

Our Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is defined as the “formative years” of a child’s life up to five years old. Much of this definition is around standards for the care, learning and development of your child. As a registered Ofsted childcare provider, Little Acorns Nursery/Pre-School follows a mixture of the Development matters and the Birth to 5, both of these are non-statutory guidance. We also use a mixture of child-initiated activities where adults can have a key role in supporting learning, along with adult-led activities which provide opportunities for introducing knowledge or ideas, and for developing skills.

The areas of learning are:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development
- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design.

We will celebrate a range of festivals and share special occasions with the children throughout the year. To do this we:

- share meals and do food tasting
- dress up
- move to music
- read books and stories
- invite special visitors in.

All our activities can be seen in our floor book, online journals and our Facebook group.

The impact of the curriculum for children at Little Acorns Nursery/Pre-School

The EYFS led curriculum at Little Acorns is about helping the children to be ready for transitioning. Each child will be allocated a key person to enable them to have the best start at the setting and they will decide the best ways in which to support this learning and development based on the child's individual needs and current levels of development. As the key person builds a positive relationship with the child, they will learn more about their interests and how they learn best.

Our key goal is for all children to be independent by the time they leave us. However, we are aware that all children have a different starting point and will work through our curriculum at a different pace.

Assessment

These link to our children’s learning and to our curriculum. Most of the assessments we do at the setting are formative, so that it quickly helps us to make a difference to children’s

learning. However, we also need to have an overview of children's progress, so that we can take further actions where needed. We notice what children can and can't do. We are good at deciding when it will be helpful to step in and support, and when it's best to be encouraging but hang back. It is important that we are certain that children are secure in what they know and can do, before introducing them to something new

We complete:

- A baseline assessment of the child's development shortly after they start with us. This is completed in partnership with parents.
- Termly summative assessment of where the child's development is in relation to typical milestones and the characteristics of effective learning.
- WellComm assessment helps practitioners to identify children who are experiencing barriers to speech and language development
- Two-year-old checks assessment helps with the early identification of children who need temporary extra help, and children who may have special educational needs.
- Checking that individual children, and groups of children, are making progress and taking prompt action where this is not the case
- School transition reports.
- Discussions with other professionals who may be involved with a child and family. For example, a health visitor or social care worker.

The three prime areas of the curriculum

Communication and Language This is an important area of learning as it provides the basis for all other learning and development. Without good communication and language skills, all other areas of learning could suffer, so these are critically important skills for children to master in their early years. Language and communication skills grow naturally to children through engaging, fun activities like role-play, story-telling and question-and-answer games. Interaction between staff and children provide an effortlessly approach to broaden their language and communication skills.

Physical development is any type of game or activity that gets children moving around and expending energy. This includes sports where the child uses their whole body to move around, like running or hopscotch, but it also includes play that only uses smaller physical movements and specific muscle groups or body parts, like finger gym or cutting skill activities. Both types of physical play are valuable and necessary in the early years as children need to develop both their fine motor skills and gross motor skills. To do this, children need to regularly practice a range of physical movements, both big and small.

Personal, Social and Emotional development ('PSED') The personal part of it aims to ensure that children can look after aspects of their lives themselves, independently managing personal needs like cleanliness, toilet training and healthy eating.

The social and emotional aspects aim to help children fit in with adults and peers around them, support one another, themselves feel supported by others and together learn to manage emotions and behave in acceptable, appropriate ways. As they learn to do all of this, they will become more confident, feel valued, more easily resolve any conflicts and form closer friendships with peers and create stronger bonds with staff.

The four additional 'specific areas' of the curriculum

Running in parallel with the three prime areas, there are four additional areas of focus for Little Acorns which adhere to the EYFS framework for our early year's curriculum.

Literacy is absolutely fundamental and will give each child the best start when they start school. Literacy is so much more than reading and writing. It's about using a wider range of vocabulary, understanding a question or instruction that has two parts, such as "Get your coat and wait at the door" and understanding 'why' questions such as "Why do we wash our hands?". We aim to expose children to our rich variety of books that will feed their imaginations and help them to be more creative themselves. We also encourage our children to verbalise, for example by reading out loud. By doing so, speech, pronunciation and articulation also benefit, as does their confidence to speak up.

Mathematics is all about understanding and using shape, space, measures and numbers to solve everyday problems. We first support children to master counting numbers from one to ten, then in reverse, then extended to 20 or more. Concepts like volume, shape, measuring and space will also be included. So, by the time they leave us, they'll have learnt the maths skills and concepts that they'll need to hit the ground running when they start school.

Understanding the world is a very broad but important area of study for the children and one that will stand them in good stead going forwards. It's about how children get to know about other people, the place they live and all aspects of the environment. With that in mind, we'll help them to recognise, understand, describe and even sometimes draw what's around them. They will also learn about the technology they see and use. The children will also learn about the world by going on walks to local parks and hearing from visiting professionals. They will also learn about other communities, both in the UK and abroad, including culture, beliefs and religions.

Expressive arts and design Children find this area fun as it gives them the freedom to express themselves, be imaginative and creative, and even to get messy from time to time. A variety of media, equipment and tools are available to them and activities encourage the children to get involved and to create. It's not just art, the children can involve themselves in role-play activities, they can sing, dance, tell stories and perform. Their imaginations can run riot and be free as they can express themselves and their creativity in a rich variety of ways.

Goals for transitioning to Inventors (pre-school room):

- co-operate and share
- follow general directions
- play alongside other children
- say some numbers in sequence when counting objects (1-1 correspondence)
- develop fine/gross motor skills
- self-register and use their name card each session
- develop pretend play pretending one object represents another
- listen to a short story from beginning to end
- cut soft objects (food) purposefully with a knife.
- give meaning to the marks they make
- begin to use scissors.

Goals for transitioning to school:

- communicate their needs
- build strong social skills
- cope emotionally with being separated from their parents
- be relatively independent in their own personal care
- turn-take, share, follow rules
- run, climb, balance, be well-coordinated, throw and catch a ball.
- draw, use scissors, use pincer grip.
- answer questions, maintain conversation, follow directions.
- sort, identify shapes, colour, count
- write some or all of their name
- self-help: toileting independently, look after belongings, tidy up after themselves.