



# Vale of Evesham School

'a specialist school for cognition and learning - enabling inclusion in the community'

## **First school Curriculum Statement**

### **The Early Years Foundation Stage**

In our nursery, reception and Year 1 at Vale of Evesham school the children are taught using a child centred, play based approach. The curriculum is based around the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and covers Communication and Language, Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development, Literacy, Numeracy, Understanding of the World and Creativity.

In the nursery there is a balance of child led learning and adult led learning. During the adult led times the children are supported to develop the essential early learning skills that allow them to sit and take part in activities as part of a group and to actively listen. As the children move in to reception there is a gradual change of emphasis as they are encouraged to take part in more adult led learning activities.

In the early years the children are assessed using the EYFS Early Support assessment materials. Staff assess progress and plan for learning using a range of observations both formal and informal. Each child's learning and progress is celebrated in their 'Learning Journey'. Some children in the early years have a range of needs best met by a more highly specialised curriculum. The needs of these pupils are met by the Vale of Evesham PMLD curriculum.

Further details of the curriculum offer in the Early Years can be found in the Continuous Provision documents. These documents detail activities offered in each curriculum area and are updated annually.

### **Characteristics of Effective learning**

The characteristics of effective learning help us to focus on and understand how children learn. Following characteristics of young children's learning enables them to become effective lifelong learners. We look for and thinking about how the children learn when accessing all areas of development.

The characteristics of effective learning are split into three different areas:

#### **Playing and exploring**

Our classroom environments are set up to actively encourage and offer children the opportunity to play, explore and investigate using open ended activities. Play is essential for children's development. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.

This area of learning is the main focus in Nursery.

## **Active Learning**

We provide opportunities for children to follow their interests for extended periods of time, fully engaged in what they are doing and concentrating deeply. In their activities, children will be encouraged to persist in the face of challenge or difficulty, thereby developing a resilient disposition.

## **Creative and critical Thinking**

Children will have many different opportunities to be creative - generating new ideas, being inventive, finding problems and challenges and figuring out their own ways to solve them. Adults will be attentive to individual children's interests and will provide new materials and experiences to extend and enhance these processes. We try wherever possible to give children more autonomy in how they approach tasks and focusing on the process of problem solving, not just on the final outcome.

## **Areas of Development**

There are 7 areas of development 3 prime and 4 specific areas. The **prime** areas begin to develop in response to relationships and experiences, and run through and support learning in all other areas. The prime areas continue to be fundamental throughout the EYFS. The prime areas are the main focus alongside the characteristic of effective learning. In Early Years we also treat Thinking skills as a prime area of development. During the Reception and Year 1 There is an increasing importance given to Literacy and Numeracy (which comes under Thinking skills) The specific areas include essential skills and knowledge. They grow out of the prime areas, and provide important contexts for learning. We also give plenty of opportunity for creativity at an appropriate level for the individual.

### **Prime areas**

**Personal Social and Emotional Development (PSED)**- This is taught throughout the day every day and in every activity. It will be a priority in child initiated play both inside and outside. We will work at building relationships, with peers and staff, sharing and turn taking as well as make a choice. Managing behaviours and emotions throughout the day is also a high priority. Throughout Early Years adults will use the Thrive approach to support children's emotions and help them to build their emotional literacy in everyday real situations. Adults will attune and validate children's emotions and support them if they become disregulated and then to calm and sooth.

**Communication and Language (CAL)**- This is also taught throughout the day every day and built in to every situation. We use a total communication and adapted to meet the individual needs of the child. For all the children we use key word language and support with signs and visuals in mostly photo form but many children will also need visuals in the form of Objects of Reference and some Reception children may start to use symbols during the year. There are some children that will also use Tassells (on body signs). Alongside developing their understanding of communication we will also promote and teach them ways in which they can express their needs and desires. They will be encouraged to use their voice alongside body language also to use other alternative methods of communication which will include: sign, PECS and Tassells.

Intensive Interaction is an approach that is used across Early Years to develop fundamental communications skills as well as build relationships. Time for intensive interaction is given high priority can be both informal and more structured across the day. In Nursery we provide adult led communication activities each day working towards personal targets in conjunction with the Speech and Language therapist. In reception and Year 1 the children have adult led communication groups working towards personal targets at least twice each week.

**Physical Development (PD)**- We try to develop personal care and independence skills during snack, lunch and toileting routines every day. We also provide activities to develop gross and fine motor skills in child initiated play. We also have adult led activities with physical skills as the main focus four times a week. This can include forest school or similar activities, bikes and Large gym equipment.

**Thinking** - Thinking skill incorporates early maths skills, understanding the world as well as developing cognitive skills around object permanence, anticipation, cause and effect and problem solving. Some mark making, book skills, imaginary play, and construction. There are adult led sessions with a thinking focus as well as developing thinking skills in child initiated play.

### **Specific Areas**

**Literacy** - Every early years class has a book area with a selection of suitable books for all the children in the group. We also have an adult led story time each day.

Mark making opportunities are available in child initiated play and may include activities to develop fine motor skills. We also have adult led mark making activities.

In adult led sessions we also develop understanding of letters and sounds. In Nursery we work on Phase 1. In Reception and Year 1 we continue to work on early reading skills including Phase 1 and 2 phonics, symbolic development and book knowledge

**Mathematics**- Mathematics is mainly taught in thinking skills but our most able Reception and Year 1 pupils will have more of a Mathematical focus during the adult led activities as well as opportunities to develop any interests around mathematics during child initiated play.

**Understanding the World** - This area is mainly taught in thinking skills but our most able Reception and Year 1 pupils will have opportunities to learn more in this area through topic based approach. For most children in Early Years the main focus of this area will be developing the characteristics of effective learning.

**Expressive Arts and Development**– We provide opportunities to be creative in imaginative play activities, arts and crafts, music and dance in both adult led and child led situations. An important part of this area is around developing characteristics of effective learning. This is often delivered through a topic based approach.