

Play

Through play, our children explore and develop the learning experiences that help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up their ideas, learn how to control themselves, and begin to understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively both alongside other children and on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

“Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others.”

(Statutory Framework for the Early Year Foundation Stage, Department for Education, 2012)

Continuous Provision

We create enabling environments to promote children’s independence when exploring recent learning, practising new skills and when following their own interests. As teachers, we enhance the continuously offered activities to make more overt links to adult-initiated and adult-directed focused sessions.

Key Worker

The key worker approach is aimed at enabling and supporting close attachments between children and practitioners. Attachment provides a sense of security so that children can become confident, independent and capable young learners. The key worker’s role is to meet the needs of each child in their care and respond sensitively to their feelings, talking to the parents and working in partnership with them.

Planning

Early years planning and learning concentrates on 7 areas, divided between prime and specific areas.

The prime areas of learning are Personal Social and Emotional development, Physical development and Communication and Language development.

The specific areas of learning are Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design.

We plan for all of these areas using observations to identify next steps for the children. We also consider children’s interests when planning and ways to support the child to strengthen and deepen their current learning and development. Planning for this reason takes place half termly, weekly and daily.

Teaching and Learning in the Foundation Stage



The Early Years Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and in preparing children for later schooling. The Early Learning Goals set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage and these goals form the basis of our curriculum. When children arrive in our Foundation Unit they have already learnt a huge variety of things at home or other settings. Our aim throughout the Foundation Stage is to continue to extend this learning process by providing a happy, secure and stimulating environment in partnership with parents and carers who have already begun the learning journey. We believe that children learn best when they are well motivated and having fun.

Our ethos is underpinned by the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework 2012.

“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 provides 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, Department for Education 2012)



Characteristics of Effective Learning

When observing children, we look for the ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment. This includes:

- playing and exploring—engagement
- active learning—motivation
- creating and thinking critically—thinking

These characteristics underpin learning and development across all areas and we firmly believe support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

Outdoors

We believe the outdoor area provides children with the freedom to investigate, explore, problem solve and be imaginative. We think learning outdoors should offer different challenges to indoor as it is special and unique. Outdoor play supports all round well-being and development and has a positive impact on this. We recognise that many children develop a wide range of skills in this environment and value its importance.

Observations

Observations of the children are where we begin. We observe them as they act and interact in their play, everyday activities and during planned activities. We think about the ‘Unique Child’ noticing what they show they can do to help identify where the child may be on their own developmental pathway (assessment).

Practitioners must be able to observe and respond appropriately to children. This should be informed by knowledge of how children develop and learn as appropriate intervention by them will engage children in the learning process.