



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Updated in line with EYFS Framework

Approved	February 2026
Review date	February 2027

This policy is underpinned by the Equality Act (2010) and the Public Sector Equality Duty (2011)

This policy will be monitored by the EYFS leads and reviewed annually in line with any statutory updates to the EYFS Framework.

Mission

Our mission is for every child and young person to be successful in their future lives. For this to happen we must champion the unique potential of every pupil. We know that an excellent education underpinned with opportunities to love, learn and laugh is transformative, and we are committed to this motto.

We take into account pupils' varied life experiences and needs, providing equal opportunities for all pupils, whatever their age, disability, race, religion or belief, gender / gender identity or socio-economic background, to ensure that every child really does matter.

Context

Manor School and The Avenue School are special schools in the Rise Partnership Trust, both schools educate reception aged children. Both schools are located in the London Borough of Brent.

All children entering EYFS at RPT schools have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in response to their diagnosis and needs. Upon entry, all pupils are working at a cognitive level which is significantly below the national average in terms of age-related expectations.

This policy should be read alongside the DfE statutory framework for the EYFS (2024), SEND Code of Practice 2015 and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)

Manor School	The Avenue School
Manor School pupils have a wide range of special educational needs and disabilities including: global developmental delay, autism, and moderate to severe learning difficulties. The vast majority of pupils (over 85%) have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Manor School have five reception classes based at our specialist Manor School Early Years Centre (NW10 9BX), each of which follows the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidance. Depending on annual admission numbers, a small cohort of reception-aged pupils may be based at our main site on Chamberlayne Road (NW10 3NT).	All pupils have a diagnosis Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and additional complex learning needs. All pupils have at least one of the following: no functional communication system, not making progress and/or exhibit behaviours of concern. The Avenue School is an all age school and has one reception class. All classes in school are taught using the principles of Verbal Behaviour.

RPT schools provide a highly specialist learning environment with small classes, specially trained staff and onsite Behaviour specialists, Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) and Occupational Therapy (OT) services. Personalised learning is central to what we do and interventions are carefully planned to ensure that every pupil is given the opportunity to achieve their true potential

RPT schools are aware that we need to focus on developing skills to support our EYFS children in being school-ready. The number of children in need of greater support with hygiene and self-care is significantly higher than in mainstream EYFS settings in Brent. A key role of our EYFS settings is to help increase the independence, social, and attention skills of our children so that they can access learning more successfully.

For many of our EYFS families, recognition of their child's needs or diagnosis has been a relatively recent event. At RPT schools we are working within a distinctly different context from our mainstream counterparts. We believe that it is important to recognise the needs of the child and focus on personalised small-step

progress towards EHCP Outcomes. Traditional EYFS systems and strategies are then used to compliment this process.

On leaving EYFS to enter Key Stage 1, the majority of our children will be ‘emerging’ on the EYFS Profile (EYFSP). Whilst some children may occasionally reach ‘expected’ or ‘exceeded’ in an area, any child that is able to reach ‘expected’ or ‘exceeded’ across multiple areas may be considered more suited to specialist support within a mainstream setting.

This policy sets out how we follow the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, effective from January 2024 and updated September 2025, within the specialist and personalised setting of our schools.

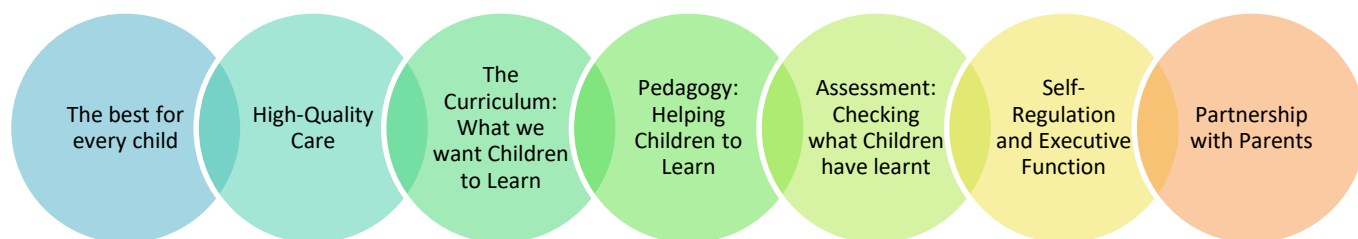
Safeguarding and Welfare

Named DSLs at RPT sites

RPT Senior Safeguarding Lead	Magdalena Gruszczynska-Lis
Manor School Early Years Centre	DSL Mala Neves DDSL Jane Gyakyi
The Avenue School	DSL Esen Fikret DDSL Penny Doswell

What is the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)?

