

# LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

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## **Aims**

At High Elms Manor School, our curriculum is designed not only to fulfil all statutory and regulatory requirements, but also to provide a modern approach in line with the Montessori philosophy and ethos. The Montessori approach to education rests on the premise of supporting the tendencies and sensitivities of each individual by creating an environment that serves the particular needs of the child's stage of development. Each adult understands the developmental needs of each child and acts as a guide to help them find their natural path of development within the environment. Freedom is given for the child to engage in his own development according to his own particular developmental timeline. To do this, we will monitor the requirements of the National Curriculum, new government teaching and learning initiatives and policy initiatives, and develop a curriculum which will help our children to -

- Develop lively and enquiring minds
- Communicate effectively, both orally and in writing
- Learn the essential skills of life, including number and information technology
- Explore and understand the world we live in
- Develop an appreciation of the interdependence of individuals, groups and nations
- Express themselves creatively and enjoy the creativity of others
- Develop an appreciation of a wide range of human achievement
- Develop personal, moral and spiritual values, including respect for others
- Be prepared for the opportunities and responsibilities of life in a changing world
- Learn how to learn and to regard learning as an enjoyable and lifelong activity
- Develop a wide range of interests and appreciate the need for a healthy lifestyle
- Set personal standards of achievement and value excellence
- Provide the children with a holistic approach to learning which will help them to make connections between different learning areas.
- Provide children with a comprehensive curriculum that caters for the individual child's needs.
- Assists the children to understand and build on their experiences in order to make sense of the world.
- Encourages teaching staff to be exciting and inspiring with their teaching skills
- Give teachers freedom to develop areas within the curriculum in different ways.
- Values and builds on prior knowledge
- Allows for the achievement of many outcomes from some or all learning areas.
- Allows for inclusion of students with a wide range of abilities and ages.

The majority of the curriculum will be taught by using an integrated curriculum approach allowing each child to move through the chosen theme, using learning and understanding to link the subjects.

## **Early Years (The Nest and Little Elms)**

### **Rationale**

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and interconnected. Through our enabling environment and with positive relationships each unique child can learn and

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develop individually in different ways and at different rates. We are committed to a principle of Learning through Play whereby children and adults engage in exploratory and active learning, and creativity and critical thinking is developed, supported and extended and all areas of learning and development are implemented..

Montessori believed that children's learning is intrinsically linked with child development and that it is not possible for children to learn until they are ready. This readiness will vary from child to child. As children mature and have access to a rich environment, supported by sensitive and knowledgeable adults, they will learn to follow their innate potential. The Childcare Act 2006 establishes that all providers are required to meet learning and development requirements regardless of the type, size or funding of the setting. High Elms Manor School ensures the requirements are delivered by ensuring that children work towards meeting the early learning goals (ELG) by the end of the reception year. All children will be assessed against the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile at the end of the reception year. The learning and development requirements take into account the fact that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates, and that all areas of learning and development are inter-connected and are equally important in contributing towards children's development.

Children are active learners and learning begins from birth; therefore in our Montessori setting we always assess where each child is in their stage of development and the level of their learning when they join the setting. We aid each child to develop their personalities in a multi-faceted way, thereby enhancing their future potential and learning. Children's needs, interests and stages of development are always considered when evaluating observations. Children's learning is facilitated by purposeful activities which are spontaneously chosen by the child as well as being adult-led and supported when appropriate. The child's autonomy is valued and respected as the most creative way for a child to develop naturally, in line with their intrinsic sensitive periods of development.

The Learning and Development requirements of the EYFS comprise of two elements: an educational programme and the early learning goals. The educational programme facilitates the delivery of the goals as set out in the Prime and specific areas of learning and is assessed primarily through observations, which also serve as means of future planning.

Montessori practitioners make links between the Montessori learning programme (schemes of work) and the ELG to ensure that their practice is transparent and assessable to parents and colleagues. They also understand that children need opportunities and encouragement to use their skills, knowledge and understanding of the world in a range of situations and for a range of purposes and need to be supported in developing their unique learning dispositions and autonomy, which are inherent in the Montessori ethos of 'following the child'.

