

## The Power of Play

**Preparation for learning beyond early years is an underpinning principle of the curriculum in nursery and reception.**

In early years, alongside our ambitiously planned curriculum and timetable for teaching instruction, there is a strong focus on children consolidating their knowledge, skills and understanding through play. Retrieving previous knowledge and skills through play based experiences and learning alongside others with well-balanced teacher instruction, modelling and collaborative learning with peers, promotes deeper learning.

As children explore resources in both imaginative, repetitive and open-ended ways they develop new knowledge and skills, as well as consolidating what they are already learning and know.

The characteristics of effective learning in early years enable adults to reflect on areas of strength for children and areas where a more supported approach might be helpful. High quality areas of provision inside and outdoors, rich with resources and the right balance of challenge, focus and opportunity for exploration in differing ways, are essential. A broad and balanced curriculum is essential for children's development.

Each area of provision provides a wealth of opportunities linked to the whole curriculum and provides excellent preparation for learning in KS1 and beyond.

### Summary of provision and the wider curriculum – readiness for learning in key stage one and beyond

**Book Corner:** throughout each half term we provide a wide range of books which focus on stories and information linked to our curriculum plans and with links to children's interests. We provide a carefully selected range of authors to support children's knowledge and understanding of people, cultures and communities. This supports children's growing understanding of similarities and differences between people, their cultures, communities and interests. Through books, we are opening up a world of opportunity to learn something new and be taken on imaginary adventures. Book corners support not only communication, language development and literacy, they also promote every curriculum area taught from year one onwards (personal, social, health and economic education - PSHE, reading, writing, maths, science, history, geography, religious education, art, design technology, languages, music, physical education and computing). Story settings are discussed and promote a growing knowledge of places, people and comparisons to what children know about where they live and places they have visited. Vocabulary development and effective communication are key areas of focus across early years and into key stage one and beyond. Stories and non-fiction books enrich the vocabulary children know and use. Through looking at books and re-telling stories, children are able to consolidate their knowledge and skills in word reading which includes phonics and comprehension knowledge and skills.

**Role Play:** children act out their experiences and develop new knowledge, understanding and skills as they play collaboratively and act out roles. Through role play, children make sense of their world, use props linked to real life and find out new information, as they are supported to carry out research to learn about people and places. Maths features strongly in role play as children sort and match resources, explore quantity, size and shape, use numbers on phones and calculators, handle money and dress up.

**Arts and Design 'Make It' areas:** trial and error, repeated practice and adapting designs in the moment are all strong elements of the learning which takes place as children create props for their play, pictures, paintings, models and explore arts methods and techniques. Children learn about real artists which supports an awareness of people, comparisons and contrasts with their interests and experiences, culture and community. Revisiting knowledge and skills in these areas enables children to refine and adapt their

techniques. Maths, physical development which in turn supports handwriting and stamina for writing, science, art and design and design technology all link strongly with these areas of provision.

The skills involved in the craft of art and design, drawing, painting, cutting, ripping, folding and sticking all support the development of fine motor control. Planning, adapting choices and actions, working hard to achieve something, feeling a sense of achievement and pride in their work are essential elements of successful learning journeys across the curriculum, throughout school.

**Malleable materials:** exploration of materials provides sensory rich experiences. By providing a wide range of resources which link to the key senses: smell, touch and sight, children become focused whilst also developing the physical strength in their hands and arms. This is key to developing control for drawing and writing. These science rich areas of provision support understanding about changing the state of a material and food technology themes which support learning and development linked to the sense of taste. Maths development through exploration of shape, size, quantity, pattern and a rich vocabulary are key to mathematical knowledge and understanding in this area of provision.

**Maths:** effective use of resources and enhancements which support the consolidation of maths teaching is embedded across all areas of provision. The problem solving approaches children apply and are taught to practice as they use their knowledge of mathematics throughout their play, enables maths to be meaningful, challenging and engaging. Adults are able to address misconceptions in children's understanding of maths concepts as they explore the many elements of maths (counting, comparison of number and quantities, composition of quantities, measure, pattern, shape and space). Using maths in play enables a healthy mindset to develop about challenge and achievement in maths and an interest in solving problems by applying what they know through trial and error. This supports readiness for the maths curriculum from key stage one onwards.

