

## Our Curriculum

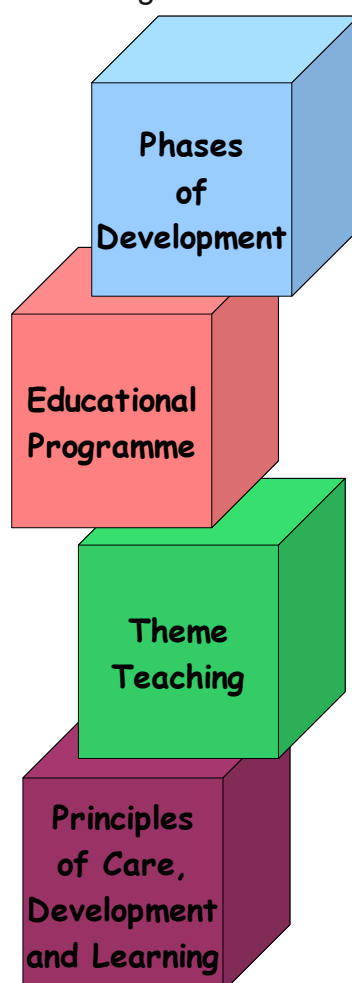
The English Garden Pre-School Curriculum is based on the principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the National Curriculum of England, which sets the standards for Learning, Development and Care for children from birth to five. This framework is used throughout the kindergarten to help ensure that the children not only learn but are safe, happy and healthy.

*“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know that provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance.”*

EYFS Statutory Framework

For older or more able children we refer to Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum in order to prepare them for possible entry into the British or American School. The transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 is very much a process not an event. As children move from one curriculum to another they practise, refine and build on their previous development and learning.

The framework within which our curriculum is founded is explained in four sections. These sections detail the expectations, methodology and principles for the Development, Learning and Care of the children at the English Garden Pre-School.



## **Phases of Development**

All children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. To reflect this our age ranges have been overlapped to create broad developmental phases. These outline some of the important 'steps' for each child to take along their own developmental pathway and how the teacher can support them. However, we do not expect children to simply move from one phase to another or to make progress in all areas at the same time e.g. for a child learning English as a second language they may be in Phase One for some areas of development whilst in Phase Four for others. Through recognising these broad developmental phases every child can make progress at their own pace in a challenging and enjoyable way.

### **PHASE ONE (1½ to 2½ years)**

The children in this phase are usually full of energy and need careful support to use it well. Growing physical strengths and skills mean that the children need active times for exercise, and quiet times for calmer activities. Playing with the other children is an important new area for learning. This helps the children to better understand other people's thoughts and feelings, and to learn how to cooperate with others. Exploration and simple self-help builds a sense of self-confidence. The children are also learning about boundaries and how to handle frustration. Playing with toys that come apart and fit together encourages problem solving and simple planning. Pretend play helps the children to learn about a range of possibilities. Teachers are an important source of security and comfort for children in this phase.

### **PHASE TWO (2 to 3 years)**

The children's fine motor skills continue to develop and they enjoy making marks, using a variety of materials, looking at picture books and listening to stories. Self-help and independence begin to emerge as the teacher supports and encourages the children in areas such as eating, dressing and toileting; building their self-esteem. In this phase, the children's language is developing rapidly and many are beginning to put sentences together. Joining in conversations with other children is an important way for the children to learn new things and to begin to think about past, present and future. Developing physical skills mean that the children can now usually walk, climb and run, and join in active play with other children in the class. This is an important time for learning about dangers and safe limits.

### **PHASE THREE (2½ to 4 years)**

An increased interest in joint play such as make-believe, construction and games helps the children to learn the important social skills of sharing and cooperating. The children also learn more about helping adults in everyday activities and finding a balance between independence and complying with the wishes of others. The children still need the comfort and security of the teacher but are also becoming more aware of their place in the class community. Literacy and numeracy can develop rapidly with the support of a wide range of interesting materials and activities. The children's language is now much more complex, as many become adept at using longer sentences. Conversations with older children and teachers become a more important source of information, guidance and reassurance.

