

# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

December 2023

To be reviewed December 2024



**Courage**

**Resilience**

**Honesty**

**Kindness**

Matthew 7:24 - "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock"

# Intent

At St Nicholas-At-Wade CE Primary School we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet individual needs and help every child to reach his/her full potential.

At St Nicholas our bespoke curriculum is the means by which we ignite the spark for life-long learning on strong foundations in all areas of learning; giving them the academic skills, emotional awareness and moral purpose they need to become valuable members of our community. Our school values, of courage, resilience, honesty, kindness and being the best they can be, provide the cornerstone of our children's personal, social and emotional development and are embedded throughout our curriculum. The children are taught about "The St Nicholas Way" from day one, leading to the development of effective learning behaviours that continue throughout the school.

Our curriculum intent is centred around the following drivers, which are fully embedded across all of our provision and curriculum:

- Every child a reader.
- Every child a learner
- Every child a responsible citizen
- Every child happy and healthy
- Every child creative and curious.

## **"The wise builder, builds their house on the rock"**

We want to give our children something solid to stand on, foundations that will allow them build a future for themselves and others that will be grounded in their own personal character, beliefs and values.

At St Nicholas CE Primary School, we recognise the huge importance that Oracy plays in children's future success both academically and socially. Language and communication, alongside high quality phonics and early reading are the heart of our curriculum. High quality, warm interactions, enabling environments and our relentless dedication to effective provision ensure that no child is left behind.

Our curriculum is balanced and well thought out, allowing for the children to sequentially build up the component knowledge and skills they need, and also make room for spontaneous learning led by the child's own wants, needs and interests. We start from what the children know, using our strong relationships with parents and carers to ensure we know all we can about each child before they embark on their learning journey with us. We aim to provide creative and memorable learning experiences that lead to high levels of engagement from all.

**"Tell me and I may forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I will learn."**

Benjamin Franklin

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At St Nicholas, we aim to provide a curriculum that breaks cycles of disadvantage, opens horizons for all and levels the playing field. Our curriculum supports the development of the whole child, leading to kind and respectful children who are confident, resilient and curious life-long learners. We provide children with a safe learning environment, where highly skilled practitioners support the children to form strong and secure relationships. This leads to children who feel valued and are comfortable to take risks with their learning.

As outlined in the EYFS Framework 2022, **“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances.”**

We adhere to the Statutory Framework for the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships with teaching**
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments and support from adults**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers over a period of time
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**

By the end of Reception year, our intent is to ensure that all children make better than expected progress from their starting points and are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to have a smooth transition into Year One.

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# Implementation

The 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage' and 'Development Matters' have been used as a planning framework to structure the build-up of skills and knowledge progressively throughout the Reception year at St Nicholas at Wade CE Primary School. From this, teachers will design medium term plans, which will guide the children's learning journey. When planning teachers will take into account their knowledge of the children, the children's interests and their next steps. Skeletal medium term plans have been created by the EYFS team at St Nicholas at Wade CE however, as young children's learning is often driven by their interests, plans will remain extremely flexible.

There are seven areas of learning and development, which shape the education and experiences for children in Reception.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas are the **prime** areas:

- **Communication and Language (Listening, Attention and Understanding & Speaking)**
- **Physical Development (Gross Motor Skills & Fine Motor Skills)**
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development (Self-Regulation, Managing Self & Building Relationships)**

## Communication and Language

The development of spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning in the EYFS. The importance of language development is widely acknowledged and is a key indicator of future success in life, academically, emotionally and socially. It is vitally important that we provide children with a language rich environment, in which they can develop their listening and attention, receptive and expressive language skills. We also recognise that it is vital that we provide early intervention for any children entering reception with any speech and language delay. At St Nicholas, we provide a language rich curriculum in a number of ways.

Firstly, our environment is word and book rich, we read with and to the children frequently. We engage them in stories, rhymes, poems, songs, non-fiction and we set up our environment in a way that gives them opportunity to embed these new words in a variety of contexts.

Secondly, we have highly skilled staff in our classrooms. Our staff also receive regular training to ensure high quality interactions and conversations happen, with adults commenting and echoing back what children are doing reinforcing and adding new vocabulary. Our reception team have staff trained in Little Wandle Reading sessions. Additionally, we run daily 'Drawing Club'. These are carefully planned book sharing activities led by our experienced staff to give children opportunities to practise the speaking and listening skills they need. This develops their language repertoire by modelling it within an engaging context.

