Orrell Lamberhead Green Academy 2024

Strong Foundations

Curriculum

Does the curriculum prioritise children's communication and language?

We know that our children start our school with a deficit in communication and language. We prioritise children's communication and language needs to rapidly up level these skills. We ensure that children are exposed to rich vocabulary regularly. On entry children are exposed to lots of stories, nursery rhymes and poems to expose them to a variety of language which they might not have previously heard. Following on from this, 'Talk Through Story' is used to develop children's knowledge of story and the vocabulary associated with it. A baseline assessment of blank level questioning is carried out on each child. Analysis of these assessments indicate that children enter school at a level below the expected with many children needing to secure blank level. This assessment practitioners to highlight the individual needs of a child and support planning.

- **How do you make sure that the curriculum gives enough emphasis to other foundational knowledge and skills, such as addition facts, handwriting and how to write simple sentences (depending on year group and EYFS/national curriculum requirements)?**

  Children typically enter the foundation stage with low levels in physical development. We focus on gross motor skills in the outdoor area for example planning activities where children can use large brushes or move heavy objects to build muscles in their shoulders and arms. In addition, we plan regular funky finger activities either as a whole class or on an individual basis to develop children's fine motor skills. During the daily phonics lesson letter formation and handwriting is a focus. In addition to this, children have additional handwriting sessions. Cutting with scissors and pencil control activities are planned for on a weekly basis in addition children participate in PE lesson weekly in addition to regular outdoor play activities

  Our phonics programme ensures that children are scaffolded in developing early writing skills. Children learn phoneme graphene correspondent and how to write individual sounds whilst also developing their skills in blending. When they are proficient in blending and know some sounds we teach them to segment in order to write short words. Phonic groups are differentiated and additional staff teach phonics so that children can be taught in small groups. Children have time to practise these skills. Children develop their skills in writing simple sentences by first learning to hold a sentence in their head and repeat it. They are then taught to sound out individual words and write the sentence. Children practise dictated sentences so that they can focus on the mechanics of writing a sentence rather than the creativity needed to write their own sentence.

  In maths we adopt a mastery approach allowing children to methodically develop their skills and conceptual understanding. We take time to ensure that children learn at an appropriate pace and have a depth of knowledge so that they can begin to manipulate numbers. Children use manipulatives and representations to develop the early mathematical skills such as counting, ordering and simple addition etc. When children are ready pictorial representations are used. Concepts are revisited throughout the year to embed and develop

children's skills. Questions are deliberately planned and targeted at specific children to ensure there are no misconceptions.

- **Do whole-school approaches get in the way of children learning important foundational knowledge in the early years and key stage 1? Do these approaches (for example, to extended writing or reading comprehension) expect children to do too much too soon?**

  Practitioners are knowledgeable about their children. Time to get to know what their children can do and what they need to do next. Where it is appropriate reception children follow whole school approaches such as the behaviour policy which is introduced when the children come into school. The children are also expected to read at home three times each week – which is the school expectation. However, children read a book which is appropriate to their level and that has already been practised in school. Children with limited reading ability will take home a prereader book to develop their skills in speaking and listening.

  From early on in reception children attend our weekly values assembly. We know that some children are not developmentally ready to sit for an extended time in the hall. Therefore provision is adapted so that targeted children remain in the classroom with support and work that is appropriate for them.

  In addition children in reception do not join their handwriting because they are not developed mentally ready to do so. Children in reception are taught how to form their letters correctly in preparation for joining later in the school life.

- **When activities are designed, to what extent is the focus on what children should learn and practise and how all children will benefit?**

  We understand that learning should not be left a chance. Activities are deliberately planned as a vehicle for learning. We track children to ensure they access all curriculum areas [rainbow challenge] We know that some children are attracted to certain areas of the curriculum e.g. a group of boys who regularly access small world or construction. We encourage these children to access other areas of the curriculum for example directing them to start off in another area. We also adapt planning to hook children's interests. For example focusing on the three little pigs in the outside area. We also plan for adults in specific areas to support learning and to up level vocabulary. This ensures that all children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

- **To what extent does the curriculum reflect children's starting points? Does it sufficiently emphasise the knowledge and skills that children need to learn so that they are not held back later?**

  We take time to get to know the children's starting points: An early induction meeting, visits to nurseries, transitions meeting with nurseries, 1-1 meeting with the teacher, TA, each child and their parents. This ensures that we know about the children before they start school. When a new cohort starts we adapt our curriculum to meet their needs. For example focusing on the primaries, particularly communication and language, PSED and physical development. This curriculum is adapted each year to meet the varying needs of each cohort. We have an excellent knowledge of where our children need to be by the end of the year and understand that focusing on these basic skills enables children to make progress throughout the year. We have high ambitions for all our children. We quickly assess children on entry and access support for children who are identified as having a special educational need. Working in conjunction with subject leaders we have developed a send profile Using the document "Wigan Ordinary Available Inclusive Practice".

