

Manor School



Headteacher: Steve Thompson

Early Years Foundation Stage

September 2021

Approved	September 2021
Review date	September 2022

Context

Manor School is a special school for reception and primary aged children, and a part of BSAT (Brent Specialist Academy Trust). The school is located in the London Borough of Brent.

Our pupils have a wide range of special educational needs and disabilities including: global developmental delay, autism, and moderate to severe learning difficulties. The vast majority of our pupil cohort (over 85%) have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The school provides a highly specialist learning environment with small classes, specially trained staff and onsite Behaviour specialists, Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) and Occupational Therapy (OT) services. Personalised learning is central to what we do and interventions are carefully planned to ensure that every pupil is given the opportunity to achieve their true potential. We have three reception classes based at our specialist Manor School Early Years Centre (NW10 9BX), each of which follows the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidance. Depending on annual admission numbers, a small cohort of reception-aged pupils may be based at our main site on Chamberlayne Road (NW10 3NT).

All children entering our EYFS have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in response to their diagnosis and needs. Upon entry, all pupils are working at a cognitive level which is significantly below the national average in terms of age-related expectations.

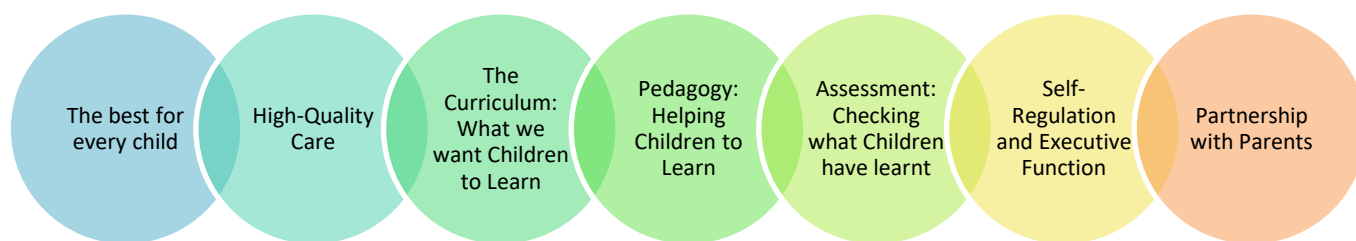
As a school we are aware that we need a focus on developing skills to support our children in being school-ready. The number of children in need of greater support with hygiene and self-care is significantly higher than in mainstream EYFS settings in Brent. A key role of our Manor School EYFS setting is to help increase the independence, social, and attention skills of our children so that they can access learning more successfully.

On leaving EYFS to enter Key Stage 1, the majority of our children will be 'emerging' on the EYFS Profile (EYFSP). Whilst some children may occasionally reach 'expected' or 'exceeded' in an area, any child that is able to reach 'expected' or 'exceeded' across multiple areas may be considered more suited to specialist support within a mainstream setting.

For many of our EYFS families, recognition of their child's needs or diagnosis has been a relatively recent event. At Manor School we are working within a distinctly different context from our mainstream counterparts. We believe that it is important to recognise the needs of the child and focus on personalised small-step progress towards EHCP Outcomes. Traditional EYFS systems and strategies are then used to compliment this process. This policy aims to set out how we follow the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, effective from September 2021, within the specialist and personalised setting of Manor School.

What is the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)?

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a framework that sets the standards for the learning, development, and care of children from birth to 5 years old. All schools and providers on the Early Years Register must follow the EYFS. The framework supports an integrated approach to early learning and is designed to be flexible so that staff can follow each child's unique interests and needs. It gives professionals a set of common principles and commitments to deliver quality early education and childcare. The Seven Features of Effective Practice (Development Matters 2021) is embedded in our approach to teaching:



Early Years at Manor School – ‘Love, Learn, Laugh’

At Manor School we recognise that every child is unique, and our Early Years practitioners develop responsive learning environments which suit the learning styles and interests of each individual child. Early intervention and strong collaboration between a number of parties (including: class teams, families, previous Early Years settings and agencies, and our own Multi-Agency Support Team or MAST) ensures that all children, regardless of their SEN, have the best start to school life. By working collaboratively, staff enable our children to overcome their barriers to learning.