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Finally, we run an extremely effective early intervention program. All children are screened by our specially trained speech and language Teaching Assistant, using the Language Link Screener. This identifies those children with a speech or language delay. Depending on their need children will then receive, 1 to 1 or small group support using the language program that is best suited to them. In doing all of the above, we aim to ensure children leave Reception with the confidence and ability to use a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)**

Children's personal, social and emotional development is crucial for them to lead happy and healthy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. At St Nicholas at Wade CE we have a values led curriculum, through which children learn to build and manage healthy relationships, understand and regulate their emotions, develop a sense of what makes them unique and celebrate the similarities and differences between us all. Each term will begin with a week of values-based learning. The schools' values are Curiosity, Resilience, Courage, Kindness and Being the Best, you can be. Within our Heartsmart sessions we will use stories, circle time and learning about people from our past to explore these values and how they relate to ourselves and our own lives. We have look at 'Healthy Relationships' during which we explore friendship and kindness and what to do if a relationship is becoming unhealthy. In this, we explore our likes, dislikes and abilities. We learn about our classmates and their families and celebrate what makes each of us unique. In order to help children, understand their emotions and begin to be able to regulate them, we use the 'Zones of Regulation' framework. This teaches children to be aware of their emotions and internal state and supports them in developing strategies to regulate them. In doing this we, teach children about their own well-being and introduce them to mindful activities such as yoga to help them feel relaxed and positive. At St Nicholas at Wade CE, all staff are trained to use the Leuven scales to monitor children's involvement and well-being. This means we can track the well-being of all our pupils and provide support quickly and effectively if needed.

### **Physical Development**

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. We have teacher-led gross motor and fine motor time daily, gross and fine motor activities available during child-initiated play as well as weekly Physical Education sessions. Gross and fine motor skills develop incrementally throughout childhood. We structure our gross motor skills throughout the year to ensure children have the key opportunities needed to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. In line, with this we use the Clever Hands program to support children with their fine motor control and precision. These sessions will lead to pencil and scissor control activities later on in the year once the children's physical development is ready for this. Each week the children have an outdoor learning session "Forest Friday" where they develop knowledge and skills when using tools. They recognise the importance of fire safety. Throughout the year, children will also learn about healthy lifestyle choices and the effect staying active and making healthy choices can have of their well-being.

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Children are also supported through the four **specific** areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The **specific** areas are:

- **Literacy (Comprehension, Word Reading & Writing)**
- **Mathematics (Number & Numerical Patterns)**
- **Understanding the World (Past and Present, People, Culture and Communities & The Natural World)**
- **Expressive Arts and Design (Creating with Materials & Being Imaginative and Expressive)**

## **Literacy**

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. At St Nicholas CE Primary School, we pride ourselves on having a book rich environment, within which children are read stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction regularly. Each classroom has an inviting book corner where adults and children spend time together sharing books. In addition, we set up our environment to encourage children to mark make in their play both inside and outside. Each month we receive an exciting delivery of current texts from a local book shop. These are shared at home with a little book box and pack so that parents can share and enjoy these with their child. Alongside, fostering a love and will to read and write, our staff use the Little Wandle program to give children the phonic skills they need to become confident readers and writers. During the first two terms, we will teach children their set one sounds. They will play oral blending games and begin to learn to form their letters. Children will begin to be able to read and write simple words. Moving forwards, children will learn their set two digraphs and will move onto reading and writing short sentences. We offer a keep up, not catch up approach, meaning we conduct regular assessment of children's phonic skills and offer immediate "Keep up" where needed. We aim to ensure that no child is left behind. To complement our phonics program, we use engaging and exciting 'Talk for Writing Text' which we orally rehearse and use to develop our Literacy skills. During these times, children will learn to discuss texts, predict endings, act out and sequence stories and discuss the characters and settings from the stories. They will also get the opportunity to write creatively during this time.

## **Mathematics**

Developing a strong grounding in number, shape, space and measure is essential, so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. In reception, we use our environment to aim to develop positive attitudes and interest in mathematics. We provide natural and engaging resources and activities to encourage counting, comparison of quantities, exploration of patterns, space and shape and most of all discussion between pupils and adults surrounding mathematical concepts and using mathematical vocabulary. With the support of the White Rose Maths program, we provide a carefully planned out curriculum that offers children with the opportunities they need to develop a deep, long term, secure and adaptable understanding of the subject. New concepts are taught in small steps and pupils are given opportunities to apply their newly acquired knowledge and vocabulary through play. Staff know each child's next steps and are trained to extend pupils knowledge and vocabulary during child initiated play. Pupils who are finding it hard to understand new concepts are offered quick and effective interventions in order to ensure no child is left behind.

