

## Little Acorns

### Curriculum Guidance

#### Communication and Language

Our aim is for all children to be confident and effective communicators. Our nursery is a language rich environment filled with open conversation, storytelling, singing and great role modelling. We want our children to be great conversationalists. To be able to listen to one another, take turns in conversations and use words that are descriptive and challenging. We want our children to have a large repertoire of songs, rhymes, and poems that they can sing/say freely.

Through everyday interactions we support, model, and extend language through play. We repeat language back to children for clarity and add in words for older children to extend on their growing vocabulary. We listen and respond to children's verbal and non-verbal attempts at communication, always acknowledging this through language. We use signing and visual aid for all children to help them communicate their needs and make requests and to help them understand daily routines and expectations. Following the HANEN approach, we use the OWL technique, Observe, Wait and Listen to allow children time to process what has been said to them and time to respond. We choose commenting over questioning and testing and find the opportune moments to ask insightful questions when needed. We build language further through songs and rhymes. We start off with 10 repetitive songs in the baby room and then add in 5 more in the toddler room and then the preschool has limitless songs for the children to learn and familiarise. By knowing our children well, we can spark conversations that will interest them through things like their homelife, interest and hobbies.

#### Personal, Emotional and Social Development

Our aim is for our children to be confident, independent and have a positive attitude towards learning. We want them to be willing to 'have a go' and not to be afraid of making mistakes. We want them to be kind, show empathy and be able to form good relationships with both adults and peers.

We allow children to be independent through all aspects of nursery life from putting on their own shoes or choosing their next activity to preparing their own meals and snacks. We have a children's committee that is held half a term which discusses different topics that matter to the children. Children's emotions can be very challenging for them. We use our SEAD approach where we acknowledge all feelings/emotions and name them so the

children can learn to understand them. We accept their rights to have emotions and express them in a safe environment. We offer emotions stones, worry keepers, well being baskets and supportive adults to guide children with this. We do weekly yoga with our children to help them with their breathing and self-control. We provide healthy, balanced meals and snack from our self-service bars and encourage children to make healthy choices. We support our children to cooperate and resolve conflict peacefully through positive reinforcement. Settling new children in is a high priority. Transition times for children can be an emotional and challenging time for them. We support children with these transitions by working with the parents, the keyperson and child ensuring the child's wellbeing is kept at the forefront of the transition process. We help children form positive relationships with their peers by supporting them to share and cooperate with one another regularly.

### Physical Development

Our aim is for all our children to be healthy, active and have strong fine and gross motor skills. We want children to be independent in their self-care skills and show a can do attitude.

We develop all the children's physical skills through indoor and outdoor learning. We value our time in the garden and view it as our 5<sup>th</sup> Classroom. Children are encouraged to challenge themselves to adventurous play. Children are guided in using large muscle movements with the use of our bikes, scooters, climbing apparatus. Our children are taught from an early age to use the staircases independently in a safe manner. Throughout the setting the children are supported to develop their self-help skills by encouraging them dress/undress, feed themselves, practice zips and buttons, self-serve meals (where applicable), brushing teeth, washing hands and faces. Within our rooms are plenty of opportunities to develop fine motor skills. Examples include threading, mark making, playdough and building which then progresses as children get older to things such as scissors, tap a shape etc. We frequently carry out activities such as dough disco and sticky kids which incorporate music, dance, and help to develop both fine and gross motor skills.

### Literacy

Our aim is for all our children to foster a love of reading and writing. We aim for children to be able to hold books appropriately and treat them with care and respect. We want children to know to turn the pages the correct way and that the print has meaning. We want the children to talk about what they see, make predictions, recall, and choose alternative endings. Our older children can write their own stories with an adult where needed scribing for them. We want children to know with each story there is a beginning, middle and end.

We read a variety of fiction and nonfiction books with our children on a daily basis which are set out for long periods of time so children can really immerse themselves in the stories. We follow the **HANEN** approach which encourages practitioners to explore the story from the very first page. We value the experience and enjoyment from looking at books and the interactions had over rushing to get to the end of the book. We look at the author, the illustrator and discuss what the story may entail. We add props and artefacts to help bring our stories to life and encourage children to retell the story or make their own versions up. We have cosy book areas that showcase each book individually. However, we believe that books don't just belong in one area and should be accessible in all areas to enhance the play and learning that is taking place.

Writing and mark making materials are accessible throughout the rooms. We want children to be able to make marks or draw and write at any point in their day as they see fit. We want children to be able to hold a tool correctly so they can gain the most from it. We want children to be able to form their own creations from their own developing skills and creativity. All children learn different skills at different times, and we will support each child to progress to their next level as appropriate.

We offer a wide range of mark making equipment for all ages and abilities. We have a dedicated area in each room for mark making which consists of paints, crayons, and other marking tools and equipment for children to access at will. Throughout the room marking making is available for children to make marks as they need to for example if the preschool need to make a shopping list whilst in the role play or design a building in the construction.

