



Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2023/2024



‘Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its’ own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.’

Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021

Cookham Nursery School



Our Vision and Values

We put the children's learning at the heart of everything we do so that they can explore, discover and make sense of the world, make choices, develop independence and learn the skills of social interaction, develop an appreciation of their learning environment and treat it with respect, develop self-esteem, self-confidence and a sense of their own identity.

We provide a caring and supportive environment in which the contributions of all children are valued enabling them to fulfil their potential.

We are an inclusive setting that appreciates the uniqueness of the individual child, regardless of ability and experience, and the wonderful diversity of the local community.

We celebrate the successes of all individuals no matter how small, to develop a committed and appreciative learning community.

We establish dynamic, innovative and creative practice based on research into how young children learn.

We involve the whole community in the day to day life of the school to enrich the children's learning opportunities.

We commit to the professional development of all staff to extend their knowledge, understanding and skills of Early Years education to build capacity and secure continuous school improvement.

We maximise the interdependent relationships of all adults and children involved in the setting enabling us to work together to secure the best possible outcomes for children.





Our Principles

The four principles of the EYFS underpin our Curriculum:

- **A Unique Child** – every child is unique and develops in different ways and at different rates; they are constantly learning and have the capacity to be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships** – children learn to be strong and independent through key person relationships which are warm and loving, sensitive, responsive and supportive.
- **Enabling Environments** – which offer stimulating resources and spaces, inside and out and rich learning opportunities where children can take risks and explore.
- **Learning and Development** – practitioners teach children through both child-led and adult-led experiences through quality interactions supporting each next step of learning.

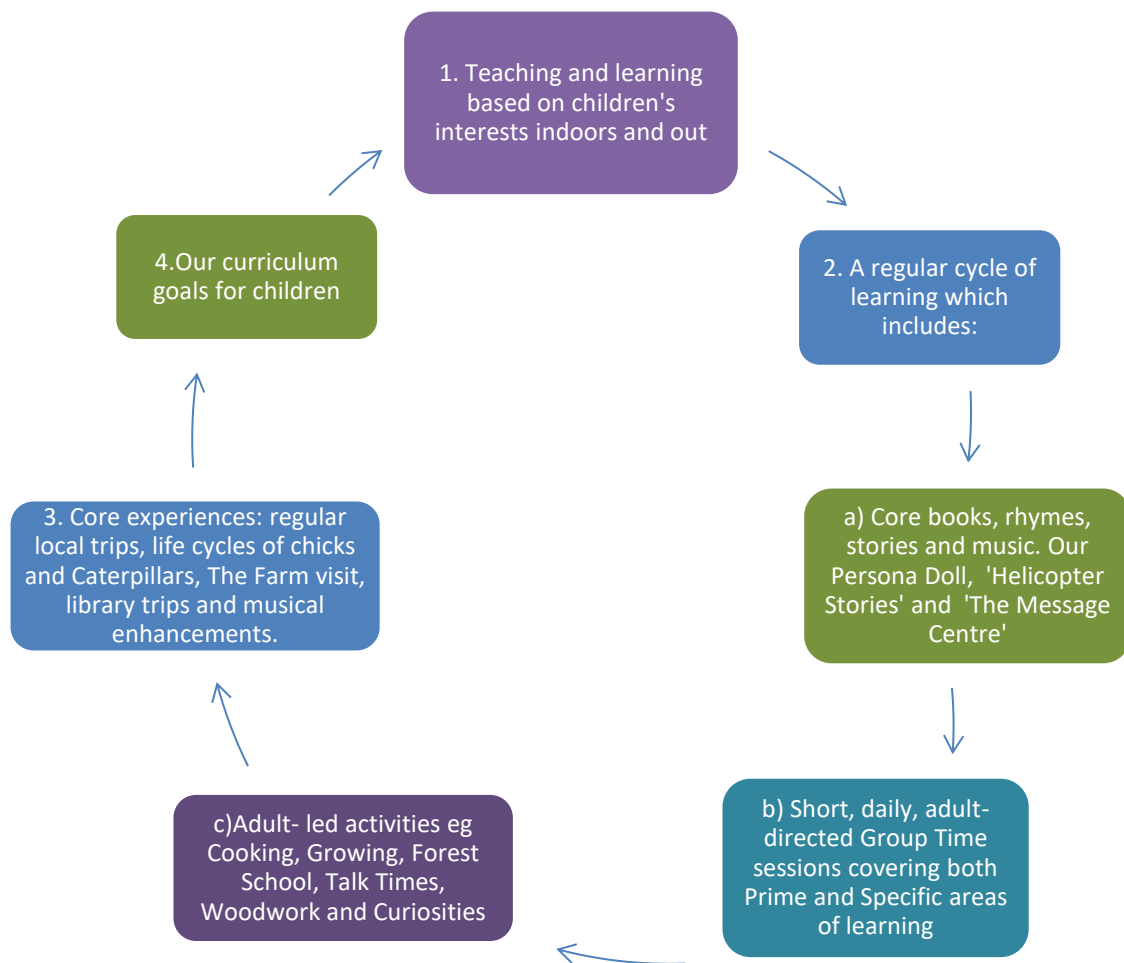
Education for children's futures requires supporting children's ability to learn and to think for themselves. The Characteristics of Effective Learning describe how children learn:

- **Playing and exploring** – we provide experiences and interactions that respect children's ideas, autonomy and interests. They follow their own curiosity and learn to develop their own challenges.
- **Active Learning** – we provide time, space and resources we foster children's growing powers to concentrate with deep involvement.
- **Creative and thinking critically** - we provide play opportunities and adult planned experiences, to allow children to think of their own ideas, imagine possibilities and creatively combine ideas in spontaneous ways.



