

Gillespie Primary School



Curriculum Intent, Implementation & Impact Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Intent

In the EYFS at Gillespie we have ambitious and high expectations of all children. Our curriculum is broad and balanced and is designed to inspire and enable children to develop the skills that are necessary for them to be active lifelong learners.

We aim for children to leave our setting being confident to make their own choices and approaches when learning, and to feel empowered by their own ability. We want children to believe that with hard work, determination and a positive attitude they can achieve whatever they put their mind to.

The characteristics of effective learning underpin everything that we do. Our curriculum and ethos is based around developing each individual child holistically to ensure that their learning experiences are motivating and meaningful. We aim to provide children with the support that they need to leave our setting having a positive attitude towards learning new things and to be intrinsically motivated and curious about the world around them.

We believe that all children will flourish and achieve their full potential when they are emotionally secure, feel safe and valued, and understand that their voice and views are heard and have an impact on the world around them.

Our curriculum is planned and reviewed every year in order to respond to the needs and interest of the children in each cohort. We have a considered balance of teaching all seven areas of learning, with the prime areas of learning being woven consistently in every opportunity throughout the day. We carefully structure our curriculum to ensure that we create an enabling environment that allows children to meet their developmental miles stones and deepen their understanding with the supported of skilled scaffolding from adults.

Implementation-

Within our EYFS setting we have team of highly skilled practitioners that have a shared vision and commitment to ensuring that we provide high quality education that improve outcomes for all children.

We believe that *how* children learn, the experiences and process of learning is just as important as *what* they are taught, therefore our curriculum offers an effective balance between child initiated learning and guided taught sessions. Staff meet regularly to plan and evaluate the effectiveness of the provision and guided sessions, and use this information to plan ahead for the next week. We intend for our plans to be fluid and for children to feel part of an ever-changing enchanted forest which inspires them and guides their imagination and learning behaviours.

All staff in our EYFS understand how children learn and respect the value of play and children's independence. Adults also have an in depth understanding about the importance of observation. As a team we understand that it is through ongoing observations we see not only what the children are learning but also how they learn

as individuals. As a result we create an enabling environment that starts from the child's perspective. We look at the provision through the eyes of a child to create a sense of awe and wonder. We ensure that activities and stations are age appropriate with enough challenge, stimulating and based on children's interests, open ended and allow for independent interpretation and exploration. We also ensure that the resources we use are of high quality, are inclusive and reflect equality and diversity. It is imperative to us that children in our setting have the experience of heuristic play and are supported through skilful adult scaffolding.

At Gillespie we are committed to providing children with the permission and opportunity to independently explore, develop friendships, and to think creatively and critically about their own work. As part of our curriculum all children in our EYFS have the experience of attending Forest School. The Reception class attend in the second half of the Autumn Term and continue this all the way throughout the school year. Nursery join the Reception class in the Summer Term in preparation for continuing the following year.

When children leave the EYFS we understand that the transition must be carefully considered and planned for, therefore children continue to attend Forest School for the first half term in year 1.

We record children's significant achievements in their 'Tapestry online journal' and share this with parents. This is an ongoing document of photographs, videos, pieces of work and observations on what achievements children have made in specific areas of learning, and practitioners use this to inform their planning for children's next steps. Parents are also invited to contribute to their child's learning journal and can post celebrations of things children have achieved at home. This helps to build an overall picture of the individual child and enables positive praise and recognition to happen both in school and at home.

Our approach to teaching and developing the prime and specific areas of learning at Gillespie are as follows:

Communication and Language:

- At Gillespie we have a particularly strong focus and commitment on developing language and communication skills as we believe that language is the foundation of children's learning and thinking. Throughout the Nursery and Reception Class staff plan a range of activities to develop children's vocabulary in order for them to be able to articulate their thoughts and opinions in full sentences to make themselves understood when communicating with others.
- We focus on developing children's understanding and use of social phrases, with the intention that children will be able to use phrases to initiate and respond in conversations and exchanges in a range of settings both in and out of school. We value this and believe that being able to initiate talk and have a back-and-forth exchange with someone has a significant impact on developing positive relationships with others.

- We also concentrate on developing children's topic vocabulary. We aim to develop children's understanding of new words in order for them to develop a large bank of rich vocabulary that is transferable and can be used during free flow play. We do this by selecting high quality key fiction and non-fiction texts within our topic. By having constant repetition and modelling from adults, combined with a range of opportunities within the environment to practise and use new vocabulary children will develop a linguistic richness that they will be able to use and transfer in their long term memory. We work closely with parents and carers to ensure that there is continuity with the use of social phrases and topic vocabulary at home, and that the expectation and model is of a high standard in both settings.
- Listening Detectives are used both in Nursery and Reception Classes, and talk Detectives are used in Reception Class too. These are roles that are heavily scaffolded by adults initially, and are designed to embed children's knowledge of what active listening and succinct talking is. One child is picked per day to be the Listening/ Talk Detective. Their role is to identify someone in the class who is demonstrating all of the active listening/ talk behaviours. They then have the opportunity to award their chosen child with a super sunshine certificate at the end of the day.

