**Early Years Foundation Stage**

We understand how vital play is for children, it’s essential for them to learn and develop to their full potential. Play improves self-esteem, social skills, language and communication. It teaches the children about sharing, taking turns and the world they live in. Play also improves their motor skills, hand-eye coordination, teaches risk taking whilst improving bone and muscle mass. Play can be a good way for children to express their emotions and empathise with others...the list could go on!

We ensure the children in our care benefit from all the different types of play, as each is equally important and inter-connecting. We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework to cover the seven areas of learning and development, these are:

**Prime Areas:**

Personal, Social, Emotional Development, Communication and Language, Physical Development

**Specific Areas:**

Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the world, Expressive Arts and Design

Some examples of the way we deliver this through play are:

**Circle time:** We sing lots of songs and play team building and sharing games. This teaches the children to respect one another and how to play nicely. This kind of play also helps the children to build up relationships and their self- esteem/confidence. We talk to the children about how they are feeling and learn about the different types of emotions.

**Books:** We encourage the children to listen and read stories together as this develops the children’s listening, attention and speaking skills as well as their imagination. We make books more fun by introducing puppets and acting out the story together while learning lots of new vocabulary. We have ‘literacy dens’ where the children enjoy magical stories and help come up with character names and alternative endings to well-known stories!

**Weekly investigations:** We carry out STEM activities (science, technology, engineering and maths) which supports the children to test their ideas and make predictions which all help to develop their critical thinking skills. Children love to explore and these investigations help the children discover for themselves what happens when they mix liquids, colours or even lights together. It develops the children’s language and teaches them all about the world that they live in. Maths is naturally brought into these investigations, with the children measuring time, weight and predicting what they think may happen. Children are also encouraged to record their findings down by making tick charts and our older children writing down key words.

**Craft/painting**: We do lots of sticking, cutting, designing and exploring with colour and texture. This develops the children’s fine motor skills which are needed for writing. Also, by giving children time to create paintings and build structures they are able express their own ideas and develop their self-esteem.

**Sensory play:** This type of play stimulates the children’s main senses – see, hear, touch, taste and smell. This can be carried out through using substances that the children can safely play in such as soap foam, ice, cornflour, gloop etc. It may be through ‘dark den play’ where the children play in our large sensory den or sensory room with fibre optic and light up toys. This kind of play stimulates the children’s senses while learning about the world they live in. Sensory play develops language, fine and gross motor skills, cognitive development and more. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) need sensory play to help regulate their emotions and sometimes this kind of play can be used as a calming method for any overwhelmed children.

**Music sessions:** We play instruments, make up songs, dance and learn exercise routines. These all help to improve rhythm, co-ordination and allows the children to express their personalities. The children learn about music from different countries and listen to a wide genre of music such as jazz, rock, classical, country and pop!

**Role play and pretend play:** We set up role play scenarios (e.g. dentist or a doctor’s surgery). The children dress up and learn about the people in their community. The children use their imagination and act out their own experiences while building on their friendship and social skills. The children create their own props out of cardboard tubes or other packaging to make their games even more fun.

**Cooking and baking**: The children are involved in lots of cooking and baking activities; they often help prepare snack by washing and cutting the fruit and vegetables. They enjoy making healthy pizzas, milkshakes and smoothies. They are also involved in cooking classes run by our Chef and make meals from different countries/cultures This not only teaches the children life skills but also helps to give them a diverse diet, keep them healthy and interested in the food they eat. We encourage the children to celebrate everyone’s differences and similarities whether that be hair colour, family backgrounds, faith or culture – we aim to make sure our children grow up to be respectful, empathetic and kind to others.

**Our core values and aims**

**Healthy Body Healthy Mind:** We aim for our children to become happy healthy adults who know how to look after themselves and make good lifestyle choices.

**Kindness and Respect:** We aim for our children to become valued members of society who are accepting of others from different backgrounds, faiths and cultures.

**Critical Thinking:** We aim for our children to be inquisitive and enthusiastic scientists of the future who are strong and resilient learners.

**We aim:** for the children to be ‘school ready’ we do this age appropriately making sure phonics and maths for example, is introduced in fun and imaginative ways. The majority of our children learn to spell and write their names, count in sequence, use cutlery and have good table manner, amongst many other important things before starting school. Please see **Our Curriculum** to see what our core values are in more depth and how we implement these into our nursery.

**Individual planning**

We plan both individual activities based on each child’s interests and development stage, whilst also planning group activities. This provides the children with new experiences to make learning fun. Children learn in different ways and each child is unique, therefore careful planning is carried out to meet the needs of all the children. We do this through observing the children in play, finding out their current interests and using their development stage to plan for each child. We send home ‘Hey there’ sheets which are just a small and friendly note to keep parents and carers update with what your children are currently learning and any tips if you want to continue it at home.