



TEACHING AND LEARNING HANDBOOK

Play • Learn • Laugh • Succeed

September 2025

Teaching and Learning Handbook User Guide

This handbook is designed to be a comprehensive, practical resource for all staff working with pupils at Fort Royal Primary School, including teachers, teaching assistants, therapists, and support staff. It outlines the pedagogical principles, teaching strategies, and approaches that underpin high-quality, individualised teaching and learning in our inclusive school community.

How to Use This Handbook

Section	Description
1. Pedagogical Approaches	Explores core teaching philosophies such as child-centred planning, developmentally appropriate practice, and multisensory learning.
2. Learning Through Play	Details the types, functions, and teaching value of play in special education, including play schemas and their use in planning.
3. Early Communication and Language	Offers a total communication approach, covering strategies for AAC, PECS, Signalong, and developmental communication stages.
4. Adaptive Teaching	Provides strategies to adjust curriculum, instruction, and environment to meet diverse needs.
5. Sensory and Emotional Regulation	Explains how to support pupils' regulation needs through environmental adaptation and therapeutic collaboration.
6. EHCP Target Teaching	Guides staff in translating EHCP outcomes into daily teaching and meaningful evidence collection.
7. Parent and Community Engagement	Emphasises strategies for home-school partnerships and the wider community's role in education.

Best Practice Tips

- Use this guide during team planning, curriculum design, and pupil progress reviews.
- Refer to specific sections during staff CPD, induction, or mentoring of new staff.
- Align your classroom practice with the approaches and examples outlined to ensure consistency across the school.
- Collaborate with therapists and families using shared terminology and frameworks in this handbook.
- Return to this document regularly to inform reflective practice and adaptation.

Where to Find More Support

- Consult your Phase Leader or SENCO for guidance on implementation.
- Use the references section for deeper reading or research-based evidence.
- Contact therapy teams (SALTs, OTs, Physios) for integrated support

1. Pedagogical Approaches

Teaching and learning at Fort Royal is framed within a **personalised curriculum pathways approach**. While other schools may use standardised pre-/semi-/formal pathways, our practice translates EHCP outcomes, developmental stages, and therapeutic input into individualised pathways for progress.

Staff can therefore articulate each pupil's pathway to learning, how their starting points are identified, how priorities are chosen, and how progress is evidenced in daily teaching. This ensures that new staff, governors, families and external stakeholders can clearly see how every child's journey fits within a structured, pathway-based model, even when their route is unique.

1.1 Child-Centred Planning

Definition:

An approach where the learner's individual needs, preferences, and strengths drive curriculum content, teaching strategies, and outcomes.

In Practice:

- Teachers use their knowledge of each pupil and draw on information from EHCP's behaviour support plans, and pupil profiles.
- Lessons follow the National Curriculum and EHCP targets and are personalised, often through individual or small-group activities.
- Pupil voice is captured in a way appropriate to their communication level e.g. Aided language Displays (ALD's), objects of reference, and AAC.

1.2 Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)

Definition:

Teaching that respects a pupil's current developmental stage rather than solely their age or academic level.

In Practice:

- Learning activities are pitched within the child's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)—challenging but achievable with support.
- Staff adapt language, interaction style, and resources to match developmental profiles
- DAP encourages a non-linear view of progress, recognising that pupils may show regression or plateaus before moving forward.

Strategies:

- Backward chaining (teaching the last step of a task first)
- Use of manipulatives and real-life objects for abstract concepts
- Retrieval practice techniques
- Pre-teaching

1.3 Engagement and Motivation

Definition:

Focused on ensuring pupils are actively engaged, motivated, and emotionally invested in learning.

In Practice:

- Activities are designed to tap into pupil interests, special interests, or sensory preferences.
- Motivators are meaningful to the child (e.g., access to a preferred toy or interaction).

Key Techniques:

- Intensive Interaction for learners at early communication levels
- Sensory stories and attention autism for building sustained attention
- Now/Next structures to build anticipation and motivation

1.4 Structured and Flexible Learning

Definition:

Combining predictable routines and clear expectations with the flexibility to adapt in real time to pupil needs.

