

Abbey Meads Community Primary School

Early Years Curriculum 2022

Intent

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to 5 years.

'A curriculum that is suitable, individual and ambitious' all children can access and all children make progress from starting points.'

Our curriculum is designed to recognise children's prior learning, both from previous settings and their experiences at home. This is particularly significant since the pandemic, with children having many different experiences before they start nursery or school. We work in partnership with parents, ensuring each individual reaches their full potential from their various starting points. Our curriculum is therefore the cultural capital we know our children need, so that they can gain knowledge, skills and understanding they require for success. We identify gaps in knowledge and understanding, skills and interest, and provide enhanced opportunities they might not otherwise have, such as the investigation centre, outside space, storytimes, using scissors and opportunities to talk. Providing a broad and balanced curriculum.

It is imperative that we teach children how to learn. There is a strong emphasis on teaching children to listen, engage, access resources, ensuring they are settled and secure in the early years environment to ensure teaching is effective. Our priority is to ensure all children are able to access learning, by quickly establishing and developing learning behaviours. Focusing on establishing high expectations, learning behaviours and developing positive relationships with the children so they feel secure and ready to learn. We prioritise personal, social and emotional development, physical development and communication and language. Executive function skills feature highly. Developing mental skills that include working memory, flexible thinking and self-control. Trouble with the executive function can make it hard to focus, follow directions and handle emotions, self-regulation, among other things.

At Abbey Meads Community Primary school we recognise that language not only improves academic outcomes, but is a life skill to ensure success beyond school, in life and future employment. Language develops children's thinking and understanding, which in turn promotes self-confidence, resilience and empathy which support the child's well-being. Our enabling environments and warm,

skillful adult interaction support the children as they begin to link learning to their play and exploration right from the start. Language development is central to self-regulation. Children use language to guide their actions and plans. Pretend play gives many opportunities for children to focus their thinking, persist and plan ahead.

We know from Hungry little minds, literacy trust, Swindon is significantly higher than national data with many adults not talking with their child, playing with them or reading with them at home. The pandemic will have also contributed to children having to play alone with very little or no interaction whilst adults work from home or cared for loved ones.

We are focused on reducing the language gap. Progress of these particular children depends on adults engaging them in high quality dialogue and direct teaching so they can:

- Articulate what they know and understand

- Develop their knowledge across all areas of learning, using the vocabulary they needs to support learning.

- Critical to this are children's back and forth interactions with adults.

- These form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial.

We are passionate about reading and fostering a love of books with lots of opportunities to practice reading. Learning to read unlocks knowledge and develops vocabulary.

Our children come in at very different starting points. To achieve the end of foundation stage expectations specifically in writing, these children need early intervention and support to have the best chance of succeeding.

High levels of engagement gives the best chance of high levels of attainment and progress for all children, including SEND. We therefore provide an engaging, holistic curriculum that maximizes opportunities for meaningful cross curricular links and learning experiences. Some children will take part in additional rich, challenging and open ended activities. They will experience curriculum content at greater depth. Other children, will experience carefully planned and regular extra help so they don't fall behind the majority.

We aim to work collaboratively with parents and carers to encourage independent, enthusiastic learners who thrive and reach their full potential. We place importance on the relationship we have with the children and their

parents. We will continue to provide training for parents to support language development and reading. We aim to promote equality and eliminate discrimination when setting the curriculum which includes consideration of our partnership with parents, promoting respect for ethnic and linguistic diversity; this includes supporting parents and children to use their first language at home and in the setting, where first language is not English. We ask families for key phrases that we can use in class. Staff and pupils who speak the same language will support EAL children when needed.

We endeavour to provide a warm welcoming atmosphere where children are valued and listened to. We value every child for who they are and prepare them for all they can be. 'Nothing but the best'

Implementation

At Abbey Meads our children learn through a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities. The timetable is carefully structured so children have directed teaching in Reading, Maths and Phonics every day in reception with regular circle time sessions to focus on PSED. As the year progresses these sessions are followed by group work where children will work with a member of staff to develop their individual targets. This focused group time means the teacher can check for understanding, identify and respond to misconceptions quickly and provide real-time verbal feedback which, results in strong impact on the acquisition of new learning. In nursery, children have planned sessions throughout the week with sessions planned for weekly, maths, reading, phonics squiggle wiggle and PSED sessions. Direct teaching will always be aimed at the children's emerging skills, not the existing ones as argued by Vygotsy (1978) and the 'zone of proximal development'.

Children are provided with plenty of time to engage in 'exploration' throughout the variety of experiences carefully planned to engage and challenge them in the provision. The curriculum is planned for the inside and outside classrooms. The curriculum is planned in a cross curricular way to enable all aspects of the children's development including understanding the world and expressive art and design, as well as to promote sustained thinking and active learning. We provide the children with an enabling environment and provide resources that reflect the progression of skills in areas of learning.

When children start school and nursery we plan for all adults to be modelling and supporting play in the provision to teach the children how to use the resources and to develop relationships. It also provides the opportunity to

establish routines, expectations of the setting and of behaviour. This ensures that all of the children's needs are met whilst settling in and learning what is expected of them. Adults promote and model active listening skills, linking listening with learning. Adults support routine, creating enabling environments, giving precise and encouraging feedback minute by minute. Children with additional needs can be quickly identified and support put in place.

