

HOLY TRINITY



C. E. PRIMARY ACADEMY  
(HANDSWORTH)

## **EYFS Curriculum Rationale**

**2023-2024**

## Holy Trinity CE Primary Academy Vision Statement

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11

At Holy Trinity CE Primary Academy our distinctive Christian values are at the heart of all we do. Through our curriculum and care our children develop independent curiosity, acquire a life-long appetite for learning and become well-rounded individuals, seeking ‘hope and a future’ for themselves and others.

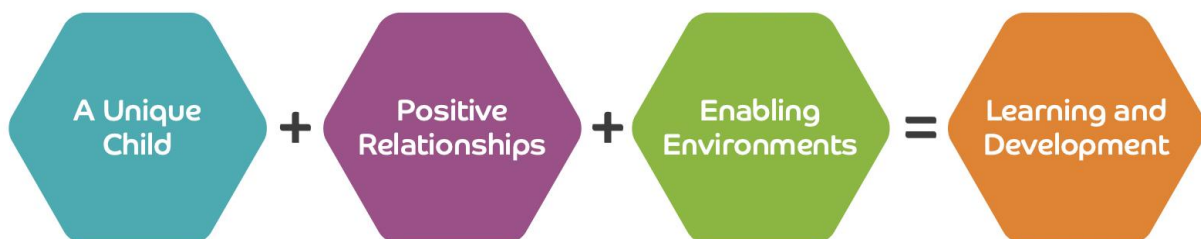
## Holy Trinity Curriculum

Our curriculum is about bringing engagement, fun and enthusiasm to learning so that our children develop independent curiosity, acquire a lifelong appetite for learning and become well-rounded individuals who achieve their full potential, both personally and academically. Our curriculum starts from the children in our academy and works out.

## Intent

At Holy Trinity CE Primary Academy, we aim to provide a solid foundation for learning that provides pupils with the best possible start to their educational journey with us. Our curriculum aims to build on our pupils’ personal experiences, heritage and culture. This is used as a starting point in their learning journey and then as a vehicle for delivering our EYFS curriculum. We ensure that pupils develop solid foundational knowledge and skills that are progressive and developed over the Reception year. As children then move through each year group in our school, their knowledge and skills learnt in Reception are further built upon and applied each year during their time at Holy Trinity. We ensure that we use our bridging documents to provide a seamless ‘bridge’ between the EYFS Curriculum and the National Curriculum so that pupils secure the prior learning ready to succeed in KS1, KS2 and beyond.

The following overarching principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage underpin our practice:



- **The Unique Child:** At the heart of our school vision is developing every child as a well-rounded individual whilst considering their innate worth and value. We believe that children learn best when they are happy, secure and actively involved in their own learning. We acknowledge that children learn at different rates and each is at an individual stage of development. 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, preparing them with the dispositions, skills and knowledge for future learning.

- **Positive Relationships:** Our caring, Christian ethos and values support children in developing positive relationships, providing a safe, secure foundation from which to learn. Personal, social and emotional development is a prime need and priority, and our behaviour policy puts nurturing relationships and restorative practice at the centre of our interactions.
- **Enabling Environments:** Through planning a stimulating indoor and outdoor environment, we seek to embrace children's natural inclinations to play and embed the right habits for learning through the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning – Play and Exploration, Active Learning and Creative and Critical Thinking. We encourage children to play, explore, use their imagination, be active, take risks and become problem solvers. We encourage children to persevere at activities and foster a growth mindset. We support them to become confident learners, preparing them well for the next stage of education. Skilful interactions with our early years staff mean that teaching and learning is supported. Adults respond to children's individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time.
- **Learning and Development:** Our curriculum supports our pupils to gain the knowledge, skills and understanding they require for success. It is based on the heritage of our school community and outworked through understanding and following children's interests and guiding them skilfully to deepen their knowledge and skills. We follow the expectations in the EYFS Statutory Framework and use the Birth to 5 Matters guidance as the starting point for progression in our curriculum.

