

# GRESHAM VILLAGE SCHOOL AND NURSERY

## Early Years Educational Programmes

The programmes below explain how we organise the Early Years learning environment, how adults interact with children during continuous provision and the direct teaching we employ in order to meet our educational goals.

### Communication and Language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age 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. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

#### Pedagogy

- Our interactions are well thought out and individualised to ensure they suit a child's level of understanding and listening capabilities.
- We use intonation and drama to encourage extended listening and new concepts.
- In imaginary play and role-play, adults model listening behaviours and correct use of language.
- We reread stories to make sure that children not only understand words but also concepts and ideas.
- We regularly repeat back ideas that children share with us to ensure they have the opportunity to explain clearly what they mean and explore any misconceptions.
- We encourage conversations and demonstrate appropriate exchanges that involve listening, letting a person finish, not interrupting by using 'my turn, your turn', and using expressions such as 'please' and 'thank you'.

#### Environment

- The environment has inspiring posters and displays which encourage children to discuss topics and themes such as historical heroes and being proud of who we are.
- Phonic displays and word walls help children to recall their learning and use it in their play.
- All areas are rich with print including symbols, signs, labels, lists and recipes to develop understanding of the functions of print, for example, a book tells a story whilst a sign may indicate danger.
- Areas are resourced to encourage communication between children, such as the mud kitchen where children often role-model 'family life' or the cars and track in which children must work together to create a working course. These areas are constantly updated to reflect the interest of the children.

- We develop meta-linguistic awareness by encouraging lots of talk during play, modelling signals that show if we have understood, for example frowning when needing clarity.

### **Direct Teaching**

- Through whole group teaching we use methods such as 'talk to a friend' to increase confidence in speaking and expressing ideas.
- Whether reading a book or discussing a concept, plentiful opportunities to speak and discuss ideas are provided to encourage the understanding and sharing of ideas.
- We repeat the reading of books and the concepts they raise so that children have time and input to raise their own questions and ensure they have a secure understanding.
- Comments and questions are all valued and if children veer off topic, the teacher will try to bring it back on track or follow the children's lead if appropriate.
- When reading a book we have text and picture facing the children so they can see it is the marks on the page that tell us what is happening not just the picture.
- In our phonics sessions we model and encourage listening to speech sounds, stressing the initial sounds in words and using 'my turn, your turn' to listen back and identify where more support is needed.

## **Personal, social and emotional development**

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, cooperate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

### **Pedagogy**

- All adults co-regulate with children using verbal and physical prompts to scaffold their ability to self-regulate.
- Children are given plentiful experiences to communicate with one another.
- Adults observe play and will sometimes observe children having disagreements, but only become involved if they feel it is necessary. Necessary involvement may involve modelling kind behaviour, modelling positive assertion, encouraging a child to speak or making suggestions about fairness.
- Every cultural capital opportunity is seized to provide children with experiences, opportunities, skills and knowledge to help them progress and achieve success.
- We sit or kneel at child's level when speaking to show we are emotionally and physically available.
- Through interactions, adults will support children in trying new activities and facing a challenge with perseverance and resilience.

- Adults are able to build trusting relationships with children by chatting to them about their interests or ideas in a non-questioning manner.
- We use language such as 'I wonder why...' or 'I'm just thinking if...' so that children do not feel pressured to give 'the right answer.'
- We praise children whenever appropriate, acknowledging their thoughtful, caring and empathetic behaviours.

### **Environment**

- Resources are planned to give children risk in a safe environment such as our climbing and woodworking areas, but children are given rules and boundaries to make sure they are safe. This shows our trust in the children's abilities to manage self-care, which increases their confidence and resilience.
- The environment is continuously updated to reflect cohort interests to encourage group play and build each child's independence.
- By providing five superhero costumes the children learn that to play a cooperative superhero game they must take account of one another's ideas about how to organise their activity.
- Small world resources, puppets and dolls enable children to explore relationships and feelings and allow adults to observe this play.
- There are small sheltered areas such as under the castle, which allow children to feel they are an enclosed space to promote chatting between themselves.

