



Merstone School

**Teaching and Learning, Assessment and
Curriculum Intent, Implementation and Impact
Statements**

Handbook Overview



Merstone School

Teaching and Learning Policy

September 2025

Contents:

- 1. Aims**
- 2. Principles of teaching and learning**
- 3. Curriculum**
- 4. Curriculum and learning**
- 5. Learning and learning styles**
- 6. Learning – children learn best when**
- 7. Learning environment**
- 8. Teaching**
- 9. Therapeutic Interventions**
- 10. Assessment, recording and reporting**
- 11. Target setting**
- 12. Recording**
- 13. Educational Visits**
- 14. Parents and children**
- 15. Continual professional development**
- 16. Monitoring and evaluation**
- 17. Linked policies**



1. Aims:

At Merstone School, we are committed to high quality teaching and learning to raise the standards of achievements for all children.

We believe that children with additional needs must be given every opportunity to achieve their full potential, academically, socially and emotionally, and the quality of teaching and learning is crucial in supportive this.

This policy aims to explain the school's rationale for its approach to Teaching and Learning.

2. Principles of Teaching and Learning:

At Merstone School, we are committed to best practice arrangements for promoting the learning and well-being of children and young people with severe and complex learning difficulties. All our pupils, regardless of their strengths and challenges, race, cultural background, gender and sexual orientation, religious belief or disability, have an entitlement to the highest quality of education we can provide. We have a responsibility to adapt our teaching to ensure that all pupils are engaged in their learning, motivated and enabled to succeed.

We firmly believe that Teaching and Learning extends beyond the classroom, and subsequently recognise the many forms Teaching and Learning can take, along with the many different environments, both inside and outside the classroom in which they take place.

In order to maximise learning, three key areas need to be in place and effective: the curriculum and planning, the quality of teaching and the behaviour and attitudes of our children.



This ethos will be upheld by:

- 1.** Providing a supportive, positive, healthy, caring and safe environment, which has high expectations and where all members of the school community feel valued;
- 2.** Recognising the needs and aspirations of all individuals and provide opportunities for all children to make the best possible progress and attain the highest personal achievements;
- 3.** Providing a nurturing space for children to grow emotionally, morally and socially, promoting their self-esteem, mental health and emotional well-being;
- 4.** Ensuring children can develop as their communication, social skills and independence skills, within a broad, balanced, exciting and challenging curriculum;
- 5.** Providing a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, both inside and outside the classroom, which promotes high aspirations for all;
- 6.** Preparing our children for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life; providing them with the key which will open the doors to their future.

3. Curriculum:

Pebbles:

Merstone School provides a specialised nursery provision for pupils aged 2-4. Pebbles is an assessment nursery provision for pupil with and without an EHCP. Pebbles is designed in two parts, the morning group present with Severe Learning Difficulties, Autism and other learning difficulties. The afternoon group present with complex medical, profound and multiple learning difficulties. This grouping allows staff to provide a safe and secure learning environment, to support their assessments and also give them a caring and safe space to start their school journeys.

Objective:

Merstone School Pebbles class provides an Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and works closely with external professionals such as the NHS, Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists, Physiotherapists and more, to ensure pupils' needs are carefully planned and detailed in their EHCPs.



Pebbles is the beginning of a pupil's journey here at Merstone School, however, some pupils are assessed through EYFS tracking and Merstone School may not be able to meet their needs. If this occurs, pupils are referred to the suitable provision for their learning needs.

Pebbles provides a rich, play based and holistic curriculum, focusing on helping pupils develop basic literacy, math and PSHE skills. We focus on the seven principles of EYFS:

- Communication and language
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Physical development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Every child is a unique child and we focus on supporting pupils to be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We provide enabling environments with a teacher and support from trained EYFS staff, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. The Pebbles class, take part in lessons in the main Merstone School building, for Swimming, Soft Play and also work closely with the Moonstones team throughout the year. This enables pupils to become familiar with the school environment and also build relationships with the Moonstones team.

Moonstones:

The Moonstones class is our reception class which provides pupils aged 4-5 with an EYFS curriculum. Pupils in this class usually transition from Pebbles to Moonstones, however, referrals are accepted if suitable and if there is a space available.

Objective:

Moonstones is a further, internal assessment year, where pupils are closely supported by the EYFS curriculum and Learning Through Play Assessment system. We carefully monitor pupil's progress and social development, to best decide which Pathway they will go on from year 1 upwards. Where suitable, pupils who meet the criteria for the Ruby Pathway will complete their reception year in Ruby 1, as this is best for their learning, personal development and safety.

We continue to focus on the 7 areas of the EYFS curriculum, learning in a continuous provision environment, where pupils become more accustomed to the routines and systems in place here at Merstone School.

- Communication and language
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Physical development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design



Ruby Pathway:

The Ruby Pathway is in place to meet the needs of pupils who present with a range of Profound and Multiple Learning difficulties, often alongside complex medical needs from Reception to year 10.

The Ruby Pathway provides a curriculum which is sensory and communication based, and has a high focus on engagement. Pupils in the Rubies department follow the Merstone Learning Through Play assessment route. There are currently three Ruby classes, all of which are grouped vertically but taking into consideration their stages of learning and chronological age. Pupils in this department require a high level of adult support, both for their learning needs and also for their personal care. They are likely to need sensory stimulation and a curriculum broken down into very small steps. Some pupils communicate by gesture, eye pointing or symbols, others by very simple language. The Ruby Pathway has a high focus on individual needs, and pays a lot of attention to the physical, social and emotional development of each pupil. A key feature of this curriculum pathway is to establish positive relationships with familiar adults, to explore the world around them using their sensory and physical capabilities to the full and to establish behaviours through which they can communicate with other people.

The curriculum in the Rubies department is delivered through a thematic unit approach to support the delivery of a vibrant and motivating curriculum for all learners; focusing on developing pupil's understanding of the world around them, social interactions and relationships. We have a half termly topic based unit, but not all learning activities will follow the topic. The units have been selected to enhance the learning experiences of this unique group of learners and deliver all aspects of the curriculum at a level appropriate to their cognitive ability. Throughout their educational career and beyond, the progress learners with PMLD can make lies on a broad continuum from a first response to stimuli to exerting autonomy. The activities in these thematic units offer learners an opportunity to master and generalise prerequisite skills for learning. They give learners exciting opportunities to participate in and enjoy the learning process, while using and extending their individual skills. The Ruby Pathway will form a clear pathway for individuals to the Diamonds 1 class in our 14-19 provision.

Sapphire Pathway:

The Sapphire Pathway is provided for pupils' year 1 to year 10. This specific pathway is provided for pupils who demonstrate our general level of academic and social ability, both together forming an in-formal system of learning. Pupils in this department have various severe learning difficulties, Autism and ADHD, and communicate mostly through gesture, symbols and some verbal communication.

There are currently three Sapphire classes, all of which are grouped vertically, but taking into consideration their stages of learning and chronological age. We provide a comprehensive offer, all of which are linked to various scheme of work relevant to each subject area. The Sapphire Pathway offers a broad and balanced curriculum, rich environments, focused on pupil's individual



needs. The Sapphire Pathway follows a thematic curriculum, where pupils are immersed in a topic which allows them to be familiar with the theme and complete learning in all areas of the curriculum.

The Sapphire Pathway will form a clear pathway for individuals to the Diamonds 2 or 3 class in our 14-19 provision.

Emerald Pathway:

The Emerald Pathway is provided for pupils' year 1 to year 10. This specific pathway is provided for pupils who demonstrate a higher level of academic and social ability, both together forming a semiformal system of learning. Pupils in this department have various severe learning difficulties, Autism and ADHD, and communicate mostly through use of gesture, symbols and verbal communication.

There are currently three Emerald classes, all of which are grouped vertically but taking into consideration their stages of learning and chronological age. We provide a comprehensive offer, all which are linked to various schemes of work relevant to each subject area. The Emerald Pathway offers a broad and balanced curriculum, rich environments, focused on pupil's individual needs. The Emerald Pathway follows a more traditional curriculum, providing:

5 Mathematical lessons	4 English Lessons	Phonics daily	2 P.E Lessons
2 Science Lessons	1 R.E Lesson	1 PSHE Lesson (supported by other aspects of PSHE learning at other times of the day)	1 Humanities
1 Art or DT Lesson (biweekly)	1 Computing or Music (bi-weekly)	Educational Visits	1 Assembly
1 SMILE			

The Emerald Pathway will form a clear pathway for individuals to the Diamonds 2 or 3 class in our 14-19 provision.

Topaz Pathway:

The Topaz Pathway begins at year 1 to year 10 and offers a specific approach for pupils with a diagnoses of Autism. Around 70% of pupils have a diagnoses of Autism, however, this department is for pupils who present with higher needs and require a specific approach to their learning, the support they receive and their learning environments.

The Topaz Pathway has a high adult support ratio, which provides pupils with the much needed support they require, this high level of adult support provides them with a trained adult who can support not only their learning, but pupil's sensory needs, regulation needs and also their engagement. The Topaz Pathway follows a thematic curriculum, which allows pupils to be immersed in a topic and provides consistency and focus. The themes which pupils in the topaz department will take part in are varied and allow for pupils to be immersed in a sensory, task



specific and life skills focused learning environment. This supports them to work on specific areas of their EHCP/IEP targets, communication, emotional regulation, and accepting support. The Topaz Pathway uses the SCERTS model, this approach is in place to support pupils learning and to develop meaningful ways to connect with others. The SCERTS model is a framework of assessment and intervention that can be applied in any natural setting or context, including educational settings and the home. Within lessons, the TEACCH structure will be implemented, aiding pupils to understand their environment and work as independently as possible. By focusing on the child, their skills, interests and needs TEACCH provides a flexibility to teaching that allows the environment, sequencing and predictability to support individual tasks and understanding the concept of finished.

The Topaz Pathway will lead onto the Diamonds 1 class, where pupils continue their journey, focusing on life skills, sensory accredited courses such as ASDAN and ASCENTIS and also accessing the community more, to transfer skills into the real world.

Diamonds Pathway:

The Diamond department at Merstone School caters for students aged 14 – 19 years. Students in our Diamond department have a range of needs, to ensure we allow all students to have access to a curriculum that suits individual needs our department consists of 3 classes. Diamond 1 class supports our students who have sensory and complex learning needs. Diamond 2 class supports our students who require a curriculum that requires a hands on practical approach to learning and our Diamond 3 class supports our students that are working at a higher academic level and require a more structured 'work' based environment. We appreciate the need for all students to feel they are integrated in our department so ensure we, as a department, join together as a whole department. Joint activities take place during SMILE activities each week, Star assembly each week where we all come together to share achievements that have happened over the week or term and we also ensure students have an opportunity to enjoy social time together at break times and lunch times.

Much of our curriculum in the Diamond department has been designed to support the students as they prepare for adulthood and life after Merstone School. Our aim is to ensure we teach and embed many of the necessary skills our students will need to become active and happy members of their community. Our curriculum is built using a range of ASDAN Towards Independence modules, some of our lessons are taken from the Equals scheme of work and some of our students in the Diamond 2 and 3 class will also take part in Ascentis exams. Much of our work is collected and internally moderated as students' progress through our department and is then sent off for external moderation when the students reach the end year 14. The units have been selected to enhance the learning experiences of the students and deliver all aspects of the curriculum at a level appropriate to their cognitive ability lessons are planned to ensure students are given exciting opportunities to participate in and enjoy the learning process, while using and extending their individual skills.



