



The Semi-Formal Curriculum

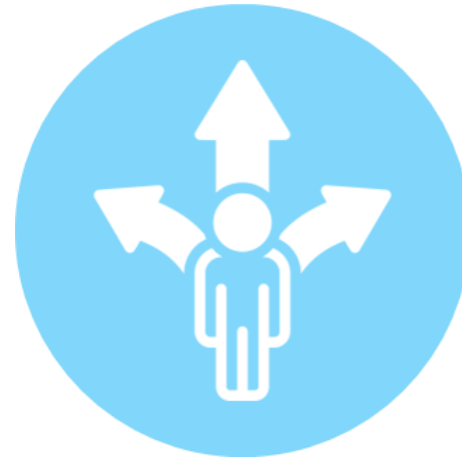
Curriculum Coordinator: Alex Pendleton

Our Curriculum Drivers

Specialist
Pedagogies



Powerful
Knowledge



Flexible
Curriculum
Pathways

S.M.S.C.



Vocabulary





Flexible Curriculum Pathways

At Melland we have Flexible Curriculum Pathways. These pathways at their core are the Pre-formal, Informal, Semi-formal and Formal pathways. Each of these core pathways are ambitious, carefully sequenced, well-considered and progressive.

Each pathway has its own curriculum but they are part of a greater learning continuum with each student getting a personalised curriculum to meet their academic and personal development needs. There are some shared aspects, for example, Skills for Life, careers education, SMSC, Fundamental British Values, personal safety, health education and Preparation for Adulthood.

Students can move between the pathways or experience elements of more than one.



Specialist Pedagogies

We use research and training to ensure our staff are equipped with specialist pedagogical knowledge to meet the needs of all our students. All staff understand the needs of students with SEND and they use informed specialist methodologies to deliver accessible and aspirational learning opportunities for all. The specialist pedagogies required can be different depending on the Key Stage, pathway or subject.



Powerful Knowledge

Powerful knowledge refers to the essential knowledge and cultural capital that students may not typically acquire from everyday life. It requires expert teaching and explicit content delivery to prepare students for adulthood and life beyond education. It introduces them to the best that has been thought and said and will help engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement. Students acquire bespoke and targeted powerful knowledge based on their pathway or personalised curriculum.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary is important as it helps shape our thinking. The explicit teaching of vocabulary is essential for our students as they may not acquire vocabulary incidentally through indirect exposure. All our students benefit from developing their vocabulary. Our curriculum strikes an appropriate balance between functional vocabulary and enriching vocabulary. The development of vocabulary is not restricted to academic development but also enriches personal development.



S.M.S.C.

Students and their well-being are at the core of our school curriculum. Having SMSC as a driver allows us to bring into focus how our curriculum helps encourage our students to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens and ensures we do not lose sight of it. Our overarching ethos for SMSC encompasses personal development across the whole curriculum and supports us in providing opportunities for students to explore themselves and discover their identity. Additionally, it equips them with strong values for living in an increasingly diverse world.



Quality of Education

INTENT, IMPLEMENTATION, IMPACT





Vision



To provide developmentally appropriate experiences that challenge and support pupils to access the world around them.



To provide pupils with skills and knowledge that is relevant to them, their life and their future.



To teach transferable skills and nurture holistic progress within the key areas of development and beyond.



Aims

The aims of the Semi-Formal curriculum are:

- For pupils to develop as individuals ready to access the world around them.
- Pupils to retain and develop transferable skills that will help them throughout their lives and prepare for adulthood.
- Pupils to make connections and build upon powerful accessible knowledge concepts.
- Pupils to apply reasoning and self-regulatory processes to their everyday life.

The Semi-Formal Curriculum

The EQUALS Semi-Formal Curriculum is an explorative learning approach that provides pupils with a broad, balanced, rich and meaningful curriculum.

Semi-Formal learning opportunities reflect the needs of the individual and aim to develop skills that are purposeful and beneficial to them. This curriculum allows us to promote personal progress utilising what our pupils need before potential development into identified formal learning opportunities.

The Semi-Formal Curriculum is designed to prepare pupils with complex learning needs for life after school. The functional and personalised learning enables pupils to successfully navigate the wider world in their own way.