Our Early Years department aims to:

- Give each child a happy, positive and enjoyable start to school life;
- Consistently provide high-quality care, ensuring children know they are loved and well cared for;
- Build upon prior learning by working in partnership with parents, carers, previous settings, and a wide range of professionals;
- In line with the ‘Preparing for Adulthood from the Earliest Years’ agenda; help each child to establish solid foundations for future learning and development, particularly with regards to functional communication, independence, and self-care;
- Provide each child with a wide range of new and exciting experiences, and give them opportunities to consolidate existing skills and to learn new ones;
- Support each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually, and emotionally through high expectations, praise and positivity;
- Celebrate each child’s personal successes and achievements together with their families;
- Provide quality and consistency so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind;
- Regularly assess and review the needs and interests of each individual child;
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported;

At Manor we believe that honouring the 4 outcomes of the EHCP (**Communication and Interaction; Cognition and Learning; Social, Emotional and Mental Health; Sensory and Physical Needs**) helps us to ensure that we provide the above. We are guided in the delivery of this by the four principles which underpin EYFS guidance. These are:

1. A Unique Child: We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. This is particularly important at Manor School where we value and celebrate the small steps of achievement of all children.

2. Positive Relationships: We recognise that children learn to connect to the world and grow in strength and independence from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, and professional relationships with all children and their families. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are

influenced by feedback from others. We use praise and encouragement, consistent reinforcement, graded prompting, and celebration/rewards to encourage positive attitudes to learning, as well as consistent strategies to set and communicate clear boundaries and keep children safe.

3. Enabling Environments: We recognise that the environment plays a key role in scaffolding and extending a child’s development. Through careful observation, we assess each child’s interests, stages of development, and learning needs. This information is used to create a stimulating and engaging environment which reflects children’s cultures and experiences. A range of indoor and outdoor play resources and opportunities are provided. Our reception classes are set up to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. Areas are clearly defined and resources are labelled so that children learn to locate equipment and resources as independently as possible. We believe in a strong Home-School partnership which begins before the child starts school and continues throughout the year.

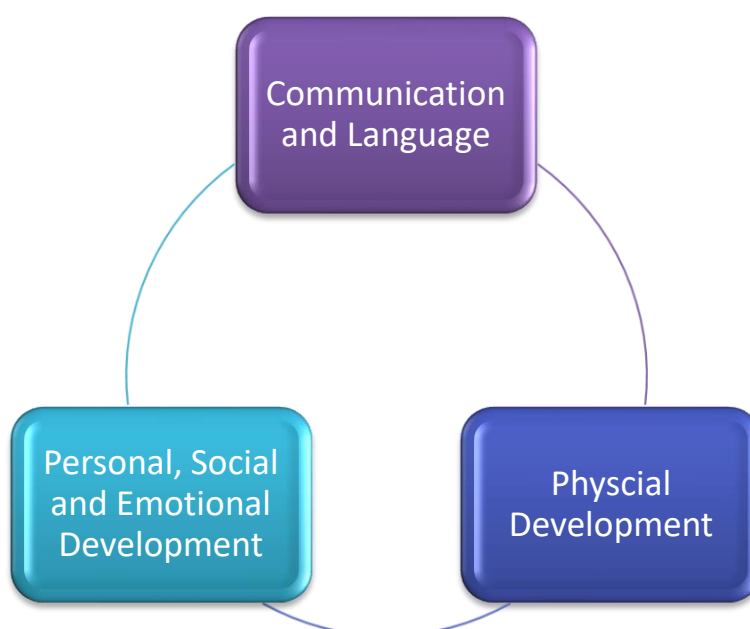
4. Learning and Development: The majority of the children in our Early Years classes need a structured approach to learning, a balance between adult-led play-focused activities and opportunities to generalise learning. We aim to ensure that all of our activities, including adult-led focused learning, are delivered in a playful, engaging and meaningful way whilst still challenging and extending individuals.