## Implementation

### The Unique Child

A child's journey begins through us getting to know them as an individual, using close observation as they are absorbed in their play, noticing what they are able to do, are interested in and their dispositions for learning. Observations are recorded in the child's learning journal and are assessed to indicate the child's level of development. Practitioners are then able to plan for how to move the child forward in their learning, particularly identifying if there are any areas of need.

### Positive Relationships

As children settle in and naturally form relationships with staff, they often find an affinity (or attachment) with a particular member of staff. As a result of this, all EYFS staff are involved

with planning and assessing children's work. However, the overarching responsibility for teaching and learning lies with the class teacher.

### **An Enabling Environment**

Our learning environment is planned to facilitate the development of the characteristics of effective learning and is pivotal to the learning and assessment we provide. We view the classroom environment (indoors and outdoors) as the child's third teacher, and it is therefore carefully designed to support the individual's development of skills and will be continually evaluated regularly throughout the year. Our continuous provision is carefully planned to meet and challenge the developmental needs of all our children both indoor and outdoor as guided by the *Birth to Five Matters* guidance. Areas of provision are reviewed on a half termly basis to address gaps in learning and evaluated on a weekly/daily basis to assess levels of children's interest and impact on learning.

### **Learning and Development**

Our Reception curriculum is based on developing the key knowledge and skills in the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*. We ensure that the learning opportunities and experiences we provide are clearly linked to both the Prime (Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language and Physical Development) and Specific (Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design) Areas of Learning. We always consider the individual needs of our children and with this information in mind, we are then able to plan a range of broad and balanced learning experiences.

In Reception, our pupils often arrive with language skills below national expectations. It is therefore important for us provide experiences that help pupils to develop their communication skills, oracy skills and increase their vocabulary. We place huge importance on this and ensure that staff are skilled in assessing language development and are able to support children in being able to communicate their thoughts and ideas and explore the meaning of new words. We utilise Makaton in Reception to support children with their early language development. We teach them a range of basic signs to help them to initially communicate. We also use repetitive stories, rhymes and songs as a starting point to help them to develop their language skills.

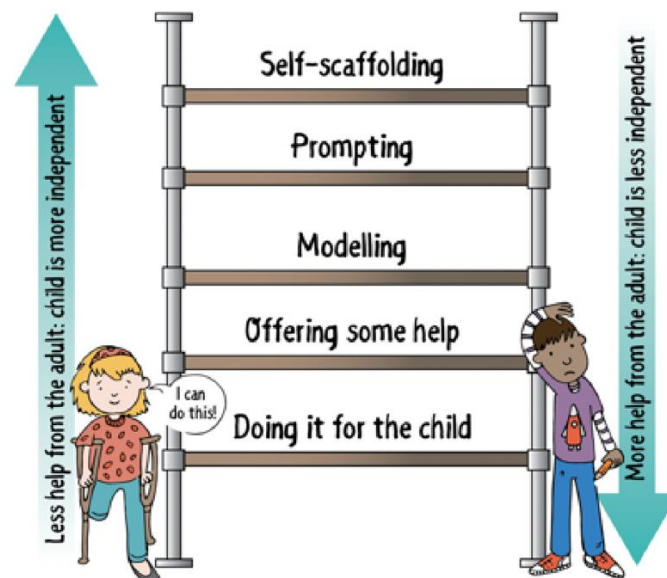
Phonics has a high priority in our school. We start teaching phonics in Reception and follow the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* scheme, which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school. Teaching begins in Week 2 of the Autumn term and children make a strong start. We teach phonics for 20-25 minutes every day and have 20-minute reading practice sessions three times a week. At Holy Trinity, we also model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics in shared reading and writing, both inside and outside of the phonics lesson and across the curriculum.

## Our Curriculum Goals

1. To become a **MAGICAL MATHEMATICIAN** who has a deep understanding of number and applies this to solve problems.
2. To become a **FANTASTIC FRIEND** who is a confident learner and cares for others.
3. To become a **HEALTHY HERO** who has the essential skills to be ready for the next step in their journey.
4. To become a **PROUD PERFORMER** who expresses and shares creativity in different ways.
5. To become an **EAGER EXPLORER** who can talk confidently about their experiences of the world around them.
6. To become a **CONFIDENT COMMUNICATOR** who listens carefully and can hold a conversation with another person.
7. To become a **ROARING READER** who can confidently read and discuss a familiar text.
8. To become a **RICH WRITER** who can independently write sentences to communicate their ideas.