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a framework that sets the standards for the learning, development, and care of children from birth to 5 years old. All schools and providers on the Early Years Register must follow the EYFS Statutory Guidance. The framework supports an integrated approach to early learning and is designed to be flexible so that staff can follow each child's unique interests and needs. It gives professionals a set of common principles and commitments to deliver quality early education and childcare. The Seven Features of Effective Practice (Development Matters 2023) is embedded in our approach to teaching:



Early Years at RPT Schools – ‘Love, Learn, Laugh’

At Rise Partnership Trust we recognise that every child is unique, and our Early Years practitioners develop responsive learning environments which suit the learning styles and interests of each individual child. Early intervention and strong collaboration between a number of parties (including: class teams, families, previous Early Years settings and agencies, and our own Multi-Agency Support Team or MAST) ensures that all children, regardless of their SEN, have the best start to school life. By working collaboratively, staff enable

our children to overcome their barriers to learning.

Our Early Years departments aim to:

- Give each child a happy, positive and enjoyable start to school life;
- Consistently provide high-quality care, ensuring children know they are loved and well cared for;
- Build upon prior learning by working in partnership with parents, carers, previous settings, and a wide range of professionals;
- In line with the 'Preparing for Adulthood from the Earliest Years' agenda; help each child to establish solid foundations for future learning and development, particularly with regard to functional communication, independence, and self-care;
- Provide each child with a wide range of new and exciting experiences, and give them opportunities to consolidate existing skills and to learn new ones;
- Support each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually, and emotionally through high expectations, praise and positivity;
- Celebrate each child's personal successes and achievements together with their families;
- Provide quality and consistency so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind;
- Regularly assess and review the needs and interests of each individual child;
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported;

At RPT we believe that honouring the 4 outcomes of the EHCP (**Communication and Interaction; Cognition and Learning; Social, Emotional and Mental Health; Sensory and Physical Needs**) helps us to ensure that we provide the above. We are guided in the delivery of this by the four principles which underpin EYFS guidance. These are:

1. A Unique Child: We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. This is particularly important at RPT schools where we value and celebrate the small steps of achievement of all children.

2. Positive Relationships: We recognise that children learn to connect to the world and grow in strength and independence from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, and professional relationships with all children and their families. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others. We use praise and encouragement, consistent reinforcement, graded prompting, and celebration/rewards to encourage positive attitudes to learning, as well as consistent strategies to set and communicate clear boundaries and keep children safe.

3. Enabling Environments: We recognise that the environment plays a key role in scaffolding and extending a child's development. Through careful observation, we assess each child's interests, stages of development, and learning needs. This information is used to create a stimulating and engaging environment which reflects children's cultures and experiences. A range of indoor and outdoor playresources and opportunities are provided. Our reception classes are set up to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. Areas are clearly defined and resources are labelled so that children learn to locate equipment and resources as independently as possible. We believe in a strong Home-School partnership which begins before the child starts school and continues throughout the year.

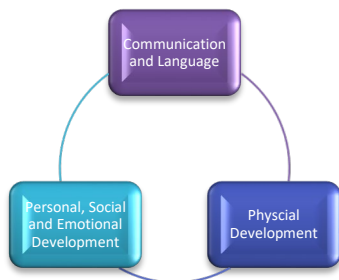
4. Learning and Development: The majority of the children in our Early Years classes need a structured approach to learning, a balance between adult-led play-focused activities and opportunities to generalise learning. We aim to ensure that all of our activities, including adult-led focused learning, are delivered in a playful, engaging and meaningful way whilst still challenging and extending individuals.