Our Curriculum, Teaching and Learning:

Curriculum

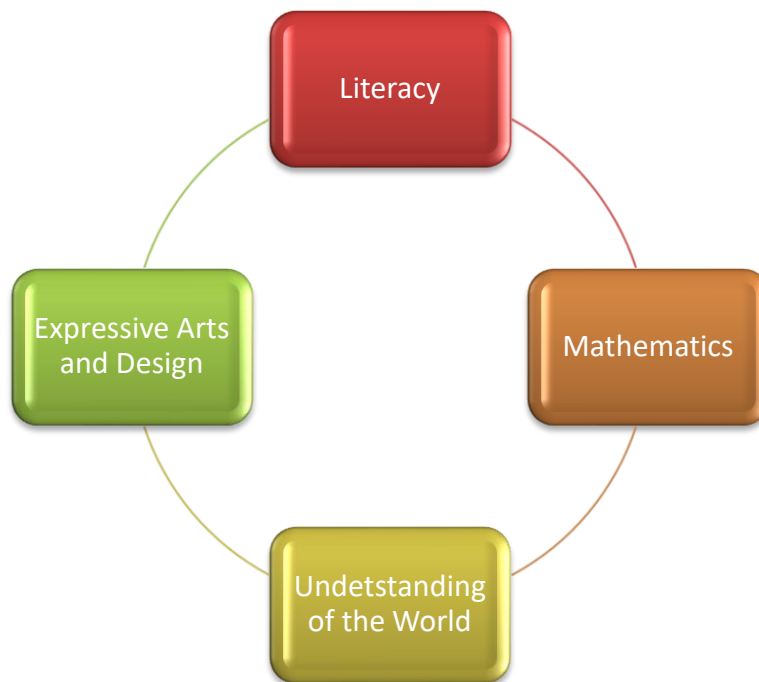
Our reception classes follow the guidance as outlined in the new Statutory Framework and use this to compliment the Outcomes of each child’s EHCP.

The framework identifies seven areas of learning and development, all of which are important and interconnected. Three areas (Prime Areas) are particularly important when it comes to building a child’s capacity to learn, form relationships, and thrive. These are:



These areas are particularly important for the children at Manor School and we have created an EYFS Processes Rationale document to map these onto the EHCP Outcomes (appendix).

As children grow and develop, the four ‘Specific Areas’ are used to strengthen and apply learning in the Prime Areas. These are:



These prime and specific areas in EYFS are strongly interconnected with the 4 EHCP Outcome areas. Please see EYFS Processes Rationale document for further detail (appendix).

Staff working in our Early Years classes support learning with these seven areas in mind and consider each child’s unique needs, interests, and stage of development when planning activities.

Teaching and learning is delivered in a cross-curricular way, i.e. planned activities often cover more than one area of learning. It is well researched that children in their early years learn by playing and exploring, being active, and through creating and thinking critically. However, many of our children need support in developing the early stages of these skills. Often, play skills need to be explicitly taught 1:1 with an adult before a child can access opportunities to initiate their own learning through play.

Because of the nature of our setting, a range of specialist pedagogy is used to support receptive (understanding) and expressive communication and attention. Approaches including symbol communication, Makaton signing, Intensive Interaction, Attention Autism, and The Curiosity Programme are used extensively across this phase and throughout the wider school. Visual and auditory cues are also used to aid smooth transitions between activities and to promote the understanding of routines. At Manor School, teachers work closely with members of the MAST (comprising Speech and Language Therapists,

Occupational Therapists, and autism and behaviour specialists) to ensure that individual pupils' PIP (Personal Intervention Plan) targets are fully integrated.

Planning

Long Term planning is inspired by the slogan “Ready, Steady, Go!” In the Autumn term, the focus is on settling the children into school and establishing routines and boundaries so that they are “ready” to learn. In the Spring term, children are more established in the setting and are on a “steady” path for learning. We are able to focus on teaching a wider range of skills and increasing engagement and a love of learning. In the Summer term, children are encouraged to be more independent in tasks and to explore and expand on the learning they have acquired; we aim for them to be able to generalise skills and have a well-supported transition for when they “go” to Key Stage 1 (i.e. transition to our main site on Chamberlayne Road).

Each half term, a medium term overview plan is created based around teaching of specific skills. A set of core texts are planned in order to promote a love of stories and give a flexible basis around which to structure learning activities. Staff write fortnightly plans based on PIP targets, children's interests, upcoming events, and assessment for next steps. Staff in the Early Years consider all seven Prime and Specific areas when planning. Occasionally theme-based teaching will take place either linked to a group of children's interests, an educational visit, or a specific festival/celebration. Planning is flexible to ensure that the Early Years classes have the opportunity to follow school themes and local or national events. Educational trips, visits within the local community, and visitors to school are organised to enhance learning.