#### **PHASE FOUR (3½ to 5½ years)**

During this period the children are now building a stronger sense of their own identity and their place in a wider world. The children are learning to recognise the importance of social rules and customs, to show understanding and tolerance of others, and to learn how to be more controlled in their own behaviour. Learning and playing in small groups helps to foster the development of social skills. The children now become better able to plan and undertake more challenging activities with a wider range of materials for making and doing. In this phase the children learn effectively in shared activities with more able peers and adults. Literacy and problem solving, reasoning and numeracy skills continue to develop.

#### **PHASE FIVE (4½ to 7 years)**

As the children become more responsible they are able to concentrate for longer periods of time and work more independently on individual work. In this period the children are encouraged to build on and consolidate their learning through practical work, practice and the opportunity to use their learning to solve problems and puzzles. The children begin using their phonetic knowledge to read and write words; they will begin to take reading books home. The children have acquired an understanding of the basic concepts of number, shape and measurement and they now experience a mix of mental, practical and informal written work. The children's understanding of cause and effect is encouraged by the introduction of a wider variety of equipment, media and technologies.

### **Educational Programme**

The English Garden Pre-School's approach to learning is hands on providing children with opportunities to learn by doing, exploring, discovering, creating, and questioning. Significant learning time is spent in small group activities to allow for individual attention. Our teachers value the importance of learning through play and plan the children's activities to encourage creative play. We believe play is one of the ways children make sense of the world in which they live, and helps them to develop their emotional, physical, intellectual and social skills. Our teachers plan activities through six main areas of learning and development:



## **1: Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

The children are provided with experiences and support which help them to develop a positive sense of themselves and of others; respect for others; social skills; and a positive disposition to learn.

*“Of all the judgements and beliefs that each one of us owns, none is more important than the ones we have about ourselves.”*

Wayne W Dyer

**Dispositions and Attitudes** – is about how the children become interested, excited and motivated about their learning.

**Self-confidence and Self-esteem** – is about the children having a sense of their own value and understanding the need for sensitivity to significant events in their own and other people’s lives.

**Making Relationships** – is about the importance of the children forming good relationships with others and working alongside others companionably.

**Self-care** – is about how the children gain a sense of self-respect and concern for their own personal hygiene and care and how they develop independence.

**Sense of Community** – is about how the children understand and respect their own needs, views, cultures and beliefs and those of other people.

### **Goals of Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

- Continue to be interested, excited and motivated to learn.
- Be confident to try new activities, initiate ideas and speak in a familiar group.
- Maintain attention, concentrate, and sit quietly when appropriate.
- Respond to significant experiences, showing a range of feelings when appropriate.
- Have a developing awareness of their own needs, views and feelings, and be sensitive to the needs, views and feelings of others.
- Form good relationships with adults and peers.
- Work as part of a group, taking turns and sharing fairly, understanding that there needs to be agreed values and codes of behaviour for groups of people, including adults and children, to work together harmoniously.
- Understand what is right, what is wrong and why.
- Consider the consequences of their words and actions for themselves and others.
- Dress and undress independently and manage their own personal hygiene.
- Select and use activities and resources independently.
- Understand that people have different needs, views, cultures and beliefs, that need to be treated with respect.
- Understand that they can expect others to treat their needs, views, cultures and beliefs with respect.

## **2: Communication, Language and Literacy**

The children are provided with a range of experiences to develop their speaking and listening skills. When ready the children are introduced to the letters through the Jolly Phonics Scheme and as they begin to read and write they can begin the Oxford Reading Tree Scheme.

*“Language is the most powerful instrument of human progress.”*

Maria Montessori

**Language for Communication** – is about how the children become communicators. Learning listening and speaking skills develop as they interact with other children, extend their vocabulary and experience stories, songs, poems and rhymes.

**Language for Thinking** – is about how the children learn to use language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences and how they use talk to clarify their thinking and ideas or to refer to events they have observed or are curious about.

