



Mapledown School Curriculum

Foreword

This curriculum is the outcome of ongoing work at Mapledown, as the school has evolved over the years and is now catering for young people in Barnet with a wider range of needs. These include severe learning difficulties (SLD) where learners are likely to need support in all areas of the curriculum and associated difficulties with mobility, emotional regulation (particularly for our pupils with ASC), and communication, through to profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), where learners are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties, as well as a physical or sensory impairment. As such, learners need a slower pace of learning to allow time for consolidation, and ensure understanding.

In 2018, Mapledown was inspected by Ofsted. The outcome from the inspection encouraged the school to further examine and completely update the curriculum that is offered. Senior leaders responded to feedback from teachers and support staff who expressed frustration at the continued pressure to follow timetables when key learning opportunities were missed due to an outdated curriculum which had too much emphasis on subject specific planning.

A revision of our curriculum offer and a response to that widespread rethinking around special education, was identified as an important school improvement project. Our aim as staff is to create highly personalised learning programmes so that pupils can excel, and as leaders and school staff, to keep the curriculum under constant review so that it continues to meet the needs of all pupils.

The onset of new technologies, particularly in relation to assistive and augmentative communication, allowing practitioners to address particular barriers to learning, and unlock potential, as well as insight from neuroscience research must be taken into account and feed into our school's improvement planning, in order to develop a curriculum fit for the challenges of the 21st Century. These developments need to be recognised in our educational offer, as well as the need to ensure our curriculum offered flexibility to cater for pupils with varied learning needs and learning styles. Other challenges are also confronting us. For example, we are starting to see the impact of climate change, and therefore there is a more visible need for schools to promote sustainability. In addition, attitudes and values around Special Education (as well as education itself) have been changing. We recognise that more personalised approaches are beneficial for individual success, and must take into account the local context, within our local community.

Curriculum Intent:

While developing our curriculum, we used “Preparing for adulthood” as a starting place. Recognising that the skills needed in adulthood are difficult to master, including teaching and promoting independence, and recognising that our learners need to practice skills over long periods, we set about providing our learners with a curriculum which is focused on successful acquisition of knowledge and skills which will have a positive impact on their lives and opportunities.

Our curriculum therefore must focus on and include opportunities to develop our learners’ self-help and independence skills, within all aspects of their learning and their daily lives, throughout their time at Mapledown. Our approach to the curriculum must also include some flexibility to ensure that all our pupils’ needs are met during the delivery. As such, day to day teaching and learning sessions may occasionally be changed or altered slightly in the event of changes within dynamics in the class, so that pupils can get the best possible experience.

Our staff will use teaching methods which adhere to the principles of developing pupils’ communication skills to ensure that pupils have an effective voice in the world. Teaching will also focus on the development of independence skills, resilience, learning skills that can be used and generalised in all areas of life, emotional regulation, self-esteem and emotional maturity. We want our pupils to be able to fulfil their potential and prepare for life beyond school. We want them to experience a curriculum that establishes a growing knowledge and awareness of the world around them, including where appropriate the world of work and what they, as young people, can aim for as they prepare for adulthood and Post 19 transition. This includes delivering a breadth of opportunities and experiences that our pupils can start to build their own future pathways on. As we aim to do this, we are also fully aware of the impact the inherent difficulties our pupils have due to the nature of their needs and diagnosis and look to how we can start to overcome these barriers, working alongside them.

In Summary, at all key stages, the overall intent is to provide a motivating and engaging context in which pupils can achieve and make progress based on their assessed levels and next steps in a personalised way.

The following form the foundation of all delivery:

- communication and interaction
- personal and social development including awareness of self and own emotions and relationships with others.
- independence including life-skills
- engagement and enjoyment

For all pupils, the curriculum is geared to achieve the ultimate aim that as adults they have developed and achieved the skills that will enable them to have the greatest level of independence and most enjoyable and fulfilling lives.

For all pupils, successful transition is a priority within, into and out of the setting.

For pupils to access a broad and balanced curriculum at a differentiated level meeting statutory requirements.

