



FLATTS
NURSERY SCHOOL

Independence

Curiosity

Community

Learning, Teaching and
Assessment Policy

2024

At Flatts Nursery School we want all our children to leave us with skills and abilities they will not only take to their next phase of education but throughout their lives. We believe our three values will enhance their learning now and in the future.

CURIOSITY – We believe curiosity leads to learning, if a child shows an interest in something then this is an open door to learning and discovery

“I think, at a child’s birth, if a mother could ask a fairy godmother to endow it with the most useful gift, that gift would be curiosity.” – **Eleanor Roosevelt**

Independence is not a static condition; it is a continuous conquest, and in order to reach not only freedom, but also strength, and the perfecting of one's powers, it is necessary to follow this path of unremitting toil.

Maria Montessori

INDEPENDENCE – A child who is independent can lead their own learning, showing resilience and tenacity which will help throughout life

COMMUNITY – An understanding of how to belong to a community is vital for life. A sense of compassion, tolerance and support are skills we all benefit from

“Alone, we can do so little; together, we can do so much” – **Helen Keller**

Quality Teaching and Learning

During the session, teaching includes working with an individual child or small group of children, and creating and enhancing the environment and provision to enable children to make progress through child-initiated play. Teaching can include *“communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating and setting challenges.” OFSTED*. Practitioners will use all types of teaching as part of their practice to engage the individual child.

During group times we focus on one or more of the following:

- Reading stories, Reading Spine Books may be shared at this time
- Rhymes and Songs, Poetry Spine may be used for this
- Stage One Phonics Activities
- Opportunities to listen, take turns and talk about the day
- Exploring number, shape space and measure
- Celebrating and learning about self

Environment

Activities and experiences are arranged to promote independence. Opportunity is given by adults to play co-operatively, alone, or time is given for children to stand and observe. There must be time and space allowed to develop play both inside and outside, safely and securely.

The environment is deliberately set up with low level furniture to allow children to observe and gain inspiration from their peers. This ensures children who choose to play alone remain a part of our community. Natural colours and materials are used to create a warm environment which is focussed around learning. Displays and the environment are designed to be useful, relevant and not overly stimulating or distracting.

We have clear boundaries and routines set around our school rules "Always be ready, kind and safe". Our three words are easy to remember and help children understand boundaries and expectations. Challenging social situations are seen as opportunities for growth and development, co regulating children to work through their issues and feelings helps them feel strong and safe, and to learn how to manage difficult issues and conflicts in appropriate ways. We explicitly teach children to say "no I don't like that" with a flat palm gesture to empower them to learn consent.

We have a large indoor and outdoor environment with varied spaces including a sensory room and woodland area.

We are committed to giving our children the opportunity to thoroughly explore their thoughts, feelings and relationships within a natural environment. Exposure to different environments develops their understanding of the world through their senses and imagination.

Enrichment

In addition to the curriculum goals and environment we provide additional activities for our children. Five activities all of our children will take part in while they are with us:

- Growing and eating our own vegetables in our allotment
- Rearing butterflies/hatching chicks
- Supporting our neighbours at Ashworth Grange Care Home e.g. making scarecrows for their scarecrow festival or going and baking with residents
- Celebrating together, Eid and Christmas
- Getting to know people who help us e.g. police and fire service

Staff teams

The core responsibility for teaching and learning rests with the class teacher or senior early years practitioner, led by the assistant headteacher. Although many tasks may be delegated to the key person, the class teacher and the senior early years practitioner must support staff to achieve best practice, coach, encourage and model, and monitor the quality of work by each team member. Staff roles and the routines of the sessions will be used to effectively support the aims and objectives of this policy. Sometimes staff work with individual children or groups of children, in guided learning activities or observing children at play both inside and outside. All key people are involved in planning and assessing children's work. Key people maintain the records of a group of children assigned to them. Students, volunteers and adult helpers are deployed as effectively as possible with clear guidelines as to what is expected of them.

Curriculum responsibilities

As a small school, we allocate the prime areas plus math and literacy to teachers and share the responsibility of the expressive arts and design and knowledge and understanding of the world. We work towards every child accessing excellent provision in all the areas of learning in the EYFS. As a team we review and reflect on the curriculum goals throughout the year. While some staff lead on particular areas they are not leading on these in isolation, a collaborative and critical friend approach is used.

Assessment for learning

We are not driven by assessment. Our assessment processes begin through getting to know each child, using close observation in structured and incidental ways. All observations and conversations with parents during transition build a picture for the child's first Spotlight. Spotlights will then take place every six months, with a two-month review. All spotlights contain the child's next steps for learning. Spotlights are shared in person with the child's family and they are encouraged to comment, so their voice is heard.