Curriculum Overview

We offer a high quality broad and balanced curriculum which has four main elements:





<p>1. Teaching and learning based on children's interests</p>	<p>All aspects of our curriculum require practitioners to be flexible and take account of children's interests and starting points.</p> <p>We're able to do this because we know our children well. We gain a thorough understanding of our children's interests and how they learn through liaising with parents, each other and observing and interacting with children.</p>
<p>2. A regular cycle of learning</p>	<p>Our curriculum reflects the needs and interests of our children at Cookham Nursery, and we plan to broaden and deepen those interests both at Nursery and in the local community.</p>
<p>3. Core experiences: gardening, nurturing chicks and caterpillars, seasonal walks, celebrating our diverse community</p>	<p>We extend the children's learning with our interactions during Free Flow Our adult-led Group Times also build on the children's current interests and learning. Our Group Times follow a progressive model of Teaching and Learning. We have yearly Curriculum overviews, Long, Medium and Short-term plans which build on the children's developmental skills.</p>
<p>4. Our curriculum goals for children</p>	<p>All aspects of our Curriculum build on children's development. For example, our cycle of Core Books begins with simple repetitive texts. Over time our core books contain more complex vocabulary, structure, and themes.</p> <p>Our curriculum goals encourage the acquisition of lifelong skills and an appreciation for the world around us ready for the next phase of education.</p>

Parents – in this document means parent/ carers.



Cookham Nursery School

Learning at Cookham Nursery School

Our Federation principles and the Characteristics of Effective learning underpin our curriculum
(see page 3)

We have planned a broad and balanced curriculum based on the 7 areas of learning of the EYFS and development. These are:

3 Prime areas: Communication and Language, Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Physical Development.

4 Specific areas: Literacy, Maths, Understanding The World and Expressive Arts and Design

We have progressive and ambitious long term, medium term and short term plans in place for all Curriculum Areas.

We have 10 specific curriculum goals with developmental learning across all curriculum areas which teach key knowledge and skills. These are adaptable and change depending on the cohort of children.

We designed our curriculum with the needs of the children at Cookham Nursery School in mind ensuring that our children learn about the diverse society in which live outside of the village of Cookham. For example, we plan weekly to use our Persona Doll Jasmine with all our children. Jasmine is of Asian heritage and we incorporate issues of equality, inclusion and a positive attitude to difference through using Biba in small groups. We also use a range of story books which promote diversity.

We ensure that all children have access to enrichments and tailor experiences accordingly, using visits to places in our local community as well as Curriculum enhancements in the Nursery.

We plan special activities throughout the year such as our farm visit, musical enrichments, local trips out, forest school activities and learning about life-cycles. These activities provide children with the foundations to further explore our world around them with all its diversity and wonder.



Cookham Nursery School

Implementing Our Curriculum

Most learning is child-led and play-based in our indoor and outside environments.

There is a balance between adult-initiated experiences (guided learning) and child-initiated experiences.

Adults take children's interests and strengths, seeing each child as a competent learner.

Parent involvement is crucial. We learn a great deal about each child from their parents. Parental support and a high-quality home learning environment make an enormous difference to children.

At Cookham Nursery School we value experiential play. We plan rich and challenging activities and experiences for awe and wonder, designed to spark children's curiosity, engage them and encourage sustained shared thinking. We plan for and organise adult led weekly 'Talk Times.' We set up an irresistible collection of items to explore, we bake, cook on the fire and observe first-hand the life cycles of caterpillars and chicks. These planned experiences ignite children's interest and use of a rich and varied vocabulary.

We offer lots of learning outdoors to build children's confidence and physical strength and co-ordination, for example through Forest School activities, the Mud Kitchen, physical play equipment and woodwork.

Our environment develops throughout the year, for example we begin with simply joined construction materials and progress towards more complex sets alongside our loose parts. Large plastic easy grip nuts and bolts will be gradually supplemented with smaller metal versions to challenge the development of fine motor skills.

Our environment is consistently and carefully planned to reflect and optimise progress and improve outcomes. Children learn a huge amount through the play they choose. Adults help to maximise this learning by making sure that we provide a high-quality learning environment, indoors and out. We might plan to keep a particular part of the provision the same to allow a child more time to explore and master a skill, or if a child has reached a particular milestone in a curriculum goal we can introduce a new resource that allows the child to progress onto the next stage of learning. We need to be flexible to ensure both the curriculum and child-initiated learning is included.

We balance Teacher-initiated and Teacher-led learning with Child-led learning. 'Free Flow' is when children are engaged in play both indoors and out. Children engage in the environment, with each other and with us. We are observing, assessing, planning for and responding to individual or groups of children all the time. As a staff, we discuss individual children regularly so that we all know how best to support each child's learning and development.



The Ofsted definition of teaching is very useful in supporting staff to recognise the teaching that they are doing through interactions and through the enabling environment. Teaching includes communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating and setting challenges (Ofsted 2015)

We are an Attachment Aware school and pride ourselves in our knowledge of the developing brain and how to support young children's well-being through understanding and managing their feelings and behaviour. The well-being and involvement levels of the children are important to us and we monitor and support this area of their development individually.

We offer scaffolding and extra support to help every child to access the curriculum and to ensure they make progress and achieve the best possible outcomes. However, we recognise that every child will not make the same progress through the curricular goals. Many children will learn to hammer a nail into a piece of wood. For some children with complex needs, managing to tolerate the sound of the hammer on the wood or the feel of the goggles on their face will represent strong progress. All those children are participating in the same curriculum. Where children move on quickly, our emphasis is on deepening their learning rather than introducing new skills or concepts. For example, a child may follow different recipe cards to make other types of bread and may help other children.

It is important to note that some children will need more help and scaffolding to access the curriculum. We will decide how to support each child so that they can access the curriculum and it is important that we are certain that children are secure in what they know and can do, before introducing them to something new.