4. Curriculum and Learning and Merstone School:

All children joining Merstone School will have an EHCP identifying specific severe and profound learning needs, suggested strategies and essential provision; staff will review the records available in preparation. On Entry, baseline assessments take place in all areas of the curriculum to enable staff to provide the most effective style of grouping and teaching.

Many children may have gaps in their learning and intensive support will be provided by specialist services, both internal and external to ensure that the provision provided daily is in place to support the child's learning journey.

Work is carefully differentiated in order to meet the individual needs of children and regular assessment ensures continuity and progression. Each child has individually tailored position expectations for achievement, ensuring that they are challenged appropriately and frequently experience success.

5. Learning and Learning Styles:

At Merstone School, we recognise that children learn in a wide variety of different ways, and respond most effectively to a huge array of stimuli.

In order to ensure that the needs of each pupil are addressed and that everyone has the best opportunity to succeed, it is our expectation that teachers use a variety of materials, activities and locations to facilitate learning.

Examples include, but are not limited to;

- Investigation and problem solving;
- Exploration;
- Specialist strategies and approaches such as, TEACCH, PECS, Sensology, Attention Autism, TASSELS, Tac Pac, liquid learning and Sensory stories;
- Research and finding out;
- Group work and or paired work;
- Independent work;
- Whole-class work;
- Asking and answering both open and closed questions;
- Use of ICT;
- Visual and or Auditory Learning (television, film and audio clips,)
- Repetition and or chorsing;
- Songs and or dance/movement routines;
- Visits to places of educational interest;
- The use of guest speakers and external professionals demonstrating and talking about events, jobs, religious or cultural celebrations;



- Specialist external groups such as Immersive Theatre, Amber Project, Solihull Music Services;
- Role-Play;
- Experimenting;
- Practical activities;
- Creative thinking;
- Links to the local environment;
- Work experience

6. Children Learn Best When...

We believe that all children thrive when pedagogy is age and understanding appropriate. Staff offer pupils personalised support with consistency and high expectations. We ensure that the pupils feel valued and cared for, safe and secure.

We believe that children learn best when:

- They are safe, happy and alert
- They are curious, interested and involved, and their learning is enjoyable
- They clearly understand the purpose of the task/the learning content
- They are actively involved, making choices and taking responsibility in their learning
- Staff empower them to work with independence (as much as possible) to make meaningful and informed choices about their learning
- They receive praise for both effort and achievements
- Their learning environments is well-organised, and resources are easily accessed
- Their tasks are differentiated and personalised
- Their learning is built on existing knowledge and experience – clearly defined sequential, small steps
- They have clearly defined and accessible targets
- They are given an opportunity to flourish and be their best selves
- Staff take a child-centred and holistic approach to each individual, nurturing their talents and believing in their ability to succeed.

7. Learning Environment

We take pride in all areas of the learning environment at Merstone School, both indoors and outdoors. We ensure that effective planning and organisation takes place to maximise opportunities.

Classrooms are resourced, providing stimulation and purpose, with a consistent approach to displays presented in both classrooms and corridors across the school.



In addition:

- Resources are easily accessible
- Reading areas are comfortable and inviting; Areas for therapy and play are suitably resourced.
- Excellence is celebrated in displays around the school. These include all curriculum areas, pupil voice and behaviour and expectations
- Key displays around the school include British Values, Total Communication, safeguarding, a love of reading and Life Long Learning
- Allocation spaces for age – appropriate restorative conversations and processes are well-resourced, calm and welcoming spaces.

8. Teaching:

All staff, irrespective of position in school, are expected to display creativity, flexibility and patience in their approach.

Strategies take account of and include:

- Individual needs, including physical and sensory
- Small group and whole class teaching
- Prior knowledge and learning
- Continuity and progression
- Effective use of support staff
- Opportunities to process, digest and reflect
- A variety of questioning techniques
- Differentiation
- Modelling
- Assessment of and for learning

We acknowledge that effective teaching offers opportunities for effective learning, and subsequently would cater for a variety of learning styles and encompass a diverse range of activities.

9. Therapeutic Interventions

To support a child's wider and personal development, Merstone school operates an internal and external interventions system which supports pupils based on their individual needs. Interventions are based on referrals, along with Nuture UK based tools and led by trained staff or staff who are overseen by a specialist. Merstone is proud of our interventions programme and ensures that pupils are supported to develop holistically in a proactive



approach. Often our support through interventions has a large impact on learning and pupil's development across the entire school.

At Merstone School, we are currently able to offer:

- Music therapy
- Lego therapy
- Books Beyond Words Intervention
- Emotional Literacy Support Assistance
- Learning mentor support
- Nuture UK approach
- Rebound therapy
- Regulate to Communicate approaches supporting Sensory Diet
- Weekly SMILE well-being time
- Grief counselling
- MHFA intervention

10. Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Merstone School believe in a collaborative approach: teachers, trusted adults, therapists, and other professionals are all involved in monitoring progress. Ongoing formative assessment is used to guide the progress of individual children through each lesson by identifying what each child has learned, can do, and supporting them to correct and improve and identifying the next stage in their learning.

Half termly teacher assessments are made in all relevant areas of the curriculum and used to inform subsequent planning. The use of teacher assessment is essential in ensuring that pupils, external professionals and parents/carers are kept up to date with progress and achievements. These are recorded in various ways, but mainly through our internal assessment system Earwig.

Assessments may take the form of:

- Marking as per each departments marking policy
- Individual questioning, answers and discussions
- Video and photographic recording alongside annotations
- Observations
- Specific tasks for individual children
- Self and peer assessment

11. Target Setting

Based on formative, summative, and ongoing teacher assessments, individual pupil targets are set on a termly basis.



The number of targets will vary according to each pupil's needs but typically averages around three per term. To support this process, the AET Target Setting Tool is used by teachers and support staff to identify a pupil's primary area of need and plan an individual target designed to develop this skill throughout the school day.

These targets are then shared with parents to enable the same skill to be practised at home and in a variety of other settings, ensuring consistency and embedding of learning. We believe that sharing all targets with families is essential to promote a collaborative approach to each child's development.

12. Recording

Earwig is used as our main assessment system. Earwig offers personalised SEND assessment frameworks suitable for each pathway at Merstone.

Earwig is used from EYFS through to 14-19. Electronic records of progress are kept for every individual child and provides support for teachers to assess against. Each assessment system is bespoke to each pathway and is used in conjunction with children's EHCP targets as well as their IEP targets. These provide short term and long term targets which are also used to provide assessment personalised to each child.

Records are kept securely at Merstone school during the child's time here with us, and shared with future colleges as necessary when they leave.

13. Educational Visits

The use of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum is important as a method of enhancing teaching and learning. These occur throughout the school to widen children's experiences and support learning across a range of subject areas.

At Merstone school we aim to complete educational visits or have specialist visitors in school every other week. This specialist approach ensures that learning is not only happening in the classrooms, but is transferred into real world scenarios that support transferring skills we learn into the wider world.

14. Parents and children

Parents are encouraged to support their child's learning by:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly,
- Ensuring that their child arrives on time and brings any necessary equipment;
- Providing support for their child in consultation with school staff
- Participating in discussions concerning their child's progress and attainment;
- Ensuring early contact with school to discuss any issues that may arise

Children are encouraged to support the school's aims by:



- Attending school each day and be punctual;
- Coming to school with a positive attitude and readiness to learn
- Conducting themselves thoughtfully and communicating any worries or concerns, where possible

Taking increased responsibility for their own learning, based on needs and age appropriateness.

15. Continuous Professional Development

Although Merstone School is a small school, we are in the privileged position of being on site with Forest Oak School. We are subsequently able to work collaboratively as a much bigger team to further develop our knowledge, skills and understanding, and in turn enhance the provision for the children in both our schools.

Staff within Merstone School and across both schools, work together collaboratively to develop policies and improve schemes of work, assessment processes, teaching and learning and resources. All staff support each other as part of continuing professional development in order to enhance the provision for all pupils.

Peer observations, learning walks, class drop in's, performance management and formal monitoring are used to develop individual staff performance. Senior staff coordinate CPD programmes across the schools, as well as working closely with partner special schools, the Local Authority and external providers.

Staff are encouraged to be pro-active and take ownership of their own professional development, and are supported to further their knowledge and understanding in areas of specific interest or need within their class. This in turn improves the quality and learning provision at Merstone School.

16. Monitoring and Evaluation

Formal and informal monitoring takes place at least once per term. This may take the form of peer observations, learning walks, class drop in's, book scrutinies, child interviews/discussions.

Moderation meetings are held at various times each half term and involve both internal and external meetings. This allows Merstone School to ensure that work is marked and assessed at a correct level and also improve staff's own assessment judgements. Our Assistant Head Teacher with the responsibility for assessment evaluates and reports on children's progress termly, and uses these findings to further inform teachers, subject leaders, SLT and also parents.

Our Assistant Head Teacher also provides a report for the governing body.

17. Linked Policies



- Curriculum Overview
- Child Specific Assessment in EYFS □ Foundation Assessment info 2024
- Departmental Marking Policies
- Accreditation Policy
- Educational Visits
- Attendance Policy
- Home School Agreement
- DFE Teachers' Professional Standards
- Keeping Children Safe in Education



Assessment Policy

November 2025

At Merstone we firmly believe in identifying and addressing the needs of each individual pupil and in recognising achievement at every level of success, no matter how big or small the steps of progress. We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement.

The diverse range of assessment techniques used at Merstone are relevant to each department, and alongside recording, reporting, moderation and target setting structures, enable even the smallest step of achievement to be evidenced appropriately and celebrated.

Rationale:

- Assessment is a crucial and integral part of the teaching and learning process.
- It is a process of gathering information, enabling us to ascertain each individual pupil's understanding and skill level, monitor and evidence progress, identify next steps and inform future planning.



Purpose of assessment:

Why do we assess?

- To recognise and celebrate individual achievement, acknowledged and rewarded by praise, tokens, certificates and awards
- To ascertain what pupils have learnt
- To identify individual needs and intervention strategies
- To inform planning and next steps
- To support transition as a pupil moves throughout the school

- To provide school self-evaluation information to support raising standards
- To inform future yearly action plans and termly targets for pupils
- To monitor progress against targets at designated times of the year, including reporting to parents and the Local Authority
- To standardise through moderation assessment across key stages for subject leader portfolios
- To assess progress and plan appropriate intervention strategies for individual pupils
- To meet specific individual needs – learning, medical, emotional, social and sensory
- To plan for staff training needs and resources

Cycle and organisation of assessment:

When, what and how do we assess?

Whole school processes that are in place across the departments:

- Pupils are base-lined on entry to our educational setting
- Progress towards yearly action plan targets are monitored and assessed termly and reported at Annual Review
- Evidence collated for each pupil and provided for subject leader files
- Internal class team moderation and subject leader for external scrutiny
- Earwig assessments completed at least half-termly for all subjects/areas of learning in all strands recognising assessments at emerging, developing and embedded attainment levels
- Photographic evidence during lessons collated for Earwig evidence
- Workbooks for evidence annotated by staff
- TEACCH tasks recorded and assessed for independent work and next 'new' skill to be taught
- Provision for delivery of Speech and Language/Communication targets
- Provision for Reading interventions

Foundation stage:

- RBA baseline assessment in completed within 6 weeks for Reception aged pupils.