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## **Understanding of the world**

Understanding of the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and community. We plan our Topics based on what the children are interested in. Each Topic will have an entry and exit point and during these, we aim to provide the children with a wide range of personal experiences that increase their knowledge of the world around them. These include exploring our local parks and beaches, meeting important people from our local community, for example, fire-fighters and nurses, having hands on experiences with wildlife, including visits from minibeasts and farm animals and planting and growing our own plants and food. We learn about past events from our own and others' lives, as well as learning about what life is like in other parts of the world. The children love to learn about other cultures and religions, studying Topics, such as Chinese New Year, Diwali and Easter around the world. Each week the children have an outdoor learning session "Forest Friday" where they develop a love & respect for nature, experience changes that occur within the environment and develop key knowledge and skills. Through this they learn to truly value what diversity across the world brings. Carefully planned activities during child-initiated play also allows children to explore the environment around them.

Educational visits within the local community and further afield are also planned to support the children's learning within the classroom. At the end of a topic children plan and execute their learning to the parents, inviting them in to share their learning experiences.

## **Expressive Arts and Design**

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. Through our curriculum we offer children opportunities to explore and play with a variety of media, materials, tools and model a range of techniques. We encourage them to experiment with colour, design and texture and to go back to what they have created to see if they can improve it. The children will have one dedicated music session a week. This will be followed up in class with opportunities to create dance sequences, compositions and perform songs and rhymes. Role-play plays a huge part in supporting children's creative, language and social development. Children are provided with props and materials to encourage and support role-play both inside and outside of the classroom. Adults know when to join in and when to stand back in order to allow the play to develop naturally.

## **Play, our enabling environment and the importance of staff development**

Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Play gives children choice and space to thrive. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play that is guided by adults. At St Nicholas at Wade CE Primary, we have worked hard over a number of years to ensure our curriculum has the right balance of teacher-led activities, teacher-initiated and child-initiated play. Careful modelling, scaffolding, discussion and questioning during play can lead to children engaging in sustained shared thinking with adults and their peers and the role adults have to play in play is vital. In light of this, we prioritise ensuring our staff have the skills they need to support pupil progress.

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## **The best for every child**

Every child is unique and every child deserves to have an equal chance of success. We believe it is important not to make negative assumptions about any pupils due to their background, and instead of doing this our aim is to ensure we get to know, value and understand every child and family that we teach. We see families as our partners in the development of their child and aim to foster positive working relationships with all our families from the moment they choose St Nicholas. Our school motto is 'A place to belong, a place to grow' and through our work with families, as well as our assessment and early intervention plans, we believe we can narrow the gaps any child in our care starts with. In line with this, at St Nicholas we ensure that our curriculum promotes and teaches both equality and diversity. We do this through the teaching of our values, celebrating and exploring the diversity of our families and of people around the world. Staff are also mindful of not exhibiting an unconscious bias, based on stereotypes that may affect our pupils.

In addition, we aim to remove any disadvantage faced by our pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. We do this by ensuring we spend time getting to know all our children and families, through regular assessment and intervention and through accessing and working with a wide variety of outside agencies.

## **Formative Assessment**

At St Nicholas at Wade CE Primary School we hold the individual child at the centre of our planning. The adults in our team respond quickly and effectively to children's interests and needs to help each child build upon their learning over time. In line with this, adults at St Nicholas will be making informal formative assessments and acting on these throughout each day. Our staff are highly skilled and have a deep understanding of child development. They use their formative assessments to provide opportunities, resources and activities to move each child's learning forwards. Assessment is about noticing what children can do and what they know. It is not about collecting lots of written evidence. In line with this, assessment does not take our skilled practitioners away from the children for long periods of time.

Where our practitioners see new and significant learning happening they will record this by noting what they have seen or taking a photo. These observations and photos will be stored in the child's learning journey, alongside learning the child produces and records from the parents regarding new learning that has happened outside of school.

Class practitioners meet regularly to discuss the children's progress based on these formative assessments. These professional discussions will be used to inform planning and changes to the environment. Any concerns about pupils not making progress will also be discussed and appropriate support can be put into place, ensuring a "keep up, not catch up" approach.

## **Summative Assessment**

On entry to St Nicholas at Wade CE Primary School, all pupils will complete the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). Teachers will use this, alongside the knowledge they have gained about the children

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from parents, nursery provision and their own observations to make a baseline assessment of each child; indicating if they are on track or not in each area of learning.

It is essential for practitioners to know each child's starting point in order to support them appropriately. During these first 6 weeks of school our highly skilled practitioners will also use a series of games and activities to make assessments about what the children do and do not yet know.