In Reception we have created 8 curriculum goals linked to the areas of learning which we aim for all our children to achieve by the end of the year. The goals are ambitious and provide an overview of many of the different things we would like the children to know and be able to do by the end of the year. *(Please see our Progression Documents to see the breakdown of skills and knowledge needed in order to achieve these curriculum goals.)* Our early years staff always have these curriculum goals in mind and consider them alongside the EYFS Framework and Birth to 5 Matters guidance. When planning activities, staff consider how to offer scaffolding and extra support to help every child access the curriculum and to ensure they make progress through it.

The goals are adaptable to the particular children on roll. However, we recognise that every child will not make the same progress through the curricular goals. Therefore, support will be offered at a level appropriate for that individual child. Nonetheless, it is important for us that all children are still able to participate in the same curriculum. Where children move on quickly, our emphasis is on deepening their learning rather than introducing new skills or concepts. This is achieved through effective scaffolding.



Children are reminded of these goals often throughout the year and we provide weekly certificates for children who have shown progress towards these goals. For example, a child may receive the 'Magical Mathematician Award' for independently using problem solving skills in a maths challenge after previous support and scaffolding by the teacher. Children use the language in our curriculum goals in their play and are often reminded of what they could do to make progress in achieving our curriculum goals.

## **Topics**

In order for children to achieve our curriculum goals and also the expectations in the EYFS Framework, we aim to engage pupils in a number of exciting and interesting topics over the year. All topics have been carefully planned to consider the heritage, culture and locality of our school community and pupils. At the beginning of each topic, pupils are immersed in a variety of different concepts and ideas surrounding the topic (*please see our Topic Overviews*). There is an exciting hook to engage and motivate pupils and provide context for their learning. Staff assess pupils' prior knowledge at the start of the half term using an entry assessment which is displayed within the classroom and referred to throughout the learning. Pupils are then introduced to the topic question which they will aim to answer by the end of the half term. Topic questions:

- Autumn 1 – What makes us all special?
- Autumn 2 – How do we celebrate special occasions?
- Spring 1 – How can we travel around our city?
- Spring 2 – How are all animals different?
- Summer 1 – Where does our food come from?
- Summer 2 – How do plants grow?