- Learning through play assessments are completed termly by class teacher
- One formal moderated observation per term to include photo/work sample, descriptor, witness statement and moderation by colleague
- All 7 areas of learning are assessed
- Post-its used for initial observations and matched to Merstone Learning through play or Foundation Profile statements and added onto online learning journals (Earwig)

Key stage 1:

- Pupils entered for Phonics testing or dis-applied in consultation with parents

Sapphire, Topaz and Emerald 2:

- Pupil Writing evidence may be required for LA moderation

Ruby, Sapphire, Topaz and Emerald 3:

- Part of the assessment process comes through accreditation opportunities which are internally and externally moderated for ASDAN transition challenge (sensory, introduction and progression)

Diamonds department:

- Assessment through accreditation opportunities internally and externally moderated for ASDAN Towards Independence.
- Pupils in Diamonds 2 and 3 will also take part in ASCENTIS examinations where suitable for the individual learner.

Merstone School has a separate Marking and Homework policy integral to assessment.

‘The overriding principle of good assessment is that it should be clearly tied to its intended purpose. There are three main forms of assessment: in-school formative assessment, which is used by teachers to evaluate pupils’ knowledge and understanding on a day to day basis and to tailor teaching accordingly; in-school summative assessment, which enables schools to evaluate how much a pupil has learned at the end of a teaching period; and nationally standardised summative assessment, which is used by the Government to hold schools to account.’

Final report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels – September 2015.

Formative assessment:



- Merstone School has adopted Earwig assessment tool as the school electronic system for recording progress in all key phases in school
- Progress can be captured on the iPad or PC and evidenced electronically for each individual pupil with appropriate comments on Earwig
- Pupil workbooks and evaluative comments from all staff demonstrate the learning journey across the curriculum

Summative assessment:

- Tracking and monitoring of targets inform intervention planning when necessary and appropriate breadth and personalisation of curriculum delivery

School standards:

- Merstone School is part of an extended Local Authority Moderation programme which meets termly according to a set programme of subject specific moderation
- The moderation group work together on initiatives to drive forward school improvement around assessment
- Assessment is shared with parents regularly, particularly at Annual Review to track progress over the last academic year in the core subjects: English (including reading and writing); Maths; Science; Computing and PSD/PSHE.
- Assessment influences the next steps which inform the yearly action plan targets for discussion at Annual Review of Statement of Educational Need or the Education, Health and Care Plan
- Pupils are entered as appropriate for any nationally recognised tests such as Phonics testing
- The Governing Body data scrutiny group challenge and question target setting, progress and outcomes
- The end of key phase data is summarised for access on the school website



Merstone School Internal Quality Assurance Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that:

- internal moderation practices are valid and reliable, cover all tutors/assessors and meet the requirements of the awarding organisation
- the internal moderation procedures are fair and open
- accurate and detailed records are kept of internal moderation decisions

Merstone School will:

- ensure that all assessment activities are valid, appropriate and fit for purpose
- apply a strategy that will provide a representative sample across all tutor/assessors
- create a plan of internal moderation in relation to all assessment activities
- define, maintain and support effective internal moderation roles, including the provision of training where required
- provide standardised documentation to support internal moderation activity and recordkeeping
- ensure that feedback and outcomes of internal and external moderation support future development of good practice
- carry out an annual evaluation and review of internal moderation policy and procedures

Monitoring and Evaluating

All accredited courses will be continuously monitored, evaluated and developed during time allocated for departmental meetings and school Inset and by the Accreditation Manager. Staff will attend support meetings and network with other similar schools to ensure they are aware of changes and have opportunity to see good practise (ASDAN). Student achievement will be monitored annually.

Moderation

All accreditation for awards is centre-assessed and 'samples' are externally moderated. The school is committed to attending at least one moderation meeting annually for each award (ASDAN). Qualifications are internally moderated and then sent by post for external moderation (ASDAN and Ascentis).

The assessor will usually be the student's teacher or support assistant. They must be familiar with the Evidence requirements for each module.

The assessor's role is to judge evidence against module requirements or completed exam and to decide whether the student has met the requirements.

Further detail is identified in Centre Handbooks for ASDAN or Ascentis.

It is a requirement of all awarding bodies that internal moderation is completed before modules are entered for external moderation. It is the process that checks assessment decisions within a centre.

Moderation at Merstone aims to check

- The evidence meets the requirements of each module or unit



- Students are being given opportunity to achieve modules/units consistent with their capabilities and are not disadvantaged in any way.

The internal moderator is someone from the centre who has knowledge and awareness of requirements needed to meet the awarding body's criteria. They must not internally moderate any evidence they have assessed.

The centre co-ordinator has the responsibility and accountability to ensure that the centre consistently carries out accurate assessments.

This person will sample all Asdan Awards and other Qualifications termly.

Staff in each of the Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 have ½ termly meetings at which the main item is 'accreditation Matters'.

At the start of each term the focus is: planning and identification of modules and exams to be delivered that term. Staff and resources identified. Key people are allocated responsibilities for ensuring recording and the end of the module completes evidence gathering.

The final session of all termly modules is given over to student review.

Termly targets for staff teams are agreed. The aim of these targets is to make delivery of the programmes and evidence collecting more effective.

The second meeting of each term focuses on moderation and updates from Regional meetings (ASDAN).

Samples of student's work is brought to these meetings and the staff verify each other's assessments (ASDAN).

Student's evidence folders are reviewed against the Internal Moderation forms.

Work can only be submitted for accreditation following this internal review process.

These meetings are 30 minutes in length.

External Moderation

External moderation of a centre's assessments decisions is achieved through sampling. On the basis of the sample taken, the External Moderator will either agree with the centre's assessment decisions or disagree with the centre's assessment decisions in relation to particular skill areas (ASDAN).

All Ascentis examinations will be sent for external moderation a maximum of 2 exam dates to be sent each academic year, external moderators will decide if each student has passed their exam as well as giving feedback regarding internal measures, paperwork and other information to ensure all work remains at a high standard.

Appeals

All appeals will be responded to; relevant work will be internally moderated by a second Moderator who is a member of SLT. They will be required to provide a written statement to support the outcome. See relevant accrediting body's Handbook for further support and information.

Signed: Paula Morbey

Date: 20th September 2025



CONDUCT OF EXTERNAL ASSESSMENTS POLICY Conduct of Examinations

1. Each examination must be taken on the day and at the time as discussed with staff involved and pupils.
2. Exams must be printed out and stored in the exams locked cupboard until the exam is due to take place.
3. When a change is made to the decided starting time/ date for an examination it is the responsibility of the staff involved to ensure all are aware of the change and appropriate locations/ times are adjusted accordingly.

Instructions for conducting external examinations

1. Staff involved to ensure all exam papers are printed in advance and stored in the locked exam cupboard until required.
2. Staff involved to ensure all necessary paperwork is downloaded onto the Ascentis website and a hard copy is available to go along with the completed exam papers.
3. Staff involved to ensure a quiet, distraction free room with no supportive resources, is available for pupils to sit the exam.
4. Staff and pupils to be aware of evacuation procedures if necessary.
5. Once completed, staff involved to ensure papers are returned to the locked cupboard until they are marked and verified.

Learner preparation

Merstone staff involved in the delivery of the Ascentis exams must ensure that learners are:

1. Fully prepared to sit an external assessment (sample materials and past papers)
2. Are aware of what is expected from them.
3. Are aware of how they can remove themselves from the situation if they are finding the process difficult due to their SEN needs.
4. Are aware of our rules that we must follow when sitting and exam.
- 5.

Merstone Accreditation Pathways an introduction to upper school pathways

As pupils progress through upper school staff will use a variety of methods to ensure each pupil is placed on the correct pathway that will best support them and ensure they continue to make progress. This will include:

1. Previous and futures teachers and class staff meeting to discuss each pupil and the pathway that would best suit their needs.
2. End of year data.

Teachers and class staff will continue to monitor and assess pupils throughout the year. If at any point, it is felt that an alternative pathway would be more suitable then we will inform all involved and make any necessary changes.



Rubies 3 pathways

All pupils in our Rubies 3 department are introduced to accreditation whilst taking part in ASDAN Transition Challenge (sensory). This offers a developmental perspective for learners working at this academic level. This ASDAN programme allows for small steps of learning to be recognised and achievements to be celebrated. Pupils will study:

1. Communication and interaction
2. Cognition
3. Physical
4. Self-help and independence

Pupils will be required to complete at least five sections in each area in order to complete the programme and gain their gold certificate.

Sapphire 3 pathways

All pupils in our Sapphire 3 department are introduced to accreditation whilst taking part in ASDAN Transition Challenge (introduction and progression). This covers a range of statutory programmes of study for key stage 3 national requirements alongside activities which support the development of many skills required for adult living. Pupils will learn skills in the following areas:

1. Knowing how
2. Making choices
3. Feeling good
4. Moving forward
5. Taking the lead

Pupils will be required to complete at least 9 sections in each of the 5 sections in order to complete the programme and gain their gold certificate.



Emerald 3 pathways

All pupils in our Emerald 3 department are introduced to accreditation whilst taking part in ASDAN Transition Challenge (introduction and progression). This covers a range of statutory programmes of study for key stage 3 national requirements alongside activities which support the development of many skills required for adult living. Pupils will learn skills in the following areas:

6. Knowing how
7. Making choices
8. Feeling good
9. Moving forward
10. Taking the lead

Pupils will be required to complete at least 9 sections in each of the 5 sections in order to complete the programme and gain their gold certificate.

Diamond 1 Pathways

Pupils who enter our Diamonds department will continue to develop skills which will enable them to lead a full and exciting life when they leave Merstone School. In our Diamonds department, we work hard to develop our independent life skills and prepare us for adult hood.

Towards Independence: sensory modules

Towards Independence provides a framework of activities to develop and accredit personal, social, work-related and independent living skills, much of our curriculum is based around Towards Independence.

Pupils working in Diamonds 1 will take part in a wide range of sensory based modules, all of which can be found on our curriculum timetable.

Life skills Challenge

To support the development of independent life skills, our pupils in Diamonds 1 will also take part in Life Skills Challenges. These are short modules which have been mapped to the four Preparing for Adulthood pathways and cover subject areas such as English, mathematics and PSHE.



Diamonds 2 pathways

Pupils in Diamonds 2 will take part in a range of externally moderated exams and modules. These include:

Towards Independence: introduction level

Much of our KS5 curriculum is based around Towards Independence; pupils will take part in a variety of modules which will enable them to build up their own personal profile. All modules can be found on the curriculum timetable.

Life Skills Challenge: pre entry level

These short modules enable pupils to work towards entry level; these are evidence based modules which will be sent off to be externally moderated before pupils receive their certificate.

Pre entry Ascentis

Pupils working within Diamonds 2 will also take part in pre entry/ entry level 1 Ascentis examinations to develop their English reading, writing and speaking and listening skills and their maths skills. These are formal exams which take place throughout the year; staff will gather evidence and pupils will take part in a short exam when they are ready which will be sent for external moderation. Staff will discuss individual pupils and decisions will be made on a pupil specific basis.

