

Rationale

Intent

Learners within the Early Years and Key Stage 1 are aged between 3-7 years old and have a wide variety of abilities and needs. They may also have complex learning needs, including all or some of the following: physical, sensory and medical needs. It may not, therefore, be developmentally appropriate for learners in Key Stage 1 to access the national curriculum. Instead, the Early Years and Key Stage 1 curriculum at Kennel Lane follows a stage, not age approach to learning.

Our curriculum takes a holistic view of the learners, enabling all learners to access and make progress in all seven areas of learning regardless of developmental level by focusing on how they learn best, what interests them and what their strengths are. Learners with complex needs require the same start to education, an environment that supports independent exploration, enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers. Learners with complex needs require a bespoke approach to their education as the way they learn is unique to them.

Implementation

There is a recognition, alongside the whole school Nurture approach, that key points of focus from the beginning of each learner's time in Early Years and Key Stage 1 are abilities to: Relate, Regulate and Communicate. Learners are supported to develop their regulation skills through co-regulation. Adults build strong, positive relationships with learners in order that they can provide the calm and regulated space learners need to support their brains' regulation, a pre-requisite for learning to take place. Communication is embedded in every activity, across all contexts, to ensure learners can transfer and apply their skills. Learners are encouraged to develop their autonomy and self-advocacy through the development of functional communication systems, within a Total Communication environment where all communication is valued.

Our curriculum is based on the 'Development Matters' broken down into smaller steps of progress to support individual progress and success. The curriculum focuses around three Prime Areas: Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development and Communication and Language; and four Specific Areas: Maths, Literacy, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design. The Characteristics of Effective Learning framework provides adults with an insight into the development of key skills for learners' later learning, such as concentration, resilience, perseverance, and self-knowledge. Through observing learners in their play, adults are able to identify characteristics they may need further opportunities to develop and plan for these.

All Prime and Specific areas will intersect during activities, which will develop a richer understanding. Using a combination of child-led and adult-led learning, activities planned to incorporate learners' current interests within each Topic. This supports independent engagement and opportunities for adults to extend and challenge learners' understanding. The role of adults in learning ranges from that of an observer to that of a support or guide. It is recognised that whilst a great deal can be learned through play, for our learners who may engage in more repetitive or limited exploration, the role of the adult is key to ensure play opportunities are carefully planned and constructed to build upon each learner's play as a starting point, whether this be in advance or in the moment. Further to this, adult-led learning provides opportunities for learners to engage in activities they may not otherwise, supporting them to build skills and knowledge they can later be supported to practice with increasing independence in their own play.

Early Years and Key Stage 1 Curriculum

Learners continue the EYFS curriculum until they leave Key Stage 1 to ensure they receive a developmentally appropriate curriculum and to foster a love of learning. Learners will be immersed in purposeful and meaningful experiences through a thematic (topic based) approach. Using a thematic approach assists adults to **plan and sequence** learning opportunities that are stimulating, immersive and that enable cross curricula learning. The topics will be taught, and experienced, through multi- sensory approaches to foster high levels of engagement. **Throughout the Key Stage there is a clear focus of preparing learners for the next stage of their educational journey in Key Stage 2 and beyond.**

Each learner's EHCP areas of need and outcomes, which are written in conjunction with parents and professionals, drive the teaching and learning. All staff ensure that learners are presented with many opportunities, in different contexts, to work towards meaningful and achievable long-term goals. There is an emphasis on generalisation of learning, rather than acquiring skills in isolation.

'Children are powerful learners. Every child can make progress in their learning, with the right help.' – Development Matters, 2021.