The following section serves as an explanation (a more detailed account is shown on the website or go to [http://www.montessori.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/99837/EYFS\\_Guide\\_2013.pdf](http://www.montessori.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/99837/EYFS_Guide_2013.pdf)) of how the Montessori learning programme meets the 3 prime areas and 4 specific areas of learning. The Prime areas of learning and development are particularly crucial

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for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

## ***The three prime areas***

1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development
2. Communication and Language
3. Physical Development

***The four specific areas*** support and strengthen the prime areas.

4. Mathematics
5. Understanding of the World
6. Expressive arts and design
7. Literacy

Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development. Practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to focus on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively, and become ready for school. Throughout the early years, if a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, practitioners must discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. Practitioners must consider whether a child may have a special educational need or disability which requires specialist support. They should link with, and help families to access, relevant services from other agencies as appropriate.

## ***Communication and Language***

The development and use of communication and language is at the heart of young children's learning. The ability to communicate gives children the capacity to participate more fully in their society. At High Elms Manor this is achieved by development of close relationships and through experiences which engage all the senses. Practitioners value and respect the notion that non-verbal messages remain an important form of communication throughout life. Being read to and beginning to read and write must be supported and extended.

- Freedom of speech and opportunities for dialogue
- Opportunities to develop listening, communication skills and vocabulary
- Story-telling and books
- Language-rich environments

## ***Physical Development***

At High Elms Manor School, our aim is to encourage children's physical development as they grow in body awareness, and explore the range of movement experiences within their environment. Children develop gross and fine motor skills, a high degree of hand-eye coordination and balance through practical life activities as well as:

- Outdoor activities, including sand and water play
- Dance and yoga

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- Tiny Mites (the nest)
- Forest School (Little Elms)
- Health awareness
- Creative activities
- All activities which maximise the flow and movement of each child

## ***Personal, Social and Emotional Development***

Children's emotional wellbeing is crucial to their learning and development and outcomes for the future. If staff and parents can support children in developing self-esteem, self-confidence, social skills and positive dispositions to learning then children can develop as autonomous, confident and social learners. Learning about themselves and other people and the world around them is at the centre of PSE.

- Life skills, practical life activities
- Cultural activities
- Ground rules, grace and courtesy
- Role modelling by peers and adults
- Freedom to develop positive friendships, relationships and self-confidence through independence and freedom of choice
- SEAL programme (reception)

## ***Literacy***

Literacy has its roots in communication and language but is developed through all areas of learning. High wellbeing and opportunities for movement, music and imaginative play and creative mark making are prerequisites to developing early literacy. Literacy development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems and other written materials) to ignite their interest. This is done through:

- Story-telling and books
- Linking phonic sounds with letters
- Pre-literacy skills with strong emphasis on phonics
- Literacy activities, including development of general skills
- Mark making leading to writing
- Language-rich environments

## ***Mathematics***

Children's mathematical development arises out of daily experiences in a rich and interesting environment. Children must be supported in their enjoyment and exploration of problem solving and mathematical development. They should be enabled to learn, revisit and reflect on their skills and understanding within numeracy and problem solving. All areas of the learning programme give children opportunities for problem solving and reasoning by virtue of the autonomy they are encouraged to access in the environment, in addition to the following:

- exploration of the environment
- sensorial education and activities including work with shapes, spaces, measures, sizes and patterns
- Use of counting activities in a mathematically-rich environment
- Understanding and using numbers

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- Calculating simple addition and subtraction problems

## ***Understanding the World***

Our children live in a complex interesting world and we need to provide opportunity to help them make sense of their environment and the world around them. We must provide them with skills, knowledge and understanding to do this.

