

Communication, Phonics & Reading Policy

At Manor Green College, we take great pride in providing students with a range of opportunities to develop both their receptive and expressive language skills, preparing them for their next steps in education and for life beyond Manor Green. However, there is not a one-size-fits-all approach, and the processes are determined by the needs of the individuals in each class. We have a number of overarching principles which guide teaching and learning on a daily basis, all of which can be categorised within four main areas:



Communication

At Manor Green College, our students have a wide range of starting points in terms of communication. In our Modular and Generic (MLD) pathways, many students are able to communicate effectively in a range of contexts, adapting their language use to meet the requirements of the situation. In our Class Based (SLD) pathway, students may have limited speaking and listening skills and will rely on a wider bank of strategies to support communication such as Aided Language Boards (ALBs), Grid communication devices, Makaton signing and the use of symbols to support text recognition. In our High Needs classes (CLDD/PMLD), many of our learners are pre-verbal and, in some cases, non-verbal. Students within this pathway require approaches utilising (as appropriate to individuals) ALBs, Grid, Makaton, Symbols, PECS, E-Tran frames and, at times, bespoke strategies tailored to the very specific needs of a young person.

Our overarching principles of Communication are:

- All students receive access to appropriate communication strategies, according to their level of need, in order to facilitate their ability to express themselves.
- All students receive appropriate levels of support to facilitate their access to learning.

Phonics & Early Reading

Phonics is just one element of what makes a skilled reader, but we recognise that many of our young people are at the developmental stage where they are just beginning to access written information, and so the development of phonic knowledge is a logical and important element of the education offer at Manor Green College.

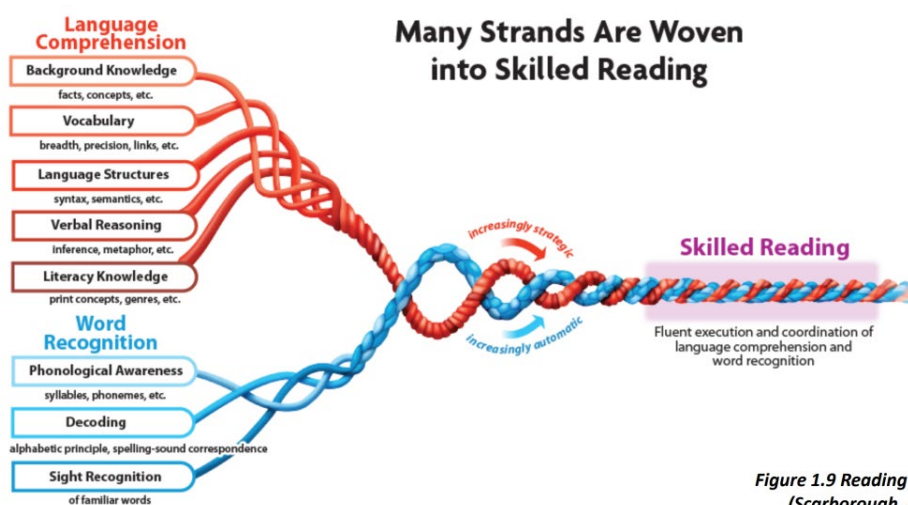


Figure 1.9 Reading Rope
(Scarborough, 2001)

We follow the Twinkl Phonics systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) programme which supports teaching and learning through providing a clear structure and progression through those Early Reading skills, ensuring our young people move sequentially through key steps when they are ready and able. Many of our young people are socially and

emotionally significantly below their biological age, and so the Twinkl Phonics resources are fully stage-appropriate for them. However, some of our students require alternative resources which may be more age-appropriate, in which case we use the PhonicBooks resources, which we map against the Twinkl Phonics SSP programme, to ensure students are engaged and motivated to continue on their early-reading learning journey.

Further up the school, particularly towards the end of KS4 and into FE, students are taught to use technology to support them to access reading in different contexts. Some students have access to Reading Pens which they use to access KS4 accredited courses with increased independence (Entry Level and GCSE Maths, for example), and in FE students are taught how to use iPads to take photos of text and have this text read aloud to them. This supports our young people to access the world around them in an independent manner beyond the gates of Manor Green College.

Our overarching principles of Phonics & Early Reading are:

- Students have access to a DfE approved Systematic Synthetic Phonics scheme (SSP) when they are developmentally ready for it.
- Students receive at least three discrete phonics sessions per week, which are based on their current level of phonic knowledge, and these are adapted where necessary to best meet the needs of the students. These are delivered in small groups where necessary.
- Students have access to age- and/or stage-appropriate texts and resources to support the development of their phonic knowledge and decoding skills.
- Students have access to technology to support them to remove barriers to learning in other areas of the curriculum and also when out in the community.