Additional **flexible learning opportunities** are regularly explored and strategized to provide additional opportunities to support pupils with a range of experiences and learning opportunities.

EQUALS SEMI-FORMAL (SLD/MLD) CURRICULUM
This unique curriculum has been written and edited by outstanding practitioners throughout the UK in the education of children, young people and adults with severe and complex learning difficulties.

My Communication Icon: Two people talking	My Thinking and Problem Solving Icon: Brain and thought bubble	My Play and Leisure Icon: People playing instruments	My Independence Icon: People walking
My Music Icon: Musical notes	My Dance Icon: People dancing	My Art Icon: Paint palette and brush	My Drama Icon: Comedy and tragedy masks
The World About Me Icon: Globe	Relationships and Sex Education Icon: People in a circle	My Outdoor School Icon: Campfire and tent	My Physical Well-being Icon: People exercising

The general principles governing the schemes of work are that they

- are developmental in nature and open to personalisation - they start at the beginning of the individual pupil's learning journey and aim for the highest level of independence possible
- cover all stages of education from 2 to 25 (and beyond) but are not directly related to either age or key stage. Learners fit into them where they will according to their individual abilities, interests and learning journey
- are not related to the National Curriculum, though the common language of the P Scales is occasionally used for ease of understanding.

[Click for more information:](#)

Semi- Formal Curriculum Structure



The Semi-Formal curriculum is delivered through a series of linked learning opportunities. These provide a holistic and integrated teaching method. Further promoting coverage of the curriculum's key principles through interconnected activities and ideas.



Concepts are connected to and reinforced through these linked learning opportunities, where appropriate. This allows pupils to make real life connections resulting in richer understanding and further supporting generalisation of transferable skills and powerful knowledge in different contexts and situations.



Linking learning opportunities ensures depth of learning through effective provision. This then informs meaningful progression when assessed through independence, maintenance, fluidity and generalisation of personal learning progress and skills.

Facilitating Progress

The Semi-Formal curriculum empowers pupils through consistent support that builds upon their individual foundation skills in:



Communication



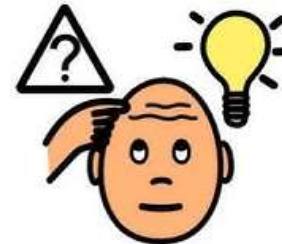
Engagement



Play and Leisure



Independence



Thinking and Problem Solving



Communication

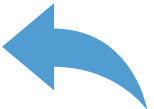
We upskill all pupils with effective communication methods, appropriate to their needs. Pupils are supported in all areas of communication for individual consistency and progression in their appropriately preferred communication means.

We aim to develop each pupil's individual ability to express and receive information from other people and the world around them.


This can be assessed through spoken word, gesture, signing, PECS, written word, photos, reading, listening and responding to choices, word reading and looking at videos and photos.

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Facilitating
progress



Personal
Learning Intentions

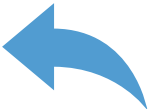


Engagement


Engagement development supports pupils in their access to a broad and balanced curriculum. All pupils are supported to establish self-regulatory skills that encourage greater engagement in all areas of the school day and promote readiness for learning.

We aim to develop each pupils individual ability to engage in wider learning encounters and expand their experiences, through engagement, building attention and responding to prompts.

This can be assessed through monitoring engagement levels and collected evidence via pictures, videos and produced works.



Facilitating
progress



Personal
Learning Intentions

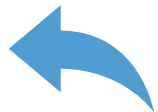


Play and Leisure

Pupils are encouraged to play in a supported and engaging environment.

Play supports the key developmental areas essential for developing social awareness, interactive skills and the development of imagination and fluid thinking.

Pupils participate in daily structured and free play that promotes turn taking, sharing and an awareness of others. Pupils also encounter opportunities to lead in solo, parallel and group play through access to inviting and inspirational specialist play resources.

