



The LINK
Education Trust
Learning • Inclusion • Nurture • Knowledge

The Rainbow Room

Curriculum Progression Document 2026 - 2027



Rainbow Room Curriculum

At the heart of our Rainbow Room is the belief that every child has the right to communicate, build relationships, develop independence and experience success. Our pupils have a range of complex learning, communication, sensory and interaction needs and therefore require a curriculum that is tailored to their developmental stage rather than their chronological age.

Many of our pupils are working within a pre-formal or semi-formal pathway and access learning through sensory experiences, structured routines, practical exploration and highly personalised communication approaches. As a result, our curriculum prioritises the fundamental skills that enable pupils to engage with the world around them, form meaningful relationships and become increasingly independent.

Our curriculum is designed to ensure that pupils develop:

- Functional communication skills – being able to communicate their wants, needs and feelings
- Emotional regulation and sensory awareness.
- Positive relationships and social interaction.
- Attention, engagement and readiness to learn.
- Self-help and independence skills.
- Understanding of themselves, their environment and the wider world.
- Early literacy and mathematical understanding where appropriate.

Learning is delivered through meaningful experiences, play, exploration, communication-rich interactions and carefully structured teaching approaches including Intensive Interaction, Attention Autism, TAC PAC, Forest School and a Core Language curriculum.

The curriculum reflects the principles of the Engagement Model and recognises that progress may be demonstrated through increased attention, responsiveness, participation, initiation and the development of independence. Success is measured through small but significant steps that enable pupils to access learning, communicate their needs and participate successfully within school, home and community environments.



Curriculum Intent

Our intention is to provide a highly individualised, ambitious and inclusive curriculum that enables every pupil to achieve their fullest potential.

We aim to:

Develop Communication

Communication is the foundation of learning and is therefore the primary driver of our curriculum. We ensure that every pupil has access to an appropriate communication system, whether this is through speech, gesture, sign language, symbols, objects of reference, AAC or assisted communication. We strive to give every pupil a functional and meaningful voice.

Promote Regulation and Wellbeing

We recognise that pupils learn best when they feel safe, regulated and understood. Through personalised sensory support, TAC PAC, movement opportunities and co-regulation strategies, pupils develop greater awareness of their sensory needs and learn strategies to support their emotional wellbeing.

Build Relationships and Social Understanding

We aim to develop positive relationships with adults and peers through shared experiences, play, group learning and communication-rich interactions. Pupils learn the foundations of social communication including shared attention, turn-taking, interaction and collaborative play.

Foster Independence

We intend for all pupils to develop the independence, confidence and self-help skills they need for everyday life. Opportunities to practise personal care, decision-making, self-advocacy and responsibility are embedded throughout the school day.



Develop Knowledge and Understanding of the World

We provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to explore themselves, their local environment and the wider world through practical experiences, outdoor learning and thematic learning topics. Pupils learn through first-hand experiences that support curiosity, exploration and understanding.

Establish Foundations for Future Learning

Through exposure to early mathematics, literacy, attention and thinking skills, pupils develop the foundations required for lifelong learning. Academic learning is carefully matched to developmental readiness, ensuring pupils experience success and sustained engagement.

Prepare Pupils for Adulthood

Everything we teach contributes towards improving pupils' long-term outcomes. Our curriculum supports pupils to become as independent as possible, communicate their needs, build positive relationships and participate actively within their communities.

Curriculum Implementation

The Rainbow Room curriculum is implemented through a highly personalised and developmental approach that meets pupils at their individual stage of learning.

Personalised Learning Pathways

Each pupil follows an individualised pathway informed by their EHCP outcomes, assessment information and developmental needs. Learning targets are broken into small achievable steps and reviewed regularly.

Communication at the Centre

Communication is embedded throughout every aspect of the school day. Staff consistently model and support communication through:



- Core Language teaching.
- Signalong signing.
- Symbols and visual supports.
- Objects of reference.
- AAC systems.
- Intensive Interaction.
- Communication-rich play and routines.

A weekly Core Language focus supports vocabulary development and generalisation across multiple environments.

Engagement-Based Teaching

Teaching is informed by Engagement Model principles and focuses on:

- Exploration.
- Realisation.
- Anticipation.
- Persistence.
- Initiation.

Staff carefully observe and respond to pupils' engagement levels to ensure learning remains motivating, meaningful and appropriately challenging.

Structured and Predictable Environments

Visual timetables, now-and-next boards, structured routines and clear environmental organisation support pupils to understand expectations and reduce anxiety. Consistency enables pupils to develop confidence, independence and security.

