



Our curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The EYFS define the 'formative years' of a child's life as being up to 5 years old. Much of this definition is around standards for the care, learning and development of your child. As a registered Ofsted childcare provider, Little Acorns Nursery/Pre-School follows the Birth to 5 non-statutory guidance.

We also use a mixture of child-initiated and adult-led activities. Child-initiated play allows the child to have full control over the direction and outcome of their play and will support children in developing their confidence, creativity and innovation. Whereas adult-led activities are guided and structured by the adults. This type of play involves planned activities or games that are directed by an adult, this provides opportunities for introducing knowledge or ideas, and for developing skills.

The areas of learning are:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development
- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design.

We will celebrate a range of festivals and share special occasions with the children throughout the year. To do this we:

- invite special visitors in
- read books and stories
- move to music
- dress up
- do food tasting.

All of our activities can be seen in our floor book, online journals and our Facebook group.

The impact of the curriculum for children at Little Acorns Nursery/Pre-School

The EYFS led curriculum at Little Acorns Nursery/Pre-School is about helping the children to be ready for transitioning. Each child will be allocated a 'key person' to enable them to have the best start at the setting. The keyworker will decide the best ways in which to support the learning and development based on the child's individual needs and current levels of development. As the key person builds a positive relationship with the child, they will learn more about their interests and how they learn best.

Our key goal is for all children to be independent by the time they leave us. However, we are aware that all children have different starting points and will work through our curriculum at a different pace.

The keyworker will continually carry out test-free assessments and an important Progress Check between the ages of two and three.

We promote equal opportunities for all the children in our care. All of the staff are alert to emerging difficulties children may have and are able to respond according to their needs. We follow the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice to ensure that all requirements are incorporated into our setting. We work closely with parents and outside agencies and together we Assess, Plan, Do and Review to support the needs of the children. Please take a look at our Local Offer.

Assessments

These link to our children's learning and to our curriculum. Most of the assessments we do at the setting are formative, so that 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. We 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 it's 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.

We complete:

- A baseline assessment of the children's development shortly after they start with us. This is completed in partnership with parents.
- Termly summative assessment of where the child's development is in relation to typical milestones and the characteristics of effective learning.
- WellComm assessments helps practitioners to identify children who are experiencing barriers to speech and language development.
- Two-year-old checks are an assessment that helps with the early identification of children who need temporary extra support, 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.
- School transition reports.
- Discussions with other professionals who may be involved with a child and family. For example, a health visitor or social care worker.

The three prime areas of the curriculum

Communication & Language is an important area of learning as it provides the basis for all other learning and development. Without good communication and language skills, all other areas of learning could suffer, so these are critically important skills for children to master in their early years. Language and communication skills grow naturally to children through

engaging, fun activities like role-play, story-telling and question-and-answer games. Interaction between staff and children provides an effortless approach to broaden their language and communication skills.

Physical Development is any type of game or activity that gets children moving around and expending energy. This includes sports where the child uses their whole body to move around, like running or hopscotch, but it also includes play that only uses smaller physical movements and specific muscle groups or body parts, like finger gym or cutting skills activities. Both types of physical play are valuable and necessary in the early years as children need to develop both their fine motor skills and gross motor skills. To do this, children need to regularly practice a range of physical movements, both big and small.

Personal, Social & Emotional Development ('PSED') The personal part of it aims to ensure that children can look after aspects of their lives themselves, independently managing personal needs like cleanliness, toilet training, healthy eating and so on.

The social and emotional aspects of it aims to help children fit in with adults and peers around them, support one another, themselves feel supported by others and together learn to manage emotions and behave in acceptable, appropriate ways. As they learn to do all of this, they will become more confident, feel rightly valued, more easily resolve any conflicts and form closer friendships with peers and create stronger bonds with staff.

The 4 Additional 'Specific Areas' of the Curriculum

Running in parallel with the 3 prime areas, there are 4 additional areas of focus for Little Acorns which adhere to the EYFS framework for our early year's curriculum.

Literacy is absolutely fundamental and will give each child the best start when they start school. Literacy is so much more than reading and writing, it's about using a wider range of vocabulary, understanding a question that has two parts, such as 'Get your coat and wait at the door' and understanding 'why' questions such as 'Why do we wash our hands?'. We aim to expose children to a rich variety of books that will feed their imaginations and help them to be more creative themselves. We also encourage our children to verbalise, for example by reading out loud. By doing so, speech, pronunciation and articulation also benefits, as does their confidence to speak up.

Mathematics is all about using shape, space, measures and numbers to solve everyday problems. We first support children to master counting numbers from one to ten, then in reverse, then extended to 20 or more. Concepts like volume, shape, measuring and space will also be included. So, by the time they leave us, they'll have learned the maths skills and concepts that they'll need to hit the ground running when they start school.

Understanding the World is a very broad but important area of study for the children and one that'll stand them in good stead going forwards. It's about how children get to know about other people, the place they live and all aspects of the environment. With that in mind, we'll help them to recognise, understand, describe and even sometimes draw what's around them.

They will also learn about the technology they see and use. The children will also learn about the world by going on walks to local parks and hearing from visiting professionals. They will also learn about other communities, both in the UK and abroad, including culture, beliefs and religions.

Expressive Arts & Design Children find this area fun as it gives them the freedom to express themselves, be imaginative and creative, and even to get messy from time to time. A variety of media, equipment and tools are available to them and activities encourage the children to get involved and to create. It's not just art, though; the children can involve themselves in role-play activities, they can sing, dance, tell stories and perform. Their imaginations can run riot and be free as they can express themselves and their creativity in a rich variety of ways.

Goals for transitioning to Inventors (pre-school room):

- co-operate and share
- begin to be independent in their self-care
- follow general directions
- play alongside other children
- say some numbers in sequence when counting objects (1:1 correspondence)
- develop fine/gross motor skills
- self-register and use their name card each session
- develop pretend play pretending one object represents another
- listen to a short story from beginning to end
- give meaning to the marks they make
- begin to use scissors.

Goals for transitioning to school:

- communicate their needs
- be independent in their self-care
- listen to and follow two-part instructions
- share toys with others and take turns
- understand and retell simple stories
- attempt to write their own name
- count in order as far as they can go
- talk about significant events in their own life
- play alongside other children who are engaged in the same theme.