



The Academy at
St James
Aspire, Achieve, Believe

Curriculum and assessment
EYFS Policy
January 2024



Principles:

- All children at our school are entitled to high quality learning and teaching. This will equip them with the skills, knowledge and understanding they need today and prepare them for their future.
- Children learn at different rates and each child's development is unique.
- Children learn best when they are happy, secure and actively involved in their own learning.
- We make children's enjoyment and choices our priority.
- Effective teaching and learning in the EYFS meets children's identified needs and interests and helps children to learn and develop in all seven areas of learning and development.
- Different aspects of early learning require different approaches. Much of early maths learning is sequential: learning new concepts must build on the solid foundation of earlier concepts. On the other hand, learning about the world is much less sequential: learning can be fluid and based on following children's likes, wants and interests and in turn, widening their horizons.
- We are open! We regularly discuss our work with each other and with parents. The discussion helps us to ensure that children take an active part in their learning with joy and enthusiasm. It helps us to ensure that their time in the 2 year old room is built upon in Nursery and this in turn, prepares them for their time in Reception.
- We help children to confidently transition between classrooms and to successfully continue their learning journey.
- Curriculum development is practitioner development: what we do, and how we do it, matter equally.
- Every child can progress well in their learning, with the right support.
- Every child can thrive.

Curriculum Overview:

- We offer a high quality broad and balanced curriculum which has 4 main elements:

Our curriculum goals for our children

Teaching and Learning based on children's wants needs and interests

Core experiences: forest schools, Pitty Beck, loose parts play and enrichments.

A regular cycle of learning related to core books, experiences and trips.

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Our curriculum goals for our children

All aspects of our curriculum require practitioners to be flexible and take account of children's interest.

All aspects of our curriculum have a 'progress model'. When we are building on children's interests, we are planning to broaden and deepen these interests.

Our core experiences provide stimulating and exciting resources for the children to access repetitively within our local area.

Our curriculum goals support the academic and social progress of all children no matter when they join our school or nursery.

Learning at The Academy at St James:

- Most of our learning is play-based and takes place both indoors and outdoors.
- The majority of learning is through child-initiated activities although some adult-directed activities are completed when appropriate.
- Adults take children's interests and strengths as a starting point, seeing each child as a competent learner.
- Parental involvement is crucial. We learn a great deal about each child from their parents. Parental support and an open dialogue with parents is essential. We used DOJO to help maintain open communication with parents at all times.

We designed our curriculum with OUR children in mind. We know our children and their strengths and interests. We put a strong focus on supporting the children to become confident communicators in order to deepen and develop their communication skills.

Our School '5 Ways of Being' have influenced our curriculum. These are:

- * Always be yourself;
- * Confident communicator;
- * Contribute to my community;
- * Knowledgeable and expert learners;
- * Show that you care;


We encourage these in all that we do.


Our goals are ambitious. They provide an overview of many of the different things we would like our children to know and be able to do.


The goals are adaptable to the particular children on roll. We offer scaffolding and extra support to help every child access the curriculum and to ensure that they make progress through it. However, we acknowledge that every child will not make the same progress through the goals but will access all activities and goals which supports their individual needs and abilities.


2 YEAR OLD CURRICULUM GOALS


Creating Knowledgeable and Expert Learners


COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE—CONFIDENT COMMUNICATORS
 ASK for help when I need it
 TELL someone what I am doing
 LISTEN when someone says my name
 APPLY words to objects


PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT—SHOW THAT YOU CARE:
 HELP others understand how I am feeling
 CONFIDENT to talk to others
 Show RESILIENCE when leaving key adult


PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
 USE a spoon to feed themselves
 HOLD equipment with control
 RIDE a sitdown bike

LITERACY
 With support, RETELL a key part from a story
 ENJOY sharing a book
 READ a book in my own words
 WRITE patterns and marks



MATHEMATICS
 With support, UNDERSTAND some number order
 RECOGNISE patterns in the environment
 COMPARE objects

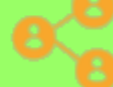
UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD—CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR COMMUNITY
 BE AWARE that things are different or the same
 REMEMBER the names of key people
 KNOW their key adults
 EXPLORE playing in different weather



EXPRESSIVE ART AND DESIGN—ALWAYS BE YOURSELF
 CREATE a picture
 To name different COLOURS
 PERFORM the actions in a nursery rhyme


RECEPTION CURRICULUM GOALS


Creating Knowledgeable and Expert Learners


COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE—CONFIDENT COMMUNICATORS
 ASK a variety of questions
 TELL others about my thoughts, feelings and opinions
 LISTEN and respond to others
 APPLY new words in their everyday conversations


PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT—SHOW THAT YOU CARE:
 HELP others who are in need
 CONFIDENT to be yourself
 Show RESILIENCE in the face of challenge


PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
 USE cutlery with confidence
 HOLD a pencil effectively
 RIDE a 2 wheeled pedal bike

LITERACY
 RETELL a story through play
 ENJOY reading a book for pleasure
 READ sentences containing known phonics sounds
 WRITE a simple sentence with finger spaces


MATHEMATICS
 UNDERSTAND the value of a number up to 10
 RECOGNISE number pieces to 10 and beyond
 COMPARE quantities and objects and explain their reasoning

UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD—CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR COMMUNITY
 BE AWARE of and explain similarities and differences
 REMEMBER and discuss key events from their experiences
 KNOW key places in the community and their purpose
 Use senses to EXPLORE and describe


EXPRESSIVE ART AND DESIGN—ALWAYS BE YOURSELF
 CREATE a model using appropriate resources and techniques
 To use COLOUR for the correct purpose
 To confidently PERFORM a story to others


Our Curriculum Goals:


Our Curriculum Goals were designed by our school community and are shared with parents and other professionals throughout the year.


All subject leaders are aware of these goals.


NURSERY CURRICULUM GOALS


Creating Knowledgeable and Expert Learners


COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE—CONFIDENT COMMUNICATORS
 ASK a simple question
 TELL someone how I feel
 LISTEN to others
 APPLY new words in their speech


PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT—SHOW THAT YOU CARE:
 HELP others who are upset
 CONFIDENT to share their ideas
 Show RESILIENCE when completing an activity


PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
 USE the toilet independently
 HOLD one handed equipment with control
 RIDE a 2 wheeled balance bike

LITERACY
 RETELL a story using pictures or props
 ENJOY retelling a story using the book
 READ my name
 WRITE my name using my name card


MATHEMATICS
 UNDERSTAND the value of a number up to 10
 RECOGNISE number pieces to 5 and beyond
 COMPARE quantities and objects

UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD—CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR COMMUNITY
 BE AWARE of similarities and differences
 REMEMBER key events from their experiences
 KNOW key people in the community and their role
 Use senses to EXPLORE


EXPRESSIVE ART AND DESIGN—ALWAYS BE YOURSELF
 To begin to CREATE a model with an idea in mind
 To mix powder paint to make COLOUR
 To PERFORM familiar songs

We regularly review these goals and our curriculum to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of our children.

We will continue to develop our curriculum to promote Our School Community and our Local Area and to celebrate local achievements, successes and developments.

Planning and Assessment:

Throughout the child's first term in our school, we focus on really getting to know the child and their parents. Building these relationships helps the children to settle and grow in confidence in their new environment. We carry out an initial baseline assessment using BDAT approved guidance to support the children whenever they start at our school.

Children are assessed as:

- Working AT age related;
- Working JUST BELOW age related;
- Working BELOW age related;

Welcomm

We know that our Communication and Language is a barrier for lots of our children. With this in mind we use Welcomm to assess each child's communication and language skills. From each assessment each child has a specific level that they are working on and specific next steps can be obtained. This means that effective interventions can be put into place to ensure that our children make rapid progress.

This is then tracked throughout the child's time in our school.

Reception Baseline Assessment

Within the children's first 6 weeks in Reception, we carry out the Government Baseline Assessment. This involves key adult—usually the class teacher—working with the child using an iPad to complete a variety of tasks and challenges. This information is then sent to the Government and provides the baseline to their life in school.

Home Visits

Every child is offered a home visit when they start at our nursery and/or in Reception. Parents share information about their child's interests, communication, confidence and physical health with the key adult. The information is then used to ensure the smooth transition into school and to ensure that the children's interests are reflected in the classroom from day one.

Assessment and tracking overview:

We are not driven by assessment and tracking and this is not a priority for staff working within the EYFS.

Assessment serves our children and our curriculum and ensures that we are providing the right support for all children.

Most assessment is formative, so 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, and so we can monitor equality. Our aim is for assessment to be fluid and to ensure that it does not take away from the time that is spent with children.

Information is stored on Class Dojo. All members of the classroom team will support the assessment of the children through weekly team meetings to discuss individual and groups of children.

Our objectives for assessment:

- Improve dialogue and communication with parents so that we can work together to support the children and the progress that they make at home and in school;
- Support the children in talking about their learning, focussing on how they learn and to promote explaining what they have learnt, how and why;
- Early identification of children who may need extra help and support and children who may have Special Educational Needs;
- Checking that individual and groups of children are making progress and to make prompt action where this is not the case;
- Reporting formally to parents and to the Year 1 teachers so that children can continue their learning journey throughout the EYFS and into KSI as seamlessly as possible.