In Practice:

- Each classroom has visual timetables, transition cues, and clear workspace boundaries (e.g., structured learning stations).
- Lessons follow a predictable structure (lessons may start and end with a particular song or musical cue)
- Staff remain flexible to adapt to dysregulation, communication breakdowns, or medical needs.

Examples:

- Use of Now/Next/Then boards to reduce anxiety around transitions
- Work systems where pupils complete tasks in a structured sequence
- Classrooms that include both structured zones and open zones (play or sensory trays)

1.5 Multisensory and Experiential Learning

Definition:

Learning that involves engaging more than one sense at a time to strengthen understanding and retention.

In Practice:

- Use of sensory stories, real-life experiences, and role-play to bring learning to life.

- Encouraging active participation through touch, movement, sound, and visuals.

Strategies:

- Teaching phonics through sensory letters (sandpaper letters, sound bags)
- Maths through physical manipulation (counting with pegs, weighing food)
- Science through messy experiments (volcanoes, texture exploration)

1.6 Thematic and Cross-Curricular Learning

Definition:

Using a central theme to deliver multiple curriculum areas in an integrated way.

In Practice:

- Half-termly topics structure planning.
- Core and foundation subjects are delivered through the lens of the topic.

Benefits:

- Promotes generalisation of knowledge
- Builds schema by linking learning across domains
- Easier to differentiate and personalise when working with a unifying theme

1.7 Collaborative Learning and Social Skills Development

Definition:

Structured opportunities for pupils to learn with and from peers, with adult facilitation as needed.

In Practice:

- Small-group activities that focus on shared attention, turn-taking, and joint problem-solving.
- Use of social stories, modelling, and group reward systems to promote social behaviour.

Strategies:

- Circle time with predictable routines
- Board games and other activities that involve competition
- Use of 'bucket time' (attention autism) for group focus and engagement

1.8 Scaffolded Independence

Definition:

Providing just the right amount of support to enable a pupil to succeed, then gradually reducing it over time.

In Practice:

- Tasks are broken into manageable steps with prompts (verbal, gestural, visual).
- Staff fade prompts over time as competence increases.

Scaffolding Tools:

- Task management boards
- Independent work folders for those developing self-directed learning

1.9 Reflective Practice and Continuous Adaptation

Definition:

Ongoing assessment, observation, and adaptation of teaching based on pupil response.

In Practice:

- Team de briefs to discuss what worked and what didn't.
- Annotation of pupils learning inform next steps.
- Staff use evidence from pupil responses to modify their approach in real time.

Tools:

- Pupil books and Learning Journeys
- Regular collaboration with therapy teams and families

2. Learning Through Play

2.1 Why Play Matters in Special Education

Play is not “just” fun—it is the primary vehicle of learning for children, especially those with learning difficulties or developmental delays. Through play, children develop skills across communication, cognition, social interaction, and emotional regulation.

Core principles:

- Play is child-led, fostering autonomy and intrinsic motivation.
- Play activities are developmentally appropriate, not age-prescriptive.
- All behaviours during play are seen as communicative and meaningful.

2.2 Types of Play and Their Educational Impact

Type of Play	Description	Skills Developed
Sensory Play	Activities that stimulate touch, smell, taste, sight, and hearing (e.g. sand, water, messy play).	Self-regulation, exploratory learning, sensory integration

Type of Play	Description	Skills Developed
Functional Play	Repetitive, cause-effect actions with toys or objects (e.g. stacking blocks, pressing buttons).	Motor skills, early problem-solving, understanding object function
Symbolic (Pretend) Play	Using one object to represent another (e.g. pretending a spoon is a phone).	Cognitive flexibility, imagination, early narrative skills
Constructive Play	Building or creating things with materials (e.g. Lego, junk modelling).	Spatial awareness, fine motor control, goal-directed behaviour
Social Play	Interacting with peers through turn-taking, shared play, or games.	Social communication, emotional awareness, cooperation

2.3 Teaching Through Play

Intentional play doesn't mean directing every move—it means skilfully embedding learning objectives into child-led or adult-facilitated play experiences.