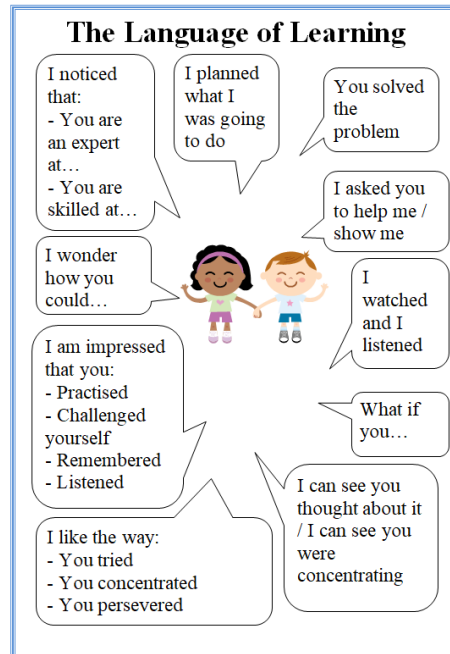
Using our knowledge of Child Development

Practitioners need to have a secure understanding of child development, as well as the features of effective pedagogy. As a team, we need to understand how the different elements of the curriculum fit together to help children build their learning over time. Reflective, regular discussions about practitioner's key children support this understanding. We spend time planning our adult-led daily Group Times and adult initiated learning to support progress in our 10 Curriculum Goals. Literacy and Maths are systematically taught during our Group Times as well as through our high-quality play-based learning environment. We check and assess that all areas of the Curriculum are being taught and are reflected in the environment

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Metacognitive thinking

We use the 'language of learning' with children and they quickly adopt this language as well which helps them to place value on the importance of their characteristics of effective learning, not just the end product of their efforts.



Practitioners are skilled in modelling metacognitive thinking for our children and this in turn helps children to develop a growth mindset.

Metacognitive thinking enables children to talk more specifically about thinking in different contexts. It enables children to use a 'plan do review' approach in their learning. They become independent and more powerful learners and this supports their approach to managing their own learning later in their school years. Children are able to articulate what they can do and identify what they are trying to do next.



Our 10 curricular goals

Settle in	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Settle in and become a confident learner
Follow	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow a recipe to make a bread roll
Make	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make a model at the Woodwork bench
Build	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build and use a collaborative obstacle course
Create	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create an artwork using a range of stimuli
Talk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk about what makes them special
Make up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make up your own story and act out others
Write	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write to communicate meaning
Notice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Notice and talk about the natural world
Explore	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore numbers using a variety of resources



Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

We are committed to providing a high-quality curriculum for all our children. We believe that all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) have an entitlement to a broad and balanced academic and social curriculum, which is accessible to them, and to be fully included in all aspects of Nursery life. We believe that all children should be equally valued in school and we strive to develop an inclusive environment where all children can flourish, feel safe and attain the best possible outcomes.

We have curious conversations with parents and carers and seek advice from other professionals (if involved) to help inform our baseline assessments for children with SEND. The focus is to understand what the child knows, understands, and can do, and the uniqueness of their play behaviours, learning dispositions and interests which can provide strong foundations for learning and progress. We Our approach ensures that every child can reach their full potential, have authentic experiences, feel a sense of belonging and be happy. This in turn allows us to support the whole family; advising, creating positive relationships, and empowering them to understand their child's learning journey.

All children are entitled to the Early Years curriculum. They will not all manage to do and know everything that is mapped out; some who appear vulnerable at first may thrive later in the year and children have different interests and experiences to build upon. Rather than 'differentiating down,' we believe that 'scaffolding up' is a positive approach in our commitment to inclusion. By 'scaffolding up,' children with SEND are exposed to the concepts and skills in our wider curriculum in a suitable breadth and depth. 'Differentiating down' suggests that children with SEND have limited access to the activities in the curriculum. Our commitment to 'scaffolding up' means that children are included in the wider curriculum and are integrated with their peers. For example, if a child has specific difficulties with their communication, for example, they may need to have aids such as a communication board so that they can make choices and share their ideas in play activities.

Weaved into our curriculum we deliver strategies and activities that were initially developed to aid the inclusion of children with SEND to enable them to engage more meaningfully in what it means to play and learn with developmental differences. However, we have found that these strategies benefit **all** children, improving their communication and language skills, social skills, self-help skills, behaviour, physical development and their attitude towards discovery, exploration, and learning. They therefore form the foundations of our provision.

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Following the children's interests and their lines of enquiry is an essential curriculum driver for children with SEND. We use their motivators to create irresistible invitations to access a wider range of curricular activities.

Intensive Interaction

Intensive Interaction is used with children who have social communication difficulties. It helps to develop eye contact and early communication skills between the child and adult so children learn to enjoy being with and attending to another person.

Attention Building Group Activities

The Attention Autism programme and Let's Connect are structured small group activities aimed at developing children's attention on an adult led agenda and developing natural and spontaneous communication using visually based and highly motivating activities. The sessions aim to grab children's attention, build their attention and then enable them to shift their attention from watching, to participating by taking a turn and back to watching again. Let's Connect also requires children to make choices during the session. Despite 'autism' in the title of the programme we find the activities help all children learn how to attend to adult led group sessions.

Mindfulness and Yoga

Staff teach and demonstrate positions and breathing exercises promoted by yoga practice for children and basic mindfulness techniques of sitting quietly and learning to keep our bodies still and calm. There is an [emerging body of research](#) that indicates that mindfulness can help our children improve their ability to **pay attention**, to **calm down** when they are upset, and to **make better decisions**. In short, it helps with **emotional regulation** and **cognitive focus**.

