Merlin Class Rationale

2025-2026

Merlin Class is a newly established UKS2 group made up of nine learners from Years 4 to 6. Each pupil brings a unique learning profile, and our teaching is carefully adapted to meet their individual needs. Learners are grouped by how they learn – either subject-specific (SSL) or non-subject-specific (NSSL) – which allows for flexible, personalised support. Some children also have Positive Behaviour Support Plans (PBSPs), which are regularly reviewed in collaboration with the school's behaviour lead to ensure consistency and progress.

Our curriculum is built around a two-year rolling topic cycle. This year's themes are *Celebrations*, *Global Warriors*, and *Living Things*. Each unit is designed with Park Lane's core values in mind – *Community, Challenge, Individuality, and Creativity*. Topics begin with an exciting launch activity to spark curiosity and end with a landing task to consolidate and celebrate learning. While most topic work takes place in the afternoons, PE (reflecting our focus on *Individuality*) is taught in the mornings.

Merlin learners have access to a wide variety of learning spaces, including the ICT suite, library, art and cooking rooms, light and soft play areas, the school hall, and outdoor learning spaces. Learning is highly individualised and may involve desk-based tasks, sensory exploration, or practical outdoor experiences. We use strategies such as Attention Autism, TACPAC, Sing & Sign, and Look and Listen to support engagement and communication.

English learning is carefully matched to learners' stages using Park Lane's Reading Pathway. Provision may include Sensology, Intensive Interaction, 'Core Word' sessions, or discrete Twinkl Phonics sessions. English is text-based, aligned to both National Curriculum goals and learners' Personal Learning Goals (PLGs), which are tracked via Evidence for Learning. Reading and phonics progress is regularly reviewed to ensure each learner is on the right pathway.

In Maths, we use and adapt White Rose resources to suit each learner. Many pupils are strong visual and tactile learners, so we embed learning through practical experiences such as cooking, building, crafting, songs, and physical objects. Communication is supported through visual timetables, symbols, photos, communication booklets, and AAC devices.

PLG-focused sessions run throughout the week and may involve physiotherapy, fine motor skills, or desensitisation activities. Learners benefit from multi-professional support, including SaLT, OT, Music Therapy, and ELSA input.

Emotional wellbeing is supported using the *Zones of Regulation*, helping pupils to understand and manage their feelings. Children are encouraged to take breaks, choose activities to regulate, and develop strategies for self-awareness and independence.

To promote positive engagement, Merlin Class uses a *Star Jar reward system*. Each learner has their own jar, collecting stars throughout the day for effort, behaviour, and engagement. At the end of the day, the child with the most stars chooses a fun class activity or TV show for everyone to enjoy. This not only motivates individual effort but also builds a sense of fairness, responsibility, and teamwork.

We work in close partnership with families, communicating regularly through home-school diaries, School Spider, and class Facebook updates. Safeguarding remains central to our practice, with concerns recorded via CPOMS, IRIS, or body maps and shared with the safeguarding team as appropriate.

Above all, Merlin Class is a warm, supportive, and collaborative environment where children are celebrated as individuals. Our dedicated team works hand-in-hand – with each other, with professionals, and with families – to ensure every child receives the best possible education, care, and opportunities. Together, we nurture curiosity, independence, and resilience, preparing our learners for their next steps with confidence and joy.