



Pre-Formal Curriculum



Important Terms

Curriculum drivers shape our curriculum breadth. They are derived from an exploration of the backgrounds of our students, our beliefs about high-quality education and our values. They are used to ensure we give our students appropriate and ambitious curriculum opportunities

Curriculum breadth is shaped by our curriculum drivers, cultural capital, subject topics and our ambition for students to study the best of what has been thought and said by many generations of academics and scholars.

Our curriculum distinguishes between subject topics and threshold concepts. Subject topics are the specific aspects of subjects that are studied.

Threshold concepts tie together the subject topics into meaningful schema. The same concepts are explored in a wide breadth of topics. Through this 'forwards-and-backwards engineering' of the curriculum, students return to the same concepts over and over, and gradually build understanding of them.

For each threshold concept a number of **Milestones**, each of which includes the procedural and semantic knowledge students need to understand the threshold concepts, provides a progression model.

Knowledge categories in each subject give students a way of expressing their understanding of the threshold concepts.

Knowledge webs help students to relate each topic to previously studied topics and to form strong, meaningful schema.

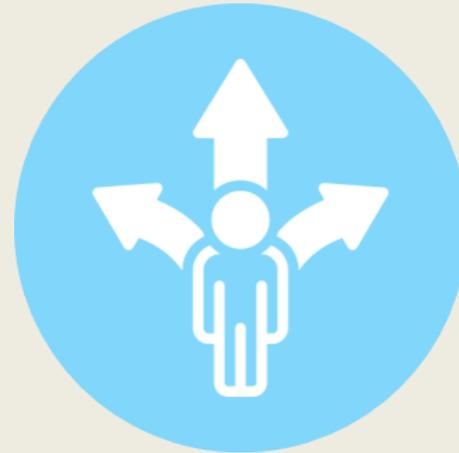
Pedagogy is the method and practice of teaching, especially as an academic subject or theoretical concept.

Our Curriculum Drivers

Specialist
Pedagogies



Powerful
Knowledge

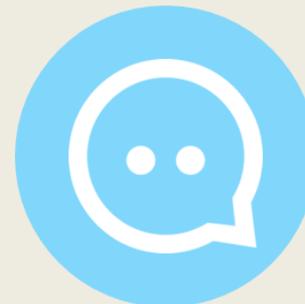


Flexible
Curriculum
Pathways

S.M.S.C.



Vocabulary





Flexible Curriculum Pathways

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

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

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



Specialist Pedagogies

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



Powerful Knowledge

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

Vocabulary

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



S.M.S.C.

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





Quality of Education

Intent, Implementation, Impact



Definition of PMLD

Students with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) are on a spectrum that indicates that they have profoundly complex learning needs.

In addition to profound learning difficulties, learners are likely, though not in all cases to have other significant difficulties such as physical disabilities, sensory impairments and/or severe medical conditions. Learners require a high level of adult support, both for their learning needs and also for their personal care.

They are likely to benefit from engagement across all senses and will need a curriculum which recognises that all learners will to a greater or lesser degree, have difficulties with object permanence, contingency awareness, declarative communications, making choices, learning by imitation and following instruction.

Learners generally communicate by facial expression, body language and other non-verbal methods.

(Imray and Colley, 2017, p45)



Curriculum Intent

A Pre-formal model recognises that children, young people and adults with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD) have unique abilities and ways of learning. In the words of Routes for Learning (Welsh Assembly Government, 2006)

"Our learners (with PMLD) are entitled to access a curriculum and assessment framework which is fit for purpose and meets their specific needs - there is little benefit or increase in entitlement if they are included in structures which fail to do this." (P.46)

EQUALS (2018)



Aim

Our aim is to put the learners in control by giving them an environment that they can understand and they are allowed to keep changing in order to encourage development. For those with a profound learning disabilities, learning is best done when the learner is placed at the centre of the Curriculum.