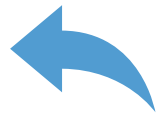




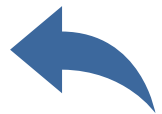
Independence

Pupils are consistently encouraged to develop their self-reliance and independent life skills. Pupils support in daily school routines to promote independence and self-resilience skills. This is achieved via an environment that actively promotes self-belief in a safe and supportive manner.

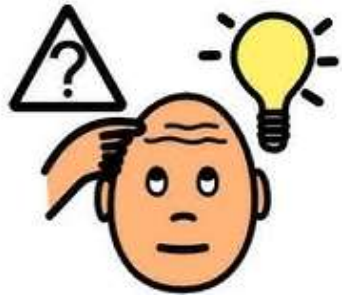
Pupils also access community based learning opportunities that provide meaningful experiences that replicate the real world and prepare for adulthood, as appropriate to their individual needs.



Facilitating
progress



Personal
Learning Intentions



Thinking and Problem Solving

Pupils are empowered through problem solving opportunities throughout the day that encourage them to expand their repertoire of skills whilst instilling a sense of self belief.

Consistent problem-solving experiences are supported within developmentally appropriate and individualistic, yet challenging, context. This maximises thinking and problem-solving learning opportunities and encourages overall pupil self-development.

Semi-Formal Learning Opportunities

All pupils benefit from timetables that ensure the activities and learning can be flexible and personalised to individual or groups learning needs. These may include:



Art



Drama



Music



Cooking



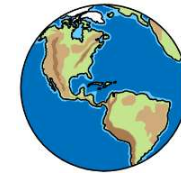
Physical Wellbeing



Dance



Citizenship and Relationships



The World About Me



Outdoor School



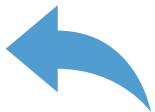
Sensory Exploration



Art

Pupils are empowered to express their individual choice and personality through art. Art opportunities aim to build self-confidence and efficacy whilst developing fine motor skills.

Pupils will explore a range of art styles and methods that inspire and engage. We also support the understanding of colour, texture and pattern with technique and vocabulary to equip pupils with powerful knowledge and methods for accessing art in their own way.

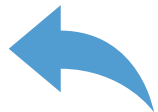




Drama

Accessing drama experiences and imaginative opportunities for play encourages pupils to express themselves, explore their identities, develop an understanding of others and process their emotions.

Pupils will encounter role play, games, stories and scenarios that promote self expression and provide context for individual and collaborative creativity.

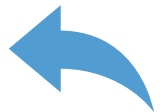




Music

Encountering music allows pupils to share personal preference and communicate choice of musical tastes and interests. Music also supports sensory regulation, self expression and causal understanding of the world around them.

Throughout musical opportunities, pupils will encounter various musical genres, styles and instruments during structured and free exploration opportunities.



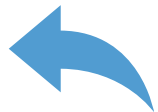


Cooking

Cooking promotes a mixture of skill-based development and process-based learning. Pupils develop cookery skills and safety awareness through repetition of activities and supported kitchen encounters.

Pupils learn the practical skills of: hygiene and food preparation; utensil control and appliance safety and usage. This prepares pupils with confidence and readiness for effective cooking.

Pupils also benefit from following simple recipes that support independence and promote healthy choices and nutritional understanding.



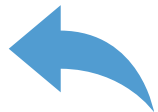


Physical Wellbeing

Throughout the day Physical Well-Being gives opportunities for functional and recreational movement and healthy practices. This is achieved through the daily mile, sensory circuit breaks, breaktime activities and clubs and focused PE lessons and games.

Pupils benefit from a range of focused physical learning experiences including; trampoline and rebound therapy; hydrotherapy and swimming, yoga and body awareness and cycling and outdoor pursuits.

Alongside this, pupils explore wider healthy learning practices such as; healthy eating, hygiene and mental health and wellbeing.



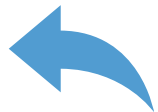


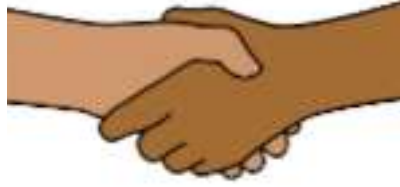
Dance

Pupils are encouraged to express themselves rhythmically whilst engaging in regular physical activities.