Planning is implemented through purposeful play, adult-led activities (including structured play, daily group stories, focused singing sessions, 1-1 work linked to PIP targets, and sessions incorporating recommendations from therapists), and child-initiated activities. Within Manor School, the ratio of adult-led activities is higher than at many other EYFS settings in order to ensure our children are supported in purposeful learning and understanding. This enables staff to reinforce, repeat, and adapt learning opportunities for all children. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, and guide their development through warm, positive interactions. The Characteristics of Effective Learning underpin learning and development across all areas and support children to become effective and motivated learners.

Our Early Years practitioners keep the three characteristics in mind when planning activities:

Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’;

Active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements;

Creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Staff continually observe what the children are doing and how they're learning most effectively, to identify where to take their learning next. Staff in our Early Years classes plan for each child's learning based on their interests and the assessments made about their stage of development through our internal developmental assessment system BARICS (Brent Assessment Route I Can System).

Personal Intervention Plans (PIPs)

Like every other pupil at Manor School, all children in our reception classes have a PIP (Personal Intervention Plan). Targets are set at the beginning of a half-term and progress is tracked throughout the half-term. The PIP headings for Early Years are strongly influenced by the EHCP Outcomes. Each child has 6 targets to work on per half term under the headings:



Please see EYFS Processes Rationale document for how these interlink with the Prime and Specific areas.

Cognition and Learning targets allow practitioners to be flexible and respond to the child's individual needs. Children working at a younger level on Development Matters may have Cognition and Learning targets which overlap with the 3 Prime areas. As children progress through Development Matters their Cognition and Learning targets become broader. However, even as children progress not all of the seven areas are set as PIP targets. Practitioners prioritise target setting for learning skills which benefit from pre-planned and adult led experiences. Other aspects of learning such as Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design which benefit from following the child's interests are delivered in a more flexible manner and judgements are made through 'in the moment' and 'over time' observations.

Observation, Assessment and Evidence Collection

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise pupil's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. (Statutory framework for the EYFS – September 2021).

Baseline

All children are baselined on our internal developmental assessment system; BARICS.

As required by the statutory framework for the EYFS, the Reception Baseline Assessment is carried out within the first six weeks of a child starting with us. All pupils are given the opportunity to undertake this statutory assessment; modifications, in line with the Reception Baseline Assessment guidance, are made to support pupils to engage. Despite modifications, some pupils may need to be disapplied if it is deemed that they do not have the pre-requisite skills in order to access the assessment. Any decision to disapply are made jointly by the class team, supporting therapists, assigned inclusion practitioners and a member of the SLT.

During the first half-term, staff focus on settling children into their new setting and reducing individual barriers to learning. The complex needs of our children means that it can take longer for them to transfer and generalise skills or demonstrate their skills to new adults.

Formative Assessment

At Manor School ongoing formative assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Ongoing formative assessment through observation is carried out by all of the adults working in our EYFS classes and is done in collaboration with our behaviour specialists, SaLTs, OTs and Family Liaison Officer.

Evidence Collection

Assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement and should not be required to prove this through collection of physical evidence. (Statutory Framework EYFS)

In line with advice that assessment should not take away from interaction with children, not all observations are formally recorded and every learning goal is not evidenced multiple times. However, each class holds weekly team planning sessions where Early Learning Goals are discussed and observations of the children are shared. This dialogue informs the planning for the following week. We feel that when viewed alongside all of the specialist support and assessment that each pupil at Manor School is given in order to reach their PIP targets and EHCP Outcomes, we can be confident that our judgements of their progress are secure. Each half-term class staff are required to use the Evidence for Learning app to record observations for each child under the 6 PIP headings (starting in Autumn 2). Where appropriate, links are made to Early Learning Goals and this evidence is used to inform “best fit” judgements for the Early Learning Goals. Progress is formally recorded against the statements on a termly basis.

Staff collect evidence using Evidence for Learning for a selection of PIP targets each half-term. This process starts in Autumn 2, as Autumn 1 is used for settling and baselining children. This results in at least 25 pieces of digital evidence per child per year across the Prime areas and Literacy and Mathematics from the Specific areas.

In addition to Evidence for Learning, staff complete Expressive Arts and Design and Understanding the World photo montages, highlight the Early Learning Goals 3 times a year, complete the EYFSP at the end of the year, complete BARICS assessment, and discuss individuals in depth at Pupil Progress Meetings.