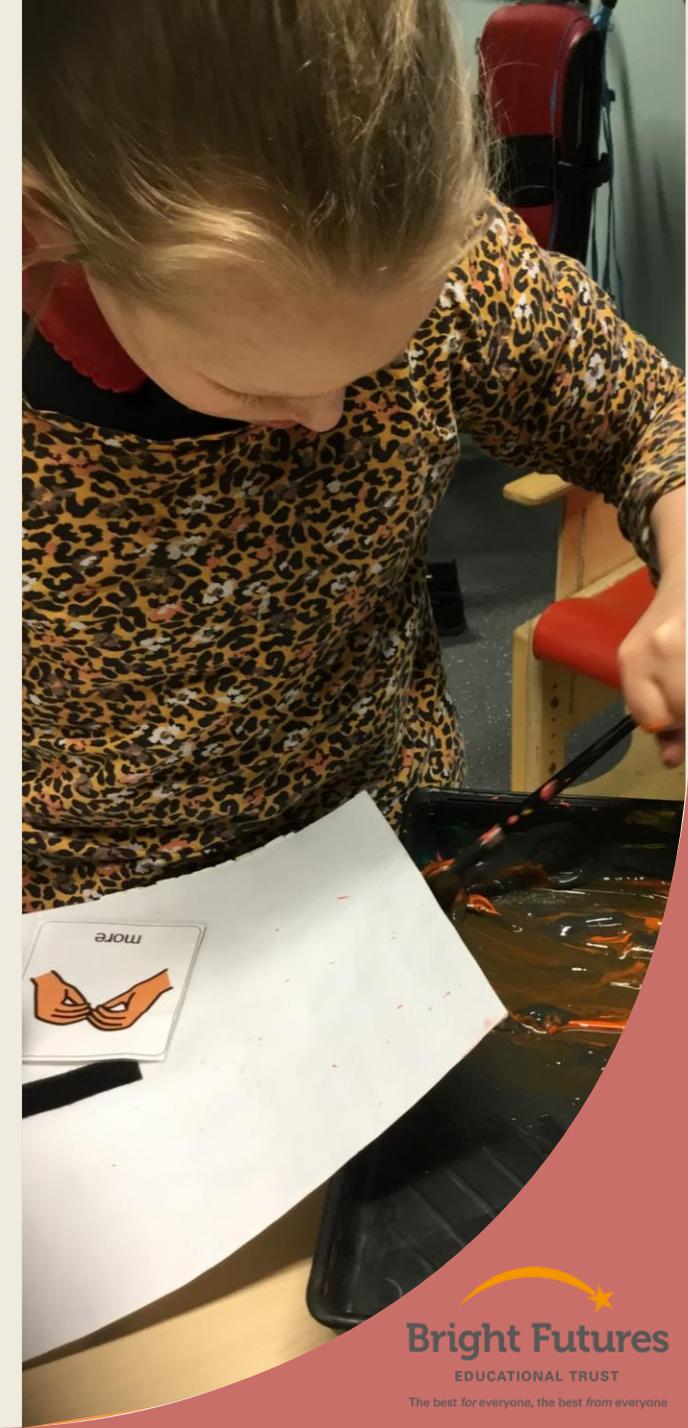
EQUALS (2019)

Sequence and Structure

A Pre-formal curriculum provides a structure to ensure that we:

- build routines
- facilitate change
- offer alternatives
- observe and guide

EQUALS (2019)