Dance allows pupils to showcase their preferences and individuality whilst, supporting gross motor development and body awareness. Pupils encounter structured routines exploring dance in a free manner.

Alongside this pupils encounter different dance styles, techniques and cultural interpretations of dance.

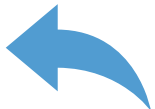




Citizenship and Relationships

Through the Semi-Formal curriculum; accessible citizenship enables our pupils to become confident, independent members of society with an awareness of their rights and responsibilities as individuals and as part of a diverse society.

Pupils access citizenship through the delivery of meaningful powerful knowledge learning opportunities. These offer pupils experiences that promote transferable skills that benefit from the real world and contribute to society.



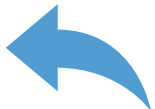


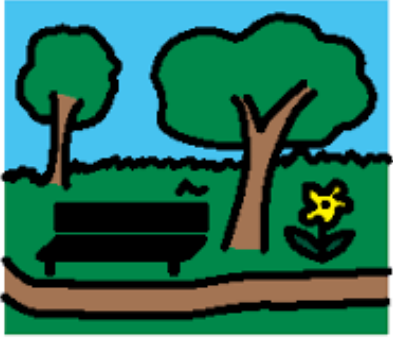
The World About Me

Pupils will develop their understanding of the world around them through meaningful experiences that promote cultural and practical awareness of local amenities, wider communities and national and international cultures.

Learning opportunities include; World Festivals, Faith, Weather, People and Animals and many more.

Pupils benefit from real world encounters, sensory immersions and experiences that reflect the wider world.

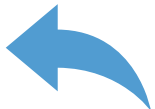




Outdoor School

Outdoor School empowers individuals with fluid thinking abilities whilst promoting community engagement, environmental awareness and an appreciation of nature. This is supported through Forest School encounters, local amenity visits and encounters and school-based outside activities.

This regular walking activity promotes healthy practices, outdoor safety and physical recreation.

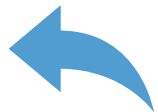




Sensory Exploration

Accessing Sensory play stimulates and supports the senses of touch, smell, taste, sight and hearing through fine and gross motor development and explorative play opportunities.

Pupils are empowered with opportunities to regulate their senses and explore regularly. Pupils are encouraged to engage with a range of preferred and new experiences using specialist resources and staff modelled sensory play encounters.





Flexible Formal Learning Opportunities

For some pupils, more **formal learning** provides an appropriate extension to their learning. **Inter-pathway links** allow for a flexible approach for all that ensures the best from everyone, for everyone.

Pupils who will benefit from access to content from the early stages of the **National Curriculum** are supported to do so, whilst taking account their individual learning styles and preferences. This may be in the form of a 1:1 or group intervention, experiential taster sessions and projects; Key Stage specific inclusive activities and options or a bespoke blended timetable to access the formal pathway, as appropriate.

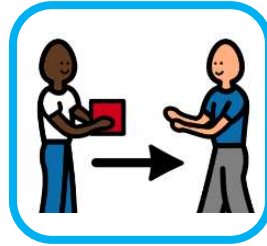
All flexible learning opportunities are planned, reviewed and implemented regularly to ensure consistent personal development, within any areas of formal learning, without limitation. Identified pupils are supported to access meaningful formal learning opportunities, suitable to their educational and holistic needs.

All National Curriculum subjects are facilitated within a needs appropriate and accessible context. Phonics, Careers and Work-Related Learning opportunities are embedded throughout the Semi-Formal curriculum. Whilst close links are made with National Curriculum **English, Maths, Science, Humanities, Art & Design, PE, Computing, Design Technology, PSHE/Citizenship** and **RSE** coordinators to provide flexible learning opportunities, where appropriate.

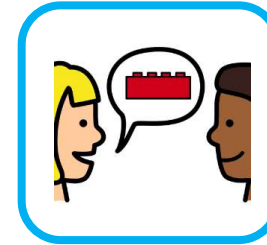
Support for learning

Identified pupils have access to bespoke specialised interventions and support for learning. These are targeted to areas of individual need and complement the wider Semi-Formal curriculum offer.