Rationale for creating a Curriculum to meet the needs of our learners

Engagement (working definition) as cited in *Engagement Profile and Scale 2018* suggests “Sustainable learning can occur only when there is meaningful engagement. The process of engagement is a journey which connects a child and their environment (including people, ideas, materials and concepts) to enable learning and achievement.” Staff working within Mapledown recognise that engagement is essential if our pupils are to make progress. Our curriculum works on the principle that staff must work on developing engaging lessons and sessions to ensure that each pupil has the very best opportunity to learn.

When working on developing our new curricula, we considered the function of a curriculum document:

Our vision remained at the core of our thinking process:

- Enabling Mapledown learners, their families and the staff to be successful;
- supporting the local community and adult providers to enable inclusive opportunities for the students leaving Mapledown;
- planning for the long term sustainability of the school;

Taking into consideration the views of all our stakeholders, our staff, our families and governors, and incorporating it to the outcomes of staff INSETs, teachers’ meetings and the school development process, the following themes emerged as the underpinning for our curriculum:

- Communication (for all our learners, including those with PMLD, so that they can express their most basic needs, make choices and take decisions)
- For all pupils to be physically involved in their own lives and personal care (including toileting, brushing their hair, teeth etc)
- For all pupils to be given daily opportunities to develop and practise dressing/undressing (including getting ready for PE or swimming), eating/drinking as appropriate, with increasing independence.
- Work related learning and preparing for adulthood- an emphasis on teaching and learning the skills preparing for adulthood throughout the school
- For all pupils to be able to develop, persevere and maintain skills (deep learning)
- Preparing for independence and adulthood: including life skills, self care, dressing, mobility, access to the local community.
- Regulating emotions and sensory needs
- Friendships and making friends, social relationships - learning to be interested in people and the environment
- Keeping safe
- Resilience and self-esteem
- Opportunities for all pupils to do things they enjoy independently
- Computing skills and control technology
- Persistence, initiation, problem solving and thinking skills

Curriculum Implementation:

At Mapledown main school and for our @Cophall provision, we have one curriculum, organised as a continuum of skills, further divided into levels or curriculum.

The Pre-formal Curriculum has been designed for learners with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD), including complex Autism, and complex learning styles and learning needs. Although some consideration has been given to overlaps and links with National curriculum subjects, it has been developed around the starting point of their individual needs, rather than from a forced attempt to make what is traditionally offered by schools “accessible”. Four key areas of learning are “taught” via a vast array of opportunities. The fundamental structures underpinning this level are the twin pillars of communication and cognition (Dr Penny Lacey [in preparation], *Educational Provision for Pupils with Severe and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties* (Research Report for Mencap). All pupils are learning to communicate and to think and learn. At this stage, “communication” and “cognition” form half of the curriculum. The other half consists of “physical development”, and “personal health education” (including self care and independence). There is no mention of National Curriculum subjects, although pupils use some subject areas, such as the arts, physical education and the humanities, to provide the contexts for their learning. These subjects are part of a thematic approach to the curriculum adopted by the whole school.

We recognise this group of learners are working in the “here and now” and as such need repeated opportunities to practice and revise their learning. It is expected that this group of learners will require a multi-sensory approach.

The content of the curriculum for pupils with such complex needs was developed through studying the historical perspective on curriculum design, typical child development textbooks, published curriculum materials and curriculum documents from other schools, with their consent.

