Tidbury Green School Dickens
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Policy Name

Early Years Foundation Stage

Date of Review

Spring Term 2026

Next Review Date

Spring Term 2028

Agreed by Governors

Jan 2026

Date

Jan 2026

Policy:	Early Years Foundation Stage
People Authorised to make changes to this policy:	• Mrs K Lynch • Miss C Powell
Committee responsible for approving policy:	Policy, Curriculum, Scrutiny & Standards

Questions for the reviewer of this policy:
Does this policy comply with statutory requirements and is relevant legislation and guidance referenced in the policy?
Does the policy reflect current evidence-based good practice?
Is the policy consistent with the vision and ethos of the school?
Does the policy reflect current practice in the school?

After policy review:	
Changes made:	In line with complimentary policies: teaching and learning, behaviour and safety
Expected impact of updated policy:	
Updated policy sent to governors:	Dec 2025
Updated policy sent to staff:	Jan 2026
Updated policy put on website:	Feb 2026

Legislation

"All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential."

This policy is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, effective from 1 September 2025, which sets the standards all early years providers must meet to ensure children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. The EYFS statutory framework states:

We are fully committed to the purpose and aims of the EYFS statutory framework and adhere to its safeguarding, welfare, learning and development requirements. To support our curriculum planning and practice, we also refer to Development Matters, the non-statutory guidance for EYFS practitioners.

The EYFS framework is built on four guiding principles which shape our overall objectives for high-quality early years practice.

- **The Unique Child** - every child is an individual who is capable in their own right. Every child has a variety of needs to be met over their time in the Foundation Stage.
- **Positive Relationships** - Social interaction is key to a child's development. Children become strong, independent learners through positive social interaction.
- **Enabling Environments** - Providing a safe, secure and stimulating base for our children is key to their development. We will provide experiences and activities that respond to the child's individual needs and interests, as well as develop a strong partnership between practitioners, parents and carers.
- **Learning and Development** - Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The curriculum covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Introduction

Early Years Foundation Stage at Tidbury Green School extends from the age of two to the end of FS2 (Reception year). Children may enter Little Wrens Preschool at the age of 2 and transfer to FS1 (Nursery year) from the beginning of the academic year in which the children are four. Entry into our primary school is at the beginning of the school year in which the children are five (although compulsory schooling does not begin until the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday).

The Foundation Stage is important in its own right and also plays a vital role in preparing children for later schooling. Our curriculum is centred on the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and is designed to ensure that every child experiences a broad, balanced and engaging range of learning opportunities. Activities are carefully planned, structured and monitored to support children's development in line with the EYFS learning and development requirements. We use Development Matters (non-statutory guidance) to support curriculum planning and assessment and

to ensure that learning experiences are appropriate to each child's age, stage of development, interests and individual needs. The Early Learning Goals (ELGs) set out the expected level of development for most children by the end of the Foundation Stage and provide a foundation for their transition into Key Stage 1.

Early Education Matters.

We know from recent research conducted by the 'Royal Foundation – Centre for Early Childhood' and many other research sources that high-quality early years education makes a life-long, positive difference to children.

We believe that high-quality learning and teaching is the entitlement of all children. This must equip them with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices. We acknowledge that children learn at different rates and each is at an individual stage of development. We believe that children learn best when they are happy, secure and actively involved in their learning. 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.

Characteristics of high-quality early education include:

- All children are safe and happy in the environment.
- All children have the best start in life and have daily opportunities to be active and healthy.
- Learning is play-based and takes place indoors and outside.
- A balance between adult-initiated experiences (guided learning) and child-initiated experiences.
- Practitioners take children's interests and strengths as a starting point, seeing each child as a competent learner
- Parent involvement is crucial: parent support and a high-quality home learning environment make a huge difference to children.
- Practitioners track each child's learning and development to pick up where children are at risk of making poor progress and adapt the programme and their teaching as appropriate.
- Early intervention is offered swiftly so that children get the additional, specialist help that they need.

Our Intent and Aims

'Afloat on a sea of talk..'

(Britton, 1970, p. 164)

In Early Years Foundation Stage at Tidbury Green Primary School, we believe that everything we learn, encounter and experience 'floats on a sea of talk'. We create stimulating and exciting learning environments and experiences that give children the language and literacy they need to succeed in all areas of learning.

Our story-based Early Years curriculum that we offer and the vocabulary that we intentionally teach, entwine into a web of learning; this positively affects children's outcomes to close the development gap, promotes good attitudes to learning and develops a love of learning.

Our curriculum is underpinned by our behaviour principle (**where kindness counts**) and our key behaviour values: -

- **Be Kind** - Mutual Respect /Tolerance
- **Be Polite** - Honesty/Respect
- **Be Safe** - Care/Responsibility
- **Be your Best** - Academic Excellence/Leadership/Effort

We work hard to develop relationships where children feel safe and secure in our care and parents trust us to do the best for their child. Happy children can describe their emotions, self-regulate and talk about their world. We build relationships that support, enhance and invite a child's curiosity. As a child begins their lifelong learning journey with us, we build confidence and individual competency to flourish regardless of backgrounds, circumstances or needs.

We understand that a good working relationship with parents is vital to a child's success. Our friendly and supportive approach ensures parents can talk to us and they take on board advice we offer to support learning at home. We listen carefully to problems, seeking external support for a child when necessary.

We promote healthy lifestyles and provide daily opportunities for children to be active indoors and outdoors, developing their co-ordination, control and movement. Developing healthy attitudes for life, we teach the importance of a varied and healthy diet, good hygiene, sleep and oral health, by supporting families and offering guidance.

As children strive forward in their education to Key Stage 1, we aim that children are fully equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to achieve and continue their love of learning.

Implementation

Safeguarding

It is important to us that all children in the school are safe. Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We educate children on the importance of boundaries, rules and limits and we encourage them to become responsible for their own behaviour by supporting them to make the right choices. We teach the children how to recognise and manage risks in a supervised learning environment. We aim to protect the physical and mental well-being of all children. (Please refer to our school's policy on Safeguarding for further information.)

First Aid

Keeping children safe is our priority. All practitioners in Early Years at Tidbury Green are trained paediatric first aiders.

Healthy Eating in Early Years at Tidbury Green School

All children in the Early Years are offered a free, healthy snack during the morning and afternoon sessions. Snack areas are clearly visible and form part of each classroom's continuous provision. Children are able to access snack during activity time, with a paediatric first aider present in the setting. Food is funded through the school budget, and milk is provided free for children under the age of five.

All practitioners are aware of children's allergies and dietary requirements, which are shared with staff and clearly displayed in food preparation areas. This ensures that children's individual health needs are consistently met.

