

The EYFS Curriculum at Excalibur

The Early Years Foundation Stage 2026/7



The EYFS has 7 areas of learning.

The Prime areas are: communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development.

The Specific areas are: literacy, mathematics, understanding the world and expressive arts and design.

Each area involves the children in activities and experiences that facilitate learning and take into account the background and interests of the children as well as local, national and international events (e.g. National bee day or Diwali).

The Characteristics of Effective Learning **playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically** permeate through all 7 areas of learning.

By the end of the EYFS, the children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals (17 statements within the 7 areas).

'Development Matters' contains non-statutory curriculum guidance for the EYFS. It offers a top level view of how children develop and learn. The guidance sets out the pathways of children's development in broad ages and stages (0-3 year olds, 3-4 year olds and, reception).

"Language is the foundation of children's learning and thinking. The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development" (Development Matters). With that in mind children's communication and language is at the heart of our curriculum.

Expectations

On entry at Excalibur, most children start broadly in line with the national average, working securely at the 3-4 year old statements from Development Matters. When they leave the EYFS most children's development will be working securely in the reception statements. Most children will achieve a Good Level of Development (typically around 80%). Children are defined as having reached a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of the EYFS if they have achieved at least the expected level for the ELGs in the prime areas of learning and the specific areas of mathematics and literacy. When children who do not achieve a GLD it is usually due to their SEN needs.

Shaping the Curriculum

PSED is crucial for children to lead happy and healthy lives. At Excalibur we use the Twinkl PSHE scheme across the whole school. In September 2022 we introduced the 'No Outsiders' project. Our children come from many different settings and we allow them time and provide experiences so that they can develop warm and supportive relationships with adults in the setting. We build on previous learning on 'The Colour Monster' used by some of our feeder nurseries to help our children understand their own feelings and the feelings of others. Children are supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self and set themselves simple goals.

Observations of our children on entry show that a number of children use a fist grip (1-2 years) or digital pronate grasp (3-4 years) to hold tools and mark making implements. With some children switching hands as they do not yet have a dominant side and the marks they make are light and they are often unable to close shapes. Our curriculum focuses on developing muscle memory and core strength through both large scale and small scale movements to help children to develop their fine and gross motor skills. We do daily 'Dough Disco' and 'Funky Finger' sessions. There is a clear progression to teach cutting skills, something our children typically arrive quite low at. At least one of our daily EMA activities a week develops cutting skills. Children have access to a wide range of tools and mark making implements in both the indoor and outdoor environment. The 'Fundamental Skills' programme clearly sets out how PD is taught in the EYFS in our twice weekly PE sessions. The skills are revisited in Year 1 with children demonstrating increased accuracy and skill. Use of large climbing equipment in our A frame and Trim trail areas help teach children to balance, jump, climb, assess risk and develop upper body and limb strength.

Phonics is taught using the synthetic phonics scheme RWI, which has been DFE approved. After some considerable research it was felt that this programme successfully meets the needs of our children, teaching them to read and write. The document 'Making a Strong Start in Reception' sets out how and when early phonics is taught. There is a clear progression and teaching sequence. The scheme sees children also developing and learning new vocabulary. A book corner, whereby books face forward and is a warm and cosy space making sharing stories inviting. It was placed next to our home corner as we had observed children sharing stories during role-play e.g. Dad reading a bedtime story to his baby. Children hear stories, poems, rhymes and songs regularly throughout the day. After researching the benefits of 'Helicopter stories' and more recently 'The Poetry Basket' (Both from Make Believe Arts) they are both now part of our EYFS curriculum. We know that reading regularly to children and actively engaging them in stories, songs, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and then providing them with opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts allows them to thrive. Adults in the setting model quality conversations, interactions, story-telling and role-play. Children are encouraged to be part of this supported and challenged to share and extend their thoughts and ideas and become comfortable using a range of rich vocabulary. Talk is promoted and encouraged through the children sharing items from home during 'Show and Tell' sessions. Children develop their listening and questioning skills with modelling and guidance from the adult who follow ShREC guidance. This is then built upon in Year 1 when the children share projects they have carried out as part of home learning with their class. Our home corner is a permanent feature of our Classroom throughout the year we mirror what may happen in our children's lives and homes by enhancing the provision e.g. adding a baby and equipment when we are exploring the RE unit about welcoming babies, adding pets and a pop-up vets when we learn about animals, getting ready for celebrations such as Diwali, Christmas or Easter and decorating the home corner accordingly. Other role-play will be in a pop-up form e.g. props and costumes to support a story 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' or experience such as a wedding or a visit from the fire brigade. Three years ago we successfully introduced Greg Bottrill's 'Drawing Club' into our reception class. Good quality stories and children's imagination lie at its heart. Our children are given the freedom to be creative, empowering themselves as artists and writers. They are keen to draw, write and talk about their ideas.