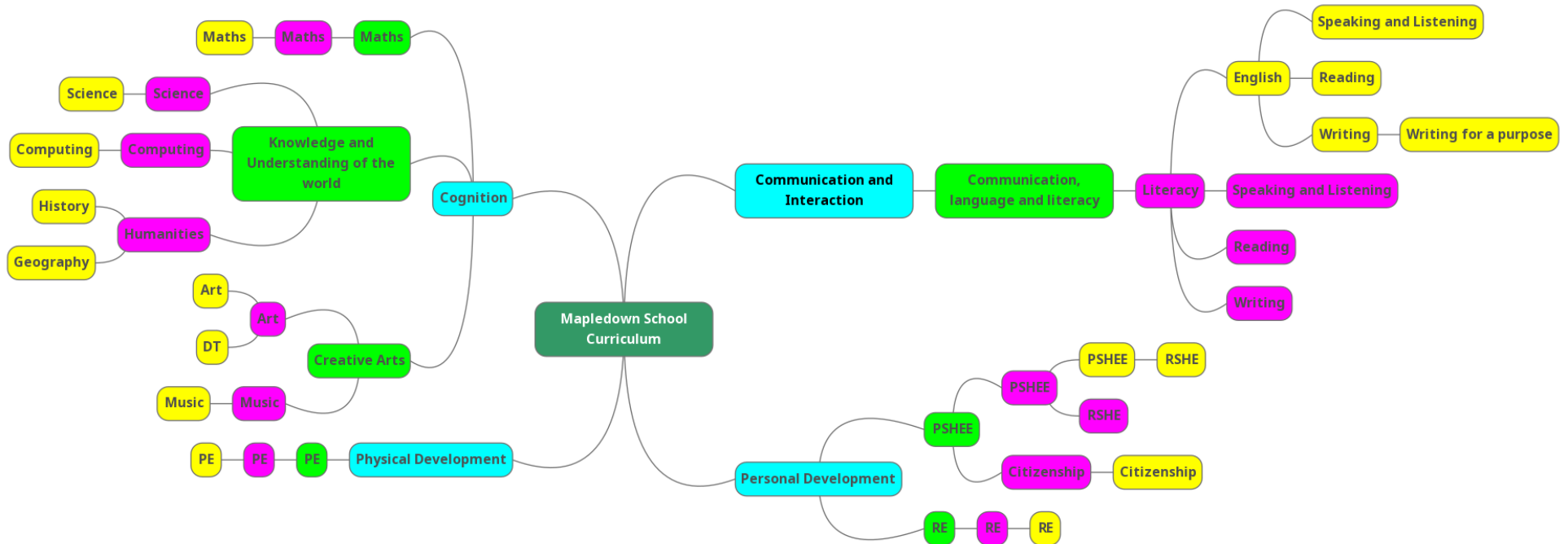
The Semi-formal Curriculum has been designed for our learners who have Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), including Autism. This group of learners also require repetition and a consistent approach. They may be able to demonstrate learning over time and some understanding that symbolic representation carries meaning. This curriculum builds on prior learning which has enabled the learner to demonstrate skills which allow developing relationships with others, effective engagement and understanding of cause and effect. This curriculum teaches through six main subject areas (Communication, Language and Literacy, Cognition, KUW, Personal development, physical development, and creative development). It is expected that there will be regular overlapping of teaching which will enable generalisation and transfer of the skills and knowledge taught. This level is designed to address the “gap” often found between learners who are not presenting as children and young people with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties, but who are not yet able to access subject specific learning.

The Formal Curriculum has been designed for our learners who have more moderate learning difficulties, including Autism, and working at Pre-Key stage 1 or 2 standards. Some of these learners may have a spiky profile which means they may need to dip into the semi-formal curriculum, but have specific skills in one area. This level allows these learners to straddle curricula and/or use the curriculum in its totality. There are eleven subject headings (mind map below) which are taught in more traditional stand alone sessions. These learners continue to require real objects, practical opportunities, modelling and a carefully differentiated approach.

The Formal Curriculum - Reaching Higher has been designed for learners with moderate learning difficulties, including Autism, but which may not be their main barrier to learning, and who are able to work within the national curriculum, up to upper Key stage 2. It is expected that this level is only used for a very small number of learners, who are generally placed at our **@Cophall satellite provision**, and who have been able to demonstrate the ability to work independently in sessions with less adult input. There are twelve subject headings (see mind map below) which are taught in discrete sessions which stretch and challenge the learners knowledge and understanding.

Across the school the curriculum is further split into Secondary (KS3 and KS4) and Post 16. Each phase is expected to deliver sessions which recognise the age of the learners whilst using key motivators for our learners.

Curriculum Coverage:



Modern foreign languages are not taught: the majority of our pupils have severe and complex communication difficulties. We focus on their communication in English so that they can be effective communicators. However, some MFL or community languages, and associated cultural experiences, may be taught within a topic when relevant.