Our Curriculum, Teaching and Learning:

Curriculum

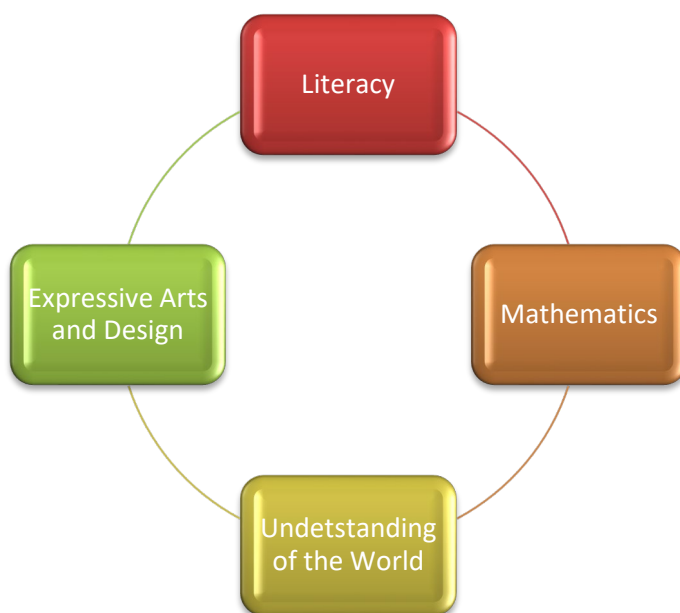
Our reception classes follow the guidance as outlined in the updated EYFS Statutory Framework and use this to compliment the Outcomes of each child's EHCP.

The framework identifies seven areas of learning and development, all of which are important and interconnected. Three areas (Prime Areas) are particularly important when it comes to building a child's capacity to learn, form relationships, and thrive. These are:



These areas are particularly important for the children at RPT schools and we have created EYFS Processes Rationale documents to map these onto the EHCP Outcomes (appendix 1 and 2).

As children grow and develop, the four 'Specific Areas' are used to strengthen and apply learning in the Prime Areas. These are:



These prime and specific areas in EYFS are strongly interconnected with the 4 EHCP Outcome areas. Please see EYFS Processes Rationale documents for further detail (appendix 1 and 2).

Staff working in our Early Years classes support learning with these seven areas in mind and consider each child's unique needs, interests, and stage of development when planning activities.

Teaching and learning is delivered in a cross-curricular way, i.e. planned activities often cover more than one area of learning. It is well researched that children in their early years learn by playing and exploring, being active, and through creating and thinking critically. However, many of our children need support in developing the early stages of these skills. Often, play skills need to be explicitly taught 1:1 with an adult before a child can access opportunities to initiate their own learning through play.

Due to the nature of our settings, a range of specialist pedagogy is used to support receptive (understanding) and expressive communication and attention. Approaches including symbol communication, Makaton signing, Intensive Interaction, Attention Autism, Verbal Behaviour teaching methodology and The Curiosity Programme are used according to needs within the settings and through the wider schools. Visual and auditory cues are also used to aid smooth transitions between activities and to promote the understanding of routines. At RPT schools, teachers work closely with members of the MAST (comprising Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, and autism and behaviour specialists) to ensure that individual pupils' PIP (Personal Intervention Plan) targets are fully integrated.

Planning

Long Term planning is inspired by the slogan “Ready, Steady, Go!” In the Autumn term, the focus is on settling the children into school and establishing routines and boundaries so that they are “ready” to learn. In the Spring term, children are more established in the setting and are on a “steady” path for learning. We are able to focus on teaching a wider range of skills and increasing engagement and a love of learning. In the Summer term, children are encouraged to be more independent in tasks and to explore and expand on the learning they have acquired; we aim for them to be able to generalise skills and be well-supported transition for when they “go” to Key Stage 1.