Guided Reading & High Quality Texts

As students progress through the school, many will get to a point where they become confident, fluent readers, with decoding skills which allow them to access a wide range of texts and reading opportunities independently. As our young people approach this stage, staff begin to incorporate Guided Reading sessions, which focuses on the 6 key areas of reading comprehension: making connections, predicting, summarising, visualising, questioning and monitoring. As a general rule, at least once per week, students work with support in small groups to develop these skills using texts which are slightly above their independent reading level so as to promote progress.

Within English lessons across the whole college, students have access to High Quality Texts which provide a range of modelled examples of excellent language use, as well as opportunities to engage with texts in different ways. We have membership with the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) which allows us access to the Power of Reading scheme - a selection of recommended texts for students reading and working at levels equivalent to EYFS to Year 6.

Our overarching principles of Guided Reading & High Quality Texts are:

- Students for whom reading comprehension skills is an appropriate area for development receive discrete Guided Reading sessions, either within or separate from their timetabled English/Literacy lessons.
- Through Guided Reading, students have support to access texts which are slightly above the level of their independent reading skills on a regular basis.
- All students have regular access to High Quality Texts. A minimum of three times per year, these are taken from the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) Power of Reading scheme.

Writing

The way in which our students engage with writing varies depending on a number of factors, including their physical abilities, their cognitive abilities and the end-points based on their pathway. Students with the highest level of need may be developing their ability to make purposeful marks on the page or with other media (such as sand, shaving foam, chalk or water) and will be starting to allocate meaning to the marks that they make. Moving through the college, other students may be developing simple sentence constructions with the support of strategies such as

Colourful Semantics which helps our young people to identify the purpose of words within sentences, alongside the physical act of writing. Some students who cannot, or who are not yet able to, write, may use technology such as SymWriter environments as a word processing tool to express their ideas as text.



Students in Modular and Generic Key Stage 4 have the opportunity to engage with Entry Level programmes of study which provide the opportunity to write for a wide range of purposes, developing their writing style and understanding of how language use changes in different contexts. Feedback from examining bodies has been overwhelmingly complimentary about the opportunities our students have to develop their writing skills, and they make excellent progress through the curriculum in this way.

Our overarching principles of Writing are:

- Students each receive support to write using strategies appropriate to their level of need.
- When appropriate, students have opportunities to write for a range of purposes, using strategies, voices and techniques appropriate to the different forms.
- Students have access to high-quality texts which model excellent language use, and explore these texts to develop their own writing.

English for students in High Needs. (Students with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties & Autistic students with complex learning difficulties and disabilities – CLDD)

Students at Manor Green College who have High Needs have the same entitlement to develop literacy skills as those following the National Curriculum programmes of study and since most of the students in High Needs are functioning at cognitive levels significantly below their chronological ages it is appropriate that they are included in our literacy aims regardless of age.

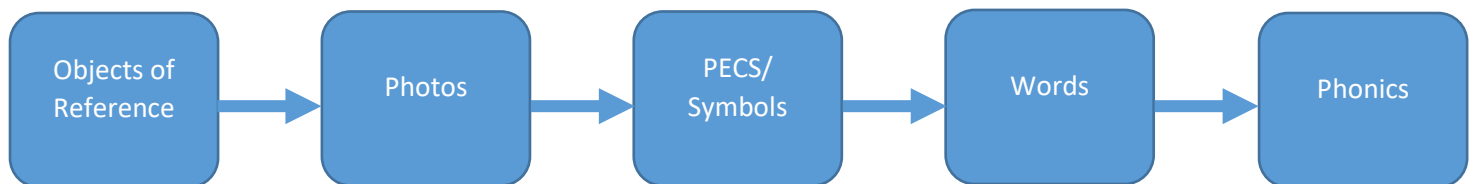
Setting aside specific times each day is regarded as being inappropriate for students within High Needs as they invariably have great difficulties maintaining concentration and attention. More realistically and effectively they should be immersed in on-going, multi-sensory experiences to foster emergent literacy skills and awareness through all aspects of their daily routines and work. Guided by an application of early young personhood development plus an understanding of how their learning is affected by their disabilities we can offer the experiences which are the foundation of early learning for all developmentally young students.

All students must experience and retain a series of pre-requisites to learning in order to move on to develop recognised skills in literacy. These pre-requisites include self-awareness, a sense of rhythm, pattern and order and communication skills.