Physical Development:

- We understand that children's physical development impacts on a range of other areas of learning, and that certain skills are developed through specific age appropriate activities and provision. Therefore we use the 'Development Matters' document to inform our planning and resources that we use in our continuous provision.
- Teachers audit the indoor and outdoor space termly to identify any areas that need to be replenished, or whereby equipment needs to be added or moved around in order to provide an effective range of opportunities for children to develop their fine and gross motor skills.
- Our indoor classroom set up is created with the development and importance of physical development in mind. We ensure that the space is as open as possible and has a good balance between seated structured activities and alternative spaces whereby children have the room to lay down, spread out and develop their core muscle strength.

Fine Motor:

- Children work with adults in small groups to learn how to use a range of tools such as: hole punches, scissors, tweezers, pipettes. This equipment is left out in the continuous provision so that children can practice independently during free flow play.
- Every week children in Reception Class participate in small focused sessions with an adult working on developing the following fine motor control activities:
 - Name writing
 - Numeral formation
 - Cutting skills

There are smaller intervention groups of children who are identified as needing more support and therefore additional OT recommended resources are available and used when appropriate.

- Children in Reception have weekly letter formation practise as a whole class, we use a letter formation script that is used consistently throughout the setting whenever anyone is modelling letter formation. Home learning tasks and resources are sent home on a weekly basis for parents to be using at home with their child.
- There is a dedicated malleable area in both classrooms to ensure children have constant opportunities to develop their fine motor control and strength.
- When making crafts at Forest School children use equipment such as mini saws, mallets and peelers under the direct supervision of our Forest School Leader. These tools are used regularly and therefore children develop their understanding of how to use equipment safely. Techniques that are learnt in Forest School are mirrored back at school with similar equipment in the mud kitchen.

Gross Motor:

- All staff in the setting are aware of how to scaffold children's gross motor development outside using a range of equipment. Specific skills such as hopping, jumping, skipping, running, balancing are modelled by adults and scaffolded through playing games in groups.
- Obstacle courses are set up with a range of equipment for children to travel over, under, through and around in order to develop children's spatial awareness. Children also have independent access to bikes, trikes and scooters throughout the day.
- Teachers plan sessions that focus on moving rhythmically and expressively to music. In the Nursery children take part in write dance and this is continued to ensure continuity and progression in Reception Class. Sessions are also planned whereby children develop their ball skills – kicking and throwing and catching.
- In the Summer Term children in the EYFS have a weekly gymnastics session with a skilled professional, whereby they develop their gross motor skills when using a range of equipment such as beams and horses.

Personal, Social and Emotional

- Children's safety, happiness and wellbeing is at the centre of everything that we do. It is imperative for us that children are happy, enjoy coming to school and feel that they are valued members of a team. In the EYFS at Gillespie we are committed to working closely with parents, we seek to develop positive relationships with families and involve them as closely as we can with the learning that is happening in class.

- We use the My Happy Mind programme to plan and deliver sessions, which ensures continuity across the EYFS and beyond when the children move up to KS1.
- We actively teach meditation and yoga as techniques that children can use to self-regulate and reach a state of calm when they need to.
- The enabling environment is tailored for children to identify and express their emotions without having to use language to communicate. There are interactive displays in both Nursery and Reception that children can use to show how they are feeling without having to always talk about their emotions. Through circle times children are taught the importance of being able to label emotions and talk about their feelings. Circle times are age appropriately planned and are developmentally progressive.

Literacy:

- In our EYFS we aim to provide a stimulating, inspiring environment in which children develop a love of reading and a purposeful passion for writing. It is important for us that children see literacy skills as a fundamental gateway to accessing the wonderful opportunities in the world around them.
- Phonics is taught every day in Reception Class following the 'Little Wandle' scheme. Children complete phase 2 by the end of the Autumn Term, and therefore should know the sound for each letter of the alphabet, be able to segment to spell and blend to read simple words and sentences. Children then learn phase 3 sounds and complete phase 4 by the end of the Reception year. They then follow this phonics programme into KS1 which ensures continuity and progression in terms of approach, resources used and terminology.
- Children who are identified as needing extra support take part in a booster phonics group that repeat activities previously taught and dedicate time to explicitly teaching the skills which children are struggling with during whole class sessions.
- Home learning incorporates the sounds and tricky words that we cover on a weekly basis. Children take home phonetically decodable books that they should be able to read with minimal support, and also have the opportunity to select a book from the book corner which sparks their interest and that can be read to them at home by an adult for pleasure.
- Guided reading sessions take place on a daily basis, every child reads at least twice a week with an adult. During these small guided sessions, children learn the key strategies of how to read, and are encouraged to use their phonic knowledge to help to blend when reading words.
- Children's comprehension skills are checked throughout the reading sessions, and at the end children are required to give their opinion and talk about what they enjoyed about the book that we just read. This reinforces that we read for a purpose and we hope that children leave our setting with the expectation that they have an opinion and can have a discussion about what they read.
- In the Nursery adults take small groups of children to work on developing children's ability to hear, tune in and discriminate between sounds. Children

develop this skill in Nursery which enables them to progress swiftly when they enter Reception Class and begin to learn sounds, and blend to read and segment to spell. There are also a range of 1-1 and small group shared reading to model positive reading behaviours and for children to have the opportunity to handle books independently.

