



Our Learning Pathways and Developmental Anchors

A clear guide for parents and carers

Explore • Discovery • Investigate

Understanding how your child's Pathway, Developmental Anchors, EHCP Outcomes and Personalised Learning Goals Work Together



Orchard Manor School

Parent and Carer Guide

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How Learning Works at Orchard Manor School

Every pupil follows an ambitious, personalised curriculum. We use three learning pathways—**Explore**, **Discovery** and **Investigate**—to match teaching, communication approaches, support and learning experiences to each pupil's needs.

Developmental Anchors sit alongside subject learning. They describe essential skills in communication and interaction, cognition and learning, social and emotional development, independence, and physical and sensory development.

In simple terms: the Anchors identify the developmental focus; the pathway guides *how* it is taught; and the wider curriculum provides opportunities to practise the skill through lessons, routines, play, interventions, residential experiences and community learning.

Pathways are not ability labels and do not limit what a pupil can achieve. Placement reflects how a pupil currently accesses learning and is reviewed over time. Your child's class team can explain how their pathway, EHCP outcomes and Personalised Learning Goals fit together.

How EHCP outcomes and Personalised Learning Goals fit

Each pupil continues to have **Personalised Learning Goals (PLGs)**: manageable steps drawn from their longer-term EHCP outcomes. Staff use the Anchors to identify the relevant developmental focus and review PLGs regularly so that teaching and next steps remain appropriately ambitious.

Our Three Learning Pathways

What every pupil receives

Whatever their pathway, every pupil benefits from small classes, personalised teaching, supportive relationships, predictable routines, sensory-aware environments, real-world learning and a **Total Communication** approach. This may include speech, signing, symbols, visuals, gesture or AAC.

Why do we have three pathways?

Pupils learn in different ways and need different levels of structure, communication support and adult help. The pathways allow us to adapt the curriculum while keeping expectations high for everyone.

They help us to:

- choose teaching approaches that help each pupil engage and understand
- provide the right communication, sensory and adult support
- balance subject learning with communication, wellbeing, independence and life skills
- review and adapt provision as a pupil develops

A pupil may develop at different rates across different areas. Staff therefore use assessment and professional judgement rather than treating a pathway as a fixed label.



What will this look like for my child?

Teachers plan subject learning and choose the Developmental Anchors most relevant to each pupil and activity. Staff look for meaningful change, such as clearer communication, fewer prompts, greater participation, improved transitions, increased independence or using a skill in a new setting.

Families should expect:

- learning linked to the pupil's current pathway and individual needs
- communication supports used throughout the day
- EHCP outcomes and Personalised Learning Goals reflected in planning
- regular review of progress and the support needed next
- opportunities to use skills in school, at home and in the community

The Pathways at a Glance

The posters later in this guide show the curriculum balance, provision and aims for each pathway. The short summaries below explain the main differences.



Explore

- Learning is highly practical, sensory and communication led.
- Pupils receive close adult support and predictable routines.
- Progress may include engagement, anticipation, choice-making, regulation and intentional communication.



Discovery

- Learning is structured, practical and supported by visuals and Total Communication.
- Pupils develop early or functional literacy, numeracy, communication and life skills.
- Progress includes using skills more independently and in different situations.



Investigate

- Learning follows a formal or adapted formal curriculum, with continued support for communication, regulation and sensory needs.
- Pupils build subject knowledge, qualifications where appropriate and practical life skills.
- There is increasing emphasis on self-advocacy, independence, college, employment and adult life.

All three pathways are equally valued. Each offers an ambitious route towards communication, participation, independence and preparation for adulthood.

Curriculum Anchors: The Skills Behind Learning

Curriculum anchors are the important skills pupils need in order to access lessons and everyday life. They are taught through subjects, routines, play, personal care, community visits and residential experiences.



The Anchors connect each pupil's EHCP outcomes and PLGs with purposeful teaching, carefully chosen support and repeated opportunities to practise important skills throughout the day. They also help families understand why progress may look different for each pupil.

They focus on:

- **Communication and interaction:** understanding communication, expressing needs, choices and feelings, and following instructions
- **Cognition, learning and independence:** managing change, organising learning and developing daily living skills
- **Social, emotional and relationship development:** recognising emotions, regulating and asking for support
- **Physical development, sensory development and wellbeing:** movement, body awareness, sensory regulation, participation and lifelong wellbeing

The detailed anchor posters later in this guide show how these skills may develop through the pathways and key stages. They are guides to progression, not checklists or age-based limits.