- Cultural activities; exploring people and places
- Exploration and care of the environment both inside and outside
- Peace education including social graces
- Special topics
- Use of technology, computers, cameras, remote control
- Sensorial activities

## ***Expressive Arts and Design***

Our children live in a complex interesting world and we need to provide opportunity to help them make sense of their environment and the world around them. We must provide them with skills, knowledge and understanding to do this. Individual children, small groups and occasionally the whole group engage in freely-available activities such as:

- art and craft
- music and movement and dance
- drama and story-telling
- spontaneous role play also occurring in a practical life area, cultural area and/or during outdoor play
- Design and Technology

## **Planning**

Observation, record keeping, evaluation and planning are inter-related and inter-dependent. They are the cornerstone for ensuring the provision is of high quality and appropriate for all children. Effective planning enables staff to provide meaningful learning experiences that will bring out the full potential in each child. Research has confirmed that Early Years staff must observe and listen to children to enable them to make a match between the curriculum offered and the development needs and current interests of the children. All planning should start with individual children and their families -their cultures, religions, languages, family compositions, economic background, homes interest, concerns and abilities. Planning takes place in many ways and on many levels within the Early Years environment. Planning should enable the organisation of learning for the development of the whole child – including their physical, intellectual, social, linguistic and emotional needs. In planning and guiding children’s activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in practice. Three characteristics of effective teaching are:

**Playing and exploring – engagement:** Children investigate and experience things and ‘have a go’.

**Active learning – motivation:** Children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.

**Creating and thinking critically – thinking:** Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

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**Playing and exploring – engagement:** Play is the child’s work of self- construction. It is universally agreed that play is the key tool for young children’s development and learning. Montessori refers to this intrinsically motivated activity as ‘work’. Therefore, it is important that we explore what is understood by play and work in Montessori settings. We could define everything a child does naturally and spontaneously as ‘play’. Equally we could describe it as ‘intrinsic motivation’ driven by positive emotions toward self-development with a need to experience one’s own worth. Play is a wonderful word, which conjures up a sense of freedom and joy with little sense of purpose or a goal. Montessorians consider that this demonstration of freedom and joy is just as evident whether a young child chooses to work or play. They value children’s engagement in any activity which leads the child to a deep level of engagement and concentration. This kind of play is serious and hard work for the child. It is the work of self-construction. Children have their own agenda for development which reveals itself through every activity, whatever we call it. From the Montessori perspective, ‘play is work’ and ‘work is play’. The defining factors are freedom of choice, the exercise of will and deep engagement, which leads to concentration.

**Active learning – motivation:** Children’s spontaneous learning will be facilitated by a wide range of cycles of activity. Each cycle is determined by the child’s selection of an activity from a shelf, engagement with it and returning it back to the shelf. The morning or afternoon sessions are usually described as a ‘work cycle’ – lasting between two hours in The Nest and two and a half to three hours in Little Elms. During this time the child will engage in many activities such as use of Montessori learning materials, painting or craft work, role play, heuristic play, treasure baskets, circle time, show and tell, small world toys, singing, dance or yoga, having snack, learning inside and outside, individually or with friends and in small groups. Many lessons will be led by an adult; these are usually one-to-one opportunities or some small group work activities. Children are also encouraged to make independent choices; therefore, children always have the opportunity to choose if they engage with an activity or not and adults facilitate this choice with sensitivity and consistency based on the principle of “following the child”.

**Creating and thinking critically:** Young children who have experienced opportunities to make choices in an atmosphere of freedom with responsibility and who are encouraged to be independent in their actions and decision making, who are guided by respectful, knowledgeable and consistent adults, develop a strong sense of self, natural confidence and curiosity as well as a sense of well-being and belonging. These qualities will serve them well not only when they enter primary school, but also in any new social and learning situations they are likely to experience in life.

## **Assessment**

At High Elms Manor assessment of children is based on observations and recording of children’s progress supported by samples of their work and photographs documenting their engagement with activities within the setting both inside and outside. These documents describe the child’s unique learning and are kept in a portfolio ‘Learning Journey’ providing on-going evidence and the basis for the assessment of individual children’s learning and progress within the setting.

Evaluated observations help practitioners understand children’s achievements, interests and learning styles, and are reflected in planning for individual children attending the setting. Where possible, practitioners’ assessments and reflections on children’s learning

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are contributed to by parents/carers, and where appropriate, by other professionals and the children themselves.