Diamonds 3 pathways Towards Independence: progression

Pupils in Diamonds 3 working at a slightly higher academic level will also take part in a wide range of Towards Independence modules, these will be delivered at a slightly higher level and pupil's evidence requirements will reflect this. Evidence will be collected during the four years spent in our Diamonds department before being internally moderated and then sent for external moderation. When complete and moderated pupils will receive their certificates.

Life skills Challenge: entry level

Pupils will also take part in a range of life skills challenges to support their development of subject areas such as English, mathematics and PSHE. These are listed on the curriculum.

Ascentis

Pupils will also take part in Ascentis examinations. These are externally moderated exams which take place at the end of each term. Pupils will take part in a range of English and maths based exams and depending on their academic level will complete exams from entry level 1 up to level 2. Staff will monitor progress throughout the term and will put pupils forward for exams when they feel they are ready.



Merstone School English – Intent and Implementation

Intent

Our intent is simple, to provide pupils with an engaging, supportive and progressive curriculum that is suitable and adapted to meet individual needs. We aim to support pupils to achieve their maximum potential and develop skills that will support them in later life. Taking into consideration each individual pupil and his or her needs, we will provide a progressive and suitable programme of English education. At Merstone School we have developed a bespoke curriculum that aims to support learners who will develop a love for reading, literacy skills and communication skills for later life. We have established a rich, relevant and purposeful educational experience that allows us to develop the whole child and meet the needs and interests of individual pupils. Our curriculum is tailored by our approach and support to pupil's needs and this provides learning that has local, national and international dimensions. Our curriculum supports pupils to build on their learning, progressively supporting them to achieve which is celebrated however big or small. We support learners to experience, engage with and develop interests in a broad and balanced curriculum from ages 2 – 19 alongside their peers and staff who are excellent role models at all times, both as individuals and as avid readers!

Implementation

How English looks across our school...

At Merstone School English is an essential part of the curriculum. It is a part of every subject and area of learning. The teaching of English enables effective communication to take place. Through the development of our pupils' confidence and communication skills we are giving them the broadest, deepest and richest experience of life they can possibly have. Merstone follows recommendations from the National Curriculum for English and has adapted this document to meet the needs of our pupils. We believe that it is important to promote a positive attitude towards English amongst all our pupils in order to develop self-confidence and a sense of achievement, celebrating success in English, and adopting a total communication and child centred approach to learning where pupils have access to their own means of communication including PECS and AAC throughout the day.

The teaching of English, as a discreet subject, covers:

- Reading (For more information see Reading and Phonics at Merstone School)
- Writing
- Composition: through organisation of ideas and events, vocabulary and sequencing skills
- Planning and Drafting: developing and using strategies to aid their planning and organisation of their writing
- Punctuation: Use and understanding of simple punctuation
- Spelling: patterns, strings, letter sounds and sound-symbol relationship
- Speaking and Listening
- Developing skills in listening to others



- Helping to sustain concentration
- Asking questions
- Taking into account their listeners needs

In particular, English offers pupils with learning difficulties opportunities to:

- develop the ability to respond, to listen and to understand
interact and communicate effectively with others in a range of
social situations
- make choices, obtain information, question and be actively involved in
decision making
- develop creativity and imagination
- have access to a wide range of literature to enrich and broaden their
experience.

Language and communication skills are essential for *all* our pupils and we recognise that the skills developed in English promote learning across the curriculum. We aim for our pupils to be able to express themselves creatively and imaginatively, and to communicate effectively both verbally and nonverbally with others in a range of social situations, appropriate to their levels and needs. In addition to this, a pupils' individual pupil Educational Health care plans (EHCs) may result in a dedicated programme of work used to address identified targets which are also reinforced where possible across the school day. Staff are trained in the use of a range of strategies including PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System), Makaton, Colourful Semantics, intensive interaction, shared attention strategies and the use of various electronic communication aids including switches and iPads. Throughout the day a range of alternative communication methods are used to support and encourage speech and language development. These are not used in isolation and a pupil may use several of these methods. These include PECS symbols, communication aids, Makaton, signing, communication books, objects or reference, AAC devices and on-body signing.

Merstone's English curriculum follows the National Curriculum requirements differentiated to the needs of our pupils and includes Communication (Speaking, Listening), Reading and Writing. Communication skills are key and pervade our curriculum through non-verbal methods (intensive interaction, objects of reference, photographs, pictures, symbols, Makaton signing) in addition to verbal speaking and listening skills. Visual clues support pupils' understanding. Individual and small group sessions are planned to suit individual pupils.



Our Early Years team are dedicated to inspiring our young people and encouraging our pupils to have a love for books and to be competent communicators from an early age. We focus on developing communication skills throughout our learning, supporting pupils through a TOTAL communication approach to develop their ability to engage and respond to the world around them. Fun, enjoyment and learning through play creates an environment where books are used to as a gateway to a world of imagination where experiences lead our learning and knowledge. Our Early Years provision is skilfully structured, allowing students to access daily social, academic and communication intervention which targets the needs of each individual. Close links are made with the other classes, particularly our Moonstones class, allowing pupils to prepare for transition into a new learning environment.

In the Ruby and Topaz departments pupils experience multi-sensory storytelling at a greater depth, encouraging their engagement in literature in a way that is accessible to their needs. English and reading is delivered in small groups or on an individual basis, focusing on early communication skills, interaction and engagement. Lessons are delivered as part of a wider thematic approach. Pupils participate in lessons including sensory stories, communication, intensive interaction to develop their communication and early literacy skills.

In our Emerald and Sapphire departments, pupils have a more formal approach to English and reading, with lessons planned and delivered focusing on the development of particular English skills. In our primary classes these will also present with a multi-sensory dynamic as pupils begin their educational journeys in a more structured way than previously in the EYFS department. Pupils will engage in individual or small group reading activities as well as whole class activities using a focal text for the term.

When pupils enter our Diamonds department we place a lot of emphasis on preparing our young people for adulthood. Pupils will continue to take part in focused English lessons each week. Much of our English lessons in our Diamonds department will encourage pupils to use their English skills to develop their independence skills at an academic level which is appropriate for each individual pupil. Pupils will also take part in a range of external maths qualifications such as ASDAN life skills challenges, ASDAN Towards Independence modules and pupils working between pre entry and entry level 3 will also work towards their Ascentis examinations. When pupils reach key stage 5 they are no longer subject to the expectations of the National Curriculum but they continue to focus on a broad range of subjects including maths. This is to ensure that our students leave school at 19 years of age being as independent as possible in order to move on to the next stage of their life. Activities in the Diamonds department therefore reflect the age and changing needs of our students. This means that the curriculum is based on the teaching of functional skills with the aim of students being able to generalise and apply these in as many everyday contexts and in as many practical ways within the community as possible.



Reading and Phonics at Merstone School Reading is a complex skill with many components. At Merstone School we focus on the importance of laying firm foundations in this crucial area of the curriculum and apply a consistent, whole school approach to the teaching of reading, encouraging children to use a variety of strategies in their pursuit of meaning and taking into account individual skills and needs. Our aim is for all children to enjoy reading experiences at whatever level they are working at. For some children this will be to experience objects related to texts, stories and poems, others will develop the skills needed to be learners who read confidently and independently.

Phonics

Throughout lower school the Jolly Phonics scheme is used to support pupils working at a formal reading level, delivered through songs and actions this teaching strategy provides pupils with high levels of engaging multisensory systems. Cued articulation (which is a set of hand cues for teaching the individual sounds in a word) may also be used alongside this to support those who are not yet able to verbally create sounds, supporting the tangible “feel” of a sound, encouraging and supporting pupils’ production of phonetic sounds. Jolly Phonics continues to be used in smaller more tailored groups to support the reading skills of particular pupils in the Secondary Phase of the school who may need further support in reading, decoding and understanding written words. As the students’ progress further through their school careers so will their progress with their Phonics (if suitable) will also be supported to develop the necessary skills to access the environment and local community, this will be through practical / real life activities but also modules such as community skills. The staff team are aware of students’ individual learning and social needs and aim to provide their entitlement in an accessible and personalised way.

Reading

Our aim is for all children to enjoy reading experiences at whatever level they are working at. For some children this will be to experience objects related to texts, stories and poems, others will develop the skills needed to be learners who read confidently and independently.

The school aims to:

- To develop happy, healthy and curious learners who read confidently and independently
- To begin to develop lifelong enjoyment and pleasure in reading
- To enable children to access all areas of the curriculum
- To enable children to access, understand and begin to manage information □ To begin to understand the meaning of what is read to them and what they read
- To begin to respond to what they read; to say whether they like or don’t like it and why
- To begin to understand and respond to the feelings that words can arouse in us like happiness, sadness, anger
- To link on object to an experience or familiar place
- To experience objects related to texts, stories and poems



Where appropriate every day each child will be engaged in

- Planned speaking, listening, reading and writing activities which allow them to explore and practice their pre reading skills, phonic knowledge, blending and segmenting skills

Opportunities within continuous provision to develop pre reading and reading skills independently

- An interactive multi-sensory phonics session (Jolly Phonics)
- Shared reading and/or writing led by the teacher to demonstrate reading and writing strategies (including phonics) in a meaningful way

Through our differentiated provision all children have opportunities to enjoy reading at their own level. For some this will be through sensory stories with objects and experiences which help develop their awareness and understanding. For others it will be through a structured approach following the levels in Jolly Phonics to help them develop knowledge of phonics, segmenting and decoding sounds to understand the written word. For pupils that are unlikely to become confident readers of words there will be a greater emphasis on functional reading. This includes teaching pupils to recognise social sight vocabulary and symbols (name, days, and places of importance) as well as 'reading' using symbols.

Synthetic phonics:

We support the children's application of phonics through their reading by using the Jolly Phonics. Reading scheme. Synthetic phonics reading is taught initially by pupils learning all of the sounds from the 7 groups alongside a whole word approach is used to teach 'tricky words' which are not phonetically plausible or where a phonic approach is not best suited to an individual pupil. The levelled Jolly Phonics reading scheme is used for pupils once all sounds have been established, which allows pupils to read books using skills with phonics, pictures, patterned language, whole words and their own experiences.

Extension Reading Scheme (Dandelion Readers – Diamonds pupils only):

We have an extension reading scheme available for pupils in the Diamonds department who may remain working within a particular level of the synthetic scheme for a significant amount of time, or as an alternative for pupils who have learned to sight read words rather than to decode using synthetic phonics. There is a wider range of books within this scheme therefore it also provides opportunities for consolidating reading skills and texts which are more age appropriate for some of our older pupils.

Merstone Symbol Reading Scheme:

Merstone school have created our own symbolised reading scheme for our pupils who require the support of symbols to aid their reading.

The books in this scheme are organised according to word level, the first 45 high frequency words and use resources from the Symbols Making sense symbolised



reading books, Footlights 45 and Zed 45 words and Zed phase 2 and 3 words symbolised books created by Widgit.

The Merstone symbol reading scheme includes Makaton signing and comprehension sheets to ensure pupils' have a secure knowledge of not only being able to "read" a symbol, but to also understand the content of the book and therefore be able to read for meaning and purpose.

