

The Curriculum

The Rodney House School curriculum is broad, balanced, relevant and challenging. It meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and the National Curriculum (NC) and includes modifications to make it accessible to all pupils. Children at Rodney House progress through age appropriate subjects differentiated to meet their individual needs. Throughout the curriculum the key focus is on the skills needed for 'readiness to learn' referred to as the 'Prime Areas' (Communication, PSED, and Physical Development).

Monitoring and assessment of pupils' work takes place continuously. Wherever possible, pupils are encouraged to be involved in the setting of their own targets and in assessing to what extent these have been met. The targets set are carefully chosen to ensure that pupils succeed, therefore developing confidence and a positive attitude to work. This process starts from the very beginning, when the children are perhaps, simply, asked to look at a piece of work they have completed or share photographs of past learning experiences.

Pupils and staff use a range of methods to record work and to monitor progress. In addition to the more usual methods of writing and drawing, models, photographs, computers, audio and video clips are all used.

Learning styles vary from pupil to pupil. This is taken into account when lessons are planned and teaching styles are therefore equally varied. Although a mixture of whole class, group and individual teaching is usually appropriate, the exact balance between these depends upon the needs of the class and the individual. Interactive learning is highly valued. Practical lessons and Educational Visits are a common feature of the school week for all classes.

Feedback and Marking

It is important that the teaching team provides constructive feedback to pupils, both written and orally, focusing on success and improvement needs against learning outcomes. This enables pupils to become reflective learners and helps them to close the gap between what they can do currently and what we would like them to do.

We recognise that the teaching team consists of Teachers, Teaching Assistants and any other specialist teachers employed by the school.

For pupils working at a pre-national curriculum level marking and feedback strategies include:

- Verbal Praise
- Signing
- Facial expressions
- Stickers and stamps
- Written annotations, short and narrative observations (written)
- Annotation of work and photographs by staff
- Children beginning to annotate their own work and pictures
- Oral dialogue with children about their play, work or Learning Journeys.

Content Subject knowledge is not learned in isolation. Staff may therefore choose to teach a combination of curricular areas linked together by a common topic. This is known as a cross-curricular theme. Alternatively subjects are taught in isolation, as discrete subjects, but with links drawn out and emphasised. Both methods enable pupils to use knowledge, skills and

understanding taught in one context in a new area, thereby ensuring transfer and generalisation of learning and the development of problem solving skills.

In order to enhance the curriculum and make it meaningful we devise a comprehensive programme of educational visits for each class group throughout the year, so that the children have access to a range of learning experiences.

English

At Rodney House we recognise that communication skills are an integral part of learning. Opportunities to communicate are embedded across the school day. Therefore most children will have specific communication targets, set according to the needs of individual pupils. During Literacy lessons pupils work towards individual or group targets in reading, writing, and speaking and listening in a multi sensory manner.

A range of additional systems is used at Rodney House with those pupils who require extra support in learning to communicate. These include signs, symbols, and pictures and sometimes alternative and augmentative communication aids such as switch technology: "Big Macs;" a simple switch that holds a recorded message. The use of these systems gives pupils a means of developing concepts, knowledge and understanding within the curriculum and then communicating their learning to others.

Mathematics

Mathematics at Rodney House begins with experiencing then developing an understanding of, pattern and rhythm, hearing and experiencing practical number, quantity, shape and measure. Maths takes place daily through a mixture of discrete teaching, enhancement activities and local walks. Planned opportunities are taken, within the wider curriculum, to extend mathematical language, understanding and knowledge.

Our foremost aim is to ensure that, as far as possible, all pupils develop mathematical confidence in the practical situations of everyday life.

Science

In Science we aim to develop inquiring minds so that children may explore their surroundings in order to understand them and to devise their own problem solving strategies.

Science is delivered through hands on and multisensory experience appropriate to their level of understanding, for instance chemistry: change of state is taught through baking. Children are introduced to early recording strategies such as taking a photograph.

History & Geography

Teaching in these subjects starts by developing the child's sense of self. Children learn about their own recent past and their community. This facilitated by hands on experience and local exploratory visits. The children have opportunities to learn about other countries and cultures world-wide.

Information and Communication Technology

Our pupils have the opportunity to use technology in order to;

- communicate with individuals
- solve problems
- process information
- store and retrieve information
- communicate with the wider community
- consolidate concepts learned in other areas

For some pupils technology proves to be a very motivating and practical tool, which provides access to learning throughout the curriculum.

Design & Technology

These are creative practical activities that involve children observing, identifying, investigating, exploring, categorising, modeling, planning, making and evaluating.

Pupils of all ages have the opportunity to cook. Food technology provides many important cross-

curricular opportunities for learning during enjoyable and often highly motivating activities e.g. the change of liquids to solids, following instructions and procedures, turn-taking, basic safety and hygiene rules. During such activities staff respect religious and dietary observances.

Art and Design

The overarching aim for children at Rodney House is for the children to work freely and creatively. Over time children will work with a wide variety of media. Pupils are encouraged to experiment with and explore materials and are supported to progress towards artistic representation of people, places and events.

Music

All children explore the expressive elements of sound and music using voice, percussion and electronic instruments. They also have the opportunity to listen to a wide variety of music and organised sounds in order to develop various skills. These may range from simple sound recognition to following rhythms and describing moods and feelings suggested by different pieces of music.

Physical Education/development

The development of self help skills is at the core of the Rodney house curriculum with an emphasis on independence. Opportunities are planned so that children develop their fine and gross motor skills; additionally twice weekly P.E. sessions following a topic accessing a range of physical activities such as gymnastics and ball skills

In P.E. we develop body awareness and provide learning experiences in which movement plays a significant role. The development of social skills such as turn taking is given a prominent role during all aspects of physical education. Consideration is given to pupils with special physical/medical needs. Physiotherapy and occupational therapy programmes are integrated into these sessions.

Religious Education

RE starts by beginning with the sense of self and placement. We aim to promote spiritual awareness and to develop personal responses to issues regarding beliefs, attitudes and values. We make available to our children the opportunity to experience the rich variety of cultures that make up our city and society. We have a school prayer that we sign and sing.

Religious Education is taught in accordance with the City of Manchester Authority's agreed syllabus.

Sex Education

The Governing Body believes that sex education should not be taught as an isolated subject, but as a natural part of children learning about themselves and their relationships with each other. It is therefore taught with sensitivity appropriately to the child's age throughout their school life.

PHSE and Citizenship

This subject is taught in a cross-curricular manner, embedded in everything Rodney House delivers. We provide opportunities for pupils to develop an awareness of themselves and others as individuals thus promoting mutual respect and understanding. There is an emphasis on personal, social and emotional development and some pupils will continue to work on individual targets developing these areas whilst accessing the wider curriculum.