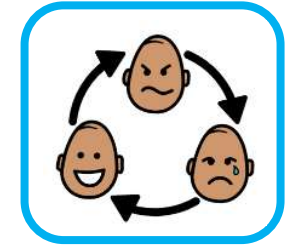
These targeted specialist interventions support a range of educational and developmental needs, these may be delivered by the class teacher, specialist school staff or by access to multi-agency support and outside agencies.



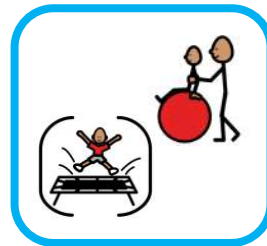
Attention
Autism



Lego
Therapy



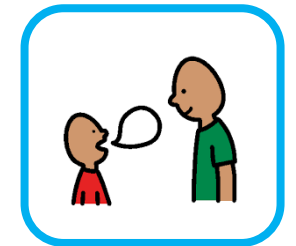
Zones of
Regulation



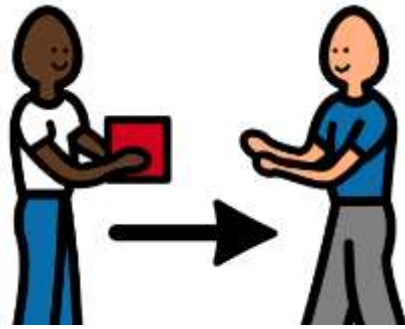
Rebound
Therapy



British Sign
Language



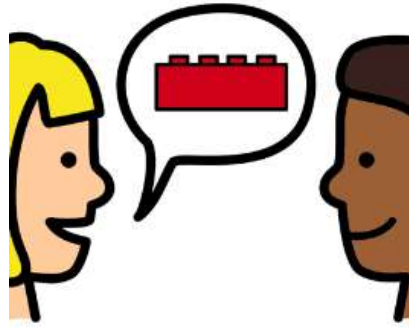
Intensive
Interaction



Attention Autism

Attention Autism is a learning approach that aims to develop natural and spontaneous communication skills in autistic pupils and pupils with additional learning needs.

Pupils develop the early fundamentals of language including awareness of others, attention, listening, shared attention, switching attention and turn-taking. Through the use of visually based and highly motivating activities.

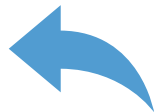


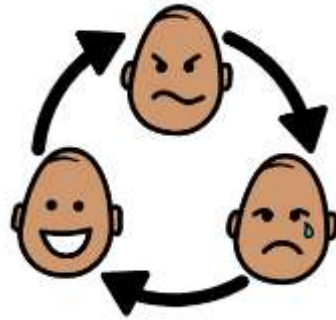
Lego Therapy

Lego therapy is an evidence based approach that aims to develop social communication skills in autistic pupils and pupils with additional learning needs. Pupils work in groups with each participant having a distinct role to build a Lego model collaboratively as a team.

- **Engineers** use the Lego instructions and ask the Supplier for the specific pieces of Lego needed.
- **Suppliers** listen to the engineers and give the Builder the pieces.
- **Builders** follow the building instructions from the Engineer in order to construct the model.

Pupils develop skills such as sharing, turn-taking, following rules, using names and problem-solving whilst learning to work together.





Zones of Regulation

The Zones of Regulation organises pupils' feelings, states of alertness, and energy levels into four coloured Zones:

Blue, Green, Yellow, and Red.

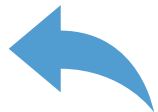
Each zone has distinct identifiers and strategies to support self regulation. By using simple, common language and visual structure, The Zones of Regulation helps make the complex skill of regulation more concrete for pupils and those who support them. Pupils learn to regulate their Zones to meet their goals and engage with tasks and demands, whilst supporting their overall well-being.



Rebound Therapy

Rebound Therapy uses trampolines to provide pupils with opportunities for movement, therapeutic exercise and recreation.

Rebound Therapy is suitable for pupils with a range of physical and cognitive needs. Accessing the trampolines in a therapeutic way facilitates movement, promotes balance, supports muscle tone, encourages relaxation, stimulates sensory integration, improves fitness and exercise tolerance, and provides a unique context to develop communication skills.