How Progress is Recognised

Progress is individual. A pupil may show progress by:

- engaging for longer or with less support
- communicating more clearly or with more people
- using a regulation strategy
- following a routine or instruction more independently
- making choices, solving a problem or asking for help
- using a skill in a new lesson, place or community setting
- gaining subject knowledge or an appropriate qualification

How Parents and Carers are Involved

- At parent meetings, talk with the class team about your child's current PLGs and agreed strategies.
- Offer choices and encourage communication and independence through familiar routines.
- Use consistent words, visuals, communication systems or regulation approaches agreed with school.
- Notice and celebrate small changes and share successes or concerns with the class team.

You do not need to recreate school lessons at home. Practice should feel manageable, positive and appropriate for your child; the class team can suggest simple ideas.

Pathway Posters

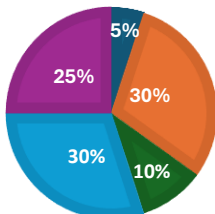
This is how we organise our curriculum

Explore	% and suggested no. of lessons	Subjects	
Humanities (Understanding & Experiencing the World)	5% (2)	Humanities (Beliefs & Values, Geography, History) & the Arts	EXPLORE Legend: ■ Humanities ■ CLL ■ MIST ■ PSED ■ Physical Literacy
Communication Language & Literature,	30% (10)	Phonics and reading, writing, oracy, communication, story massage, sensory stories, attention autism, EHCP led provision, Sensology,	
MIST (Mathematics, IT, Science & Technology)	10% (4)	Maths, IT, Science & DT	
Personal Social and Emotional Development,	30% (10)	PSHE, Life skills, E-Safety, Skills Builder, Home cooking, Careers, EHCP led provision	
Physical & Sensory Development	25% (9)	PE & Swimming, Tacpac, Horticulture, Outdoor Education, Woodland Learning, Play, EHCP led provision	

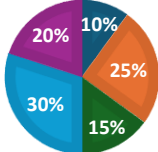
Discovery	% and suggested no. of lessons	Subjects													
Humanities (Understanding & Experiencing the World)	10% (4)	Humanities (Beliefs & Values, Geography, History) & the Arts	DISCOVERY Legend: Humanities (dark blue), CLL (orange), MIST (green), PSED (light blue), Physical Literacy (purple) <table><caption>Discovery Subject Distribution</caption><thead><tr><th>Subject</th><th>Percentage</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Humanities</td><td>10%</td></tr><tr><td>CLL</td><td>25%</td></tr><tr><td>MIST</td><td>15%</td></tr><tr><td>PSED</td><td>30%</td></tr><tr><td>Physical Literacy</td><td>20%</td></tr></tbody></table>	Subject	Percentage	Humanities	10%	CLL	25%	MIST	15%	PSED	30%	Physical Literacy	20%
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Physical & Sensory	20% (7)	PE & Swimming, Tacpac, Horticulture, Outdoor Education, Woodland Learning, Play, EHCP led provision													

Investigate	% and suggested no. of lessons	Subjects													
Humanities (Understanding & Experiencing the World)	15% (4)	Humanities (Beliefs & Values, Geography, History) & the Arts	INVESTIGATE Humanities CLL MIST PSED Physical Literacy <table><thead><tr><th>Subject</th><th>Percentage</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Humanities</td><td>15%</td></tr><tr><td>CLL</td><td>25%</td></tr><tr><td>MIST</td><td>25%</td></tr><tr><td>PSED</td><td>25%</td></tr><tr><td>Physical Literacy</td><td>10%</td></tr></tbody></table>	Subject	Percentage	Humanities	15%	CLL	25%	MIST	25%	PSED	25%	Physical Literacy	10%
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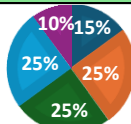
Explore Pathway – This is what the provision would be like

Pupils: (Features of pathway learners)		
	Communication: Students often exhibit pre-verbal communication skills. Sensory Requirements: They have significant sensory needs which may have an impact on their ability to engage. Cognitive Abilities: Limited cognitive abilities and typically, non-fluent readers. Social Interaction: May not independently seek, or have opportunities for, social interactions. Require substantial support to develop essential social skills. Managing Transitions: Limited ability to transition Independence and Health Needs: Often have intimate care needs and lack an awareness of safety, requiring careful attention.	
Provision:		
	The Explore Pathway is designed to provide a supportive and nurturing environment for pupils who need to develop communication and other life-and social skills. Classrooms are intentionally pared back to create a lower stimulus setting, promoting focus and calm. Each area is secure, ensuring the safety of all pupils, who also have safe access to outdoor spaces for play and learning. To accommodate pupils with intimate care needs, toileting areas are thoughtfully designed. Sensory exploration and regulation spaces are easily accessible, allowing pupils to engage in activities that help them manage their sensory needs. The classroom environment is often zoned, creating distinct areas for different types of activities and learning experiences. Staff within the Explore Pathway are highly skilled and knowledgeable at operating within a Total Communication environment. They utilise Makaton, Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), and both low and high-tech Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) methods. These tools are expertly modelled and scaffolded to support pupils' communication needs. A high ratio of adults is maintained to provide the necessary support as pupils learn to adapt to routines, communicate their needs, and participate in adult-directed tasks. This ensures that each pupil receives the individual attention and guidance they need to thrive in their learning environment. Overall, the Explore Pathway aims to create a supportive and highly adaptable learning environment that meets the diverse needs of pupils with complex SEN and ASC needs, helping them to thrive and develop.	
Curriculum:		
	5% Humanities and Culture 30% CL (Communication Language & Literature) 10% MIST- (Mathematics, Science, IT & Technology)	30% PSED (Personal Social and Emotional Development), 25% Physical Development
Aspirational Aim:		
	Pupils will have developed effective communication and engagement strategies and skills. They will be able to communicate their needs, feelings and make appropriate choices to engage and interact socially with peers. Pupils will be engaged and present within the community.	