Little Wrens Pre-school (2-3 year olds)

In Little Wrens, the snack table is continuously supported by a paediatric first aid trained practitioner. Children are always offered a nutritious snack along with milk or water. Practitioners ensure that all provided food is cut appropriately and in line with relevant guidelines. Practitioners engage children in conversation to:

- reinforce good hygiene practices, including hand-washing.
- talk about healthy snack choices.
- encourage children to explore and try new foods without pressure.
- discuss where food comes from and make links to children's home experiences.

Children are encouraged to develop independence, including learning to drink from a cup, selecting plates and cutlery, and tidying the snack area after use. Practitioners model healthy eating by eating snack alongside the children.

The snack table is also used for cooking activities and is recognised as a key area for supporting communication and language development. Additional water is provided during outdoor play, particularly in warm weather.

Nursery and Reception (3-5 year olds)

In Nursery and Reception, children are able to help themselves to snack throughout the session. While the snack table is not staffed continuously, paediatric first aid trained practitioners regularly remind children about hygiene routines and healthy eating expectations. Additional support is provided during induction periods where needed.

Children are always offered a nutritious snack with milk or water. Practitioners support learning through conversation by:

- reinforcing hygiene routines
- discussing healthy food choices
- encouraging children to explore new foods
- talking about food origins and home experiences

Children are encouraged to develop independence by pouring their own drinks and, where appropriate, serving, spreading or cutting food safely before clearing away. Practitioners model healthy eating and eat snack alongside the children. In Penguins, practitioners support children in learning to pour water or milk into their cups independently.

The snack table is also used for cooking activities and is recognised as a valuable space for promoting communication, language and social interaction. Additional water is provided outdoors during hot weather.

Hygiene and Environment

Cups, bowls and utensils are washed after use to maintain high hygiene standards. Milk and water jugs are emptied, cleaned and refilled between sessions. Snack areas are kept clean, bright and welcoming, with displays that promote healthy eating and food preparation. Displays may include photographs of children participating in snack, cooking and tasting activities. Visual prompts promoting healthy practices, such as hand-washing, are displayed in or near bathroom areas.

Lunch Time in Early Years

Early Years children are offered three hot food options at lunchtime. Practitioners talk about the food on offer with the children or discuss options with parents. Most children stay for lunchtime in Little Wrens Preschool and Nursery. All children stay for lunch in Reception. Children are supported by their practitioners during their lunch time, therefore offering continuity for the children and managing difficulties when occur. Lunchtime can be challenging for some children and any difficulties can then be discussed with parents appropriately.

Some parents provide a packed lunch. Healthy eating advice is given to parents on the types of food and drink brought in from home. If necessary, we will speak sensitively with individual parents if we judge that the lunch they are providing is not balanced, with correct portion sizes, and nutritious. With the agreement of parents, practitioners will encourage children to have ‘tasters’ from the menu to encourage children to have a hot dinner and broaden their diet.

Festival and Celebration Foods

Children are encouraged to enjoy a variety of foods and enjoy the social aspect of food to support their communication and language development but also to understand other families' routines and cultures. Cooking takes place regularly and we ensure that we only cook healthy recipes. In addition, activities such as planting seeds and growing food, visiting farms and learning about food through role play are part of our core curriculum. Opportunities to explore food is included in;

- Book-based curriculum links to growing food and healthy eating in 'The Enormous Turnip', 'Jack and the Beanstalk', 'Oliver's Stories', 'Yo! Ho! Ho! A Pirating We Will Go!', 'Little Red Hen Makes a Pizza', 'Farmer Duck'.
- Curriculum links to how food is important in celebrating religious festivals such as Easter, Christmas, Diwali, Eid, Shrove Tuesday, Hanukkah, Chinese New Year and Birthdays topics.

Being Active in Early Years at Tidbury Green School

Children are encouraged to play adventurously outside, so they develop their strength, stamina, co-ordination and fitness. We like to see children get out of breath. Physical activity is part of our daily curriculum Opportunities to be physical include;

- Climbing equipment.
- Pedal bikes
- Outdoor continuous provision
- Outdoor play resources
- P.E. lessons (See Curriculum Maps)
- Forest School (See Curriculum Maps)
- Yoga
- Write Dance

Supporting Children's and Parents Oral Health

Good oral health habits are formed from the earliest age. Nationally, nearly a quarter of five-year-olds in England experience tooth decay, with an average of three to four teeth affected. Tooth extraction is one of the most common hospital procedures for children under six and a leading cause of hospital admission for children aged six to ten. Children from more deprived backgrounds are disproportionately affected.

At Tidbury Green School, we actively promote positive oral health throughout the Early Years curriculum by making meaningful links to healthy eating, physical development and personal care routines.

Oral health is supported through the following approaches:

- Curriculum links to visiting the dentist during topics such as 'People Who Help Us', 'Oliver's Stories' and the 'Pirates' topic
- Discussions about sugary foods and drinks during cooking and food preparation activities

- The provision of toothbrushes, dolls and soft toys within the home role-play area, supported by age-appropriate books about oral health
- Ongoing discussion about healthy food choices at the snack table as part of continuous provision
- Participation in the Colgate toothbrushing scheme for Nursery children, where children are taught how to brush their teeth using mirrors to observe their teeth

Toothbrushing kits are sent home to support consistency between home and school. Practical information is shared with parents, and advice is provided through school communications and website pages, promoting a strong partnership with families.

Sleeping and Rest in Early Years at Tidbury Green

We recognise that Little Wrens Preschool children can become very tired during the day and we aim to provide flexibility and opportunities for them to take rests and naps as they need and desire. NHS guidelines are referred to throughout this policy to ensure health and safety when children are sleeping. Safe sleeping practices are vital to reduce the risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome). Staff in Little Wrens provision follow these guidelines to reduce the risk.

- Never let the child sleep in the armchair with a member of staff. It's safer for them to sleep on the floor bed.
- Overheating can increase the risk of SIDS. Children can overheat because of too much bedding or clothing, or because the room's too hot.
- When you check a child, make sure they're not too hot. If the child is sweating or their tummy feels hot to the touch, take off some of the bedding. Don't worry if their hands or feet feel cool – this is normal.
- Control the temperature of the child by using layers of lightweight blankets. A folded blanket counts as 2 blankets.
- Children don't need hot rooms. Room at a temperature of about 18C (65F) is ideal.
- If it's very warm, the child may not need any bedclothes other than a sheet.
- In winter, most children who are unwell or feverish don't need extra clothes.
- Children should never sleep with a hot water bottle or electric blanket, next to a radiator, heater or fire, or in direct sunshine.
- Children lose excess heat through their heads, so make sure their heads can't be covered by bedclothes while they're asleep.
- Remove hats and extra clothing as soon as you come indoors or enter a warm car, bus or train, even if it means waking the child.
- To prevent the child from wriggling down under the covers, place them in the **"feet to foot"** position. This means their feet are at the end of the floor bed.
- How to put the child in the **'feet to foot'** position
    i. Tuck the covers in securely under the child's arms so they can't slip over their head. Use 1 or more layers of lightweight blankets.

ii. Use a child's mattress that's firm, flat, well-fitting, clean and waterproof on the outside. Cover the mattress with a single sheet.

iii. Don't use duvets, quilts, baby nests, wedges, bedding rolls or pillows.