### **Direct Teaching**

- The adults model and discuss the names of feelings and use Makaton sign to show feelings too. At appropriate times children are asked how they are feeling and can reply using speech or sign. Children often choose to sign how they are feeling throughout the day to spark discussions with peers and adults.
- Children are shown the breathing technique of slowly outlining their fingers whilst breathing in and out.
- We often have smaller group teaching for children with social and emotional difficulties to help them build confidence. We use craft or Lego activities so that a child has resources to 'fiddle' with allowing them to feel at ease.
- Interventions are planned carefully to ensure that children/ a child feels secure, safe and confident to become involved. For example, we currently use the game 'Dobble' but using gesture rather than voice to encourage participation from quieter children.
- By using literature, the teacher introduces themes such as racism, sexism, confidence and worries using appropriate books and child documentaries. The teacher introduces British Values and other themes throughout the year reflecting the needs of the cohort. This year we have used people in history; Rosa Parks, Mary Anning, Muhammed Ali and David Attenborough. After repetitive reading of the book, children talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others behaviour, and its consequences, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable.
- Historical figures and events allow us to model a range of tenses and historical words. These are reinforced during activities and play. For example during a visit from a Police Officer he showed a truncheon from the past and a baton from the present.
- Our 'Special helper' certificate encourages children to give and receive praise and recognise their own talents and abilities.

- Whenever appropriate the teacher stresses the importance of making mistakes on the journey to trying different methods and praises children for resilience, perseverance, determination and aiming high.

## **Physical development**

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

### **Pedagogy**

- Provision is both indoors and outdoors with our children very often spending most of their continuous provision time outside.
- Children are given freedom to explore resources with rules being in place to protect their safety. For example, we have ropes outside which the children may use to make pulleys up to the castle, but children are aware through adult interactions that they must never be put around the neck or tied around a child.
- We use 'in the moment' opportunities to model and interact with children about safety and the possibilities of movement within the environment. An adult will model that our climbing frame may be climbed over but also under or a combination of the two and always know that, as long as it is safe to do so, the children will investigate the resources freely.
- Our observations and knowledge of every child ensure interactions support physical development or challenge it further. An adult might wonder aloud if the child can run faster or it may be more appropriate to hold a hand as a child finds a first step up the rope ladder.

### **Environment**

- Children with all abilities are considered and the environment is regularly adapted to suit all children including those with SEND.
- Our climbing wall has grips at a low level for cautious climbers and at higher levels for those wishing to climb over the wall. We have created platforms with rope ladders giving children the opportunity to jump off or climb down.
- Both inside and outside different sensory experiences are available for children to explore such as sand, dry pasta and gloop.
- Construction equipment is of differing sizes, weights so that it is accessible to all children, and allows them to be imaginative. For example, our milk crates may be used by a child as a seat to put on wellies or they could be stacked and used as climbing equipment.
- We resource our fine manipulative equipment to offer challenge to all children, from Duplo to Lego and from abacus to counting beads.

- The setting has a number of waterproof overalls and children have their own wellies so that they can be encouraged to independently ready themselves for mud, water or sand play.

#### **Direct Teaching**

- Reception children benefit from weekly PE lessons with trained staff to explore different games and gymnastics.
- Both in the classrooms and during PE, the teacher will directly assist on a small group or individual basis. Recently 1:1 climbing guidance was given to a child with development delay that felt afraid of the climbing frame yet desperately wanted to give it a go. Direct teaching inspires confidence and gives opportunity for modelling.

### **Literacy**

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing.)

#### **Pedagogy**

- During continuous provision, children have access to fact books, fiction books, maps, magazines, posters and displays.
- Adults are looking for teachable moments in which a child may want to read or discuss literature.
- An adult is stationed at the snack station to read to the children or have a discussion.
- Technology is used 'in the moment' to model and encouraging finding information that match children's interests when appropriate, for example, identifying an insect.
- Games are modelled and played to help children make links between letters and speech sounds. Adults model segmenting words into sounds and blending them back together.
- During play, children's stories are listened to and valued.
- When appropriate, adults encourage children to read and write independently or they may scribe for the child or encourage mark making.
- Adults talk to children about things they might write to support their play both inside and outside and a range of tools and media are provided including digital technology and paper. Children may create a shopping list, a treasure map or construction plan.
- Children's writing books are kept out for them to look at, read, write in or talk about with peers and adults. Children are encouraged to 'have a go' and take ownership of their own books.