The process of devising our new curriculum at Mapledown continues to be part of reflections, systems development, leadership and management, teamwork, and teaching and learning. We believe that the most effective and powerful curricula are those that are flexible, allow for responsiveness, and continually change through evaluation. We expect that aspects of the curriculum will need to be continually updated and in effect the planning documents become a working document with particular features having been slightly adjusted to reflect new insights and reflections from our classrooms.

When developing our curriculum, we also thought carefully about our demographics, to ensure that teaching and learning reflects and represents the various ethnic and social groups within our school. Most significantly, when redesigning our Curriculum, we also strove to look beyond the labels and respect that each individual learner is unique. In reality therefore, most children and young people across our school follow their own bespoke curriculum pathway. This tends to be based on one of the four curricula we offer, but lend aspects from others. In using this framework, we hope that practitioners craft their own plans, around the particular needs of each learner, and develop their important role by breaking down the barriers to learning each of our learners present. We recognise that without addressing the learning barriers, we are unable to support our learners in all aspects of their learning.

Our assessment will link directly to our curriculum. We believe that assessment for our students should influence future teaching. Therefore our assessment is intended to build on previous learning and lead practitioners to improved delivery.

Curriculum Impact:

We aim for our curriculum to enable practitioners to break down barriers to learning that each individual student presents, as well as to ensure our students leave Mapledown, at the end of their journey with us, with a set of core key skills which prepares and equips them for adulthood and life beyond school (see our vision above). These transferable skills in communication, cognition, independence, physical development, self-care, work related learning, personal safety, self-esteem and positive relationships will be taught within a curriculum that is responsive to each learner, building on their individual strengths and interests, to prepare them for a meaningful, happy and safe life beyond our school.

Monitoring the Curriculum:

The curriculum provision will be monitored by Senior Leaders in collaboration with Learning Zone leads. They will ensure that:

- Medium, short term and lesson plans are monitored by Learning Zone Leads to ensure that all areas are covered and appropriate objectives are set for the pupils.
- Observations of lessons take place, giving opportunities for peer observation and providing support with planning and presentation of lessons.
- The suitability and effectiveness of provision and resources are monitored.

Systematic monitoring and evaluation is seen as a way to help staff to identify clear priorities for curriculum development and to gather information for review. Targets in the School Development Plan will be set as a result of the monitoring.

The monitoring will be used to ensure:

- Pupils' entitlement to curriculum content is met and the individualisation they require in order to make progress is devised and implemented.
- The curriculum enables the targets set for individual pupils to be met.
- The curriculum is balanced and offers an appropriate pace of learning.
- Curriculum aims are being met.
- The individual needs of pupils are recognised and fully provided for.
- **The cultural backgrounds of pupils' different ethnic origins and religions are respected, acknowledged and celebrated.**
- Attention is given to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- Previous learning is built on, practised and applied, and there is provision for continuity and progression.
- Relationships between curriculum policy and practice are analysed.

Therapy:

Some forms of therapy, for example, speech and language, occupational therapy and physiotherapy, may be necessary to further and maintain physical well-being, development of basic learning, self-help skills and health or emotional needs. Careful consideration is given to the nature and extent of this support for each individual pupil.

The planned provision for these therapies is delivered by therapists working in the school with support from school staff under their advice.

Therapists' role in enhancing pupils' learning opportunities

- By supporting the accurate identification and assessment of individual needs in language and communication.
- To assess and monitor the posture and mobility needs of each pupil in order to support their physical development.
- To encourage 24 hour management strategy of pupils with regard to posture and mobility working in conjunction with school staff and parents.
- To encourage development, refinement and maintenance of skills working towards independent mobility.
- Promoting pupils' autonomy and independence through the use of specialist aids and equipment. Develop self-esteem
- Positioning pupils so they can access the curriculum and learn effectively.
- Promoting relaxation and support to help pupils manage stress and anxiety.
- Helping pupils to manage eating and drinking.
- Allowing pupils' behaviour and alternative ways of communicating to be acknowledged and understood.