Planning will follow the EYFS framework guidelines and show clear links to both the interest and characteristics of the children and the development matters stages. Planning will reflect observations of children and relate to lesson plans of Montessori activities included in *Montessori curriculum portfolios which represent the schemes of work for The Nest and Little Elms*. In addition any other activities included in the setting are supported by lesson plans and evaluated regularly to ensure their relevance to children's individual learning. Individual children's progress is documented in the *Child's Learning Journey* portfolio which is a collection of observations, anecdotes, next steps, and reflections as well as samples of work and dated photographs. Parent/carers are encouraged to comment and provide samples and observations from home which follow the child and continue until they leave the setting. Other records include Settling in reviews and initial information provided by the Parent/carer. Weekly plans, Medium term plans and Long term plans are recorded. Records should be stored so that they are easily accessible to staff, children and Parents in the classroom. All records must be kept in a confidential way. Children's work is also displayed around the setting to show off what they are doing and to value and celebrate a child's achievements and efforts.

## **Statutory Assessments**

The two statutory assessments required by the EYFS relate to children's skills and abilities. When a child is aged between two and three practitioners must review their progress (this is a baseline assessment of what the child can do at that point) and when the child turns five years of age the EYFS profile must be completed during the summer term of that academic year. The profile assessments are based on the early learning goals which outline possible achievement by a child at the end of the Foundation Stage and at the beginning of the compulsory school age. As both of these assessments are summative, a statement of the child's skills, knowledge and understanding and a range of abilities, relating to a particular time in the child's life, it is essential that practitioners collect and evaluate a wide range of the child's achievements as evidence of learning, progression and development to support the two statutory assessments. This is where the child's *Learning Journey portfolio, consisting of formative assessments* is helpful. There are no requirements or prescribed practice as to how these formative assessments are made and recorded, providing they are based on observations with evaluative and reflective comments.

## **Progress check at age two:**

This check should be a short summary of the child's development in the Prime Areas of: Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal Social and Emotional Development and should highlight the child's strengths and any areas where progress is not as expected (in which case the parents, the key person and the setting's SENCO should develop a targeted plan and should seek appropriate support for the child and the family working with a range of agencies in the local community).

The check must be carried out during the third year of the child's life (between two and three years) and the timing will be dependent on the regularity, frequency and length of attendance in the setting. It will be at the setting's discretion to decide when this check will be undertaken, but it is anticipated it will take place within the first three months of the child turning two or when they start to attend the setting over the age of two. If a

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child moves settings between the ages of two and three it is expected that the progress check would usually be undertaken by the setting where the child has spent most time.

Practitioners are invited to add any other relevant information to the progress check report which highlight the child's strength and which might identify areas for development. Beyond the prime areas, it is for practitioners to decide what the written summary should include, reflecting the development level and needs of the individual child. The summary must highlight: areas in which a child is progressing well; areas in which some additional support might be needed; and focus particularly on areas where there is a concern that a child may have a developmental delay (which may indicate a special educational need or disability).

It must describe the activities and strategies the provider intends to adopt to address any issues or concerns.

The progress check must be completed in partnership with parents and must be used to enhance home learning opportunities, where appropriate.

Practitioners must agree with parents and/or carers when will be the most useful; point to provide a summary. It should be provided in time to inform the Healthy Child programme health and development review at age two whenever possible (when health visitors gather information on a child's health and development, allowing them to identify any developmental delay and any particular support from which they think the child/family might benefit). Taking account of the information from the progress check (which reflects ongoing, regular observation of children's development) should help ensure that health visitors can identify children's needs accurately and fully at the health review. Providers must have the consent of parents and/or carers to share information directly with other professionals, if they consider this would be helpful.

## **Assessment at the end of the EYFS - Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)**

This profile is based upon on-going observations of individual children during the Early Years Foundation Stage when starting to observe and record children's progress. These observations will provide evidence of individual children's skills, abilities, knowledge and understanding and relates to the child's achievement in respect of the Early Learning Goals and is completed no later than 30th June of the final term of the year when the child reaches age five and contributes to the national statistics of children's educational achievements at the age of five. The profile must reflect: on-going observation: all relevant records held by the setting; discussions with parents and carers; and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

The judgements that are made are moderated by the local authority. Local authority representatives are entitled to access all assessment procedures and documents relating to the completion of the Profile. Providers are required to discuss the child's profile with parents or carers, and any other adults whom the teacher judges can offer a useful contribution.

