, Narratives, about their own experiences, Recipes, Wanted posters, Leaflets, Rhyming words, Lists, Descriptions, Book reviews.

Key Stage 3

The Key Stage Three Progression Pathway is based on the National Curriculum Programmes of Study for English for Year 2. Teachers may need to return to the Key Stage 2 statements to secure pupil understanding or knowledge in some aspects. Texts, activities and resources are selected to match the interest and attainment levels of the students at Key Stage 3 whilst ensuring the breadth and richness of literature studies expected for this age group.

Phonics will continue to be taught at Key Stage 3 at a level appropriate to learners. This may be through whole group sessions and/or targeted interventions for individuals. Where appropriate learners will access Phase 5 from All Aboard Phonics when aspects of Phases 2-4 are secure.

Communication and Spoken Language

Communication and spoken language is a priority in the formal curriculum. Opportunities should be sought during all English lessons and indeed across the curriculum to develop skills in communication and spoken language.

Pupils should be taught to:

- Listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers
- Re-tell a story in their own words to a partner or adult; a group or the class
- Express emotions using symbols, signs or speech
- Begin to build a wider vocabulary
- Accurately follow instructions
- Accurately convey a message
- Accurately report learning using whole sentences
- Provide a description or an explanation in their own words to a group or the class
- Ask and answer relevant questions
- Engage in conversational turn-taking

National Curriculum English Programmes of Study for Years 1 to 6.

This curriculum requires direct teaching of communication and spoken language skills through whole lessons (e.g. role-play), parts of lessons (e.g. recap/plenary) and one to one teaching (e.g. cued articulation.) Specialist teaching for the children of this needs group is as follows:

- Teaching of Listening Skills. Children should be taught what is required for listening. These include eye contact, focus, concentration and taking turns.
- Teaching of Makaton signs relevant to everyday activities and topic work
- Teaching of Speech sounds and speech sound production through cued articulation.

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- Specific teaching of the vocabulary required for each topic
- Provide opportunities to talk in pairs, groups and to the whole class.
- Provide opportunities for speech during role-play and drama activities.
- Opportunities to articulate choices, descriptions of activities, feelings and thoughts.

Sample List of topic vocabulary to be taught during Key Stage 3

- This should be supported as required using symbols, photos and Makaton signs.
- Pupils will benefit from pre-teaching of some vocab before a topic begins and the key words available to them in an accessible format to support use in reading and writing activities.

Local Studies	• Beach, cliffs, harbour, resort, farm, shopping, smugglers, human features, physical features, chalk, leisure, tourism, landmark,
Wonders of the World	• Bamboo painting, willow pattern, great wall, China, Chinese New year, emperor, oracle bones, bronze art, junk ship, Ming dynasty, Buddhism
Myths and Legends	• Myth, legend, gods (Jupiter, Neptune, Mars, Saturn, Apollo, Diana, Juno, Minerva, Venus, Mercury, Pluto) emperor, gladiator, chariot, slave, sword, shield, helmet, standard, coin, toga, amphitheatre, aqueduct, coliseum, Julius Caesar, villa, baths, mosaic,
Rain Forests	• Trees, canopy, under canopy, shrub layer, deforestation, ecotourism, Hinduism
Extreme Climates	• Climate zones, poles, arctic, Antarctic, desert, ice caps, melting, sea level,
Brilliant Britain	• Culture, immigration, city, river, flag, landmark, symbol, festival, map, land use
The Vikings	• Spear, axe, sword, Dane law, Wessex, York, coins, longboat, thatched house, Thor, Odin
Recycling	• Plastic, cardboard, cans, recycle, reuse, biodegradable, Earth, ecosystem, environment, glass, paper, bin, landfill, waste, compost
World War 2	• Hitler, Churchill, allies, Nazi, Germany, Jew, Anne Frank, gas mask, rations, soldier, pilot, evacuate, tank, plane, ship, bomb, prisoner, evacuee

Reading

Word Reading

Pupils should be taught to:

- continue to apply phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words until automatic decoding has become embedded and reading is more fluent
- read accurately by blending the sounds in words that contain the graphemes taught so far, beginning to recognise alternative sounds for graphemes
- read accurately words of two or more syllables that contain the same graphemes as above

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- read words containing common suffixes
- read further common exception and high frequency words
- read most words quickly and accurately, without overt sounding and blending, when they have been frequently encountered
- read aloud books closely matched to their improving phonic knowledge, sounding out unfamiliar words accurately, automatically and without undue hesitation