Possible Approaches:

- Adult as play partner: Staff join the child's play at their level, imitate actions, and model new ideas or vocabulary.
- Thematic play: Topics like "people who help us" or "under the sea" explored through role play, sensory trays, and creative arts.
- Learning targets in play: Counting blocks while building a tower, using PECs to request sensory materials, or naming animals in a farm set.

Adaptations for accessibility:

- Using switch-adapted toys for learners with physical disabilities
- Providing visual choice boards to support decision-making
- Creating low-arousal play spaces for pupils with sensory sensitivities

2.4. Understanding and Supporting Play Schemas

What Are Play Schemas?

Play schemas are *repetitive patterns of behaviour* that children naturally engage in as they explore the world around them. These behaviours are a fundamental part of cognitive development and help children make sense of concepts like movement, transformation, and order.

Understanding and supporting play schemas is crucial in a special school context because:

- Schemas help identify how a child learns, even if they are not yet verbal or traditionally academic.

- They reveal interests and motivations that can be used to engage pupils in more formal learning.
- They provide insight into sensory needs, emotional regulation, and developmental stages.

2.5 Common Play Schemas in Special Schools

Schema	Description	Behaviours You Might See	Learning Opportunities
Trajectory	Exploring lines, movement, direction	Throwing, pushing, dropping, climbing, running in straight lines	Physics concepts, gross motor, spatial awareness
Rotation	Interest in things that turn	Twirling, spinning wheels, spinning self, watching fans	Cause and effect, fine/gross motor, sensory processing
Enclosure/Containing	Placing objects within boundaries or containers	Filling bags, boxes, lining up toys, hiding under blankets	Early maths (in/out, full/empty), independence (tidying)
Transporting	Moving items from one place to another	Carrying bags, pushing trolleys, moving toys between rooms	Organisation, purpose-driven play, functional routines
Positioning	Arranging items in lines, patterns, or specific ways	Lining up cars, stacking precisely, distress when order changes	Pattern recognition, maths foundations, routine
Connecting	Joining or fixing objects together	Building with Lego, connecting trains, using clips or tape	Construction, fine motor skills, early engineering
Transforming	Mixing, changing, or combining materials	Mixing paint, water play, messy play, fascination with food	Scientific thinking, creativity, cause and effect
Orientation	Exploring position and perspective	Hanging upside down, crawling under, climbing to high places	Body awareness, sensory input, spatial understanding

2.6 Observing and Planning for Schemas

Staff should observe schema-driven play to:

- Identify learning styles
- Plan motivating and meaningful activities
- Avoid unnecessary conflict (e.g., stopping a child from transporting items without understanding their need)

Observation tips:

- Look for repeated behaviours across contexts
- Note if the child seeks similar experiences daily
- Watch how they engage with objects, people, and spaces

2.7 Responding to Schemas in the Classroom

Do:

- Provide safe, appropriate outlets for schema-driven behaviour (e.g., heavy items for transporting, ramps for trajectory).
- Join the play and expand it by modelling vocabulary or new variations.
- Use schemas to build towards curriculum goals.

Don't:

- Stop schema behaviours unless they are unsafe - redirect them instead.
- Label them as “obsessions” or “poor behaviour” – they are a valid learning process.

2.8 Examples of Schema-Based Activities

Schema	Activity	Linked Curriculum Area
Rotation	Spin art using salad spinners	Art, cause and effect
Containing	Sorting objects into containers with labels	Maths, Literacy
Transporting	Outdoor wheelbarrow play with objects to count	Maths, motor skills
Trajectory	Water squirters to hit numbered targets	Maths, gross motor
Positioning	Setting the table with placemats and cutlery	Life skills, sequencing
Connecting	Stickle bricks to build models	Creativity, language development

2.9 Inclusion and Adaptation

- Schemas can look different in pre-verbal or neurodivergent pupils (e.g., spinning string instead of wheels).
- Physical adaptations may be needed (e.g., Velcro bricks, sensory-friendly containers).
- Schemas are often tied to sensory regulation and emotional needs. Honour this in behaviour support plans.

