

Our Response to School Closure at Manland School

As you know, on 20th March 2020 all UK schools were closed to children except those of key workers and vulnerable children. Only eligible children attended Manland until 1st June when the school opened for children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 and while we were pleased to be able offer some “keep-in-touch days” for other year groups, we know that school closure will have proved very difficult for many families.

During this time, we were able to provide high quality learning activities though the online platform *Seesaw* and teachers were able to deliver a version of the usual curriculum for children to study at home. We were extremely pleased with the success of the platform and were encouraged by the quality of work that children produced during a very difficult time.

Despite the hard work of teachers and families during school closure, we are well aware that children will have returned to school having missed a significant proportion of their school year and understand that there will be some anxieties about how they will catch-up on the missed learning.

At Manland, Senior Leaders recognise and share many of the concerns of the potential impact of such a prolonged absence from school might have on children’s education and well-being. This is why we have placed the response to the school closure at the centre of our School Development Plan for the Academic Year 2020-2021. Many of these plans, including for curriculum adaptations are based on DfE guidance found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

There are two broad aims for “catch up” at Manland School. We want to ensure that:

Attainment outcomes at end of 2020-21 for all groups are at least in line with those at the end of 2019-20.

The health and well-being of children in response to the prolonged school absence remains a central focus in school.

To provide some context, below is an outline of just some of the ways we have adapted our curriculum and approach to ensure that children have the best possible return to school and any gaps in learning are quickly addressed. The list is not exhaustive, but gives you some idea of how we have responded to the difficult situation we currently face.

Assessing Learning Gaps

In the first 2 weeks of term, all children will complete English and Maths assessments which will enable teachers to quickly identify any learning gaps from the previous academic year and establish the type and level of support needed (if any) to close the gaps in learning and ensure a swift catch up of knowledge and skills.

A targeted intervention program will be implemented in the autumn term. Teachers will identify children who need some extra support with specific areas of the English and Maths curriculum and will organise a tailored intervention programme to quickly address learning gaps.

English and Maths subject leaders will then work with teachers to ensure that their long term planning is structured to ensure a focus on areas of learning that were missed during school closure and support teachers to tailor their curriculum to provide the most effective learning.

The appointment of a new Learning Mentor

Using some of the 'Catch-up Premium' provided by the Government, we have appointed a Learning Mentor who will provide targeted support to those children who may have fallen furthest behind. This work might take the form of in-class support under the direction of the class teacher, or through targeted intervention work.

A focus on consolidation of basic skills.

The core skills which enable successful learning will require increased curriculum time across all year groups. These include: handwriting, spelling of high frequency words, basic sentence punctuation, times-tables recall, basic addition & subtraction fact recall and reading skills relevant to age. At Manland, we have adjusted our marking and feedback policy and carried out training with teachers to help them focus on these key skills when working with children.

Additional lesson time on core teaching.

Reading, writing and maths teaching will require increased teaching time in order to cover missed learning – particularly in the autumn term. In order to keep a broad and balanced curriculum, some subject areas may be taught as blocked days rather than weekly lessons in the autumn term.

Particular focus on early reading and phonics.

This is always a focus in the school and will continue to be so in order to develop children's reading ability and vocabulary.

Pastoral support and PSHE

Teachers have spent a great deal of time, during the first few weeks back at school providing children with opportunities to talk about their experience of school closure and the effects it had on them. They will monitor the children in their classes closely and ensure that children who may need additional emotional or pastoral support are cared for.

In the autumn term, our PSHE curriculum will focus heavily on providing children with the opportunities to reflect openly about how they are coping in the current situation and help them to articulate their feelings.