Lego Therapy

Adult supported sessions where 2 children build a set Lego model together. One child assumes the role of the architect and gives instructions, either verbally or using visual supports, to build a certain model to another child, who is the builder. This helps children to socially interact with peers, sustain social interaction over a period of time, engage in paired problem solving, take turns, wait patiently and develop joint attention on a shared challenge.

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Sensory circuits

Short sensory motor skills programme involving an alerting, organising and then calming activity are encouraged at regular intervals to help improve children's ability to self-regulate and concentrate. Some children need these activities more regularly than others. Heavy work activities such as pushing, pulling, lifting carrying and transporting can also help with children's self-regulation.

Makaton

Makaton is a language programme using signs and symbols to help people to communicate. We use Makaton for all children and teach the children two or three signs each week. We believe all children benefit from learning to sign and it is also greatly of benefit for children who are learning English.

Behaviour Management Strategies

Please see 'Positive Behaviour Principles' in the appendix which outlines our approach.



Monitoring and Assessment throughout the Year

Settling In and Initial Planning and Assessment

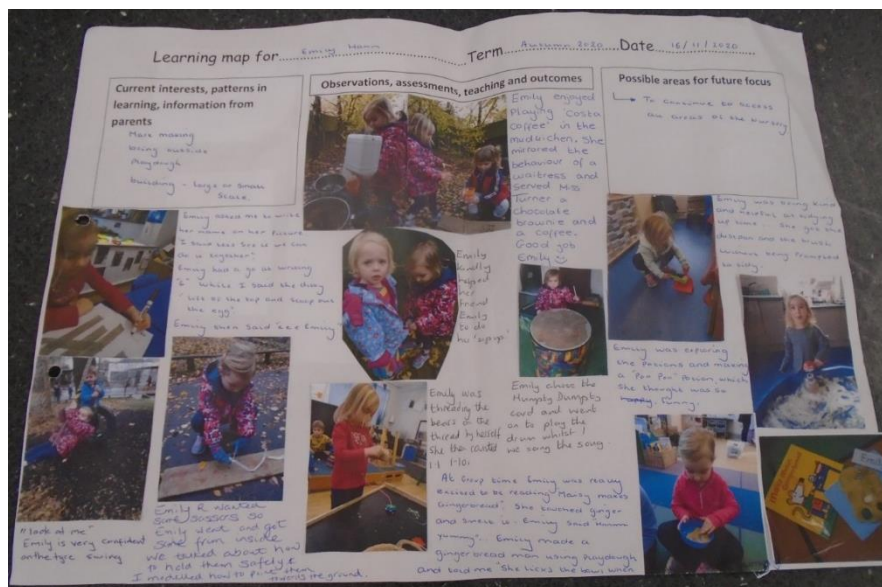
1. In the first half term we prioritise planning for and assessing the Prime Areas of the Curriculum. Key people spend quality time getting to know their key children and their families but all the staff are involved with all the children, talking about, observing and planning to settle them into Nursery and grow in confidence in their new environment.
2. Our assessment begins with an initial phone call, a home visit and a session at Nursery with a parent/carer and their key person spending time altogether. During September all parents will receive a 'My First Week' montage of their child at Nursery and a phone call with their key person to discuss the initial settling in period.
3. Every child is offered a home visit or a call if a home visit is not possible and this is followed by a Nursery session together. Parents share information about their child's interests, communication, confidence and physical health with their key person. This information will be recorded and used for initial starting points and to build the child's interests into the planning of the provision.
4. Practitioners meet or call parents during the month of September to discuss how their child has settled in and what they have observed. This is a snapshot of a child's starting points. The practitioners will refer to Development Matters to check development in the Prime Areas and we will use our Communication and Language Tracker to record all children on entry to identify children who may not be showing age-appropriate skills to plan extra support if necessary. We will assess every child's well-being and measure children's engagement.
5. If we notice that a child may be having difficulties in their development, we will act quickly. It is important that we understand these more vulnerable children and the areas where they need support. We will continue to develop a strong relationship with the parents, working together to give their child the extra help they need. The curriculum for all children will remain ambitious and inclusive. It is important that we focus on support, scaffolding and helping children overcome barriers to their learning.

Our objectives for initial planning and assessment

- Dialogue with parents so that we can work in a respectful partnership to support children's learning at home and in Nursery.
- Dialogue with children focused on how they learn to promote thinking.
- Early identification of children who need extra help and children who may have SEND.
- Checking that children are making progress and taking prompt action if this is not the case.
- Reporting formally to parents to work in partnership to give each child the very best possible start.

Reporting to Parents throughout the year and parental involvement

Each term we ask parents/carers to come and talk with us about their child's learning and development. We ask parents to tell us about any significant events that may be helpful for us to know, take some photos of their child for their Learning Journey and then come in to talk about their child's progress. We record some of our teaching moments and their child's learning for us to discuss.



We monitor children's learning in the 10 Curricular goals to check that children are on track. We also record significant observations or 'wow moments' in the child's learning journey folder. The child's achievements and perseverance are made clear and they take great pride in sharing their folders with their friends, the Nursery adults and their families.

We track and monitor children's well-being and involvement throughout the year. This helps us to identify any children needing extra support, for example with attachment, friendships or managing their feelings. Alongside this we track and monitor all children's communication, language and speech development to ensure that additional input is provided where need. These ongoing observations and assessments are shared regularly with parents.

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We have an 'open door' policy for parents and recognise that the child's parents are their primary and most important educators. We pride ourselves on working closely with parents from the very start of their child's time with us. We do this through induction visits and meetings, home visits, termly feedback, sharing learning journeys and wow moments, weekly updates of teaching and learning, incidental discussions and an end of year report.

Our weekly update is emailed home in the form of photographs and an explanation of the teaching and the children's learning during both free flow and Group Times. We share ways in which parents can support their child's learning at home which complement the learning at school.