Within all Early Years classrooms, there is a quiet, carpeted rest areas with soft cushions, soft toys and books where children can go if they wish to rest and relax at any time of the day.

The school shall not provide dummies for children nor shall the nursery introduce a child to a dummy if they have not used one before at home. Parents are permitted to bring in a dummy from home for their child to use when at Little Wrens preschool and we recognise a dummy can provide great comfort for a child during rest and sleep times. If parents do provide dummies from home for their children to use at preschool, they shall also be asked to provide a hygienic dummy pot in which the dummy can be sealed to store when not in use. Dummies are usually restricted to sleep and rest times. They are not encouraged at other times as they can hamper a child's speech, can be a barrier to interacting with others and are a major cause of speech delay. Support is offered to parents to discourage dummy use.

The preferences and wishes of parents are always valued and staff work closely with them to ensure each child's individual needs are carefully met. Some parents prefer their children to only have a short sleep, fearing that a longer sleep will infringe on their child's night-time sleep. Any parent's wishes will be taken into account provided that these wishes are in the child's best interests.

Records sheets are completed each day to record how long each child has slept whilst at nursery. Sleep times are structured into Little Wrens' timetable but can be adapted to meet the needs of every child.

- Our toddlers are encouraged to sleep after lunch, but the facilities are available for them to sleep at other times of the day if needed in the Cosy Corner.
- If a child is brought in to sleep after lunch but does not fall asleep within 20 minutes, they will be asked whether they would like to join those children who are playing, rather than remain in the sleep area.
- Some toddlers who are out of nappies need a sleep nappy during sleep time and our staff will ensure any such children are changed into their sleep nappy before being settled for a nap.
- Familiar practitioners settle the children (and any preschool children who require a nap after lunch) down for their naps and quiet classical music is played for them. A member of staff remains in the sleep areas at all times when children are sleeping.

- Toddlers who do not need (or whose parents do not wish them to) a nap after lunch enjoy "quiet time" when they have the opportunity to engage in quieter activities such as playing board games, reading or playing with small world toys or puzzles in a smaller group.
- Staff to check children every 10 minutes.

Nappy Changing Procedure and Toileting in Early Years at Tidbury Green

We aim to support children's care and welfare daily in line with their individual needs. All children need contact with familiar, consistent carers to ensure they can grow confidently and feel self-assured. Toddlers will have their nappies changed according to their individual needs and requirements, by their key practitioner, whenever possible. Information will be shared between parents and key practitioners about nappy changing and toilet training in a way that suits the parents and their children. We wish to ensure the safety and welfare of the children whilst being changed and safeguarded against any potential harm. Staff members involved are fully supported and able to perform their duties safely and confidently. Through the following actions, we will endeavour to support all parties.

- Whenever possible the child should be changed by their key practitioner and NEVER by anyone who has not provided a satisfactory DBS.
- Should a member of staff have any concerns about a child they should follow our Safeguarding procedures.
- A child's nappy should be checked on arrival at the nursery. If necessary, it should be changed immediately. If it does not need to be changed at the time checked, it should still be noted on the nappy changing chart.
- All children should be changed as and when needed, but at least 3 times daily, morning, lunch and afternoon.
- All nappy changes must be recorded by the member of staff responsible. It should also be recorded whether the nappy was W (wet) or BM (bowel movement), the time of nappy change and initialled by the member of staff.
- A child should be changed immediately if they soil their nappy or it becomes wet.
- When changing a nappy, staff members must wear a disposable apron and disposable gloves. These must be removed after every nappy change, disposed of and new ones worn for the next nappy change.
- Hands must be washed after nappy change.
- Respect the parent/carers choice of nappies for their child by ensuring you are using the correct make and size of nappy.
- Only nappy creams brought in by the parent/carers for their own child may be used on the child. Staff must record when a child is sore and cream has been applied.
- The changing mat must be disinfected with anti-bacterial spray between each nappy change. Allow the mat to dry naturally or wipe it dry with a paper towel before changing the next child.
- All children should be encouraged to use the steps to access the mat on the changing table, staff are not to lift heavy children onto the changing table.
- All nappies and wipes must be put into nappy sacks and disposed of in the nappy bin provided. All aprons and gloves must be put into nappy sacks and disposed of in the correct bin provided.

- At the end of the day, or if the bin becomes full, the nappy bags need to be taken outside and placed in the big bins. An apron and gloves must be worn when doing this.
- Wash nappy bins on a Friday and leave to air by not replacing a bin liner and lid over the weekend.

Practitioners understand that every child is unique and with the agreement of parents a potty is introduced. When using the potty practitioners must;

- Give children privacy when using potties, by sitting them out of sight of passers-by in a toilet cubical.
- After use staff needs to dispose of the waste appropriately in a toilet, potties must be cleaned with anti-bac and put away immediately.
- Children need to wash their hands after using the potty.

If a child has a wetting accident, soiled underwear needs to be placed in a nappy sack and then into the child's bag or on their peg immediately. Any child having a bowel movement accident needs to be cleaned appropriately, if the underwear is badly soiled, place it in a nappy sack and keep it in the toilet area until the parent collects. Explain to the parent the condition of the underwear giving them to choice of keeping the underwear or allowing the staff to dispose appropriately in the yellow sack. The same procedure applies to any garments soiled with blood.

Effective Teaching and Learning in Early Years at Tidbury Green

Effective teaching and learning at Tidbury Green includes face-to-face with a child or small group of children during the session, and structuring the learning environment to support children in making progress through child-initiated play. Sometimes these two approaches overlap, for example when a child or small group initiates play which is then supported and extended by the practitioner.

When practitioners teach children:

- They make opportunities for the child to make a contribution and to make choices in their learning;
- They scaffold the child's development, to support increasing independence and control;
- They ask questions to check or develop children's understanding;
- They work collaboratively to solve problems and find answers;
- They provide formative feedback to help children to consolidate their learning and extend their exploration and thinking further.

Structured sessions in Little Wrens Preschool focus on one or more of the following:

- Reading stories from our curriculum topic support collection, using dialogic book talk strategies, and extending opportunities for curriculum book-related play.
- Singing and rhymes.
- Library visit.
- Pre-reading Phonics Letters and Sounds activities.
- Forest School
- Opportunities to talk, listen, take turns and talk about the day.

Structured sessions in Nursery focus on two or more of the following:

- Language for Thinking based on our topic book.

- Reading stories from our curriculum topic support collection, using dialogic book talk strategies, and extending opportunities for curriculum book-related play.
- Singing and rhymes.
- Library visit.
- Jigsaw
- Little Wandle Foundations for Phonics Programme.
- P.E.
- Forest School
- Opportunities to talk, listen, take turns and talk about the day.

