

# Newbold Verdon Primary School

## EYFS Curriculum

'In early year's settings, the starting point must be the needs and characteristics of the child; the educator must assess these through observation and by collaborating with parents. The wide range of developmental stages and needs of very young children puts a great responsibility on educators to provide a curriculum which can take into account the similarities and differences within any group of under-fives and also provide continuity with what went before and progression to what will follow.'

*Starting with quality: the 'Rumbold Report' 1990*

### Introduction: our Curriculum

For most of the time, children at Newbold Verdon are engaged in exploration and play-based learning which is well-resourced and well-supported.

This learning does not have immediate fixed outcomes. But practitioners are mindful of the outcomes we want children to reach, and guide children towards them.

Children have significant choice and independence as they play. This supports their developing confidence, independence, collaboration, persistence and self-regulation.

Exploration and play-based learning can be chosen entirely by the child or can be guided by the practitioners in a playful way. Children need both options.

Practitioners have a key role in supporting this learning by developing episodes of joint adult/child attention and listening to the children and developing conversations with them. Practitioners gently challenge children's thinking. They provide suggestions and resources over time which make the learning more challenging. They use new vocabulary naturally and repeatedly, so children use and learn those words. As practitioners interact with the children minute-by-minute, they are reflecting on how their interactions can support further learning.

Everything is underpinned by support for children's confidence and emotional wellbeing.

Children also need adult-guided learning and direct teaching to learn key skills and concepts.

They need to learn new words which are not present in everyday speech ('tier 2 vocabulary').

For example, to count to five, a child needs to learn to:

- develop fast recognition of up to 3 objects, without having to count them individually ('subitising')
- recite numbers past 5
- say one number for each item in order: 1,2,3,4,5
- know that the last number reached when counting a small set of objects tells you how many there are in total ('cardinal principle')
- show 'finger numbers' up to 5

- link numerals and amounts: for example, showing the right number of objects to match the numeral, up to 5

That's why curriculum is important in the early years.

By 'curriculum' we mean: all the things that we want children to know, experience and be able to do as a result of their time in the EYFS.

Through observation and assessment, we have identified that developing communication and vocabulary skills is a priority for our children and this is why it is the main thread running through our curriculum. We also know that providing enhanced and continuous provision is not enough without understanding the skills progression that children need whilst in the Early Years. We have therefore developed (based on Alistair Bryce-Clegg's pedagogy) a set of Common Play Behaviours for each area of provision. This is by no means an exhaustive list but include the progression of skills that we would like to see in each area. These grids are designed to be used as a tool to ensure challenge for all learners using continuous provision and to reflect on and to provide enhancements to follow the children's interests and to provoke their exploration, thinking and learning.

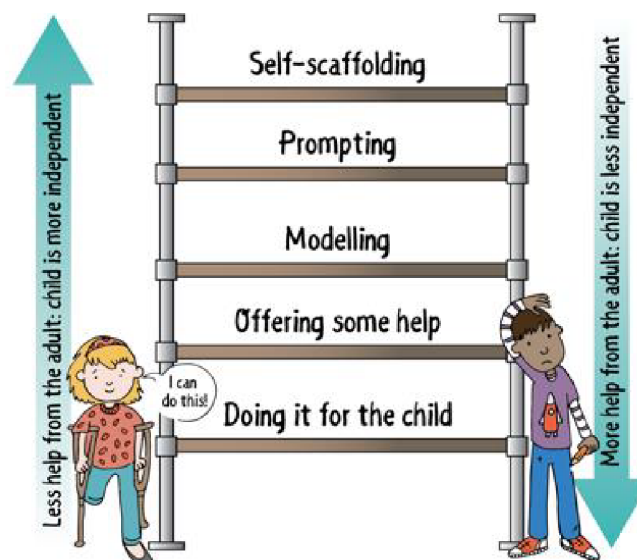
## Scaffolding

We have an inclusive curriculum. Every child can access our curriculum, with extra help when needed. We call this help 'scaffolding' and we aim to 'scaffold up' to our inclusive curriculum rather than give children with SEND a watered-down, differentiated curriculum. We have adopted the definition of learning as a change in long-term memory. If a child can't remember and retrieve what they have learnt, then they haven't learnt it at all. It's important that a child's learning is secure before moving onto new concepts or skills. Secure learning is more important than covering lots of things superficially.

