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Marlborough St Mary's CE VC Primary School



MARLBOROUGH
ST MARY'S
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Early Years Policy

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Early Years Policy

This document focuses on long term planning of the ethos, environment, principles and values of our Early Years provision. Medium and short term plans will include learning intentions and activities to meet every aspect of the curriculum.

We have a written and spoken series of aims and objectives which are shared by all participants- children, parents, teachers, teaching assistants, Head Teacher and governors.

AIMS OF RAINBOW ROOM

We do not underestimate the enormous leaps children make when they enter school. We aim to make transitions into Reception and then onto Year 1 as positive as possible.

We commit ourselves to:

- ❖ Taking our children on a learning journey which will support them to become successful, responsible and confident learners.
- ❖ The development, inclusion, safety, health and well being of every child, recognising that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.
- ❖ Forging partnerships with parents and valuing the information they give us.
- ❖ Using careful observation, assessment and planning to establish an effective learning environment.
- ❖ Providing a challenging and stimulating curriculum to help children to help themselves.
- ❖ **"Quality First" teaching- getting it right the first time.**

POLICY

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school, all children join us full time after a short period of staggered entry in the first term.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based upon four key principles:

-  A Unique Child
-  Positive Relationships
-  Enabling Environments
-  Learning and Development

This policy explains how our practice is underpinned by these four themes.



A Unique Child



At Marlborough St Mary's Primary School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

We value the diversity of individuals within the school. In our school we believe that all of our children matter. We give them every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning and next steps.

We set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Children from our Specialist Learning Centre are, usually in the afternoons fully included in the classroom lessons and activities. They are considered members of the class and are able to access experiences at their own level, according to age and stage.

Safeguarding and Welfare

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them."

DfE Statutory Framework for EYFS

At Marlborough St Mary's Primary School we:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.

- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.



The role of the adult in Rainbow Room

Deep adult engagement is not just a string of shepherding or organisational comments. It requires skilful judgement to decide when adult intervention in child- initiated play is most appropriate.

We aim to promote high quality interactions between children and with adults by:

- Planning and resourcing a challenging environment.
- Ensuring the environment is safe and teaching the children to use equipment safely.
- Teach the children how to access and return the resources they need.
- Creating a learning environment where children are able to make proper decisions and real choices.
- Encourage creativity and sustained thinking by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas. Get the children to explain what they are planning, doing or thinking.
- Remembering to give adequate thinking time and use these type of open ended questions:
 - ✚ What might happen if?
 - ✚ Design a new way to...
 - ✚ How can we make it better?
 - ✚ What is good about it?
 - ✚ Will that happen if you do it again?
 - ✚ Can you tell me more about it?
- When discussing ideas adults should value all contributions and withhold judgements. Sometimes adults can challenge thinking by posing an alternative point of view.
- Involving "wanderers" who find it difficult to access sustained engagement.
- Acting as facilitators- we want the children to know they can bring anything within reason into their play, including adults.
- Making observations of child- initiated play, in particular recognising that some boisterous play is often serious drama not just noisy mischief.
- Encouraging collaborative play. Keep an element of challenge; too much scaffolding can result in learned helplessness. Don't always define the outcome too closely.
- Helping children manage occasional failures- explain "you didn't make a mistake you need to think about it again."
- Sometimes children think we only value the product so try to document the children's thinking processes too.

- Aiming for Curriculum Richness- try to use real life problems.
- Encouraging the children to add language to doing- get them to describe what they are doing as they are doing it.
- Using digital photographic documentation to make immediate displays available to the children to encourage group discussions and decision making.

At Marlborough St Mary's Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Meeting families at the pre-schools before induction and communicate with them through, presentations, curriculum workshops, newsletters, reports and telephone calls.
- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school and use the 'All about me' booklets for parents and children to share their likes, dislikes and family/cultural experiences.
- Operating an open door policy for parents with any queries.
- Sharing regularly the children's 'Learning Journey' with parents and valuing the on-going contributions to this from parents.
- Offering two parent/teacher consultation evenings per year.
- Developing opportunities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents:
- Providing regular, accessible information on next steps and progress and give clear advice on how to support learning at home.
- Weekly letters home to parents informing them of the weeks planning and learning intentions, with support and advice on ways of enhancing the children's learning at home.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. We have very strong links with various feeder pre-schools and child minders and take an active role in the local preschool and children's centre network. The Foundation Stage staff meet with providers to discuss each individual child and their transition process into school. We attend cluster meetings and invite St Mary's under 5's pre-school and various community groups to our assemblies and celebrations. We have forged strong links with the Children's centre and have developed summer school sessions to support transition from pre-school to Reception. Children's necessary skills are promoted at these sessions and parents supported to make a seamless and secure move up.