2.10 Schemas and Communication Development

Play schemas are an ideal context for:

- Language modelling (e.g., “Spin! Round and round!”)
- Symbol-supported interaction (requesting materials, commenting)
- Joint attention and shared enjoyment in structured interactions

2.11 Supporting Families

- Share schema observations with families during reviews or home-school diaries.
- Help parents understand why their child repeats behaviours and how to extend learning at home.
- Provide home play ideas based on observed schemas.

3. Early Communication and Language Development

3.1 The Importance of Early Communication

For many learners in a special school, communication is the foundation for all other learning. Our focus is not just on spoken language but on helping every pupil find their voice—whatever form it may take.

3.2 Total Communication Approach

A multi-modal strategy to ensure that all pupils have access to meaningful, functional communication.

We use:

- Signalong: Sign-supported language to support understanding and expression.
- PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System): Used for pupils who benefit from a structured, visual communication method.
- AAC devices: Low-tech (e.g. communication books) and high-tech (e.g. voice output devices like Grid, Proloquo2Go).
- Objects of Reference: Concrete items used to represent activities or people.
- Photographs and Symbols: Used across the environment to support comprehension and routine.

3.3 Communication-Friendly Classrooms

Key features:

- Clear visual schedules, structured learning areas and transition cues
- Use of ALD's, visual scaffolds and accessible language prompts
- Adult modelling and mirroring of all forms of communication
- Switches and sound buttons

3.4 Stages of Communication Development

Understanding where each pupil is developmentally allows staff to tailor interaction styles appropriately.

Communication Stage	Characteristics	Strategies
Pre-intentional	Behaviour communicates need (e.g., crying, reaching)	Sensory engagement, Intensive Interaction, responsive caregiving
Intentional (pre-verbal)	Purposeful gestures, eye gaze, vocalisations	PECS Phase 1, cause-effect toys, choice making
Emerging verbal	Simple words or sounds, imitative speech	Makaton, modelling speech, expanding utterances
Functional language	Use of short phrases or AAC to meet needs	Narrative-building, questions, social interaction scaffolds

3.5 Intensive Interaction

A key approach for learners at early communication stages, especially those with autism or profound learning difficulties.

Core principles:

- Following the pupil's lead
- Mirroring their sounds, gestures, and facial expressions
- Promoting turn-taking, shared attention, and being emotionally attuned with the pupil

Used for:

- Building trust and connection
- Increasing frequency and duration of interaction
- Developing early reciprocity and eye contact

3.6 Creating Opportunities for Communication

Communication is not confined to 'lessons'. It should occur across the day, in natural contexts, such as:

- Lunch time: requesting items, making choices
- Outdoor play: commenting on actions, negotiating space
- Music sessions: turn-taking, joint attention
- Transitions: understanding and anticipating routine

Strategies:

- Sabotage techniques (e.g., missing item prompts a request)
- Waiting: Allowing time for a child to initiate
- Commenting, not questioning: “You’ve got a red car!” instead of “What colour is that?”

3.7 Collaboration with Therapists

- Speech and Language Therapists (SALTs) collaborate with teaching staff to embed targets into the classroom routine.
- Whole-school communication audits and training ensure consistent strategies across environments.

4. Adaptive Teaching

4.1 What Is Adaptive Teaching?

Adaptive teaching is the process of thoughtfully adjusting the content, delivery, and environment of learning to suit the diverse profiles of pupils. It is distinct from "differentiation" in that it emphasises fluid, ongoing responsiveness rather than fixed ability groups or pre-set tasks.

In a special school, adaptive teaching is essential to:

- Address complex needs
- Support a wide range of learning styles
- Maximise engagement, independence, and progress

4.2 Principles of Adaptive Teaching

Principle	Description
Equity, not equality	Pupils receive what they need to succeed, not the same input.
Flexibility	Plans are a guide, not a script—lessons change in response to pupil needs in real time.
High expectations	All pupils are capable of progress. Staff hold high yet realistic expectations for each learner.
Individualised teaching	Teaching builds from EHCP outcomes, developmental profiles, and therapeutic input.