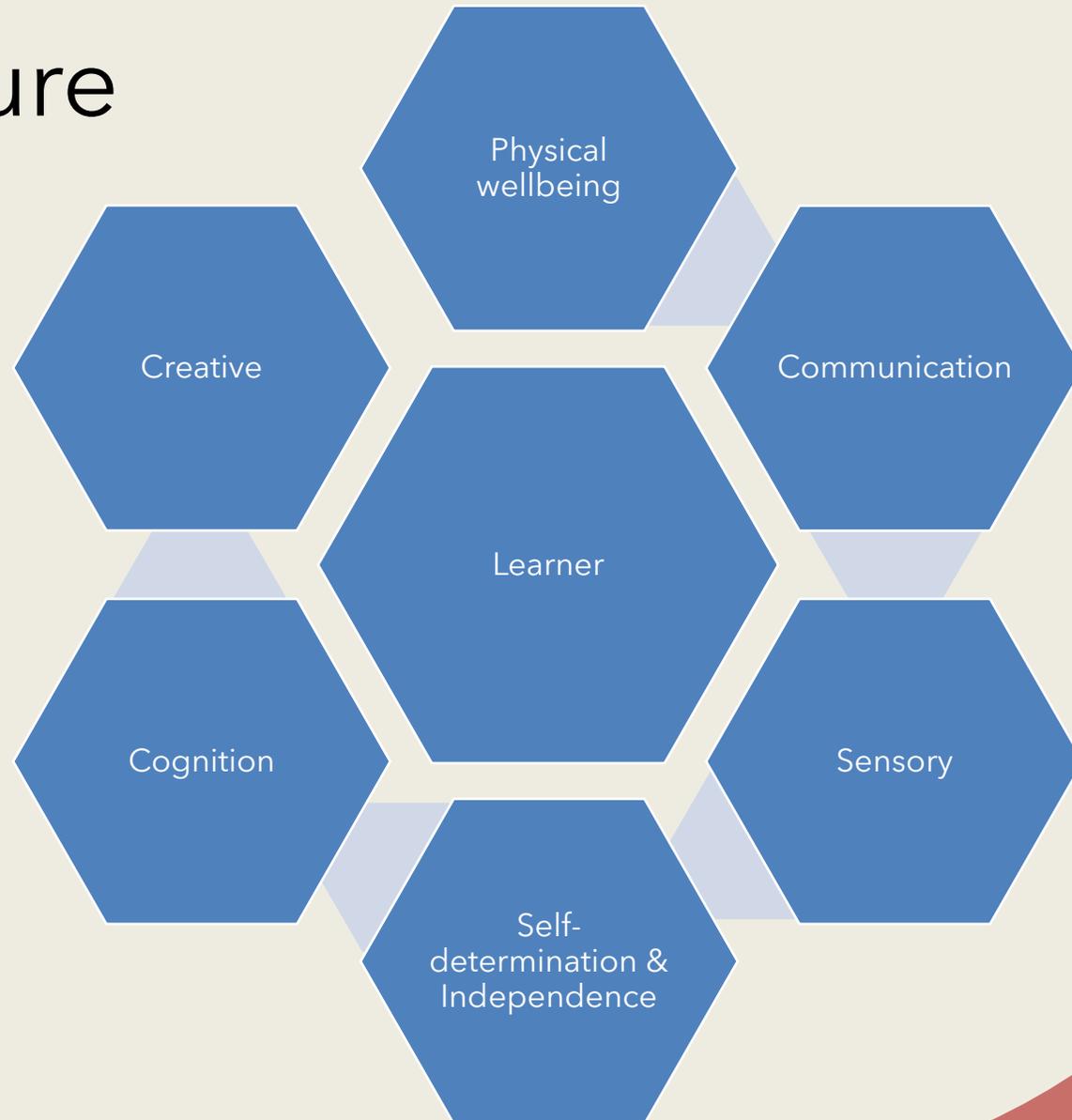
Curriculum content

- *Generally speaking, for (learners) with the most complex needs such as those with PMLD and some with SLD, we do not believe in a broad and balanced curriculum. Our view is that (educational establishments) do not have time to offer all (learners) an experiential curriculum - for the most complex (learners) let's focus on the things that matter. This is why we advocate a very different personalised curriculum for some learners, which might be broad and balanced when we can make it so, but above all, is relevant.*
- Imray and Hinchcliffe, 2014, p46



Curriculum Structure

Our curriculum is being delivered through a **holistic curriculum** which is learner centred.





Basic Principles

Classroom organisation

Following good practice for learners with PMLD, here at Melland High School we organise our days around specific Class Groups taught by the same core staff of Teachers and teaching assistants, and seeks to hold these Class Groups together over time. This ensures that strong relationships, trust and consistency continue to be central. We recognise that deep and meaningful knowledge of each individual student, which can only be gained overtime, is an essential part of the long term teaching and learning experience

Transitions

We are developing communication passports to support students who cannot easily communicate, by helping them to have some control and to share important information. They will help with transitions from one teacher to another, one setting to another and with across home and school.