Opportunities are provided for parents to provide regular feedback to us on their children's learning. We document their comments during planned teacher/parent meetings and record spontaneous comments too.

The 'WoW Wall' in the classroom is a system for recording individual's achievements. We encourage parents to contribute to their children's learning through the use of 'WoW slips' which are then transferred to the child's Learning Journey.

Learning journeys are accessible to parents. They will include information on all areas of learning and take account of well-being, characteristics of effective learning, involvement and a range of different achievements.

Behaviour to promote learning

Our school ethos signals an expectation of good behaviour and high achievement.

We have a proactive behaviour policy which reinforces desired behaviour.

The whole school uses the Wiltshire 'Learn for Life' programme to teach social, emotional and behavioural skills. This programme explores different emotions, models conflict resolution strategies and promotes perseverance.

Desired behaviour such as active looking and listening is clearly taught and all adults model appropriate values. Our school Mission Statement is **"Do be kind, do be gentle, work hard. Love one another as I have loved you."** We explain clear, consistent boundaries, limits and expectations to the children to help them understand why rules exist. However we know that good behaviour does not always mean children are learning- it could be just be passive conformity.

If tracking reveals poor pupil progress or behaviour it is our responsibility to examine our learning curriculum and learning environment. We may discern a pattern of particular activities or times of the day which an individual finds challenging. Guidance and support will need to be given to help children cope with strong feelings such as frustration, anger and anxiety. We need to follow up inappropriate behaviour by supporting children in rationalising and talking through conflicts. We condemn the action not the child; we do not say "you naughty boy" or refer to a "naughty bench."

A "quiet chair" can be used for short periods of time out for children to sit and reflect quietly.

Sometimes we have a pupil with very challenging behaviour. It is important that the whole staff take collective responsibility for such children so that the class teacher does not feel isolated. All staff must be aware of such a child's behaviour contract, sanctions and rewards.



Enabling Environments

At Marlborough St Mary's Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children

and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences.

The Learning Environment

Rainbow classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet, creative etc. Rainbow has its own outdoor classroom area. The free flow between the inside and the outside has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.

In Rainbow we aim to provide resources at the children's level allowing them to searchlight the room and self-select, providing genuine independent learning at varying times of the day. We recognise that children are more engaged and confident if they have chosen a resource themselves. Through regular observation we are then able to ascertain their current level of skill and understanding and scaffold appropriately, building in new language and extended resources to further extend their learning.

Displays reflect the importance of the process in all areas of learning; they contain questions and prompts to highlight key learning points, objectives for learning and direct quotes for children about their work and achievements. These achievements can mean an end product or their ability to persevere and demonstrate competences and progress in new or recently acquired skills. The children are encouraged to contribute to their own displaying of work by displaying models and creations alongside a self-written name label.

The Rainbow Garden

We are fortunate to have a very attractive, secure outside area with different surfaces, all weather covering and mature trees and plants. It is a small but complex environment made up of different textures, colours and shades. Different fences offer possibilities for weaving and displaying work. We have waterproof clothing and boots to allow access in all weathers. The Rainbow Garden has a high profile position at the front of the school and is a visible link to the community. Parents, neighbours and visitors are interested in the learning they see going on in the garden. We must make it clear to parents and children that the garden is not another playground; it is resourced and planned as our outside classroom. All areas of learning can be targeted through outdoor play but the garden will complement rather than duplicate indoor provision. Naturally we want the outside area to look attractive but we cannot equate aesthetically pleasing with stimulating. We will need to provide regular information to parents about the activities their children undertake in the garden; we can do this through curriculum newsletters and photographic narrative documentation.

It is intended that all children will have access to the outside classroom for a reasonable period every day and we will be flexible in our organisation; we know that children need time to settle into an activity and that longer periods of outside play can lead to creative and more complex co-operative play. The children will need to have agreed boundaries and behavioural expectations. The garden must be treated respectfully and it is essential that the children

can access and return their resources. They are involved in the setting up and tidying up of the garden every day.

