

What is the Rainbow Room?



A calm, ordered space which helps to facilitate the delivery of both learning & therapeutic interventions to students either diagnosed with a special educational need, on a special educational needs pathway or who require additional support to access their classroom or curriculum. In order to offer a predictable, consistent & safe environment the Rainbow Room is carefully divided into zones which ensure that the needs of all children are met whilst helping to support independence, self-regulation & behaviour expectations. The Rainbow Room will also offer three 'hot desk' spaces; two for supported work (1:1 for example a classroom TA & one child) & one for independent learners who simply need time out of the classroom to attend.

Self Registration & Carpet Area:



Children will be taught the routine of self-registration. When they enter the room, they will find their name peg & will clip it to the edge of the tray. Children will also remove their shoes & leave them neatly in the shoe rack creating a sense of belonging & grounding. Encouraging the children to remove & put on their shoes is a simple act but will develop fine motor strength, control & independence. It also marks the start & end of each session very clearly. Before leaving the room, name pegs should be unclipped & placed back in the tray.

All sessions will begin with some input on the carpet where the theme of the session will be introduced & explained. This will also be a time to remind each child 'how we do it in the Rainbow Room' setting the same clear & transparent expectations for everyone reinforced by using a recognition board & positive notes. Class mantras will also be repeated before the session begins.

Stations for Learning

1:1 intervention Station:

This is an adult-led bespoke intervention space designed specifically for one child to receive timetabled & targeted support. Interventions are based on the needs of the child & are carefully planned on a weekly basis to ensure both progress & participation can be monitored. Resources have been carefully organised & colour-coded under the 4 SEND strands; Communication & Interaction, Cognition & Learning, Social, Emotional, Mental health difficulties (SEMH) & Sensory &/or Physical Needs. This helps to keep the workspace ordered, efficient & flexible when needed.



Group Activity Workstations:

Desks are organised into quads with core resources available for children to access as required, reducing unnecessary disruption & distraction. Areas of need & development are central to the planning of the activities which themselves are linked to a weekly theme. Each child will be encouraged to take part in every activity & supported to attend to that activity for a period of 5 minutes before moving on to the next task. A summary report for every child's Rainbow Room session will be written & shared with their class teacher to support a holistic approach to their needs & strengthen the relationship between the alternate provision offer & their core classroom work. These reports can also be used to evidence progress & be shared with parents & carers.



Independent Workstation:

A fully resourced independent workstation is available for children who do not need adult support but who may respond well to some time out of their classroom to complete their work. A timetable will be available outside the Rainbow Room where teachers &/or TAs can allocate a time slot to a child. The child must be able to work quietly & independently when using this desk so as not to distract the other work taking place in the RR. The child must be made explicitly aware of this expectation & class teachers & TAs should remain responsible for their own RR scheduling so the system works effectively & efficiently for as many children as possible. Children will also be expected to leave the work area as they have found it so that it is ready to use for the next pupil. Resources should not be removed but left neat & tidy in the space provided



Supported Learning Workstations:

There are two 1:1 workstations where children can come with a TA or another adult to complete work which may not have been possible in the whole class setting. The adult & child are expected to enter the room calmly & quietly, making their way to the workstation without disturbing activities or therapies taking place there. A timetable will be available outside the Rainbow Room where teachers &/or TAs can self-allocate a session at one of these workstations. The work area should be left as it was found so that it is ready for the next pupil to use. Resources should not be removed but left neat & tidy in the space provided.



Stations for Regulation



The Reading Corner:

This is a soft, inviting space which children should use to read or sit quietly under a blanket. There is a small shelving space with a selection of books which children can choose to look at. These will be refreshed every half term.



The Dark Tent:

Strictly one child at a time. Shoes should always be removed & put neatly on the rack at the door of the RR. Please ensure that children are explicitly taught & encouraged to understand that it is not a play area but a calm, distraction-free space for those who require limited sensory input whilst they re-regulate. There is a foam mattress, pillows & weighted blanket available for children who require a space to feel safe, secure & grounded. Adults responsible for any child using the tent should adhere to the rules of use so children become familiar with the regulation options available to them & know that all members of staff will provide the same offer. The tent should be left as it has been found so that all users can benefit equally.