Active citizens

We ensure that our students with PMLD are active citizens within the school community and actively (rather than passively) mix with their peers as much as they are able. With this in mind, each day students are members of a tutor group attending morning registration and being part of tutor group time or options groups in key stage 4. They are inclusive teaching and learning sessions and inclusive opportunities are consistently planned for through sports days, mental health days, careers events etc.

Process based learning

Learning for those with a PMLD is best done holistically, that is, as a complete and self-contained exercise, rather than as a series of separate skills chained together (WAG 2006). Process Based Learning provides a platform for varied and disparate learning to take place, and individual progression may only be recognised in retrospect (Imray and Colley 2017)

Relationships

At Melland High School we place the student at the centre of the curriculum, listening to each student's behaviours and what this might tell us about their interests, motivations and potential for engagement.



Basic Principles

Making connections

Student's interests and motivators at the heart of the curriculum, otherwise it would be all too easy for staff make the learner powerless, voiceless, not in control of their own lives.

Repetition and variation

A student with PMLD will probably have to repeat something hundreds or even thousands of times before it is remembered and therefore, we have to be mindful to not give the learner too much variation.

Language

We must use language carefully; we must use language that is appropriate to the situation and the learner; we must use language repetitively so that learners have many opportunities to understand meanings in real and concrete ways (EQUALS P.16).

Routines

consistency in routines allows learners to build upon previous learning experiences

Alertness

We have to both alert to when our learners are most alert, and sympathetic when they're struggling



Learning Opportunities

A weekly time table of learning opportunities

The learning opportunities are not prescriptive allowing for flexibility when planning

There are a wide range of learning opportunities (see next slide)

Learning opportunities can be selected from a menu to ensure the activities and learning can be personalised to an individual or group according to their learning needs

All of these may be covered over a student's school career





What difference is our curriculum making?

- **Summative assessment** is ipsative. This means progress is based on the students own starting points and the steps of progress they make.
- **Formative Assessment** happens all the time. It informs everything we do. We always ask why are we doing this and is it meaningful and relevant. It is a written assessment, using observation and narrative to build a story of progress.
- These processes are underpinned by rigorous monitoring. This ensures the aims, principles and learning opportunities are having impact on the learning of students
- Skills, knowledge, pedagogy, practice - these are what we should measure and gather evidence on. It is important to monitor and triangulate this information to ensure we make judgements about the impact of the Pre-formal curriculum.



Using Routes for Learning in supporting EHC plan outcomes

- Long term outcomes are developed with parents and other professionals
- Long term outcomes may be guided by Routes for Learning milestones
- Long term outcomes guided by Routes for Learning are identified on the student's EHC plan
- Evidence is collected over the year through the **Evidence for Learning** app
- Teachers collect evidence over time to capture progress



Mapping progress against Priority next steps

Priority next steps are aligned to the EHC plan long term outcomes

Priority next steps (or learning intentions) are identified as short term outcomes on the EHC plan

There are 3 priority next steps (or Learning Intentions) set for each student

Priority next steps are reviewed termly using the MAPP tool

Assessment of progress is made against the continuum of skills development using the four aspects of independence; fluency; maintenance and generalisation

Next steps (Learning Intentions) are displayed in the classroom

Evidence for Learning APP used to collect evidence against next steps and reports from EFL are used for judgements and moderation

Opportunities to moderate judgements made through progress meetings and alongside other PMLD teachers



Specialist Resources

Staff are able to utilise a range of specialist equipment such as:

Eye gaze technology

Evidence for Learning

Choose it maker 3

Range of early cognition software

Matrix maker

Monitoring of Impact

How do you monitor the Pre-formal curriculum?

Peer learning opportunities – joint lesson planning and delivery

Modelling, mentoring and coaching

Progress and multi-disciplinary meetings

Sharing good practice with wider PMLD community

Evidence of learning- use of Evidence for Learning APP

Summative assessment –Routes for Learning

Evidence of further study, research and development



Personal Development



Skills for life

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

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

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