All assessment data must be accessible to the child's new school. The profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1.

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Each child's level of learning and development must be assessed against the early learning goals. Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). This is the EYFS profile. Year 1 teachers must be given a copy of the profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. These should inform a dialogue between reception and year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assist with the planning of activities in Year 1.

Teachers must share the results of the profile with parents and/or carers, and explain to them when and how they can discuss the profile with them.

For children attending more than one setting, the profile must be completed by the school where the child spends most time. If the child moves to a new school during the academic year, the original school must send their assessment of the child's level of development against the early learning goal to the relevant school within 25 days of receiving a request. If the child moves during the summer term, relevant providers must agree which one of them will complete the profile.

The Profile must be completed for all children, including those with special educational needs or disabilities. Reasonable adjustments to the assessment process for children with special educational needs or disabilities must be made as appropriate. Teachers should consider whether they may need to seek specialist assistance to help with this. Children will have differing levels of skills and abilities across the profile and it is important that there is a full assessment of all areas of their development to inform plans for future activities and to identify any future support needs.

## **Information to be Provided to the Local Authority**

High Elms Manor School must report EYFS Profile results to local authorities upon request. Local authorities are under a duty to return this data to the relevant government department. The school must permit the relevant local authority to enter their premises to observe the completion of the EYFS profile, and permit the relevant local authority to examine and take copies of documents and other articles relating to the Profile and assessments. The school must take part in all reasonable moderation activities specified by their local authority and provide the local authority with such information relating to the EYFS profile and assessment as they may reasonably request.

For more information on EYFS Learning and development go to

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/a0068102/early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs>

## **Primary Years (High Elms)**

### **Rationale**

High Elms school primary years meets the changing needs of the children as they grow up, and responds to their expanding view of the world around them. At this stage, children are ready for more complex work as they move towards abstract ways of thinking. Many new materials are introduced as they develop their imagination to embrace concepts beyond their immediate environment. The curriculum is interdisciplinary and academically challenging. It covers the full range of subjects

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required by the National Curriculum while maintaining essential Montessori principles, and much emphasis is placed on the interconnection between different areas of study. Children work individually and in groups, on projects and themes that spark their interest. The teacher's role is to guide them in their research, and to provide information in such a way that they learn to make full use of a library, reference books and the worldwide web.

High Elms Manor School promotes a full understanding of the human, natural and scientific world. This awareness grows not only through intellectual knowledge and understanding, but through sensitivity to all manifestations of life that evoke wonder, awe and respect. Montessori education shows children how all life is interdependent, and instils in them the confidence and spirit of enquiry that lead to life-long exploration and learning.

## **Montessori's Integrated Curriculum: The Cosmic Education**

The integrated curriculum is the central guiding theme of Montessori education at primary level. The term "Cosmic Education" refers to the interrelatedness of humanity and the earth. It is both a philosophy and a guide for the development of an interdisciplinary curriculum. The concept of cosmic education goes beyond the "bits and pieces" approach. It presents a comprehensive whole picture of the world—a world in which the child sees himself as being a part. The foundation for the integrated curriculum is an organizing vision of the universe on a grand scale, called Montessori's five Great Lessons:

- The Origins of the Universe;
- the Time Line of Life;
- the Time Line of Humans;
- the History of Mathematics; and
- the History of Language

These lessons set out a macrocosmic framework into which all the concepts, values, and academic lessons are organized. The central theme unifying all the Great Lessons is the concept of the order and interrelatedness of all elements of the cosmos. Dr. Montessori saw the grand scheme of the universe as not only awe-inspiring, but also as a great teaching tool. The impact and magic of these first lessons, while telling a grand story and setting the stage for later work, is designed to involve the child—giving him a sense of importance, place, and responsibility in his world. So, the academic lessons also fundamentally cultivate the child's character. The integrated curriculum includes materials and activities for the development of understanding and skills in the following subjects:

