

Curriculum Policy

To be read in conjunction with:

- Accessibility Plan
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Inclusion
- SMSC and British Values
- Assessment
- Teaching and Learning

Policy Number	<i>1.0</i>
Review Date	<i>March 2026</i>
Owner	Luke Bell

Document History

Version	Comments/amendments	Name	Date
1.0	First Version	Luke Bell	March 2026



Personalised Learning Goals (PLGs) developed around EHCP outcomes:

- Communication and Interaction
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Physical and Sensory needs
- Independence/PFA

Post 16 students will be offered accredited vocational options.

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Curriculum Pathways



A multi-disciplinary team will assess the young person's needs, abilities and aspirations to ensure they are placed in a pathway that is most suited to them. Each pupil will have rationale document, clearly justifying their pathway placement. Regular review and assessment of learning ensures that they are appropriately placed. A young person may move pathways as their needs change.

Bloom Pre- Formal



Thematic approach for experiential learning of cross curricular subjects including careers, PSHE, creativity, and outdoor learning etc. The Equals areas form the basis of the lesson outlines e.g. The world around me. Careers/PFA is woven through the curriculum.

The engagement model will be used to enrich learning and understanding through explorations, persistence and initiation etc.

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Thrive Semi- Formal



Discrete teaching – Maths, English, Science and Humanities.

Thematic approach (from Equals curriculum) for exploratory learning of cross curricular subjects including careers, PSHE, IT, creativity, and outdoor learning etc. Key Stage 3/4/5 pupils will have specific independence/WRL lessons with a focus on Preparation for Adulthood (PFA).

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- Independence/PFA

Post 16 students will be offered accredited vocational options.

Reach Formal



Discrete teaching – Maths, English, Science, PSHE and Humanities.

Foundation subjects will be taught across the curriculum to support the pupils to make connections between learning and real-life relevance. Key Stage 3/4/5 pupils will have specific careers/independence lessons with a focus on Preparation for Adulthood (PFA).

Personalised Learning Goals (PLGs) developed around EHCP outcomes:

- Cognition and Learning
- Communication and Interaction
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Physical and Sensory needs
- Independence/PFA

Post 16 students will be offered accredited vocational options.

Bloom (Pre-Formal Pathway)

Learner Profile

The learners following the pre-formal curriculum have complex needs, usually working within the Engagement Model or the Pre-key stage standards. Each of our learners is unique, requiring staff to take a holistic approach centred in a multi-sensory environment around the physical needs, strengths and interests of each learner whilst acknowledging how they best learn. The focus is upon enabling the learners to establish positive interactive relationships with others and to proactively explore the world around them, gaining environmental control skills. All learners are given maximum opportunity to achieve the highest level of independence possible.

Intent

We provide a personalised curriculum that:

- Ensures learning is holistic, with all parts of the curriculum interconnected.
- Builds in sufficient time for learners to repeat, practise and consolidate skills.
- Recognises learners' need for consistency.
- Develops learners' levels of engagement by finding out what interests and motivates them.
- Places learners' targets at the centre of the curriculum with their interests as the teaching vehicle. Some learners in this group are working beyond the Engagement Model in specific areas and are supported to access a semi-formal curriculum in those areas.
- Recognises learners' need for different levels of sensory stimulation.

Implementation

Whole School Approach	Lessons	Curriculum Areas
• We have common themes in place across the curriculum, which aim to be interesting, engaging and appropriate for our learners and that provide relevant learning contexts for them to grow and develop. • The topics we teach are the vehicle to practise and broaden existing skills and knowledge and are a scaffold for new learning to take place. This enables our learners to make small but important steps of progress. • The pre-formal curriculum is, at its heart, a personalised learning journey for each learner.	We aim to build the early communication, social and emotional, and cognitive skills that are the foundation of learning. The curriculum acknowledges the importance of movement and play in a child's development, and the need our learners have for sensory and multi-sensory approach to learning. To help achieve a learner's full potential, our lessons are: • Multi-Sensory • Tactile • Experiential • Exploratory • Stimulating • Relevant • Individualised To aid communication in lessons, we use a wide range of communication methods. On the pre-formal curriculum, you might see use of:	Equals Curriculum: Our classes follow termly topics from our school Long Term Plan. The subject areas and lesson objectives are largely taken from the EQUALS curriculum and are adapted to meet our learners' needs. This provides learners with the opportunity to make progress against their EHCP and learner-specific targets. The EQUALS curriculum areas are: • My Communication and Social Relationships • My Cognition, Challenge and Sensory • My Physical and Wellbeing • My Creativity • My Independence • Enrichment