The Creative Area:

A desk dedicated to creative & imaginative work with easy access to the arts & crafts materials, aprons & sink. Children should be encouraged to look after the area & tidy the space after each use ensuring it is ready to use. Supervising adults should ensure resources are used sensibly & be mindful of waste & misuse, including the safe use of equipment e.g. scissors.



Occupational Therapy Space:

Occupational Therapy will continue to take place every Wednesday, when the Rainbow Room will be closed. There is now a designated OT space & this should not be used outside of those sessions. Children should not play with or touch OT equipment or resources unless they have been guided or supported to do so by a supervision adult.



Why do we need a Rainbow Room?

It is worrying but perhaps not surprising that children on SEN pathways are five times more likely to be permanently excluded than their peers without SEN, and children with EHCPs almost four times more likely (DfE, 2024). The cycle is statistically self-perpetuating & the case for targeted, planned, high quality early intervention speaks almost for itself.

Very often, behaviour, attendance & support for children with special education needs are viewed as separate & unrelated challenges leading to a siloed, isolated & disconnected approach reserved for those who meet a statutory threshold. This not only results in a narrowing of our understanding of inclusion but does not capitalise on the heavy lifting capability of a whole school approach from which all children benefit.

According to the Department for Education, fewer than one in 10 mainstream schools have SEN units or resourced provision. As of May 2024, local authorities reported SEN unit and resourced provision capacity for 1,781 mainstream schools, including 1,155 primary schools (DfE, 2025a) but specialist facilities which provide more intensive support for pupils with SEN are in demand.

With limited access to official special schools and units, schools are diversifying and creating their own internal provision. A Teacher Tapp survey in the Autumn commissioned by the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) indicated that most teachers said their school had some kind of additional provision, usually focused upon pupils with SEMH needs, moderate learning difficulties, pupils on the autistic spectrum, or those with language and communication needs.

It is in this context that the Rainbow Room must operate. It is vital that our offer responds to the needs of the community it serves & uses every opportunity & resource to fine tune its effectiveness; observing, reflecting & communicating what it does well, what it does not & crucially identifying where changes can be made for the better. A well-researched, planned & embedded approach will have profound effects on the whole school & I believe has the power to positively impact every child, not just the few.

The principal objective of the Rainbow Room is to provide a predictable, calm & safe space for any child or adult who uses it; where everyone is treated with dignity & kindness even in the most difficult or challenging

circumstances. Understanding the specific needs of the children is crucial but minimising stress, anxiety & threat in the environment using daily routines, rituals, order & consistency is vital. The vulnerable child may perceive a change in body language as a fight or flight trigger; the sensitive child may respond disproportionately to a change in tone...it is up to us to create conditions which facilitate success & growth for all children, so they can thrive alongside their peers. Keeping improvised behaviour low & planned, even scripted responses & interventions high is fundamental to the language of the room. Simple & clear action & consequence strategies which remove the spotlight from behaviour & focus on the power of learning from a restorative conversation conducted with empathy can help to deactivate the powerful amygdala response. Having a room where time can be taken to both explicitly teach strategies to help children understand their own needs & eventually regulate their emotions as well as developing the learned skills of attention & focus is of huge benefit to the wider school community as well as the children who use the Rainbow Room on a more regular basis.

I hope that a simple ready, respectful & safe room culture with clear boundaries & simple consequences delivered with warmth but also conviction will help children to believe in & trust the adults in the room. With the focus on restoration, recognition & positivity I believe we can encourage all children to ultimately integrate fully in the wider school community.