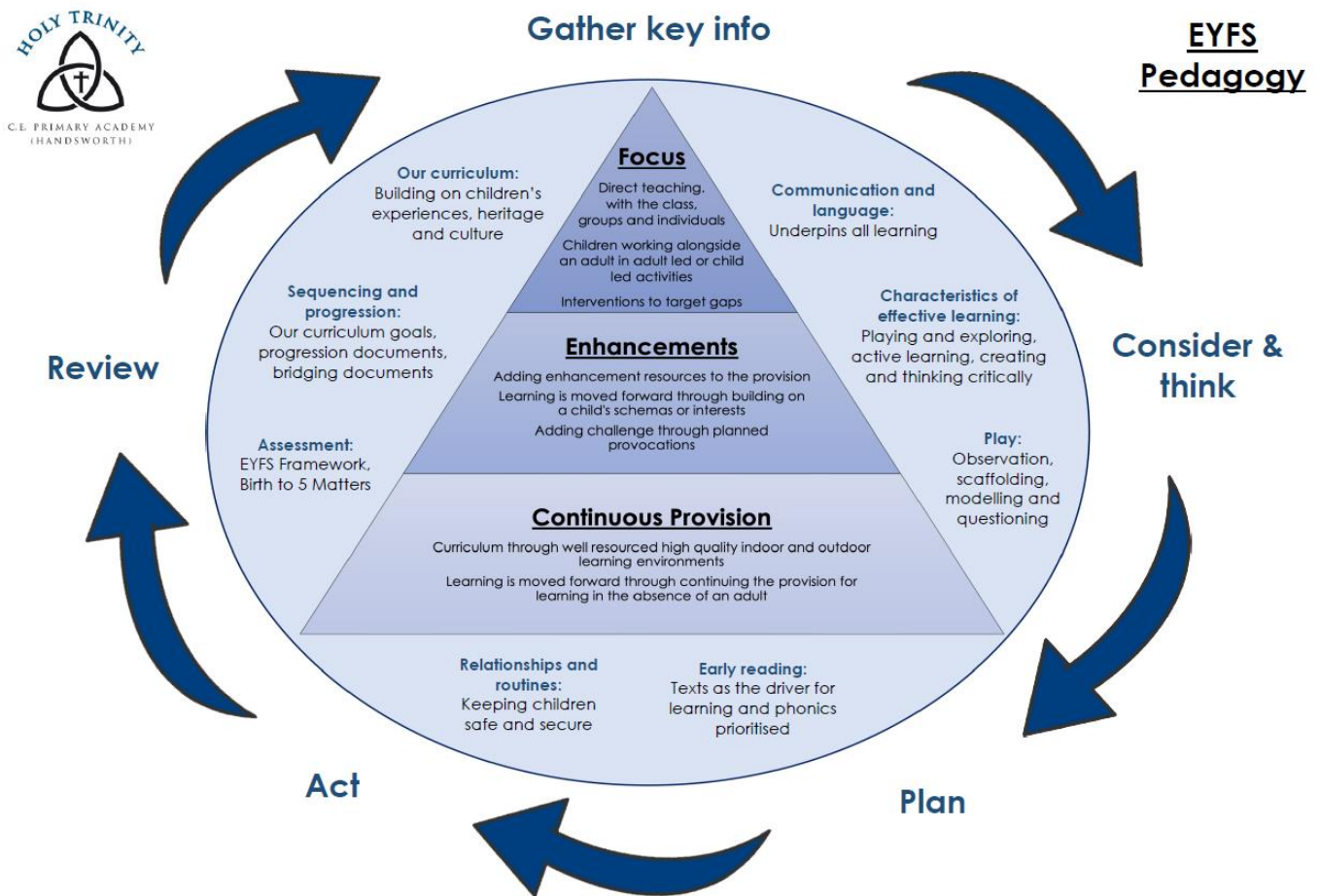
Children's progress throughout the topic is carefully monitored by staff. Their learning is evaluated using the class learning journey board which illustrates what has been learned over the half term. It also showcases the 'journey' of their learning over the half term and how their skills and knowledge have progressed since the start of the topic. It is added to weekly to illustrate pupils' learning of the topic over the half term. From this, next steps for knowledge and skills can be identified. Staff can then assess the skills and knowledge learned throughout the half term and plan future activities accordingly. This is then further developed through the next topic.

Reading is at the heart of our curriculum. Key literacy texts become a springboard for inspiring cross-curricular learning, embedding imagination and a love of reading at the core of our curriculum. Each half term there is a core text that stimulates learning about the topic. There are also some additional texts to enhance learning and improve children's knowledge around the topic. Teaching is then based around the core text and is carefully sequenced and progressive. We believe that children's engagement is highest based upon their interests and therefore the manner in which key objectives are taught is flexible and adapted to the needs and interests of the cohort. Effective interactions between staff and children and

regular home/school communication ensures that our curriculum planning and provision is flexible and continuously adapted to meet the needs of all learners and to reflect children's needs and interests as they continue to develop and grow.

## Teaching and Learning

Our early years approach is based upon the Early Excellence Curriculum Development Model. The curriculum and learning environment is carefully planned to support learning through play. This model comprises of three layers: continuous provision, enhanced provision, focus tasks. This philosophy sits within our own school curriculum model which has a number of key aspects as identified below.

