

Early Years Curriculum

The Foundation Stage Curriculum is based on Seven Areas of Learning. These areas are divided into Prime areas and Specific areas.

The prime areas of learning are:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development

The specific areas of learning are:

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

The DfE describes the prime areas as being fundamental to children's learning of the specific areas, with the specific areas in turn helping to further develop the prime areas. In reality this means planning activities that support the three prime areas for younger children (so until around 2 years-old). For children aged two and above, planning and activities should be widened to also incorporate the four specific areas of learning & development.

In the Early Years, children learn through play and activities are designed to promote independent learning. Early Years practitioners will look closely at the way in which children learn. This is known as 'characteristics of effective learning.' The 'characteristics of effective learning are:

- playing and exploring
- active learning
- creating and thinking critically.

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is structured around a 'mini topic' approach; which incorporates children's own interests. Each topic has planned learning objectives and specific assessment opportunities are built in. The curriculum, whilst developed through a topic approach, ensures there is a suitable balance between adult-led and child-initiated independent activities. The units of work being covered in Reception include:

Family and Friends

Animals

Food

Let's Pretend

Up and Away

Sand and Water

Outdoor learning happens throughout the day in Nursery and Reception. Children have opportunities to experience a wide range of themed activities; including role-play activities and sensory based activities.

The curriculum has been developed to maximise progression for children and in particular, to enable them to access learning opportunities when they are ready rather than as a result of their age. The Foundation Stage curriculum allows for flexible learning and some children will be able to access learning programmes ahead of their normal age.

Activities that are provided are interesting and carefully matched to the capabilities and interests of the children. The children are taught in different ways and in different teaching styles according to the needs of the children and the curriculum.

The current tracking system enables staff to identify baseline starting points for all the children entering Nursery and Reception and thus enables them to plan for appropriate teaching.