## Mathematics

Our aim is for all children to have a deep understanding of number, shape and space and to use mathematical language freely. We want children to have a 'can do' attitude in relation to mathematics and not to be afraid of making mistakes.

Children are encouraged to explore number and shape on a daily basis using everyday objects, daily routines and games. Maths is taught through fun, inviting and exciting ways to ensure the children are interested to help children retain the information better. The nursery follows **loose parts** play and throughout all rooms and the garden there is an abundance of loose parts such as corks, pebbles, shells, pinecones, and bobbins for the children to be able to sort, count, sequence and categorise. From a young age we encourage children to experiment with number and begin to understand quantities. Before we move on with the next step, we ensure the child has a deep understanding of what it is they are learning i.e., we want children to fully understand the number one before we move on to the next phase. We offer children a wide range of challenging mathematical equipment for them to understand mathematical concepts. As a setting we offer science experiments for all ages for children to understand changes, sequences and problem solving.

## Understanding the World

Our aim is for all our children to have sense of the world around them and their wider community. We want children to foster an understanding of different cultures, religions, family dynamics, the environment, and the diverse world.

Children at our setting are offered variety of opportunities to build on their cultural capital. The children take part in external educational programmes (such as debutots, Sam's safari). We invite services to talk to the children such as emergency services, dental hygienist etc. Trips and outings are a regular part of nursery life. In the baby room we have our transporter so children can be taken out on local walks to see animals, visit the local park or shops. Older children have walk dials to go for walks and remain safe. We learn about road safety, the weather or find numbers and print in the environment. We take our children our further afield to places such as museums, children centre events, soft play, our annual preschool trip, which is selected by the children. As part of our curriculum the children are given lots of opportunities weekly to make their own food/snacks whether this is preparing snack, making their pizzas or wraps for tea or making a meal in the slow cooker. We bake on a regular basis and when we do, we offer this all week, so children are given the opportunity to fully immerse themselves in this process. Being a part of our local community is important to the setting. We visit our local church at Easter, Christmas and for Harvest festival. We support our community hall by hiring it out over the course of the year to support our larger events such as our Christmas performance, LSSP sessions, stay and play sessions and Friends of Little Acorns events. It is important for our children to learn about the environment, and we help children to understand how to 'go green' and our children keep our local area clean by litter picking. We use PenPal which is a electronic reading device for our children to be able to hear and see other languages including their own. Our children are pen pals with a country school preschool and a care home. We share pictures and update on what is happening at the nursery and find out about their setting so we can learn from one another and share experiences. We visit a care home every other week to sing songs and share stories with the residents. We learn all about the older generation and how to communicate and behave around other people respectfully.

## Expressive Arts and Design

Our aim is for all children to be able to use their creativity, self-expression, and vocabulary to make their own mark on society. We want children's imaginations to flourish and for children to have confidence in themselves.

Our children are encouraged to be creative from an early age through sensory experiences. We have a dedicated sensory area in the baby room for them to always access as well as dark dens and a sensory room for all children. Throughout the nursery children are supported to use all their senses through the exploration of real-life objects such as flowers, herbs, foods, sand, soil etc. All children are given all the time they need to be able to wallow in these experiences. Children are given an insight into music from across the globe and the setting will invite musicians to come in and play instruments with the children whilst we sing songs. Children select music and use their bodies to express themselves through dance. Opportunities to make music is important to our children. Making music is supported both indoors and outdoors. We have dedicated music areas which a range of musical instruments from around the world and children are also involved in making their own instruments. All rooms have a deconstructed role play which provide bundles of flexible and open-ended opportunities for children's imaginative play. All role plays have real authentic resources to support their play and spark their curiosity, awe, and wonder. The nursery provides a wide range of recycled materials as well as wood, card, fabrics, clay, and children are encouraged to create their own structures. We provide a range of open-ended materials such as sticks, different kinds of pens, pencils, and other mark making tools for children to make marks and create their own creations with paper, junk modelling, card, gloop, sand, etc. Observational drawings are used to help children progress their skill set by providing a range of equipment as well as an interesting focal point such as vase of flowers or a bowl of fruit. Practitioners will sit with the children and role model alongside them how to create an observational drawing to build on their current skills.

## Woodwork

Our aim is for all children to be able to design and produce their own woodwork creation using real tools and equipment. The children will understand and respect the tools and use them in a safe manner to keep themselves safe.

From babies we begin the introduction to woodwork by offering resources such as golf tees and hammers to develop their hand eye coordination, playdough and clay to strengthen their hands and muscle tone and wooden objects to understand how wood feels. This continues though to the toddler room where they build on these activities and resources with the children, and we provide them with scissors and tap a shape to practice control and learning how to keep safe and respect tools. Once the children reach preschool, they are offered all the above and more. They are given real tools to explore in the construction area such as hammers and screwdrivers. Once the children are ready, they begin the process of

designing what they want to create then in small groups bringing their ideas to life. Children will use saws, hammers, screwdrivers, nails, glue, paints, as well as loose parts such as corks and buttons etc to enhance their designs.