Our belief is interactions are the most important thing we do. We do not believe interactions should be routinely interrupted by recording observations or taking photos. We want our practitioners to be "in the moment" NOT "recording the moment".

We use OPAL (Observing Play and Learning) to assess children against a set of age-related expectations. We also use this system to share observations and photographs between school and home. Children are tracked during the year, to identify children who may be at risk of making poor progress (while appreciating progress in the early years can be uneven). Staff are aware of all their children and will focus on the child's next steps ensuring all children make progress.

Data is recorded on entry and then at the end of December, February, April and July. Data is analysed at each data point to highlight patterns and track vulnerable groups. This is shared with staff and governors.

Our objectives:

- Dialogue with parents, so that we can work in a respectful partnership to support children's learning at home and in the nursery
- Dialogue with children, focused on how they learn, to promote metacognitive thinking
- 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
- Reporting to parents and to the receiving reception teacher in the summer so that children can continue their learning journey through the EYFS as seamlessly as possible.

Special Educational Needs

We believe early identification is vital to supporting our children with additional needs. Children will be identified through observation, conversations with parents or through health services. Staff will always appropriately modify learning and teaching for children with SEN and/or disabilities. We value each child as a unique individual and are familiar with and meet all the requirements of relevant equal opportunities legislation regarding race, gender and disability. We work closely and in partnership with parents and any other involved agencies to meet the needs of our children through provision that is inclusive to all.

We use diagnostic tools e.g. Wellcomm to assist in helping us to identify where there are gaps and then work with parents to address these.

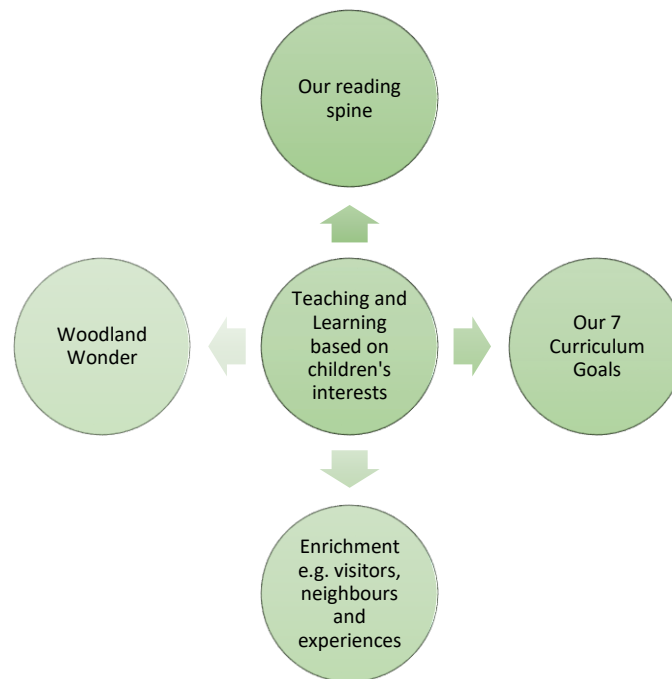
We work closely with Kirklees Early Years Special Educational Needs Service to support our children. We work closely with parents and outside agencies and therapy services to set and review targets. We utilise our additional spaces including The Nest (a smaller less stimulating environment) and The Sensory Room (a room with lighting, projections, mirrors and soft play) to support children as appropriate.

We aim to ensure all our children are supported well within nursery and leave us making good progress on their targets, and with the appropriate levels of support in place.

We are passionate about inclusion and ensure our children have the targeted input they need, alongside learning from and with their peers.

Our Curriculum

Our curriculum is made up of five different elements, all of which are connected to providing a broad, balanced and progressive programme which enable our children to make good progress.



Children's Interests

- All areas of learning at Flatts nursery school must start with children's interests.
- Practitioners are flexible in their approach and use these interests to "light a spark"

Reading Spine

- We have a strong reading offer and use our reading spine to ensure our children are familiar with quality books to support narrative structure, rhyme and mindfulness

Curriculum Goals

- Our seven curriculum goals are focussed around our vision of Independence, Curiosity, Community.
- They include progressive milestones for children to achieve as they master new skills

Enrichment

- We enrich our curriculum through experiences e.g hatching chicks, raising butterflies
- We work with our neighbours in the community e.g. cooking with Ashworth Grange Care Home

Woodland Wonder

- Our woodland enhances our children's opportunity to interact with nature
- We encourage children to use this as a unique area to learn new skills and apply prior knowledge