**Writing and Drawing areas:** across provision there are rich, explicit and open ended opportunities for drawing and writing. Drawing and writing linked to children's self-initiated play is a key element of developing knowledge and understanding in the writing process. Opportunities to practice small movements essential for effective fine motor control development, which is essential to effective drawing and writing are widely available through the broad range of resources on offer across provision. Making choices, practising again and again and learning about making improvements to their work supports the whole school ethos for learning. Learning from mistakes, rectifying them and recognising errors is a nurtured approach within lessons and as children draw and write across provision. Children learn to apply their growing phonic knowledge and reading knowledge and skills.

**Construction:** children's own experiences and growing knowledge of the world is collaboratively shared as they use small and large scale construction resources. Working independently and as part of a group where collaboration and effective communication are essential, is richly promoted through construction play. Resolving minor disagreements and learning about other people's viewpoints is a challenging element of construction play which adults support and guide children with. This links well with the PSHE curriculum in key stage one and two. Maths knowledge, understanding and skills (properties of shape, space and size, quantities and capacity) are practised in varied ways as children create models and vocabulary rich play linked to imaginative thinking is promoted. History and geography links are made as children recall experiences as they role play events in their lives.

**Science areas:** a strong focus on the natural world and observing changes over time through the resources on offer in classrooms, supports effective teaching and learning linked to science themes (materials, forces, animals and humans, living things and their habitats, plants, seasonal change). Promoting children's curiosity and awe and wonder for the natural world is planned for and enriched by children's interests and further developed explicitly through planned science learning challenges. Children's first hand experiences

enable children to join up what they know and have experienced already and new experiences. For example, caring for living things and exploring how materials can be used, mixed, changed and re-changed are common themes across the year. Becoming confident in identifying, classifying and grouping animals, natural objects and materials and pattern seeking as children learn about their world is excellent preparation for future learning in science.

**Small World Play:** children's knowledge of the world and imaginative ideas are developed through independent and collaborative play. A carefully planned balance of well-defined resources are used, such as vehicles, people, animals, places, buildings and more open-ended resources which support creative representation of places, people and objects. Geographical knowledge, understanding and skills are developed through children's play and their understanding of their own personal history and the history of their peers and familiar adults. Stories and non-fiction link closely to themes developed in these areas of provision.

**Physical Development Challenge Areas:** developing fine and gross motor control is a prime area of focus. This preparation for stamina in both fine and gross movement supports children's development across the whole curriculum in early years and into key stage one and beyond. Resources across provision are carefully planned to provide physical challenge and the outdoors supports children's desire to move in larger scale ways and with varying speed and physical skill. We provide core resources which enable children to revisit and refine their skills. For example, scooters and trikes in nursery and balance bikes in reception. Climbing walls, open ended resources which provide challenges for children to climb and move across and balls, bats and balanced based challenges. Physical education lessons in reception, continuous access to the outdoors across early years and discussions about coordination and control, supports children's understanding of the importance of being physically active and keeping healthy. Early years timetables take account of the need for children to be physically active throughout the day.

**Computing:** children use a wide range of resources to support their knowledge and skills linked to the computing curriculum. I pads, interactive screens, computers, battery operated toys including programmable toys support learning across the curriculum and provision. Children in reception learn how to use the computer suite in order to prepare them for learning in year one and beyond. Use of technology to engage children is embedded in our practice. For example, emails from story characters with photographic attachments, video messages, creating videos with the children, use of an online journal for every child (Tapestry) which is shared between home and school and used to showcase learning, supports wider understanding of the role and purpose of technology in our lives.

Each area of provision is interconnected; staff challenge and guide children across provision to ensure they experience a rich balance of learning across the curriculum and make connections between learning.

**Building strong foundations for children's future learning journeys is the essence of teaching and learning in early years.**

*Together we can make a difference.*