

## Early Years Curriculum and Assessment

### The Curriculum

#### The Characteristics of Effective Learning

These are the ways in which children engage with other people and their environment. They underpin learning and development across all areas and support children to remain an effective and motivated learner. They enable children to become learners for life and are a key indicator for future achievement.

The 3 characteristics of effective learning are:

- **playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
- **active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements;
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

### The Areas of Learning

There are seven areas of learning and development. 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. The **prime** areas begin to develop quickly in response to relationships and experiences, and run through and support learning in all other areas. The prime areas continue to be fundamental throughout the EYFS.

These three areas, the prime areas, are:

- Communication and Language - how children speak in groups and to express ideas, how well children listen and respond and how well they follow instructions and maintain a theme in a conversation.
- Physical Development - large movements such as walking, running and climbing, small movements such as using pencils and scissors, an awareness of safety, keeping healthy and managing personal hygiene.
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – interacting with others, self-confidence, awareness of their own and others' feelings, knowing how to behave and follow rules, coping with new situations

The **specific** areas include essential skills and knowledge. They grow out of the prime areas, and provide important contexts for learning. The four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied are:

- Literacy – enjoyment and understanding of stories they read, using phonic skills to decode, writing for a purpose, using phonic skills to write
- Mathematics – counting and ordering numbers to 20, 1 more and 1 less, adding and taking away, using numbers in their play, talking about shapes and what they are like, naming some shapes, heavy, length, long, short, more, less
- Understanding the World – talking about the things they see in the world around them, enjoying traditions and learning about other people's traditions, using technology such as computers, cameras, cd players etc.

- Expressive Arts and Design – using different materials to make things of interest, exploring what they can do with different materials, pretend play (mums and dads, vets, superheroes), dance, music

Each area of learning and development must be carried out through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity.

### What we do in the Early Years Classroom – indoors and outdoors

*We play! We learn!*

In Early Years we learn in different ways:

**Whole class sessions** which involve a mixture of listening, talking (to the whole class or to your partner) and doing (Phonics, maths, Talk for Writing, PE and ICT)

**Group activities** like guided reading

**Adult-led** activities like cooking

**Child-led** activities – play

### Why do we play?

Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.

(EYFS Framework)

"Play is practice for life"  
(Karl Groos)

### The Social value of play

Play helps develop:

- Concentration
- Flexibility
- Language skills
- Taking on other perspectives
- Negotiation

### The emotional value of play

- Well-being is enhanced through play
- Tuning in to your own senses improves your ability to empathise with others
- Children can work through their emotions and anxieties

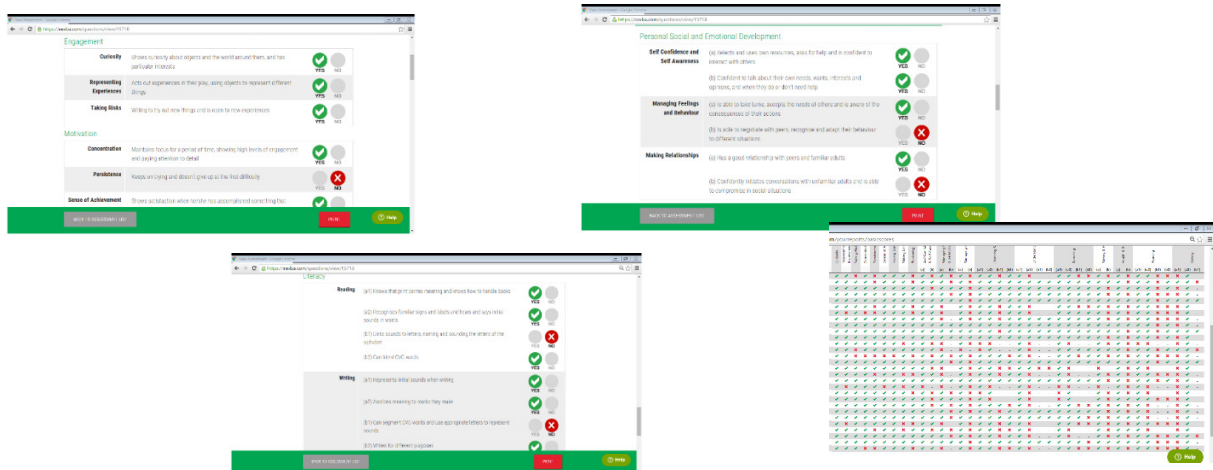
## Assessment

Throughout the year, we assess at 3 different times

- On entry (baseline)
- Throughout the year (learning journeys)
- At the end of the year (Early Years Profile)
  
- We use the Early Years Foundation Stage document – Development Matters
- We assess against ages and stages (birth to 11 months, 8-20 months, 16-26 months, 22-36 months, 30-50 months, 40-60 months, ELG (Early Learning Goal – end of year expectations))

Baseline Assessment – up to the end of the first 6 weeks

- Early Excellence Baseline (EExBa)
- Based on observations and knowing the children
- Emphasis on children’s wellbeing and involvement
- 47 statements to assess against
- Assesses characteristics of learning, prime areas plus maths and literacy



Ongoing Assessments – (Learning Journeys)

In Early Years we assess throughout the year and many of our observations are recorded in the learning journeys which will be used as evidence for the end of year assessments and to send home to parents when the children leave EY. These ongoing assessments:

- Are based on observations, knowing, playing and talking with the children
- Assess all 7 areas of learning plus characteristics of learning
- Use ages and stages and ELGs (Early Learning Goals)
- Other records may be made e.g. guided reading
- Are made through focus observations – 3 children per week
- Are made using photos, observations, children’s quotes, information from home, guided reading notes, class session observations, anecdotal evidence
- Children and parents can add work to learning journey

### Early Years Foundation Stage Profile – (by 1<sup>st</sup> July)

The main purpose of the EYFS profile is to provide an assessment of individual pupils at the end of the EYFS. EYFS profile data is used to:

- inform parents about their child's development
- support a smooth transition to key stage 1 (KS1)

At the end of the Year, children will be assessed as to whether they are:

- at the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS as described in the Early Learning Goals (**expected**)
- not yet at the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS as described in the Early Learning Goals (**emerging**)
- beyond the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS as described in the Early Learning Goals (**exceeding**)

Pupils are also assessed as to whether they have the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

Children with effective learning characteristics:

- are willing to have a go
- are involved and concentrating
- have their own ideas
- choose ways to do things
- find new ways of doing things
- enjoy achieving what they set out to do

To accurately assess these characteristics, we observe learning which pupils have **initiated** (chosen to do themselves) rather than only focusing on what pupils do when prompted.

**These characteristics also support lifelong learning.**

- Children need to show their skills and knowledge **consistently and independently, in a range of situations.**
- Assessments will be made of mostly child initiated activities and some adult initiated activities.

School is measured on the percentage of children achieving a Good Level of Development – GLD

GLD is determined by children achieving expected in the 3 prime plus maths and literacy

We will begin to talk about your child's achievement in terms of them reaching expected in the Early Learning Goals and whether they demonstrate the Effective Characteristics of Learning.

If you have any questions at all, then do not hesitate to come and speak to a member of the Early Years Team.