Discovery Pathway

Pupils: (Features of pathway learners)		
	Communication: Generally, possess some verbal communication skills but may have processing difficulties or need to use AAC.	
	Sensory Requirements: May have identified sensory needs requiring supportive interventions.	
	Cognitive abilities: Often perform significantly below age-related expectations, needing targeted support. They are less likely to retain information without regular recall opportunities.	
	Social Interaction: Desire social interaction but may lack appropriate engagement skills.	
	Managing Transitions: Some may struggle with transitions	
Independent and Health needs: Can work independently for brief periods, with structured support. May need assistance with personal care tasks, such as toileting and staying safe.		
Provision:		
	The Discovery Pathway - pupils with ASC and are developing their cognitive abilities. The curriculum is based on the core subjects linked to the National Curriculum while also spending more time learning key life skills to support their transition into adulthood.	
	This pathway is designed to provide a well-structured and organised learning environment that caters to the unique needs of pupils. These environments often feature lower levels of stimulus to promote focus and reduce sensory overload. The approach is blended, incorporating zones of learning and continuous provision, allowing pupils to engage in both structured and flexible learning activities. Group learning opportunities are also available, fostering social interaction and collaborative skills.	
	Staff within the Discovery Pathway are highly skilled and knowledgeable at operating within a Total Communication environment to support pupils' communication to develop functionally.	
	The staffing ratios are designed to reflect the pupils' learning needs. While pupils are encouraged to work in groups, significant individualised support is still provided throughout the day. Additionally, individualised equipment and resources, are available to support personalised learning experiences as appropriate.	
	Overall, the Discovery Pathway aims to create a supportive and adaptable learning environment that meets the diverse needs of pupils, helping them to thrive academically and socially.	
Curriculum:		
	10% Humanities and Culture	30% PSSED (Personal Social and Emotional Development)
	25% CLL (Communication Language & Literature)	20% Physical Development
	15% MIST- (Mathematics, Science, IT & Technology)	
Aspirational Aim:		
	Pupils have essential life skills that foster independence and will eventually prepare them for adulthood. They develop their talents and interests and can enjoy participating in these beyond school.	
	Pupils communicate with others through a range of techniques such as oral, PECs or AAC.	
	Pupils apply key knowledge and skills beyond the classroom and develop the core functional, academic and key life skills, accessing accreditations as appropriate.	
	Pupils become valued, proactive community members, and are likely to pursue further education or post-16 supported study programmes. They may have the skills to transition into supportive employment environments.	

