



Overarching aims

At New Invention Infant School, we have created an exciting, innovative, bespoke curriculum with overarching cohesive themes across the whole of the school. British Values thread throughout these themes; however, there is a greater emphasis on aspects of this at particular points during the year. These themes are chosen purposefully, to engage young children, while year on year building on prior knowledge systematically, to widen their understanding of themselves and the world around them. The children also access year group topics that link into our overarching themes throughout the year.

Autumn Term - 'Me and My Imagination'

By placing this theme at the start of each academic year, it enables the children some time to think about themselves and their individuality, the challenges ahead as they transition and share their interests, thoughts and emotions as they build new relationships.

Spring Term - 'Heroes and Villains'

This theme further develops the children's understanding of how to keep themselves safe. It gives them the opportunity to explore the dynamics of relationships and mutual respect including what is acceptable in the way we treat others and in the way that others treat us. This theme also aims to develop children's understanding of tolerance, rights and wrongs and the rule of law.

Summer Term - 'Natural World'

During this theme, the children will explore the natural world moving from insular environments to the wider world as they move through the school. They will explore animals, nature and the environment including developing an understanding of environmental issues and what it means to be a world citizen.

Play underpins all development and learning for our young children. Most children play spontaneously, although some may need adult support to move this play forward. It is through play that they develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally. The classroom environments are set up so that children can move freely around clearly defined areas. There is a balance between activities that the teacher chooses for your child, and opportunities for child-initiated learning in a structured environment.



What we teach...

Our Early Years Curriculum is topic-based, thematic and creative, and referenced to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which is a statutory requirement for schools in England.. Currently the curriculum is organised in the following way:-

Your child will be learning skills, acquiring new knowledge and demonstrating their understanding through 7 areas of learning and development. Initially, the key focus is on the development of the prime areas of learning, these are:

- **Communication and Language** The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

- **Personal, social and emotional development** - Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.
- **Physical development** - Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practise of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

These prime areas are the most essential for your child's development. Without a strong foundation in these, the children cannot work on developing the skills needed to succeed in the four specific areas. The four specific areas are:

- **Literacy** - It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).
- **Mathematics** - Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.
- **Understanding the world** - Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them - from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their

understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

- **Expressive arts and design** - The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

Our learning opportunities are delivered through exciting and dynamic topics, which fit into our overarching themes of 'Me and My Imagination', 'Heroes and Villains' and the 'Natural World'. Each topic begins with an inspirational event, followed by fortnightly 'blocks' of learning based around a specific book or focused area of a topic. These are chosen carefully to not only engage our youngest children in their learning but to also enable us to focus learning initially around themselves and their own experiences, before expanding into the world around them as the year passes. In Nursery the topics are: **Me and My Celebrations**, **People Who Help Us** and **Down on the Farm**. Reception topics are: **Nursery Rhyme land**, **Superheroes** and **At the Bottom of the Garden**.



How we teach...

Nursery:

Throughout the day children stay together in their family groups, moving around each of the three areas of the Nursery environment. We call this rotation of areas 'Turnarounds'. The 'splash zone' gives the children the opportunity to access sand, water, malleable materials like play dough, the home corner, construction materials and a loose parts maths area. In the 'splat zone' children can access a range of books, the easels, a creative trolley, message centre, the Clevertouch, small world and an ever-changing role play loft. The final area is the 'squelch zone', which is the outdoor environment - here the children have the opportunity to develop their gross motor skills on the climbing equipment, bikes and scooters. They can also access provision covering each area of learning in differently themed sheds in the outdoor area. These include:- water, literacy/maths and a music shed. Children will also have the opportunity to explore their senses in the water area, mud kitchen, planting area and sensory garden.

During each 'Turnaround' the children participate in one adult-led focused activity. These activities can be taught in small groups or as a one-to-one activity if the children need this. The children also have access to all of the areas in each 'zone' where they can engage in child-initiated play. To help engage the children there are a range of 'enhancements' to move learning forward as well as independent activities and challenges. The nursery environment is set up so that children who are ready can organise their own play, learn whilst being active, make links and thinking critically.

Initially, during the first few months the Nursery environment is very minimalistic. There is then a steady introduction of further resources as the children show they are 'ready' for this. By doing this adults can teach the children how to use new areas of learning in a purposeful and respectful way. This ensures that our children become independent learners very quickly. During the first term in Nursery, there is a greater emphasis on the prime areas of learning. We develop the children's language by playing alongside them, modelling language and through specific activities teaching the children the key features of a conversation including listening and turn taking. Key vocabulary is always modelled with the expectation that children will initially repeat the word and when ready the word in a sentence. By having an adult in child-initiated learning we are able to support the children to take turns, share equipment and engage them with the other children quickly giving the children opportunities to have good relationships with both adults and their peers. We use a range of activities when the children first come into the setting in 'squiggle and wiggle' time to develop

their gross and fine motor skills including write dance, dough disco and core strength activities such as Cosmic kids yoga.