4.3 Strategies for Adaptive Teaching

Environment Adaptation

- Workstations for individual learning, with reduced sensory input
- Calm zones such as regulation stations/rooms for emotional regulation or sensory breaks
- Accessible displays with symbol supports, real objects, or tactile elements
- Seating arranged to support physical needs or peer interaction

Instructional Adaptation

- Multisensory input (e.g., combining visual, tactile, and auditory cues)
- Chunking instructions: Short, sequenced steps with modelling
- Use of visuals: Now/Next boards, first/then prompts, visual instructions
- Alternative formats: Text simplified or replaced with symbols, objects of reference, or AAC

Task Adaptation

- Varying levels of support (e.g., physical prompts, verbal scaffolds, peer models)
- Adjusting task expectations (e.g., completing one item vs. five; observing vs. participating)
- Offering multiple means of expression: drawing, signing, PECS, verbal responses
- Providing choice and autonomy in task materials or sequence

4.4 Planning for Adaptive Teaching

- A clear learning intention that can be accessed in multiple ways
- Communication modes, sensory considerations, and motor needs considered
- Identification of scaffolding strategies or prompt hierarchies
- Links to EHCP outcomes and individual learning priorities

Example:

In a maths lesson on shapes:

- Pupil A matches real objects to shape outlines (concrete level)
- Pupil B names and describes shapes using symbols or AAC
- Pupil C uses 2D shapes to build a model, integrating fine motor skills and creative thinking

4.5 Monitoring and Reflecting

Adaptive teaching requires ongoing assessment for learning. Staff reflect on:

- What worked well to support engagement or understanding?
- Which scaffolds are still needed, and which can be faded?
- What behaviours indicated confusion, frustration, or motivation?

Tools such as:

- Learning journals/pupil books
- Formative and summative assessment

4.6 Collaboration and Communication

- Adaptive teaching is a team effort involving teachers, TAs, therapists, and families.
- Daily briefings, joint planning, and consistent communication ensure that all adults understand:
 - ✓ Pupil needs and preferred supports
 - ✓ Adaptations in place for lessons, routines, and transitions

4.7 Examples of Adaptive Teaching in Practice

Context	Adaptive Strategy
Literacy	Use of story sacks, tactile books, symbol-supported text
Maths	Hands-on activities with real objects for counting, matching, or sequencing
Art	Sensory-friendly materials and freedom in expression
PE	Seated movement sessions, physio-informed adaptations, visual prompts

5. Sensory and Emotional Regulation

5.1 Why Sensory and Emotional Regulation Matter

Many pupils in special schools have **neurological differences**, such as autism, ADHD, PMLD, or sensory processing disorders, which significantly affect how they experience and respond to sensory input and emotional states.

Sensory and emotional regulation is the ability to:

- Understand and respond to internal and external sensory stimuli
- Recognise emotional states
- Use tools, strategies, or support to return to a “calm and ready” state for learning

Key idea: A child who is overwhelmed, under-stimulated, or emotionally dysregulated is not “choosing” not to learn—they are often neurologically unable to until their nervous system feels safe and balanced.

5.2 The Sensory Processing Continuum

Learners may present as:

- Sensory-seeking: Actively seeking input through movement, sound, or touch
- Sensory-avoiding: Distressed by noise, texture, or unpredictability
- Under-responsive: Unaware of bodily cues, slow to respond to stimuli
- Over-responsive: Hyper-aware and quickly overwhelmed by sensory information

Each pupil will have a unique sensory profile, some pupils, under the direction of the schools sensory OT will have individual sensory ladders to support with regulation.

5.3 Classroom Strategies for Sensory Regulation

Environmental Design

- Flexible seating: Beanbags, wobble cushions, therapy balls, rocker chairs
- Acoustic modifications: Carpets or rugs, ear defenders
- Clear spatial layout: Defined areas for work, play, rest both in the classroom and in outdoor areas

Sensory Tools and Equipment

- Fidget toys, chewelry, weighted items, vibration tools
- Sensory circuits: Planned daily routines to meet regulation needs (e.g., jumping, crawling, stretching)
- Tactile trays, bubble tubes, dark dens, projectors for calming or alerting

Movement Breaks

Scheduled and on-demand opportunities for:

- Stretching
- Rebounding (on mini-trampoline)
- Heavy work (carrying, pushing)
- Swinging or rocking

5.4 Emotional Regulation Support

Co-Regulation First

Many learners require co-regulation before they can self-regulate.