Structured sessions in Reception focus on two or more of the following:

- Language for Thinking based on our topic book.
- Reading stories from our curriculum topic support collection, using dialogic book talk strategies, and extending opportunities for curriculum book-related play.
- Singing and rhymes.
- Library visit.
- Jigsaw
- Little Wandle Phonics Letters and Sounds activities.
- P.E.
- Forest School
- Opportunities to talk, listen, take turns and talk about the day.

Enabling Environments in Early Years

Classroom Activities and experiences are arranged to promote independence. Opportunity is given by adults to play co-operatively, alone, or time is given for children to stand and observe. There must be time and space allowed to develop play both inside and outside, safely and securely. The environment is aesthetically appealing with lots of examples of children's current work included in child-centred displays.

Promoting conversation in the classroom is a priority. Furniture and resources are selected to ensure children interact and have a conversation. 'Conversation Hotspots' include snack tables, make and create areas, construction, home and role play areas. Tables are circular to ensure children are face-to-face when working together. Challenging social situations are seen as opportunities for growth and development, explaining and working with children to help them feel strong and safe, and to learn how to manage difficult issues and conflicts in appropriate ways.

Displays include examples of children's speech where possible and appropriate and give children opportunities to talk about, review and think about their previous experiences and learning (metacognition).

We use ITERS-R, ECERS-R and ECERS-E, as well as other review/observation approaches, we work towards every child accessing excellent provision in all the areas of learning in the EYFS.

Outdoor Learning in Early Years at Tidbury Green

- We believe that pupils benefit enormously from working outdoors and at Forest School. In a natural environment, where children, are given time to thoroughly explore their thoughts,

feelings and relationships, they develop an understanding of the world and the environment through the use of emotions, imagination and senses.

- Outdoor learning complements the curriculum we provide in school by enabling them to have first-hand experience of activities not available in school. They may introduce children to aspects of the world around them that they have not yet experienced.
- Outdoor learning contributes to the development of their confidence and independence.
- Outdoor learning contributes to their social development through sharing an experience with peers.
- Children benefit to their language development through discussion during and after the visit.
- Outdoors enriches children's enjoyment of school.

Curriculum in Early Year at Tidbury Green

The curriculum of the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by promoting and developing:

The **three Prime Areas** are fundamental throughout the EYFS and they run through and support development in all other areas.

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language Development
- Physical Development

Four Specific Areas include the essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society and which grow out of the Prime areas and provide important contexts for learning.

- Literacy Development
- Mathematics development
- Understanding of the world
- Expressive Arts development

The EYFS also includes the **'Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning'** which help practitioners identify a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are;

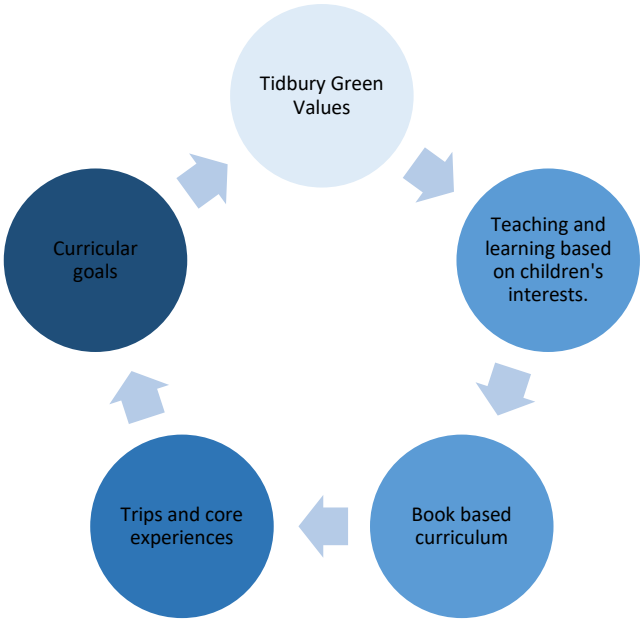
- **Playing and Exploring** - children investigate and experience things and 'have a go.'
- **Active Learning** - children concentrate and keep trying if they encounter difficulties, they enjoy achievements.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

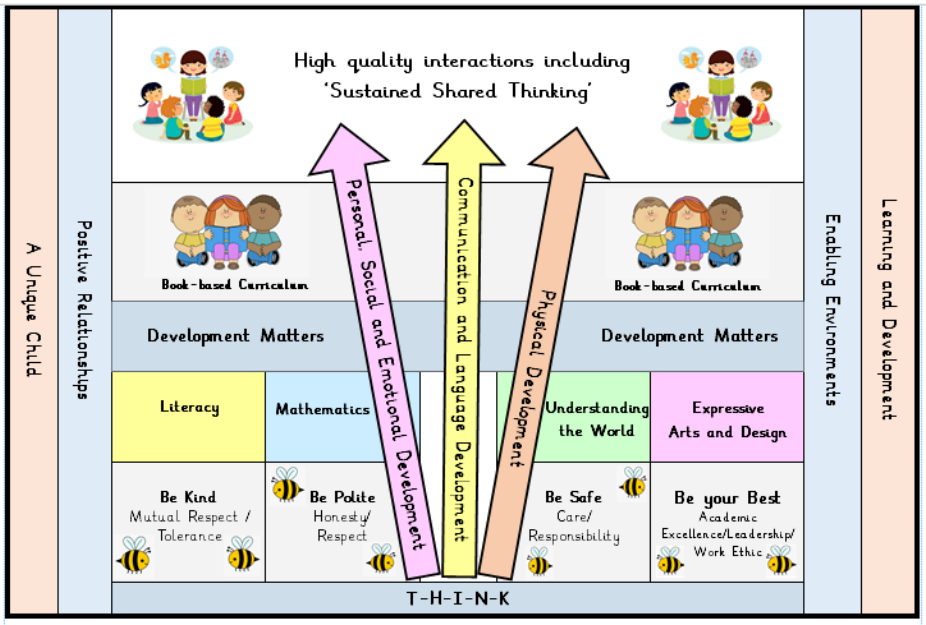
In Early Years, children at Tidbury Green School are engaged in explorative and play-based learning for most of their day. This learning does not always have an immediate and fixed outcome but Early Years practitioners at Tidbury Green are mindful of the outcomes we want our children to reach and we guide children towards them. Children have significant choice and independence as they play and this supports their confidence, independence, collaboration, motivation and self-regulation.

Exploration and play-based learning can be chosen entirely by a child or can be guided by a practitioner who knows that child well. Both options are open to all children.

Our curriculum is vital in Early Years, especially in a post-covid world. It encompasses all the things we want children to know and experience and be able to do as a result of their time in Early Years at Tidbury Green. The main priority is Communication and Language – Our curriculum 'Floats on a Sea of Talk.'