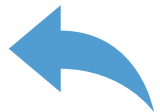


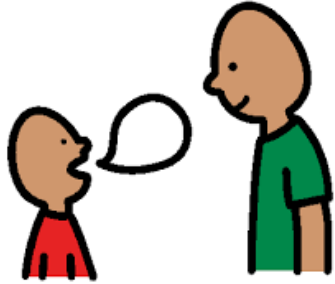


British Sign Language

British Sign Language (BSL) is a visual means of communicating using hand movements, gestures, finger spelling, facial expressions, and body language.

British Sign Language is used mainly by people who are Deaf or have hearing impairments, however all pupils are supported to sign, as appropriate to their individual needs. BSL complements the Total Communication approach that facilitates effective communication for all pupils.



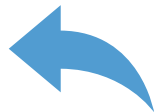


Intensive Interaction

Intensive Interaction is a social communication approach that supports the establishment and development of improved social communication exchanges. Such as:

- Using and understanding eye contacts and facial expressions
- Learning to share personal space
- Using and understanding sociable physical contacts
- Using vocalisations with meaning
- Taking turns with another person.
- Enjoying being with another person.

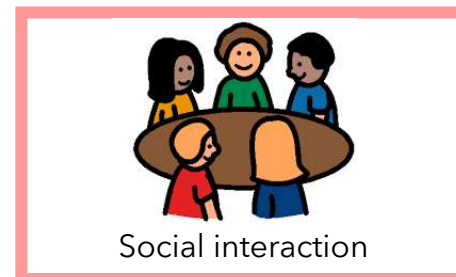
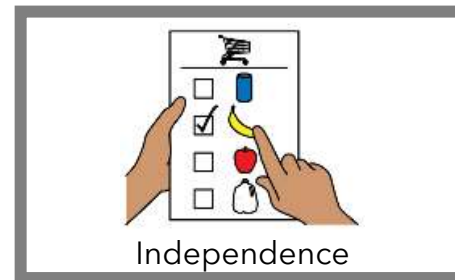
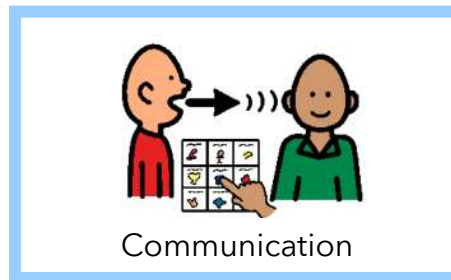
These skills and understandings develop over time within, and across, a range of responsive and dynamic interactions with identified staff. Regular access to Intensive Interaction activities support development in content, duration and complexity of interactions as the pupil develops.



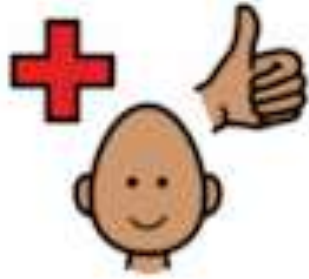
Personal Learning Intentions

Pupils benefit from **Personal Learning Intentions**; These individual targets are facilitated throughout the school day and complemented by wider learning opportunities. PLI's are aligned to the **EHCP** long term outcomes as short-term outcomes, where appropriate.

Personal Learning Intentions are identified following a **Strengths, Provision Analysis** to support meaningful target setting in the key developmental areas.



These targets support the pupils as individuals and are ipsative in nature. Progress is observed and tracked to inform the effective personal next steps utilising **Evidence For Learning**, evidence capture tool and **MAPP** assessment system.

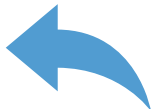


Health and Wellbeing

Health and wellbeing opportunities are delivered and facilitated throughout the school day.

Pupils encounter many aspects of health and wellbeing including; emotional regulation, safety awareness, hygiene, healthy eating and exercise. These are delivered within focused lessons and as part of an empowering and flexible learning environment.

These opportunities compliment the holistic development of each individual, appropriate to their own needs and wellbeing requirements. Collaboration between home and school further supports a consistent approach to all healthy practices and approaches for the benefit of the individual.