The scheme is used as an alternative for the school Jolly Phonics synthetic phonics based scheme, and accessed by pupils who are not yet able to develop their reading through text alone. Extension symbolised texts are available for pupils who complete the scheme but are unable to move onto text only stories.

At Merstone, we believe that all pupils should have access to and develop "reading for pleasure". All classrooms have a designated reading area within their classroom or in an alternative daily accessible location such as the school library bus. We have a fantastic library bus, which is situated in our Secondary Playground. Pupils are able to select books to read for pleasure including Sensory stories and Books Beyond Words to ensure that pupils have a variety of ways to access stories and are able to develop a love for reading and sharing stories.

Fine motor skills/ Writing

Throughout the school we thrive ourselves on supporting students in the developments of fine motor skills and the coordination of small muscle movements in such areas as the fingers and hands. These movements often operate in coordination with the eyes. Our staff team encourage and develop these skills through sensory experiences as well as supporting students to use scissors, write, fasten clothing, hold utensils, and to complete activities that require left to right task orientation. The task we provide will be built into the day to day routines as well as lessons as we believe practice is so important for developing proficiency with these tasks.

Additional...

All pupils are given the opportunity to take part in class and whole school productions such as Shakespeare, The Merstone Christmas Production and more.

English is a focus for celebrations throughout the school year with pupils taking part in different events such as whole school Poetry day and World Book day.

Pupils in the Ruby department take part in weekly Open Theatre session to develop engagement and interaction skills.

The diversity bookshelf provides a monthly focus on themes and authors to encourage pupils to engage with a wider range of texts that cover PSED themes alongside literature and promote positive role models which pupils can relate to from a range of cultures, ethnicities, religions and genders. These books are



accessible through the school day/week and can also be used by classes during their superhero reading time.

Students in upper school are also provided with the opportunity to study ASDAN modules. This qualification links to the many key areas of our curriculum including English, and students can gain a qualification for completing modules throughout the ASDAN course.

EYFS- Through Communication and Language, Understanding, Speaking, writing and reading pupils develop skills that they build upon and continue to develop as they move into Key Stage 1. Establishing expressive and communications systems for all pupils are key in developing individual pupils' ability to engage with and interact in not only educational progress but also the world around them. This is reflected in end of EYFS summative data where communication is a strength.

Impact

KS1- KS4- Through KS1 to KS4 pupils are developing their reading, writing and speaking and listening skills. They are focusing on the school's reading schemes that are relevant to them and a variety of strategies and approaches are used to personalise and support pupil's individualised needs. Weekly 4 English lessons take place as a minimum and may be labelled, literacy, reading, writing, PECS, intensive interaction, Makaton, Drama, speaking and listening or communication. Each class teacher ensures that their approaches are tailored specifically to the needs of the pupils in their class and most require various approaches to ensure all pupils needs are met

KS5- Literacy is covered through functional literacy making each lesson bespoke and tailored to life skills that are needed for when pupils leave school. Reading, writing, Intensive interaction and communication are focused on depending on needs and levels of attainment. Pupils continue in this key stage to work towards their ASDAN qualification which supports pupils to develop their literacy and communication skills



Merstone School Mathematics – Intent and Implementation

Intent

At Merstone School, our intent is to provide the pupils with a wide range of exciting and stimulating opportunities as they progress through the school. In our school we understand and appreciate that maths is an essential aspect of the curriculum as it will provide the pupils with many of the important skills they will require whilst they are members of our school but also in later life. Staff are consistently mindful of how important life skills are and how we can lay the foundations which the pupils will take with them through their life. Our aim is simple, to support the pupils to develop the maths skills they require to be active and contributing members of society who are able to take the skills they have learnt in school and be able to use them in the community.



Implementation

In our school we follow the National Curriculum guidelines for our subject content. Each key stage will then use this information to plan and deliver weekly lessons which are tailored for each individual pupil to suit their individual learning style and level of academic ability.

Pebbles

Maths enters every area of the Early Years and the development of mathematical concepts is happening all the time.

Through their play and by means of adult-supported practical experiences children become familiar with sorting, matching, ordering, sequencing, recognising and creating patterns and counting everyday objects.

Elements of the daily routine such as preparing snacks, counting those present, number games, songs, rhymes and number-related activities such as jigsaw puzzles help children recognise and use numbers to 10 (and beyond, where appropriate).

Children are encouraged to use their developing mathematical understanding to solve practical problems and their developing mathematical vocabulary to describe shape, position, and size. Early mathematical concepts are developed such as sorting, matching, colour, shape, size and number.

Moonstones

Maths is taught class-based. The Maths lessons are all taught under a thematic approach. Pupils are grouped according to their individual level/ability. Some lessons are delivered as a whole class such as; number songs. Most lessons are based around a free-flow approach where the pupils can access small group work and 1:1 focused activities. 50% of the lessons have a number focus and 50% of the lessons focus on the space, shape and measure area of learning. In Moonstones much of our learning is achieved through exploration and play based maths activities. We use a range of fun online resources to encourage the pupils to participate in maths activities.



Rubies

The Rubies department at Merstone School consists of pupils from the academic year groups of reception to Year 9. Pupils in the Rubies department have a range of profound and complex learning needs, often alongside complex medical needs. Pupils in the Rubies department are predominately identified as having a diagnosis of PMLD and are usually working within the assessment ranges of PS1 to PS3. The study of maths involves the world around us and the importance of how the skills we learn fit into daily life. Maths links to many other areas of the curriculum from creative to scientific and is not just a set of numbers learned but a way of thinking in many areas of learning.

Early maths is taught in Rubies department through a range of activities including practical, exploration and experience. There are four areas of numeracy development, Using and applying, number, shape, space and measure, and data handling. Using and applying is fundamental to the other three areas and enables pupils in their own individual way to demonstrate their experiences, understand and apply their knowledge appropriately.

Pupils in our Ruby 3 department take part in Asdan Transition Challenge sensory programme which supports all aspects of the curriculum including maths and helps our young people prepare for adulthood.

Sapphires

Maths is taught in classes. The groups within the classroom are differentiated to address individual learning styles and levels. 50% of lessons are Number based and 50% are devoted to topic work as detailed for each term. Two topics are delivered every term for either two lessons per half term or one lesson every week.

In Sapphires department pupils continue to learn through exploration and play based activities where appropriate. We begin to encourage more structured 'work' based activities where appropriate for the individual child. In Sapphires we use a range of online resources to suit individual needs and learning styles.

When pupils enter Sapphires 3 they will be introduced to ASDAN Transition Challenge introduction and progression level to support them to use maths skills whilst developing their independent living skills.

Emeralds

Maths is taught in classes. The groups within the classroom are differentiated to address individual learning styles and levels. 50% of lessons are Number based and 50% are devoted to topic work as detailed for each term. Two topics are delivered every term for either two lessons per half term or one lesson every week.



Pupils in Emeralds 1 and 2 will continue to learn through play and exploration but staff will encourage more 'work' based activities as appropriate. When pupils enter Emeralds 3 they will be introduced to ASDAN personal progress. These awards will allow the pupils to continue to develop their maths skills whilst beginning to understand how they can use maths to develop the skills they will require to prepare for adulthood.

Topaz

Maths enters every area of the Topaz department and the development of mathematical concepts is happening all the time.

Through play, life skills activities and by means of adult-supported practical experiences children become familiar with sorting, matching, ordering, sequencing, recognising and creating patterns and counting everyday objects. During the early stages of development, cognitive and perceptual skills are very much a part of play, and we encourage the children to explore toys and materials where they can develop knowledge of his/her world. This includes concepts such as "what happens when we press, push, dial, shake, turn... how can we make the same action occur again?" Children learn that objects exist even when out of sight. These skills are called "cognitive skills" and are the beginnings of the growth in understanding and early thinking. Through the mathematics area of learning, we develop our skills of number and shape, space and measure. The children learn to anticipate daily routines and specific time-based events such as mealtimes. Children experience number names through games and rhymes, and enjoy counting in a variety of fun ways.

Diamonds

When pupils enter our Diamonds department we place a lot of emphasis on preparing our young people for adulthood. Pupils will continue to take part in 4 maths lessons per week. 2 lessons will focus on number based activities and lessons per week focussing on topic based maths. Much of our maths lessons in our Diamonds department will encourage pupils to use their maths skills to develop their independence skills at an academic level which is appropriate for each individual pupil.

Pupils will also take part in a range of external maths qualifications such as ASDAN life skills challenges, ASDAN Towards Independence modules and pupils working between pre entry and entry level 3 will also work towards their Ascentis examinations.

When pupils reach key stage 5 they are no longer subject to the expectations of the National Curriculum but they continue to focus on a broad range of subjects including maths. This is to ensure that our students leave school at 19 years of age being as independent as possible in order to move on to the next stage of their life. Activities in the Diamonds department therefore reflect the age and changing needs of our students. This means that the curriculum is based on the teaching of



functional skills with the aim of students being able to generalise and apply these in as many everyday contexts and in as many practical ways within the community as possible.

Merstone School PSHE – Intent and Implementation

Intent

At Merstone school, our intent for PSHE is to support pupils to develop and promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils. We intend to prepare each individual for life outside of Merstone School and to support them in becoming an aware and active member of their community. PSHE will allow pupils to immerse themselves in specific topics areas within PSHE that will provide them with opportunities, responsibilities and experiences for later life. We want our pupils to have high aspirations and in an everchanging world and be able to manage their emotions. The curriculum will ensure they can play an active, positive and successful role in a global community. Our 'Relationships and Sex Education' paired with our 'Protective Behaviours' ethos, enables our children to learn how to stay safe, and to understand and develop healthy relationships, both now and in their future lives



Implementation

PSHE is taught in discreet lessons throughout the week in Sapphire, Emerald, Topaz and Diamond departments and is woven throughout wider sessions within Pebbles, Moonstones and Rubies departments. Merstone school uses a combination of Jigsaw PSHE, Equals PSHE, ASDAN and complimented with Citizenship schemes of work- to support pupils to learn and develop their understanding of a variety of PSHE topics areas depending on their age, department and their current topic. These schemes of work are heavily adapted to suit the learner's needs and abilities and work is then further differentiated to support individual pupil's ability.

Pebbles and Moonstones departments (EYFS) – In the foundation stage, PSHE is taught as an integral part of topic work and is embedded throughout the curriculum. Pupils experience and learn from chosen topics to ensure that the PSHE curriculum content is covered, and pupils experience a wide breath of study in this subject area.

Emerald, Sapphire, Topaz and Diamonds Departments- PSHE is taught through a comprehensive scheme of work which supports pupils to better understand and develop skills within the areas of 'Health and Well-being', 'Relationships and Sex Education' and 'Living in the Wider World'. These learning opportunities are taught during timetabled lessons and are further enhanced across the entire curriculum where pupils develop their personal, community and life skills to become a happy and active member of the school and local community. The PSHE Jigsaw Scheme of Work supports learning in these key stages, however, are heavily adapted to support the pupil's needs and abilities. Changes that come as we grow older are also supported on an individual basis in line with requests from parents and carers and the specific needs of each individual. Workshops are offered to parents to further support



and develop pupils and their families as they grow older. PSHE is taught in discreet lessons across Key Stage 3 and 4 and teachers continue to base learning around the key themed areas, also covering 'Relationships and Sex Education' where appropriate. Individual needs, cognitive ability and understanding is always taken into careful consideration when planning a series of lessons. In Key Stage 3 and 4, pupils complete ASDAN modules and use this accredited course to support their PSHE skills and understanding. ASDAN further supports pupils to understand the key areas for PSHE which are; 'Health and Well-being', 'Relationships and Sex Education' and 'Living in the Wider World'. There is a focus on behaviours in safe and unsafe, following the 'Protective Behaviours' approach, public and private areas, rules, citizenship, relationships and our bodies as we grow older. Individual workshops are used throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 to support pupils understanding puberty and changes to their bodies. PSHE continues to be very cross curricular in its approach and development of skills to support our pupils to be as independent as possible.