Reading Comprehension

Pupils should be taught to:

- develop pleasure in reading, motivation to read, vocabulary and understanding by:
 - listening to, discussing and expressing views about a wide range of poetry, stories and non-fiction
 - discussing the sequence of events in books and how items of information are related
 - becoming increasingly familiar with and retelling a wider range of stories, fairy stories and traditional tales
 - being introduced to non-fiction books that are structured in different ways
 - recognising simple recurring literary language in stories and poetry
 - discussing and clarifying the meanings of words, linking new meanings to known vocabulary
 - discussing their favourite words and phrases
 - continuing to build up a repertoire of poems learnt by heart, appreciating these and reciting some, with appropriate intonation to make the meaning clear
- understand both the books that they can already read accurately and fluently and those that they listen to by:
 - drawing on what they already know or on background information and vocabulary provided by the teacher
 - checking that the text makes sense to them as they read and correcting inaccurate reading
 - making inferences on the basis of what is being said and done
 - answering and asking questions
 - predicting what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far
- participate in discussion about books, poems and other works that are read to them and those that they can read for themselves, taking turns and listening to what others say
- Explain and discuss their understanding of books, poems and other material, both those that they listen to and those that they read for themselves.

Writing

Handwriting

Pupils should be taught to:

- form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters
- use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

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Students will be encouraged to form letters correctly in standard print with an emphasis on clarity and clear functional writing for a purpose. The teaching of cursive writing is not considered a priority for our learners but may be encouraged if appropriate for individual pupils.

Spelling – see above for Phonics progression at Key Stage 3 (All Aboard Phonics program)

Pupils should be taught and given opportunities to practice how to:

- spell words of one or more syllables that are consistent with their phonic knowledge
- spell common exception words
- Spell common words with contracted forms
- Spell compound words, e.g., windmill, football etc.
- Begin to use a dictionary to check spelling
- Use common prefixes and suffixes with known words

Vocabulary, Grammar and Punctuation

Pupils should be taught to:

- Develop their understanding of the following concepts:
 - how to use both familiar and new punctuation including full stops, capital letters, exclamation marks, question marks and commas for lists
 - writing in the present and past tenses
- learn how to use:
 - sentences with different forms: statement, question, exclamation, command
 - expanded noun phrases to describe and specify [for example, the blue butterfly]
 - subordination (using when, if, that, or because) and co-ordination (using or, and, or but)
- use grammatical terminology when discussing their writing - noun, noun phrase, question, command, compound word, suffix, adjective, adverb, verb tense (past, present), apostrophe, comma

Writing Composition

Pupils should be taught to:

- develop positive attitudes towards and stamina for writing by:
 - writing narratives about personal experiences and those of others (real and fictional)
 - writing about real events
 - writing poetry
 - writing for different purposes
- consider what they are going to write before beginning by:
 - planning or saying out loud what they are going to write about
 - writing down ideas and/or key words, including new vocabulary
 - encapsulating what they want to say, sentence by sentence
- make simple additions, revisions and corrections to their own writing by:
 - evaluating their writing with the teacher and other pupils
 - re-reading to check that their writing makes sense
 - proof-reading to check for errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation
- Read aloud what they have written with appropriate intonation to make the meaning clear.

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Assessment

Pupils following the Pioneers' Pathway are assessed in all curriculum areas using Pioneers' Stages 1-3, which are based on assessment statements from Pupil Asset. Some Pioneers pupils in Key Stage 2 will be working below these levels and they will use Pre-Key Stage Standards for statutory assessment.

Much evidence of progress will be stored in individual pupil's workbooks or folders. Evidence for Learning is also used to record progress towards Pioneers Stages and also to capture video and photographic evidence of progress towards practical subjects, such as PE, life skills and music.

Accreditation

Pioneers pupils are supported to gain the accreditation that will support them to achieve their aspirations for adult life and the world of work including:

- Pearson Entry Level Certificates in maths and English
- OCR Life and Living Skills
- AQA Unit Awards
- Duke of Edinburgh Awards

Learning at The Hive

The Hive is a purpose-built centre for school and community use designed to meet the needs of children and adults with learning difficulties and disabilities. It has a pavilion with inclusive changing rooms and toilets and kitchen as well as a large multi-use space. There are also two outdoor classrooms, a Horticulture centre, sensory gardens, bike track and playing fields. It has been designed to meet the curriculum needs of a wide range of learners, including all types of SEND. The centre is dual use with safeguarding procedures in place to allow adults (many of whom are ex-pupil of Foreland Fields) with SEND undertaking traineeships to work alongside current pupils. There are joint projects undertaken, especially in areas such as horticulture, site maintenance and hospitality. The school bases its horticulture, PE and bike-ability, Duke of Edinburgh programmes on this site.