For most of our High Needs students, gaining these requisites will be a continuous process throughout their time at school. In terms of progression we recognise that the usual hierarchical model is not realistic for High Needs students – a more appropriate one is horizontal. These students move on in very small steps – some of which are imperceptible to those who do not know them well and once achieved these steps are easily lost without continuous reinforcement. As most of our students will not move beyond this requisite stage we must be skilled at presenting the same learning goals in different ways. We also recognise that some students may regress and lose skills or need to redevelop skills previously learned. To monitor student's achievements, we use personalised assessment continuums (MYPAC) which offers breadth of developmental steps for individual students as well as progression.

Communication

In order for our High Needs students to become communicators, a multidisciplinary approach using the skills of the teacher, occupational therapists and the speech and language therapists will enable the student to find the means to make their needs, wants, feelings and ideas known. Intensive Interaction & Attention Autism strategies are used to support the development of pre-linguistic skills that are a foundation for students becoming independent communicators e.g. turn taking, sharing and vocalisation. Our students at the pre-phonics stage are working within the communication stages below:



Staff can help the student to become as independent a communicator as possible by giving attention to:

- how the student calls for attention.
- how the student greets.
- how the student indicates yes/no.
- how the student indicates his/her needs.
- how the student makes choices.
- how the student gives more complex information.

- how the student asks questions.
- how the student interrupts.
- how the student expresses emotions.
- how the student initiates, sustains and terminates communication.
- how well the student is understood by familiar people.
- how well strangers can understand the student.

Within High Needs, we believe in the philosophy of Total Communication, incorporating all forms of communication into our practice.

Pre-Phonics Curriculum - For those students who need a progressive pre-phonics pathway, we have aligned Twinkl with the Engagement model.

Entry: Engagement Model Students.

Exit: First 5 phonemes from Level 2 embedded and seen 3 times in different sessions.

Manor Green College High Needs Pre-Phonics Curriculum

Engagement Model (MYPAC Assessment)

Exploration	Realisation	Anticipation	Persistence	Initiation
<p>Whether a student can build on their initial reaction to a new stimulus or activity. For example, whether they display more than an involuntary or startled reaction to the activity. Exploration becomes more established when it is presented in different contexts e.g. a different time of day/place.</p>	<p>How the student interacts with a new stimulus or activity or discovers a new aspect of a familiar stimulus or activity. The student will often show what familiar adults consider to be 'surprise' 'excitement' 'delight' or 'fear'. They will display behaviours that show they want more control of the stimulus.</p>	<p>How much the student predicts, expects or associates a stimulus or activity with an event. Anticipation becomes more established when the student shows awareness that a familiar activity is about to start or finish. It is important in measuring understanding of cause and effect.</p>	<p>Whether the student can sustain their attention in a stimulus or activity for long enough that they can actively try to find out more and interact with it. Persistence becomes more established when the student shows a determined effort to interact with the stimulus or activity. They will do this by showing intentional changes such as gaze, posture or hand movement.</p>	<p>How much, and the different ways, a student investigates a stimulus or activity in order to bring about a desired outcome. Initiation becomes more established when the student shows they understand how to create an impact on their environment in order to achieve a desired outcome.</p>
	<p>Environmental (water sounds, outdoor walk, animal and weather sounds)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Students will discover sounds from their indoor and outdoor environment e.g. animal sounds, traffic, routine sounds -Students will be taught to turn towards familiar sounds. -Students may be startled by loud noises. -Students will be taught how to make eye contact for longer periods. -Students will recognise and be calmed by familiar voices. -Students will be taught to concentrate intently on an object or activity of their choice. 	<p>Instrumental (Drum beats, pots and pans, shakers, bells)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Students will discover a variety of sounds from a range of instruments and music cues -Students will use gestures like waving and pointing to communicate. -Students will be taught to reach for or point to something they want. -Students will imitate gestures, words and sounds. -Students will be taught to imitate what adults do, taking turns in conversation and activities. -Students will listen and respond to a simple instruction. -Students will repeat actions that have an effect. -Students will be interested in and explore sounds made by banging and tapping familiar objects. 	<p>Voice Sounds (Action sounds, using mirrors)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will discover a range of voice sounds and mouth shapes through interactions with staff -Students will anticipate noises and begin to make sounds with their bodies. -Students will be taught to communicate needs and feelings in a variety of ways. -Students will turn towards the familiar sound and voices. -Students will be taught to react in interactions with others. -Students will be taught to imitate and mirror voice sounds. 	<p>Rhythm and Rhyme (Clapping, patting, stamping, quiet and loud, fast and slow)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will discover rhythm and rhyme through interaction with their bodies -Students will move parts of their body to sounds they enjoy, such as music or a regular beat. -Students will listen to and enjoy rhythmic patterns in rhymes and stories, trying to join in with actions or vocalisations. -Students will begin to join in with repeated refrains and anticipate key events and phrase in rhymes and stories. -Students will be taught to begin to focus attention and change their attention focus.