	• Body movements/Sign Supported Speech • Facial expression • Eye movements/tracking • Mouthing • Increased processing time • Sensory cues – smells, music of reference • Objects of reference with single word use • Photograph symbols • Big Mack interactive buttons • In addition, some learners can access therapies or interventions if needed (see Therapies and Interventions sections).	
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Assessment

Learner progress is assessed on an ongoing basis, with staff capturing evidence regularly using an interactive recording tool called Evidence for Learning (EfL) and the Engagement Model/Pre-key stage standards. The Engagement Model is used as a national assessment tool to help support learners who are working below the level of the National Curriculum and are not engaged in subject-specific study. The learners focus on developing the engagements skills of exploration, realisation, anticipation, persistence, and initiation. These skills are monitored throughout the year to moderate the level of engagement on the pre- formal curriculum. Evidence collected includes observations, photographs, videos and learners' work. Parents and carers can access EfL to see the progress of their child and are able to add supportive comments.

Progress is assessed against learner-specific set targets taken from a bespoke framework consisting of 'I will' statements suitable for the pathway. Progress towards personal targets is reviewed at key points through the year, with new targets being set as appropriate in a cycle of 'assess, plan, do, review'. Targets are set to support the learners' work towards their long-term goals, as set in the EHCP SEND profiles. As a short-term target is met, a new target that will further them towards their overall, long-term goal will be set.

Thrive (Semi-Formal Pathway)

Learner Profile

The semi-formal curriculum supports a wide range of learners working below age-related expectations. In addition to their severe or moderate learning difficulties, they may also face other barriers to learning such as physical difficulties, medical conditions, social and emotional needs, sensory processing, visual or hearing impairments, communication difficulties. The semi-formal curriculum incorporates the EQUALS Schemes of Work and has a strong foundation of life skills. These skills promote independence and communication skills allowing the learner to make progress to the best of their ability. Within KS3 and 4, pupil achievements are formally recognised through LASER Learning Award qualifications.

Intent

We provide a personalised curriculum that:

Promotes independence by developing skills that will allow learners to be as independent as possible; Develops independence by providing explicit instructions and sufficient time for learners to repeat, practise, maintain and consolidate skills; Challenges and stretches learners with a strength in English and Maths to reach their full potential; Develops learners' levels of engagement by finding out what interests and motivates them; Provides meaningful contexts for learning that use real-life materials and experiences, concrete resources and practical everyday activities so that learners link experiences and make connections;

- Supports learners to develop an awareness of, and interest in, themselves and their immediate surroundings and environment.
- Recognises the importance of play and games as motivational curriculum activities that allow repetition and consolidation of skills.
- Recognises that when using imagination and thinking of something that is not immediately present, children with learning differences may need prompts to recall an experience.
- Includes activities that move beyond memory-building activities to take part in supported thinking and problem-solving activities.
- Provides opportunities for generalising and applying skills and knowledge across curriculum areas.
- Acknowledges that the physical wellbeing and development of our learners is important.
- Recognises some of our learners may not be physically able to complete practical processes without full support, but that they should be involved in choice and decision-making about the process.