Wheeled vehicles and small PE apparatus will be available on the Playground but not in the Rainbow Garden unless specifically requested e.g. a bike to be an ambulance in hospital role play. Outside play also offers added dimensions:

- ❖ It allows activities to take place on a larger scale e.g. den building which is big, manipulative collaborative play.
- ❖ It allows children to experience the natural world.
- ❖ It enables children to learn through using their senses- experiencing changes in seasons and weather.

See appendix 1 - resources



Observation, Assessment and Planning

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early years settings.

All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

Prime Areas:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Knowledge of the world
- Expressive arts and design

The Planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are taken from the Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations.

On entry children are observed through a child friendly baseline, having settled into school they are then observed in the first six weeks. Teachers are able to assess which band they are working in through informal observation of their knowledge and understanding in play

situations and in-turn comment on their characteristics of effective learning. Children are then tracked throughout the year three times. At the end of their foundation year in school the children's progress is recorded on to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Each child's level of development is recorded against the 17 Early Learning Goals and children will be assigned a level of emerging, expected and exceeding.

Assessment through observation is at the heart of the EYFS. In Rainbow room we recognise the importance of taking time to observe the children at their own work. In order to collect evidence we make daily observations of children's child initiated and adult led activities.

Observations can provide insight into children's schemas e.g. they can reveal that the seemingly noisy, rough "superhero" play typical of very young boys is often in fact complex drama with rich rhythms and images.

They include:

- ✚ Spontaneous snap shot moments.
- ✚ Discussion with parents.
- ✚ Examples of recorded work.
- ✚ Annotated photographs.

Observations of play can show children's strengths and counteract teacher's possible prejudices and assumptions. We must remember that young children's development can be very uneven with fine motor skills lagging behind oral competency.

Our planning has to ensure inclusion, curriculum coverage, relevance, continuity and progression. Our planning must be flexible enough to be sensitive to the changing needs and interests of our children. We use observations and assessments to identify learning priorities and plan relevant and motivating learning experiences and next steps for each child. There is a balance of adult led and child initiated play. Some child initiated play is adult referenced. We know that good cognitive achievement is associated with adult involvement in child initiated activities, sustained periods of shared thinking and open ended questioning.

We believe in the importance of child initiated learning, giving children the opportunities to practise and rehearse what has been taught in adult led time. We recognise the activities the children have chosen themselves are those in which they become most engaged, motivated and promote more critical thinking skills. We encourage and discuss the language of learning, where children are encouraged to be more resilient and responsible for their learning journey.

Fostering of the children's interests develops a high level of motivation for the children's learning. The staff use the children's interests to plan for themes for which the staff draw up medium term plans. In addition to this the children contribute to planning through their own input of interests and ideas on a day to day basis. Plans are then annotated accordingly.

OUR CURRICULUM

We aim to provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum which reflects the context of St Mary's. Our curriculum is regularly evaluated through staff dialogue and reflection. Our

planning ensures inclusion, curriculum coverage, relevance, continuity and progression. We aim to make learning vivid and real by grounding it in actual experience. We view social and cognitive activities as complementary.

We believe that good learning outcomes for children are linked to:

- Practitioners having good curriculum knowledge as well as knowledge and understanding of child development.
- A combination of teacher-directed and child initiated activities. The child initiated activities are often adult referenced- the adults provide a range of instructive learning environments and show sustained interest in the children's ideas.
- Shared educational aims with parents.
- Strategic deployment of all adults to maximise achievement.
- Effective use of observation and assessment to inform and direct teaching and learning.
- Flexible timings of different parts of lessons to fit specific purposes.
- Adult- child interactions that involve "sustained shared thinking" and open ended questioning to extend children's thinking
- Positive behaviour policies.
- Precise, diagnostic feedback both oral and written to children as often as possible.
- Enough age appropriate resources.
- Enough time for children to complete activities.
- Clear, manageable records that can track progress and also be analysed to evaluate the impact of our provision.
- Paying particular attention to the beginning and end of lessons which is the bit children remember.