Pedagogy

- **How do you make sure that all children get enough practice to become fluent in using important foundational knowledge?**

  Vocabulary is deliberately planned and explicitly taught. Teachers deliberately plan questions; use a range of question strategies and target these at specific children to check their understanding. Teachers in the foundation stage model and narrate their thinking to develop the children's understanding. Practice is planned for, so children have the opportunity to embed learning independently in continuous provision or with the support of an adult. Retrieval practice is used regularly to help children commit concepts to their long-term memory. All staff in the foundation stage use formative assessment strategies to continually assess the learning of children and give feedback to move children's learning on. This approach is practised throughout the school.

- **How are tasks broken down to focus on small steps of learning and to prepare children for what comes next**?

  Schemes such as RWI and white rose maths are deliberately chosen as they break learning down into small chunks. The curriculum is deliberately planned and sequenced to build on what children already know. For example in foundation stage the children learn to sequence a series of events and explain the importance of sequencing that will lead them to learn in year one about exploring algorithms and sequencing of instructions. There is also deliberate opportunities for children to revisit prior learning and to practise these skills and we understand the importance of the Ebbinghaus forgetting curve. This reduces cognitive overload by allowing children to think about what they specifically need to learn.

- **What routines help children to maintain attention without overloading their working memory?**

  Routines are developed from the first days in reception. For example children know the routine of the day through a visual timetable. The behaviour policy is introduced and is consistently applied by all staff. Phonics sessions are routine lead and have the same parts in each lesson. For example, children know each phonics lesson starts with a speed sounds lesson This focus on routines allows children to concentrate on the task they are asked to do rather than how to do it. Some of our children who have neurodivergent tendencies need routines to help them feel safe and to keep them regulated.

- **How are distractions kept to a minimum to help children focus?**

  Where possible lighting is kept low in the classroom. Some displays are neutral using Hessian background. Furniture has been replaced from coloured tables and chairs to more neutral furniture.

- **Does instruction involve all children, including those who find learning more difficult?**

  Typically all children are included in the modelling process. Some children who require more guidance will have an adult to help scaffold their thinking. In addition to this, children who require further repetitive modelling or practice will have additional access to an adult. Children who need it may have a deliberate pre learning conversations. Children who find it hard to grasp the concepts will revisit when appropriate.

- **How do you make sure that children with lower starting points have enough opportunities to interact with adults?**

  Our thorough ongoing assessment ensure that we know our children. We ensure that children with lower starting points are prioritised for interactions with adults. In small group work, staff deliberately plan to work with children with lower starting points. Children with lower starting points are prioritised for relevant interventions where appropriate. We strive for equity. The children with the most needy are deliberately prioritised for interactions.

- **To what extent have you considered what children are thinking during play-based learning?**

  We deliberately plan high quality interactions as we know that children who have had fewer sustained interactions have shorter attention spans (as evidenced in the EEF Quality Interactions document.) We know that children need to be taught to share and work together. We deliberately plan opportunities which encourage children to play cooperatively e.g. when learning about the three little pigs the activity was deliberately planned so that each child had a brick and they had to work together to be successful.

  Given a starting point e.g. 3 little pigs, actually been present to observe and interject language and direction in their personalised learning. Understanding that children have different life experiences that they may bring to the play. Scaffolding their creative ideas and helping children have positive experiences that they can talk about and share with others.