Rubies department- At Merstone School we have introduced a pre formal sensory curriculum- tailor made to support pupils with PMLD and specific ASC. The sensory curriculum offers an alternative way to learn, from a subject based timetable to a holistic individual based system which we feel is more engaging for our learners with complex learning difficulties and disabilities. Pupils within the Ruby Department also engage in the ASDAN Transition Challenge following the sensory targets. These are incorporated in our learning across the curriculum and is a key way of ensuring the department follows PSHE focuses.

Individual interventions are also in place for pupil's emotional needs and any changes they are going through with our Family Support Workers, Learning Mentors, SMHL, MHFAs and ELSAs. We also have external services such as SOLAR and Umbrella that come into school to deliver mental health and wellbeing, PSHE and RSE workshops.

Impact

The impact of our PSHE curriculum in school can be seen right from Pebbles and Moonstones (EYFS) to Diamonds (14-19). Pupils begin their journey with us and through exposure to personal, social and health development and support, they can develop key skills from toileting and communicating with others, as they progress through their journey, developing understanding of our changing bodies and our mental health to leaving our school with a sense of self and independence. Each pupil at Merstone is unique and will have their own PSHE journey that they are supported to develop.



Merstone School Science – Intent and Implementation through the Pathways

Intent	<p>At Merstone School, we feel that Science is one of the most interesting subjects to learn and engage students in. Our intention and vision is to ensure our curriculum provides the foundations for understanding the world through the specific disciplines of biology, chemistry and physics. We aim to ensure pupils are taught essential aspects of the knowledge, methods, processes and uses of science in a way that is accessible and exciting for all pupils working at all levels of the curriculum.</p> <p>Through the teaching of science, we hope to foster a growth mind-set approach, where children will experience the joy of learning 'how' and 'why', whilst gaining valuable skills, such as gathering and making sense of evidence and generating and testing ideas, as well as the skills required to eventually become independent learners.</p> <p>Before they leave us, our intention is to ensure all pupils are equipped with the scientific knowledge required to understand the uses and implications of science, today and for their future.</p>
Implementation	<p>At Merstone School, we are now facilitating a pathways approach based on children's needs rather than age groups. Science is taught weekly to all pupils, this is from year 1 to year 14. Merstone school understands the vital skills learnt in science and the various topics it covers. Through science, our pupils better understand the world around them and how things work together. In our foundation stage, pupils are taught science whilst learning about the world around them, beginning the journey of developing a love for science.</p>
Moonstones and Pebbles	<p>At Merstone School, pupils in our foundation stage are not taught science explicitly but have many opportunities to learn about the world around them to through a thematic approach across the seven areas of learning within the Early Years Curriculum. During their first years at school our children will explore creatures, people, plants and objects in their natural environments. They will observe and manipulate objects and materials to identify differences and similarities. They will also learn to use their senses, feeling dough or listening to sounds in the environment, such as sirens or farm animals.</p>
Topaz	<p>Topaz follow a learning through play curriculum. Science is not explicitly taught in this pathway but there are many sensory activities in Topaz that stimulate at least one of the five senses. These activities allow children in Topaz to explore and investigate the world around them whilst encouraging creativity and scientific exploration. Topaz offers this learning through play curriculum across the key stages 1 to 3.</p>



<p>Ruby</p>	<p>The PMLD curriculum at Merstone School is a process based, sensory and developmental curriculum, focusing on the experience gained through completing activities that stimulate the senses. It focuses upon developing children's communication, engagement and experiences. We use an adapted, adult-led play based approach to teaching. Classrooms are set up to provide continuous provision and sensory exploration activities throughout the day. We use a topic approach which follows a 12 year rolling program which aims to cover a variety of themes, science fits under Sensology. Although sessions are planned and delivered in a variety of ways (whole class, group and individually) all teaching is individualised. The adult's role is to facilitate learning across all areas for the curriculum and school day.</p>
<p>Emerald</p>	<p>Through the Emerald Subject specific Equals Curriculum, learning science gives all pupils the opportunity to think and learn, and develop an interest in, and curiosity about, the world around them through exploratory and investigative experiences and activities. Science in Emerald pathway allows children to develop an awareness of, and interest in, themselves and their immediate surroundings and environment by joining in practical activities that link to ideas, for example, doing and thinking, using their senses to explore and investigate. Children will develop over time understanding of cause and effect. Over time, the Emerald pathway will develop an understanding of the more abstract as well as the concrete and practical.</p>
<p>Sapphire</p>	<p>The semi-formal Equals curriculum for science (The World about Me) acknowledges that learners are likely to have difficulties making generalisations, which they can apply and link appropriately to future learning.</p> <p>These difficulties may act as barriers in applying what they have learned in order to make the necessary connections when studying science. The learners may need support to remember previous experiences and link them to make sense out of a new one.</p> <p>The intent of the semi-formal curriculum is to build on what the learner has experienced in the past and use this to support the learners to make connections and link future learning to these experiences.</p>
<p>Diamonds</p>	<p>Science is taught in discreet lessons and learning is based around modules from ASDAN Towards Independence. Pupils are completing tasks that promote their independence and life skills. Diamonds aims to allow young adults to apply knowledge from science lessons to real life as they come to the end of their time at Merstone school.</p>



Intent

Physical Education for the pupils at Merstone School is the education and awareness of what their bodies are capable of. It is about the pupils learning how to move and express themselves, which in turn will allow them to learn more about the world around them.

PE also helps to establish self-esteem through the development of physical confidence and helps students to cope with both successes and failure in competitive and co-operative activities. Through encouraging their awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses as well as those of their peers, our pupils will hopefully become more aware of the consequences of actions upon others and the environment around them. PE also offers outstanding opportunities to adopt cross-curricular links through consolidating and applying knowledge gained in other subject areas such as, English, Mathematics, Music, Science and PSHE. It is this practical application of knowledge that is so vital for the cognitive development of our pupils and hopefully one step towards greater independence.

Implementation

At Merstone School, we are now facilitating a pathways approach based on children’s needs rather than age groups. Science is taught weekly to all pupils, this is from year 1 to year 14. Merstone school understands the vital skills learnt in science and the various topics it covers. Through science, our pupils better understand the world around them and how things work together. In our foundation stage, pupils are taught science whilst learning about the world around them, beginning the journey of developing a love for science.

PE is taught in discreet lessons throughout the week, however this is further supported by playtimes, choice times, and sensory diet or movement breaks, which can be seen in all classes across the school.

EYFS

Pupils in the Foundation Stage are covering their Physical Development Goals through a very physical, experiential timetable, as well as during specifically timetabled weekly sessions of hydrotherapy, swimming and movement.

Ruby Department

Ruby department engage in a physical development programme of MATP which concentrates on physio and fine and gross motor skills based on the topic of “Special Olympics”. So far this term children have been enjoying swimming, MATP sessions in class



concentrating on pushing, hitting and striking and making the most of the weather and using their gross motor skills in the outside areas!

Topaz Department

In Topaz Department, pupils have engaged in a program based on self-regulation and movement. This programme is designed to focus on identifying students' sensory needs and is tailored specifically for an individual through a range of activities. We hope to support our students through these sensory activities working with them to change their mood or level of alertness, increasing performance and learning.

The focus of our PE lessons is to provide the right level of alertness so the child can complete their day-to-day activities, including self-care, learning and play. This 'just right' state means that the child can process sensory information and respond appropriately by focusing and engaging on the PE lessons set up for them. When they are able to do this, they feel more confident, in control of what they are doing and a sense of inclusion within their class.

Sapphire Department

Sapphire have engaged in weekly sessions, exploring team games such as, football, dodgeball and cricket to name a few. This really helps the pupils to work on their team building skills and to share the winning and the losing. Our other session is dance where we are learning a dance to The Greatest Showman. Each week we are building up the steps to create a dance using the skills we have learned.

Emerald Department

In Emerald department we are looking at the topic 'Dance and Prance' this term. For our sensory learners this may look like exploring body movements to music. Our middle ability group will be copying movements to dances both on the IWB and also copy their teachers' movements. Our higher ability group will be creating their own actions and movements to dance music.

We also have a weekly slot to access soft play where we enhance our gross motor skills then put it into practice in real life situations, i.e. during playtimes in the playground.

Soft play has been a great resource for our children so that they can work on stepping, climbing, crawling, jumping, rolling and also providing the benefit of enhancing their social skills.



Diamonds Department -

When pupils reach our Diamond department we continue to put a big emphasis on sport or leisure and fitness as we understand the importance of sport and movement to support the pupil's physical and mental health. Pupils take part in at least 2 leisure/sport lessons per week.

Pupils in our Diamond 1 department take part in a weekly swim session where they are able to complete their physio routines or have time to regulate themselves in the pool where they can be calm. This also supports our life skills development as pupils are able to practice their dressing skills.

Pupils in our diamond department complete ASDAN life skills challenges and ASDAN Towards Independence modules to support their understanding of the importance of sport and leisure opportunities, this work is then externally moderated at the end of KS5.

In Diamonds we work hard to ensure pupils understand that there are leisure facilities available to them in the community and they have an opportunity to take part in "bikeability", golf, Ackers and rock climbing as well as many other activities throughout the year!

These activities ensure that our pupils leave Merstone School being as independent, healthy and as informed as possible, in order to move on to the next stage of their life.

If you walk into PE or Swimming lessons at Merstone School, you will see:

- ✓ Pupils engaged, participating and offered to join in with a variety of PE and Swimming activities.
- ✓ Pupils developing an understanding of themselves, others and exploring their bodies through movement and play.
- ✓ PE or Swimming activities that have been tailored to meet the needs of individual pupils.
- ✓ PE or Swimming activities being taught at the appropriate level for individuals pupils.
- ✓ Pupils expressing choices.

- ✓ A respectful environment of opinion, choices and preferences.

- ✓ Pupils engaging in a variety of movement based activities such as, outdoor and indoor games, gymnastics, ball or racket sports, leisure activities, "Inclusive Sports", "Bikeability", golf, swimming, hydrotherapy, physiotherapy and more.