Specialist Approaches

The curriculum incorporates evidence-informed specialist approaches including:



- Attention Autism
- Intensive Interaction
- TAC PAC
- Forest School
- Sensory Integration-informed practice
- Total Communication approaches
- Play-based learning
- Structured teaching strategies

These approaches support communication, regulation, engagement, social interaction and independence.

Learning Through Experience

Learning is organised through carefully planned, meaningful themes such as *All About Me*, *Celebrations and Festivals*, *Winter Explorers* and *Growing and New Life*. These themes provide rich opportunities to revisit and apply skills across different contexts whilst broadening pupils' understanding of the world.

Developing Independence Throughout the Day

Independence is not taught in isolation but embedded within daily routines. Pupils are supported to:

- Follow visual schedules.
- Participate in personal care routines.
- Make choices.
- Access preferred resources.
- Carry belongings.
- Complete classroom jobs.
- Transition successfully between activities.
- Advocate for their needs.



Assessment and Progress

Progress is monitored through ongoing observation, engagement-based assessment, EHCP outcomes and personalised targets. Assessment focuses on the development of communication, regulation, engagement, social interaction and independence alongside emerging academic skills.

We use the our Pre-Formal Curriculum objectives to track pupils progress as well as the National Autism Framework Objectives

Staff celebrate and record small-step achievements, recognising that progress for many pupils may be demonstrated through increased participation, initiation, confidence and independence.

Impact

The impact of our curriculum is evidenced by pupils who:

- Communicate more effectively using their preferred communication methods.
- Develop positive relationships with adults and peers.
- Show increased engagement and participation in learning.
- Demonstrate improved emotional regulation and wellbeing.
- Become increasingly independent in daily routines and self-care.
- Generalise skills across different environments.
- Develop early literacy and mathematical understanding where appropriate.
- Are prepared for successful transition into their next stage of education and beyond.

Ultimately, we aim for every pupil to leave the Rainbow with greater confidence, independence, communication and readiness for life.



Progression Document

Autumn Term 1 All About Me

Autumn Term 2 Celebrations and Festivals

Spring Term 1 Winter Explorers

Spring Term 2 Growing and New Life

Summer Term 1 Animals and Habitats

Summer Term 2 Moving On

Curriculum Area	Learning Intentions Progression	Assessment
Communication and Interaction	Key Learning 1 • Develop trusting relationships with familiar adults. • Respond to familiar voices, songs and social interactions. • Develop anticipation during familiar routines. • Increase awareness of communication partners. • Make choices between two motivating objects, activities or people. • Communicate wants and needs through eye gaze, gesture, vocalisation, sign or AAC. • Tolerate adult participation during play. • Engage in Intensive Interaction exchanges for increasing periods. • Begin to understand core vocabulary related to daily routines. • Follow simple "stop", "go", "sit", "stand" instructions using visual and sign support.	Key Learning 1



	Key Learning 2 • Develop spontaneous communication attempts. • Request highly motivating activities. • Use symbols, objects of reference or signs to support understanding. • Follow one-step instructions supported by visuals. • Maintain attention within Attention Autism sessions	Key Learning 2
	Key Learning 3 • Initiate interactions with adults more frequently. • Communicate to gain attention. • Use preferred communication systems with increasing consistency. • Develop understanding of key Core Language words.	Key Learning 3
	Key Learning 4 • Request help and assistance. • Communicate during play and exploration. • Use a wider range of vocabulary through signs, symbols and objects. • Develop understanding of simple questions.	Key Learning 4
	Key Learning 5 • Communicate for a range of reasons including requesting, protesting, commenting and sharing enjoyment. • Follow two-part instructions supported by visuals and signs. • Use communication systems consistently across settings	Key Learning 5



	Key Learning 6 • Generalise communication skills across different environments and adults. • Communicate spontaneously throughout the day. • Develop confidence when communicating unfamiliar needs and wants. • Participate in transition activities.	Key Learning 6
Social Communication	Key Learning 1 • Share attention with an adult during motivating activities. • Participate in people games. • Develop awareness of peers within shared spaces. • Begin to take turns in highly motivating activities. • Develop enjoyment of shared experiences.	Key Learning 1
	Key Learning 2 • Participate in group celebration activities. • Copy simple actions. • Wait briefly for preferred activities. • Increase shared attention during group sessions	Key Learning 2
	Key Learning 3 • Maintain shared attention during group activities. • Engage alongside peers. • Participate in turn-taking games.	Key Learning 3