- **Do all staff understand how play can develop children's language and executive functioning and help them to learn important knowledge?**

  We understand that our current cohort were born in covid. Through the work of Tim Oates, we know children are likely to have a significant deficit in language acquisition and executive functioning. We know that many of our children struggle to manage emotions or follow instructions, struggle to focus or separate from their main carer. As a consequence, we break learning into small chunks, introduce Zones of Regulations at an early stage, build relationships with children and their trusted adults. We know that children's basic needs should be met in order for them to be able to learn. (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs)

  In line with the work of Tim Oates we know that the remedy to the deficit of executive functioning is in line with school practise of formative assessment strategies, providing feedback that moves the learning forward. Schools ensures children have lots of opportunity to practice while being engaged in rich questions and quality dialogue with adults.

- Do staff know how to address children's speech, language and communication difficulties?

Assessment

Thanks to work Dylan William we know that the biggest improvements in students learning happen when teachers use assessment minute by minute and day by day as part of regular teaching not as part of a monitoring process good assessment is good teaching and is about making sure that our teachers have good evidence for the decisions they need to make.

As teachers it is important that we understand use and can articulate the difference between the three types of assessment:

- assessment for learning formative assessment bullet.
- assessment to learn the testing effect well about
- assessment of learning summative assessment.

- **Does training make sure that staff can anticipate and deal with misconceptions during instruction and practice?**

  Continuing professional development is a focus for us. Staff have attended training in a variety of areas such as phonics, maths and the wider curriculum. Staff plan questions to explore if children have any misconceptions and there is a regular dialogue between practitioners to discuss next steps.

- **Do gaps in knowledge for the lowest-attaining children persist? If so, why?**

  Some children who are low attainers have gaps in their knowledge Groupings are carefully considered for children who are not making expected progress. Small steps trackers are used to support progress the progress of children with send this allows us to see were gaps are and then plan activities to plug these gaps. If further support is needed interventions may be planned, an IEP put in place, or the advice of the SENCO sort.

- **To what extent do current reading and writing tasks replicate end of key stage tests? Can tasks be introduced that provide practice (and opportunities for assessment) in foundational knowledge?**

  Children are regularly assessed on phonics – this is deliberate so that practitioners know the progress they have made and the next steps. This prepares them so that they will be successful when they come to take the PSC. However, at no point in FS do we practise the PSC.

- **How do you assess foundational knowledge and skills such as handwriting and number facts?**

  Summative assessments include : Half term late phonic assessments are completed to assess children's knowledge of sounds and blending. Each term children's pencil grip is assessed. Maths assessments are ongoing and a checkpoint system is in operation for the White Rose Maths. In addition to the summative assessments, staff continually assess children on a daily basis to see where they are making progress. Activities may be planned to support children who are not making as much progress. In addition groups in phonics are fluid and children

who have made a lot of progress and who are over performing in their group are quickly moved to a more appropriate group to ensure they make the maximum progress.

- **How might information about any gaps in children's knowledge be shared most effectively with the children's next teacher?**

  End of year transition is crucial to support children in the next academic year. Staff meet to discuss each child in detail what their strengths are and any issues that they might have. In addition year one staff visit the foundation stage to get to know the children. There is an early meet the teacher meeting for parents and then children get to spend a day with their new class teacher. Of this happened before the beginning of the new academic year. Staff are also given time to read through the personalised reports for each child.

Personal development, behaviour and attitudes

- **How do you help children to get on with others and learn well? In particular, how do you help children who have less previous experience of this than others?**

  Practitioners understand that children need to be taught to behave. From entry to school children are taught the golden rules and what they mean. They are quickly introduced to the school's behaviour policy and staff take time to narrate the classroom so that children develop their understanding of what good behaviour looks like. Children in reception soon attend our weekly values assembly so that they develop their understanding of our school values and expectations. Our behaviour policy is visual and allows children to see the impact that their good behaviour has. Children who need more support may have adaptations to the policy. The class is learn about zones of regulation to develop their understanding of their emotions and how to deal with them. Strong routines are quickly established as well as a cool down area which any child is encouraged to use to help them regulate themselves.

- **How do you make sure that activities enable children to learn and to be able to do what you expect? How do you make sure that activities are not too complicated?**

  Focus activities teach children new skills and concepts. There is then an opportunity for children to practise these skills independently in continuous provision. Activities are broken down into small steps so that children do not suffer from cognitive overload and are able to succeed.

Actions to Improve Practice

- Discussions with staff re interventions V quality interactions
- Relook at timetable
- List of targeted children – ensure all staff know who and why
- Track children who are targeted
- Possible training on quality interactions for staff