Cookham Nursery School

An example of the weekly learning update for parents



This Week

Our Learning

This week we showed the children how to stay safe around our fire bowl. We explained how we light the fire, how we need to sit away from it and how we keep water close by for putting the fire out. We will build on the children's understanding of using the fire bowl until they are able to kneel around it and toast marshmallows.

We used our conkers for maths this week and compared and talked about sizes and played our game '3 and not 3.' The children are already noticing amounts within 3, e.g 2 and 1, 1 and 1 and 1. This is the beginning of understanding the concept of addition.

Jasmine came to visit and she brought one of her favourite stories, The Gingerbread man and some props, to share with the children. Repeating stories like this builds up the children's understanding of story structure as they join in with telling the story themselves.



Next Week

It is our Personna Doll Jasmine's 4th Birthday! We will sing and make cards for her, giving meaning to marks as we draw and 'write'. We are learning how to build our imaginations and story-telling skills through our use of 'story sacks' and 'small world' characters. We will continue using our subitising skills with a range of 3 objects. We will be introduced to a five frame for the first time, which shows up to 5 objects placed on a line – children can subitise how many objects and also see the spaces left on the five frame – beginning to practise the skills in seeing what makes 5.

At home



Show your child this photo. Ask your child about the fire that we made at school this week. Can they tell you about the different coloured flames and the Meg and Mog story? Can they tell you a little bit about fire safety?

These back and forth conversations with your children when you are really listening to their replies and responding to them is a fabulous way to build your child's vocabulary and gives them an opportunity to reflect on their learning.

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Yearly Overview – Monitoring and Assessment

	When	Details
Settling In and Initial Assessments	<i>Completed within child's first 4 weeks at Nursery.</i>	"Starting Nursery" photographs taken and sent home. Teacher observations of the child through quality interactions and play. Discussions with parents and amongst the team.
Learning Maps	<i>Our Daily planning and assessment for all children throughout the year.</i>	Ongoing for all children. Learning Maps for each child once a term which are shared with the child and their parents/carers.
Learning Journal and Sketchbooks	<i>On-going through child's time at setting.</i>	Evidence of the child's learning at home and school and their interests are documented, shared and given to the child to take home when they leave. Sketch books are used to show progression of mark making.
Communication and Language Monitoring	<i>Termly</i>	Communication forms for all children. Discussions about individual children amongst the team. The whole team support children with speech strategies, ongoing.
POMS Well-being and Involvement	<i>Termly</i>	POMS records for all children.
Our 10 Curricular Goals	<i>Recorded when achieved and added to Learning Journeys.</i>	The children's goals are set, monitored, and achieved throughout their time with us.

Our 10 curriculum goals

1. Settle in and become a confident learner	
Why?	Children thrive when they feel safe, valued and loved. Emotional self-regulation is a critical support for development and learning.
First milestone: children make a strong relationship with their key person. Increasingly, they separate confidently from their parent at the start of the session and become involved in their play. They use their key person as a 'secure base' throughout the session, 'touching base' as/when needed.	Where children need individualised and additional help, this will be offered promptly. Help includes; individual meetings with parents to map a way forward. Early Help support for parenting; Triple P parenting. As children grow in confidence, their involvement in nursery activities deepens. They explore a wider range of activities. They play for longer periods of time. They play alongside friends. They play collaboratively. They develop their 'pretend play'.
Component	Spend time at Nursery managing their emotions with support.
Second milestone: children take part in pretend play, communicating and negotiating with their friends.	As children's engagement and perseverance grows, they either challenge themselves with more difficult activities, or they respond positively to adults challenging them.
Component	Spend 5 minutes or more in pretend play with another child.
Third milestone: children persevere with difficulties. They make comments about their learning and play in their Learning Journey folders and show pleasure and pride in what they have done.	As children play and learn more collaboratively, over longer time periods, and taking part in more challenging activities, they talk about and reflect on their learning.
Component	Talk about what they are doing or have done using the words 'thinking' or 'learning.'
Final milestone: (Composite) Children reflect on their learning, through their Learning Journeys. They comment on their 'thinking' and the ways they go about their learning. They reflect on what helps them to persevere through difficulties and what helps them when they find things hard. Children show they are developing their metacognition.	
Vocabulary: persevere, challenge, expert, confidence, collaborate	



2. Follow a recipe to bake a bread roll

Why?

We want to instil a love of cooking in our children whilst developing the ability to work independently and follow instructions in sequential order.

First milestone: with adult support, children mix different ingredients, including; sand and water, and flour and water to make simple playdough. They use the following tools; wooden spoons, sieves, scoop, rolling pins, cookie cutters and knives. They follow simple recipes in areas such as the mud kitchen.

As children take part in these activities, they become more precise in using scoops (filling the scoop carefully to the top); they count the scoops as they tip them out; they use a wide range of different-sized buckets, tins and other containers. Children become confident in using tools at the snack table to prepare their own snack e.g. spreading butter on toast.

Component

Mix 2 or more substances together using tools.

Second milestone: in a small group, children follow the steps in making a chapatti with an adult. The adult draws children's attention to the recipe card. With adult help, children use measures (teaspoon, tablespoon, cup etc) and tip in the ingredients. With adult help, they knead the flour until it becomes soft and cover it. With adult help, they roll the dough into small balls and flatten. They help to cook these and reflect on the process.

As children become more used to cooking, the adult reduces their support for the group. Children also mix other substances together carefully, with adult guidance, e.g. mixing water and powder paint.

Component

Follow all the steps in the recipe card with support.

Third milestone: in small group cooking activities, children follow the steps in making a bread roll with an adult. They independently fill measures carefully to the top (teaspoon, tablespoon, cup etc). They recognise the numerals in the recipe card. When they count out quantities (e.g., 3 teaspoons of salt) they say the numbers in the correct order (1-2-3) and they know the last number they say (3) is the total number of spoonfuls they have added.