#### **Environment**

- Posters and displays are arranged around the setting to encourage children to talk, ask or discuss them. The posters introduce people from Albert Einstein to Kermit the Frog with one of their quotes.

- We provide a range of reading materials that enable children to draw on their home experiences and introduce children to a new and diverse range of texts, genre and media. Material represents diversity in the local and global community, ensuring every child has the opportunity to find a character they can relate to.
- We keep up to date with new book releases and consider the changing interests of our children, updating our collections when appropriate.
- Mark making equipment is in lots of areas such as role-play, construction, small world and children know that they can move resources around rooms and outside. For example, they may be making a hero base outside but come in to create a back-drop and signs.

#### **Direct teaching**

- We teach reading and aspects of writing through Read Write Inc.
- There is a phonics session every morning that teaches children to read accurately and fluently with good comprehension. They learn to form each letter, spell correctly, and compose their ideas step-by-step. Children take home books that match their phonetical knowledge.
- Stories are read aloud to children every day. The stories are well thought out and read with expression and drama. Children are introduced to a wide variety of literature, talking about not only the meaning of the print or digital book but also the illustrations and the author.
- 'Helicopter stories' are used weekly to encourage children to tell stories in their own way whilst becoming aware of story structure. We model and listen enabling adults to learn more about the child and their interests.
- Adults think aloud and talk through what they are writing on the board, on paper or on screen, breaking down words and sounding out or reminding of 'red' words.
- Writing activities have a context either from the child's interests, aspects of their life or from a book. For example, after reading 'This is our house', children wrote down what the main character did that was unkind.

## **Mathematics**

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum include rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

#### **Pedagogy**

- We model and encourage counting and representing numbers within continuous provision, e.g. making a paper mobile phone or sharing resources out.
- We always think aloud, and may make 'on purpose' mistakes so that children can correct adults.

- The children's mathematical representations are always valued during play and adults will use these opportunities to scaffold and challenge with numbers 'in the moment'. Children are encouraged to use their own methods to record mathematical challenges and these too are valued.
- When appropriate, adults model writing numerals and model using resources whilst thinking aloud, e.g. labelling birthday cards or car park spaces. We use many concrete resources such as number fans, beads and numicon during play to show numerical solutions such as adding, taking away and one more, one less.
- In our talk with children, we encourage the use of relative terms (in front of, behind, before and after, in a line, next to and between).
- Adults use interactions to encourage children to think about space and position during their play and seek opportunities to identify shapes and their properties.
- Interactions enable adults to weave in mathematical concepts and language in the play context e.g. comparing the volume of two water bottle or exploring the patterns on clothes.

### **Environment**

- The environment is resourced to encourage mathematical exploration.
- We have a variety of measuring equipment such as tape measures and rulers, which adults might model using to measure heights or dimensions.
- We provide a numeral rich environment such as numbered toilet doors and numbered ride-on resources. Children have numerals and numicon, which they can pick up and use in their play.
- Numicon is used during registration and plenty is left in the environment for children to explore and role-play 'schools' with. Numicon patterns on pegboards encourage children to create patterns and count amounts of holes in plates to create pictures.
- Puzzles and games that require children to use logic, shape awareness or number skills are accessible and, when appropriate, initiated by an adult.
- Equipment such as tessellating shapes and 'magformers' are used for small construction supporting children's discovery of properties of shapes.
- Dice, number lines, beads and number fans are in many areas encouraging children to use them in their play e.g. bead strings in snack area to share fruit or numicon in the role-play shop to help work out change.
- We have areas in which children can explore the properties of objects, compare lengths, weigh and measure including those that vary in length, capacity or weight, including tall thin, short, fat, large light and small heavy things.

### **Direct teaching**

- The White Rose Maths scheme is used for short daily maths lessons. Pupils are introduced to maths concepts through whole class teaching, before moving on to a partner task or challenge. Numberblocks clips often support this maths.
- In Nursery and at the beginning of Reception, children are counted during registration and this number is shown using numicon, numeral and bead strings. When children arrive late or leave early, it provides opportunity to model addition and subtraction.
- Any teachable moment during continuous provision that the teacher feels will provide a good context for mathematical skills is seized and used in group teaching. For example, a game of football would provide opportunity for group addition work or sharing cakes provides context for division.