	Key Learning 4 • Participate in collaborative play. • Imitate actions modelled by peers. • Develop joint attention with peers and adults.	Key Learning 4
	Key Learning 5 • Initiate interactions with peers. • Participate in cooperative activities. • Develop turn-taking during group learning	Key Learning 5
	Key Learning 6 • Build positive peer relationships. • Participate in group celebrations. • Develop awareness of changes and transitions	Key Learning 6
Sensory Regulation	Key Learning 1 • Explore preferred sensory experiences. • Participate in TAC PAC sessions. • Identify sensory activities that support regulation. • Develop tolerance of sensory exploration activities. • Explore movement, tactile and auditory experiences.	Key Learning 1



	Key Learning 2 • Explore sensory experiences linked to festivals. • Participate in adult-led sensory exploration. • Develop regulation through movement and sensory breaks.	Key Learning 2
	Key Learning 3 • Explore different textures and materials. • Develop sensory tolerance. • Communicate sensory preferences.	Key Learning 3
	Key Learning 4 • Explore natural sensory resources. • Participate successfully in Forest School sessions. • Develop self-regulation strategies.	Key Learning 4
	Key Learning 5 • Explore a wider range of sensory experiences outdoors. • Develop appropriate sensory seeking strategies.	Key Learning 5
	Key Learning 6 • Identify strategies that support regulation. • Access sensory resources independently where appropriate	Key Learning 6



Independence and Self-Care	Key Learning 1 • Follow familiar classroom routines with adult support. • Begin to transition between activities using visual timetables. • Tolerate hand-over-hand guidance during self-care tasks. • Participate in handwashing routines. • Develop awareness of toileting routines. • Request drink, snack, toilet or help using their preferred communication method. • Hang up coat and bag with support. • Sit appropriately during snack and mealtimes. • Begin to recognise personal belongings. • Develop awareness of personal space and boundaries	Key Learning 1
	Key Learning 2 • Follow a visual sequence for handwashing. • Anticipate key stages within toileting routines. • Communicate toileting needs through signs, symbols, objects or gestures. • Clear cup and plate after snack with support. • Put on and remove simple items of clothing with assistance. • Begin to access preferred resources independently. • Make choices during daily routines. • Wait appropriately during turn-taking activities. • Follow simple classroom responsibilities.	Key Learning 2



	Key Learning 3 • Complete parts of a handwashing routine with reduced prompting. • Pull trousers up and down during toileting where appropriate. • Begin to wash and dry hands independently. • Use a visual sequence to complete familiar routines. • Independently collect equipment needed for activities. • Carry personal belongings independently. • Put rubbish in the bin. • Develop awareness of personal hygiene. • Independently access visual supports when needed.	Key Learning 3
	Key Learning 4 • Complete the majority of the handwashing routine independently. • Follow toileting routines with minimal adult support. • Recognise when personal care support may be needed. • Put on coat using a structured teaching approach. • Begin fastening simple clothing where appropriate. • Independently tidy away resources after activities. • Follow visual schedules independently. • Make simple choices throughout the day. • Develop safe behaviour during Forest School sessions.	Key Learning 4



	Key Learning 5 • Generalise handwashing routines across different environments. • Use toileting facilities with increasing independence. • Communicate when help is required. • Independently prepare for transitions. • Select and use preferred regulation tools. • Access snack and lunchtime routines with reduced support. • Carry out simple classroom jobs. • Follow safety expectations outdoors and in the community. • Take responsibility for personal belongings.	Key Learning 5
	Key Learning 6 • Demonstrate independence in familiar self-care routines. • Follow visual schedules independently throughout the school day. • Use communication systems to advocate for needs and preferences. • Complete handwashing and toileting routines with minimal prompts. • Organise belongings for home time. • Participate in transition visits confidently. • Follow simple safety instructions in community environments. • Show increased confidence when accessing new environments. • Demonstrate resilience when routines change.	Key Learning 6



Understanding of the World	Key Learning 1 • Recognise familiar adults and environments. • Explore body awareness through songs and movement. • Develop understanding of classroom routines. • Understand that people respond to their needs. • Notice different textures, sounds, colours and movements.	Key Learning 1
	Key Learning 2 • Experience different cultural celebrations. • Explore light and dark. • Notice weather and seasonal changes. • Observe animals and plants. • Understand that familiar routines happen every day, for example, handwashing before lunchtime.	Key Learning 2
	Key Learning 3 • Investigate ice, water and weather. • Explore changes in materials. • Investigate how things work. • Use simple cause-and-effect toys. • Join in with daily routines.	Key Learning 3