Each half term, a medium term overview plan is created based around teaching of specific skills. A set of core texts are planned in order to promote a love of stories and give a flexible basis around which to structure learning activities. Staff also create detailed, fortnightly plans linked to their current theme, based on PIP targets, children’s interests, upcoming events, and assessment for next steps. Staff in the Early Years consider all seven areas (Prime and Specific) when planning. Occasionally theme-based teaching will take place either linked to a group of children’s interests, an educational visit, or a specific festival/celebration. Planning is flexible to ensure that the Early Years classes have the opportunity to follow school themes and local or national events. Educational trips, visits within the local community, and visitors to school are organised to enhance learning.

Planning is implemented through purposeful play, adult-led activities (including structured play, daily group stories, focused singing sessions, 1-1 work linked to PIP targets, and sessions incorporating recommendations from therapists), and child-initiated activities. Within RPT schools, the ratio of adult-led activities is higher than at many other EYFS settings in order to ensure our children are supported in purposeful learning and understanding. This enables staff to reinforce, repeat, and adapt learning opportunities for all children. Staff respond to each child’s emerging needs and interests, and guide their development through warm, positive interactions. The Characteristics of Effective Learning underpin learning and development across all areas and support children to become effective and motivated learners.

Our Early Years practitioners keep the three characteristics in mind when planning activities:

Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’;

Active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements;

Creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Staff continually observe what the children are doing and how they’re learning most effectively, to identify where to take their learning next. Staff in our Early Years classes plan for each child’s learning based on their interests and the assessments made about their stage of development through our internal developmental assessment system ‘Small Steps’.

Personal Intervention Plans (PIPs)

Like every other pupil at RPT schools, all children in our reception classes have a PIP (Personal Intervention Plan). Targets are set at the beginning of a half-term and progress is tracked throughout the half-term. The PIP headings for Early Years are strongly influenced by the EHCP Outcomes. Each child has 6 targets to work on per half term under the headings:



Please see EYFS Processes Rationale documents for how these interlink with the Prime and Specific areas. (Appendix 1 and 2)

Cognition and Learning targets allow practitioners to be flexible and respond to the child's individual needs. Children working at a younger level on Development Matters may have Cognition and Learning targets which overlap with the 3 Prime areas. As children progress through Development Matters their Cognition and Learning targets become broader. However, even as children progress not all of the seven areas are set as PIP targets. Practitioners prioritise target setting for learning skills which benefit from pre-planned and adult led experiences. Other aspects of learning such as Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design which benefit from following the child's interests are delivered in a more flexible manner and judgements are made through 'in the moment' and 'over time' observations.

Observation, Assessment and Evidence Collection

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise pupils' progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. (Statutory framework for the EYFS – January 2024 updated September 2025).

Baseline

All children are baselined on our internal developmental assessment system; Small Steps.

As required by the statutory framework for the EYFS, the Reception Baseline Assessment is carried out within the first six weeks of a child starting with us. If pupils are able to undertake this statutory assessment; appropriate modifications will be made, in line with the Reception Baseline Assessment guidance, to support pupil engagement. Despite modifications, some pupils may need to be dis-applied if it is deemed that they do not have the pre-requisite skills in order to access the assessment. Any decision to dis-apply is made jointly by the class team, supporting therapists, assigned inclusion practitioners and a member of the SLT.

During the first half-term, staff focus on settling children into their new setting and reducing individual barriers to learning. The complex needs of our children means that it can take longer for them to transfer and generalise skills or demonstrate their skills to new adults.

Formative Assessment

At RPT schools ongoing formative assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Ongoing formative assessment through observation is carried out by all of the adults working in our EYFS classes and is done in collaboration with our behaviour specialists, SaLTs, OTs, and SLT.

Evidence Collection

“When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement. Practitioners **are not required** to prove this through collection of any physical evidence.” (Statutory Framework January 2024 updated September 2025)

In line with advice that assessment should not take away from interaction with children, not all observations are formally recorded and every learning goal is not evidenced multiple times. However, each class holds weekly team planning sessions where Early Learning Goals and individual learning is discussed and observations of the children are shared. This dialogue informs the planning for the following week. We are of the belief that when viewed alongside all of the specialist support and assessment that each pupil at RPT schools is given in order to reach their PIP targets and EHCP Outcomes, we can be confident that our judgements of their progress are secure.

