

Understanding the World

In this area of learning, children are developing the crucial knowledge, skills and understanding that help them to make sense of the world. They use all of their senses to learn about the world around them and make connections between new information and what they already know. This area forms the foundation for later work in science, history, geography, and information and computing.

Expressive Art and Design

Creativity is fundamental to successful learning. Being creative enables children to make connections between one area of learning and another and so extend their understanding. This area of learning includes design and technology, art, music, dance and role play.

Planning

- The Long Term Plan outlines the topics to be covered and Medium Term Plans (MTPs) are completed termly for subjects that are taught as a whole class.
- Short term planning consists of a foundation subject plan which covers Personal, Social & Emotional Development, Understanding the World, Expressive Arts and Design and Physical Development there are additional plans for Communication & Language and Literacy & Maths.
- We run fortnightly topics, which the children help to plan. These topics are not set in stone and can be led by the needs / interests of the cohort or the staff. Resources for existing topics can be found in labelled boxes in Walter's Wing.
- Alongside this planned learning there is a lot of scope for the children to do what interests them. As long as the activity is purposeful and safe, the children are allowed and encouraged to follow their own ideas. To ensure that staff are maximising the children's learning we have next step sheets which cover all the areas of the curriculum and contain each child's next step for that area. Each week staff focus on a specific area and ensure that they interact with every child on this at some point in the week. In this way we are taking the learning objectives into their play in an organised and planned way. Any notes made are used to inform both future plans and the child's individual records.

Assessment Procedures

- Assessment is continuous in Reception and involves all adults in the setting. Each class has an observation book with a page for each child where informal observations are collected. We sometimes use a pro-forma for group activities, where evidence of achievement is recorded. When a particular strand is the focus of a session, class tick sheets are also used as a time efficient way to collect data.
- We have a grid for each child which sign-posts any evidence gathered against the Development Matters age related statements during the year, and the Early Learning Goals and Exceeding Statements at the end of the year. There is no requirement for there to be evidence for every point awarded; practitioner knowledge is equally as valid.
- We use a data spreadsheet to record all our judgements. This is an electronic record keeping system which is saved to the school network. To make the data gathered accessible in this excel document we have assigned a number to each age related step. Staff members meet regularly as a team to monitor progress and identify gaps; this information then informs planning.
- At the end of the year children are levelled as 'emerging, expected or exceeding' against the Early Learning Goals for each strand within the above areas.
- Evidence of the work that children have done is kept in their individual learning journey (LJ) which contains a mixture of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Any independent work that the child is proud of goes on their personal square on the wall. Whenever possible, staff speak to the child about the learning that has taken place and write these thoughts on a post-it note which is then attached to the piece of work. After each month's Open House the child selects favourite pieces of work to be added to their LJ.

Learning through Play

Play is vital for young children's development. Through play, children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as to communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or uncertainties in controlled and safe situations. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and begin to understand the need for rules.

With all this in mind we ensure that we offer ample opportunities for self-initiated and planned play activities.

Enabling Environments; the Learning Environment

The setting is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. The classroom is divided into learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently wherever possible. The children access a mixture of planned and child-initiated activities in each of the areas across the week.

The setting has its own enclosed outdoor area which offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. Here children are able to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and offer resources that mirror those offered inside.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the role that parents have played so far, and their future role, in educating the children.

We do this by:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school
- Making visits to the child's home prior to their starting school
- While the children spend time with their teacher for story visits we offer parents the opportunity to have a drink together and meet each other in an informal setting
- Welcoming all parents with an induction meeting the term before their child starts school
- Inviting parents to visit the classroom during our monthly "Open House" sessions
- Running parent information sessions on reading & phonics, handwriting and numeracy during which we outline both how we cover these areas and how parents can best help at home
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if they have questions or concerns
- We send home fortnightly observation documents that give parents up to the minute, relevant feedback on how their child is doing. There is also space for parents' comments and these, when pertinent, are added to our signposting sheets for each child.
- There is a formal meeting for parents during the autumn and spring terms at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress. A summer term meeting is available on request following the issue of the end of year report.

Roles and Responsibilities of Early Years Leader

- To lead policy development
- To write and implement the subject action plan
- To support colleagues with their knowledge of Early Years
- To monitor progress and improve standards in teaching and learning
- To be familiar with current best practice in the EYFS and apply when appropriate
- Audit, maintain and replace resources
- To manage and monitor expenditure within the annual budget.

Health and Safety

- There is always a member of staff in each of the areas of learning, including the outdoor area
- Staff show children how to use any new tools/resources with safety

Roles and Responsibilities of Link Governor

To meet the Early Years Leader at least annually to discuss the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the action plan. Visit the setting at least annually in order to relate findings back to the C and L committee.

Equal Opportunities

Staff will ensure that all children have equal access to the curriculum. They will be encouraged to respect similarities & differences within cultures other than their own (see Inclusion & Equality Policies).