	<p>At Merstone we have a range of abilities. Our PMLD pupils (Ruby's Department) may not be able to access movement in the same way some of our more able-bodied pupils can, therefore they will take part in physio, hydrotherapy, relaxation, massage, story massage and more. During these activities pupils are encouraged to communicate their likes, dislikes and make choices through sound/movement.</p>
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Merstone School Art– Intent and Implementation	
Intent	<p>At Merstone School we value Art as an important part of the children's entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum. Art provides the children with the opportunities to develop and extend skills and an opportunity to express their individual interests, thoughts and ideas. This gives our students a "voice." Arts and crafts embody some of the highest forms of human creativity. A high quality art education should engage, inspire and challenge pupils, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to experiment, invent and create their own works of art, craft and design. As pupils progress, they should be able to think critically and develop a more rigorous understanding of art. They should also know how art reflects and shapes our history and contributes to the culture, creativity and wealth of our nation. The national curriculum for art and design (which Merstone's art curriculum is based on) aim to ensure that all children:</p> <p>Produce creative work, exploring their ideas and recording their experiences</p> <p>Become proficient in drawing, painting, sculpture and other art, craft and design techniques</p> <p>Evaluate and analyse creative works using the language of art, craft and design · Know about great artists, craft makers and designers, and understand the historical and cultural development of their art forms.</p>
Implementation	<p>Art is taught in discreet lessons throughout the week in Emeralds and Diamonds departments and as part of topic work in EYFS, Topaz, Rubies and Sapphires. Merstone school uses a combination of Arts Award , ASDAN and other schemes of work to support pupils learn and develop</p>



their understanding of a variety of Art topics areas depending on their Key Stage and their current topic. These schemes of work are heavily adapted to suit the learner's needs and abilities and work is then further differentiated to support individual pupil's ability.

Rubies

Art covers the Core Strands of Sensory and Cognition, Physical and Motor and has the potential to be a major vehicle for sensory cognitive development. Care needs to be taken to ensure that pupils are participants rather than merely observers (of the adults making the work) or possibly worse, objects to do things to – making learners put their hands in paint in order to create a picture full of handprints for example. Staff need to move away from the idea of conventional paintings, and allow, encourage and facilitate our PMLD learners to make art for themselves. The key to teaching Art is that the process of undertaking the sensory experiences relating to the materials and the cognitive experiences derived from combining materials is far more important than the finished work

EYFS

Children are encouraged to use their senses and a wide range of resources in order to express their own ideas, feelings and responses.

Art equipment, including paints, glue, crayons, and pencils as well as natural and discarded resources provide for open-ended exploration of colour, shape and texture and the development of skills in painting, drawing and collage.

Children join in with and respond to music, dance and stories and practitioners support and encourage opportunities for imaginative roleplay, both individually and as part of the group.

Topaz –

In Topaz, Art is taught as a stand-alone lesson, alongside DT, but is also seen cross-curriculum through the thematic approach that Topaz adapts. Pupils have exposure of key ART/DT concepts such as line, tone, structure and mechanics. Lessons have content linked to the theme that term and will have a sensory focus for exploration of the subject

Sapphires follow a semiformal curriculum and art is taught part of topic work in lessons that develop skills within the areas of sculpture, drawing, painting and materials.

Emeralds.



This art and design scheme of work incorporates the EQUALS semi-formal 'my art' strand, the EQUALS subject specific DT scheme of learning for key stages 1,2 and 3, the National Curriculum intentions for art and design across key stage 1 and 2. The emerald department lead has also consulted with the art and DT leads for Merstone school in ensuring the curriculum links with key associations and resource hubs linked to art and design. Emerald's art and DT curriculum is rooted in the subject's intent, implementation and impact plan that has been produced by the subject leader and should be referenced in conjunction with this plan.

Emerald department's art and design scheme aims to:

- Aid pupils to produce creative work, exploring their ideas and recording their experiences
- Develop skills around drawing, painting, sculpting and other art, craft and design techniques
- Explore artists, craft makers and designers, exploring their historical and cultural art forms

Emerald department works off the following LTP model: Emerald 1 work off a 2-year rolling programme and Emerald 2 and Emerald 3 work off a 4-year rolling programme. Emerald department's art and design is assessed through SOLAR art and design strands; art-creative investigation, art-exploration, art-learn and apply, art-review and improve, design technology.

Within art and design, focuses are broad, however teachers can use the semi-formal equals scheme to structure units. Art and design have broader focuses to allow teachers to hone in on key skills and talents of pupils within these subjects and adapt teaching to suit these needs; ensuring pupils are stretched and challenged within their abilities.

Diamonds – Art is taught in discreet lessons and learning is based around modules from the equals curriculum and Arts Award. Children look at and examine a range of artists and media. Diamonds 1 work in a very sensory way exploring media whereas Diamonds 2 and 3 have more technical lessons focussing on line, textiles and sculpture.

Impact

Art is a subject which not only helps children with their fine motor skills such as cutting, sticking and painting. It also helps the children express themselves and builds their confidence and self-esteem.



Merstone School Design and Technology – Intent and Implementation
2024-2025

Intent

At Merstone School, our intent is to provide the pupils with a wide range of exciting and stimulating opportunities as they progress through the school. In our school, we understand and appreciate that many pupils enjoy a practical, exciting, and engaging curriculum; where pupils can continue to be scaffolded to gain knowledge and skills that are transferable and relatable in their own lives. This continues to promote our pupil's independence, knowledge, and self – esteem which is embedded within our school and our curriculum.

Design & Technology is a subject, which allows children to use their creativity and imagination to design and make products that solve real and relevant problems in different situations. It promotes divergent thinking, where there is not a sole answer to a question, but space for a whole host of answers and ideas that can continue to be planned for, created, tested and continuously revied; developing and progressing both knowledge and skills. It forms close links with our Art and Design curriculum so children can use and build skills gained in both subjects and continue to develop and promote mastery within these skills and providing many cross-curricular links.

Our intent is to encourage children to become creative problem solvers, both as individuals and as part of a team. Creative thinking encourages children to make positive changes to their quality of life. Design and Technology prepares children to be part of the development of our rapidly changing world and make positive changes for their lives and the lives within our communities and our world.

Design Technology is taught throughout the week in each class. Merstone uses the Equals Curriculum Scheme of Work to support pupils to learn and develop their understanding of a variety of Design Technology topic areas depending on their key stage, development pathway and their current topic. These schemes of work are heavily adapted to suit the learner's needs and abilities and work is then further differentiated to support individual pupil's ability.

EYFS – In the foundation stage, Design Technology is taught as an integral part of topic work and is embedded throughout the curriculum. Pupil's experience and learn from chosen topics to ensure that the Design Technology curriculum content is covered, and pupils experience a wider breath of study in this subject area.



In our Nursery setting Pebbles and Reception Moonstones, pupils follow the Learning Through Play Curriculum.

Music, Art, and Design Technology are delivered under the umbrella area of Expressive Arts and Design in EYFS classrooms.

As an extension of our play activities, we provide a variety of creative activities which give the children the opportunity to explore different materials, including paint and glue, as well as musical instruments.

We learn to explore a range of media through sensory exploration and to express ourselves through physical movement and sound. We learn to be imaginative and engage in pretend play.

Children are encouraged to use their senses and a wide range of resources in order to express their own ideas, feelings and responses.

Art and Design equipment, including paints, glue, crayons, and pencils as well as natural and discarded resources provide for open-ended exploration of colour, shape and texture and the development of skills in painting, drawing and collage.

Children join in with and respond to music, dance and stories and practitioners support and encourage opportunities for imaginative roleplay, both individually and as part of the group.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are assessed using Earwig as our assessment tracker to record children's knowledge and skills.

Ruby Department

The Ruby curriculum at Merstone School is a process based, sensory and developmental curriculum This involves tailored learning that supports the whole child in a multi-sensory and stimulating way. Ruby Department follow the Learning Through Play curriculum and use Earwig to assess the children's developmental stages and progression.

The curriculum promotes engagement and curiosity, an approach whereby the children experience and explore different materials promoting engagement in the experience and to support the use of the child's communication. The environment provides children with stimulating and sensory rich resources, that develop children's learning through practical learning and supports their development.

With a total communication approach and high-level communication plans, children can communicate in their preferred way. Through



continuous provision and sensory exploration activities children can engage in a curriculum that stimulates the whole body by partaking in activities such as Sensology, Sensory stories, Immersive Theatre, Sensory Cooking, and Proprioceptive Massage.

Topaz Department- The Topaz curriculum is a thematic curriculum which offers broad and balanced learning opportunities to pupils who are on the autism spectrum. Learning through a thematic curriculum allows for the pupils in the topaz department to experience and enjoy various themes about the world in which they live. The themes which pupils in the topaz department will take part in are varied and allow for pupils to be immersed in a sensory, task specific and life skills focused learning environment. This supports them to work on specific areas of their SERTS/EHCP/IEP targets, communication, emotional regulation, and accepting support. The thematic curriculum will be closely linked to the expectations of the national curriculum but adapted to support the specific needs of each individual in this department and the individual classes. Learning will be focused, structured and responsive to pupil's emotional and individual needs. Programmes of intervention will continuously be taking place, which supports a readiness to learn approach. Within lessons, the TEACCH structure will be implemented, aiding pupils to understand their environment and work as independently as possible. By focusing on the child, their skills, interests and needs, TEACCH provides a flexibility to teaching that allows the environment, sequencing and predictability to support individual tasks and understanding the concept of finished.

Assessment for the Topaz department is recorded on our earwig system and follows the SCERTS model. SCERTS has been developed to support children with social communication needs, it is a framework of assessment and intervention that can be applied in any natural setting or context. The SCERTS framework is a strength-based framework that allows identifying and addressing the most significant challenges by building on existing strengths.

Sapphire Department

A Sapphire pathway follows a Semi Formal EQUALS curriculum whereby the children in the classroom will enjoy a process based and skills-based curriculum with enhanced provision to develop and master the skills that they are developing. Within Design and Technology, children explore a range of materials in a sensory pathway.

The children will explore different topics from the curriculum to develop life skills within food technology and design and which incorporate their



preferred communication systems to include the child's voice within assessment. These learning opportunities are taught during a timetabled lesson with a high level of support and often in 1 to 1 and small group input.

They learn within different environments within school including the Food Technology room, allowing the children to experience different environments and to have a different experience of health and safety and resources.

Sapphire Design and Technology Topics -

My Independence – My Cooking Food and Technology My Independence – My Shopping

My Thinking and Problem Solving whereby the developing the children's mind with questioning develops important skills transferable to Design and Technology such as;

1. memory to
2. understanding to
3. application, and then on to
4. the higher orders of learning which are to be found in the abilities to analyse, evaluate, and create.

In the Sapphire Department, Earwig is used to assess the children and make observations and record children's learning through photographic evidence and detailed written statements. This will also reflect the work they have done, the support that they received and the engagement level they had during the lesson.

Emerald Department

Emerald classes follow a Subject Specific pathway planned from the EQUALS curriculum, where Design and Technology is taught to the children in a lesson format. Within this lesson, children continue to have lots of sensory opportunities and exploration but this also develops to a design, make, and do and review process. As in all subjects, DT is differentiated to meet the individual needs of the learners and to draw on their strengths, interests, and abilities.

Within the Design and Technology lessons, children explore a range of new vocabulary and experience a range of real resources to engage and enhance their learning. They use a variety of materials that come together for them to achieve a desired effect. The curriculum topics include homes, playground, fruit, and picnic – which ensure these are relatable topics for



the children, developing the life skills aspect of the design and technology and embedding and scaffolding skills in a cross curricular aspect.

Supporting adults can also identify those with gifted and talented aspects of Design and Technology and develop these skills further with individualised learning and challenging activities.

Children are assessed on Earwig and recording is added to Earwig as well as in children's learning books to reflect on the plan – do – review process that Design Technology inspires.

