

Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum Policy



Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum Statement

The early years curriculum is defined by the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which sets out seven areas of learning and what children should be able to do by the end of the Early Years Foundation stage (the early learning goals). Our early years curriculum also ensures every child is unique, and are constantly learning. We encourage resilience, confidence and self assurance through our play based approach, promoting the Characteristics of Effective Learning. We provide a rich and varied curriculum that builds on children's experiences, interests and cultures.

Basic Curriculum Principles:

- 1. Learning is a change to long-term memory.**
- 2. Our aims are to ensure that our pupils experience a wide breadth of study and have, by the end of each key stage, long-term memory of an ambitious body of knowledge.**
- 3. On-going formative assessment is at the heart of effective early years practice using reflective practice to plan, observe and assess - 'plan, do and review'.**

Early Years Curriculum Intent Statement:

Early Years Curriculum drivers shape our curriculum breadth. The drivers are derived from the backgrounds of our pupils, their interests, our beliefs about high quality education and our values. We take the following statement from the statutory framework as our starting point:

'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated play. As children grow older it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults to help children prepare for the more formal learning of Year 1.'

The early years curriculum is taught across two year groups; nursery and reception. Our curriculum we teach goes beyond what is assessed, although the seven areas of learning are a broad outline. Within both nursery and reception broad and varied lessons are planned to ensure children learn new skills. In addition, the high-quality planning ensures there are many opportunities for the children to retrieve and use skills which are already embedded or newly developing. A planned education rich in wonder and memorable experiences, allows each child's natural creativity and curiosity to flourish, alongside their purposeful acquisition of skills and knowledge.

Central to our planning, The Foundation Stage Early Learning Goals set out our end of reception year expectations. To support the coverage of our curriculum, our nursery and reception breadth map provides guidance for the progression of the skills and learning for each term. Carefully planned high-quality challenges, allow each child the opportunity to draw upon their prior learning and challenge them to build upon these skills to master their

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technique. We recognise the crucial role that Early Years education has to play in providing firm foundations upon which the rest of a child's education is successfully based.

It is our intention to provide a broadly enriched, rounded and stimulating learning environment where children can work with adults and peers in a climate of mutual respect. We provide children with a well-structured, safe, active learning environment both indoors and outdoors. This goes beyond teaching the statutory objectives and enables each child to develop the skills, attitudes and understanding that will form the basis of lifelong learning and encourage them to become useful, active members of a diverse and constantly changing society.

Cultural capital gives our pupils the vital background knowledge required to be informed and thoughtful members of our community who understand and believe in British values. Exposing our children to a wide range of quality literature including archaic text, non-linear sequences, narratively complex, symbolic text and resistant text is a key factor in developing cultural capital and enriches their vocabulary. We use a holistic approach to understand each child, using our home visits, nursery visits and transition meetings. We are able to gather information about each child, providing a firm understanding of the experiences children have not had, for example, not having stairs or a garden. This enables us to plan experiences that include the skills and language that children have not already been exposed to. Each child is unique therefore their experiences will be unique also. We use the knowledge and understanding of each and every pupil, not to judge, but to develop and inform our pedagogy accordingly to bring out the best in all of our pupils.

Implementation Statement:

Our curriculum design is based on evidence from cognitive science; three main principles underpin it: **Learning is most effective with spaced repetition; Interleaving helps pupils to discriminate between topics and aids long-term retention; Retrieval of previously learned content is frequent and regular, which increases both storage and retrieval strength.**

In addition to the three principles we also understand that learning is invisible in the short term and that sustained mastery takes time.

A balance of child-initiated and adult-directed play based activities, using continuous play and small group activities, helps each child to make progress across the seven areas of learning. Teachers regularly deploy these two different styles of teaching in order to give pupils a variety of learning experiences.

Our child-initiated learning focuses on activities starting with a stimulus, often provided by the pupils themselves. Through discussion and encouragement, an adult will help pupils to explore an area of interest and create an outcome of value, demonstrating the retrieval and application of embedded skills.

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Our adult-directed learning takes place in small groups to learn new skills in reading, writing and maths. Whole class teaching takes place to learn new skills in phonics, communication and language, understanding of the world and expressive art and design. When appropriate, quality schemes and resources are purchased to support the delivery of high quality lessons and reduced teacher workloads. These include Read Write Inc for phonics lessons, Charanga for music, 1Decison for PSHE and RSE lessons. Pupils work in small groups to practise these skills using the instructional direction and support of an adult.

We supplement these schemes with visitors, additional programmes and initiatives, as well as pupil specific intervention programmes and planning for pupils who are not meeting expectations.

Within our nursery and reception classes, we follow a systematic synthetic phonics programme, Read Write Inc. This programme is supplemented with; Jolly phonics stories and rhymes, Busy Things - Cat and Dog software resources and daily shared story time. In reception a discrete daily session is planned and delivered by a RWI trained adult and daily challenges, including interactive white board activities, sound hunts, sounds and words of the day focuses and group games are available during the continuous provision time.

To support the application of phonics, we encourage all children to access our class libraries, where they can share the enjoyment of books with their peers and adults. In addition, children are invited to take a class library book home with them to enjoy with their family. As children progress to being able to independently apply their sounds when segmenting and blending words, each child will receive a phonetically levelled book from one of our reading schemes. The children are encouraged to apply their decoding strategies to read and comprehend the text. Each child reads to the class teacher regularly and books changed as required. Where children are not meeting age related expectations in phonics and reading, additional differentiated phonic sessions and support are provided to individuals and smaller groups. Whole class guided reading sessions and story time occur daily at different parts of the school day. Children are encouraged to participate with careful questioning led by the adult. Letter formation worksheets and activities are sent home and parent workshops are held regularly to support parents.