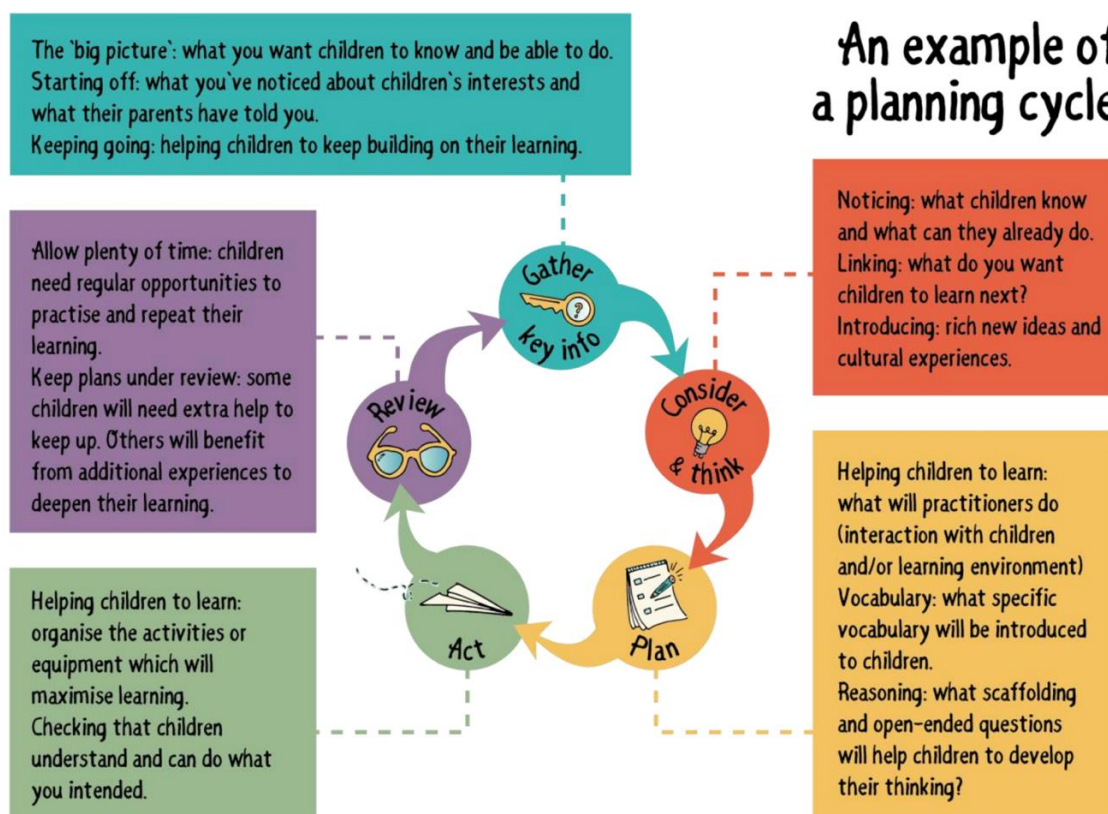


Our approach to teaching and learning involves an appropriate balance of both adult-led and child-led learning that focuses on developing core skills and knowledge. All activities are specific to children's needs and provide appropriate challenge. All children complete several focus activities weekly with an adult. These are often linked to Literacy and Maths and are planned, guided learning activities where an individual or group work with a member of staff towards achieving specific targets. This focused time means the teacher can support children to progress in key sequential building blocks, systematically checking for understanding, identifying and responding to misconceptions quickly and provide real-time verbal feedback which results in a strong impact on the acquisition of new learning. Focus activities target specific knowledge, skills or gaps in learning and may be designed to offer challenge to the cohort. Specific gaps for individuals are targeted through interventions.

In addition to this, pupils are able to access child-led activities through continuous provision daily. At the start of each academic year, we teach the children to use the basic provision in the classroom which has been designed to meet the developmental needs of the cohort. Learning is developed through the different classroom areas and resources both indoors and outdoors. These areas stay the same all year and form the foundation for all learning. The purpose of our high-quality continuous provision is that the learning can still be moved forward through continuing the provision for learning in the absence of an adult.