Investigate Pathway

Pupils: (Features of pathway learners)		
	Communication: Predominantly exhibit verbal communication skills. Sensory Requirements: May exhibit some sensory needs that require interventions or reasonable adjustments. Cognitive abilities: Developing as independent learners. Generally able to access significant parts of the National curriculum. Social Interactions: Emerging social interaction skills and ability to work collaboratively, with guidance and support as required. Managing Transitions: Pupils generally transition independently. They may need some support to manage significant change. Independence and Health needs: Pupils are learning to keep themselves safe and working towards managing own risk, transitions and health needs effectively.	
Provision:		
	The Investigate Pathway is designed for high-functioning pupils with ASC who are pursuing a mainly academic curriculum, based on the National Curriculum, whilst also learning key life skills to support their transition into adulthood. Classrooms in the Investigate Pathway follow a relatively traditional model, tailored to meet the universal needs of pupils. Some zoning may be evident, such as designated book areas, quiet spaces, and TEACCH-style arrangements. Pupils may use sensory equipment, like wobble cushions, as needed, to help them focus and stay comfortable. Pupils are likely to access more subject specialist teachers and will transition between different classrooms and spaces. This exposure helps them adapt to various learning environments and teaching styles. The curriculum emphasises the modelling, scaffolding, and recall of key knowledge and skills over time, ensuring a solid academic foundation. The use of visual reminders, timetables, and tools like traffic lights or zones of regulation is integral to the Investigate Pathway. These aids help pupils understand and manage their schedules and emotions, promoting independence and self-regulation. Support for social interactions is carefully planned and structured to help pupils progress against their Communication and Interaction (C&I) targets within their Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs). This structured support is crucial for developing social skills and building confidence in social settings. Sensory breaks are individualised, allowing pupils to develop personal strategies for managing sensory input. As pupils grow more independent, the need for Teaching Assistant (TA) support decreases, although individual pupils may still access 1:1 support through referral to mentoring or counselling as needed. The pathway emphasizes the development of independence. Pupils are encouraged to write in books and use IT such as laptops and other equipment, which is provided to facilitate learning and independence. Overall, the Investigate Pathway aims to balance academic rigor with the development of life skills, preparing pupils for successful transitions into adulthood while supporting their unique needs.	
Curriculum:		
	15% Humanities and Culture 25% CLL (Communication Language & Literature) 25% MIST- (Mathematics, Science, IT & Technology)	25% PSED (Personal Social and Emotional Development), 10% Physical Development
Aspirational Aim:		
	Pupils are equipped with essential skills for a largely independent adult life and are likely to access the world of work. They develop self-confidence, and a diverse skill set beneficial for adult life and achieving their aspirations. Pupils may pursue qualifications such as Functional Skills, BTECs, and GCSEs. Most pupils will proceed to mainly mainstream colleges, primarily enrolling in vocational courses. They evolve into skilled and employable community members.	

The following posters show how each anchor may develop across pathways and key stages. Use them to understand the direction of learning rather than as a checklist for every pupil.

Transitions and Managing Change in the Community

Intent:

To support pupils to manage change, movement and unpredictability, including community and travel transitions, through approaches that prioritise emotional regulation, predictability and supportive relationships, enabling safe participation and increasing independence across settings.

- **Respect & Relationships:** transitions are planned and supported in ways that recognise individual communication, sensory and emotional needs
- **Kindness & Community:** consistent, compassionate support enables pupils to participate confidently within school and the wider community
- **Health & Happiness:** reducing anxiety around change supports regulation, wellbeing and positive experiences beyond the classroom

Pathway	Feature	KS1	KS2	KS3	KS4 – Generalisation (community & travel examples)
Explore (Pre-formal)	Managing Transitions and Journeys	Responds to simple transitions with full adult support and clear cues (Now/Next, objects of reference). Moves with adult guidance.	Anticipates familiar transitions using visuals; moves with adult support (e.g. walking beside adult, holding hands).	Manages familiar transitions using visual prompts; may move short distances with reassurance and close adult proximity.	Manages familiar transitions with minimal prompting; generalises movement skills across adults, rooms and short community walks (e.g. moving between buildings, local walks holding hands).
	Understanding & adapting to change	Shows awareness of transition or travel through behaviour; requires co-regulation.	Uses familiar calming strategies with adult support when moving or leaving site.	Uses agreed regulation strategies with prompts during walks, trips or vehicle transitions.	Uses regulation strategies during movement; generalises to trips, visitors, transport and timetable changes.
	Managing & adapting to change and travel	Relies on adults to guide, reassure and ensure safety during movement or travel.	Indicates need for support using gesture, symbols or AAC (e.g. stopping, pointing, requesting adult).	Signals uncertainty and seeks reassurance when approaching unfamiliar spaces.	Seeks help appropriately; generalises help-seeking to unfamiliar community environments and routes.

Discovery (Semi-formal)	Managing transitions and journeys	Moves between activities with prompts and visual support; walks with adult nearby or hand-holding where required.	Follows transition routines with decreasing adult input; begins short walks with adult supervision rather than hand-holding.	Manages most transitions independently using visual or verbal cues; walks safely with adult monitoring.	Independently manages transitions between activities and settings; generalises across subjects, staff and unfamiliar routines, including community visits and local journeys.
	Managing & adapting to change and travel	Begins to understand that routines and journeys change with adult explanation.	Understands simple reasons for change (e.g. different route, trip planned) and accepts with support.	Anticipates planned changes or trips, using preparation such as photos, maps or schedules.	Anticipates and adapts to change; generalises to real-world travel challenges (e.g. transport delays, altered plans).
Investigate (Formal)	Transitions and Journeys	Manages transitions with minimal adult support.	Independently manages routine transitions across the school day.	Applies transition skills across school and community contexts.	Independently manages complex transitions and extended journeys; generalises to structured community and outdoor challenges, including participating in the Jubilee Challenge, moorland or countryside walking in a group with a qualified guide, off-site activities and organised travel linked to college, work experience or volunteering.
	Managing & adapting to change and travel	Accepts minor changes to plans or routes with explanation.	Adjusts behaviour appropriately when routines or travel plans change.	Adapts to changes and problem-solves with limited support.	Demonstrates flexibility and resilience; generalises to unexpected real-life situations, such as cancellations, route changes, weather conditions or outdoor terrain.
	Support and safety	Asks for help when unsure.	Seeks clarification or reassurance when routines or plans change.	Communicates concerns and negotiates adjustments (e.g. route, timing, support).	Advocates for own needs during transitions and travel; generalises to adult-led and group contexts, including guided outdoor activities, placements and new services.