Implementation

Implementation			
Whole School Approach	Lessons	Curriculum area	
• We have common themes in place across the curriculum, which aim to be interesting, engaging and appropriate for our learners and that provide relevant learning contexts for them to grow and develop. • The topics we teach are the vehicle to practise and broaden existing skills and knowledge and are a scaffold for new learning to take place. This enables our learners to make small but important steps of progress. • The semi-formal curriculum is, at its heart, a personalised learning journey for each learner, which includes key skills needed to live as independently as	On this pathway we aim to minimise the learning barriers experienced by individual learners. We aim to equip our learners with the skills, knowledge and passion to participate and contribute within society, empowering them to live active and fulfilled lives. It is essential that learning is purposeful, immersive, fun and interactive; therefore, our lessons include: • Collaborative learning. • Active learning.	Our classes follow termly topics from the relevant school Long Term Plan. The subject areas and lesson objectives are largely taken from the EQUALS curriculum, building to provide learners the opportunity to make progress against their EHCP, learner-specific targets. The EQUALS curriculum areas are:	
		Key Stages 1-3	Key Stages 4&5
		Maths English Science My Communication	Functional English Functional Maths ICT Life Skills/PFA

possible.	• Multi-sensory activities. • Differentiation. • Individualisation. To aid communication in lessons, we use a wide range of communication methods. On the semi-formal curriculum, you might see use of: • Photo support visuals • Visual symbols • Now and Next prompts • BSL • Visual timetable • Chat mats • PODD books/communication books • Social stories • Verbal communication • Key word language	My Thinking and Problem Solving My Play and Leisure My Independence My Creativity The World Around Me My Physical Wellbeing PSHE/RSE Enrichment	Creativity Careers/WRL PSHE/RSE My Physical Wellbeing Social Communication My Outdoor School Zones of Regulation Enrichment
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Assessment

Learner progress is assessed on an ongoing basis, with staff capturing evidence regularly using an interactive recording tool called Evidence for Learning (EfL). Evidence collected includes observations, photographs, videos and learners' work. Parents and carers can access EfL to see the progress of their child and are able to add supportive comments.

Progress is assessed against learner-specific set targets taken from a bespoke framework consisting of 'I will' statements suitable for the pathway. Progress towards personal targets is reviewed at key points through the year, with new targets being set as appropriate in a cycle of 'assess, plan, review, do'. Targets are set to support the learners work towards their long-term goals, as set in the EHCP SEND profiles. As a short-term target is met, a new target that will further them towards their overall, long-term goal will be set.

Pre and Key stage standards focus on key aspects of English reading, English writing, Mathematics and Science. Reading and Mathematical skills are assessed through Star Reader and Star Maths. Reading is also assessed using Little Wandle Phonics where appropriate. Our Key Stage 3 and 4 learners can work towards achieving Entry Level 1 LASER Lifelong Learning qualifications in areas linked to their interests and aspirations. In Key Stage 5, these are built upon to gain certificates in vocational or academic areas.

Reach (Formal Pathway)

Learner Profile

Learners on our formal curriculum have moderate learning difficulties, alongside associated complexities, such as SEMH, physical and visual impairments. Learners access a range of National Curriculum subjects for their Key Stage, modified to accommodate their developmental level and special educational needs. Life skills and independence skills also form a part of the curriculum, in addition to the more traditional formal learning subjects. As the term 'formal' implies, there is a high level of structure. We nevertheless avoid making the formal curriculum too abstract; teachers ensure that learning is linked to practical activities and consolidated and applied in practical sessions. Older learners will pursue accreditation pathways (e.g. Entry Level/Level 1/GCSE as appropriate).

Intent

We provide a curriculum that:

- Is primarily accessible to those learners with moderate learning difficulties in their learner profile.
- Supports learners to develop their interests as well as their skills and knowledge.
- Is a planned programme of objectives, content, learning experiences, resources and assessment based on, but not exclusive to, the National Curriculum 2014.
- Includes life skills and independence skills.
- Ensures learning is linked to practical activities and consolidated and applied in practical sessions.
- Is interconnected to encourage the transference of skills and knowledge across the learning pathway, whilst allowing for subject-specific knowledge and understanding to be embedded.
- Recognises some of our learners may not be physically able to complete practical processes without additional support, but that they should be involved in choice and decision-making about the process.
- Through collaboration with a range of other professionals, is accessible to all learners as part of a bespoke provision of supported access and personalised approaches e.g. SaLT input in supporting non-verbal learners to use AAC devices to communicate about their learning.
- Enables older learners to pursue accreditation pathways (e.g. Entry Level awards and exams).