Co-regulation includes:

- Calming tone of voice and body language
- Naming emotions aloud: “You look frustrated, let’s take a break.”
- Modelling strategies like deep breathing or asking for help

Zones of Regulation / Colour Monster

Visual systems help pupils identify and communicate their emotional state:

- Green = calm
- Yellow = anxious/excited
- Red = angry/upset
- Blue = sad/tired

Staff support pupils to:

- Recognise and label emotions
- Match feelings to regulation strategies (e.g., quiet space, movement, sensory item)
- Reflect on triggers and outcomes once regulated

5.5 Whole-School Approaches to Regulation

Individual Plans

Created for pupils with known sensory/emotional needs

- Triggers
- Signs of dysregulation
- Preferred de-escalation strategies
- ‘Do’s and don’ts’ for support staff

Calm Corners / Regulation Zones

Every classroom should include a calm zone, with:

- Soft furnishings
- Visual prompts for strategies
- Emotion cards or mirrors
- Sensory materials (e.g., weighted lap pads, glitter jars)

Staff Consistency

- All staff model and reinforce regulation strategies
- Use shared language and consistent responses to behaviours
- Use non-punitive approaches to challenging behaviour (e.g., “time-in” instead of time-out)

5.6 Working with Therapists

- Occupational Therapists (OTs)
- Speech and Language Therapists (SALTs)
- Physiotherapists
- Play therapist.
- Regular multi-agency reviews ensure consistency between classroom strategies, home routines, and therapy goals.

Where class teachers identify a need they can refer for specialist support via the senior leadership team.

5.7 Embedding Regulation into the Curriculum

- Mindfulness and yoga incorporated into daily routines where appropriate
- Social stories and comic strip conversations to teach emotional awareness
- Curriculum time given to PSHE, emotions vocabulary, and mental wellbeing
- Opportunities for all pupils to develop their own toolkit for regulation supported by the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA)

6. Teaching EHCP Targets and Outcomes

6.1 Why Teaching EHCP Targets Matters

EHCP outcomes are not simply paperwork—they are legally binding entitlements and form the core of personalised education for every pupil with an EHCP.

Teaching EHCP targets:

- Ensures each pupil receives the right support at the right time
- Makes progress measurable, visible, and meaningful
- Ensures accountability and compliance with the EHCP
- Connects teaching to what matters most for the child and their future

6.2 From Long-Term Outcomes to Daily Teaching

Step-by-Step Breakdown:

- Read and understand the EHCP:
- Focus on Section E (Outcomes) and Section F (Provision).
- Consider how health and care needs (Sections C and D) impact learning.

6.3 Break long-term outcomes into short-term targets:

- Use a SMART format: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound.
- Keep the pupil's learning profile, interests, and preferred communication method in mind.
- Translate targets into teachable skills:
- Identify what the pupil needs to do.
- Decide how to teach it, and in what context (e.g., play, 1:1, routine).

6.4 Embedding EHCP Targets in Daily Learning

EHCP targets are not taught in isolation—they are woven into real-life activities, routines, and lessons.

Target Area	Teaching Opportunity	Example
Communication	Snack time, play, transitions	"Uses PECS to request preferred snack"
Independence	Morning routine, dressing	"Zips coat with minimal help during arrival"
Cognition	Structured play, small group	"Sorts two shapes consistently during maths"
Social interaction	Turn-taking games	"Engages in 3-step turn-taking with peer"
Emotional regulation	Circle time, calm zones	"Recognises 'red zone' and uses break card"

Approaches:

- Use visuals, symbols, signing, or AAC to support learning.
- Embed targets in play-based, sensory, or functional activities.
- Involve peers, adults, and therapists to generalise skills.

6.5 Target Delivery in Classroom Practice

Individualised Target Time

- Short daily or weekly sessions to focus on specific EHCP targets.
- 1:1 or small-group work using motivating materials and familiar routines.