Executive Function and Independent Learning

Intent (linked to school values) This anchor supports pupils to engage with learning, manage routines, organise tasks and persist through challenges, in ways that are developmentally appropriate and emotionally supportive.

- **Respect & Relationships:** adults adapt expectations, scaffolding and environments so pupils can experience success and feel safe to engage
- **Kindness & Community:** learners are supported to participate meaningfully alongside others, with flexible approaches that value difference
- **Health & Happiness:** achievable routines, regulation strategies and supportive planning reduce anxiety and build confidence

Progression reflects how pupils access learning and managing demands, not academic ability.

Pathway	Feature	KS1	KS2	KS3	KS4 – Generalisation
Explore (Pre-formal)	Organisation & Self-Management Skills	Engages briefly with activities using adult support and sensory/visual cues (e.g. shared attention, modelling, Now/Next).	Sustains attention in familiar tasks; follows predictable routines using visual support and reassurance.	Maintains attention in structured activities; follows routines across the day with prompts or breaks.	Sustains attention and follows routines with minimal prompting; generalises across adults, rooms and activities.
	Flexibility, participation & problem-solving	Participates in tasks with adult support (e.g. joint actions, tolerated involvement).	Completes short, structured tasks with prompts, modelling or adjusted expectations.	Completes familiar tasks with decreasing prompts and sustains effort during challenge.	Completes familiar multi-step tasks ; generalises participation and perseverance across curriculum and daily living routines.
Discovery (Semi-formal)	Organisation & Self-Management Skills	Begins to organise self within activities with adult support (e.g. gathering resources together).	Uses visuals to organise materials and decide how to start tasks.	Plans and organises tasks with minimal prompting, following a clear structure.	Independently plans and organises tasks; generalises organisation skills across subjects and community-based activities.
	Flexibility, participation & problem-solving	Requires reassurance and adult support when tasks change or become challenging.	Accepts small changes; persists with encouragement and visual cues.	Adjusts approach and uses taught strategies when challenges arise.	Adjusts plans independently; generalises flexibility and problem-solving to unfamiliar or less-preferred tasks.
Investigate (Formal)	Organisation & Self-Management Skills	Organises self and materials with minimal prompts.	Independently organises tasks and resources using familiar systems.	Manages multiple tasks or expectations across contexts.	Independently manages complex organisation ; generalises to college, work experience and community expectations , including preparation for trips or outdoor activities.

Emotional Literacy and Regulation

Intent:

To support pupils to recognise, understand and regulate their emotions, and to advocate for their emotional needs, using autism-affirming, relational and sensory-informed strategies that promote safety, confidence and wellbeing.

- **Respect & Relationships:** pupils' emotions are validated and supported through trusting, responsive relationships
- **Kindness & Community:** emotional understanding enables positive interactions and participation alongside others
- **Health & Happiness:** effective regulation strategies reduce anxiety, build resilience and support lifelong emotional wellbeing

Pathway	Feature	KS1	KS2	KS3	KS4 – Generalisation
Explore (Pre-formal)	Awareness of emotional states	Shows changes in mood or regulation through behaviour, movement, vocalisation or affect , interpreted by familiar adults.	Begins to recognise own emotional states using visuals or AAC with adult support (e.g. calm / alert / unsettled).	Identifies emotions within familiar routines using supported strategies such as visual cues or modelling.	Identifies emotions and early signs of dysregulation ; understanding is recognised across adults, rooms and daily routines.
	Regulation strategies (taught and supported)	Requires adult-led regulation and co-regulation , including sensory equipment, calming spaces, movement and breaks.	Uses familiar sensory strategies with adult prompting (e.g. weighted items, quiet space, movement breaks).	Uses agreed regulation strategies with prompts during challenge or transition.	Uses familiar strategies with minimal prompting; generalises regulation strategies to trips, visitors, timetable changes and supported community activities.
	Expressing needs and choices	Relies on adults to identify need and provide regulation support.	Indicates need for help using gesture, symbols or AAC.	Signals escalating feelings and seeks support using known strategies.	Seeks support appropriately; generalises help-seeking to unfamiliar situations and community contexts.
Discovery (Semi-formal)	Awareness of emotional states	Begins to name or identify emotions with visuals or verbal cues.	Identifies emotions in self and others with adult support.	Recognises common emotional triggers (e.g. noise, change, waiting) with increasing independence.	Recognises emotions and triggers; generalises understanding across settings, relationships and group contexts.
	Regulation strategies (taught and supported)	Uses adult-led strategies to regulate emotions.	Uses taught strategies with reminders, including early Zones of Regulation language.	Selects appropriate strategies when emotional challenge is emerging or expected.	Plans regulation strategies in advance and uses them independently; generalises to community, group activities and work-related contexts.