- English (including phonics, spelling, grammar, sentence analysis, creative and expository writing, and literature)
- Mathematics (arithmetic, algebra, and geometry)
- Science (natural sciences, physical sciences, and environmental sciences)
- DT (design and technology)
- ICT (information and communication technology)
- Social sciences (history, civics, economics, anthropology, sociology, geography)
- Cultural life (music, drama, and art and design)

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- PE (physical education and health)
- PSICHE (personal, social, citizenship and health education)
- Foreign Languages (French)

The integrated curriculum encourages children to make connections between topics such as history and science and In this way, the child guides the path of his/her learning by engaging special interests and his/her own learning style. The Montessori teacher functions as a critical resource in this process, always ensuring that the child's research and findings are valued and teaching the lesson that we live in an evolving universe where growth, development, and adaptation are essential for existence. The Montessori classroom is rich with resources to stimulate the child to explore deeper in order to understand their world more clearly—cultivating lifelong learning skills.

At any given time different children will be studying any number of different subject areas, at varying degrees of complexity. All subjects are interwoven, not taught in isolation. This means that the children will understand the relevance of what they are learning and place it in context. They learn that everything is connected: climate, crops, culture and so forth. The aim of an integrated curriculum is to make education a coherent whole rather than an assortment of unrelated bits of information.

## ***English***

Language is an important part of the entire Montessori curriculum. Its treatment as a separate subject comes only at the points in which it is necessary to give clarity to the child's mind, that is, to give him conscious awareness of language in order that it may be used more effectively. Once the child has an understanding of writing being a graphic form of language, these focus points centre around spelling, word study, penmanship, grammar, punctuation, and capitalisation. The real experience in reading and writing comes through the child's work in other areas of the curriculum, such as geography, history, botany, etc.

Because children have different cognitive styles, they are provided with different ways to learn to read within the environment. In this way, the child will be able to select the components of reading which fit his cognitive style and put them together in the way that is best for him. Once reading is mastered, the child expands into reading quality literature and poetry and into self-expression through creative writing.

High Elms Manor School requires strong competencies in the development of expository essays and comprehension of diverse types of reading material. Other areas of emphasis at the primary level are expository writing and practicing the writing process; guided reading with non-fiction texts; comparison between texts; interpreting and using media for communication; and genre, author, and illustrator studies.

## ***Mathematics***

Manipulation of concrete and symbolic materials with built-in error control develops sound arithmetic skills and leads the child to make his own abstractions. As in other parts of the Montessori curriculum, experience with a material comes first, then the spoken language or naming of the concept. This is followed by the symbolic representation or written symbol. After these three approaches have been mastered, they are then associated with one another in the child's sub-conscious. In Montessori mathematics, this sequence is referred to as quantity, symbol, and association.

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Montessori materials for Mathematics (arithmetic, geometry, and algebra) allows the child to discover abstractions and their applications both in classroom math work (when studying geometry lessons) and in applying these concepts to other areas of study, such as chemistry or genetics.

High Elms Manor Montessori curriculum specifically addresses the Mathematics objectives set forth in the National Curriculum. Number Sense and Operations and Geometry receive especially strong and effective emphasis in the Montessori curriculum. Students use a math textbook to guide core content skill development in relation to the key stage 1 and 2 standards

## ***Social Studies and Science***

Subjects like anthropology, astronomy, biology, chemistry, economics, geography, geology, government, history, philosophy, physics, politics and sociology are not broken down into separate subjects. Instead, they are totally integrated within the curriculum. Where appropriate they are also integrated more broadly. Science studies, including anatomy, physics, environmental studies, botany, and chemistry, are structured in such a way as to give the child a sense of classification so he/she can relate to the interrelated facts of the natural world. Throughout his/her scientific and historical education, the child sees the struggle of living communities to develop and maintain themselves and how this struggle benefits us today. The child begins to understand his/her role in the development of our living community, and cultivate the drive to understand it and the sense of responsibility to protect it.