Emerald Design and Technology Topics

Moving Pictures, Energy, Eat More Fruit, Playgrounds, Homes, Vehicles, Puppets, Winding Up, Joseph's Coat, Masks, Picnic.

Diamonds Department - Design Technology is taught in discreet lessons and learning is based around modules from ASDAN towards independence. Pupils are completing tasks that promote their independence and life skills which become embedded in their life and prepare them for the wider community and adulthood. Design Technology is taught through lessons such as cooking, Citizenship and mini-enterprise activities where the children design and make and create items to sell. Design and Technology is also taught through the Equals Curriculum which is a flexible and inclusive curriculum that offers a wide range of learning opportunities. The curriculum is designed to be personalised ed to meet the needs and interests of each student which is then recorded using Earwig.

Impact

If you walk into Design Technology lessons at Merstone School, you will see:

- Pupils engaged, participating, and offered to join in with a variety of practical and exploratory activities, including crafting and development of different resources and preparing, and cooking food.
- Pupils developing their skills of fine and gross motor activities, such as using scissors, cutting, and mixing.
- Children developing their joining techniques such as sticking, folding, taping.
- Pupils expressing choices and their individual opinions with a range of communication tools to support this.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A respectful environment of opinion, choices, and preferences, celebrating achievements of all pupils.• Tailored and differentiated Design and Technology activities to pupil's needs and developmental levels.• Pupils working towards becoming and leading safe, independent, and fulfilling lives.• Activities in books to show an array of DT skills and a range of practical experiences that the children have had to shape and develop their life skills.
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Merstone School Music – Intent and Implementation through the Pathways	
Intent	<p>At Merstone School our intent is to support pupils to develop and promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils. We intend to prepare each individual for life outside of Merstone School and become an aware and active member of their community. Our intention and vision is to ensure each of our pupils is given the opportunity to experience music, play instruments and to listen to music of different cultures. We hope through our curriculum pupils will have the opportunity to have their own likes and dislikes, learn musical instruments, appreciate music from around the world and learn key skills and vocabulary linked to music. It is our vision that pupils engage in high-quality music education enabling them to develop a life-long love of music. We aim to increase pupil's self-confidence, creativity and sense of achievement through participation in a wealth of music-making activities including singing, performing, composing and listening. Singing and performing is encouraged during assemblies, Christmas productions and the older pupils participating in a performance of Shakespeare. In addition, we recognise that music can also be beneficial in the development of cognitive skills across the curriculum and can support the development of literacy, numeracy and listening.</p>



Implementation	<p>At Merstone School we are now following a pathways approach based on pupil's needs rather than age groups. Music is taught in discreet lessons throughout the week and is further supported through use of singing and music across all areas of the curriculum. Pupil's in EYFS (Pebbles and Moonstones) classes have access to a range of percussion instruments which they can self-select as part of their provision, encouraging them to explore and create sounds during free play activities. To support our music curriculum, we have music professionals Laura and Steven who are Intensive training teachers that visit classes in school weekly. The professionals are in the process of training up staff members to deliver their own music sessions.</p>
British Values and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Learning in Music	<p>Collaborative work in music develops mutual respect for the differing opinions, beliefs and abilities of others. In addition, pupils develop a respect for the resources used and understand the importance of looking after them. As part of their music lessons, pupils are taught how to handle instruments correctly and play them appropriately. They learn to appreciate the value of similarities and differences and learn to show tolerance. A variety of experiences teaches them to appreciate that all people – and their views – are equally important. Pupils share their favourite songs during music lessons and collectively we appreciate all genres of music.</p> <p>We promote moral development by creating an awareness of, encouraging respect for and developing a tolerance of other people's views and opinions.</p> <p>This links well to our PSHE and RE lessons, giving all pupils a voice through their chosen communication methods to express their likes and views. We promote cultural development by providing opportunities for pupils to participate in music and other cultural events, these include Chinese dragon dancing, Rubyfest, Open theatre and Shakespeare.</p>



Merstone School Religious Education – Intent and Implementation

Intent

At Merstone School, pupils are empowered to learn skills from a balanced curriculum. Merstone’s Religious Education curriculum provides pupils with the opportunity to learn key skills and gain an understanding of different religions, understanding and tolerance of others and their opinions.

RE’s place in the curriculum is underpinned by values and purposes. Along with the other subjects of the curriculum, RE aims to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and to achieve; promote pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of the present and the future.

Pupils will have the opportunity to explore and experience religious Education through senses and sensory exploration

Implementation

The foundation for pupils’ Religious Education journey starts in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), where students learn through a cross-curricular, thematic approach. During their time in EYFS, pupils develop a core understanding of the skills they will need to apply in Religious Education during the rest of their time at Merstone School and beyond.

In Ruby Department, the pupils explore and experience the subject of Religious Education through a whole range of activities. Each term the department has a different theme that is not repeated throughout the pupils’ school life. This enables staff to plan a variety of activities and ensure that pupils have access to a world of experiences. These experiences will include weekly Star assembly, Special events each half term linked to the planned theme, celebrating cultural events from around the world and across all 6 religions that we explore at Merstone School.

In Sapphire Department, the pupils follow a pre formal curriculum that enables pupils to access all areas of Religious Education through their own lives and the world around them. The pupils experiences special days in the calendar, cultural events and participate in activities that are important to them and their families. All pupils attend Star Assembly each week and celebrate each other’s successes and achievements.

In Emerald Department Merstone School’s Religious Education curriculum features an exciting range of topics that ensures that pupils experience a balance of both Christianity and five other main religions. We follow the



National Curriculum to ensure that the content of our Religious Education delivery encompasses the key skills pupils need to develop, which is further supported with specific topics from the EQUALS schemes of work.

In Topaz Department, the pupils explore and experience the subject of Religious Education through a whole range of activities and a play based approach. This enables staff to plan a variety of activities and ensure that pupils have access to a world of experiences. These experiences will include weekly Star assembly, Special events each half term linked to the planned theme, celebrating cultural events from around the world and across all 6 religions that we explore at Merstone School.

In Diamond Department In Key stage five (Sixth form) pupils do not have explicit Religious Education lessons, but rather learn through a thematic, cross-curricular approach. Pupils' learning is centred on the modules of ASDAN: Towards Independence. Pupils are able to apply their skills learnt in Religious education previously at Merstone School.

Throughout Merstone School, pupils attend regular educational visits, allowing them to gain a first-hand experience of many different faiths and their differing features.

Across the school teachers are given ownership and opportunity to choose topics that will best suit the pupils, whilst also maintaining the skills and subject specific content that pupils are required to learn.

Through a well-considered Religious Education curriculum, Merstone school is ensuring that the skills and knowledge acquired by pupils, enables them to thrive during their time at school as well as later in life in the community.

All pupils across the whole school will attend assemblies with other classes in different departments



Merstone School Humanities– Intent and Implementation

Intent

At Merstone School, our humanities curriculum encompasses history and geography. Our intention and vision is to ensure each of our pupils is given the opportunity to gain an appreciation of their own locality and that of the wider world in which we all live. We hope through this broad curriculum, each pupil will develop an understanding of how the complexity of people’s lives are grown through the process of change from past to present, and how their own lives also are part of this ongoing change.

Through the teaching of humanities, we hope to foster in our pupils not only a tolerance, but a joy, too, of those who have lived before them, those amongst whom they currently live, and those who live in different parts of the world in very different cultures and communities to the ones they know so well here at home. In this way, we hope that our pupils will eventually leave Merstone empowered with an empathy and independence to stand them in good stead wherever they may find themselves in the world.

Throughout the different pathways in Merstone, we expect the humanities curriculum to enable all pupils to develop at their own pace and level within an environment that feels safe, secure and comfortable. Lessons will be delivered in a multi-sensory way to help each student achieve their full potential and grow in self-esteem and enjoyment of the subject.

Implementation

At Merstone School, we are now facilitating a pathways approach based on children’s needs rather than age groups.

Moonstones and Pebbles

In the Pebbles and Moonstone pathways, our pupils benefit from the holistic opportunities they are given to go out and about into the local community. During these first years at school, they will embark on educational visits where they can explore their environment, both natural and human-made. They will observe similarities between places and people, and compare differences, too. They will also learn to use their senses by listening, observing and experiencing the world around them, whether it be a modern take or a historical perspective.



Topaz	<p>Topaz follow a learning through play curriculum. As with most curriculum areas, humanities is not explicitly taught in this pathway but there are lots of opportunities for pupils to go out into the wider community to explore and experience the world around us. Sensory activities in Topaz stimulate at least one of the five senses, and these activities allow children in this pathway to explore and investigate the world around them whilst encouraging curiosity and inquisitiveness. Topaz offers this learning through play curriculum across the key stages 1 to 3.</p>
Ruby	<p>The PMLD curriculum at Merstone School is a process based, sensory and developmental curriculum, focussing on the experience gained through completing activities that stimulate the curiosity about the world around us. It focuses upon developing children's communication, engagement and experiences. We use an adapted, adult-led play based approach to teaching. Classrooms are set up to provide continuous provision and sensory exploration activities throughout the day, both indoors and outdoors, providing pupils with the opportunity to explore their immediate surroundings and also the wider community. Although sessions are planned and delivered in a variety of ways (whole class, group and individually) all teaching is individualised. Sensory stories, music, sensory cooking, and proprioceptive massage are just some of the activities pupils are exposed to, and at all times, the adults' role is predominantly to facilitate learning across all areas of the curriculum and school day.</p>
Emerald	<p>Through the Emerald subject-specific Equals Curriculum, humanities gives all pupils the opportunity to think and learn, and develop an interest in, and curiosity about, the world around them and that which has gone before, through exploratory and investigative experiences and activities. Humanities in the Emerald pathway allows children to develop an awareness of, and interest in, themselves, their immediate surroundings, together with the wider world with all its different peoples and cultures, both past and present. Participating in practical activities and educational trips around the locality helps pupils link ideas, for example, investigating and exploring places of local interest such as old churches, libraries and farms, to see how people lived many years before. Children will develop over time an understanding of how life today has grown and developed, and how natural areas are now places where humankind has intervened and changed their appearance and use. Our hope is that the Emerald pathway will develop a tolerance and understanding of how different people and communities have evolved, and how we can all live and work harmoniously, side by side, with our differences and similarities helping to enhance our developing world.</p>



Sapphire	<p>For our Sapphire pathway, the semi-formal Equals curriculum for humanities acknowledges that learners are likely to have difficulties making generalisations which they can apply and link appropriately to future learning.</p> <p>These difficulties may act as barriers in applying what they have learned in order to make the necessary connections when studying humanities. The learners may need support to remember previous experiences and link them to make sense out of a new one.</p> <p>The intent of the semi-formal curriculum is to build on what the learner has experienced in the past and use this to support them to make connections and link future learning to these experiences. By regularly going out on trips to explore and experience the local community, we hope to reinforce an understanding of the people and places both in their own locality, and those within the wider world, past and present.</p>
Diamonds	<p>In the Diamond pathway, humanities is taught in discreet lessons and learning is based around modules from ASDAN Towards Independence. Pupils are completing tasks that promote their independence and life skills, along with going out into the wider community to explore and experience the world around us, both past and present. This pathway aims to allow young adults to apply knowledge from humanities lessons to real life as they come to the end of their time at Merstone school.</p>