We follow Rising Stars Rocket Phonics when teaching the children phonics. In Nursery during phonics session we ensure that the children have the ability to listen, talk about and differentiate between sounds. The children love joining in with listening walks, playing sound lotto and using instruments to develop their auditory discrimination and memory. By sharing a range of rhyming and alliterative stories, songs and playing games with the children they show more readiness when we move onto learning graphemes in reception. When the children have embedded the key skills of needed they are introduced to sounds - by using Rocket Phonics we engage the children with a multi-sensory interactive approach to learning graphemes. To find out more information about how nursery teach phonics please see our school website. In Maths we use the White Rose Hub for Early Years but have adapted the order and length of time that it takes to teach each aspect for Nursery to ensure that our children have embedded the key skills, alongside this we use the NCETM resources with Cbeebies Number blocks to engage the children in learning numbers and the key concepts of counting. Children have access to Numicon, bead strings and counting toys to add depth their knowledge of number.

Reception:

Each morning when the children first enter the classroom they are met with a song or two - during 'Squiggle and Wiggle time'. This start to their day helps to develop their gross and fine motor skills through write dance, dough disco and core strength activities. The teacher also uses this time to focus on those children who need extra support with handwriting, pencil grip and co-ordination.

The focus for the first part of the morning is on phonics and reading as this is crucial to every aspect of learning. Reception continue to follow the Rocket Phonics scheme. Children are introduced to two sounds a week including the chance to practise blending and segmenting with these sounds. During the introduction phase children access a multi-sensory approach to learning letters and sounds by using the Rocket Phonics schemes, playing phonics games and using the Rocket Phonics 'workbooks'. As the children move through the scheme they will have access to more books - based on the sounds that they have learned so far. When in school children will read physical books which can then be accessed at home via the rocket phonics online reading scheme. (If you do not have access to the internet please inform your class teacher and we will provide you with the physical book.) Both the teacher and teaching assistant work with groups of children during the phonics session whilst the other children access independent phonics activities or child initiated learning.

For the remainder of the morning the children complete three 'turnarounds' covering the other areas of learning. The children complete activities with both the teacher and TA, as well as adult-direct enhancements and child initiated learning. The classrooms follow a similar pattern of areas to learning as Nursery, however due to their size this is not always possible. In reception the children have access to sand or water, a painting easel, construction area, book corner, message centre, loose parts maths area and role play area in the loft. Due to the children's growing independence they also have access to a range of 'choosing drawers', these are evaluated with the children and are different in each class depending on the classes interests. Again in each choosing area the staff plan enhancements and set the children challenges to cover all areas of the EYFS curriculum.

The children will complete either an adult-led focus or an independent Maths activity each day. These are based around the White Rose Hub activities, however as a school we have amended the teaching order to ensure that the children cover areas of both Number and Shape, Space and Measure each term whilst also having enough time to embed what is taught. The children also continue on their journey with the Number blocks and use a range of resources including Numicon, Dienes, counting beads and number lines to ensure they have breadth of their number knowledge.

Four out of five afternoons a week all of the children in Reception have full access to the outdoor area. This is set up similar to Nursery with the children having access to a range of resources through different sheds which are as follows: sports, builders, literacy, maths, creative, music, gardening and mud kitchen. Areas however are more difficult to set up for reception as our playground is also the entrance and exit to school.

When outside through the week the children have the opportunity to complete four adult-led activities with a member of reception staff helping them to further expand their circle of relationships. One adult will engage in child-initiated learning focusing on developing children's language and social skills. The final adult uses this time to work with target children to ensure that they are making rapid progress in phonics. On the day the children are not outside they have the opportunity to complete P.E. in the hall initially working on key movement skills but eventually moving onto more traditional games, gym and dance lesson as well as having a focus on developing children's health and fitness.

Assessment and Homework

An important part of planning appropriate activities for your child is understanding what your child can already do. We continually assess your child so that we can plan for their next step of learning. Regular meetings with parents enable us to share this progress with you, and also gives you a chance to let us know what your child can do at home, so that we can build a full picture.

All children are assessed using the Wellcomm test on entry to Nursery and at the end of each term up until the end of Reception. This is a language toolkit that gives detailed information to help us identify possible gaps in learning and areas for further development, as well as share next steps with you to work on at home. Although it has the title 'test' it is a range of fun activities that the children enjoy engaging especially when they get a sticker at the end!

In addition, all children are assessed against a nationally recognised profile across all areas of the EYFS curriculum. This measures carefully the progress your child has made during the year and along with our own regular assessments and observations of your child at work and play, gives parents and staff key information to maximise further progress. This also feeds into how the year one teacher's arrange their curriculum during the first half term of year one.

Although we do not have traditional homework in EYFS learning doesn't stop at the school gates. In Nursery, there is the chance for you to access our library each day where you can take home a book to share at bedtime something which we think is vital to help develop your children's language and later love of reading. In Reception we will send home books to share with your children and when they are ready they will bring home sounds, words and their own reading books to complete with you at home, as well as phonics books on bug club - our online reading platform. Children in EYFS will have access to espresso and purple mash at home giving them lots of opportunities to learn and be creative on their computer at home. Our staff have worked hard to create home learning pages on our website which include activities for each subject and area of learning, they also include bedtime stories read by the teachers and some songs too!