Music therapy plays a complementary role in the school curriculum for individual pupils and is planned for as part of the whole curriculum.

Visiting Professionals, Parents and Carers:

Visiting professionals, parents, carers and their families all have a significant part to play in determining the progress of their child. To make the most of their contribution, they need to be involved in establishing long, medium and short term goals and learning strategies that enable the child/pupil to achieve their goal. We do this through Progress meetings, parents' evenings, the annual review of Education Health and Care Plan process, informal and formal meetings regarding pupil achievement.

Pupils have access to:

- Speech and Language Therapy
 - Occupational Therapy
 - Physiotherapy
- Each of these therapists support the implementation of our curriculum
- We have a Total communication approach which means pupils have access to staff who can use - Pragmatic Organisational Dynamic Display books (PODD) , Makaton, Objects of Reference (OoR), on body signing, intensive interaction.
 - Staff are also trained to support pupils with sensory processing difficulties and emotional regulation difficulties. We use a Positive Behaviour System

We may also offer:

- Music therapy
- Sensory Integration
- Extended Physical provision
- Rebound Therapy
- Work Experience - onsite and offsite

Timetables

Timetables are used to demonstrate good curriculum coverage across the week and include sessions of Communication, Language and Literacy Development (English) and Mathematical Development (Maths). In addition one Knowledge and Understanding of the World (Science) session a week, one other Knowledge and Understanding World session (Geography or History), two Creative Development sessions (one should be music the other Art or Design Technology), one P.E session plus another area of physical development. Communication, Personal Social and Health Education and Computing (ICT) can be taught across all curriculum areas.

Area of Learning	Number of sessions a week (minimum)
Communication, Language and Literacy (English)	4
Mathematical Development (Maths)	4
Knowledge and Understanding of the World (Science)	1
Knowledge and Understanding of the World (Geography, History, Computing and R.E)	1
Creative Development (Art and DT/Music)	1
Physical Development (Physical Education)	1
Physical Development (Extended Physical provision, MOVE)	Daily
Personal Development (PSHE, Citizenship and RSHE)	Daily
Collective Worship	Daily

Curriculum Planning:

The curriculum takes account of the age range (11 – 19 years) and the wide range of categories needs of the pupils. All pupils at Mapledown are individuals and curriculum planning must reflect their individual needs. The curriculum must provide a balance of activities that accommodate educational programmes which support the values and ethos of the School.

Recognising Progress:

In addition to the curriculum decisions about breadth, balance and time given to different components in the curriculum, throughout the pupils' education, their progress and access are continually reviewed and revised. Decisions are influenced by the pupils' individual needs, drawing on their EHCP over-arching aspirations and outcomes, review of progress of these at EHCP Reviews and priorities identified in their KPLTs (Key Personal Learning Targets), Individual Behaviour Plans and MOVE programmes.

All staff use a variety of assessment tools to identify the learning and support needs of the pupils. Through this assessment teachers are able to pinpoint pupils':

- Existing levels of development, knowledge, skills and understanding as well as their achievements, strengths and learning needs from which they can prioritise learning.
- Priorities for learning.
- Individual responses, including those that may indicate progress is taking place, whether planned and targeted or unexpected.
- Personal interest and motivation.
- Therapeutic needs.
- Responses to teaching methods and plans, and how they preferred learning style
- Use of resources including staff, settings and rooms
- Needs for support from other agencies if appropriate.

Recognising Attainment and Achievement:

At each stage of the School, attainment and achievement are marked in a variety of ways. These include:

- Curriculum steps
- KPLTs
- Move
- SCERTS
- Accreditation (Key Stage 4 and Post 16)
- Weekly, termly certificates (Whole School)
- Annual Reviews of EHCPs

Good Practice:

Good practice is identified within our schemes of work and associating guidance documents.

It is recognised by the school that all support staff can add to and support the curriculum, through exchange of information, discussions on learning opportunities and providing ways to review pupils' progress.

The school sees it as important for staff to look at the planning, teaching and assessment methods used and to monitor the effects on pupils' progress and achievement.