

RainbowSchool

PROSPECTUS

2011/2012



beyondautism.org.uk



Rainbow School is an independent, non profit making school for children and young people diagnosed with autism and/or related communication disorders. The School is registered with the Department of Education as an Independent Special Needs School for children and young people with autism aged 4 to 17 years. Rainbow School is located on two sites (primary and secondary) in Wandsworth, South West London and was founded in 2000 by parents of children with autism. It was the first VB School to be established in the UK.

The school offers a structured and individualised programme of intensive intervention based more specifically on the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) and Verbal Behaviour (VB) whilst ensuring a broad and balanced specialised curriculum aligned with the National Curriculum. VB focuses primarily on developing functional communication and language acquisition. This also encompasses social, play and independent skills. Another key aim of teaching using VB methods is to reduce challenging behaviour and replace with appropriate functional behaviours. Reducing challenging behaviours allows access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Teaching using VB gives pupils the learning skills they need to achieve their academic potential.



The school offers 1:1 teaching, from 9.15am to 3.15pm at the primary school and from 9.30am to 3.30pm at the secondary school, Monday to Friday, for approximately 41 weeks per year. The school day follows a structured timetable which includes tutor group time, individual programmes to develop functional language skills, as well as individual and group based sessions in all areas of the curriculum. Independent living skills and communication skills as well as group activities, outdoor playtime, art, music, PE, football and swimming are all part of the Rainbow School week.

Rainbow School provides an education that enables each child and young person to grow in confidence and autonomy, to feel safe and secure in their school environment, and to achieve their maximum potential within a structured, happy and caring school environment.

Rainbow School's founding principle is to enable all pupils who come to the school to achieve their full potential. To this end, the School offers its students an education designed to help them to understand, integrate and work with the rest of their society by using the ABA/VB approach to teaching, which has been pioneered and developed in the US over the last 40 years. As the core difficulty affecting children and young people with autism is communication, this is the central focus of our teaching.

“Children who go to Rainbow make far greater progress than they would elsewhere. Every gain is positive.”

Rainbow parent

Our Aims

- To offer an approach to learning based on the principles of **Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) and Verbal Behaviour (VB)**.
- To provide a curriculum which meets each pupil's individual education plan based on the National Curriculum.
- To enable children and young people, where possible, to integrate into mainstream schools and where not, to continue to support their on-going needs.
- To work in partnership with parents; providing support and information.
- To provide a safe, caring and enjoyable environment where children and young people can thrive and grow towards independence.
- To provide a comprehensive and on-going training and development programme for teaching staff.

Verbal Behaviour

The teaching procedures used during 1:1 teaching and small group work, which form the basis of all interactions with pupils throughout the school day, are based on the principles of Verbal Behaviour Analysis. This data driven, scientifically based method has been proven to be effective in advancing children and young people with autism and has been in use in the USA (and Scandinavia) for over 20 years. At Rainbow School we are experts in the use of VB which focuses on the establishment of a functional communication repertoire. Situations are contrived and created throughout the day with the aim of motivating the pupil to communicate using target language, teaches language for a variety of purposes i.e. requesting, naming, responding to the language of others receptively, asking questions and responding to questions. All teaching staff receive extensive in-house training in ABA and VB from Rainbow School's highly qualified senior staff. We are also fortunate to have Dr. Patrick McGreevy Ph.D., P.A., BCBA (www.behaviorchange.com) as a VB advisor to the school.

What do we teach?

The core difficulty affecting children and young people with ASD is communication which is the central focus of teaching, particularly in the early years. The National Curriculum, Literacy & Numeracy Strategies and Schemes of Work are adapted to the specific needs of the pupils and delivered through VB.

The aims of VB are to enhance the communicative, academic, social and practical skills of the children enabling them to access educational and social opportunities available in their communities and reducing professional input, as they grow older. Initial assessments for every pupil cover a wide range of skills: communication, self help, social interaction, learning behaviours, play, literacy and numeracy. Input is also sought from the parents and other professionals such as an Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist and any other professionals involved with the pupils. Based on this information, an individual programme is designed to enhance the pupil's skills.

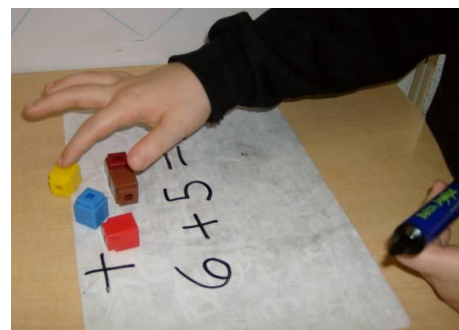


The secondary curriculum at Rainbow School is based on a modified National Curriculum, with the full range of subjects offered. The emphasis continues to be on building pupils' functional language and comprehension and providing opportunities for young people to enjoy and participate in a broad range of learning experiences.