We offer a high-quality quality broad and balanced curriculum that has five main elements. Learning is play-based and takes place indoors and outside.





Please see Curriculum Overviews.

The Role of a Practitioner in Early Years at Tidbury Green School

Early Years Practitioners at Tidbury School work hard to develop close relationships with children to ensure they feel safe and secure in our school. Our children feel cared for by the practitioners they work with and they trust them. The emotional well-being of each child and the development of their confidence underpins every practitioner's interaction.

Practitioners support children's explorative and play-based learning by working with a child to develop their listening and attention and developing language and conversations with them. Practitioners positively challenge children's thinking by providing suggestions and resources to challenge and extend their learning. New Vocabulary is used in everyday interactions, daily routines and play repeatedly to ensure children learn these words in the correct context. As practitioners interact with the children they are reflecting on how their interactions can further support learning. Every interaction with a child is intentional.

"An intentional teacher acts with knowledge and purpose to ensure that young children acquire the knowledge and skills (content) they need to succeed in school and in life. Intentional teaching does not happen by chance. It is playful, thoughtful, and purposeful. Intentional teachers use their knowledge, judgment, and expertise to organize learning experiences for children; when an unplanned situation arises (as it always does), they can recognise a teaching opportunity and take advantage of it, too."

'The Intentional Teacher' by Ann S. Epstein 2008

Working alongside supporting children's explorative and play-based learning, children also need adult-led learning and direct teaching to learn key skills and concepts. Children also need to learn new words that are not present in everyday speech. As children move from Little Wrens Preschool to Nursery and into Reception, adult-led and direct teaching increases to ensure they are ready for Year One.

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. (Please see 'Here and Now Assessment on Page 14)

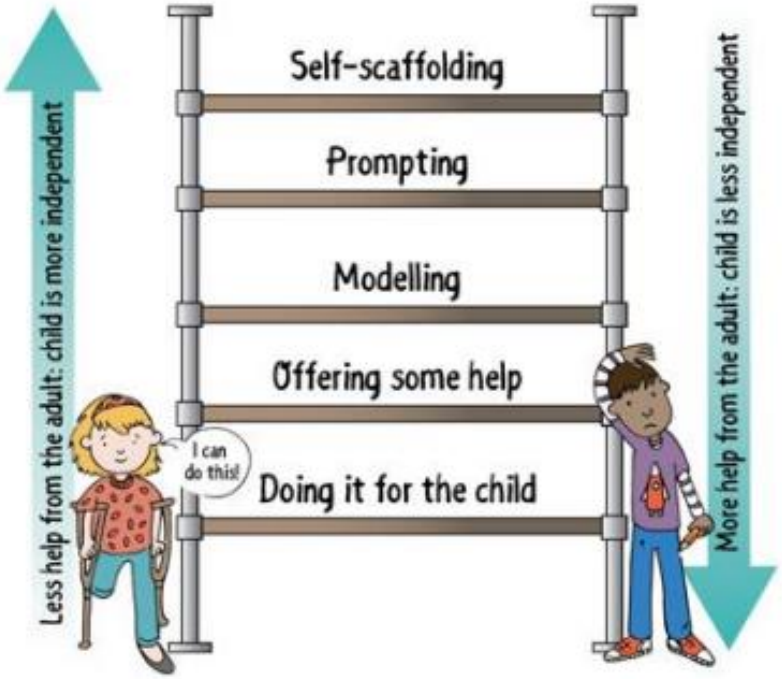
Learning in Early Years at Tidbury Green

- 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 take children's interests and strengths as a starting point, 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.

Our curriculum is designed with our children at Tidbury Green at the forefront of our minds. In our community, children come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and their life experiences can differ drastically. However, one common theme that all children have experienced is the impact of the Covid pandemic. The pandemic has affected children's social interactions, communication and language. In addition, our cohort is increasingly more multilingual: We celebrate the different languages that children speak and we also put a strong focus on helping children to learn English.

Our curriculum is inclusive. Every child can access our curriculum, with help and support when needed. We understand that all children develop differently. Practitioners 'scaffold up' to ensure all children at their developmental stage access our curriculum rather than a watered-down, differentiated curriculum. We offer scaffolding and extra support to help every child 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 but they will be participating in the same curriculum.



Where children move on quickly, our emphasis is on deepening their learning rather than introducing new skills or concepts.

Practitioners understand our definition of learning is change in the child's 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 and skills. Secure learning is more important than covering lots of things superficially. Progress is 'knowing more and remembering more'.

Practitioners plan considering 'components' and 'composites'. Components are secure, small building blocks of learning. Components are practiced together, repetitively, linking previous learning and ideas to make skills; for example, a component is subitising up to 3. Composites are the coming-together of components into a skilled performance – like counting accurately up to 5.

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. They become independent and more powerful learners. This in turn supports their approach to managing their own learning later in their school years.

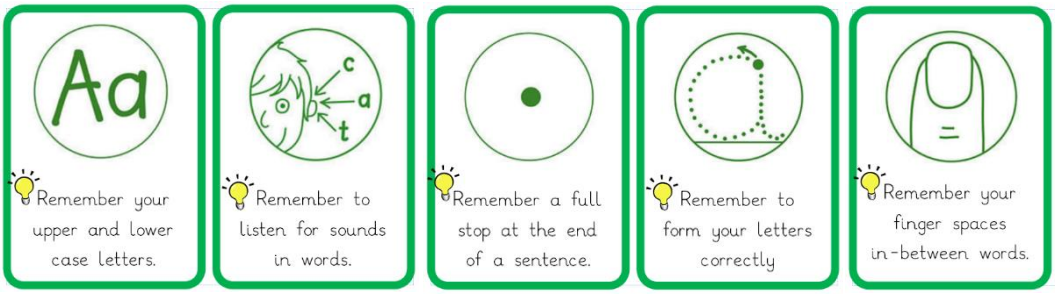
A practical example of this is:
Child A is trying to build a tower using the blocks. The tower is wobbly and keeps falling down.
Practitioner comments by saying **"Oh no, it has fallen down. I wonder why that happened?"** This enables the child to think about why the tower has fallen rather than continuing 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."**

Sustained Shared Thinking is a form of feedback with a focus on exploring solutions to problems. In Sustained Shared Thinking, 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).

Sustained Shared Thinking 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 children in Nursery and Reception, 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 – Mistakes are good and we learn from our mistakes. This develops the mindset of continuous improvement. Practitioners use SSTEW scale scores to help improve their interactions with children.

In Reception, when offering feedback to support writing, we use stamps to illustrate where writing can be improved. Work is stamped in conjunction with the child.



Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

For children with SEND, precise and ongoing assessment focuses first on what the child can do, alongside a clear understanding of the barriers to learning they may experience. Assessment is purposeful and informs timely, well-considered adaptations that enable children to participate meaningfully in daily learning and in the broader Early Years curriculum. We identify needs early and put support in place to help children make progress from their individual starting points.