Each term class staff are required to use the Evidence for Learning app to record observations for each child under the 6 PIP headings (starting in Autumn 2). Where appropriate, links are made to Early Learning Goals and this evidence is used to inform “best fit” judgements. Progress is formally recorded against the Development Matters statements on a termly basis.

Staff collect evidence using Evidence for Learning for a selection of PIP targets each half-term. This process starts in Autumn 2, as Autumn 1 is used for settling and baselining children. This results in at least 15 pieces of digital evidence per child per year across the Prime areas and Literacy and Mathematics from the Specific areas.

In addition to Evidence for Learning, staff complete Expressive Arts and Design and Understanding the World photo montages, highlight the Early Learning Goals 3 times a year, complete the EYFSP at the end of the year, complete Small Steps assessment, and discuss individuals in depth at Pupil Progress Meetings.

The EYFSP (Early Years Foundation Stage Profile)

The EYFSP is a statutory assessment that must be completed in the final term of the year in which the child reaches five years of age, and within the statutory guidelines. The profile summarises and describes an individual's attainment at the end of the Early Years. It gives the child's attainment in relation to the 17 ELG descriptors and indicates whether their development within each ELG is ‘emerging’, ‘expected’ or ‘exceeding’. The profile must reflect ongoing observation. Information that can be used to inform EYFSP judgements include staff judgement, Evidence for Learning, PIP trackers, Pupil Progress Meetings discussions, Small Steps assessment, therapy reports, and Annual Review discussions.

Where pupils show evidence of achievement towards EYFSP outcomes, these are shared with parents, the local authority, and receiving Year 1 teachers as required by the EYFS statutory framework.

Family links

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very hard to ensure that they're as involved as possible in school life and supporting their child's learning at home.

We want all parents to feel that they can speak to us about their child at any time and to be comfortable in our setting. We aim to fully involve parents in their child's transition from nursery to school and we do this via meetings with parents and liaisons at the child's pre-school setting. EYFS staff, Parents/Carers and pre-school practitioners fill out an ‘All About Me’ booklet or a ‘Who am I?’ document that provides the school with important information (such as: likes, dislikes, information about family members, etc.) which helps to enable a smooth transition. We also offer a ‘Stay and Play’ session – taking place during the summer term, before

pupils join in the autumn – to begin to build a home-school connection, prior to the September start. Our Home-School Partnership Meeting at the beginning of the year continues our journey of working together. We also offer various parenting workshops, coffee mornings and training. Meetings with the class teacher are set up each term, with two home-school conversations and one Annual Review, each year.

These meetings help to inform assessments, which strengthen judgements. Families are given the opportunity to discuss areas where they would like their child to be supported with at school, such as toileting or behaviour. All progress reports and PIPs are shared with parents and we encourage all families to feed into these processes. Looking at pupil progress towards the Early Learning Goals, alongside our own internal development assessment system – Small Steps, celebrates what their child can do and identifies manageable next steps. We do not reference chronological age-related expectations, which can be distracting when our EYFS pupils are working at the earliest developmental stages (i.e. Birth to three).

For regular communication each child receives a weekly home-link letter. The home-link letter allows us to share updates on what each child has been learning and informs families of weekly progress and suggestions on how to extend learning at home. It also enables families to share their child's successes with school. We encourage all parents to stay in touch and check the school website regularly.

Transition

We support a smooth transition to Key Stage 1 (KS1) by ensuring opportunities for professional dialogue between EYFS and KS1 teachers in the summer term. Statutory data is submitted to the Local Authority within the statutory assessment timeframe. Our systemic approach to teaching and learning means our EYFS pupils will continue to build upon their social, emotional and functional skills, as they move into KS1 and beyond.

Across both schools and throughout the key stages we continue to be heavily influenced by the EYFS principles and Characteristics of Effective learning and this ethos supports all of our pupils to thrive as they begin their journey of preparing for adulthood.