Alongside these subjects, the school offers ASDAN programmes at a range of levels in Literacy, Numeracy and Personal and Social Skills, based around the practical application of these skills in daily life.

Teaching activities

Daily timetables include individual teaching sessions where pupils work on personalised speech and language, self-help, numeracy or literacy programmes, small group lessons, with one-to-one support as appropriate and focussed social skills sessions. All the children participate in weekly PE, football, music, art and swimming sessions and we are always on the look out for other activities from horse riding to trampolining. Regular class community trips, library trips, and other school and class outings are also planned.



Communication

At Rainbow School pupils are encouraged to use verbal communication if possible and their individual programmes are aimed at teaching them to identify and express their needs, to respond to questions and to identify people, places and objects. Children who are unable to express their needs verbally are taught to communicate using sign (Makaton and Sing-along) or PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) depending on what is most appropriate for the individual child. The school also ensures that parents are given information, training and resources so that, if appropriate, they can use the same communication system with their child at home.

“The curriculum is good and provides the pupils with a broad range of National Curriculum experiences while retaining a highly appropriate emphasis on communication and social skills”

Ofsted 2010



Social interaction

The Pupils are also encouraged to interact with their peers whenever appropriate including during targeted social skills sessions as well as during snack, lunch, playtimes, outings and group lessons. We have links with several local mainstream schools which we use for integration sessions for those pupils for whom it is deemed appropriate. These sessions may involve taking part in shared playtimes or lessons at these schools or visits by their pupils to Rainbow School.

Speech & Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy

The school employs therapists for Speech & Language and Occupational Therapy. These professionals work closely with the staff and pupils, observing, assessing, devising programmes of intervention, which can either be delivered by the therapist or by Rainbow School Staff, depending on the individual need of the pupil. The Speech and Language Therapist and the Occupational Therapist are both qualified in paediatrics and have taken further training to support their work with pupils with ASD. They provide inset training to Rainbow School Staff as well as providing reports for parents at Annual Reviews.

How do we teach?

Teaching based on the VB approach uses **highly structured teaching interactions aimed at maximising a pupil’s opportunities to respond and actively participate in learning.** Teaching is broken down into discrete trials, aimed at eliciting very specific responses. These trials are repeated throughout the day until the child or young person reaches specified criteria for success. **Task analysis is used to break down skills into achievable targets** allowing pupils to learn difficult and complex behaviours step by step.

Detailed data is collected on learning targets as well behaviour throughout the day. This is then used to assess the pupil's progress on an on-going basis and ensures consistency across the teaching staff. If a child or young person is not making sufficient progress in a specific area, the teaching will be reviewed and alternative strategies employed to improve learning.

Priority is given to promoting and maintaining motivation to learn through the use of positive reinforcement to promote independent and appropriate responses. In order to be effective, teachers are required to constantly assess where the pupil's motivation lies and become skilled in creating interest and motivation where it is absent. What each child or young person experiences as rewarding is individual and constantly changing. The longer term aim is to reduce the frequency of reinforcement and move toward less tangible and more natural, social reinforcement. **Prompting is used to maximise success during learning of new skills.** When learning new skills, the pupil is prompted in such a way, that errors are avoided as far as possible to prevent confusion and loss of motivation. These prompts are then carefully faded until the child or young person is able to respond independently.



Careful attention is paid to the generalisation and maintenance of learnt skills.

Previously learnt skills are frequently revisited in individual and group lessons. This creates momentum during teaching and ensures that knowledge is retained. In teaching new skills, we aim to teach many examples and present concepts in as functional and meaningful a way as possible, to ensure each concept is generalised. Teaching occurs across a variety of stimuli, teachers and where appropriate, environments to further promote generalisation. Parents are also encouraged to play a role in this. As each pupil's skills increase, the aim is to move towards more natural and varied language during instruction, more natural levels and types of reinforcement, a varied pace of instruction and the ability to learn in small group settings.