How will the Rainbow Room achieve its objectives:

1. Develop a positive sense of self- identity:

Children who need to access the Rainbow Room will often be those within our community who experience low self-confidence, low self-worth, low self-esteem & either physical &/or mental hypersensitivities. Developing a strong & robust sense of self by getting to know each child deeply & meaningfully is therefore crucial. The emotional currency established by understanding likes & dislikes, strengths & challenges can be exchanged in daily interactions & help to build mutual trust & respect. When combined with predictable routines, classroom norms, rituals & a collective desire to uphold expectations a sense of belonging, positive self-identity follows.

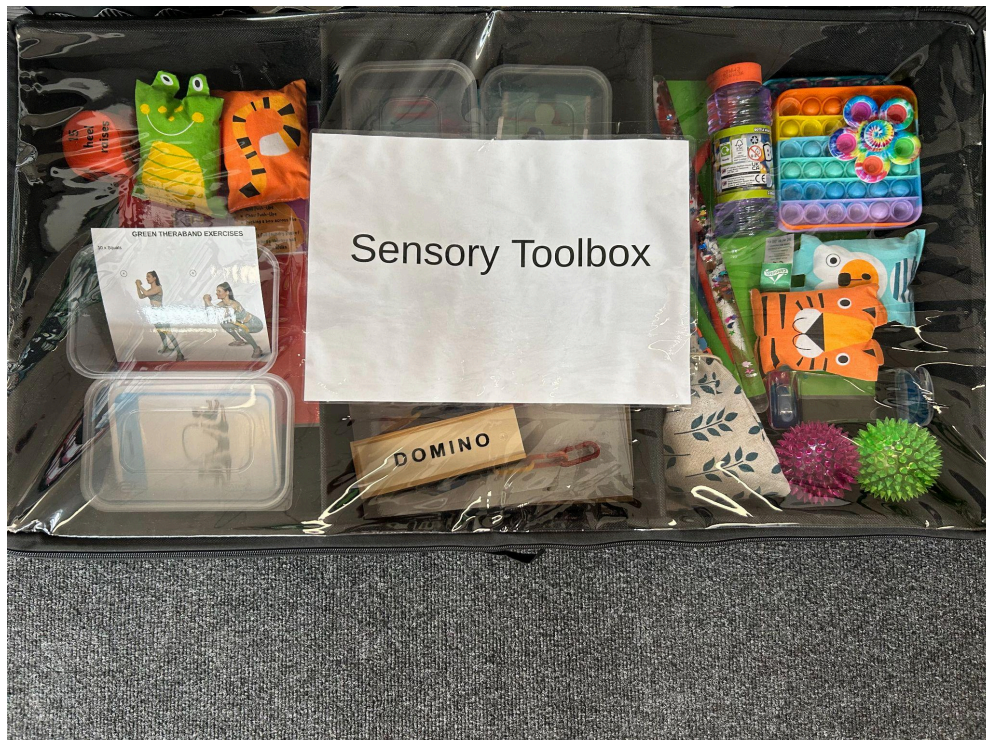
2. Enjoy learning and feel successful:

Building a predictable learning environment where children can be caught in the act of success is very important. Setting challenges which not only stimulate & engage the child but also allow the adult strategic opportunities to recognise & praise successful outcomes is central to the planning of activities. A recognition board will be used as a collective strategy for catching desired behaviour in the act along with recognition cards that children can take to show class teachers, friends & those at home. Positive notes home will be written when direct communication with parents/carers is desired so success becomes holistically acknowledged & reinforced.