Learning Styles and Characteristics of Learning

At St Mary's we acknowledge that children have differing emotional responses and diverse learning preferences but also realise that during their lives children will have to adapt to learn in a variety of circumstances and in different ways. We aim to provide a variety of learning situations in order to foster and facilitate for the development of effective early childhood learning characteristics. Our curriculum and environment allow for the facilitation of exploration and play, encouraging children to adopt a level of independence which they can assimilate for life, becoming responsible citizens. We know that when children are active learners, they are motivated to learn and more likely to persevere and take ownership for their learning. We hope that with such a rich variety of experiences we offer they will in-turn become more creative and critical thinkers.

We know that schools can favour learners who are predominantly visual and auditory and must make provision for learners who are intuitive or kinaesthetic. Equally we are aware that the preferred learning style of a teacher is likely to influence the way she teaches.

We aim to provide a choice of learning activity to accommodate different learning styles. The choice can be open {How would you like to show that information?} or guided {Would you like to write a description, draw and label a diagram, make a flow chart or cartoon, put the keywords to music or in a poem, or make a model?}

We use a range of interactive strategies:

- ❖ Questioning and discussing
- ❖ Response partners {child to child}
- ❖ Children demonstrating to the class e.g. on the Smart Board
- ❖ Show me activities
- ❖ Joint classes
- ❖ Links with older classes
- ❖ Pausing and asking the children to predict what comes next
- ❖ Handling artefacts.

Physical Development

The requirements for teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for maintained schools are set out in the EYFS statutory framework, which was most recently updated in 2014.

There is no requirement to teach physical education (PE) as a subject in the EYFS. However, physical development is one of three prime areas within the EYFS statutory framework. We recognise the importance of this and plan our sessions both according to individual and group needs.

The statutory framework document says that EYFS practitioners are required to provide activities and experiences for children to:

- Be active and interactive
- Develop their co-ordination, control and movement
- Be helped to understand the importance of physical activity
- Make healthy choices in relation to food

Typical children aged 40 to 60 months should be able to:

- Experiment with different ways of moving
- Jump off an object and land appropriately
- Negotiate space successfully when playing racing and chasing games with other children

At St Mary's, Reception children take part in regular PE and dance lessons, where the focus is on improving fundamental skills of agility, balance and coordination, through this they will acquire stamina, perseverance, and specific skills using balls, bats and a wide variety of other equipment. We use both the indoor and outdoor space providing a range of equipment whereby children can develop their core strength, move over, under and through apparatus and lift and carry equipment to build with. Children's physical skills are also developed through:

- Manipulating paintbrushes, pencils, and tools
- Riding bikes, balancing, and handling equipment

Some elements of the expressive arts ELGs depend on a child's physical ability to explore and manipulate media with confidence ... A child with emerging physical (moving and handling) skills may not attain the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS in relation to these creative ELGs.

Creativity

Creativity means what you do with what you have.

Creativity cannot come from nothing; children need to be taught skills otherwise their creativity will be very restricted. In class we have to teach specific skills such as phonic knowledge and correct letter formation but also transferable skills such as the ability to think through problems and communicate our ideas. Being creative often involves doing something one has never done before. This requires self-confidence and we must set challenges which are within the children's scope of competence.

We can offer scaffolding for children's learning, giving them a secure structure to work within by demonstrating techniques and skills or initiating ideas. However we do not need to scaffold too much learning for the children or give them materials which are too representational.

If children are given too rigid a framework and little choice in the materials they use, the opportunity to be creative is limited. Creativity is quashed when adults impose their own ideas and preoccupations e.g. rabbits need not have whiskers made of drinking straws. We are not focused on end products and believe that the process in arts activities is important. This will avoid the "screwed up tissue paper syndrome".

Adults can promote creativity by introducing new materials, words, stories, movement and music and building stimulating environments and display.

Semi- structured environments can suggest alternative possibilities to children. The materials which most lend themselves to imaginative play tend to be the most basic- logs, planks and blankets. We will invest in low cost, versatile open-ended resources and encourage the children to make their own resources on an always available art/technology table.

FEEDBACK

Children need praise and recognition for their efforts and achievement but staff need to be aware of how often they use phrases such as "good boy" "well done" and "lovely" without any explanation or detail about what they are praising.

To be really effective oral feedback must be specific, address the learning intention and give clear advice for moving forward.

External rewards such as stickers can be motivational in the short term but some children tend to strive for the reward rather than the achievement. Research reveals that children of average ability tend to get fewer rewards.