We have adopted the definition of progress as 'knowing more and remembering more', not moving from one 'age band' to the next in a tracker.

When we think about the curriculum, we consider 'components' and 'composites'.

Components are secure, small building blocks of learning. In the example about counting, a component is subitising up to 3. Composites are the coming-together of components into a skilled performance – like counting accurately up to 5.



## **Learning at Newbold Verdon Primary School**

- Learning is play-based and takes place indoors and outside.
- There is a balance between adult-initiated experiences (guided learning) and child-initiated experiences.
- Adults consider children's interests and strengths, seeing each child as a competent learner.
- Parent involvement is crucial. We learn a great deal about each child from their parents. Parental support and a high-quality home learning environment make a huge difference to children.

We designed our curriculum with the particular strengths and needs of the children of Newbold Verdon in mind. For example, we know that we have a number of children with speech and language barriers therefore we plan to teach Tier 2 vocabulary through our daily story time and children participate in Helicopter stories which provide opportunities for speaking and listening as well as exploring vocabulary.

Our goals are ambitious. They provide an overview of many of the different things we would like children to know and be able to do.

The goals are adaptable to the particular children on roll. We offer scaffolding and extra support to help every child to access the curriculum and to ensure they make progress through it. Practitioners sensitively reduce their support so that children become more independent in their learning.

We recognise that every child will not make the same progress through the curricular goals. Many children will learn to bake bread. For some children with complex needs, managing to tolerate the feel of flour and water, and mix it together to make playdough, will represent strong progress. All of those children are participating in the same curriculum.

## **Planning and Assessment**

Planning will always include new vocabulary, beyond the everyday words children hear and use. Practitioners introduce those new words naturally and repeat them whilst interacting with the children, so that children use the new vocabulary confidently. It is important to be conversational, rather than hammering new words.

### **Assessment**

One of the most powerful forms of assessment takes place in the here-and-now, not on-screen or in learning journeys. This is when we notice something important about a child's learning and respond to it to help them build their learning. That response can take different forms – we might:

- stand back and be encouraging;
- get involved to extend the learning, by joining in with the play, engaging in a conversation, or showing the child a specific skill to help them accomplish what they want to do;
- reflect afterwards and bring in new resources or plan something special in response to what we noticed.

This type of assessment work is not written down. It often focuses on the key milestones on the way to the curricular goals. It shows how we can assess what children know and can do, and help them to progress, through our minute-by-minute interactions.

The focus of our assessment is on clear and specific things that a child needs to be able to do, or needs to know. In order to do this practitioners need to understand how the different elements of the curriculum fit together to help children build their learning over time. Reflective discussions about children after school and during planning meetings support this understanding.

Practitioners also need to have a secure understanding of child development, as well as the features of effective pedagogy. This will help with judging when to get involved and when to encourage and knowing how to scaffold children's learning so we support them to keep trying without over-helping them.

Some children will need a lot more help and scaffolding to access the curriculum. This is a strength of the practitioners at Newbold Verdon. We will 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.

The majority of assessment and responsive action or teaching will happen in the here-and-now. Discussions at planning often involve talking about the actions practitioners had already taken, how successful they were and what will happen next.

This responsive action is often linked to the 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 reached a particular milestone in a curricular goal we might introduce a new resource that allows the child to progress on to the next stage of learning. We might also plan for a part of the provision that is linked to a child's particular fascination. Our plans are flexible to ensure both curricular and child-initiated learning are included. Where learning is child-initiated, practitioners are mindful of the longer-term outcomes children need to achieve, and sensitively guide the learning towards them.

Practitioners record significant observations on Tapestry. The aim of these records is to 'bring the child's learning to life' and engage parents in their child's learning. Observations should show significant examples of the child's learning related to the child's interests, our cycle of learning, core experiences or the curricular goals. Observations should also show how children are:

- developing conversations and using new vocabulary
- persisting with difficulties, ignoring distractions (self-regulation)
- talking about their thinking and learning (metacognition)

The teaching input will also be documented. The entry will describe what the practitioner did to support or extend the child's learning and how the child responded. We will include the child's voice.