## Understanding the World

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

### Pedagogy

- Throughout continuous provision, adults look for activities and role-play to model in order to bring the outside world into the setting. The sand pit may become an ice cream shop with the addition of cone moulds or it may become a treasure hunt beach when gems are added.
- Our role-play areas have a variety of resources that reflect diversity e.g. we have different spices in the mud kitchen, real foods in the house and dressing up from differing cultures.
- During play, we encourage children to share their feelings and talk about why and how they respond to experiences. We sensitively explain why some children may need extra help or why some children feel upset by a particular thing.
- Children have the freedom to explore the setting freely including climbing wall, bug hunting and construction areas.

### Environment

- We have appropriate books and photographs of parts of the world that are commonly stereotyped and misrepresented as well as local maps and pictures. These displays encourage children to talk about their own home and community life, and to find out about other children's experiences.
- The outside environment is enabled to promote children's investigations and explorations into nature such as logs to upturn, herbs growing and resources such as bug boxes, magnifying glasses, spades and rakes.
- The 'water wall' requires children to use thought and skill to catch the water using bamboo guttering and whichever resources they think will be effective or worth a try!
- Resources are chosen to be open-ended and provide lots of challenge with adults available to support and use interactions to take learning further.

### Direct teaching

- Frequent visits encourage children to develop positive relationships with community members, such as ambulance person, police person, painter, researcher, cheese maker. The children watch clips from Cbeebies 'Our Planet' to learn facts about the natural world and Cbeebies 'Where in the World' to see the living environments of children around the world. Children have much time to discuss their thoughts with appropriate adult support when needed.

- The teacher shares stories about people from the past who have an influence on our lives ensuring that they are developmentally appropriate but introducing new concepts and challenging stereotypes. Coco Chanel was used to introduce the notion of inequality between men and women and Picasso used to introduce the practise of trying new things and challenging traditional stereotypes.
- Every week, children take part in a planned Forest School session, which encourages children to observe and respect our natural environment.
- Influencers in the area such as Andy Goldsworthy are introduced to the children for inspiration and increase knowledge.

## **Expressive Arts and Design**

The development of children’s artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

### **Pedagogy**

- During play, we draw attention to children’s choice and use of materials, tools and techniques. We use interactions to discuss their choice of colour, the design and methods they are using.
- Using individual and small group discussions, we encourage children to explain their work and listen to ideas from others. It may be appropriate for a child to reflect and make improvements with or without adult support.
- With an awareness of links in the areas of learning, we encourage children to create stories, plays and themes and then transfer them to paper using writing, drawings or adult scribing.
- Real resources are used in some areas such as bricks in construction and other areas purposefully have real resources removed. Examples are using real money for direct maths teaching but removing it for role-play to encourage children to make or use substitutes.

### **Environment**

- The areas of learning include media such as paint, chalk, pencils and also woodworking, junk modelling and resources to encourage trial, error and critical thinking e.g. glue, nails, string, clear tape and masking tape.
- Media such as clay, pens, papers and cards are always available so that children can have a journey of progression, increasing and testing their skills.
- Role-play resources are basic and de-constructed to allow children to create their own props and think about ways to reach a goal.
- Our raised stage area has a percussion section of mounted pans and other real percussion instruments for the children to explore.
- Music is often played to promote discussions of beat, loudness and tempo.

- Playing both popular and other genres of music inspires the children to sing and dance with adults joining in too.
- Small world toys are arranged to support children in creating their own themes, stories and plots, such as dinosaurs amongst real plants and safari animals in sand.

#### **Direct teaching**

- Artists' work that relates to children's interests and experiences are discussed and where possible appropriate biographies and artwork are shared. Whilst the interests of the children lead the teacher, a greater depth of knowledge is given and often children recreate their own pieces of art.
- During design processes, children are supported in finding ways to develop their ideas and encouraged to reflect and improve on these ideas as knowledge grows.
- The use of tools and techniques is modelled with children always having opportunity to try, make mistakes or find even better ways!
- Musicians from many genres are introduced and children encouraged to find their own meanings or context for songs e.g. Bob Marley's 'Three Little Birds' allowed children to consider their own worries whilst embracing singing to express themselves.