After their first 6 weeks of school practitioners will meet to discuss which pupils are on track and those who are significantly below in each area of learning and the support that will be put in place accordingly.

### **Tracking**

Evidence of children's learning is kept using photographs, records of observations and samples of children's recorded learning in a learning journey (Tapestry). Parents are able to add and comment on this journey. In October, February and July practitioners will use their knowledge of the child and the evidence collected to establish those children that are on track, below and significantly below in each area of learning. This information feeds into the pupil progress meetings that take place three times per year to discuss the progress and needs of all children with senior management. All practitioners will discuss how each child has progressed, any gaps in knowledge and the progress and attainment of vulnerable groups.

### **EYFS Profile**

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, St Nicholas completes the EYFS profile for each child. The profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a clear picture of a child's development, knowledge, understanding and abilities, as well as their progress against expected levels. It is shared with Year One teachers for individual children's readiness, needs and next steps. The profile will reflect upon the schools on-going observation and relevant records. The teacher will determine whether the child is meeting or is below expected levels of development against each Early Learning Goal (ELG). The teacher will also make a specific statement about each child's characteristics of effective learning.

### **Moderation**

Within our assessment and tracking system moderation is key to ensure assessment data is accurate and robust. Whenever summative data is submitted a number of moderation meetings will have taken place. Firstly, between class teachers, then with a member of SLT and finally with other local costal schools. In addition to this, EYFS practitioners meet bi-weekly to discuss ongoing assessments, children's progress and next steps.

### **Transition**

Open mornings are provided for parents and children to visit the school, this presents a realistic portrayal of St Nicholas-At-Wade. The head teacher provides advice and information regarding the school day, ethos and the application process. Pupils in Year 6 are on hand to give parents a tour of the school.

Upon obtaining a place at St Nicholas-At-wade School, parents are invited to a 'New Parents' Meeting' where they meet their child's teacher and find out basic information about the

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EYFS curriculum and the first few weeks of their child's life in school. Pupils are then invited to a Teddy Bears' Picnic, where the children get the chance to meet their teacher and explore their new classroom. We also offer a taster morning/afternoon where children can sample school life prior to starting in September. Parents are welcomed into the school for tea and cake upon the child's second visit so that they can meet other parents and key members of staff, helping strengthen links between the school and parents.

Pre Schools are visited by the Reception teacher so that the children can be observed within their Nursery setting, to aid transition.

In September, children are visited within their home setting to get a true understanding of the "whole child". The Reception Teacher sends out letters with a reminder and a balloon to their home address.

After this, there is a very short part-time period before the children begin full time.

This enables teachers and teaching support staff to really get to know children as individuals and plan for their needs accordingly.

The reception children have their own playtimes and assemblies until the class teacher feels it is appropriate for gradual introduction to activities involving Key Stage 1 children and ultimately the whole school.

### **Transition from Reception to year One**

A similar carefully planned transition occurs between reception and year 1. The year one teachers attend moderation throughout the year and so are aware of the reception children. Throughout the final term the year one teachers will come and spend a day with the class that will be going up to them. This allows them to see the daily routines and attainment levels of the children first hand. We will do regular story time swaps with the year one teachers. The Reception children will spend a full day with their new teacher in their year 1 classroom in July. Any children for whom transition may be a problem can spend more sessions in their new classroom with a teaching assistant to accompany them. The reception teachers meet with year one teachers in July to discuss each individual child in depth. In addition, in July the parents will have a chance to visit their child's new class with their child in order to meet their year 1 teacher. The timetable at the end of Reception will be the same as they transition into Year One in September.

### **Parents as partners**

St Nicholas at Wade CE Primary School recognises that children's experiences at home are highly significant to achievement and it is our policy to develop effective partnerships between home and school. We acknowledge the role parents have already played in the early education of their child and encourage their continued involvement.

Parental help is welcomed in class once the children are fully settled into school life.

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## **Workshops**

During their time at St Nicholas at Wade CE Primary School we run a series of workshops for parents to attend. These workshops centre on the importance of play, speech and language and supporting your child at home. We then continue to run workshops throughout the year on subjects such as phonics, reading, writing and supporting with Maths at home.

## **Safeguarding Children**

The school takes its child protection responsibilities very seriously. Any concerns, which the school has, will be noted (Safeguarding Online platform) and, if deemed necessary, will be reported to the relevant agency. The safety of the child is always of paramount importance. The full Safeguarding Policy is available in school for parents to read if they wish.