As children become more independent, there is minimal adult support as they follow recipe cards and follow paint-mixing cards.

Component

Fill measures accurately to the top.

Final milestone: (Composite) children follow the steps of a recipe independently. They measure ingredients, mix them and create their own bread roll by placing the mixture onto a greased proof tray ready to be baked.

Vocabulary: recipe, predict, instructions, sequence, measure



3. Make a model at the Woodwork Bench	
Why?	We want children to be able to plan, construct and learn to handle tools confidently and safely. We want then to be able to take risks, to explain their choices and talk about what they have made and how they have made it.
First milestone: children undertake woodwork induction with 1:1 support.	Children will learn the rules of the woodwork area. How to stay safe by wearing safety glasses and using a magnet for nails. They will see where things are kept and how to store them safely. Children will be taught how to hammer a nail into a piece of wood.
Component	Hammer a nail into a piece of wood.
Second milestone: children independently access woodwork. New tools are introduced, with an adult. Hand drill, screwdriver, saw, peelers.	Children access the woodwork bench and explore using the hammer and nails when an adult is close by. New tools are introduced with adult supervision. Hand drills are used to drill into pumpkins first. Peelers to whittle sticks and they use the saw 1:1 with an adult to cut soft wood. Screw drivers are added to the tinker table.
Component	Control a tool safely and change a material.
Third milestone: children have repeated experiences at the woodwork bench. They think about what they are creating and how they want it to look e.g. "I'm making a car; it has four wheels."	With support children use tools safely and with increasing confidence. They have an idea of what they want to make and how they want it to look. They may draw plans as they wait to access the woodwork area.
Component	Talk about what they plan to make, in advance or during the making.
Final milestone: (Composite) Children decide on the model they will make. They may draw a plan of their model. They choose the materials they want to use, shape materials with tools, and join materials together.	
Vocabulary safety, design, plan, create, technique	

4. Build and use a Collaborative Obstacle Course

Why?

We want our Children to gain social and communication skills by collaborating on a project whilst gaining confidence through reaching physical milestones that focus on gross motor skills.

First milestone: with adult support, identify safe equipment for building outside and begin to explore their own physical capabilities.

The children can begin with smaller resources such as wooden blocks. Larger equipment can be introduced and explored as the children become more confident and capable and their core strength and balancing skills develop.

The Trim Trail can be used to build climbing and balancing skills.

Children begin to communicate to an adult about what that they are doing with adult support.

Component

Use part of the trim trail independently and communicate what they are doing to an adult.

Second milestone: with at least one other friend gather equipment to build a structure/ obstacle course and demonstrate to others how to use to it.

Adults ask questions and verbalise thinking, modelling the process of 'what should we do and how should we do it?'

Adults verbalise the process of making and using the equipment to scaffold to children.

Component

Build with one other child or more, with adult support.

Third milestone: in a small group, use larger construction, developing their ideas and focussing on 'does it feel safe?' Begin to plan and communicate their ideas firstly with adult support and then more independently.

Children are encouraged to explain their thinking, first to adults and then to 'tell your friend.' Children then start to communicate with each other as they design and build.

Component

Build and use an obstacle course with others. Talk about what they are doing and why.

Final milestone: (Composite) Children demonstrate strength, balance and co-ordination when climbing independently. Children build a safe, solid structure which is planned for and built collaboratively from a range of equipment where the children must use a variety of physical skills to move around the course.

Vocabulary: design, structure, collaborate, communicate, stable, secure

5. Create an artwork using a range of stimuli

Why?

We want to foster a love of art and creativity in our children. We want children to learn to express their own ideas using their curiosity and imagination.

First milestone: Children learn how to use and look after the creative area. They will begin to access the creative area with adult support, experimenting with using the resources. They will use small paint brushes to apply a variety of colour paint. They will be able to put their pictures on the dryer and wash their brushes.

Group Times will be planned to introduce specific skills and materials. Children are shown where they can access the creative resources, how to use the tools such as paint brushes and glue sticks and the collage materials, children will be able to experiment freely with the range of resources, sometimes using one type of medium and other times layering their painting with collage materials and pastel colours. There is no need for a planned end outcome, rather an opportunity to experiment and learn what everything does, how it feels and how it can all work together to produce a piece of art.

Component

Access resources in the Creative Area to produce a piece of art with adult support.

Second milestone: Children become more independent at accessing the creative during free flow. Children build up their experience of using a range of materials so that some may begin to plan for an end outcome and consider how they may want their art to look.

Children will choose to use our creative areas independently of adults. Areas will be well stocked with the table areas clear to allow the children free choice of all the resources. Children may need reminding to clear away and clean the equipment after use.

Children will be shown how to join card and plastic modelling materials together to begin to build 3d Art.

Children will have free access to scissors and masking tape. Children will be taught to use the masking tape dispenser to take small pieces of tape for joining.

Component

Join 3d art materials together with tape.

Third milestone: children will be exposed to a variety of artists and their work, highlighting the techniques that the artists use. Children will experiment with those techniques and media and with adult support will begin to use the influences in their own art work.

Every child will have an opportunity to experiment with various artistic styles during Group Time and artist's art work will be available to the children during free flow to use, look at and talk about.

Component

Talk about what you want to make and create it.

Final milestone: (composite) children independently use a variety of techniques they have learnt to create pictures or models.