We hold a clear and ambitious belief that all children are entitled to access the full breadth of the Early Years curriculum, in line with the EYFS learning and development requirements. While children will progress at different rates and may not achieve the same outcomes at the same time, we value progress relative to each child's starting point. With the right support, children who appear vulnerable initially can thrive later in the year.

We are committed to adapting our practice so that we can 'scaffold up' learning. This ensures that children with SEND are exposed to the same key concepts, knowledge, and skills as their peers. Carefully planned scaffolds and differentiated support enable children to achieve success, maintain high expectations, and develop independence. By scaffolding up, children with SEND are fully included in the wider curriculum, learning alongside their peers rather than being separated or limited in their experiences.

For more information, please read our SEND Policy.

Assessment and Planning in the Early Years at Tidbury Green

Planning and assessment begin as soon as we meet a child new to our setting. The induction process is different for each class in Early Years and it can be changed and adapted to meet the needs of each child. Key persons and teachers spend quality time getting to know their children and their families. This trusting relationship helps children to settle into Preschool, Nursery and Reception.

Little Wrens Preschool

Our assessment begins when we meet the child and their family when they come to 'Play, Stay and Chat' in the setting with their key person. The key purpose of 'Play, Stay and Chat' is to establish a respectful partnership with the parents and a strong relationship with the child. The key person asks

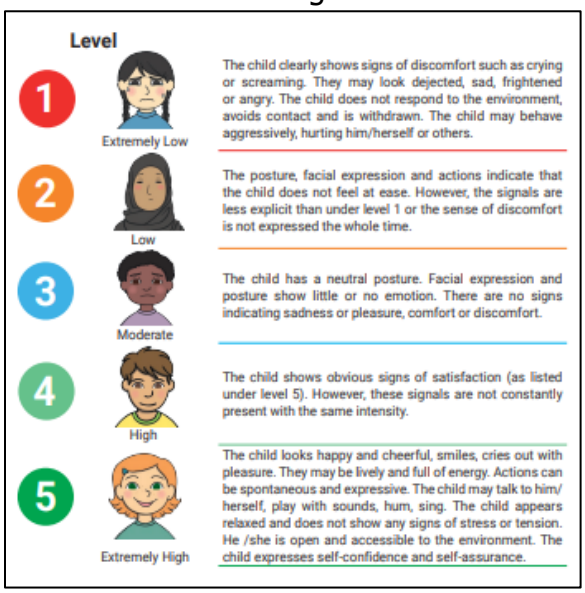
parents to share information about their child's interests, communication, confidence and physical health. The key person will use the information shared by parents to add to the child's developmental checkpoint document. They will also build the child's interests into the planning of the provision.

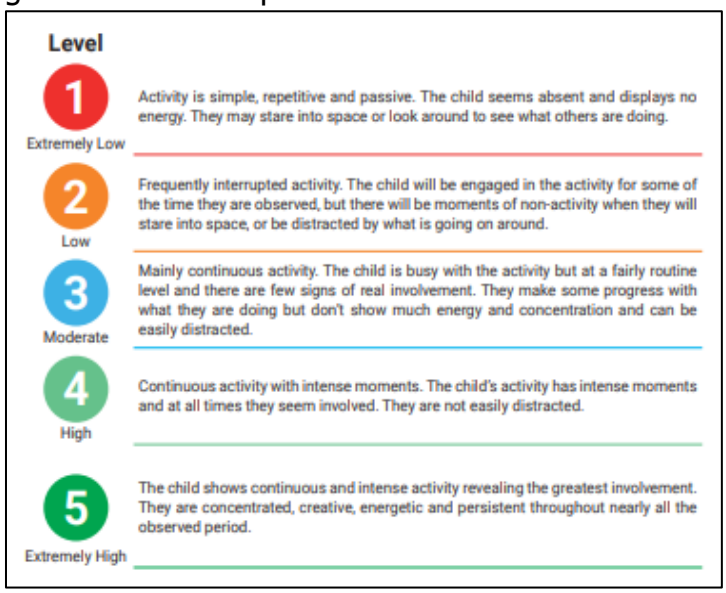
After five sessions, the key person and parents will meet again to discuss how the child has settled in and what they have observed. This is a snapshot of a child's starting points and is a joint assessment with the parents of the child. The key purpose of this assessment is to check that the child can access our curriculum. Where there are barriers to taking part, the practitioner may refer to the checkpoints in Development Matters before discussing concerns with their team leader, SENCO and the parent. Where children have barriers to taking part, we need to work together to help them overcome those barriers. Overall, this assessment informs the discussion with parents about how well their child is settling.

Nursery and Reception

Our assessment begins when children who attend Little Wrens visit Penguins Class and children who attend Penguins Class visit Pelicans and Swans Receptions classes for 'Transition Week' in July. Nursery and Reception staff work hard to establish relationships with children and families before they enter the class in September. Information, data and developmental checkpoint documents are shared with class teachers and teaching assistants.

For children who are new to our setting, every child is offered a home visit or video call via Teams, if the home visit is not possible. The key purpose of the home visit is to establish a respectful partnership with the parents and a strong relationship with the child. During the home visit and settling-in period, teachers ask parents to share information about their child's interests, communication, confidence and physical health. Teachers will use the information shared by parents to add to the child's developmental checkpoint document. They will also build the child's interests into the planning of the provision. In Preschool, Nursery and Reception, if children settle quickly and engage in a wide range of play in their first few weeks, there will be no need to set out 'next steps'. The next steps from children's starting points are usually linked to how the children have settled into Early Years or anything of significance e.g. toilet training. Once children have settled and can access the environment, we begin thinking with more detail about how they will access the curriculum and we support learning around their interests. For the children who settle quickly and are confident, we can move into meeting the wider curricular goals from Development Matters.





We use the Leuven Scale to support practitioners in monitoring the involvement and well-being of children who are new to a setting.

If we notice that a child might be having difficulties with their development, we will act quickly. We get to know and understand these 'vulnerable starters' so we will spend time observing them closely and reflecting on what we notice.

We will continue to develop a strong relationship with their parents, supporting them to also give their child the extra help they need. The curriculum for these children will remain ambitious and inclusive. We focus on support, scaffolding and helping children overcome barriers to their learning.

Reception Baseline

In addition to teacher baseline assessment, it is a statutory requirement for all children entering the Reception year to be assessed within six weeks of starting. This is known as the Reception Baseline Assessment or RBA.

The RBA can be administered in any term, depending on when the child first started school. Therefore, children entering reception year in the spring and summer terms, as well as the autumn term, will carry out the RBA at these points.

Here and Now Assessment

'Here and Now Assessment' is the most common and most powerful form of assessment. 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 depending on each unique child.