	Expressing needs and choices	Behaviour is supported through adult guidance and shared regulation.	Responds to prompts to regulate behaviour.	Applies regulation strategies with decreasing adult support.	Manages behaviour appropriately; generalises regulation-based behaviour management to unfamiliar expectations and environments.
Investigate (Formal)	Awareness of emotional states	Understands basic emotions and emotional responses in self.	Understands how emotions and triggers impact behaviour (self and others).	Identifies personal triggers and early warning signs; reflects on emotional outcomes.	Demonstrates insight and resilience; anticipates triggers and plans responses across adult-led environments (college, placements, group challenges).
	Regulation strategies (taught and supported)	Regulates emotions with minimal adult support when prompted.	Independently uses regulation strategies in predictable settings.	Prepares and selects strategies across contexts (e.g. brings sensory support, requests breaks).	Plans, applies and adapts regulation strategies independently; generalises to unexpected real-life situations (stress, change, conflict).
	Expressing needs and choices	Asks for help when overwhelmed.	Communicates emotional needs appropriately.	Negotiates support or adjustments based on known triggers.	Advocates proactively for emotional needs , explaining triggers and strategies; generalises to services, interviews, workplaces and community settings.

Communication – Receptive

To support pupils to understand communication, instructions and meaning through approaches that are accessible, predictable and responsive to individual communication needs, enabling safe participation and shared understanding across learning and daily life.

- **Respect & Relationships:** communication is adapted to pupils' processing styles so they feel understood and secure
- **Kindness & Community:** shared understanding supports inclusion, cooperation and positive interactions

Health & Happiness: clarity and consistency reduce anxiety, support regulation and promote emotional wellbeing

Pathway	Feature	KS1	KS2	KS3	KS4 – Generalisation
Explore (Pre-formal)	Responding to and expressing meaning	Responds to familiar voices, visuals, objects of reference or gestures through behaviour (e.g. pausing, turning, moving, facial expression). Expresses needs through behaviour or gesture with adult interpretation.	Engages with visuals and functional symbols; understands and responds to simple everyday instructions (e.g. <i>“wash hands”</i> , <i>“sit down”</i> , <i>“finished”</i> , <i>“not available”</i>). Uses consistent behaviours or symbols to express needs.	Responds consistently to key words, symbols or routine-based cues; expresses preferences and choices intentionally using AAC, symbols or gesture within familiar contexts.	Responds to familiar communication cues from less familiar adults; generalises understanding and expression across settings, including structured community visits.
	Cause-and-effect & sequencing	Explores cause-and-effect through play with adult support.	Demonstrates cause-and-effect understanding through simple programmable devices (e.g. pressing Bee-Bot controls).	Uses simple directional language or symbols (<i>forwards</i> , <i>backwards</i> , <i>go</i> , <i>stop</i>) in supported activities.	Applies early sequencing understanding in real-life contexts (e.g. anticipating steps in journeys or routines).
Discovery (Semi-formal)	Responding to and expressing meaning	Understands simple spoken/signed/AAC-supported messages; makes choices using symbols or AAC.	Follows one-step instructions using visuals or AAC; begins to initiate communication to request or comment.	Follows one- to two-step instructions; uses directional language (<i>forwards/backwards</i> , <i>first/next</i>) and symbols meaningfully.	Generalises receptive understanding and expressive communication to community contexts (e.g. shops, leisure activities).
	Cause-and-effect & sequencing	Communicates needs and choices clearly in familiar situations.	Gives simple instructions to others using speech, AAC or symbols (e.g. directing a peer, programming a robot).	Plans and delivers a simple activity with support, explaining steps and supporting others to take part.	Generalises instruction-giving and explanation to group activities, community tasks or supported leadership roles.

Investigate (Formal)	Responding to and expressing meaning	Understands spoken or AAC-supported language in structured learning; expresses opinions and preferences.	Understands two-step instructions and simple explanations; adapts communication for audience with support.	Adjusts communication when expectations change; repairs breakdowns independently.	Communicates confidently across adult and community contexts, including interviews, workplaces, public services and group activities; understands and uses safety-related language appropriately.
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Communication – Expressive

To enable pupils to express needs, choices, preferences and feelings using their most effective and accessible communication methods, ensuring they are heard, understood and able to participate meaningfully in learning and daily life.

