



Aims for the Foundation Stage

Schools need to plan activities and experiences that help children make progress in their development and learning. Young children will have had a wide range of different experiences and will have a wide range of skills and interests when they join a setting or school at the age of three, four or five.

They need a well-planned and resourced curriculum to take their learning forward and to provide opportunities for all children to succeed in an atmosphere of care and of feeling valued. This curriculum is carefully planned to ensure consistency, continuity and progression throughout the three year groups.

The 6 Areas of the Curriculum

This guidance sets out six areas of learning which form the basis of the foundation stage curriculum. These areas are:

Personal, social and emotional development

Communication, language and literacy

Mathematical development

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Physical development

Creative development

Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage is intended to help practitioners plan to meet the diverse needs of all children. We will now look at the 6 areas in more detail leaving Personal & Social till the end.

• **Language & Communication**

- **language and communication:** children learn to talk and communicate in a widening range of situations, to respond to adults and to each other, to practise and extend the range of vocabulary and communication skills they use and to listen carefully.
- **reading and writing:** children explore, enjoy, learn about and use words and text in a broad range of contexts and to experience a rich variety of books.

Helping at home

There are lots of fun ways to encourage your child's use of language and readiness for reading and writing. Making a game of their early learning is important. It is vital that early reading experiences are happy and positive. Enjoyment is key - learning through play and games protects a child from a feeling of failure and helps you both to relax. Listen to stories, songs and other music, rhymes and poems together. Try making some up between you. Finding books at the right level for your child and letting them rummage through a library's collection can start them off on a lifelong love of books.



- **Mathematics**

In school children develop their understanding of number, measurement, pattern, shape and space. We provide a broad range of contexts in which they can explore, enjoy, learn, practise and talk about them.

A lot of this work will be practical, and you will notice that your child does much less written number work than you might remember doing yourself at the same age.

Helping at home

Fun activities with songs, stories and imaginative play are ideal ways to encourage their learning. Spending short but frequent periods, (5 or 10 minutes), together enjoying activities which practise number skills is one of the best ways to help young children to become confident at maths.

Play games that involve numbers and counting using dice and cards. Help your child to understand and use the vocabulary related to money, to begin to recognise coins and use them in role play. Let them handle money whenever possible.

- **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

Children need to solve problems, make decisions, experiment, predict, plan and question in a variety of contexts. They also explore and find out about their environment and people and places that have significance in their lives. This area includes science, history, geography, religious studies and information technology.

Helping at home

Show your child how to investigate objects and materials by using all of their senses - look, touch, taste, smell, listen. Next time you go to the supermarket together look at the fruit and vegetables. Buy a fruit they haven't tried before - what does it feel like, taste like?

Knowing how and why things change in the world around them gives children a greater understanding of their surroundings. When you are outside make a point of discussing the seasons and seeing what changes you can observe together.

When you are out together, talk about some of technology such as supermarket doors and bar codes.

At school your child will be encouraged to think about designs and models, and to select the tools and techniques they need. Next time they want to make something at home, ask them how they will decide what to use.

- **Physical Development**

We provide opportunities for all children to develop and practise their fine and gross motor skills and to increase their understanding of how their bodies work and what they need to do to be healthy and safe.

Helping at home

A trip to the park offers great learning opportunities for your child. By using the swings, seesaw and climbing frames they are not just having fun but developing their hand-eye co-ordination and other skills. You can help them understand safety issues and the importance of co-operating with other children.

Cutting and sticking, threading and weaving, shape cutting, finger rhymes and model making all help to develop your child's fine motor skills and dexterity. They will be getting lots of opportunities at school but any practice is helpful with child-friendly scissors, glue, paint and brushes and plasticine.

- **Creative development**

All children need to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of ways. These include art, design and technology, music, movement, dance and imaginative and role play activities.

Helping at home

For children, much fun can be had singing songs, making music with different instruments and dancing. Musical activities encourage social skills, group co-operation and taking turns. There is a lot you can do together at home,



such as making home-made instruments, playing clapping games, listening to a range of music, singing songs and dancing around.