Practitioners will;

- 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 afterward 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 learning components children need on the way to meeting curriculum 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. 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 practitioners' key children after school and during planning meetings support this understanding. Daily, weekly and termly discussions happen frequently between practitioners in each classroom, formally and informally. Each term, practitioners in every room come together to moderate children's learning. Annually and whenever possible, practitioners meet with staff from other settings to moderate children's learning. It's an important opportunity to learn from each other about the children and their development.

Practitioners 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 that curriculum. This is a strength of the practitioners in Early Years at Tidbury Green School. 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. We must be certain that children are secure in what they know and can do.

This responsive action is often linked to 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 curricular goal in Development Matters and 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.

Assessment and Tracking in Early Years at Tidbury Green School

In Early Years at Tidbury Green, assessment serves children's learning and our curriculum. Most assessments are formative, so they quickly inform us how to make a difference in children's learning. Our data drop tracking system ensures we have an overview of children's progress, so we can take further action where needed.

Seesaw is used to promote the partnership with parents in support of children's learning. This involves us finding out about significant learning at home, and sharing significant learning with families. Practitioners only record significant observations in Seesaw. These records aim 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 do not use Seesaw to create a comprehensive overview of everything a child has learned.

End of Early Years Foundation Key Stage

At the end of the EYFS (end of Reception), practitioners complete the EYFS profile (Statutory requirement) for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 16 early learning goals, indicating whether they are;

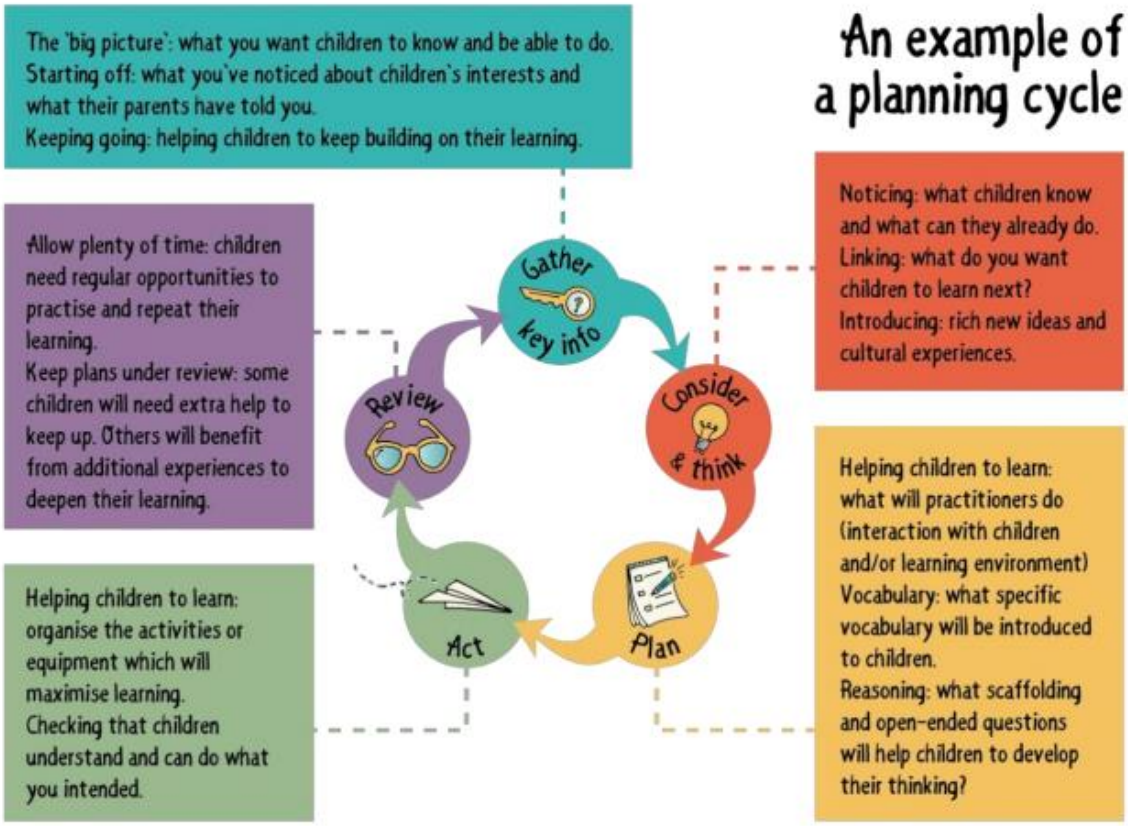
- 'Expected' - meeting expected levels of development.

- 'Emerging'- not yet reaching the expected levels of development.

Early Learning Goals is an assessment at the end of the key stage. Children's development levels are assessed as the year progresses. If a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for

concern, practitioners will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child.

Assessment and Planning in Early Years at Tidbury Green School



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. Practitioners use I-CAN Top Talking tips to encourage children to develop their confidence in developing their communication and language. I-CAN Top Talking Tips are displayed to aid practitioners in each classroom.

In Early Years at Tidbury Green, we use a book-based approach to underpin our curriculum. These high-quality fiction and non-fiction texts expose children to the wider world, people, places and extensive vocabulary. Books create the perfect context for purposeful writing to take place. We can create and immerse children in a wide range of experiences that link to their own lives. Books ask more questions than give answers and this creates critical readers. Our discussions in Language for Thinking, books make us think and question things about characters, relationships and ultimately our own lives, developing empathy.

Talk for Writing is used in Little Wrens, Nursery and Reception to motivate and engage children in developing and embedding language through repetition. Each unit of work is planned using;

- Imitation - understanding existing vocabulary in context.
- Imitation - embedding existing vocabulary in context.

- Innovation - extension of vocabulary in context.
- Rehearsal, performing and evaluation of new innovation.

Working with Parents and Carers in the Early Years at Tidbury Green

Parents and carers have a vital role to play in the education of their children. Parents or carers and the school must have a good relationship and work together to support children in their education, health and well-being. Dialogue with parents and carers is respectful and sensitive. This dialogue is underpinned by sharing and discussing 'What to Expect, When? Guidance to your child's learning and Development in the Early Years Foundation Stage: a guide for parents'.

Working with parents and their families in Little Wrens Preschool

We meet the child and their family when they come to 'Play, Stay and Chat' in the setting with their key person. The key purpose of 'Play, Stay and Chat' is to establish a respectful partnership with the parents and a strong relationship with the child. The key person asks parents to share information about their child's interests, communication, confidence and physical health. After five sessions, the key person and parents will meet again to discuss how the child has settled in and what they have observed.

- Offer flexible admission arrangements when children are struggling to start school and agree on an action plan with parents. Sometimes, encouraging the children to stay.
- Ensuring staff and parents have good relationships to talk about any concerns.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress throughout the Foundation Stage.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress throughout the Foundation Stage, informally and formally. Parents and carers are made to feel welcome to come and have informal discussions each day.
- Formal discussions take place in person for Parent and Carer Consultations or SEND reviews. There is a formal meeting for parents in the autumn and spring terms, at which the parents discuss their child's progress with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- Information to support education, health and well-being is easily accessible on our school website. Links to family support and health visitor referrals.