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Sixth Form Provision



Preparing for Adulthood

Preparing for Adulthood is an exciting time for our students as they transition onto the next stage of their lives, but for families it can be a difficult and confusing time. We aim to make this process as informative and smooth as possible. As part of Pupil Progress Reviews for all pupils from Year R, parents, carers,

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families and teachers discuss annually their aspirations for the child's life beyond school. The personalised nature of our curriculum is designed to equip pupils with the skills that they will need to move successfully to the next phase of their learning journey in school and achieve their goals in adulthood.

At Foreland Fields School we have high aspirations for all our students. Throughout their school journey we work with families and professionals to ensure our students are challenged and supported to go on to live fulfilling lives that encompass the Preparing for Adulthood four key outcomes:

Further Education and/or employment – including the opportunity exploring different employment options, such as supported internships, volunteering and apprenticeships.

Independent living – students have a say in all aspects of their daily living. Students are supported to have input into where they live and who with, this includes supported living.

Being Active Member of the Community – Young people have opportunities to spend time with their peers outside of school and college. They are supported to develop and maintain friendships and relationships. They can access their community and feel safe and confident.

Being as healthy as possible in adult life – ensuring access to the right health professionals who understand the young person's learning difficulties and disabilities and where possible students to have a say in the health care plan.

Curriculum

The student's curriculum has been carefully designed to optimise opportunities for students to develop life skills, to be involved within the community and to understand and plan for their future. All students receive Careers Education - 'Futures'; this will look different for each pathway and will be personalised to meet the needs of individual students. and all students for whom it is appropriate will receive two statutory Information and Guidance (C.E.I.A.G) interviews by Year 14. Where appropriate, students engage in work related experiences – either on-site or with off-site providers), Relationships and Sex education (RSE) and health education. All students have life skills learning appropriate to their needs.

Triangulated Planning (student/Parent/Carer/Teacher)

Alongside planning in EHC Planning meetings we provide yearly Planning for Adulthood meetings?? What are these? Do you mean Pupil Progress meetings? Opportunities to discuss futures during goal planning meetings with parents and carers and these are recorded on the Pupil Progress Records. These meetings will provide the opportunity for parents and carers, students and class teachers to provide information and discuss the student's future and options. In Year 9, 11 and 13 students and parent/carers can meet with our careers advisor for next step specific advice. Parents/Carers can also request a meeting outside these year groups if they feel it would be beneficial.

External Support

The school works with a number of organisations such as employment services, businesses, disability organisations and arts and sports groups, to help students understand what is available to them as they get older, and what it is possible for them to achieve. Students have opportunities to explore what is available so they can make informed choices about their future, their leisure time and their involvement within the community.

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Pupils Across All Pathways with Sensory Impairments

Visual Impairment (VI)

Some pupils, particularly those on the Explorers Pathway have a visual impairment, which can affect all areas of learning and development.

It can result in restrictions in the range and variety of experiences affecting:

- The child's development of mental processes such as conceptual thought, logical memory and language.
- The time needed to take in information or perform tasks.
- His/her ability to detect non-verbal clues, facial expressions, posture, body language, and spatial arrangements (height, width, length and shape), resulting in a delay in building up an understanding of objects or situations from separate components.
- The child's awareness of his/her own non-verbal gestures and expressions, and how others perceive these.
- Social development is affected as children are not able to pick up on non-verbal clues or, if they are unable to make eye contact, they may appear disinterested and can reduce sustained social interactions.
- Delays in the area of independence in activities of daily living are impacted as incidental learning through observation is not possible for those with significant vision impairments. This impact can be magnified when caregivers, in an effort to help or to rush through activities, complete tasks for the child which creates learned helplessness in the child.

It can result in restrictions in the ability to get about...

- Vision impairment impacts motor development as a child may not be motivated to move toward that which can't be seen or causes inhibition to move for fear of the unknown.
- Exploration of the environment and materials is critical in cognitive development. Therefore, movement is important not only for motor development but for the development of concepts.

