

# Name of Policy: Curriculum Policy PMLD



Author/s: Vikki MacRae Assistant Head

Date Policy written: May 2017

Date Policy reviewed by Senior Management Team: May 2019

Review date: May 2021

APPROVAL: Governor Policy Group 22/5/19

**Woodlands Meed Equalities Statement is available on the website:**  
[www.woodlandsmeed.co.uk](http://www.woodlandsmeed.co.uk) under policies.

## **Woodlands Meed's Overall Aims: Building Unique Futures Together**

This includes:

- Providing a safe, secure environment
- Recognising the individual needs and strengths of each child
- Planning and facilitating unique, enjoyable opportunities to maximise learning and potential
- Working with parents/carers and outside agencies to achieve the best for each child
- Ensuring opportunities from the wider community are utilised

### **The PMLD Curriculum**

The intention of this document is to set out the priorities and content for a curriculum that meets the very individual needs of students with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties at Woodlands Meed.

Defining characteristics of a person with PMLD are likely to include most of the following:

- Pre-verbal in terms of intent
- May communicate for needs and wants only
- Physically reliant on others for the majority of their needs

- Significant difficulty with understanding abstract concepts
- Limited understanding of cause and effect

There is a very high chance that there will be attendant physical and/or sensory impairment

The term PMLD can include a number of students who may not be considered by some to have profound learning difficulties. These are pupils who will probably be ambulant and will have well established self-care skills in being able for example, to feed themselves and at least partly dress themselves. They are likely to have a rudimentary understanding of cause and effect, and may even have attained at least partial contingency awareness. They may have additional learning difficulties such as autism, but will not generally suffer from the attendant physical and multiple disabilities. Nonetheless, the intellectual and cognitive impairments of this group will restrict their development to around P4 and below; though this is not an exact science and some may well achieve slightly above this mark.

In his 1952 publication "The Origins of Intelligence in Children", Piaget argued that all children pass through four stages of intellectual development in the same sequence but not necessarily at the same pace. The first of these stages, the sensorimotor period, lasts from birth to approximately two years (in normally developing infants). During this period children will acquire:

- Object Permanence - the realisation that objects exist even if you can't see them
- A reduction in profound egocentrism - which allows babies to realise that they are distinct and separate entities and that there are different others in the world
- Imitation
- An improved understanding of cause and effect

However, it is during this early stage of development that the person with PMLD gets 'stuck' and it is here that any curriculum should be based. There needs to be a clear focus on the early communication and cognitive skills that are crucial to all learning. As Teachers we need to be aware that:

- young people and adults with Profound Learning Difficulties have unique abilities and ways of learning
- learning for students with Profound Learning Difficulties is best done holistically rather than through the teaching of isolated skills.
- learning does not take place through linear progression, rather the learner with Profound Learning Difficulties may be open to learning through 'pathways'

**With this in mind we aim to:**

- focus on the needs of the individual student with PMLD and to place these needs at the centre of the curriculum
- provide therapeutic input in collaboration with a range of therapists and medical professionals. There should be a particular emphasis on physical, postural, sensory and health care needs
- develop students' self-awareness through a caring, stimulating and sensory environment including that of the local and wider community

**The Curriculum**

The curriculum for students with PMLD at Woodlands Meed is based on four main areas of development:

- Communication
- Emotional and social,
- Physical, motor and sensory
- Cognitive

Reference will also be made to:

- Care
- Community
- Inclusion

- The curriculum is as broad and balanced as possible whilst meeting the very individual needs of our students with PMLD. These needs are determined in consultation with all those who have knowledge of the young person, especially their parents.
- The majority of students with profound learning difficulties have additional sensory or physical impairments and/or medical conditions. School staff, therefore, work closely with Speech and Language Therapists, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists and other specialists in order to establish the most effective sensory input/provision for each student
- Students with PMLD do achieve but often in ways that have been difficult to measure in the past. As a result of their subtle means of communication it is accepted that they should be supported by staff who know them very well and who are 'constant' over time. This ensures that achievements (however small) are noted and that any developments are used to inform planning for the individual

□ Constant observation and regular, termly, assessment informs planning for individual students, reporting to parents and the statutory reporting of levels using the 'P' scale. Moderation across the PMLD 'department' using evidence of achievements ensures consistency of assessment

### **Curriculum Planning**

For those with PMLD, learning is best done when every moment and situation is regarded as a learning opportunity