Functional assessment of Behaviour

At Rainbow School, we aim to understand and manage behaviour based on an assessment of its function. People learn to repeat behaviours that provide some form of reward/are in some way useful to them in certain circumstances. By monitoring behaviour as well as its environmental context over a period of time, we may be able to detect a pattern in the types of events that follow and precede the behaviour. This allows us to form a hypothesis of the function of a specific behaviour. We feel that without a good understanding of what this function is, effective behaviour management is not possible. For example, if the function of a pupil's inappropriate behaviour during a lesson is to avoid participating, then sending them out will only be reinforcing i.e. encouraging this behaviour to occur again in the future. Using this approach, behaviours that are seen to be significantly impairing a pupil's ability to take part in learning and social interaction are assessed and behaviour management plans developed accordingly. Behaviour data is regularly monitored. Parents are kept informed and offered support in dealing with behaviour issues experienced at home.

Assessment tools

Rainbow School uses a number of assessment tools to track and monitor the progress of its pupils. By monitoring the progress of students closely, new skills can be targeted and barriers to learning effectively overcome.

The Verbal Behaviour Milestones Assessment & Placement Program (VB-MAPP)

Skills in 16 key areas (including requests, labelling, intraverbals, play, social interaction, literacy and numeracy) are broken down into significant milestones and presented in developmental sequence. They are also divided into three levels, which correspond to the skills demonstrated by typically developing children between 0 and 18 months, 18 and 30 months and 30 and 48 months. This provides valuable information regarding the overall picture of each child's development in relation to a typically developing child and in line with this suggests priorities for teaching. All pupils are re-assessed once a year.

In addition, the **VB-MAPP Barriers Assessment** provides an analysis and assessment of 21 common language and learning barriers faced by children and young people with autism. Once identified, an individualised analysis of these barriers is conducted to determine the nature of the specific problem and the appropriate intervention. In some cases, a particular barrier (for example the inability to establish a positive working relationship), may need to be overcome before language instruction can progress any further.

The Assessment of Basic Language and learning Skills (ABLLS):

The self help and motor skills of the pupils are assessed using this curriculum particularly in the areas of eating, dressing and toileting. The pupils are assessed to establish a baseline when they enter the school and are then re-assessed twice a year. The information gained

from these assessments is used to inform future planning of individual programmes for the children. It also enables the school to take data on a wide range of important skills such as self-help, behaviour, social interaction and basic learner skills, as well as academic skills. It is important that these skills are measurable when setting targets for children with autism.

“The assessment of progress in behaviour and social skills is meticulous and very well used to tailor individual programmes”

Ofsted 2010



The Curriculum

Rainbow School provides a multi-professional and collaborative approach to the teaching therapy and care of children and young people whose primary difficulty is their Autism Spectrum Disorder. Rainbow School provides a broad and balanced education, giving each child and young person an individual curriculum tailored to their needs within the framework of the National Curriculum and Early Years Curriculum. Their progress is monitored using B squared, QCA P-Scales, on-going formative assessments and their Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

The National Curriculum, Literacy & Numeracy Strategies and Schemes of Work are adapted to the specific needs of the pupils and delivered through VB.

B Squared

The B Squared Assessment Files break down the P Levels and the National Curriculum from Levels 1 to 5 into small steps allowing Teachers to credit pupils with their achievements and enabling them to demonstrate that a pupil is making progress. B Squared is used by over 8000 schools in the UK.

QCA P-Scales- Supporting the Target Setting Process

These are used to help track the attainment of the pupils starting below National Curriculum Level 1 and working up through the P Levels to Level 1 and beyond. They are used to provide a framework to measure pupil's progress. This assessment helps to inform future

planning, targets and objectives for the pupil. The P-Scales are used in the following subjects:

English:	Speaking and listening; Reading; Writing
Mathematics:	Using and applying; Number; Space, shape and measures.
Science:	Scientific Enquiry; Life Processes and Living Things; Materials and their properties; Physical Processes.

Formative assessments

Attainment in other areas is noted through formative, ongoing assessments. Annotations about the pupil's progress are written onto their programme sheets and data sheets. These are then used to inform future planning. Other curriculum areas taught at Rainbow School are under the general heading *Knowledge and Understanding of the World*. This includes,

Geography
History
Design and Technology
Art
Information and Communication Technology
Religious Education
Personal Social and Health Education and Citizenship
Physical Education

Attainment in these areas is also noted through formative, ongoing assessments. Annotations about the progress are written on their individual programme sheet. This is then used to inform future planning.

ASDAN and GCSE Courses

Pupils in the secondary school will follow the National Curriculum modified appropriately. They will be offered ASDAN programmes at a range of levels in Literacy, Numeracy and Personal and Social Skills, based around the practical application of these skills in daily life. They will be fully supported to access GCSEs in subjects in which they excel.

Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

IEPs are also used to monitor pupils' progress throughout the year. These are reviewed regularly and new targets set as appropriate. The IEPs are used as written, documented evidence of attainment and progress.