Role play helps your child learn more about themselves and understand the feelings of others. Pretend to be Red Riding Hood and her mother shopping for Grandma next time you're at the supermarket, or even the Wolf, looking for a special supper. Which porridge would the Bears choose, or would Baby Bear prefer some fruit? You could role play their conversation.

• **Personal and Social development**

This very important area of learning is about emotional well-being, knowing who you are and where you fit in and feeling good about yourself. It is also about developing respect for others, social competence and a positive disposition to learn.

This is the main focus for us as practitioners at the start of your child's school experience. We aim to provide them with these skills to start the lifelong process of learning in the best possible way.

Becoming independent is crucial for effective learning in this area.

Effective learning includes

- Children learning to respect themselves and others.
- Children learning about relationships.
- Children learning the importance of friendship.
- Children having opportunities for problem solving.
- Children feeling safe and secure and able to trust those who work with them.
- Children developing a positive disposition to learn
- Respecting children's culture so that they develop a positive self image.

Much of this approach links in with the theory adopted by CLIB *Dimension 1 Attitudes and Perceptions* from the 'Dimensions of Learning'.

Helping at home

Helping your child to form good relationships with adults and with other children is important. They need to learn the importance of taking turns and sharing fairly and following rules.

They should begin to understand that at school there are values and codes of behaviour such as being kind to one another, telling the truth, putting up their hand to answer a question on so on. Help them to understand what is right, what is wrong, and why.

Self-confidence is the foundation for learning. Your own patience and praise are crucial. Remind them of their achievements. As their successes grow so will their self-esteem and their determination.

What teachers find helpful in children's independence and why.

Some teachers have found it helpful to advise parents what skills they would hope that the children could do independently by the time they start at school. These might be:

- to dress and undress themselves,
- to remove their coat, gloves and hat and hang them up on a peg,
- to tie their own laces or fasten their own Velcro on their shoes,
- to use the toilet properly and flush it after use,
- to tidy or clear away toys,
- to be willing to share toys and take turns,
- to wash their hands and faces and use a towel to dry them,
- to eat with a knife and fork (provided the cutting up is not too difficult),
- to use a tissue to wipe their nose,
- to be able to stay confident without their parents and carer always there



How we help children become more independent at school:

Learning through play

Well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge and become more independent. In playing, they behave in different ways: sometimes their play will be boisterous, sometimes they will describe and discuss what they are doing, sometimes they will be quiet and reflective as they play.

How children develop from Preprep through to Reception Assessment/ Planning/ Differentiation

Preprep

Emphasis is given to personal and social development and to the pleasure children should take from learning.

Children learn through play at all times.

Knowledge and understanding of the world and autonomy are the basis of learning at this level. Children are assessed on what they already know of the world around them when they enter Preprep.

Prep

Children enter Prep when they have been given the basic foundations of 'School life'. They are now ready to be assessed within the curriculum and through planning. Children continue to learn through play and activities are planned around all core subjects. At this level the process of learning is still more important than the product. The English language is introduced in their routine and a phonological awareness is developed. Vocabulary is extended and the fine motor skills are developed through the introduction of handwriting.

Reception

As the children's personal, social and emotional development progresses they become more independent in thought and action. Aside from other areas of learning, reading and writing are introduced as well as mathematical development. Letter sounds and formation, concept of addition and subtraction are areas explored through practical 'hands-on' activities. These activities are planned to meet and adapt to individual needs and abilities.

Portuguese

- Conhecer a escrita e os símbolos do quotidiano;
- Memorizar e recitar poemas, canções e lengalengas;
- Ouvir, reconstruir histórias simples;
- Relacionar letra / som;
- Nomear objectos, acções, etc;
- Diferenciar as grafias (manuscrito e imprensa; minúscula, maiúscula).

Through 'Play', in a secure environment with effective adult support, children can;

- explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world;
- practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills;
- learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules;
- be alone, be alongside others or cooperate as they talk or rehearse their feelings;
- take risks and make mistakes;
- think creatively and imaginatively;
- communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems;
- express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