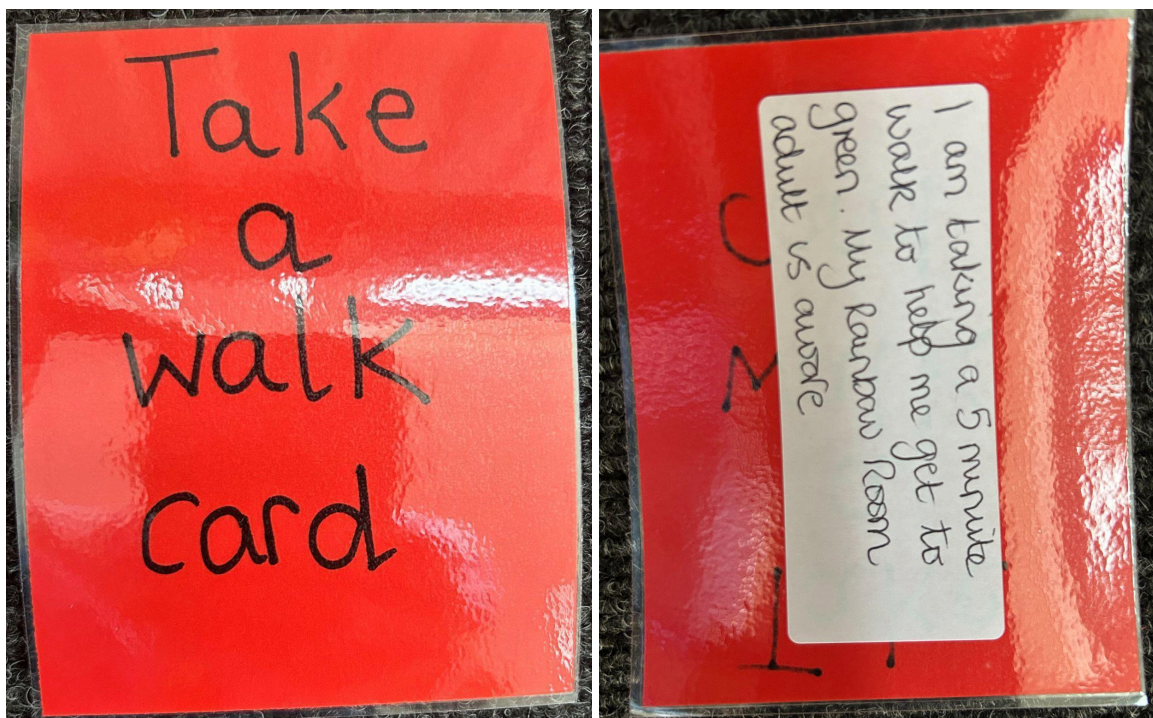
3. Recognise 'triggers' and develop techniques to express and manage their emotions, facilitating an increase in positive emotional experiences:

A number of regulation stations are available which are based on the zones of regulation principles. The art of self-regulation is explicitly taught & scaffolded to enable the child to reach independence. Children can be directed to use the sensory toolbox &/or the self-regulation buckets both of which allow them to access tasks &/or activities to help them to get into the green zone. When triggers & the resultant emotions present themselves it is important for the child to learn how to intercept the fight or flight response & by providing a small number of predictable options for the child to choose from which will ultimately help them recognise, control & perhaps suppress

that intense & innate sensation in the future. Conditioning the children to access these strategies when they recognise a need for them will help them to self-regulate & when done in a calm, normalised environment will give the child confidence to ask for or access support without feeling the heat of the spotlight on them.



The colour of the bucket represents the zone of regulation the child is in. Inside the bucket are 5 strategies for the child to choose from which are designed to help them find their green. If the child feels like they need to take some time outside of the room, they can select the 'Take A Walk Card'. The child must inform the adult, they have chosen this option, they must be given permission to take the walk FIRST. This should act as a circuit breaker for the fight or flight instinct. There are non-negotiable boundaries for this option, inform the adult, take the card, take the 5 minute timer & return when the sand runs out with the card & the timer. Any adult passing the unaccompanied child can ask to see the card & the timer to confirm what zone the child was in when they took their walk & how long they have left before returning to the Rainbow Room. If children do not return after 5 minutes (a timer will be set in the classroom too) there will be a consequence time out. Children should be rewarded with Dojos or house points depending on their form rewards systems.



Additional, explicitly taught self-regulation stations are available:
The sensory toolbox which contains activities designed to either alert, organise or calm brain function preparing it for listening & learning.

