



Teaching and Learning Policy

We value the whole child and work in partnership with parents/carers to give each individual the best possible start to their education. Our children learn to be confident, active learners through positive relationships. Our highly skilled and knowledgeable practitioners know the children and their families well. Our expectations are high. We provide a secure and stimulating setting for all our children. Children learn and develop well in an enabling environment in which their experiences reflect their unique needs. We offer a broad curriculum which engages and excites children, allowing ownership of their learning, with increasing independence and resilience.

The Curriculum

Four elements form the foundation of our curriculum intentions and development:

- **A clear pedagogy based on a robust understanding of child development – cognitive, emotional and physical.**

We understand that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. Each child brings different learning and play experiences with them when they join our nursery school (now referred to as Cultural Capital). We work with parents to gather this crucial knowledge which helps us to develop our curriculum intentions. Practitioners are mindful of the large difference in development between the different cohorts of our children; those who are just two years old and those who are in their fifth year. This is reflected in amongst other things, the structure of the day, use of physical space, use of language, behavioural expectations, staffing ratios and curriculum mapping.

- **A shared definition of what teaching looks like in the Early Years.**

We adhere to the Ofsted definition of teaching and this is at the heart of our provision.

"Teaching should not be taken to imply a 'top down' or formal way of working. It is a broad term that covers the many different ways in which adults help young children learn. It includes: their interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities, communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating and setting challenges. It takes account of the equipment that adults provide and the attention given to the physical environment, as well as the structure and routines of the day that establish expectations. Integral to teaching is how practitioners assess what children know, understand and can do, as well as taking account of their interests and dispositions to learn (characteristics of effective learning), and how practitioners use this information to plan children's next steps in learning and to monitor their progress."

Early Years Inspection Handbook (September 2019) p.33

Observation is an integral part of this teaching.

- **A secure understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (EYFS), its content, sequencing and progression through the Seven Areas of Learning and the Characteristics of Effective Learning.**

The EYFS provides the curriculum framework that leaders and practitioners build upon when deciding what we intend our children to learn. We foster the children's enjoyment of learning, their desire to explore, investigate and persevere and offer a broad, stimulating and balanced curriculum which covers:

Prime Areas:
 Communication and Language Development
 Physical Development
 Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Specific Areas:
 Literacy
 Mathematics
 Understanding of the World
 Expressive Arts and Design

Underpinning and interconnected to all these areas of learning are the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

**Playing and Exploring -
 Engagement**
 Finding out and exploring
 Playing with what they know
 Being willing to 'have a go'

**Active Learning -
 Motivation**
 Being involved and concentrating
 Keeping trying
 Enjoying achieving what they set
 out to do

**Creating and Thinking Critically -
 Thinking**
 Having their own ideas
 Making links
 Choosing ways to do things

- **An excellent knowledge of the children in our care.**

Each child is unique. We use an *assess - plan - do - review* cycle to inform our curriculum. This cycle works on different levels (see How Children Learn below). By observing, listening and playing with the children, focusing on their interests, key people get to know their children extremely well; they are then able to identify and extend learning opportunities. We foster an ethos of partnership, inviting parents to Parent Conversations twice a year and encouraging parents to engage in their child's learning by contributing to their Tapestry on-line Learning Journal (see Tapestry Guidelines). Key people discuss their child's development and agree on next steps. Parents are urged to share home achievements via our 'Shooting Stars' board which we then go on to share in group times. They are invited to attend workshops to further their understanding of learning in the early years. The Head teacher and Lead Teacher meet key people each term to discuss children's progress and the nursery team meet at the end of each day to discuss what has worked well and what can be further developed. Wider needs of the children are identified (amongst other things - children receiving EYPP/FSM; those with EAL; those supported by children's services or family centres; summer born children; those who might be regarded as young carers; those with medical care plans and children with more complex additional needs who have a detailed One Page Profile).

Curriculum Planning

The curriculum evolves from close observations of children's play and develops from their interests. Key people use this knowledge to plan their differentiated group activities. These are recorded in Key Group files. Analysis of tracking data informs wider planning and is demonstrated on half termly curriculum maps for both Little Stars and Rockets. Topics reflect seasonal themes, festivals and celebrations. We use our outdoor space to its full potential reflecting the principles of Forest Schools throughout the year. Practitioners ensure the appropriate

sequencing and progression in learning by referring to our subject curriculum maps (see Maths and Understanding the World).

How Children Learn (Implementation)

We provide a rich, varied and ambitious learning environment both indoors and out. Our children are safe and secure, happy, engaged and stimulated. Children are enabled to develop, consolidate and deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills through a range of child initiated and adult led activities. For most of the session children choose from a variety of activities and self-select workshops. Good quality resources are always available. They are encouraged to follow their own interests and have ownership of their own learning. Practitioners know when to support and scaffold a child's learning and when not to interfere, recognising teachable moments while observing, listening and playing with the children (In the Moment Planning). Their professional knowledge of language development allows them to differentiate their communication with each child. In this way we foster sustained shared thinking and ensure that individuals are appropriately challenged. The daily session includes a family time where the day's activities are highlighted, news is shared and achievements celebrated. Story time creates a love of story, rhyme and song, critical in the development of communication and language skills. Snack time, lunch time and personal care times are valued as real learning opportunities. Key group time allows for targeted, differentiated teaching. Underpinning this is the key person's knowledge of their children's stage of development and the next steps in their learning journey (Little Footsteps). Children with additional needs have an Individual Support Plan (ISP) which incorporates advice from external professionals, outlining learning objectives for targeted support and those to be embedded throughout the session.

Curriculum Impact - Review and Development

Review of the curriculum is ongoing. Staff are reflective practitioners and are very mindful of levels of well-being, involvement and engagement. Our use of In the Moment Planning allows us to make incisive changes within a session. Children are given opportunities to show what they remember from previous learning and to generalise this to a range of experiences. Similarly, SLT curriculum scrutiny and data analysis might prompt other changes to the provision. The staff team meet at the end of each session to evaluate the day's activities and discuss their observations of children. Regular learning walks by members of the SLT and Governors monitor curriculum implementation as do targeted, standardised observations formats (e.g. SSTEW, Leuven) and peer observations. The impact of curriculum planning is also reflected in assessment data (see Assessment Policy), pupil progress meetings and feedback from outside professionals and colleagues in receiving schools.

Supporting Documents

- Assessment Policy
- Literacy Curriculum Map
- Language Curriculum Map
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development Curriculum Map
- Physical Development Curriculum Map
- Number Curriculum Map
- Understanding the World Curriculum Map
- Tapestry Guidelines for Staff
- Waves of Provision
- SEN/D Policy and Information Report

