

Curriculum Policy

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Intent – What do we want the children to learn?

At our nursery, the curriculum is designed to recognise children's prior learning from previous settings (if applicable) and their experiences at home, provide first-hand learning experiences, whilst allowing the children to build resilience, independence, ambition, and integrity.

Every child is recognised as a unique individual, and we celebrate and welcome differences within our school community. The ability to learn is underpinned by the teaching of basic skills, knowledge, concepts, and values. We provide enhancement opportunities to engage learning and believe that our first experiences of school should be happy and positive, enabling us to develop a lifelong love of learning.

Community involvement is an essential part of our curriculum as we celebrate local traditions, learning new skills to enable the children to take an active role in events throughout the year.

Additionally, we place an emphasis on building the children's vocabulary and physical development.

Children leave the Nursery with a sense of belonging to a tightly knit community. As well as dispositions that include resilience, imagination, veracity, empathy, and responsibility. We want them to develop independence, ready to start a Reception class the following academic year. They have the confidence and skills to make decisions and self-evaluate, make connections and become lifelong learners, preparing them for the world around them.

Implementation – How are we going to teach this?

At our nursery, we follow the Early Years Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage as well as Montessori philosophy and an element of Reggio Emilia practice.

At our nursery all children are supported in developing and learning at their own pace. All staff plan carefully to ensure a well-balanced curriculum, tailored to the needs of each individual child,

by means of developmentally appropriate play activities and a level of adult input. We offer a curriculum that prepares each child to progress with confidence onto the next stage of their learning. Our programme is planned around the Montessori as well as the EYFS, and individual child observational data. Please see the Riverside Prospectus - Curriculum.

Incorporation of the three Prime Areas:

- **Communication and Language**

In both small and large groups, children are encouraged to extend their vocabulary and language skills by listening and responding to stories through the use of songs and rhymes. Children are supported to understand that written symbols carry meaning. They are made aware of the purpose of writing and when they are ready, use drawn and written symbols themselves. A well-stocked book corner gives every child the opportunity and encouragement to become familiar with books, to be able to handle them correctly and to be aware of their uses both for reference and as a source of stories and pictures. In addition, there is a stronger focus on early language and extending vocabulary in line with the new EYFS.

- **Physical Development**

A range of equipment and opportunities allow children to develop confidence and enjoyment in the use of development of their own body. The level of adult input allows children to safely create and meet physical challenges, developing increasing skill and control in moving, climbing and balancing. At the same time children are encouraged in the development of fine motor skills enabling them to use tools including pens and pencils and to handle small objects with greater control and precision. This area also teaches children about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and self-care.

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

Within a nurturing environment child are individually supported in developing confidence, autonomy, and self-respect. They are encouraged to work and concentrate independently and take part in the life of the group, sharing and co-operating with other children and adults. Children learn through activities, conversation, and practical example. They learn acceptable ways to express their own feelings and to have respect for the feelings of others. All children are given the opportunity, as appropriate, to take responsibility for themselves and for the group, group members and property. Children also learn to relate to other children and adults. In addition, there is a stronger focus on health, healthy eating, and oral hygiene, in line with the new EYFS.

The Specific Areas:

- **Literacy**

Children learn reading and writing skills, including phonic knowledge, simple reading, and emergent writing. Children are helped to understand that written symbols carry meaning, to be aware of the purpose of writing and when they are ready, to use drawn and written symbols themselves. We follow *Jolly Phonics plus letters and sounds* as a scheme to support the teaching of phonics to the pre-school children.

- **Mathematics**

By means of adult supported practical experiences, children are able to become familiar with the sorting, matching, ordering, sequencing and counting activities which form the basis for early mathematics. As they use their developing mathematical understanding to solve practical problems, children are assisted to learn and use the vocabulary of mathematics, identifying objects by shape, position, size, volume and number. Songs, games and picture books help children become aware of number sequencing and when they are ready, to use simple mathematical operations such as adding. Children can recognise shapes and use simple mathematical language.

- **Understanding of the World**

A safe and stimulating environment allows children to explore and experiment with a range of natural and manufactured materials. They learn to observe the features of objects and substances, recognising differences, patterns and similarities. Children are assisted in exploring and understanding their environment both within the group and also in the wider community. Safe and well-maintained equipment enables children to extend their technological understanding using simple tools and techniques appropriate to achieve their intentions and to solve problems.

- **Expressive Arts and Design**

Children are encouraged to use a wide range of resources and their imagination in order to express their own ideas and feelings and to construct their individual response to experience in two and three dimensions. Art equipment including paint, glue, crayons and pencils as well as natural and discarded resources provides for open ended exploration of colour, shape, texture and the development of skills in painting, drawing and collage. Children join in with and respond to music and stories. There are many opportunities for imaginative role-play both individually and as part of the group. Opportunities feed into the garden with the use of mark making caddies to support creativity within their natural environment and surroundings inspiring thinking and creativity.

Our nursery has recognised the use of clear, focused learning intentions as an effective tool in gaining intended learning outcomes. Staff working with the curriculum receive regular training to ensure their interactions with the children reflect current best practise, are valuable, support each individual child and move learning on.

Where possible the children's own interests are used by the adults to engage the children in higher level thinking and deeper learning. Child initiated learning is valued and encouraged. Through adult led learning we introduce new concepts and knowledge, the progression of which can be led by the children through enabling environments and continuous provision.

We invite visitors developing opportunities to reinforce children's understanding of experiences such as fire fighters when learning about people who help us in the community. We encourage and support up and coming transitions for our school leavers. This provides opportunities for role play using

scenarios set up for children including home corners and shops continuing with more open-ended opportunities using more real resources including boxes, containers and trinkets to name a few. Children love to explore, move around the room working together with lovely elaborate play.

Parents are valued as first educators and every effort is made to inform them of the Montessori curriculum whilst providing them with the tools to continue in school learning at home. Parents are also encouraged to inform school of their child's interests and achievements at home as these are an essential part of each child's learning journey. Strategies to include and inform parents include, Tapestry, parent questionnaires and monthly curriculum newsletters. Parents are also invited to add to Tapestry sharing events and achievements.

Other strategies to implement our intent at our nursery include:

- Specialist lessons – Montessori (See Riverside Prospectus - Curriculum)
- Each activity having a learning objective set by the teacher.
- Differentiated teaching strategies for each unique child schemas.
- Show and Tell opportunities for toddler and preschool age children.
- Circle Time
- Small group focus time
- Rolling snack time
- Encouraging interactions between different age groups
- A good balance of adult led, and child led activities.
- Weekly planning for indoor and outdoor activities
- Different teaching methodology for different age groups as well as differentiation through a range of pre-school activities with challenging but achievable activities

Impact – Whether the children can do what we want them to do.

At our nursery, the impact of the EYFS and Montessori Curriculum is that all children make excellent progress from their individual starting points. All children get the best possible start to their school life and develop the knowledge and skills to reach and exceed their potential in Reception. They develop and nurture strong, positive attitudes where they become proud and respectful of themselves, others and their environment and carry with them the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will make them lifelong learners and valuable future citizens.

Ways in which we assess the impact of our curriculum at our nursery include:

- Evaluations of activities, both indoors and outdoors
- Photographic observations of children on Tapestry
- Tracking children's progress to help identify next steps.
- Monthly staff meetings
- Key Person system
- Next steps for individual children
- Growing confidence in children as they develop within their environment.
- Repetition of learning objectives to consolidate learning.
- Continuous provision activities
- Adapting to children's interests
- Children creating activities with spontaneity and growing confidence.