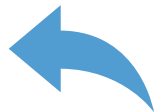
Social Interaction

We encourage all pupils to be socially aware and inspired to engage positively with others. Pupils are supported in all areas of social interaction to prepare them as socially active members of society.

We aim to develop each pupil's individual ability to navigate social situations and scenarios, such as: sharing space, turn taking, conversational skills, questioning, listening, reasoning and response.

Social interaction is nurtured through consistent and effective modelling of social interaction. This encourages pupils to explore their developing sociability in a safe and supportive environment.

This can be assessed through spoken word, gesture, signing, PECS, written word, photos, reading, listening and responding to choices, word reading and looking at videos and photos.



Evidence For Learning



Evidence of student engagement and progress is captured through the Evidence For Learning App.



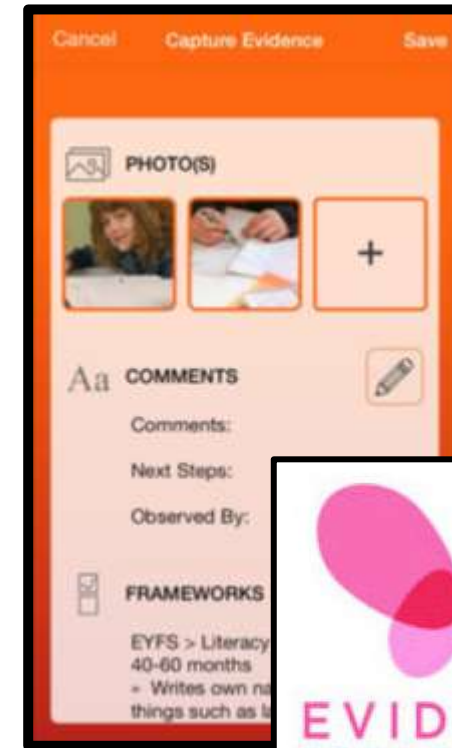
All teaching teams are equipped with an iPad to capture real time learning, engagement and achievement unique to each student.



Evidence is stored through pictures, videos and anecdotes to track progress.



Evidence is shared and evaluated during the moderation process to inform target progress, celebrate success and identify next steps.





Mapping and Assessing Personal Progress (MAPP)

Collated evidence is analysed through the **MAPP assessment system**. MAPP evaluates the lateral progression of pupils with identified learning and developmental needs. All progress is ipsative in nature; where pupils are judged solely as an individual and where they are within their own learning journey.

Then progress is measured and logical next steps can be discussed, planned and supported within the Semi-Formal learning environment.

All targets are assessed in the context **of independence, fluidity, maintenance** and **generalisation**. Thus, analysing depth of progress within each target.

Focussing on these personal skills during curriculum delivery will provide consistent and constant reinforcement with the aim of providing a solid foundation for our pupils holistic development at school and beyond.

EQUALS EQUALS is committed to improving the lives of children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities through supporting high quality education.

Written by Mike Sissons and originally developed at The Dales School (North Yorkshire)

MAPP - Semi-Formal
Mapping and Assessing Personal Progress
For learners of all ages working within a Semi-Formal Curriculum Model

MAPP is a suite of materials developed to facilitate the planning, assessment and recording of progress in relation to personal learning intentions.

Continuum of Skill Development (CSD)	Learning Intention 1	Communication: I can respond appropriately to direct questioning on non-preferred topics	Months	4
Independence	0	0	0	0
Fluidity	0	0	0	0
Maintenance	0	0	0	0
Generalisation	0	0	0	0
CSD Score	0	0	0	0

Continuum of Skill Development (CSD)	Learning Intention 2	Engagement: I can engage in specified activities during an identified period.	Months	4
Independence	0	0	0	0
Fluidity	0	0	0	0
Maintenance	0	0	0	0
Generalisation	0	0	0	0
CSD Score	0	0	0	0

Continuum of Skill Development (CSD)	Learning Intention 3	Developing Independence: I can collect identified resources with verbal prompting.	Months	4
Independence	0	0	0	0
Fluidity	0	0	0	0
Maintenance	0	0	0	0
Generalisation	0	0	0	0
CSD Score	0	0	0	0

Total Communication Support

All pupils benefit from a **total communication environment**. We support individual access to preferred means of communication, this may include Verbal communication, signing, gesture, objects of reference and use of symbols.

