



EYFS Curriculum

In Early Years at Lowther Primary School, we deliver a curriculum based on the framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. This describes the seven areas of learning and development which “must be implemented through planned, purposeful play”.

The framework also states that “Practitioners must respond to each child’s emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.” We have a fantastic team of adults who put this into practice every day.

In addition, the framework describes “Three characteristics of effective teaching and learningplaying and exploring...active learning.... and creating and thinking critically.” These describe exactly the approach we take to learning in our EYFS unit at Lowther Primary School. Throughout the year, the children play, make friends, develop and learn. They have great fun, exploring and creating, indoors and outdoors. They gain independence and confidence and their natural curiosity is encouraged at all times.

In the Moment Planning

In September the Reception Class Teachers received a fantastic opportunity to hear Anna Ephgrave speak about her approach to teaching and learning in Early Years. Her philosophy was one that resonated with us at Lowther and we subsequently adopted her ‘in the moment planning’ approach in our Reception Classrooms. It has been very effective and we have seen positive results when working in this way. Therefore, we plan to adopt the ‘in the moment’ style of teaching in our nursery in the summer term.

Planning 'in the moment' is all about seizing the moment for children to progress in their learning, whilst following their own interests. Based on what the children are already deeply involved in, this way of planning relies on our skilled practitioners, to use quality interactions to draw out the children’s knowledge and build on it there and then (in the moment). We observe the children in their play and look out for ‘teachable moments’ (moments during play which provide an opportunity for a practitioner to teach the child) which we then act upon in order to ensure the children progress. This way of working

means that most planning is retrospective (there is little forward planning). Phonics, Guided Reading, Maths, PE and Forest School are still taught using weekly plans that ensure progression in skills in these areas.

The teachable moment

National Strategies document states:

“It is in the moment of curiosity, puzzlement, effort or interest – the ‘teachable moment’ – that the skilful adult makes a difference.”

What does the child gain from the teachable moment?

The child should feel valued, important, interesting, capable, and able to learn as well as gaining knowledge, skills, attitude and understanding therefore making progress in one or several areas of the Early Years Curriculum.

What does the practitioner gain from the teachable moment?

They should feel valued, important, interesting, capable, and able to teach as well as gaining a sound understanding of the child’s knowledge, skills, attitude, understanding and progress.

Ofsted

Jane Wotherspoon HMI (quoted in an Early Years Course by Anna Ephgrave 24.01.14) states “Teaching... is all those different things that you do as an adult that help young children learn... communicating, modelling language, working with children as they initiate their own play and activities, being ready to intervene on the moment, demonstrating how to do something, explaining why something is as it is, showing children something, exploring ideas with them, encouraging them, questioning them, checking what it is they are understanding, helping them to record something that they did so that they get the structure and sequence of events, providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating what they are doing, setting challenges, all those sorts of things are the sorts of things we mean when we are teaching.” (Conference 9.10.13)

Planning in the moment means that Early Years practitioners do all of these things, all day, every day.

The Early Years Framework 2014 states:

“1.6. Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development.”

Planning in the moment fully allows this to happen and encourages the children to pursue their own interests.

The Learning Environment

This way of planning means that the learning environment (both the indoor environment and outdoor environment) constantly need to be reviewed and adapted to ensure that the children's level of involvement and their activity is constantly deep. The resources in each area also need to be purposeful and engaging. A continuous provision plans will still be conducted on a weekly basis.

Observations

All observations made of the children must be based on quality interactions between children or children and practitioners. They must include any teaching that has taken place or progress that a child or group of children have made. All practitioners are responsible for highlighting progress in observations. Emphasis is highly placed on using 'I wonder...' statements ie 'I wonder if...', 'I wonder what...', 'I wonder how...' We feel that this approach to questioning is a lot less pressurising and allows the children to open up more readily. Observations will be written up at the end of the day. Teachers also place children's wow moments on Tapestry, which parents also have access to.

Focus Children

During each week 3 children from each class will have an A3 sheet of paper on which quality interactions and learning experiences will be recorded. It will make up part of their learning journey.