Implementation

Whole School Approach	Lessons	Curriculum Areas																																																									
We have common themes in place across the curriculum, which aim to be interesting, engaging and appropriate for our learners and that provide relevant learning contexts for them to grow. Formal learners follow a modified National Curriculum across Key Stages 1 – 4. In Key Stage 5, learners follow a range of accredited courses.	On the formal pathway we teach a range of qualifications, accreditations and syllabuses. We see the formal curriculum as a tool to enable the learner to become an active and engaged contributor to our society. Our lessons include: • Subject-specific learning • Collaborative learning • Active learning • Differentiation • Individualisation • Vocational learning • To aid communication in lessons, we use a wide range of communication methods. On the formal curriculum you might see use of: • Visual symbols • BSL signing • Visual timetable • Verbal communication • Written language	The pathway follows a traditional primary/early secondary approach, offering a broad and balanced curriculum. Learners follow a timetable and lessons take place across a small number of key learning spaces, including their base classroom. Transitioning from between areas is a crucial part of developing independence and helps prepare learners for college and/or employment in the future. The curriculum areas at each key stage are: <table> <tr> <th>Key Stage 1/2</th><th>Key Stage 3</th><th>Key Stage 4/5</th></tr> <tr> <td>National Curriculum:</td><td>National Curriculum:</td><td>Vocational courses:</td></tr> <tr> <td>English</td><td>English</td><td>English</td></tr> <tr> <td>Maths</td><td>Maths</td><td>Maths</td></tr> <tr> <td>Science</td><td>Science</td><td>Science</td></tr> <tr> <td>PSHE</td><td>PSHCE</td><td>PSHCE</td></tr> <tr> <td>Computing</td><td>Computing</td><td>Computing</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>PE</td><td>PE</td><td>Life Skills</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Humanities Science Art & DT</td><td>Science</td><td>PE</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Music</td><td>Art & DT Humanities Also:</td><td>Work Experience</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Life Skills</td><td>Careers</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td>Social and Leisure</td></tr> <tr> <td>Also:</td><td>Work Experience</td><td>College Links</td></tr> <tr> <td>Life Skills</td><td>Careers</td><td>Enrichment</td></tr> <tr> <td>Zones of Regulation</td><td>Enrichment</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Enrichment</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	Key Stage 1/2	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4/5	National Curriculum:	National Curriculum:	Vocational courses:	English	English	English	Maths	Maths	Maths	Science	Science	Science	PSHE	PSHCE	PSHCE	Computing	Computing	Computing				PE	PE	Life Skills				Humanities Science Art & DT	Science	PE				Music	Art & DT Humanities Also:	Work Experience		Life Skills	Careers			Social and Leisure	Also:	Work Experience	College Links	Life Skills	Careers	Enrichment	Zones of Regulation	Enrichment		Enrichment		
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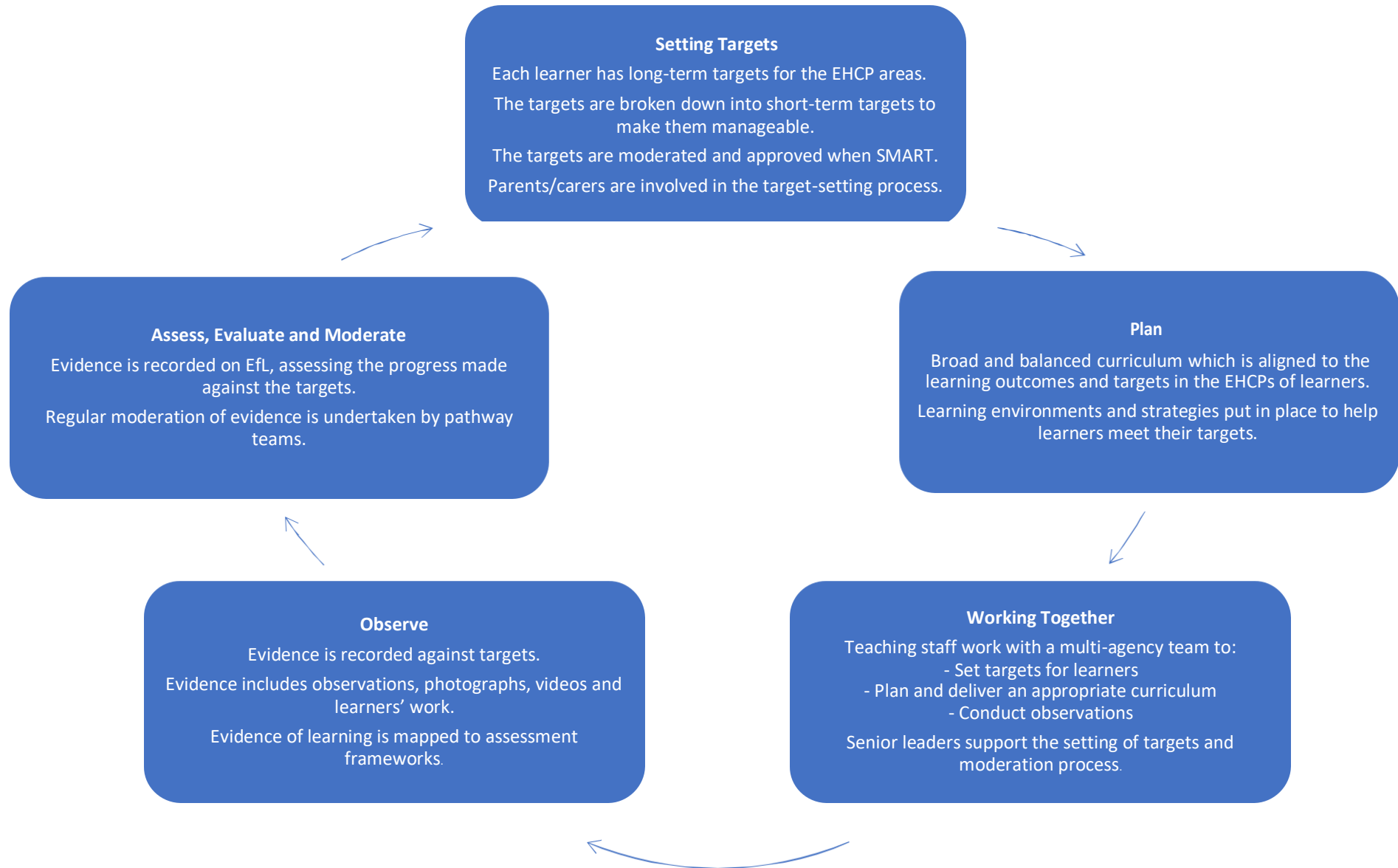
In addition, some learners can access therapies or interventions if needed (see Therapies and Interventions sections).