Vocabulary: technique, artist, style, create, materials, manipulate

6. Talk about what makes them special

Why?	We nurture children towards having a high self-esteem and an appreciation of diversity and the wider world.
First milestone: Children can make a choice based on their interests, likes and dislikes and know that they can say no. They can identify their family.	Children are encouraged to bring in a photograph of their family from home to display in their group corners. During Free Flow, children follow their own interests and adults support them with this learning. Adults demonstrate how to manage conflict and resolutions and support the children positively with this. The children are encouraged to make their own choices from a range of high-quality activities and resources.
Component	Talk about a family photo.
Second milestone: children can act out family experiences that are familiar to them.	Resources that reflect the children's home lives are shared in nursery. Dressing up materials are generic drapes rather than set costumes to allow for different interpretations. Festivals and celebrations are shared and explored such as Diwali, Eid, Hanukkah, weddings, christenings and Christmas.
Component	Bring in something that is special to you and talk about it.
Third milestone: children can notice differences and similarities such as skin colour, gender, types of hair special needs and disabilities in picture books and within the setting and wider community.	A Persona doll is used with the children to help them to explore the feelings and issues it experiences such as gender bias. A wide range of children's books which better reflect our diverse society are an integral part of nursery and are available for the children to take home. Our diverse community is shared through multicultural activities and visiting parents and groups such as drummers and dancers.
Component	Talk about something which is similar and something which is different about themselves and someone else.
Final milestone: (Composite) Children can recognise the difference and similarities between themselves and their peers. Children care for others and know how to make them feel better. They can talk about what they are good at, what they are an expert in and what makes them unique.	
Vocabulary: special, similar, different, expert, unique	



7. Make up a story and act out others	
Why?	Reading and Writing float on a sea of talk. We want our children to understand story structure so that they can make up, perform and tell stories. We want them to ignite their interest in stories to build a firm foundation for their literacy learning.
First milestone: children join in with role-play and play imaginatively with 'small world.' Children join in with repeated refrains with well-known stories.	The Nursery environment has lots of opportunities for children to play imaginatively. Stories are read for children to join in with, repeating phrases and 'acting out' parts using facial expressions and hand movements.
Component	Join in with repeated refrains/ actions in a well-known story.
Second milestone: children act out a short story as part of a group.	At Group Times, adults read Core Books over the term so that the children know these stories really well and begin to know how stories are structured. Helicopter Stories are introduced during Group Times and repeated weekly.
Component	Join in with acting out a story.
Third milestone: children tell stories and that they have made up and well-known stories using props/ picture books. Children continue to contribute in Group Times, acting out stories and being part of an audience.	Adults begin to scribe stories that the children have started to make up. This can be continued in Group Time and during Free Flow. Adults read stories, discussing the beginning, middle and end and the characters.
Component	Re- tell a story in sequential order.
Final milestone: (Composite) Initiate and make up your own Helicopter Story and act it out within a group.	
Vocabulary characters, repeat, sequence, imagine, perform, audience	



8. Write with a purpose in mind	
Why?	We want children to see themselves as writers and use mark making, symbols and letters in their play as a way of communicating to others.
First milestone: children to begin to use mark-making equipment independently both indoors and outdoors.	Adults use Group Time and play opportunities to model write every day, highlighting its' meaning. Adults make sure that print, books, and mark-making resources are everywhere. As children watch adults modelling writing for a purpose, when they are read to and see print around them that is read to them, when they have exciting resources to mark-make with, children will begin to really value writing and will want to have a go themselves.
Component	Use mark making equipment independently
Second milestone: children will have access to a variety of paper and our pen collection to mark-make and draw secret messages to each other and hide them for their friends to find. Children's messages may also take other forms such as chalk outdoors – using arrows to lead children to a message at the end of a trail.	Adults will model writing for different purposes and read writing from left to right and top to bottom, running their finger under the words. Adults will show print has value and meaning and will support children's own writing attempts. Adults will re-familiarise themselves with Greg Botrill's training on 'The Message Centre.'
Component	'write a message to others.'
Third milestone: children develop an increasingly wide range of purposes for mark making and early writing to support their play such as making posters, letters, cards, tickets and maps. Children will begin to imitate adult's writing by producing continuous lines of shapes and symbols.	Adults plan activities that focus on collaborative and purposeful mark-making and early writing. Children will start to use vertical lines, circles and zig zags to imitate writing from left to right and 'read what it says.' Some children will start to build some knowledge of letter sounds particularly with their name and Mummy and Daddy. They will start to write some of their letters in their name accurately. Children take this learning in their own play.
Component	Use writing type marks independently
Final milestone: (Composite) Children choose to write in a range of play situations with a purpose in mind, making letter type shapes and attempting some recognisable letters from their own name.	
Vocabulary message, communicate, letters, sounds, skill	



9. Able to notice and talk about the natural world	
Why?	Being in touch with nature is important to our well-being and having knowledge of the natural world is an essential part of our lives as humans. We want our children to notice, value and investigate the natural world around them.
First milestone: children will notice and be fascinated by what they find or experience. They can name living things in the environment such as worm or snail.	Adults will use the local area for helping children to explore the natural environment and provide opportunities to observe things closely through a variety of means, e.g., magnifiers and photographs and iPad apps to listen to and recognise birds. We will use non-fiction books to reference aspects of the natural world that the children have experienced, providing opportunities to extend vocabulary by naming living things.
Component	Can name some living things in the environment.
Second milestone: children will be able to notice and talk about materials using specific language such as wet/dry or textures such as rough/soft. Children will be able to notice and talk about the features of minibeasts eg. wings, legs, shell.	Adults will teach skills and knowledge in the context of practical activities, e.g. learning about the characteristics of liquids and solids by involving children in melting chocolate or cooking eggs, or observing ice outdoors. Adults will support children in developing their knowledge of living things in the environment by close observation and opportunities for lots of discussion.
Component	Name features of minibeasts.
Third milestone: children can notice the similarities and differences between living things, materials and growth.	We will provide first-hand experiences to support children in making sense of micro-environments, the specific conditions which enable each plant or animal to live and thrive. We will explore different habitats outdoors looking particularly at changes throughout the seasons. Children will have opportunities to record and creatively represent findings by, e.g. drawing, writing.
Component	Name changes in materials/record findings.
Final milestone: (Composite) children can notice and talk about the similarities and differences between living things, materials and growth. They can predict what may happen and why.	
Vocabulary predict, similar, different, habitat, seasons, environment	