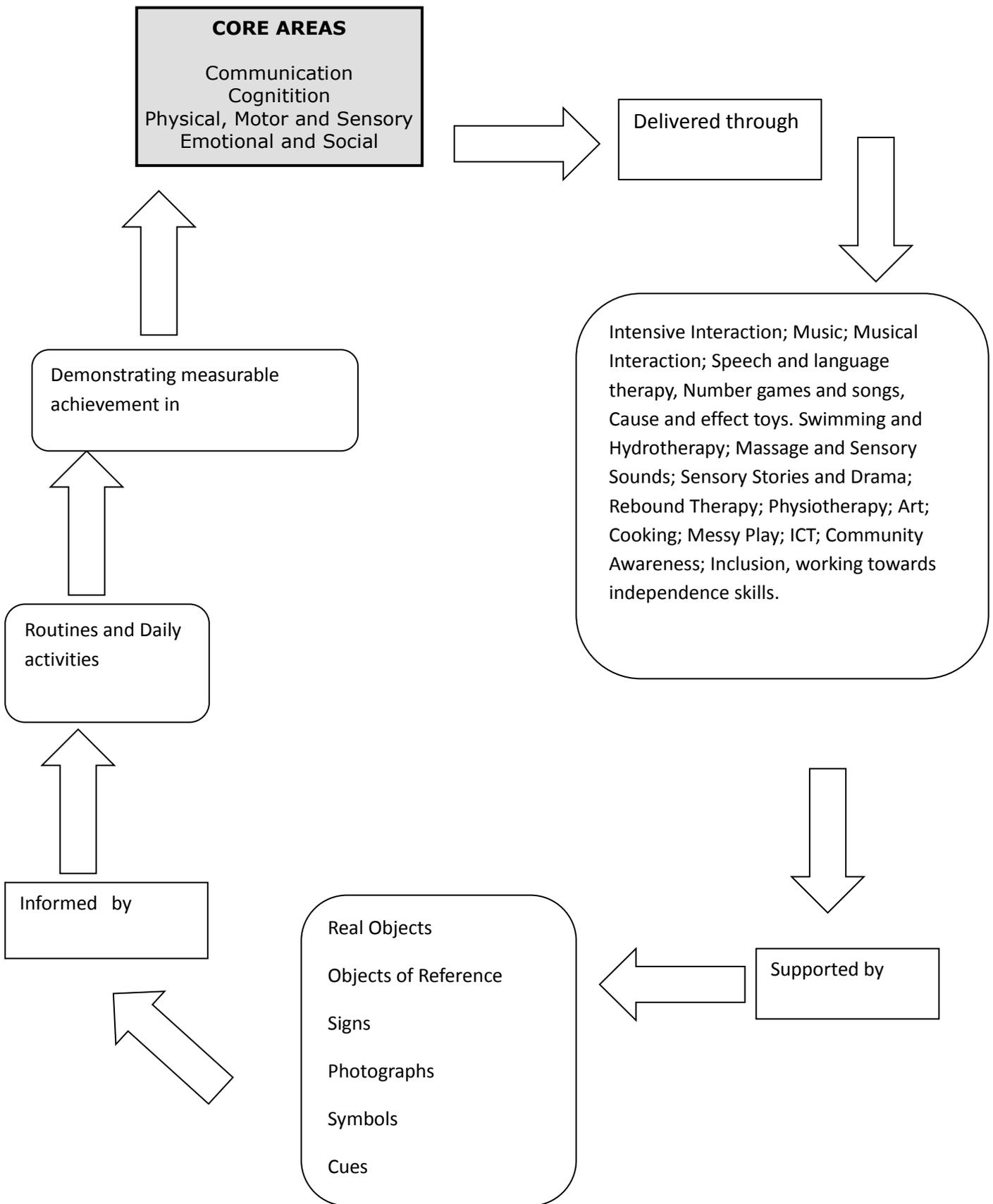
Learners with PMLD are likely to remain within developmentally early intellectual parameters for the whole of their school lives and beyond (that is, in the main, at or below P3 of the National Curriculum, though some may achieve as high as P4/5). The curriculum is planned using a Topic approach and will include references to MAPP (Mapping and Assessing personal Progress.) This is a programme which allows key developmental areas to be tracked and assessed alongside other curriculum areas. The key areas that MAPP supports are

- Communication
- Thinking Skills
- Personal and Social development.

Each Learner has "next steps" taken from the targets set at an annual review and broken down into achievable steps for the year.

They are broken down into the following areas.

- Cognitive Development
- Communicative Development
- Physical, Motor and Sensory Development
- Emotional and Social Development



### **Assessment, recording and reporting.**

Staff are expected to make a written record of success, maintenance or regression of each student whenever something is observed and wherever possible take photographs, make an audio or image recording. These will be annotated and often shared on See Saw. Next steps are evidenced and dated and where possible, information is recorded on learning ladders. MAPP assessments are recorded and analysed for progress.

### **Inclusion**

Students with PMLD at Woodlands Meed will be included in all school activities, for example, Christmas plays, assemblies and sports days and every effort will be made for the pupils with PMLD to mix with other students at appropriate times within the school day/week.

PMLD Pupils can access all specialist rooms, outside areas and classrooms within Woodlands Meed.

This also includes being able to access the minibuses to have trips off site and accessible equipment e.g. wheelchair swing, in the outside areas at Woodlands Meed.

PMLD students will be given the opportunity to have their thoughts and ideas listened to by staff and the student council with regards to future ideas and plans at Woodlands Meed.

### **Health and Medical Needs**

Children with PMLD can have unique and specific needs in comparison to the majority of the school population, and will often have complex health/medical needs.

Such needs will necessitate the close working of parents, class staff and the specialist school nurses together to understand, plan and respond to them, ensuring the pupil is treated holistically. They could include every day health needs as well as short and long term changes in their condition or illness. Close team working is especially important for pupils with complex conditions and when the pupil may be unable to effectively communicate their needs or worries themselves. Furthermore, this will also help to insure inclusion, to the best of the pupils' abilities, to actively partake in school life and the activities therein.

Individual Health Care Plans will be written by the class team in conjunction with the parents and Special School Nurses; thus highlighting the child's needs, the training and the ongoing support required to ensure a safe and full school life in a holistic way. In addition to medical needs, plans will also take into account any known long term pain issues and muscular-skeletal discomforts (alongside a treatment plan) and may also require input from specialised therapists (eg. SALT, Physiotherapy or OT).

The Specialist School Nurses will ensure that appropriate and individualised training for specific health needs are provided to education staff; ensuring adequate and safe provision throughout the year. The support required from the nursing team will vary from pupil to pupil and may change at any time (and may include direct pupil support when required). Some pupils' needs may be so specialised (eg. deep suctioning) that their delegation to education staff will not be possible. When this occurs, a plan will be drawn up by the Special School Nurses in conjunction with the family and the multidisciplinary team to ensure that the child's needs are adequately provided for in school.