Assessment

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Assessment Cycle – All Pathways



Communication

Communication

We offer a Total Communication approach. We use Widgit symbols and VI-friendly visual support for our learners. Learner need defines the communication support offered to each learner; examples might include AAC, Sign Supported Speech, Communication books etc. Communication support also differs across our different pathways and is highlighted in the communication flowchart. This flowchart highlights some of the communication methods we might also expect to see across the different curriculum pathways. We work closely with our Speech and Language therapist to incorporate individual learner programmes into the school day.

Communication Flowchart



Pre-Formal Curriculum	Semi-Formal Curriculum	Formal Curriculum
• Body movements/signs • Facial expression • Eye movements/tracking • Mouthing • Intensive interaction • Vocalisations • Increased processing time • Intensive Interaction – reactive to proactive (reaching out) to interactive • Sensory cues – smells, music of reference • Objects of reference with single word use • Photograph symbols • Use of explorative sounds in the environment	• Photo support visuals • Visual symbols • Now and Next • Makaton • Visual timetable • PECS/Communication books • Social stories • Colourful semantics • Verbal communication • Key word language	• Visual symbols • Makaton • Visual timetable • Verbal communication • Written language

Therapies

Therapies

Some learners have additional needs identified in their EHCP which require support from a therapist. To ensure that these needs are met, there are a range of professionals and therapists who are part of the Educational Team and work alongside the class team and parents, either by providing individual plans or by supporting the delivery of programmes within the class.