- **Respect & Relationships:** all forms of communication are recognised, valued and responded to with respect
- **Kindness & Community:** expressive communication supports inclusion, connection and shared understanding
- **Health & Happiness:** being able to express oneself reduces frustration, supports regulation and promotes emotional wellbeing

Pathway	Feature	KS1	KS2	KS3	KS4 – Generalisation
Explore (Pre-formal)	Choice-making, initiation and interaction	Communicates wants, needs or responses through behaviour, body movement, facial expression or vocalisation , interpreted by familiar adults.	Uses consistent behaviours, gestures, objects or single symbols to communicate needs or preferences within familiar routines (e.g. reaching, pointing, selecting).	Demonstrates intentional communication within predictable routines (e.g. anticipating outcomes, repeating actions to request continuation).	Communicates intentionally with less familiar adults ; communication is recognised and responded to across settings, routines and environments , including supported community activities.
Discovery (Semi-formal)	Choice-making, initiation and interaction	Makes choices using AAC, symbols, signs or visuals when supported and presented with structured options. E.g Attends to short exchanges with adult support (e.g. shared attention, waiting briefly).	Initiates communication with prompts (verbal, visual or gestural) to express needs, interests or choices e.g. Listens and responds during supported interactions (e.g. answering, indicating, commenting).	Initiates communication independently using known systems (AAC, speech, signing). Demonstrates early turn-taking in shared activities and participates in simple conversational exchanges , taking turns with reminders	Initiates communication appropriately and takes turns in short interactions ; generalises choice-making, initiation and interaction to community activities and unfamiliar contexts and can generalises turn-taking and responsive communication to group activities, practical tasks and community settings.
Investigate (Formal)	Choice-making, initiation and interaction	Expresses opinions, preferences and views using speech or AAC in familiar situations.	Listens to others and responds appropriately ; repairs communication breakdowns with support (e.g. repeating, clarifying, rephrasing).	Adapts communication to audience, purpose and context; participates in conversations , sharing ideas and listening to others.	Self-advocates confidently and participates in sustained conversations ; generalises expressive communication skills to interviews, work placements, group activities, services and adult environments .

Understanding Instructions

To support pupils to understand, respond to and act on instructions in ways that are accessible, emotionally supportive and meaningful, enabling safe participation and growing independence within predictable routines and real-world contexts.

- **Respect & Relationships:** instructions are adapted to pupils' communication styles and processing needs, ensuring they feel understood and supported
- **Kindness & Community:** clear, consistent guidance enables pupils to participate confidently alongside other
- **Health & Happiness:** achievable instruction-following reduces anxiety, supports regulation and promotes emotional wellbeing

Pathway	Feature	KS1	KS2	KS3	KS4 – Generalisation
Explore (Pre-formal)	Understanding and giving instructions	Responds to adult direction within routines through behaviour, movement or attention (e.g. pausing, reaching, stopping).	Shows understanding of familiar actions or expectations when supported by objects of reference, modelling or physical prompts.	Responds purposefully to routine-based instructions supported by consistent cues (e.g. gesture, object, visual).	Responds to familiar supported instructions from less familiar adults; understanding is recognised across settings and routines.
Discovery (Semi-formal)	Understanding and giving instructions	Follows single, concrete instructions when supported by visuals, modelling or AAC.	Follows one-step instructions with reduced prompting within familiar activities.	Follows one- to two-step instructions, demonstrating understanding through appropriate action.	Follows familiar instructions; generalises instruction-following to community activities and unfamiliar contexts.
Investigate (Formal)	Understanding and giving instructions	Follows spoken or AAC-supported instructions independently in familiar situations.	Understands and follows two-step instructions, including changes to routine.	Adapts responses when instructions change or expectations increase.	Follows instructions independently in work-related, public and adult environments, including safety, vocational and service-based contexts.

Independence in Daily Living Skills (including Health, Hygiene, Toileting and Eating)

To support pupils to develop health, hygiene, bodily awareness and independence in daily living skills, including personal care, toileting and eating, in ways that promote dignity, comfort, wellbeing and participation.

