

Early Years Foundation Stage

In Nursery and Reception we aim to provide the best learning environment and opportunities that we can, so that children develop a love of learning at school. We aim to support children to be curious about the world and to become independent and confident learners. To achieve this we ensure that we support them in developing the skills and knowledge they will need to access a broad curriculum.

"In the Nursery and Reception classes, activities are well planned, both inside the classroom and outside. The result is good progress for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage..." OfSTED 2014

We believe that crucial to any child's education in the Foundation Stage is the partnership that we build with parents. Strong partnerships enable us to create an environment in which each child feels secure and valued and through which we can support and challenge them.

The curriculum

In both Nursery and Reception, all children follow a curriculum that develops seven aspects of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication and Language
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

We use topics to provide a context for learning and story books are often used as a starting point for the development of learning. For example, in Reception, the traditional tale 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' is used to teach about story sequencing, storytelling language and to engage the children in role play but is also used to teach mathematical concepts, writing skills and to engage the children in thinking about whether the characters' actions were right or wrong.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

This aspect of learning is relevant to everything that a child experiences at school and in the wider world. We help children to become self-aware and self-confident, to manage their behaviour and feelings in different contexts and to build positive relationships with others. In a safe and supportive environment we encourage children to take risks that will move their learning forward.

Reading

Children are regularly read to by adults and are encouraged to choose to read a range of stories, rhymes and non-fiction books from the class reading area, either to themselves or with friends.

They are taught to understand the meaning of text, to decode letters and words and, in time, to read sentences and whole books.

Children often learn to read in a different way and at a different pace from their peers. Therefore, we teach reading in different ways so that each individual child's needs are met.

Writing

From the beginning of Nursery, we teach children that their mark making or writing can convey meaning by asking them to read it to or with us. A range of learning opportunities is planned for so that children experience writing in a range of contexts. For example, they may write letters, notes, to tell a story or to add a caption to a drawing. Children are encouraged to think about the vocabulary that they use in their writing and to use any 'interesting' words they may have learned.

Children achieve readiness for writing as their fine motor skills develop and they become more able to hold and control objects, tools and writing implements. In Nursery and Reception, children are taught the correct formation of letters as part of their phonics sessions, to help reinforce the link between sounds of letters and letter shapes.

Phonics

The teaching of phonics begins in the Nursery, where children develop their listening skills and learn to distinguish one sound from another by joining in with rhymes and songs and by playing games. They begin to learn to link letter shapes to sounds and to sound and recognise the letters in their own names and other common words.

In Reception, a discrete phonics lesson is taught daily but phonic skills and knowledge are also linked to learning to read and spell. Children are taught to hear, say, recognise and write all of the single letter sounds of the alphabet and their corresponding letter shapes. They are also taught the sounds of combinations of letters. We use a range of resources to teach phonic skills but draw mainly on two schemes: Read, Write, Inc and Jolly Phonics.

Mathematics

Children are supported to develop a love of mathematics and to be confident in using their mathematical skills and knowledge in a range of contexts and to solve problems. Mathematics skills are taught discretely but are then practised through play and investigation.

The outdoor learning environment

Both our Nursery and Reception classes have their own outside areas and the children use them all year round as an extension of the classroom. All aspects of learning are developed outside. Children can read, write, count, engage in imaginary play, problem solve with sand, water and other materials. We are fortunate that we have the space to enable the children to use large climbing equipment, bikes and to build with large blocks. They also enjoy digging and planting in their garden and looking after whatever they are growing. They often grow vegetables or herbs which they can then cook with.