

EYFS

The EYFS is recognised as a distinct and important phase in education. It places an equal priority on supporting children's learning as well as their social and emotional development.

In line with the *Statutory Framework For The Early Years Foundation Stage (2021)*, practice in early years is guided by the following principles,

- Every child is a **unique child** who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments** with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them build their learning over time.
- Children develop at different rates. Effective practice takes this into account and meets the needs of all pupils including those with SEND and other vulnerabilities.

Learning Opportunities

Our children benefit from a balanced curriculum which includes teaching that has been planned ahead and also allows time for spontaneous learning. This approach allows adults to bring new ideas and experiences to the children's lives whilst valuing the children's interests and prior experiences. Teachers skillfully extend children's interests and build learning over time through a range of indoor and outdoor opportunities. Regular, short teacher led inputs teach children skills in an appropriate sequence, whilst sustained periods of time within the continuous provision allow children to repeat and practice skills until they become automatic. Depth in learning is prioritised.

As set out in the *Statutory Framework For The Early Years Foundation Stage (2021)*, children develop skills in the three prime areas of learning;

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The children then strengthen and apply these skills in the specific areas of the curriculum;

- Literacy
- Maths
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Through our curriculum, children also develop *Characteristics Of Effective Learning*. This ensures our children become effective, active learners, who are resilient, who persevere and who can think critically.

- Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- Active learning – children concentrate and keep on trying even if they encounter difficulties. They learn to enjoy their achievements
- Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

(Statutory framework for the EYFS 2021)

Communication and language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all learning. Children's interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The children are immersed in a language rich environment where they are engaged in regular, high quality conversations with adults and peers. Adults

intentionally comment on what children are interested in or doing, and echo back what they say adding new vocabulary to build children's language effectively. Adults read to children frequently, engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems. They then provide them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts. Children are encouraged to share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher. Sensitive questioning encourages them to elaborate their conversations resulting in children who are confident to use a rich range of vocabulary and language structures. Teachers are skilled at identifying which children need additional support and use a range of interventions, including new to English support and speech therapy to ensure these children do not fall behind.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. There is a strong emphasis on relationships in our setting. These relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children are supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life. Adults continuously model and support children to develop these skills whilst working with them in the continuous provision. Circle times, where PSED is further developed, are an integral part of the timetable for all children.

Physical Development

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout their time in our EYFS. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence. The discreet teaching of PE towards the end Reception allows children to develop their skills further and encourages a love of an active lifestyle.

Literacy

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. The two dimension of reading - language comprehension and word reading are taught.

Adults teach language comprehension by talking with children about the world around them, reading a range of texts to them and enjoying rhymes, poems and songs together. A long term plan, based around high quality texts and poetry ensures the children are exposed to a wide variety of books and experiences.

Skilled word reading is taught through high quality phonics sessions (see English rationale).

The children have regular opportunities to practise by reading books which match their stage of phonics development to an adult daily. A love of reading is encouraged by enthusiastic adult readers and by immersing the children in literature within the classroom, in the school library and at home.

Children are encouraged to mark make using a range of tools and equipment early on. The link to physical development is recognised and a range of gross and fine motor opportunities allow children to develop control over mark making tools, including writing implements. Children progress from giving meaning to marks to being taught discreetly how to form letters correctly and develop legible handwriting.

Spelling is taught through daily phonics sessions. Oral rehearsing of ideas underpins the teaching of writing composition. It is recognised that children need to be able to say before they can write. Discreet English inputs, oracy sessions and high quality conversations support this. Children are taught how to 'hold a sentence' in phonics sessions and how to apply phonics knowledge to order letters and words to record ideas.

Mathematics

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children are taught to count confidently. They develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. Children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics and are taught to look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes. Using the White Rose Maths programme of learning, Maths is delivered in short, discreet inputs regularly throughout the week. The children are then given the opportunity to apply their skills in small groups with an adult and also within the continuous provision.

Understanding the World

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. Our curriculum takes into account the knowledge that the frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them and fosters their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. Adults use and teach the children a wide range of vocabulary that allows them to access subject specific learning. Knowledge and understanding of our world is taught both intentionally within adult led activities, through providing children with enriching experiences and through setting up the continuous provision in ways which allow the children to experiment and explore key concepts and ideas. By the time children leave the EYFS they have the knowledge and skills to access discreet subject areas such as History, Geography, Science and RE.

Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. Our children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts and to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe. A balance of adult led and exploration and experimentation opportunities in provision allow children to understand how they can combine their imagination, creativity and understanding of media and materials to express themselves. Children leave the EYFS confident to design, to produce art work, to take part in role play and to make music.

Assessment

Development Matters provides teachers with a broad outline of children's typical development at different ages helping practitioners to consider which goals might be important in a child's development. This supports our teachers with their curricular planning and assessment and ensures our children are making progress towards the statutory Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception.

Early Essence is a software tool used by adults to capture key information about children in order to inform assessment. Short, purposeful observations of the children's learning are made and uploaded to their profile. Teachers, parents and SLT can access these at any time. At regular intervals, these short observations alongside practitioner knowledge are used to determine each child's stage of development across the 7 areas of the EYFS curriculum.

Teachers discuss their children at regular points; daily with classroom staff, weekly with EYFS team and half termly with SLT or sooner should the need arise. There is an understanding that children develop differently in EYFS and on different pathways. This is taken into account when reflecting on assessments. Quality first teaching ensures the children are supported to achieve their potential. Where additional support is needed, this is discussed with parents and the SENDCO and appropriate intervention put in place.