Each week, a few children will be selected to be the “focus children” and adults will record some of the interactions that they have with these focus children. Although staff do give the focus children a bit more attention, the staff are interacting with all the children, but do not record all interactions – they only record some of their interactions with the focus children on their Learning Journeys. The staff observe and interact with the children in their pursuits – looking out for “teachable moments” in which they can make a difference. All adults, who interact with a focus child, contribute to the Learning Journeys. This process contains a moment in which the adult has to “plan” what to do as a result of what he/she has observed. The entries on the Learning Journeys are intended to be a record of some planning and teaching. Therefore, they are interactions when an adult has been involved and has had some impact on the child, teaching a next step in that moment.

Planning follows this cycle:



(Working With the Revised Early Years Foundation Stage: Principles into Practice, Julian Grenier, 2020)

Each half term, there are a set of texts for each topic. As we introduce these texts, the classroom areas will be enhanced with additional resources, provocations or activities to



spark the children's curiosity, develop their exploration and play, extend/challenge their learning and practise key skills. Enhancements will often be linked to the core text/topic. They are added and changed as and when needed – this is usually weekly but could be more often depending on the children's needs. Enhancements add breadth and increase opportunities for the children to develop knowledge and skills across the curriculum. The types of enhancements that we provide may link to a child's schema, interests or gaps in knowledge or skills that the teacher wants to develop. These are mapped out through our medium and short term planning.

Staff are trained to observe, join in, extend and develop children's play and learning through high quality interactions and effective questioning. Our curriculum is balanced with learning that stems from the children's interests. Child-initiated learning plans are flexible and follow children's fascinations within the topic. Children learn a huge amount through the play they choose. We will help maximise this learning by making sure we provide a high-quality learning environment. 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. This responsive action is often linked to the continuous provision planning. For example, we may plan to keep a particular part of the provision the same to allow the child more time to explore and master a skill, or if the practitioner decides that a child has achieved a particular skill or curriculum goal, we might introduce a new resource that allows the child to progress on to the next stage of learning.

During continuous provision, we have implemented weekly 'Rainbow Challenges'. There are 8 different challenges which are based on our 8 curriculum goals. Each challenge enables the children to develop key skills in that specific area of learning and is a purposefully planned activity to enable pupils' learning to continue in the absence of an adult. Pupils are set their rainbow challenges at the start of the week, and it is an aim for them to ensure that they complete all activities by the end of the week. Each child has to collect a different coloured lollipop stick upon completing each challenge. These are then counted at the end of the week and the child is awarded a rainbow challenge sticker. This helps staff to monitor progress across the challenges and target key children who may need additional support in developing certain skills. They may then be provided with an additional rainbow challenge the following day/week that specifically targets any gaps or areas of need.

Our staff help children to learn through continuous provision in many encouraging, thoughtful and gently challenging ways. These include:

- creating a rich and stimulating environment, indoors and outside, so that children can choose their own play and activities
- joining in with children's play when appropriate, and sensitively introducing challenges and new ideas
- setting challenges for children in a sensitive way and allowing them to find their own solutions to problems
- showing children how to do things (modelling) and explaining how to do things
- scaffolding learning so that pupils can tackle new problems
- encouraging children to collaborate and learn from each other
- guiding children's learning in a playful way

- discussing ideas with children, using skilful questioning and challenging their thinking to help them clarify their understanding of ideas
- commenting on what children are doing
- directly teaching children a new skill, concept or an important piece of information
- using ICT to support children's learning