The work of Karen Wilding and Antony Reddy has encouraged us to explore our teaching around early maths and number sense and ensure that our children are developing a strong grounding in number. In line with the rest of the school we use WRM. However, we also use the popular 'Numberblocks' and resources from the NCETM, capturing children's interests and thirst for number through the characters and their stories. Our morning routine uses 5 then 10 frames for self-registration, as well as songs and rhymes, counting and Numicon to ensure that children are making connections and relationships and developing a deeper understanding of

numbers. We have created an open ended maths rich environment whereby maths talk and maths learning can take place whenever and wherever both inside and outside. From the way our blocks are laid out in the building area, the Duplo which has to be sorted by the number of raised circles through to the range of manipulatives like pebbles, conkers and stones, maths is everywhere.

In Understanding the world children learn about their immediate locality so they learn about places around our school and grounds. They learn about familiar features such as houses, the train station and shops, building on their everyday experiences and talking about what they see in Alsager and beyond. They encounter distant places through topics and stories and when sharing personal experiences. The children observe and discuss the weather regularly during EYFS, becoming familiar with types of weather and how it can affect us, such as needing coats when it is cold. The children also learn about the different jobs which people do in our community. They make maps through 3D representations and then on paper e.g. a pirate treasure map. They begin to understand that landmarks on a map are permanent. They learn and understand History by talking about the very recent past. They begin to use language like 'yesterday' and 'last week'. They speak in past tense, understand places and people change over time, they are encouraged to notice difference and we use a simple timeline to record events such as 'when I was born', 'when my parents were born', 'when the dinosaurs lived'. They use their senses to explore the world around them noticing change/difference, experimenting with textures and materials, exploring nature such as planting seeds and plants and observing how they change over time. Noticing what happens to ice on a warm day or shadows on the playground. Children are encouraged to explore, problem solve, observe, predict, think, make decisions and talk about the world around them. During their first year at school our children will explore creatures, people, plants and objects in their natural environment. When they move to Year 1 they study these in greater depth. We use the Kapow RE scheme. There is a clear progression and teaching sequence laid out in these schemes that we adhere to.

Our expressive arts allows children an outlet for their imagination, thoughts and ideas. Our environment has been organised to allow children to freely access resources and materials to support this. The children are exposed to a range of stimuli often through stories and books such as 'Junk DNA' by Claire Thompson or 'Leaf Man' by Lois Ehlert. They then create their own responses using transient art materials. We frequently take our inspiration from nature and the changing world around us, representing patterns and change. Further up the school in Year 2 the children build on this by looking at the artist Andy Goldsworthy. Songs and rhymes happen daily and support children's learning and language development across the curriculum. Helicopter stories allows children to tell and perform their own stories. We also learn and perform poems using the Poetry Basket. Children move expressively through music during daily

'Dough Disco', other songs and rhymes. Each day we begin the day with our morning song which invites the children to move in a variety of ways. Retelling stories such as 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt', 'Pumpkin Soup' and 'Red Riding Hood' allow the children to retell and perform the story using movement and drama. We use Charanga to teach discrete music lessons that are built upon in Year 1.

Curriculum aims for Autumn

To use their senses to explore the world around them.

To build relationships with other children and adults.

To develop confidence in making their own choices, turn taking and sharing

Curriculum aims for Spring

To begin to learn their place in the wider world.

To solve problems, cooperate with others and work as part of a team.

Curriculum aims for Summer

To develop independence and confidence as learners in preparation for Year One.

To value the opinions and approaches of others.

To speak in sentences and ask and answer questions.

Intentions for Year One

Our children will be independent learners who can plan, resource and carry out a project. They will problem solve and work as part of a team. They will share ideas and take on board the ideas of others, valuing different opinions and approaches.