As a whole school, our teaching for mastery approach begins in early years. Our Early Years subject leader has experience as a Specialist Leader of Education (SLE), having completed training with the Maths Hub and National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM). Nursery begins the mathematical fluency journey with the introduction of a number a week. Having a focused number the children are encouraged to develop number sense. The objective for those working in both nursery and reception, is to ensure that all children develop firm mathematical foundations in a way that is engaging, and appropriate for their age. There are six key areas of early mathematics learning, which collectively provide a platform for everything children will encounter as they progress through their maths learning at primary school, and beyond:



Cardinality and Counting

Comparison

Composition

Pattern

Shape and Space

Measures

These areas form the fundamental mathematical basis of a CBeebies series of five-minute animated programmes called Numberblocks. In nursery the children are introduced to the characters to provide familiarity and consistency however it is only once the children begin Reception where they follow a number a week using the support materials linked to the Numberblocks programmes. Lessons are planned and delivered on a daily basis, which draws out and builds on the maths embedded in the stories contained in each episode. Further learning is planned using a topic or interest based approach to encourage the application of the skills taught.

Our approach promotes the different ways children learn. The planning and guidance of children's activities, underpins and supports the characteristics of effective learning and teaching:

Our *active learning* promotes the pupils' engagement where pupils maintain their attention for a period of time and are not easily distracted because they are interested and fascinated by the activity. Adults help children to enjoy their achievements, be satisfied when they meet their own goal, and do what they set out to do so they are content with their own success and not dependent on the success of others.

Our *playing and exploring* encourages curiosity and independent exploration, extending children's learning which supports the development of language. Adults support the introduction of new and varied vocabulary and challenge children's thinking. Children are confident to try new ideas and are not afraid to 'have a go' as adults encourage a 'can do' attitude so children are willing to take risks in new experiences.

Our *creating and thinking critically* approach supports children to develop so that they make connections in their learning, encouraging them to make predictions so they are able to think things through and evaluate their learning for future learning. Pupils learn to apply skills in different contexts and consider the best way of completing a task without waiting to be directed. Pupils are thinkers who make sense of their experiences. Using what they already know to learn new things, linking information as concepts are developed and linked together, finding meaning in sequence and cause and effect. Pupils are encouraged to give

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their own explanations about how they solve a problem, providing the opportunity to review their learning and identify and amend errors they may come across.

Impact Statement:

With the successful implementation of both an enriched, rounded and balanced curriculum and a well-structured, safe, active and challenging learning environment, both indoors and outdoors children will be able to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding that enables them to be successful learners. Children will be actively engaged in learning and their enjoyment of this learning will be apparent to all. All children will have experienced a curriculum that provides exciting and enriching learning experiences and opportunities for children to learn through educational visits and hands-on experiences. Children will fully appreciate and understand the world around them, experiencing and learning about different cultures, music, dance, art and history. Children will actively ask questions about the world around them and their learning experiences and they will never fear making a mistake but instead see this as an opportunity to learn. Children will be able to make links with their learning and develop their skills as they are able to use and apply these skills. Children will also be skillful at solving problems and they will have effectively developed their personal levels of resilience and independent learning skills. Children will be successful learners and fully prepared for the next stage of their education as they transition from Foundation Stage to Year One.

As the government does not yet prescribe how on-entry and on-going assessments should be undertaken in the early years, we currently use assessments based on deliberate practise. We use comparative judgement in two ways: in tasks we set and observe and in comparing pupil's work over time to the expected outcomes taken from the EYFS Framework.

Children's attainment on-entry is assessed over the first three to four weeks during the Autumn term and reported to the Foundation Stage Leader for analysis. This analysis is then shared with SLT, governors and the class teacher to implement specific planning and interventions.

On-going assessment is reported a further two times over the academic year; December and March. This is also analysed and shared in a similar way to inform planning and interventions which the cohort, small groups and individuals may need to meet expectations.

Finally, the EYFS Profile statement summarises the children's attainment at the end of the EYFS. It is based on the completing and assessment of on-going observations. The reporting of this attainment is measured over 17 learning goals within the seven areas of learning:

Prime Areas of Learning:

Communication and Language

Physical Development

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Personal, social and emotional development

Specific Areas of Learning:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding of the world

Expressive arts and design

The three characteristics of effective learning; playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically are all embedded within the learning and are shared during the EYFS Profile reporting process.

Discrete phonics lessons are taught within the early years. Assessment of phonics takes place half termly (approximately every 6-8 weeks) using the Read Write Inc. assessment tools.

The pupil's receptive vocabulary is assessed on-entry to reception and assessments are completed half termly using Collins Assessment tools - Assessing Receptive Vocabulary Age 4-5.

Finally, at the end of the school year, transition meetings are held between the current Reception class teacher, prospective Year 1 teacher, Early Years leader and Key Stage 1 lead. Information of each pupil is shared and discussion and planning of targets, supportive methods and enhanced transition strategies are conducted.

Policy Implementation and Review

This policy was reviewed by SLT, shared with staff and approved by governors. It will be reviewed annually as per the policy review cycle.