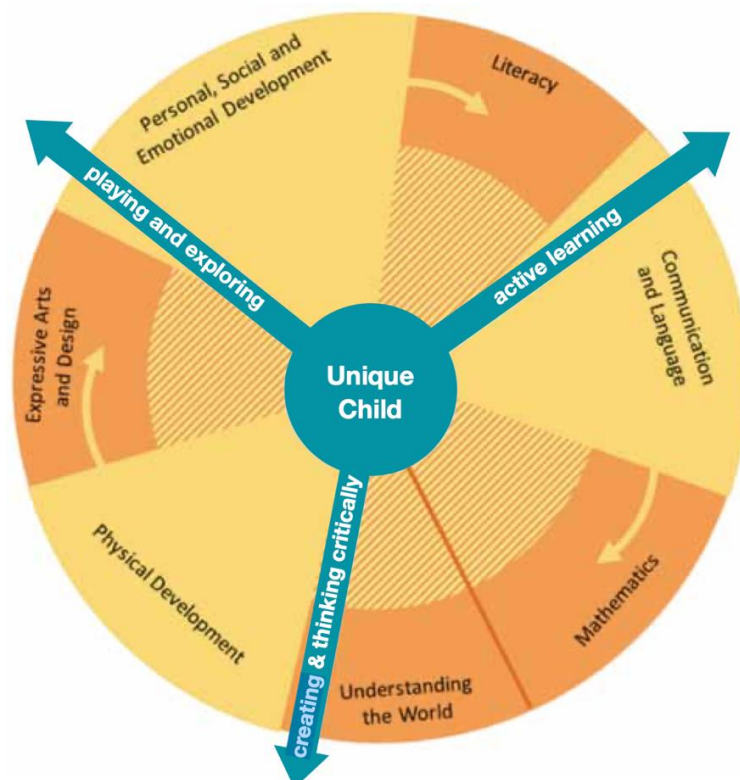
## **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

In planning and guiding children's activities, our early years staff reflect on the different ways that children learn, and then promote these in their practice. The Characteristics of Effective Learning describe how children learn. These learning dispositions, behaviours and habits of mind are particularly important because they build the foundations needed to support children to become strong lifelong learners and independent thinkers.

Three Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning identified by the EYFS are:

- Playing and exploring - Children are finding out and exploring, playing with what they know and are willing to have a go at new things.
- Active learning - Children are involved in what they are doing and concentrating, they keep trying and enjoy achieving what they set out to do.
- Creating and thinking critically - Children have their own ideas, make links and choose ways to do things.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning and the Prime and Specific Areas of Learning and Development are all inter-connected. Different elements of learning are identified in the EYFS, to make the complex picture of learning clearer. But children's learning is not compartmentalised and many or all of these elements are in action at the same time as children interact with people and things.



## Impact

We aim for outcomes in early years to evidence a broad and balanced curriculum that demonstrates children's acquisition of age-related key knowledge and skills. The impact of our curriculum is measured by how effectively it helps our children develop into well rounded individuals who achieve our curriculum goals, embody our school values and carry with them the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will make them lifelong learners and valuable future citizens. We endeavour for pupils to be Key Stage 1 ready and have our school values embedded by the time they leave Reception, preparing them for their future. Many of our children have varied and diverse starting points. Therefore, we have high expectations to ensure that all our children make strong progress across all the areas of the EYFS curriculum. Through delivering our curriculum, we strive for all children to reach the Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception and to be at least in line with national expectations.

Despite the exceeding descriptor being removed from the Early Learning Goals, we continue to have high expectations and support our more able children to gain depth and breadth of knowledge and skills for application across the curriculum. We understand that when assessing children against the early learning goals, there will be many children who are awarded the same level but may be working at differing levels within that range. Effective communication between EYFS and KS1 staff is therefore crucial to achieve an effective transition for children and to plan accordingly for the next stage of their learning journey.

Our bridging documents ensure that children remember what they have learnt in Reception and can absorb new knowledge into larger ideas. Each subject in KS1 is valued as its own discipline and has a knowledge and skills map, which is delivered through various exciting ways. We aim to ensure that the knowledge and skills learned in EYFS are then applied and built upon later in KS1. Therefore, learning is progressive from EYFS into KS1 and the 'bridge' is effective.

In Reception we constantly monitor the number of pupils who are making expected progress throughout the academic year and put supportive interventions in place when needed. Class teachers use observations to make formative assessments which inform future planning and ensure that all children build on their current knowledge and skills. Summative assessment compares children's attainment to age related expectations using the bands in the *Birth to Five Matters* guidance. We complete a data drop half termly and teachers record the progress children have made onto trackers. This allows us to assess the impact of teaching and evaluate its impact on pupil progress through discussion with the class teacher. Evidence of children's learning includes teacher knowledge of the child, completed work in learning journals and books, and observational evidence which includes pupil voice. Our assessment judgements are moderated and validated both in school by senior leaders and externally with local schools and BDMAT schools.