At Abbey Meads we believe effective pedagogy is a mix of different approaches including, play, adults modelling, observing others, guided learning, objective led learning and direct teaching. We check that all children get the experiences and teaching they need to become secure in concepts, like early numeracy. We can't do that solely by responding to children's play.

Language and reading is at the heart of our curriculum. Children follow the story time phonics scheme which has enabled us to see very successful outcomes after the first year of running this programme with 97% children passing the year one phonic screening test. This success was continued Summer 2022 with 86.4% meeting the expected standard, surpassing national data of 75%. Reading aloud is a priority. We provide the children with a daily big book session and a daily poetry basket session which includes opportunities for performance poetry. We listen to the children individually reading on a regular basis and children who do not read at home are targeted. We identify key vocabulary from books that is relevant and purposeful. There is discreet reinforcement of vocabulary at all times for example snack time we can talk about positional language and when supporting building we model mathematical language. If discussing scientific concepts with the children we would introduce the key vocabulary, for example a puddle is evaporating rather than disappearing. We value snack time, as an opportunity to sit with the children and talk. This may be led by the children and their interests/fascinations or can be led by adults. Many children do not sit at the table with their families for dinner so we value this as part of our cultural capital and language development. This is a time to model good listening skills and an opportunity to listen and respond to our peers through questioning. We provide time and quiet spaces to read throughout the day. Importance of talk is evident in our early year's classrooms. Adults are seen reading to children within the provision. We provide a home corner role play all year, in all classrooms, and additional role-play that is topic related. Children engage in lots of small world activities. Routines include songs and singing is used throughout the day to engage children. Our book corner is used as a mini library, providing a place to browse, we make books look attractive and easy to find. We provide extra small group story times for

children with speech, language and communication needs. We send the children home with an additional book from our class library so they have access to many different books at home, promoting the love of reading.

We provide a vocabulary and language rich environment where adults talk with children throughout the day. All adults really listen to children and are interested in them. They are working with children within the provision so they are having conversations. Bringing in that rich vocabulary which is really powerful. We provide the children with oracy activities from the Oracy project, children are introduced to sentence starters I see, I know, I wonder. Language is important for emotional well-being, enabling and providing opportunities for children to talk about feelings.

In Reception, storytime phonics drives our curriculum when we start teaching letter and grapheme correspondence of the first 45 sounds. Every day is based on a new book linked to the phonics and all other areas of the curriculum will be delivered through this theme to provide inspiration for learning. This gives phonics a very big focus as we recognise the importance of giving all children the best chance of success by reading as soon as possible so they can access all areas of the curriculum. In Nursery we consider what comes before phonics and this is carefully planned for to give the children the best chance of developing solid foundations so they are ready for formal grapheme, phoneme correspondence. We develop spoken language, listening skills alongside more formal sound discrimination activities. Children are immersed in early phonic skills, such as creating and hearing sounds, identifying syllables in words, rhyme and oral blending/segmenting. We sing throughout the day and value nursery rhymes.

Throughout the year, we plan a range of themes and topics for the children to learn about, providing a range of experiences and knowledge they may not otherwise experience. This enables us to ensure we provide the children with a broad and balanced curriculum full of awe and wonder. This can be seen on our Long term plan. We link some of our curiosity and awe and wonder to vegetables and fruit that the children would not otherwise experience. This also develops vocabulary.

The children need to achieve the expected level in many other areas of learning before they will experience success in writing. With this in mind we teach dough disco and squiggle wiggle in nursery, alongside our big draw sessions. This is revisited in term 1 in Reception to develop those fine motor and gross motor movements required to be successful mark makers. We run Nursery Talkboost

and have introduced Reception Talkboost to those children who are identified within the first few weeks of starting school, at risk of falling behind. This will improve their spoken language.

The learning experiences within our Early Years are linked to the seven areas of learning and development within the EYFS statutory framework. These are split into three prime areas and four specific areas. The three prime areas are those which the children should develop first and are considered most essential for the healthy development and future learning of our children. These are Personal, social and emotional development, Communication and language and Physical development.

As they grow and make progress in the prime areas, this will help them to naturally develop skills within the four specific areas of Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the world and Expressive arts and design.

We teach daily maths sessions which primarily focus on number, calculation, and numerical patterns, enabling children to develop a deep understanding of number and the acquisition of mathematical language. We use white rose maths scheme of work which is adapted to support our teaching of number alongside our progression of skills document. Children learn through games and activities using concrete manipulatives which are then rehearsed and applied to their own learning during exploration. Nursery children begin to develop these key skills during maths sessions and within the provision where they explore sorting, quantities, shape, number, pattern and counting awareness. We use routines such as daily registration to visit many of these mathematical concepts every day.

We use the revised development matters document as guidance for our nursery and reception children to develop the skills and knowledge to achieve the early year's foundation stage goals at the end of their Reception year.

