

Woolsery Primary School Early Years Planning *Learning at the Heart of the Community*

In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately, referring to the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

These are: **playing and exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’; **active learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements for their own sake; **creating and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

In addition, the **Prime Areas of Learning (Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language and Physical Development)** underpin and are an integral part of children’s learning in all areas.

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

Comprehension	Word Reading	Writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Make previously read books available for children to share at school and at home.</li> <li>● Avoid asking children to read books at home they cannot yet read.</li> <li>● Discuss books read in class.</li> <li>● Make predictions on books by asking what happens next.</li> <li>● Talk about characters in stories they have been read.</li> <li>● Talk about story settings in stories they have been read.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Help children to read the sounds speedily. This will make sound-blending easier.</li> <li>● Ask children to work out the word you say in sounds: for example, h-a-t &gt; hat; sh-o-p &gt; shop.</li> <li>● Show how to say sounds for the letters from left to right and blend them, for example, big, stamp.</li> <li>● Help children to become familiar with letter groups, such as ‘th’, ‘sh’, ‘ch’, ‘ee’ ‘or’ ‘igh’.</li> <li>● Provide opportunities for children to read words containing familiar letter groups: ‘that’, ‘shop’, ‘chin’, ‘feet’, ‘storm’, ‘night’.</li> <li>● Listen to children read some longer words made up of letter-sound correspondences they know: ‘rabbit’, ‘himself’, ‘jumping’.</li> <li>● Note correspondences between letters and sounds that are unusual or that they have not yet been taught, such as ‘do’, ‘said’, ‘were’.</li> <li>● Listen to children read aloud, ensuring books are consistent with their developing phonic knowledge.</li> <li>● Do not include words that include letter-sound correspondences that children cannot yet read, or exception words that have not been taught.</li> <li>● Children should not be required to use other strategies to work out words.</li> <li>● Make the books available for children to share at school and at home.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teach formation as they learn the sounds for each letter using a memorable phrase, encouraging an effective pen grip.</li> <li>● When forming letters, the starting point and direction are more important at this stage than the size or position of the letter on a line.</li> <li>● Show children how to touch each finger as they say each sound.</li> <li>● For exception words such as ‘the’ and ‘said’, help children identify the sound that is tricky to spell.</li> <li>● Support children to form the complete sentence orally before writing.</li> <li>● Help children memorise the sentence before writing by repeatedly saying it aloud.</li> <li>● Only ask children to write sentences when they have sufficient knowledge of letter-sound correspondences.</li> <li>● Dictate sentences to ensure they contain only the taught sound-letter correspondences.</li> </ul>

● Avoid asking children to read books at home they cannot yet read.

● Model how you read and re-read your own writing to check it makes sense.

**Development Matters**  
**Comprehension:**  
Re-read known books to build up their confidence in word reading, their fluency and their understanding and enjoyment.  
**Word Reading:**  
Read individual letters by saying the sounds for them.  
Blend sounds into words, so that they can read short words made up of known letter– sound correspondences.  
Read some letter groups that each represent one sound and say sounds for them.  
Read a few common exception words matched to the school’s phonic programme.  
Read simple phrases and sentences made up of words with known letter–sound correspondences and, where necessary, a few exception words.  
Re-read these books to build up their confidence in word reading, their fluency and their understanding and enjoyment.  
**Writing:**  
Form lower-case and capital letters correctly.  
Spell words by identifying the sounds and then writing the sound with letter/s.  
Write short sentences with words with known sound-letter correspondences using a capital letter and full stop.  
Re-read what they have written to check that it makes sense.

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary;
- Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories;
- Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs;
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending;
- Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed;
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters;
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

Physical activity is vital in children’s all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives<sup>7</sup>. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child’s strength, co-ordination and positional awareness

through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

- Before teaching children the correct pencil grip and posture for writing, or how to use a knife and fork and cut with scissors, check:
  - ✓ that children have developed their upper arm and shoulder strength sufficiently: they do not need to move their shoulders as they move their hands and fingers
  - ✓ that they can move and rotate their lower arms and wrists independently
- Help children to develop the core strength and stability they need to support their small motor skills.
- Encourage and model tummy-crawling, crawling on all fours, climbing, pulling themselves up on a rope and hanging on monkey bars. Offer children activities to develop and further refine their small motor skills. Suggestions: threading and sewing, woodwork, pouring, stirring, dancing with scarves, using spray bottles, dressing and undressing dolls, planting and caring for plants, playing with small world toys, and making models with junk materials, construction kits and malleable materials like clay.
- Regularly review the equipment for children to develop their small motor skills. Is it appropriate for the different levels of skill and confidence of children in the class? Is it challenging for the most dexterous children?
- Continuously check how children are holding pencils for writing, scissors and knives and forks. Offer regular, gentle encouragement and feedback. With regular practice, the physical skills children need to eat with a knife and fork and develop an efficient handwriting style will become increasingly automatic.
- Provide areas for sitting at a table that are quiet, purposeful and free of distraction.
- Give children regular, sensitive reminders about correct posture: Provide different chairs at the correct height for the range of children in the class, so that their feet are flat on the floor or a footrest. Provide different tables at the correct height for the range of children in the class. The table supports children's forearms. The top of the table is slightly higher than the height of the child's elbow flexed to 90 degrees.
- Encourage children to draw freely.
- Engage children in structured activities: guide them in what to draw, write or copy.
- Teach and model correct letter formation. Continuously check the process of children's handwriting (pencil grip and letter formation, including directionality). Provide extra help and guidance when needed.
- Plan for regular repetition so that correct letter formation becomes automatic, efficient and fluent over time.

#### **Development Matters**

Develop their small motor skills so that they can use a range of tools competently, safely and confidently. Suggested tools: pencils for drawing and writing, paintbrushes, scissors, knives, forks and spoons.

Use their core muscle strength to achieve a good posture when sitting at a table or sitting on the floor.

Develop the foundations of a handwriting style which is fast, accurate and efficient.

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases;
- Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery;
- Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.