	Key Learning 4 • Observe living things. • Investigate growth and change. • Care for plants and outdoor areas • Explore natural materials. • Explore through their senses: touch, smell, feel, taste, sound	Key Learning 4
	Key Learning 5 • Learn about animals and their environments. • Explore habitats through Forest School. • Notice similarities and differences in living things • Notice changes in the weather. • Explore materials with different properties.	Key Learning 5
	Key Learning 6 • Explore the local community. • Reflect on experiences and achievements. • Understand changes and transitions. • Join in with celebrations for events and festivals. • Explore and compare properties of different materials,	Key Learning 6
Early Maths Pathway	Key Learning 1 • Match identical objects. • Explore cause and effect. • Join in counting songs to 5 • Sort objects by colour or type	Key Learning 1



	Key Learning 2 • Match quantities to objects. • Explore full and empty. • Compare big and small. • Develop awareness of one and many	Key Learning 2
	Key Learning 3 • Match and sort by attributes. • Explore shape. • Develop understanding of size. • Sequence familiar daily routines	Key Learning 3
	Key Learning 4 • Count objects during practical activities. • Explore more and less. • Begin to say number names in order through songs and play • Identify patterns in songs and routines.	Key Learning 4
	Key Learning 5 • Count objects with increasing accuracy. • Explore positional language. • Compare heavier and lighter. • Explore capacity through water play	Key Learning 5



	Key Learning 6 • Apply counting skills across different contexts. • Solve simple practical problems. • Sequence events in familiar routines	Key Learning 6
	Small Steps Tracking • Able to engage with more subject specific learning and being tracked through small steps tracking objectives in maths	Small Steps Tracking
Phonics and Early Reading Pathway	Key Learning 1 • Attend to environmental sounds. • Listen and respond to music and rhythm. • Explore books appropriately. • Engage with sensory stories	Key Learning 1
	Key Learning 2 • Listen to environmental and instrumental sounds. • Join repetitive phrases. • Engage in rhyme and rhythm activities. • Recognise familiar photographs and symbols.	Key Learning 2
	Key Learning 3 • Identify familiar sounds.	Key Learning 3



	• Develop sound discrimination skills. • Listen attentively to stories. • Recognise own photograph and name symbol	
	Key Learning 4 • Begin to recognise some letter sounds if developmentally appropriate. • Match pictures and symbols. • Retell familiar stories through objects and pictures	Key Learning 4
	Key Learning 5 • Recognise some letter-sound correspondences. • Use symbols and visual supports to retell stories. • Demonstrate preferences for books and stories	Key Learning 5
	Key Learning 6 • Share favourite books independently. • Recognise familiar words, symbols and signs. • Demonstrate emerging comprehension through pictures, symbols and objects of reference	Key Learning 6
	Small Steps Tracking • Able to engage with more subject specific learning and being tracked through small steps tracking objectives in reading and phonics	Small Steps Tracking



<u>Year Group Learning</u> • Children are engaged with subject specific learning in line with their year group expectations. • There may be some reasonable adjustments in place • There may be some interventions in place to target some gaps in learning	
<u>Year Group Timetable</u> • Children follow a subject specific timetable but small steps tracking indicate working at a lower age band (Main assessment 5) • There will be significant interventions around Cognition and Learning in place • There may be interventions taking place in the afternoon to target Sensory/Physical or Social, Emotional and Mental Health	
<u>Semi-Formal Curriculum</u> • Children are engaged in some learning/curriculum activities associated with subject specific learning (reading phonics maths) but this is often in 1:1 situation. • Children will have significant needs requiring extensive additional support. • A bespoke timetable is in place to meet Cognition/Learning, Social, Emotional and Mental Health, Communication and Interaction, and Sensory/Physical needs. • Children will still be engaged in some activities which are pre-requisites to subject specific learning: Exploration, Engagement, Attention and listening, Early Interaction and Communication, Establishing Routines, Developing Play Skills, Gross and Fine Motor Development	
<u>Pre-Formal Curriculum</u> • Children will be provided with a multi-sensory curriculum approach which develops concepts and skills that are pre-requisites to subject specific learning. • Learning will be around: Exploration, Engagement, Attention and listening, Early Interaction and Communication, Establishing Routines, Developing Play Skills, Gross and Fine Motor Development	