## ***History***

The study of history starts prior to the dawn of life, with the development of the solar system, life on earth, the development of humans, early civilizations, and recorded history. The child sees the long development which preceded the arrival of humans and then the long labour of humankind to accomplish all that is here for us to enjoy today. In general, curricular concepts are presented in a historical format—that is, they are presented in the order in which the concepts were developed by humankind. When possible, lessons are directly related to the person and era in which the concept, discovery, or invention emerged or occurred. Writing plays and acting out the drama of the discoveries, inventions and new concepts is an integral part of the curriculum. At every turn in the curriculum, students are active participants and the arts bolster the academic curriculum in creative and often unexpected ways.

## ***Arts and Crafts***

In the Montessori Primary Class, the adult aids the child in the development of skills in order for the child to creatively express himself through various media. In addition to art expression for its own sake, art is an integrating factor for the rest of the curriculum. The child may make use of it in such ways as geometrical drawings, geographical maps, mathematical graphing, or illustrations for history, botany, etc. With a variety of techniques and media at their disposal, the primary aged children may choose appropriate forms of artistic expression for the areas of the curriculum. A study of the historical development of artistic expression is made available within the history material. It is developed simply at first as an idea by itself; then, as the child matures, it is related to architecture, religion, music, politics, literature, inventions, explorations, etc. Later, it is taken again by itself and studied more deeply. Appreciation activities are a natural part of the historical study.

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## ***Music***

In the Primary Programme consists of seven related elements, namely singing, listening, music theory and ear training, producing music and music appreciation. Singing provides opportunities for understanding scales, expression of feelings, and understanding of other cultures. Recorder lessons take place weekly for all children to enjoy. In addition, parents may enrol their child for piano lessons during school hours.

## ***Physical Education***

An interest in the development of skills that could be used in later life is the emphasis, along with the challenge of competing with oneself rather than competing with others. Biological studies relating to physical education include human anatomy, physiology, and nutrition. Practical life areas such as sewing, weaving and movement activities in music are also related. Children are given opportunity to take part in many different activities during the school day. All children have swimming lessons which are alternated termly between 6-9 class and 9-12 class. Children are divided into groups of ability allowing them to feel comfortable or challenged depending on their individual needs. The children also take part in P.E lessons with 'GAME ON' every week which lasts for one hour. Activities change regularly, so the children get the opportunity to experience a broad range of physical exercise. In addition parents may enrol their child for horse riding lessons during lunch break.

## ***PSCHE***

The human relations curriculum uses the theme of "Fundamental Needs" as its organizing concept. Through this perspective, the child sees that the needs of humans in all places on earth and throughout history are the same. Ignorance of this concept of basic equality can breed fear and prejudice. A primary goal of Montessori education is to help children learn to live in peace and harmony with all people and to establish an innate awareness that they are citizens of the world and stewards of their own communities.

To this end, world geography, international cultural studies, second languages, ethnically diverse classrooms, and world history are central to the Montessori curriculum. We want children to revere the dignity of the human spirit and to develop appreciation of differences in ability, in color, in culture, in beliefs, in thought, in ways of doing things, and in dress and in physical appearance.

The Montessori Peace Curriculum strives to convey a deep understanding that all people share the same fundamental needs and tendencies and that difference arises simply from different ways of addressing those needs. When the child can see that the needs of humans are the same, then he can respect and appreciate the variety of ways in which those needs are met. With this understanding of our human community, open-mindedness flourishes.

The SEAL programme is integrated into the PSCHE curriculum and included in weekly assemblies and group lessons.

## ***Outdoor Education***

A primary focus of High Elms Manor School is to expose children to the natural world and guide them towards an appreciation of our natural world so that they recognize their unique role in the world. The school emphasizes outdoor experiences and will provide

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extensive outdoor activities as an integral part of the learning environment. These opportunities involve weekly Forest School sessions which last for one hour. Regular outdoor activities are also held, where larger experiments, nature research, art projects, and performances can occur and a school allotment to compliment the science, environmental education, and nutrition curricula. At lunchtime children participate in both free play outside and organized activities in the school grounds.