- **Respect & Relationships:** pupils' bodies, privacy, communication and readiness are respected
- **Kindness & Community:** routines are supported sensitively and consistently
- **Health & Happiness:** continence, hygiene and positive food experiences underpin wellbeing

Pathway	Feature	KS1	KS2	KS3	KS4 – Generalisation
Explore (Pre-formal)	Self- care, independence in health	Participates in personal care, toileting and eating routines with full adult support (e.g. hand-over-hand, shared actions, sensory tolerance).	Anticipates familiar routines using sensory or visual cues (e.g. moving toward bathroom, calming at mealtime, recognising routine order).	Assists with routines by completing accessible steps (e.g. pulling clothing, flushing, handwashing, holding cup).	Participates meaningfully across settings; generalises engagement in care, toileting and eating with different adults and environments (home, trips).
Discovery (Semi-formal)	Self- care, independence in health	Completes parts of care, toileting and eating routines independently with visual or AAC support .	Manages familiar routines using structured prompts (e.g. visual schedules, first/then).	Makes informed choices (e.g. food preferences, clothing, hygiene sequence).	Generalises independence to community contexts (public toilets, cafés, leisure, supported work routines).
Investigate (Formal)	Self- care, independence in health	Independently manages personal care, toileting and eating, or with minimal reminders. E.g. Asks for help related to health or care needs.	Applies health and self-care skills consistently across school and home and Communicates health needs and preferences clearly	Problem-solves when routines change (e.g. unfamiliar toilets, missing items, new food environments) and Advocates for adjustments or support when needed.	Generalises full independence to adult life including college, supported living, work placements, travel and community services.

Physical Development, Sensory Development and Wellbeing

Intent: This anchor promotes inclusive physical and sensory development, outdoor learning and wellbeing. Repeated opportunities for movement, sensory exploration, balance, coordination, core strength and hand-eye coordination help pupils build motor competence, body awareness and confidence to access learning, regulate, participate and use skills in real-life contexts. Progress is based on developmental starting points, sensory regulation, confidence, enjoyment and generalisation.

- **Respect & Relationships:** movement experiences are adapted and supported to recognise each pupil's individual physical, sensory and communication needs, enabling safe engagement and shared interaction
- **Kindness & Community:** inclusive, well-supported opportunities for movement allow pupils to participate alongside others, fostering encouragement, shared experiences and a sense of belonging
- **Health & Happiness:** accessible, enjoyable movement experiences promote regulation, wellbeing and positive engagement, prioritising choice and participation over performance for all learners, including those with complex SEN

Pathway	Feature	KS1	KS2	KS3	KS4 (Generalisation)
Explore	Sensory movement exploration	Experiences movement and sensory input with full adult support (e.g. rocking, swinging, tactile exploration)	Engages in a range of sensory movement experiences with reassurance, modelling and co-regulation	Explores preferred movement activities with support, showing emerging awareness of sensory preferences	Participates in preferred sensory movement activities with minimal prompting; generalises preferences across adults, environments and equipment
	Body awareness through movement	Shows awareness of body position through movement or response to support	Demonstrates emerging awareness of body parts during movement with prompts	Responds purposefully to guided movement activities	Demonstrates increased body awareness; generalises awareness across activities and routines
	Tolerance and choice of movement	Requires reassurance and co-regulation to engage in movement	Participates in movement activities with support; developing safety awareness and beginning to follow instructions	Engages confidently in a range of movement experiences, demonstrating safe participation; generalises tolerance, control and awareness across environments, including less familiar and community settings	Engages confidently in a range of movement experiences, demonstrating safe participation; generalises tolerance, control and awareness across environments, including less familiar and community settings

Discovery	Purposeful movement	Moves purposefully to explore spaces, resources or activities with support	Uses movement to access activities and environments more independently	Applies movement skills functionally across the school day	Uses movement confidently and purposefully; generalises skills to community settings
	Sensory regulation through movement	Uses adult-led sensory movement for regulation	Uses taught movement-based regulation strategies with reminders	Selects preferred movement activities to support regulation	Independently uses movement to regulate sensory needs; generalises strategies across contexts
	Choice in movement	Responds to limited choices in movement activities	Makes choices between movement activities using visuals or AAC	Selects preferred movement activities independently	Makes informed choices about movement for wellbeing; generalises choice-making to leisure and community activities
Investigate	Independent engagement in movement	Engages in movement activities independently within familiar settings	Sustains engagement in movement activities across contexts	Manages participation in movement activities independently	Independently engages in movement for health and enjoyment; generalises to adult and community environments
	Adapted physical participation	Uses equipment or adaptations with adult guidance	Uses adaptations independently when available	Selects and uses appropriate adaptations independently	Independently accesses physical activity using adaptations; generalises to leisure, sport or fitness contexts
	Enjoyment and wellbeing through movement	Shows enjoyment of movement through behavioural or communicative cues	Communicates enjoyment or dislike of movement activities	Reflects on preferences and adjusts participation accordingly	Demonstrates sustained enjoyment and motivation; generalises engagement to lifelong physical wellbeing

Implementation, assessment and reporting processes that support this curriculum are set out in the school's PARRCS Implementation Policy