

Continuous Provision and Writing in Year 1

At Lord Deramore's we believe that children learn best when their well-being is high and they are happy and engaged. We make sure this happens by providing them with a continuous provision play environment in Year 1. This means children are 'active and autonomous' (Ephgrave, 2017) in their play. This provides a supportive transition from Early Years (Norton, 2022), where they will have played with similar resources. The continuous provision in Year 1 is more challenging than that provided in Early Years and is designed to develop children's skills in 3 key areas: independence, resilience and problem solving. It also supports development of key skills and knowledge within the National Curriculum. There is an emphasis on communication and language, an area in which we have noticed that children need extra support and practice after Covid (Crowther et al, 2022). Each year we analyse EYFS Profile data to identify children's gaps and tailor provision to support their needs. Our continuous provision approach supports children with SEND, children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and summer born children, giving them opportunities to learn in a way which suits them best.

We support children to refine and develop key concepts which they are taught in whole class sessions, for example using the sand to embed geographical vocabulary such as mountain, river, lake and valley. We expect children in Year 1 to move beyond the exploratory play they did in Early Years to a more considered style where they plan what they will do, evaluate and share their discoveries.

In order to facilitate play in continuous provision, both indoors and outside, we staff Year 1 with a full time teaching assistant (Fisher, 2010).

We teach all elements of writing in Phase 1 (see chart). Children learn the skills of spelling, grammar, handwriting and composition separately before bringing them together gradually in a supported manner towards the end of Year 1. We support children to write for the purpose of sharing their learning through use of their independent ("orange") books throughout Year 1, gradually increasing the cognitive demands as their skills and independence increase. Children show their independent recording to an adult and this enables adults to give immediate, personalised feedback to children about their writing and to support them in starting to edit their work if appropriate.

We believe that the benefits of continuous provision shine through in our children's confidence, independence and enthusiasm. They are ready to approach more formal learning in Year 2 with an excitement and relish for learning that have come from being able to follow their own interests for the first two years of their Lord Deramore's journey.

The layout of the Year 1 classroom facilitates our continuous provision approach. This means that we use the space to provide structured, challenging and interesting resources. We have two tables where children can write when they

are ready, as well as providing clipboards for them to take their writing into their play. We also use the tables to give small groups a chance to practise their growing handwriting skills using pencil, paper and grip supports, with direct adult support to develop correct pencil grip. At other times, and in phonics lessons, children use whiteboards and pens to practice letter formation.

References

Crowther, P, Blake, V and Webster R (2022) How are schools adopting pedagogies of play in Key Stage 1? Findings from research into practices of play at the transition and beyond (IMPACT Journal, Spring 2022)

Ephgrave, A (2017) Year One in Action, A month-by-month guide to taking Early Years pedagogy into KS1 (Routledge)

Fisher, J (2010) Moving on to Key Stage 1, Improving transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage (Open University Press)

Norton, M (2022) A reflection on how and why we changed our Key Stage One learning environment (IMPACT Journal, Summer 2022)