TA Delivery

Teaching assistants play a vital role in delivering, modelling, and scaffolding target work.

Ensure staff understand:

- What each target means
- How to record evidence
- When to prompt or step back

Therapists in Target Teaching

- SALTs, OTs, and Physios provide programmes and strategies embedded into class routines.
- Class staff reinforce therapy targets (e.g., using a sensory diet, following a communication plan).

6.6 Evidence Collection and Monitoring

Progress toward EHCP outcomes is monitored continuously and contributes to Annual Reviews and multi-agency meetings.

Ways to record progress:

- Observation notes
- Annotated work samples
- Photos or video clips
- Pupil voice (spoken, signed, symbol-based)

Frequency: Evidence should be collected routinely, but not excessively—focus on quality over quantity.

6.7 Reviewing and Updating Targets

- Targets are reviewed half-termly
- Adjust targets that are:
 - ✓ Too easy or too hard
 - ✓ Achieved consistently
 - ✓ No longer appropriate due to changes in need

6.8 Best Practice: Making EHCP Target Teaching Work

What Works Well	Why It Works
Embedding targets in real-life contexts	Increases relevance and generalisation
Using consistent routines and prompts	Builds security and understanding
Sharing targets with all adults working with the child	Ensures consistency and focus
Celebrating small steps	Boosts motivation and engagement
Using motivating materials and interests	Makes learning meaningful
Tracking with visuals or reward systems	Helps pupils self-monitor and stay engaged

7. Parent and Community Engagement

At our school, we recognise that meaningful engagement with parents, carers, and the wider community is a vital element in supporting the progress and well-being of our pupils. Children with SEND benefit significantly from a consistent, joined-up approach between home and school, and we are committed to fostering strong, respectful partnerships with families and local stakeholders. We have informative up to date website that parents/carers can access, including a dedicated parent information tab for support for both home and school. We have an active and supportive 'Friends of Fort Royal' group who meet regularly with a member of the Senior Leadership Team to discuss future events and how funds can be allocated to best support the pupils.

Home-School Communication and Partnership

We place a strong emphasis on open, two-way communication between staff and families. This includes:

- Regular communication through home-school books, meetings in person, virtual meetings or phone calls.
- The Fort Royal flyer is a fortnightly newsletter to parents/carers. This is a collaborative venture including contributions from the Headteacher, Chair of Governors, Family Support Worker, Chair of friends and individual classes
- Review meetings as part of the EHCP process and parents evening to discuss progress.
- An ethos that encourages parents and carers to speak with staff whenever needed.

We understand that parents/carers are experts on their children, and we value the insights and experiences they bring. Our goal is to build trust and shared understanding, ensuring that families feel informed, included, and empowered.

Parents/Carers as Key Partners in Goal Setting and Review

Parents and carers are not only included in school life but are essential partners in the assessment, planning, and review of their child's progress. We invite parents/carers to:

- Collaborate with staff to set realistic and aspirational targets at annual reviews.
- Attend review meetings and contribute to the evaluation of strategies and support.
- Share updates about home life and progress outside of school that can inform planning.

This joint approach helps us create a holistic picture of each child, ensuring that support strategies are meaningful, consistent, and adapted over time to meet evolving needs.

Community Visits and Inclusive Activities

We are proud to offer a rich programme of off-site visits, community-based learning, and inclusive experiences to promote independence, social understanding, and confidence. These may include:

- Visits to local shops, libraries, places of worship, and parks.
- Participation in inclusive arts, sports, and cultural events.
- Life skills sessions in real-world settings
- Opportunities to spend time at their local mainstream school

These experiences are carefully planned and scaffolded to match individual needs, with a strong focus on developing practical skills, communication, and resilience.

Links to Personal Development

All parent/carers and community engagement opportunities are closely tied to our Personal Development curriculum, which seeks to:

- Nurture pupils' social, emotional, and communication skills.
- Foster independence and self-advocacy.
- Build a sense of belonging and responsibility within the wider community.

Through consistent involvement and shared experiences, our pupils learn how to interact safely and confidently with the world around them, and how to develop relationships beyond the school environment.

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