## Metacognition and Feedback

Practitioners are skilled in modelling metacognitive thinking for children and this in turn helps children to develop a growth mindset.

Metacognitive thinking enables children to talk more specifically about thinking in different contexts. It enables children to use a plan, do, review approach in their learning. They become independent and more powerful learners. This in turn supports their approach to managing their own learning later in their school years.

A practical example of this is:

- Child A is trying to build a tower using the blocks. The tower is wobbly and keeps falling down.
- Practitioner comments by saying "Oh no, it has fallen down. I wonder why that happened?" This enables the child to think about why the tower has fallen rather than continuing with the same strategy.
- Child comments by saying "It is too wobbly."
- Practitioner responds by saying "I wonder why it is wobbly. Let's have a look at the shape of the blocks you have used."
- Child looks closely at the shape of the blocks whilst the practitioner talks to the child about this. The practitioner asks "What do you think you need to do differently?"
- If the child doesn't know then the practitioner could model this by building their own tower alongside the child using the blocks. Practitioner thinks aloud to model this process. Practitioner says "I need to make sure I balance these blocks one on top of the other to make my tower sturdy."
- The child manages to build a tower that is sturdy. The practitioner provides instant feedback by saying "That is amazing. You took your time to look at the way you were placing the blocks and worked out that you needed similar shapes and kept trying until you built the tower."

The majority of our assessment of children's learning is done through feedback in the here-and-now. Feedback is a powerful minute by minute assessment tool. The Education Endowment Foundation's Teaching and Learning Toolkit (2021) shows that feedback has the most impact on children's progress out of all the approaches listed.

Feedback can be seen as giving information to the learner, about their progress towards a goal or outcome, to help them improve. The curriculum (key skills, attitudes or concepts) gives the scaffold for the feedback we want to give.

For an interaction to be feedback, it needs to make a difference to children's learning. It might look like this:

- A practitioner interprets what a child does or says (*What does this tell us about the child's learning needs or level of development? Assessment in the moment*)

This information enables the practitioner to give feedback that changes the child's approach (*what do they need to do differently to make progress with their skills or understanding?*)

Sustained Shared Thinking (SST) is a form of feedback with a focus on exploring solutions to problems. In SST, a child and another person (generally an adult) 'work together in an intellectual way to find a solution for a problem, clarify a concept, extend a narrative, evaluate activities, etc. Both parties should contribute to the thinking, and it must develop

and extend the understanding.’ (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002, p. 8). SST is powerful, and only needs to happen occasionally.

Most children who are making sound progress do not need frequent diagnostic feedback. We can focus our attention on children who are struggling with their learning. For these children we need to be curious about why they are struggling and offer sustained support and feedback.

For older children we can also use feedback with elements of critique. This is descriptive feedback that includes honest comments about their work. Here it is about giving kind but precise feedback that helps them to reflect on and develop their learning.

Specific praise is helpful. Supporting children to look carefully at their work and see if it can be improved, is even better. This feedback needs to be age appropriate and tailored specifically to the child. It is important to ensure that the feedback is kind, specific, helpful and related to the work, not the child.

Supporting children to give and receive feedback teaches them that effort and revision are valuable and that the things they do can be improved. This develops the mindset of continuous improvement.

#### Appendices:

Appendix A: Newbold Verdon 3i's

Appendix B: EYFS long term plan

Appendix C: Common Play Behaviours

Appendix D – Phonics progression

Appendix E-RWI curriculum overview

Appendix F- Guidance for Nursery RWI

Appendix G – Rising Stars medium term plan

Appendix H-Reception skills development progression

Appendix I - pre-school maths progression of skills

Appendix J - 3-4 year olds skill progression

Appendix K - mark making, early writing progression

Appendix L - progression of expressive language

Appendix M- articulation progression of skills

#### PSED:

Appendix H -<https://www.coramlifeeducation.org.uk/scarf/year/N>

Appendix I -<https://www.coramlifeeducation.org.uk/scarf/year/R>