Parents as partners

At Rainbow School we are aware that parental involvement is particularly crucial for a child or young person with autism because:

- Parents provide a continuity of perspective on their son or daughter's progress
- No-one knows their son or daughter as well as the parents do
- Parents play a vital role in generalising newly-learned skills to areas outside school
- Parents and teachers will need to work together consistently in order to achieve the same goals

Rainbow School offers all parents information, training, support and access to resources. Parents are kept informed about what their son or daughter is working on, how they can help and how to use the same methods to encourage them to make progress. It is also essential for developing home based skills such as eating appropriately, toilet training and bedtime routines. The more that the school and family work together, the faster the child or young person will learn the appropriate behaviours and skills we are trying to teach them. The school meets regularly with parents both formally and informally, at school and on home visits, to discuss progress, agree behaviour plans and to help parents manage their son or daughter's behaviour at home. Regular progress reports are sent home detailing skills which a child has mastered as well information about general progress and behaviour. A daily communication book also serves to strengthen the link between home and school.



Policies & Procedures

The School has written policies and procedures on a wide range of subjects and copies of these documents are kept in the school office. If you would like a full list of our Policies & Procedures or would like a copy of any individual policy, then please call the school office. A full staff list is available on request.

The following policies are available and are of particular relevance for Parents:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection

- Behaviour Policy
- First Aid/Medical Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Discipline and exclusions
- Complaints policy

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Where English is the second language spoken at home, parents are encouraged to use English as frequently as possible whilst their son/daughter is learning to communicate. Rainbow School can only meet the needs of children and young people whose parents agree to support this policy. At Annual Review meetings translators are invited to attend where the parents' first language is not English.

Staff and staff training

The school has a highly qualified and experienced senior staff led by a Head of School experienced in teaching children with special education needs. She is supported by experienced Assistant Heads of ABA and Teaching as well as ABA Supervisors, Qualified Teachers, Class Leaders and ABA Tutors who provide 1:1 tutoring for the children. Specific VB training and continuous evaluation of all personnel involved in the treatment programme is a vital part of our methodology due to the importance of consistency of approach. All full time staff receive extensive and on-going training in the principles of ABA and VB and how to apply them in a school environment.

We have a fully integrated and committed approach to our staff's training and professional development. Staff have opportunities to attend external ABA courses, National Autism Society Courses, Makaton courses and other appropriate and relevant training courses. Staff are also given training in child protection and staff protection, child focused behaviour management as well as first aid and health and safety procedures for both themselves and the children. The school also funds committed members of staff to study for their Board Certified Associate Behaviour Analyst qualification or to become qualified teachers by gaining their Post Graduate Certificate in Education or QTS via a GTP.

At Rainbow School, we hope to not only directly advance the children and young people in our care but also to assist in the creation of a pool of teachers skilled in the techniques of VB to provide a model of excellence in the education and care of children and young people with autism.

Admissions

To be eligible for admission to the Rainbow School pupils must:

- Have a diagnosis of autism or a related communication disorder
- Have a statement of special educational needs (or be in the process of gaining one)
- Have agreement (in writing) from the LA or another source to fund the placement
- Have the appropriate age, skills and behaviour for the vacancy that exists
- Live within a feasible commuting distance.

Rainbow School does not generally accept privately funded pupils. All pupils who are UK citizens are funded by the Local Authority in which they reside.

Interested parents are asked to attend an open day or arrange an individual visit to the school bringing with them their son or daughter's latest statement and any relevant reports. The child or young person will then visit for an informal assessment. This is a chance for us to assess whether we can meet their needs – we are looking to get a feel for how the child or young person reacts to the environment, will play and interact. Occasionally we will say no to those who are too high functioning or if challenging behaviours may have an adverse effect on the existing peer group.

Glossary

ABA	Applied behaviour analysis
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
DFE	Department of Education
IEP	Individual Education Plan
ITP	Individual Teaching Plan
LA	Local Authority
Makaton	A modified form of sign language developed to meet the needs of individuals with learning disabilities.
PECS	Picture Exchange Communication System which was developed by the Delaware Autistic Program, and has been proven to be very effective in promoting communication skills in children with autism.
Statement	A statement of special educational needs is a document that sets out a child's needs and all the special help that he or she should have. The LA will make a statement when they decide that all the special help your child needs cannot reasonably be provided within the resources normally available to the school.
Task analysis	A precise break down of the steps required to perform a task.
VB	Verbal Behaviour
VB-MAPP	Verbal Behaviour Milestones Assessment & Placement Program www.marksundberg.com/vb-mapp

Further Information

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The information contained in this prospectus was correct at the time of printing.