Manor Green College High Needs Phonics and Reading Curriculum

All students within the High Needs Pathway have regular access to high quality literature. Their reading progression route will be determined by their class teacher depending on their current needs and abilities. For those students learning to read, the school uses Twinkl Phonics as its main phonics scheme and staff have undertaken training. This is a research-based, DfE-approved phonics and reading scheme. Staff will assess and record using MYPAC, Phonics Level 1 & 2 Assessments and Earwig.

Pre-readers	Shared reading	Phonics Level 1 & 2	Independent reading
<p>Pre-readers phonics sessions are typically cross-curricular with music and sensory sessions in order to motivate and capture the attention of these students. Older students, whose reading has progressed more slowly, will be encouraged to listen to a wide range of stories.</p>	<p>Through the use of enlarged texts via big books, ICT and high quality fiction books, the student will become more independent in reading material that would otherwise be too difficult. When using these books in 'shared reading' the teacher takes responsibility for decoding, but at the same time the activity allows for, but does not demand, active participation. It allows the young person to learn at his/her own rate.</p>	<p>For students who have achieved the skills outlined in the pre-readers section, a more structured approach to systematic synthetic phonics is recommended.</p> <p>For students who have the first 5 phonemes from Level 1 embedded and seen 3 times in different sessions.</p>	<p>The school will provide suitable reading materials to provide structure for both the teacher and the student. We appreciate that students may remain at the same reading level for many years. We provide a range of books specially selected for older readers who continue to work at a lower level. Teaching staff will ensure that reading material is appropriate to the age and development of individual students and promotes the understanding of the diversity of beliefs, attitudes and social and cultural traditions.</p>
<p>Many of our pre-readers attend activities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • music sessions • sensory stories • attention autism • community visits which encourage them to refine their listening. • to enjoy picture books • develop a social sight vocabulary which will enable students to function safely and sensibly in the wider community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - appreciate stories being read to them as a group or on a one to one basis. - Students will actively be encouraged to participate in story reading through pointing at pictures, turning pages and interacting with props during sensory story sessions. - To distinguish between print and pictures - To recognise that words have meaning - To understand one to one correspondence of spoken word to written word - To understand that print is read from left to right and top to bottom - To read the left page before the right - To understand the meaning of capital letters and full stops - To learn that information books have a contents page, index, glossary; that they do not necessarily have to be read from beginning to end - To predict, retell the story - To acquire language skills taught in context - Word recognition - Phonic knowledge e.g. initial sounds, rhyme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students begin to notice different sounds around them - Students enjoy exploring the different sounds that instruments make. - Students start to name different sounds they have identified. - Students start to identify the sounds of familiar instruments and name them. - Students start to talk about the sounds they hear in more detail - Students talk about, describe and compare the sounds of different familiar instruments - Students explore the sound their bodies make by stamping, patting, clapping and clicking - Students join in with familiar songs and rhymes when led by an adult or peer - Students begin to explore the initial sounds of words. - Students start to explore different mouth movements and sounds - Students are able to identify the initial sounds of the words they hear and say 	<p>The student will be encouraged to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learn letter names, sounds and alphabetical order - Recognise initial sounds and some common digraphs - Establish a store of familiar words that are recognised immediately and linked to their meanings - Use picture cues - Decode regular monosyllabic words - Use a range of phonic initial and final phonic sounds and some blends - Recognise that some words can be decoded by 'chunking' - Find information by reading illustrations - Express opinions about books and stories - Recognise rhyming words, rhythm and alliteration - Recognise the difference between stories and information books - Use information books for simple reference purposes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Graphic knowledge e.g. plurals: ing 'ed' endings, contractions, don't, can't - Grammatical language e.g. full stop, question mark, capital letter, word, sentence - Reading for meaning: – pause at full stops and not at the end of a line, read with expression. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decode letter-sound correspondences quickly and effortlessly, using their phonic knowledge and skills - Read 'tricky' words on sight - Understand what they read - Read aloud with fluency and expression - Write confidently, with a strong focus on vocabulary and grammar - Spell quickly and easily by segmenting the sounds in words - Acquire good handwriting where possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use alphabetical order, a simple dictionary and thesaurus to aid their studies - Make and read their own books
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