Appendix 1

The Avenue School - EYFS Processes Rationale

At The Avenue School we have a statutory obligation to follow the SEND code of practice and honour the EHCP of every pupil.

We also have a statutory obligation to follow the EYFS statutory framework. Learning and Development requirements comprise of the 7 areas of learning placing focus on the 3 prime areas. The 4 specific areas are then used to strengthen and apply learning in the 3 prime areas.

At The Avenue School we believe that the 4 areas of the EHCP are strongly interconnected with the prime and specific areas in EYFS and that by viewing the EYFS areas of learning and development through the lens of a pupils individual EHCP we will be providing for the best possible outcomes.

3 Prime Areas	4 Specific Areas	4 EHCP Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and Language • Personal, Social and Emotional Development • Physical Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy • Maths • Understanding the World • Expressive Arts and Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and Interaction • Social, Emotional and Mental Health • Cognition and Learning • Sensory and Physical needs

Guidance			Assessment system					
EHCP	Prime and Specific	Early Learning Goals	MAST Assessment	Reception Baseline	EYFSP	Development Matters	Small Steps B1-4	VB MAPP Milestones and Barriers Assessment
Communication and Interaction	Communication and Language	Speaking	SaLT Observations and Assessment					
		Listening, Attention and Understanding						
Social, Emotional and Mental Health	Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Self Regulation	SaLT and OT Assessment					
		Managing Self						
		Building Relationships						
Sensory and Physical Needs	Physical Development	Gross Motor Skills	OT Observations and Assessment					
		Fine Motor Skills						
Cognition and Learning	Literacy	Comprehension	SaLT and OT Assessment					
		Word Reading						
		Writing						
		Mathematics						
	Understanding the World	Number						
		Numerical Patterns						
		People, Culture and Communities						
	Expressive Arts and Design	The Natural World						
		Past and Present						
		Creating with Materials						
		Being Imaginative and Expressive						
Evidence								
PIPS Annual Review Evidence for Learning	EYFSP Evidence for Learning Pupil Progress Meetings	EYFSP Pupil Progress Meetings						

Appendix 2

Manor School – EYFS Processes Rationale

At Manor School, we have a statutory obligation to follow the SEND code of practice and honour the EHCP of every pupil.

We also have a statutory obligation to follow the EYFS statutory framework. Learning and development requirements comprise of the 7 areas of learning placing focus on the 3 prime areas. The 4 specific areas are then used to strengthen and apply learning in the 3 prime areas.

At Manor School we believe that the 4 areas of the EHCP are strongly interconnected with the prime and specific areas in EYFS and that by viewing the EYFS areas of learning and development through the lens of a pupils individual EHCP we will be providing for the best possible outcomes.

3 Prime areas	4 Specific areas	4 EHCP Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication and Language - Personal, Social and Emotional Development - Physical Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Literacy - Maths - Understanding the World - Expressive Arts and Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication and Interaction - Social, Emotional and Mental Health - Sensory/ Physical needs - Cognition and Learning

Guidance			Assessment system				
EHCP	Prime and Specific	Early Learning Goals	MAST Assessment	Reception Baseline	EYFSP	Development Matters	Small Steps B1-4
Communication and Interaction	Communication and Language	Speaking	SaLT Observations and Assessment				
		Listening, Attention and Understanding					
Social, Emotional and Mental Health	Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Self Regulation	SaLT and OT Assessment				
		Managing Self					
		Building Relationships					
Sensory and Physical Needs	Physical Development	Gross Motor Skills	OT Observations and Assessment				
		Fine Motor Skills					
Cognition and Learning	Literacy	Comprehension	SaLT and OT Assessment				
		Word Reading					
		Writing					
	Mathematics	Number					
		Numerical Patterns					
	Understanding the World	People, Culture and Communities					
		The Natural World					
		Past and Present					
	Expressive Arts and Design	Creating with Materials					
Being Imaginative and Expressive							
Evidence							
PIPS Annual Review Evidence for Learning	EYFSP Evidence for Learning Pupil Progress Meetings	EYFSP Pupil Progress Meetings					