At St Nicholas the health, safety and wellbeing of children are significantly enhanced by the vigilant and highly consistent implementation of robust policies, procedures and practice. In the EYFS we adhere closely to the school's safeguarding and child protection policy and all staff are trained in accordance with this. These are available on the school website. The school ensures that practitioners and any other person who is likely to have regular contact with children are suitable. At the beginning of the year parents/carers are asked to give permission for their child to be photographed/videoed during their time at school. We use these images in the classroom, on displays, in the children's individual record books and on the school website (Children who are 'looked after' will not have their photograph put on the website or any public flyers etc)

The teacher/s of the class is the key person for all children in their class. Once relationships are established each TA within the class are given 15 key children each. Whilst all three adults in class still observe and teach all 30 children, the child's key person will monitor their key children's well-being on a daily basis. We have one adult per class who holds a paediatric first aid certificate and a designated fire safety officer in the school. Staff will only let children go with individuals who have been notified to staff by the parent.

The reception class follows the school policies and procedures regarding medicines, food and drink, accident or injury, fire safety, managing behaviour, outings, special educational needs, information and records and complaints.

## **Equality and disabilities**

All practitioners at St Nicholas-At-Wade School have a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring inclusive practice is always delivered in the EYFS setting.

All children, regardless of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion or social circumstances, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development within the EYFS at St Nicholas-At-Wade.

## **Special Educational Needs**

Care is taken to assess the needs of each child. Should a child have any special need the parent will be informed at an early stage. Group and individual help is provided within the school where possible. We have links with various agencies and when necessary their involvement may be required to support

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certain children. Parents/Carers will always be informed if an outside agency is assisting us to support their child. We have a full Special Educational Needs (S.E.N) policy available at school.

### **Health and Safety**

We have a Health and Safety policy which all staff and students are familiar with and we have designated people responsible for first aid in school. Children are taught the safe and appropriate use of equipment and materials. Children are taught to be mindful when moving around the school and are aware of safety issues. Risk assessments are undertaken before after school activities take place and before we embark on school outings. A full Health and Safety Policy is available in School.

### **Allergies**

Parents/carers are asked to inform us of any foods their children are allergic to or any foods they do not wish their child to eat. A note of this is kept in the kitchen area and all adults involved are informed.

### **Medical Needs**

We keep a note of any medical needs, allergies, children who need inhalers, piriton, epi-pens in the school office and in the class area so everyone is aware of the individual needs. An EYFS staff member is trained in paediatric first aid.

### **Intimate Care**

This section of the policy has been devised in response to the increasing number of children entering the Early Years Foundation Stage not toilet trained or with specific medical needs. It sets out the procedures we will follow in when nappy changing and in the case of a child accidentally wetting or soiling him/herself. It also states the roles and responsibilities of both the home and school. We are an inclusive school and do admit children who are not fully toilet trained but we feel that it benefits the child if he/she is out of nappies or at least working towards this by the time they start school. Parents are made aware that the EYFS team are on hand to offer advice on how to toilet train and are put into contact with relevant support if wanted. Parents are also asked to inform us of any medical condition which requires their child to need a nappy. In the case of a known medical condition an agreed medical plan will be made between parents and staff with the procedures to be followed in case of wetting/soiling/nappy changing. In the case of accidental wetting/soiling, parents will be contacted for permission to be given to clean and change their child. When changing a child there will be at least 2 adults present. In the case of a child struggling to wipe their bottom staff will give verbal instructions to support the child.

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# Impact

The impact of our curriculum is to ensure children make better than expected progress from their varied starting points in every area of learning. We aim for all children to reach a 'good level of development' and consistently ensure the number of our children reaching the 'GLD' is above the national average.

The impact of our curriculum is also measured by how effectively it helps our children develop into well rounded individuals who 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 our children to be 'Key Stage 1 Ready'. Our children make strong progress academically, emotionally, creatively, socially and physically. Knowledge, understanding and skills are secured and embedded so that children attain highly and are fully prepared for their new year-group.

On entry to St Nicholas at Wade CE Primary School, all pupils will complete the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). Teachers will use this, alongside the knowledge they have gained about the children from parents, nursery provision and their own observations to make a baseline assessment of each child; indicating if they are on track or not in each area of learning.

Children's progress is recording in individual learning journeys which is shared through Tapestry. These include photos, observations, assessments, children's work and child and parent voice. Teachers will use their knowledge of the child to make further assessments at the middle and end of the year; allowing us to track progress. At the end of the year, teachers will use the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile to indicate if children have met the expected standard in each area of learning. Effective in and cross school moderation ensures these judgements are accurate.

Date Completed: December 2023

Date to be reviewed: December 2024

Completed by: Miss Hannah Buckley

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