Subject	Area of the EYFS	Key skills/knowledge	How we teach it	Early Learning Goals
PSHE	Personal, social and emotional development	To recognise my own feelings To start to understand others might feel different than I	Twinkl PSHE No Outsiders Games that require taking turns/sharing	Self- regulation Managing self Building relationships

	Communication and language	To use strategies/language to help me deal with social situations To 'have a go'	Promoting independence Praising the effort not the product The power of 'yet'	People, culture and communities
PE	Physical development	To hold a pencil comfortably To use scissors safely and effectively To demonstrate control over my body and other objects	Fundamental Skills programme for PE lessons Gross motor – bikes, scooters, outdoor equipment e.g. A frame area. Fine motor and muscle memory: Dough disco and Funky Fingers Scissor skills progression	Gross motor skills Fine motor skills
Literacy: a) Speaking and listening b) Reading c) Writing	Communication and language Literacy Physical development	To ask and answer questions To retell a story To tell stories of my own. To use set 1 and 2 sounds to read and write words and then phrases and sentences. To write words, phrases and sentences that the others can read. Describe some events in detail To explain how things work and why they might happen	Helicopter Stories The Poetry Basket – oral poems and rhymes Drawing Club RWI phonics Dough disco and Funky Fingers	Listening, attention and understanding Speaking Comprehension Word reading Writing

Maths	Mathematics	To have a deep understanding of numbers to 10 and their composition, odds and evens and doubles To recall number bonds to 5 and some to 10. Count verbally to 20 and beyond To recognise patterns and shapes To compare quantities	Daily White Rose maths input Numberblocks/NCTEM Karen Wilding – developing early number sense work. Maths takes place throughout the provision Stories e.g. Anno's Counting Book, 10 Black Dots, The Button Box	Number Numerical patterns
History	Understanding the world Literacy (comprehension) Communication and language	To use language like 'yesterday' and 'last week'. To speak in past tense To understand places and people change over time To notice difference. To use a simple timeline to record events such as 'when I was born', 'When my parents were born', 'When the dinosaurs lived'	Stories Songs about the passing of time. Sharing personal events and experiences Kapow History Scheme	Past and present People, culture and communities
Geography	Understanding the world	To learn about the immediate locality. To learn about familiar features such as houses, community	Kapow Geography scheme Exploring traditional tales e.g. making a map of Red	People, culture and communities The natural world

	Mathematics (special awareness) Language and communication	buildings and shops building on their everyday experiences. To encounter distant places through topics and stories. To observe and discuss the weather and the changing seasons To learn about the different jobs which people do in our community. To read a simple map To understand landmarks on the map are permanent	Riding Hood's journey or 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' Stories Observations of the local environment e.g. visit to Wesley Place Stories with a journey e.g. Rosie's Walk	
Science	Understanding the world Communication and language Mathematics	To explore, problem solve, observe, predict, think, make decisions and talk about the world around them. They will explore creatures, people, plants and objects in their natural environment To notice change/difference To experiment with textures and materials	Through experiences such as planting seeds. Using their senses to play games and explore the world around them Concrete experiences such as investigating magnets, observing ice melting cooking e.g. making bread and soup, melting chocolate	The natural world Creating with materials Self-regulation
DT	Expressive arts and design	To use tools safely To join materials	Tinkering Table Role play prop making	Fine motor skills Creating with materials

	Physical development	To talk about what we create	Make and Do area Kapow D&T scheme	
Art	Expressive arts and design Physical development	To mix colours To use simple tools and materials To talk about what we create	Self-portraits Observational paintings Kapow Art Scheme	Fine motor skills Creating with materials
Music	Expressive arts and design	To sing a range of rhymes and songs To clap out a rhythm To understand different tempos. To perform in front of an audience	Singing Dough Disco Love Music Trust Charanga Dance/Drama lessons	Being imaginative and expressive
RE	Personal, social and emotional development Communication and language Understanding of world	To celebrate difference To talk about how Christians look after the world. To know that Christians welcome babies in a special way. To understand why Christians go to church. To know that Easter is a special time for Christians. To talk about how Jesus showed friendship to others. To know that faiths have special books.	Kapow RE scheme Christmas performance Church visit Concrete experiences e.g. acting out what happens at a christening	People, culture and communities Building relationships

Computing		To programme the Codapillar or Beebot to carry out a short sequence. To use a computer and mouse to complete a task such as complete an online jigsaw. To create pictures by colouring and drawing. To know simple e-safety and know when to ask a grown-up for help when online.	Barefoot Computing Scheme E-safety Smartie the Penguin	
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