MHS encourages symbols to support vocabulary development, choice making and reference. A combination of identified timetabled visuals support consistency, alongside personalised symbols or photo references.

Staff also encourage pupils with consistent British Sign Language signs that support the school day. Additional signing is encouraged on an individual level to empower all pupils with effective communication.

Additional information and reference of topics is supported through visual displays and working walls, these are targeted to individual groups and appropriateness of student needs. pupils with visual or hearing impairments benefit from the total communication access and are then supported further in their individual needs.





Specialist Learning Environment

The Semi-Formal curriculum is complemented by an environment that actively facilitates learning and challenge. We provide ambitious opportunities for pupils to engage, explore and learn in individual and meaningful ways.

We actively promote problem solving and independence through our learning environments. Pupils are encouraged to take an active role in their learning and contribute to an effective and inspirational learning culture.

Pupils benefit from learning environments that promote independence and pupil lead learning. Bespoke and specialised resources and equipment are accessible and organised for pupils to explore at their pace.

All pupils have access to flexible classrooms that can be adapted to the needs of the pupil and learning encounter. Moreover, all pupils have access to outside learning spaces and specialised and therapeutic rooms. Such as, the sensory room, rebound room, safe spaces, theatre, sports hall and the hydrotherapy pool.

The flexible pathways also provide additional opportunity for pupils to access meaningful formal learning opportunities or shared social spaces, such as the lunch hall and common areas. Fully equipped multimedia studio is also available for learners.



Targeted Multiagency support

Pupils benefit from a specialist learning environment that is supported by multiagency industry professional and practitioners within Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

Whole school collaboration and support is fostered between:

Educational
Psychology

Occupational
Therapy

Disability Nursing

Physiotherapy

Speech & Language
Therapy

Pedagogy

We use research and training to ensure our staff are equipped with specialist pedagogical knowledge to meet the needs of all our pupils. All staff understand the needs of pupils with SEND and they use informed specialist methodologies to deliver accessible and aspirational learning opportunities for all. The specialist pedagogies required can be different depending on the key stage, curriculum pathway or subject the pupil accesses.

Our pedagogy has been informed by personalised training opportunities from providers such as:

- **EQUALS**
 - **Evidence For Learning**
 - **Specialist Consultation**
- **Bright Futures and Melland SEND Specialist Outreach Team**



Quality Assurance

- Within the Semi-Formal Curriculum Pathway an internal quality assurance cycle takes place.
- This includes the **Subject Evaluation Form (SEF)**. This is completed after a period of reflection by the subject coordinator, usually at the end of an academic year. Its purpose is to highlight good practice and areas for development.
- Further Specific QA that takes place in our curriculum includes:
 - **Lesson observations**
 - **Learning walks**
 - **Scrutiny of work**
 - **Progress meetings**
 - **Coordinator meetings**



Skills for life

The Manchester City Council '**Skills for Life**' is a universal approach that promotes the use of a common language to describe five key skills and a commitment to increase opportunities for children and young people to practice, reflect and record these skills.

In Manchester, Skills for Life is not only needed for young people and employers but also, for the cultural capital of our city.

The development of this work is as a way of supporting our children and young people to have the skills to be able to grow up happy, healthy, safe and successful.

Pupils accessing the Semi-Formal Curriculum are tracked, where appropriate, in the development in these key areas. Progress is monitored and promoted across identified flexible learning opportunities and wider school activities and encounters.





Celebrating Achievement

Celebrating pupils achievement is a key part of our culture at MHS. We hope to support intrinsic motivation development through a variety of methods and approaches to upskill, inform and promote personal achievement and positive behaviour, this can celebrated through:

- **Descriptive praise**
- **Awarding House Points**
- **Awards Assemblies**
- **Postcards Home**
- **Extrinsic Tokens of Achievement i.e. stickers, stamps**

Identified pupils also access bespoke achievement plans that promote individual positive behaviour and learning engagement in an individually meaningful strategic approach.