

St John's Highbury Vale Early Years Curriculum Overview

At St John's Highbury Vale Primary School, we use the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021) as a basis to build our curriculum upon. We have identified key areas that we feel our children at St John's should be able to achieve by the time they leave Reception in order to reach their full potential and develop their cultural capital. This page contains some of the experiences we may offer the children in order to reach our aims. This is not an exhaustive list or a tick sheet. This is a supporting document.

Curriculum Aim	Vocabulary and Books	Healthy lifestyle	Communicate with the wider community - use some signs of British Sign Language	Outdoor learning	Improved mental health
Skills progression and experiences we can offer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Labelled environment 2. Play word games 3. Create a word wall 4. Introduce a word of the week and up level vocabulary 5. Use words in sentences 6. Share vocabulary with parents 7. Read together 8. Emphasise words when reading 9. Story time 10. Make conversation a priority 11. Extend children's vocabulary at every opportunity 12. Multi-sensory experiences help understanding of words and concepts 13. More access to books (indoor and outdoor reading areas) 14. Story sacks 15. Book trust 16. Friday afternoon stay and read 17. Write for pleasure 18. Inviting book corners inside and outside 19. 5 stories and rhymes per day 20. Exposure to vocabulary 21. Opportunities to deepen vocabulary 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wash hands 2. Express preferences 3. Explore different textures, smells and tastes 4. Understand vocabulary (mix, cut, put, add- Imperative verbs) 5. Follow instructions 6. Know safety requirements/risks 7. Use a range of cooking equipment (knives, spoons, graters) 8. Understand what healthy things are (food and drink) and that they are usually grown 9. Select resources 10. Read a recipe (in words or pictures) and follow a recipe to make simple things such as playdough, rainbow salad, bird feeders 11. Role-play kitchens/restaurants/doctors 12. Identify food sources 13. Measure and work out quantities 14. Classify 15. Write 16. Plan and record 17. Grow vegetables 18. Oral health 19. Meet a chef 20. Meet a dentist/doctor 21. Go on a farm trip 22. Farm to fork (Tesco) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore different ways of communication and why we use it 2. Adult input of explicit teaching 3. Look 4. Copy 5. Greet someone 6. Use manners 7. Understand signs for visual timetable 8. Sign visual timetable 9. Sign selected nursery rhymes and songs (Happy Birthday colours of the rainbow) 10. Sign initial letters 11. Sign numbers 12. Sign letters of the alphabet 13. Sign your name 14. Meet a person who uses sign language 15. Non speaking day - Charities to support 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Forest schooling afternoon's at Gillespie Park 2. Re-organisation of outdoor space 3. Being safe in the forest classroom 4. Rules for equipment 5. Being safe in the school grounds 6. Co-operation and sharing resources 7. Identify plants and vegetables 8. Growing plants and vegetables 9. Identify mini beasts 10. Caring for creatures 11. Caring for the environment 12. Animal identification and habitats 13. Weather 14. Seasons 15. Investigate local area 16. Class pet 17. Wormery or ant trail? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Secure attachments with key workers 2. Working memory skills 3. Mindfulness 4. Sense of belonging 5. Cultural visits from parents/cultural calendar celebrations 6. Pride in achievements 7. Having a say/children's interests 8. Opportunities to succeed 9. Self - regulation strategies 10. Outdoor learning 11. Making mistakes 12. Positive affirmations

St John's Highbury Vale Early Years Curriculum Justifications

This page contains some of the reasoning as to why we have identified those key areas and how it will impact our children and lead to excellent outcomes.

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Reasoning	We are seeing a higher number of children with Speech and language needs so this would support them.	To encourage independence in both preparing and making healthy choices. To be able to understand how to take care of their health and bodies. KS1 children will be able to explain where food comes from (supermarket is the usual response) so to support their cultural capital.	To ensure all children can communicate effectively. We are seeing a higher number of children with Speech and language needs so this would support them. Give the children another skill that is useful in the wider world. Explore different ways of communicating.	We are seeing a large amount of children whose physical development needs intervention, this would support them and in addition will help with our improved mental health initiative.	To encourage to use skills to manage their feelings and emotions.
How will this lead to excellent outcomes?	Many children will start school with a limited number of spoken words. By starting early, children are given a greater chance to have the crucial words in place before the impacts of their poor vocabulary can be seen on literacy and conceptual understanding. The Early Years curriculum provides ample opportunities for teaching the fundamental concepts that underpin later learning. So, it is essential that the whole school approach to vocabulary teaching starts when children enter educational provisions.' WORDAWARE Parsons & Brannigan	‘Good health is one of the most important determinants of a child’s life chances. All professionals working in the foundation years need to be involved in promoting and encouraging children’s healthy development.’ https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/	Signing is often used with children and adults with developmental delays and communication difficulties, however there are added benefits to its use with all children in the early years. I have seen Makaton used beautifully in mainstream nursery and primary settings to support singing and music making, assemblies, performances, storytelling, reading and the learning of new curriculum vocabulary. Learning new songs and words supported by signing provides all children with a visual prompt to reinforce what they have learnt. Plus signing supports memory and recall too. There is an added benefit for practitioners who can use signs to quietly reinforce classroom expectations such as good sitting/listening or a prompt to wait to take a turn in a group activity. (Very handy to be able to sign your drink order to a colleague across a busy staffroom too!) When signing is incorporated more broadly in an early years setting - - this allows for a far more inclusive approach. Signing becomes a ‘normal’ part of the communication toolkit and a child who requires signing to communicate has a greater opportunity to successfully interact with a range of children and adults rather than with only one or two identified individuals who they feel will understand them. Signing supports the development of language skills, such as effectively learning, storing and retrieving words. Additionally, a child’s confidence as a communicator is positively impacted when they feel they can understand what is said to them and they can express themselves. As their language skills and confidence develop, this can encourage more spoken language rather than less. https://ican.org.uk/news/why-use-signing-within-early-years-settings/	‘Research from T. Gill showed that outdoor learning boosts confidence, social skills, communication, motivation, physical skills, knowledge and understanding, while research from O’Brien and Murray found an increase in children’s self-esteem, self-confidence, ability to work cooperatively and positive attitude to learning following Forest School experience, an inspirational process that offers children, young people and adults regular opportunities to achieve, and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland environment.’ https://literacytrust.org.uk	‘According to the Mental Health Foundation (2015) children who suffer from health problems associated with poor behaviour and low achievement at school are those who have poorer outcomes in later life. Evidence indicates that difficulties that arise in early life continue to shape adolescence.’ ‘By the time all children begin school they vary in cognitive skills, communication, and social development. Therefore, if their early experiences have been negative then the Government’s pledge to support their wellbeing could be interpreted as an empty promise which will fail to address the root cause of some mental health issues. Heckman (2012) points out that the years between 0-5 are critical for shaping productivity when the brain rapidly develops cognition and the skills necessary for success in school, career, and life. The Perry Pre-school study in 1962 reinforced the idea that the early years in a child’s life are crucial for health and wellbeing. The outcome of the study indicates that the role of the caregiver/teacher is paramount for a child’s success. A professional childcare provider who recognises the difference between typical behaviour versus atypical behaviour can help regulate a child’s temperament. Consistency and kindness from a professional caregiver can help prevent negative experiences from causing lasting harm.’ https://www.pacey.org.uk/