The EYFSP

The EYFSP is a statutory document that must be completed in the final term of the year in which the child reaches five years of age, and within the statutory guidelines. The profile must reflect ongoing observation. At Manor School, information which can be used to inform EYFSP judgements includes staff judgement, Evidence for Learning, PIP trackers, Pupil Progress Meeting discussions, BARICS assessment, therapy reports, and Annual Review discussions.

At the end of the academic year, class teachers are required to complete an EYFS Profile for each child in their class. An EYFS Profile summarises and describes an individual’s attainment at the end of the Early Years. It gives the child’s attainment in relation to the 17 ELG descriptors and indicates whether their development within each ELG is ‘emerging’, ‘expected’ or ‘exceeding’.

Family links

We believe that parents and carers are a child’s first educator and therefore work very hard to ensure that they’re as involved as possible in school life and supporting their child’s learning at home.

We want all parents to feel that they can speak to us about their child at any time and to feel comfortable in our setting. We aim to fully involve parents in their child’s transition from nursery to school and we do this via meetings with parents and liaisons at the child’s pre-school setting. EYFS staff, Parents/Carers and pre-school practitioners fill out an ‘All About Me’ booklet that provides school with important information (such as: likes, dislikes, information about family members, etc.) which helps to enable a smooth transition. Our Home-School Partnership Meeting at the beginning of the year begins our journey of working together. We offer parenting workshops, coffee mornings and training through our Family Forum. All parents of children

in our reception classes are also invited to attend a 5-week training course led by the Speech and Language Therapy team. The course, which has proven to be very popular, focuses on communication development and how to support communication at home.

Meetings with the Class Teacher are set up each term with two Structured Conversations and one Annual Review each year. These meetings help to inform assessments, which strengthen judgements. Families are given the opportunity to discuss areas they would like their child to be supported with at school, such as toileting or behaviour. All progress reports and PIPs are shared with parents and we encourage all families to feed into these processes. At Manor School, we not only report on progress towards the Early Learning Goals but also on our own internal developmental assessment system; BARICS. Our experience has led us to believe that this bespoke, small-step assessment system is more supportive to parents as it celebrates what their child can do and identifies manageable next steps. It also does not make reference to chronological age-related expectations which can be distracting, especially as some of our cohort are working at the earliest developmental stages (i.e. Birth to three).

For day-to-day communication each child has a home-link book which is completed by class staff on a daily basis for the first few weeks. This progresses to a weekly basis during the course of the year, in line with the rest of the school. The home-link book allows us to share progress and suggestions on how to extend learning at home. It also enables parents to share successes and any potential issues that they might want support with. We encourage all parents to stay in touch and check the school website regularly.

Transition

On entry to Key Stage 1 pupils will either begin accessing subject specific learning opportunities in one of our “Thyme” provision classes or they will be given further opportunities to develop their early learning skills by working on the Engagement Model in either our “Rosemary” or “Lavender” provisions.

We support a smooth transition to Key Stage 1 (KS1) by ensuring opportunities for professional dialogue between EYFS and KS1 teachers in the summer term. Statutory data is submitted to the Local Authority within the statutory assessment timeframe. Our EYFS pupil progress is very good, with a very large majority of children making better than expected progress from their starting points. On entry to KS1 the majority of our children have acquired the necessary social, emotional, and functional skills to be “school ready.” This is the first step in supporting our children with Preparation for Adulthood, and ensures our children begin KS1 with firm foundations upon which to build.

This information is communicated to parents and carers via the Annual Review, end of year report and during the final Structured Conversation of the year.

We create passport documents to pass key information and strategies between staff and therapists. Year 1 teachers spend time in the EYFS observing and pairing with their future pupils and the pupils visit their new classes at the main site on Chamberlayne Road. This allows Year 1 teachers to plan an effective, responsive, and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

Parents get the chance to meet the new class teams and some pupils are given visual transition books. By this stage we know our pupils well enough to place them in a Year 1 class group which will support their individual needs and support them using our bespoke assessment systems, or where appropriate, the VB-MAPP (Verbal Behaviour – Milestones Assessment and Placement Program).

Across the school we are still heavily influenced by the EYFS principles and Characteristics of Effective Learning and this ethos supports all of our pupils to thrive.

Please see:

- EYFS Processes Rationale
- EYFS PIP Maps