Assessment and Planning:

One of the most powerful forms of assessment takes place in the here-and-now, not on screen or in learning journeys. This is when we notice something important about a child's learning and respond to it to help them build their learning. That response can take different forms—we might:

- Stand back and encourage;
- Get involved to extend the learning, by joining in with the play, engaging in a conversation or showing the child a specific skill to help them accomplish what they want to do;
- Reflect afterwards and bring in new resources or plan something special in response to what we notice.

This type of assessment work is not written down. It often focuses on the curriculum goals. It shows how we can assess what children know and can do, and help them to progress, through our minute by minute interactions.

The focus of our assessment is on clear and specific things that a child needs to be able to do, or needs to know. In order to do this, practitioners need to understand how the different elements of the curriculum fit together to help children build their learning over time. Reflective discussions about key children after school in the EYFS teams, during planning meetings and in Pupil Progress Meetings support this understanding.

Practitioners also need to have a secure understanding of child development, as well as the features of effective pedagogy. This will help with judging when to get involved and when to encourage and knowing how to scaffold children's learning so we support them to keep trying without over-helping them.

Some children will need a lot more help and scaffolding to access that curriculum. This is a strength of the staff at our school. We will 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 its 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.

This curriculum learning must be balanced with learning that stems from the children's interests. Plans must be flexible and go with the children's fascinations. Children learn a huge amount through the play that they choose. We will help maximise this learning by making sure we provide a high quality learning

environment. We can then sensitively get involved and extend their play. It is important that we have a systematic approach to evaluating the quality of the environment, and those interactions, so that we can build on what we do well, and improve where we need to.

Practitioners will meet weekly to look through any key observations that have been completed of the children and to discuss any concerns that may be noted. This will be recorded on Tapestry on the 'Reflections' area. Observations and assessments can be based on work the child is making towards a particular curriculum goal or learning that has arisen from their interests.

During these meetings the practitioners talk about the children and their observations and what they think it shows about the child. We discuss what the child knows, what they can do and any barriers to learning. In collaboration with the team, we then decide what action to take next in order to support the child's learning. The majority of assessment and responsive action or teaching will happen in the here-and-now.

This responsive planning is often linked to provision planning. We plan our provision through the skills that we want the children to learn that week rather than by planning for specific areas. We may plan to keep a specific skill in place for a number of weeks in order for the children to more time to explore and master the skill. We can also add additional resources to these area in order to broaden the expectations if particular children have met the skill planned. Our plans are flexible to ensure both curricular and child initiated learning is included. The decisions around provision planning lies with the class teacher and is based on a deep understanding of the children in their class. Curriculum learning weaves throughout the year and can be picked up and worked on together at multiple points. A curricular goal doesn't need to be the sole focus for the work with that child week in and week out. Unless the child is deeply motivated to return to the learning again and again, in which case we would follow the child's lead.

Practitioners record significant information and observations using Tapestry. The aim of these records is to highlight new and important aspects of learning. The child's struggles or perseverance are made clear. It will include characteristics of effective learning and the child's voice. The teaching input will also be recorded. The observation will describe what the practitioner did to support or extend the child's learning and how the child responded.

Feedback and reflection:

The majority of our assessment of children's learning is done through feedback in the here-and-now. Practitioners are skilled in modelling metacognitive thinking for children and this in turn helps children to develop a growth mindset.

Metacognitive thinking enables the children to talk more specifically about thinking in different contexts. It enables children to use a plan do review approach in their learning. They become independent and more powerful learners. This in turn supports their approach to managing their own learning later in their school years.

When giving instant feedback to children it is important to give them appropriate but honest comments about their work. Specific praise is helpful but supporting children to look carefully at their work and see if it can be improved, is even better. This feedback needs to be age appropriate and tailored specifically to the child. It is important to ensure that the feedback given to the child is kind, specific, helpful and related to the work and not the child.

This type of feedback is descriptive and includes elements of critique. Supporting children to give and receive feedback teaches them that effort and revision are valuable and that the things that they do can be improved. This develops the mindset of continuous improvement.

We use 'Flashback Friday' to support the recapping of learning within the week/ term/ time in school. In the EYFS, this involves talking about photos of events that are placed throughout the classroom and discussions about the learning journey display in the classroom. At regular times within the week, practitioners will support the children to reflect on something that they have learnt and skilfully deepen the children's language in talking about their learning. Children also spend time looking at previous observation records to evaluate their learning and understanding.