- Significant examples of the children's work to be sent to parents and carers at least once every half term via Seesaw. Parents and Carers have the opportunity to send work back via Seesaw.
- Offering a range of parent and child activity sessions throughout the year, that encourage collaboration and shared learning.

    - ❖ Mother's Day Assembly and Cream Tea.
    - ❖ Visit to Attwell Farm or Wythall Transport Museum
    - ❖ Foundation Stage Sports Day.

- Communicating children's learning and suggesting ways to support their learning from home.

    - ❖ Little Wrens weekly newsletters support our book-based topic learning, communication and language, vocabulary and literacy skills.
    - ❖ Shared Reading Record.
    - ❖ Little Wren Home Book

Working with parents and their families in Nursery

- Meet and greet parents and carers in an evening induction meeting offering them to look around the setting and meet Headteacher, Early Years teachers and SLT. When this is not possible, a virtual meeting will be organised.
- Home visits are offered to all Nursery children who are new to our school to develop relationships with Nursery staff and discuss their child before they start school.
- Give all children (new and existing Little Wrens' children) and their parents and carers an opportunity to spend time with their teacher before they start school in 'Play, Stay and Chat' sessions.
- Offer flexible admission arrangements when children are struggling to start school and agree on an action plan with parents. Sometimes, encouraging the children to stay.
- Ensuring staff and parents have good relationships to talk about any concerns.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress throughout the Foundation Stage.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress throughout the Foundation Stage, informally and formally. Parents and carers are made to feel welcome to come and have informal discussions each day.
- Formal discussions take place in person for Parent and Carer Consultations or SEND reviews. There is a formal meeting for parents in the autumn and spring terms, at which the parents discuss their child's progress with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- Information to support education, health and well-being is easily accessible on our school website. Links to family support and health visitor referrals.
- Significant examples of the children's work to be sent to parents and carers at least once every half term via Seesaw. Parents and Carers have the opportunity to send work back via Seesaw.
- Offering a range of parent and child activity sessions throughout the year, that encourage collaboration and shared learning.

    - ❖ Welcome to Nursery Workshop for Parents and Carers.

- ❖ Parents and Carers Induction Coffee Morning.
- ❖ Mother's Day Assembly and Cream Tea.
- ❖ Mathematics workshop.
- ❖ Father's Day trip to Henley.
- ❖ Foundation Stage Sports Day.

- Communicating children's learning and suggesting ways to support their learning from home.

    - ❖ Pelicans and Swans half-termly subject knowledge organisers are designed to support book-based topic learning, communication and language development, vocabulary acquisition, and early literacy skills. They also outline planned mathematical learning, phonics sounds, and provide guidance and ideas to support handwriting practice.
    - ❖ Shared Reading Record.
    - ❖ Weekly blogs to showcase children's learning.

Working with parents or carers and their families in Reception

- Meet and greet parents and carers in an evening induction meeting offering them to look around the setting and meet Headteacher, Early Years teachers and SLT. When this is not possible, a virtual meeting will be organised.
- Home visits are offered to all Reception children who are new to our school to develop relationships with Reception staff and discuss their child before they start school.
- Give all children (new and existing Penguins' children) and their parents and carers an opportunity to spend time with their teacher before they start school in 'Play, Stay and Chat' sessions.
- Offer flexible admission arrangements when children are struggling to start school and agree on an action plan with parents. Sometimes, encouraging the children to stay.
- Ensuring staff and parents have good relationships to talk about any concerns.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress throughout the Foundation Stage, informally and formally. Parents and carers are made to feel welcome to come and have informal discussions each day.
- Formal discussions take place in person for Parent and Carer Consultations or SEND reviews. There is a formal meeting for parents in the autumn and spring terms, at which the parents discuss their child's progress with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year. Their attainment in line with the Foundation Stage 'Early Learning Goals' is shared with parents at the end of Reception.
- Information to support education, health and well-being is easily accessible on our school website. Links to family support and school nurse referrals.
- Significant examples of the children's work to be sent to parents and carers at least once every half term via Seesaw. Parents and Carers have the opportunity to send work back via Seesaw.
- Offering a range of parent and child activity sessions throughout the year, that encourage collaboration and shared learning.

    - ❖ Reception Parents and Carers Induction Coffee Morning.
    - ❖ Reception Phonics Workshop.

- ❖ Reception Mathematics Workshop.
- ❖ Mother's Day Assembly and Cream Tea.
- ❖ Father's Day Workshop.
- ❖ Foundation Stage Sports Day.
- ❖ Transition Meeting to Year One.

- Communicating children's learning and suggesting ways to support their learning from home.

  - ❖ Pelicans and Swans half-termly subject knowledge organisers are designed to support book-based topic learning, communication and language development, vocabulary acquisition, and early literacy skills. They also outline planned mathematical learning, phonics sounds, and provide guidance and ideas to support handwriting practice.
  - ❖ Daily reading diary.
  - ❖ Little Wandle Phonics Book.
  - ❖ Weekly blogs to showcase children's learning.

Transition to Year One

We understand that change can be difficult for children and they should be given every opportunity to be prepared for change when they leave Foundation Stage and progress to Year One. A structured program of activities is implemented in Summer Term 2 to make the transition as smooth as possible.

- 'Learning through play' activities to continue into Year One and transfer into more formal teaching by Spring 1.
- In Summer 2, the Year One teacher to work in Reception and get to know children in FS2.
- Children to play in the Key Stage 1 playground, two weeks before transition week.
- A homework project to be completed over the summer holidays about change and themselves.
- In Summer 2, children to participate in circle time activities about change to prepare for transition.
- On the first Monday of the transition week the children to come into the main EYFS classroom and home from Year One classroom.
- Child-friendly Key Stage One transition booklet.

Leading and Monitoring Early Years

The school's improvement plan sets out the specific actions aimed at improving outcomes for children in Early Years at Tidbury Green and to narrow the gap for disadvantaged children. These actions are linked to teachers' appraisal targets. Teachers are observed regularly to judge progress towards their targets, and their general impact on children's progress and wellbeing. The Senior Leadership Team and Subject Leads also carry out 'Book Looks' and class reviews, looking at the quality of provision and the progress of children in each class. Teaching and learning are informally monitored throughout the year and a brief log of judgments is kept. We strongly promote professional dialogue

about children and their learning, and staff are encouraged to innovate, to use ideas from other schools and to take action based on research. We believe that it is important that all practitioners are given support, encouragement and targeted coaching through supervision to improve.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the governing body, and will be reviewed in two years, or earlier if necessary**.**