10. Explore numbers using a variety of resources	
Why?	We want children to develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 5, the relationships between them and the patterns within them. The skill of subitising and 5 Frames builds up children's knowledge of Number and Number patterns. We want to lay firm foundations in 'The Five C's' – Cardinality and Conservation, Counting, Comparison and Composition. We want children to experience bigger numbers and begin to relate their knowledge to them to build up firm foundations with our number system.
First milestone: Children join in with number rhymes, saying some numbers in sequence. They begin to subitise and can answer the questions 'what do you see and how do you see it?'	Adults introduce, model and children join in with a range of number rhymes with props e.g. Five Green and Speckled Frogs, Five Little Ducks, One, Two, Three, Four Five... Children learn to subitise up to 3 counters and know that they are 'subitising' when they can see how many without counting. Adults do lots of noticing with children – mathematical vocabulary is used.
Component	Join in with a Number rhymes. Can subitise to 3. Children talk about Number.
Second milestone: Children can count objects, actions, and sounds in a short sequence. Children can show the different quantities on a 5-frame using subitising and handle and partition groups of similar objects (part/whole). Children build up an image of what amounts look like (pictorial image)	Children use counters on five frames and begin to understand the concept of one more. Children explore larger groups of objects – and can talk about what they see within a larger group (part/whole) They build up a picture of what totals look like using a variety of resources including Numicon. Children recite numbers past 5. They count things such as sounds and jumps.
Component	Children explore number within 5 and build up a range of number skills.
Third milestone: Children relate their knowledge to a range of 'real life' situations – e.g. getting the right number of cups for the children at snack time. They can show you numbers to 5 and up to 10 on their fingers, with counters and using Numicon tiles. They know that when you add more objects to a group the total increases. Children recognise Numicon to find and explore them.	Children are given learning opportunities to see what totals are made up of e.g. 5 is 4 and 1 and 3 and 2, 2 and 1 and 1 and 1. (Part, whole) Children experience moving objects in different ways and realise that the number stays the same even though the resources have moved. (Move it to prove it) Children count out amounts from a larger group in real life contexts and use a variety of resources when counting to represent numbers. Numerals are used to represent amounts to 5.
Component	Children start to use their Number knowledge throughout the Nursery, seeing connections with what they have learnt at Group Times.
Final milestone: (Composite) Use, talk about and apply knowledge of cardinality and conservation, counting, comparison and composition in different play/real life situations.	
Vocabulary pattern, subitise, total, sequence, estimate, accurate	



Our Behaviour Policy.

We want...

- a safe and secure environment where all children and adults are valued;
- positive behaviour management techniques and specific praise to underpin all our strategies in the early years;
- rewards and sanctions to maintain positive behaviour patterns and safe routines;
- all individuals to feel respected and included, regardless of gender, race, religion, ethnicity, background, family or social circumstances;
- children to be free from judgements – whether based on previous behaviour or the behaviour of other family members;
- an effective learning environment that stimulates, motivates and engages all children;
- team members to be confident in pre-empting potential triggers that could lead to the occurrence of undesirable behaviour;
- positive interactions with children and close monitoring of situations that could cause conflict;
- good management and support from team leaders to ensure practitioners are able to manage situations to the best of their ability;
- adults to be effective role models – being kind, empathetic, tolerant, gentle, patient, supportive and understanding.

To achieve these outcomes we will introduce, reinforce and consistently follow our three rules;

ready, respectful and safe, in order to:

- give children positive, clear, consistent instructions with visual supports;
- reach the eye level of the child and maintain eye contact when giving instruction or addressing behaviour;
- set clear and consistent boundaries and use a firm but fair tone when necessary;
- praise children – making praise explicit “praise in public”, ensuring children who are behaving appropriately receive the attention they deserve, using praise of others to motivate those less eager to respond. Verbally acknowledge when individual children go “above and beyond” our expectations;
- understand that these are the first steps in very young children’s learning, and respond appropriately to their mistakes – allowing them a safe place to make mistakes without humiliation;
- avoid labelling children;
- be discreet and limit children and adults overhearing any interactions addressing behaviour – “reprimand in private”;
- use cue cards, photographs, etc., that continually refer back to the nursery rules so children are clearly aware of expectations;
- children are actively involved in the discussion of and application of Nursery rules so they have ownership of them;
- engage and involve children positively in activities that they will readily enjoy to avoid confrontation and boredom;

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- provide a stimulating environment where children can make their own decisions and choices;
- set small achievable challenges that enable children to feel intrinsically proud of their own achievements, thus encouraging positive behaviour;
- employ the use of our behaviour script “I noticed that...it’s the rule about being ready/respectful/safe...what could you do now/instead? Thank you for listening”;
- discuss concerns about any persistent behaviour problems discretely with team members (as appropriate) but never openly discuss concerns in front of the child or other children. Observe for underlying causes of undesirable behaviour – are there any triggers, patterns, sensory needs, etc.;
- inform parents of any issues, arrange a meeting to discuss positive behaviour strategies (use judgement about what is important to discuss with parents – avoid bombarding parents with a daily list of bad behaviour, remember to chat to parents about all the positive aspects of the child’s day too);
- employ positive behaviour strategies first (engaging child, giving praise for appropriate behaviour, setting clear boundaries, ignoring inappropriate behaviour but not the child).