Practitioners carefully organise the enabling environments for high quality play and are reflective in their practice, responding to how the children are learning and adapting the environment accordingly, and always considering the unique child.

Our inclusive approach means that all children learn together but, we have a range of additional intervention and support to enhance and scaffold children who may not be reaching their potential or moving on children who are doing very well. This includes, for example 'Talkboost, or additional Keep up sessions. Within our early years we refer to 'Keep up' rather than catch up. Adults check

children have plenty of time with each phase, so they are, secure where they are. Children are provided with plenty of time for regular opportunities to practice and repeat learning. Outside agencies support us to plan and help us understand complex SEND needs, providing guidance for next steps/targets.

We promote equality and non-discrimination, encouraging children from different backgrounds to share activities, combatting stereotypical views of what boys and girls can do and combating stereotypical views about people from different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds.

Adults are responsive to the children and will support the children where it is needed. Children who require support are identified and they are supported accordingly. Adults will focus assessment on those children who really need our help. This quote from Julian Grenier captures the current practice that we have adopted at Abbey Meads primary school in response to the changes in the new Early Years framework.

Effective early year's practitioners are a bit like the harbour master who keeps an eye on the boats as they come into the harbour. Most boats are heading safely into dock although they are going at different rates and following different courses. The harbour master does not need to watch every single one every moment of the day, but, some boats may be going off course or perhaps they won't make it into the dock that day. Those are the boats the harbour master needs to pay extra attention to because they need extra help in order to dock safely.

Impact

The New revised EYFS Framework changes enable teachers to focus their assessment where most needed, for children in danger of falling behind the majority and children who may have barriers to their learning. Ensuring as many children as possible reach an expected level of development before they begin year 1. Giving better and more equal life chances. Our curriculum and pedagogy reflects this change and will ensure we continue to meet and surpass the national, end of foundation stage expectations. Creating confident, articulate, resilient and kind children who are ready to access the national curriculum.

Our curriculum meets the needs of all of our children, including our disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, spending time looking at and evaluating how children are learning. This is achieved through talking to

children, looking at their work, observing their learning experiences and analysing data looking at attainment and progress by year group, class, groups and individuals. All staff use ongoing observational assessment and our baseline assessment sheet to identify children's starting points and plan experiences which ensure progress. We identify children who are at 'stage' not 'age'. We build on prior knowledge enabling children to know more and remember more. The information is tracked on target tracker which enables us to measure our data against national data at the end of foundation stage.

The enabling environment, provision and planned direct teaching sessions meet the needs of the majority of the children and their 'emerging skills, zone of proximal development' that Vygotsky makes reference to. The children at risk of falling behind who need support to 'Keep up' are identified on planning documents and support/intervention is evident for these children. These children can be seen interacting with adults more in the continuous provision and assessment reflects this. We focus our assessment work on these children. Identifying what their strengths are, so we can build on them and identifying what their needs are, so we can help them.

Children's learning and progress is documented and captured in each child's 'Tapestry' learning journal. This is shared with parents so they can engage and comment on anything shared. This also allows children to reflect on their progress and successes through pupil voice. This is an effective way of engaging with parents.

Our curriculum and its delivery, our pedagogy, ensure children make good progress. We consistently meet the end of year expectations at the end of Reception, achieving GLD in line and above National data.

Our curriculum will ensure all children develop a love of reading. All children have the skills to decode text and recognise words to read books matched to their ability. All children have established learning behaviours which enable them to access a broad and balanced curriculum and learn. Finally, **all** children are equal.

Children quickly settle into school life and behaviour is good. Children demonstrate good learning behaviours throughout the setting and are able to independently access the curriculum through both direct teaching and the enabling environment. All staff are able to articulate what is provided in the classroom and why. Reflecting on the needs of the children and curriculum.

Given an effective settling in approach, most children settle well, and quickly join in with all play and learning we offer. They access the curriculum and thrive. Some children have barriers so need extra help to settle in. By working closely with their parents we ensure they are given the help they need quickly so they do not miss out on valuable play and learning. Giving all of our children the best chance to succeed, by feeling confident, happy and capable, as soon as possible.

Milestones in our curriculum and our progression of skills documents help all children achieve the ELG. We have a set of curriculum goals at the end of both Nursery and Reception. We write a brief pen picture for each child on entry, followed by one in December, March and July for children who are at risk of falling behind, which identifies any barriers to learning and support they may need. It is a holistic, best fit judgement on whether they are on track to meeting the end of foundation stage expectations.

We have a number of children who access the curriculum at a greater depth. They are challenged through open ended tasks and questioning. They are able to articulate their understanding and learning. At the end of the year they are identified by staff as they transition into the next year group, Reception or Year 1.

The children at Abbey Meads Community Primary school experience a smooth transition between Nursery, Reception and beyond. Effective communication and collaboration ensure the children leave the EYFS with a solid foundation of learning of which to build upon.

With language and reading at the heart of our early year's curriculum we give all children the best chance of successfully leaving the Foundation stage with the tools to be able to access the national curriculum and open many doors for those who may not otherwise have the language, understanding or vocabulary to 'keep up' with their peers.

Our children will grow to be confident, competent lifelong learners and good citizens.