- Throughout our setting children are exposed to and emersed in the 'Talk for Writing' approach in literacy. We take certain key texts per topic and use the Pie Corbett actions to teach the children how to learn and orally retell the story. We use the story maps to visually plot and enhance the narrative, and we do modelled and shared writing to accompany the drawings on our story maps.
- Children in Reception Class then make their own story maps, create alternative endings to the story, and write captions and sentences for their work.

Mathematics:

- All staff in the EYFS at Gillespie know that developing a strong grounding in number is essential for young children. Our aim is by the time they leave us in Reception, for every child to be able to count confidently and develop a deep understanding of numbers to 10, and to understand the pattern and relationships within those numbers.
- Staff provide frequent and varied opportunities for children to build and apply this understanding by providing a range of engaging resources that children can use to count, organise and sequence. In the Nursery children become familiar with 5 frames, and in Reception children move onto using 10 frames, counting a range of different objects onto them, and exploring the pattern in number.
Staff create opportunities and help children to identify opportunities when they can use their mathematic knowledge to solve real life meaningful problems. As a result of this approach to teaching maths we believe that children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary of numbers to 10 from which the mastery skills can be built on in KS1.

Understanding the World:

As a team we believe in the importance of developing children's understanding and curiosity about the world around them. We provide a wide range of first hand experiences that enrich children's sense of the world in a way that is purposeful and meaningful to them. We ensure that children are familiar with their local surroundings and feel part of the community.

We do this by:

- Going on local walks, doing surveys, making links with local businesses, visiting the local library, inviting important figures in the community into school such as police officers and firefighters.
- We have a strong link with Gillespie Nature Park as children visit the site on a weekly basis to take part in Forest School sessions. At Forest School children

are encouraged and empowered to take an active role in their learning and initiate investigations and explorations that interest them. We foster a love of nature and provide experiences for the children to observe change over time throughout all seasons. As a class we explore and learn about features of the natural world such as plants, trees, mini beasts, and animals.

- We ensure that we incorporate a range of non-fiction texts to support children's understanding of the similarities and differences between religious and cultural communities in this country, and about the similarities and differences between the world around them and contrasting environments. These texts are also available for children to look at independently within the provision.
- All religious festivals are celebrated in the Early Years. We invite families from our culturally diverse community to come into school to talk about their religion and religious customs which enriches children's knowledge, understanding and appreciation of traditions and celebrations which may be similar or different to their own.
- We develop children's understanding of the past and present by using examples from the children's own experiences. We create time lines of children's lives from when they were first born to the present current day. Children are then encouraged to comment about the changes they have identified and talk about progression and growing older. We create family trees and plot family members that lived a long time ago, we do this to help support and visualize change from the past to the present. We also use this model to help support with the transition of children moving up to Reception and year one.
- We use a range of non-fiction texts to support children's understanding of what the past is. These books are specifically placed in the small world play and the role play areas in the setting to enable children to demonstrate their understanding of the passing of time using props and to make comparisons and links between events in the past compared to events in the current day.

Expressive Art and Design:

- We believe that children need to feel emotionally secure in order to be confident to take risks and create and explore independently.
- Children in the Early Years have a weekly music session with our specialist music teacher. During the session they sing songs, learn familiar rhymes, and have lots of fun playing a range of instruments along to music.
- Each term children work collaboratively to create a large piece of art work based on the class topic. When creating children are encouraged to think exercise their creative and critical thinking skills in order to plan and review their work.
- Children have access to a wide range of tools, equipment and malleable materials to use during free flow play. Children are encouraged to safely use

and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.

- Children's imagination and creativity is valued and celebrated on a daily basis, children have access to a wide range of rich resources that are carefully planned and set up for children to use to retell familiar stories and create their own narratives.
- In our outdoor garden we have a creative space for performing, children have free access to the stage with a cd player, microphones, instruments and dressing up clothes which they can use to perform songs, poems and stories and explore different ways to move to a range of music.

Impact-

The design of our curriculum in light of the new DFE changes in 2021 has enabled our Foundation Stage team to reflect on our approach and reaffirm our shared vision and commitment to the education and life experiences that we provide to the children in our care. We strongly believe that our curriculum and teaching is enabling every child to make great individual progress in all areas of learning relative to their starting points whilst continuing to prioritize children's emotional health and wellbeing. We ensure that children feel safe, respected, valued and empowered, and have a positive and optimistic outlook and attitude on their first or early experiences of education.