## **Planning**

Following the Montessori method, when children reach the primary years they begin to use a 'work list'. Every morning, upon arrival, each child writes a list of tasks to work on during their three hour work cycle. This list includes math's, writing, reading, language and culture and are "scaffolded" to include other areas that interest them as well – for example art, fitness, gardening, zoology etc. Children work through the list in any order, working independently, with a friend, in a small group or alongside their teacher. Each child works their way through a broad curriculum which includes spelling, grammar, comprehension, reading, maths, science and culture at their own pace. In the afternoons they cover additional parts of the curriculum such as music, information technology, art and planned themes. This system also encourages children to develop self-discipline, organization and prioritizing skills, establishing the foundations for independent, life-long learning.

## ***Long Term Planning***

Teachers ensure children acquire a balanced and broad curriculum through long term planning that includes themes from the National curriculum. Whilst children investigate and research their own individual interests, projects led by the teacher, involving all the children are studied in the afternoons. Themes are taken from the QCA Schemes of Learning. These themes are chosen to allow progression, natural building on knowledge and to ensure a balanced 'core' of subjects are taught.

## ***Medium Term Planning***

Medium term planning takes the form of firstly a 'mind map' of information. All the curricular subjects surrounding the theme and then as part of a planning meeting with all teaching staff – lesson ideas, activities, trips etc.. are then mapped on. This plan is also influenced by assessment from the last half term and any 'child led' learning that staff want to ensure is incorporated into the plan.

## ***Short Term Planning***

These plans are completed on a weekly basis by teaching staff. They are directly influenced by the work completed the week before, any assessments that may have taken place and by staff following the 'child led' interests and ideas. These plans form a reflective practice and are used as direct evidence for planning for the next weeks work. The child is actively involved with this planning and targets are agreed upon between both the teacher and child.

## ***Resources***

Our Montessori Prepared Environment allows for our resources to be well presented and well planned. Our Long Term Continuous Provision plan shows our materials are on our shelves at all times. Alongside these activities staff will design, make, and prepare other materials that will complement the Integrated Curriculum. These activities will change according to the child's interest and needs. Children will be directed to use these materials through their work journals or through free choice.

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## **Assessment**

Children are regularly assessed using both standard and non-standardised tests and in Year 2 and Year 6 they also sit the national assessments known as SATs (Standard Attainment Tests). Our results in these tests are invariably excellent. Pupils go on to both independent and maintained secondary schools where their knowledge and learning skills are valued and admired.

### **Key stage 1**

As High Elms Manor is an independent school we may choose whether to take part in the assessment and reporting arrangements for one or more subjects at the end of Key Stage 1. We have decided that Teachers will summarise their judgements on children's attainment in relation to the National Curriculum level descriptions for each eligible child. The aim is to reach a rounded judgement that:

- is based on knowledge of how a child has performed over time and across a range of contexts; and takes into account strengths and weaknesses of a child's performance through the key stage. They need to determine:
- Levels for reading, writing, and speaking and listening
- An overall subject level for mathematics
- A level for each attainment target in science.

Once teachers have information about each attainment target, they must reach an overall subject level. If a teacher reaches a level 2 judgement for reading and writing for example, they should then consider whether the performance is just into level 2, securely at level 2 or at the top end of level 2. This refines the judgement into 2C, 2B or 2A.

Children will not partake in any tasks or tests as part of this assessment and results are not shared with the local authorities or displayed on the website. However results will be shared and discussed with parents at the summer term parent/teacher meeting.

### **Key Stage 2**

The National Curriculum tests are designed to assess children's knowledge and understanding of specific elements of the Key Stage 2 programmes of study. They provide a snapshot of a child's attainment at the end of the key stage. Further information about the tests is available on the Department's website at [www.education.gov.uk/ks2](http://www.education.gov.uk/ks2). Schools are required to administer the following level 3-5 tests:

English reading  
English grammar, punctuation and spelling (new for 2013)  
mathematics

### **P scales**

The use of P scales is statutory for children with special educational needs (SEN) who are working below level 1 of the National Curriculum. Schools will need to use P scales to record and report the achievements of those children in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. P scales are not to be used to assess children with English as

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an additional language (EAL) at any age unless they have additional special educational needs.