At St. Mary's kindness, effort and achievement are rewarded with recognition and affirmation. This can be in the form of a thumbs up, a star of the day award, a high five, a handshake, a pat on the back, displaying work, sharing good news with mum or a certificate.

Successes are celebrated with individuals, groups, classes, parents, the Headteacher and the whole school in Gold Book Assemblies.

OUTSIDE LEARNING ZONES

Different learning zones will ensure that a balance of activities is on offer. However the zones have to be seen as flexible. Children need to know that they can move their play from one area to another and that materials can be moved from one zone to another.

IMAGINATIVE PLAY ZONE

Much of the equipment associated with this play is also relevant to the building area. Just as indoors we would change the focus of an imaginative area sometimes we must do this outdoors and set up themes such as a café or spaceship. But the children need to know they can set up their own imaginative scene.

Possible theme areas could include- garden centre, boat, pirate ship, post office, shop, castle, garage, fire station, police station, camping,

We will provide these versatile resources:

Crates, A frames, planks, boxes, drapes, carpets, large umbrellas, chairs, tables, soft play. Blankets and rugs.

Musical instruments

Table, chairs, steering wheel

A trolley with props, bags, hats, belts, sunglasses, hard hats, suitcases, baskets, backpacks.

Tools, paint brushes, shovels, spades, old cameras, telephones, binoculars, pegs, ropes, brushes.

Cooking utensils, picnic food, dolls, prams and bedding.

Ropes, string, masking tape.

Clipboards with attached paper and pencil.

Number plates, cones and road signs can be used on Rainbow Playground.

Not all this equipment should be put out all at once but the children need to know that if they want a particular piece of equipment it can be made available.

CONSTRUCTION ZONE

Water area- trays, guttering, buckets, hoses, pumps, sprays, rollers, paint brushes.

Natural materials- stones, twigs, bark, wood, pebbles and gravel.

Pulleys, ropes, different bricks, crates, tunnels, steps, ramps,

GARDENING AREA

This zone needs a boundary so it is not used for play purposes.

Plant daffodils, potatoes.

Pots, spades, trowels, forks, hoes, watering cans, hoses, canes, wheelbarrows.

SCIENCE ZONE

Old logs, inspection pots, magnifying glasses, clipboards.

Bird boxes, reference photos and books.
Windmills, rain gauge,
Signs and symbols from the environment.

Mud Kitchen

In this area children can explore all areas of the curriculum and experiment with mixtures of solids, liquids and tools.

LITERACY ZONE

Table, chairs, cushions, graphics area, drawing and writing materials.

Laminated alphabet frieze

Chalks, whiteboards

Weaving ribbons

Outdoor book box

Clipboards

Writing trolley

NUMERACY ZONE

Number washing line and pegs

Skittles, scoreboards

Dice, number bean bags

Programmable toys

Number books

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

A frames

Planks, ladders, barrels, tunnels, slides, cardboard boxes

Steps, soft play,

Clay, dough

Bikes, scooters

Climbing equipment

Communication and Language

Literacy

We recognise the key importance of speaking and listening skills as a priority in their own right and for paving the way to make a good start on reading and writing.

We promote enjoyable, worthwhile activities that encourage the children to talk a lot, to increase their vocabulary and improve their command of dialogue.

We exploit the power of story, rhyme, drama and song to fire children's imagination and stimulate speech.

We use investigations and information texts to capture the children's interests.

Adults read to the children every day.

Reading and writing happens inside and outside.

Children build up a good bank of known texts.

There are lots of opportunities to hear, sing and discuss rhymes.

The books in our class book boxes and book corner are of good quality and quantity and variety- fiction, non-fiction and rhymes.

Big Books, favourite books, new books and phonic games are available for independent use. Books are included in all displays, not just CLL displays.

There are sets of guided reading books for early readers.

We have a good supply of early reading books from a range of schemes which have a repetitive structure, use High Frequency words and easily decodable words. We recognise the importance of rhyme and alliteration, listening games and activities as pre-reading skills and encourage local pre-schools to include these in their daily play, particularly towards the summer term. Pre-school staff are invited down at the beginning of the year to observe phonics sessions and Reception staff visit pre-schools to model good phonics practise. This aims to ease transition and develop a unified, seamless approach towards phonics teaching.

We believe that is important for children to view themselves as readers and feel the success of this. Decodable books are important here for children to be able to use the skills taught in class. We expect an ongoing dialogue and partnership with parents, inviting them into class to share reading books and attend 'stay and learn' sessions.