If required, learners have access to on site Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy and Psychologists. Therapists offer support in a range of ways:

- Supporting the pastoral team to show them how they can work on developing learners' skills across a range of learning opportunities in school.
- Working in partnership with the pastoral team to develop a clear and holistic picture of learners' skills and how this has an impact on their learning, behaviour and social skills.
- Providing specific and targeted support for learners as needed.

Interventions / Support

Emotional Health and Wellbeing

Some of our learners, at some times in their lives, benefit from a more specific type of programmed support. In such cases we make use of our Pastoral Lead. The Pastoral Lead is able to work to support individuals who may have experienced or be experiencing pressures that impact on their emotional health and wellbeing and therefore impacting on their daily functioning. The Pastoral Lead makes use of methods such as:

- Positive Behaviour Support
- Emotional Regulation and Support
- Mental Health Support

Sensory Circuits

Sensory Circuits interventions are available for those learners who need help settling into their school day. The aim of the Sensory Circuits programme is to facilitate sensory processing and sensory integration, and to allow learners to be in the optimum state of alertness, ready for learning. The children participate in a short 10–15-minute session of activities designed to improve brain processing efficiency, and they generally find that the circuit is a fun way to start the day. Sessions are run in the morning before learners attend their first lesson.

Sensory Diets

Identified learners have a sensory diet, a programme of sensory activities that are specifically scheduled into their day to ensure they're getting the input their bodies need. The sensory diets assist with attention, arousal and adaptive responses.

Zones of Regulation

We recognise the importance of promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in our learners and their families. We aim to create an open culture around the discussion of mental health and wellbeing and to empower our children be able to regulate their emotions. By implementing the Zones of Regulation curriculum, we aim to teach our learners to identify emotions in themselves and others and provide them with a bank of strategies to help regulate their emotions and improve their wellbeing.

Zones of Regulation is a curriculum based around the use of four colours to help children self-identify how they're feeling and categorise it based on colour. The curriculum also helps children better understand their emotions, sensory needs and thinking patterns. The children learn different strategies to cope and manage their emotions based on which colour zone they're in. Additionally, Zones of Regulation helps children to recognise their own triggers, learn to read facial expressions, develop problem-solving skills, and become more attuned to how their actions affect other people.

Education outside of the classroom

Education outside the classroom, including visits and visitors

Educational visits and external visitors to school play a significant part in our curriculum offer. We believe our learners learn best through experience and therefore we aim for all learners to engage in learning outside the classroom through our Penny Tree Pioneers project. These experiences are often linked to curriculum topics; however, they can be standalone events. Examples are:

In Primary:
Visits/assemblies by roles in the local community
Offsite PE activities
Variety of museums and places of worship
Parks and Supermarkets

Through community engagement, horizons are broadened, interests shaped and relationships built. Many of these experiences will lead to future opportunities for work experience, volunteering or further study.

Enrichment Curriculum

Enrichment Curriculum

Our enrichment curriculum provides the opportunity for learners to develop life-long skills and interests that can lead to greater independence and confidence and support them in later life. Our wish is to develop our learners' skills and talents in a very practical and hands on way.

Such activities might include, amongst others:

- Archery
- Sports clubs
- Board/card games
- Computers
- Lego Club
- And a range of lunchtime activities

Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural education, and British values

Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural education, and British values

We recognise that social, moral, spiritual and cultural education (SMSC) including British values plays a significant part in the personal development of our learners. SMSC is a dimension of the whole school experience which makes the curriculum relevant, creative, stimulating and fun. It enriches the curriculum and ethos of our school. Penny Tree school has an SMSC calendar that details the cultural events celebrated within school over each academic year.