The calm reading corner which has a selection of books; reading, picture, lift the flap & fact, where children can settle under a soft blanket, with soft lighting & take a moment to attune to their environment & the people in it. The dark tent which has a foam mattress, pillows, a weighted blanket & soft lighting. The tent is not a play area, but a space designed to intercept excessive sensory input which has caused an over-stimulated or distressed state.

4. Participate, try their best and overcome challenges to engagement:

The start of each session begins ritualistically with removing shoes, placing them on the shoe rack, finding your named peg & coming to the carpet calmly. A daily class mantra will be used at the start of every session during carpet time: 'I can choose to walk away; I can choose to stop myself; I can choose to be calm; I can stop myself; I am in control of myself, I can choose to be calm'. This will help to set the weather in the room from the start of each session & create a collective sense of belonging & aspiration.

5. Form positive relationships through building trust, sharing, cooperating and learning how to manage and resolve conflict:

Modelling behaviour consistently & fairly with trust & respect at the heart of all discussions & negotiations is essential daily practice. Explicit modelling will also be used to clearly demonstrate physically & verbally how to be a positive influence in the room. Behaviour will be rewarded in line with school policy & consequences will be managed using the time out chair & the 'Restorative 5' system of questioning when the time out has been served. It is important to state that the time out chair is in a central position where children can access learning visually & audially throughout. The time out strategy is used to reduce power play responses from either the adult or child & remove 'celebrity behaviour culture' keeping the idea of learning from our mistakes at the heart.

6. Experience a learning journey, creating both digital and physical evidence of their participation and progress:

Activity checklists will be produced for each child & for every session. The checklist will include a description of the theme, a picture of each activity relating to that theme, the learning objective of each activity & a comment on how the child responded to the activity. The checklist will be sent to class

teachers to develop the link between the learning in the Rainbow Room & the classroom to which they belong, helping to foster a greater connection & coherence between the two spaces.

7. Leave with an increased understanding of themselves, their strengths and a sense of accomplishment:

Activities will be designed to meet the needs of the child & will be adapted to reflect their age, development & current working level & targets. This enables every child to experience success & challenge in a weighted & measured way. Each child will feel a strong sense of purpose, responsibility & achievement when in the Rainbow Room & as a result will move closer towards their academic & personal goals.

8. Make good academic and SEMH progress:

Checklists will be an ongoing record of progress & attainment & can provide additional information about a child's progress. They can be used by the class teacher to report to parents directly or to inform their own classroom practice & curriculum adaptations. Teachers have the opportunity to respond to the comments made & suggest new ideas or targets for their children to ensure Rainbow Room activities are relevant & meaningful in terms of the child's overall learning journey.

9. Benefit from the work completed with families to better understand and manage their child's SEMH needs:

Direct communication with the families is undertaken by the SENCo &/or the class teacher. Proud posts & stickers are used to supplement the home-school relationship & can provide immediate feedback about their child's day helping to reduce anxiety & promote positivity & transparency.

10. Benefit from multi-disciplinary working which ensures all appropriate agencies and support have been accessed for the child:

The Rainbow Room hosts occupational health & speech & language therapists for children who require those additional support systems. These practitioners work closely with the SENDCo & other adults to inform class & whole school approaches wherever possible. Entrenching their recommendations in daily school practice ensures their impact is maximised.

11. Develop their emotional intelligence and emotional literacy (other kinds of smart) which will enable them to develop self-regulation techniques, in preparation for returning to a mainstream setting where appropriate:

Complete integration in the mainstream classroom is the ultimate goal for all Rainbow Room children. The Rainbow Room provides a safe, calm & predictable environment for students who need a more bespoke approach to learning but who will remain within mainstream education. All activities & practices are designed with this central objective in mind.

12. Build resilience and perseverance through confidence building activities:

Many of the children in the Rainbow Room have low resilience & are hypersensitive on some level. Support strategies based around personal growth including self-regulation & resilience are therefore key features of all planning, modelling & behaviour. Normalising feelings such as failure & success are crucial & activities which generate such feelings will be explicitly used so children can experience them, learn to manage them & ultimately confront them with the support & help of the resources & adults available.