Adults explicitly model the behaviours of an effective reader or writer.

Sessions are interactive, with a balance of contributions from teacher and children.

Work in children's books will be dated and annotated before it is put into the finished work tray.

PHONICS

We follow the Letters and Sounds programme and use the Ruth Miskin - Read Write Inc. scheme.

Daily, discrete phonic sessions are taught in active, participatory and multisensory ways at a brisk pace; the children are not regularly expected to fill in worksheets.

We will regularly demonstrate the application of taught phonic skills across all areas of the curriculum.

Regular assessments will be made against the phase levels in Letters and Sounds. These assessments will inform differentiation which will mean teachers and teaching assistants will work with groups of children of similar ability to maximise achievement.

Any child identified as making insufficient progress will receive additional adult support so they do not fall behind the rest of the class.

We expect children to know letter names as well as sounds by the end of Reception. They are taught in Phase 3 when the children start to learn two and three letter graphemes.

Mathematics

Mathematical ideas are difficult because they are abstract and children need time to fully understand them. Pattern is the big idea behind mathematics. Children need to recognise copy and create patterns.

Counting is the basis of our Early Years numeracy curriculum.

Counting can often be a largely imitative social practice- the recitation of numbers in a certain order e.g. "1, 2, buckle my shoe." We need to make close observations of how children count irregular arrangements of up to 10 objects.

We need to make the purposes of counting explicit for the children -"it is to find out how many".

We understand these five counting principle

1. The one to one principle {correspondence}
2. The stable order principle-knowing the list of words used must be in a consistent order-1,2,3
3. The cardinal principle- when a child realises that the final word has special significance- it represents how many are in the array.
4. The abstraction principle- anything can be counted.
5. The order irrelevance principle.

We use practical apparatus such as unifix "staircases", numberlines and Numicon plates to help the children construct mental images of numbers.

Dice and dominoes also help to fix visual patterns. Children begin to see for example the pattern of 4 as two two's or 6 as two three's.

Numicon is multi-sensory apparatus, aiming for children to learn mathematical ideas through seeing and feeling and learning the connected mathematical language. Numicon images have been designed to help children see numbers as "wholes".

The concept of "one more" and "one less" underpin children's mathematical learning.

We teach the concept of "fewer" early in the Reception year.

We teach the children to make pairs and count in 2's and 10's.

We teach "estimate" as a "sensible guess".

Our way of naming numbers uses a ten based system and understanding this system is crucial for successful counting. So we teach children how to group collections into tens.

The other key concept is place value. It is vital that the children understand that the number 30 does not just represent the number that is one bigger than 29, but that it is also thought of as three groups of 10. This can be represented by 3 Numicon 10 plates or 3 Dienes 10 sticks.

Vocabulary : more, add, make altogether, total, take away, how many are left, 1 more, 1 less, sum, is the same as, difference between, how many more than, count out, group, share out, left over.

We set up role play areas that have a definitive focus on numeracy e.g. a grocers shop or shoe shop. We provide rich resources for numeracy activities in story and rhyme sacks. We exploit every opportunity for the practical use of number e.g. registration, counting out fruit snacks and organising groups and games. Clipboards are used inside and outside for the children's mark making and tallying. Number lines are used inside and outside.

Our outside environment will complement rather than mimic the numeracy activities available inside.

Large water and sand trays facilitate work on capacity using comparative language.

Numbers, shapes and patterns can be chalked on different surfaces.
Children can practise forming numbers with paint brushes and water.
Children can weave ribbons and numbers and shapes in the mesh fences.

Vocabulary:

Measure, size, compare, too many, too few, nearly, just over, just under, length, width, height, depth, long, tall, short, taller, longer, shorter, higher, longest, shortest, tallest, highest.

Weigh, weighs, balances, heavy, light, heavier, lighter, heaviest, lightest, balance, scales, weight.

Full, half full, empty, holds, container.

Time, day, week, birthday, holiday, morning, afternoon, evening, night, bedtime, dinnertime, playtime, today, yesterday, tomorrow, before, after, next, last, now, soon, early, late, quick, quicker, quickest, quickly, slow, slower, slowest, old, older, oldest, takes longer, takes less time, hour, o'clock, clock, watch, hands.

Written by Rachael Palmer