It can result in restrictions in interaction with the environment...

- His/her perception of the immediate environment, objects, learning resources and other people.
- Language acquisition can also be affected by vision impairment, as active interaction with people and the environment is important in language development.

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Strategies used in school to support pupils with vision impairment

The principles of...

- 'Access to learning' - providing pupils with 'accessible' material in their preferred medium (for example, large print), and,
- 'Learning to access' - teaching pupils 'access skills' (for example, through the use of a low vision aid, or assistive technology).

... are used to plan instruction in the following skills.

Concrete experiences

Pupils with vision impairment need rich, varied and consistent experiences with objects to gain a thorough knowledge of the environment around them and to develop meaningful concepts.

Learning by doing

Learning by doing is achieved by engaging pupils with vision impairment in completing the task that is the focus of instruction, rather than presenting only a discussion. This encourages pupils to do things for themselves, rather than having things done for them.

Unifying experiences

Providing unifying experiences gives pupils with vision impairment opportunities to gain a sense of the totality and wholeness of objects and situations (for example, cooking involves planning, shopping, measuring, mixing, baking and cleaning up).

Deaf / Hearing Impaired (HI)

Some pupils have a hearing impairment in addition to a severe or profound learning difficulty. Deafness, or hearing loss, happens when one or more parts of the ear are not working effectively. The term 'deaf' refers to all types of hearing loss from mild to profound. This includes deafness in one ear or temporary hearing loss such as glue ear.

Deafness can result in restrictions for pupils in a range and variety of experiences:

- The ability to acquire and process spoken language,
- Significant delay in the areas of cognition and learning. The language deficit causes learning problems that result in reduced academic achievement
- Significant delay in the development of receptive and expressive communication skills (speech and language). Vocabulary develops more slowly in children with hearing loss. Often, they cannot hear quiet speech sounds such as "s," "sh," "f," "t," and "k" and so do not include them in their speech.
- Understanding words with multiple meanings. For example, the word bank can mean the edge of a stream or a place where we put money.

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- Communication, which often leads to social isolation and poor self-concept.
- May have an impact on vocational choices

Therefore, sufficient provision needs to be implemented in order to ensure that deaf learners have optimum access to the curriculum.

Hearing impaired students struggle to 'soak in' communication around them which we refer to as incidental learning. Incidental learning constitutes a huge part of one's social development and world knowledge. Without incidental learning, hearing impaired pupils are missing out imperative access to educational content and social norms, which could then affect their self-esteem and mental health.

Strategies used in school to support pupils with hearing impairment:

- Access to qualified Teacher of the Deaf (QToD) and audio-logical support.
- Access to staff with BSL qualification.
- Inclusion in our High Communication need class.
- Access to a specialist Hearing Impairment Speech and Language Therapist (weekly).
- A specialist acoustically adapted environment, with carpets, soundboards and a sound field system to provide the optimal listening environment.
- A Total Communication Approach, including BSL, SSE, spoken and written language, visual support, symbols and augmentative and alternative communication devices.
- Personalised timetable reflecting pupil need with access to other classes as appropriate

Curriculum Development in the Future

Our vision is to create an aspirational and highly personalised curriculum, tailored to the varied and complex needs of our pupils, that prepares them for a successful life beyond school.

To do this we will:

- Continue to monitor the changing needs of our pupils as they join our school and adapt our provision and curriculum accordingly
- Continue to research latest developments and good practice around SEN curriculum and provision
- Continue to develop teams of specialist staff for each Curriculum Pathway including Pathway Leads and specialist leads (such as Intensive Interaction leads)
- Develop teams of specialist staff for key areas of the curriculum, such as Sensory Impairment/PE
- Continue to programme sufficient time for CPD targeted at each Curriculum Pathway and key area
- Programme sufficient class based coaching time, for teams to use Iris and Evidence for Learning (video analysis) to reflect on and develop their practice
- Work in partnership with outside agencies and the wider special schools' community (Evidence for Learning, Equals and KsENT) to ensure that we are aware of and share best practice

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- Encourage teachers and teaching assistants to develop their knowledge and understanding of the pedagogy of their curriculum pathway through personal research, through the Performance Management Review process
- Monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum through the quality assurance process, including pathway reviews, annual review paperwork and assessment data, work and evidence scrutiny, learning walks and lesson observations
- Develop the semi-formal curriculum for KS4 and KS5, to ensure that students are well prepared for their life beyond school