**Linking Sounds and Letters** – is about how the children develop the ability to distinguish between sounds and become familiar with rhyme, rhythm and alliteration. They develop understanding of the correspondence between spoken and written sounds and learn to link sounds and letters and use their knowledge to read and write simple words by sounding out and blending.

**Reading** – is about the children understanding and enjoying stories, books and rhymes, recognising that print carries meaning, both fiction and fact, and reading a range of familiar words and simple sentences.

**Writing** – is about how the children build an understanding of the relationship between the spoken and written word and how through making marks, drawing and personal writing children ascribe meaning to text and attempt to write for various purposes.

**Handwriting** – is about the ways in which the children’s random marks, lines and drawings develop and form the basis of recognisable letter.

### **Goals of Communication, Language and Literacy**

- Interact with others, negotiating plans and activities and taking turns in conversation.
- Enjoy listening to and using spoken and written language, and readily turn to it in their play and learning.
- Sustain attentive listening, responding to what they have heard with relevant comments, questions or actions.
- Listen with enjoyment, and respond to stories, songs and other music, rhymes and poems and make up their own stories, songs, rhymes and poems.
- Extend their vocabulary, exploring the meanings and sounds of new words.
- Speak clearly and audibly with confidence and control and show awareness of the listener.
- Use language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences.
- Use talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking, ideas, feelings and events.

- Hear and say sounds in words in the order in which they occur.
- Link sounds to letters, naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet.
- Use their phonic knowledge to write simple regular words and make phonetically plausible attempts at more complex words.
- Explore and experiment with sounds, words and texts.
- Retell narratives in the correct sequence, drawing on language patterns of stories.
- Read a range of familiar and common words and simple sentences independently.
- Know that print carries meaning and, in English, is read from left to right and top to bottom.
- Show an understanding of the elements of stories, such as main character, sequence of events and openings, and how information can be found in non-fiction texts to answer questions about where, who, why and how.
- Attempt writing for different purposes, using features of different forms such as lists, stories and instructions.
- Write their own names and other things such as labels and captions, and begin to form simple sentences, sometimes using punctuation.
- Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.

### **3: Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy**

The children are supported in developing their understanding of Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy in a broad range of contexts in which they can explore, enjoy, learn and talk about their developing understanding. They are provided with opportunities to practise and extend their skills in these areas and to gain confidence and competence in their use.

*“All the arithmetical expressions we know  
of consist of only ten symbols.”*

Don Fabun

**Numbers as Labels and for Counting** – is about how the children gradually know and use numbers and counting in play, and eventually recognise and use numbers reliably, to develop mathematical ideas and to solve problems.

**Calculating** – is about how the children develop an awareness of the relationship between numbers and amounts and know that numbers can be combined to be ‘added together’ and can be separated by ‘taking away’ and that two or more amounts can be compared.

**Shape, Space and Measures** – is about how through talking about shapes and quantities, and developing appropriate vocabulary, the children use their knowledge to develop ideas and to solve mathematical problems.

#### **Goals of Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy**

- Say and use number names in order in familiar contexts.
- Count reliably up to ten everyday objects.

- Recognise numerals 1 to 9.
- Use developing mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems.
- In practical activities and discussion, begin to use the vocabulary involved in adding and subtracting.
- Use language such as 'more' or 'less' to compare two numbers.
- Find one more or one less than a number from one to ten.
- Begin to relate addition to combining two groups of objects and subtraction to 'taking away'.
- Use language such as 'greater', 'smaller', 'heavier' or 'lighter' to compare quantities.
- Talk about, recognise and recreate simple patterns.
- Use language such as 'circle' or 'bigger' to describe the shape and size of solids and flat shapes.
- Use everyday words to describe position.

#### **4: Knowledge and Understanding of the World**

The children are supported in developing the knowledge, skills and understanding that help them to make sense of the world. They are given the opportunity to use a range of tools safely; encounter creatures, people, plants and objects in their natural environments and in real-life situations; undertake practical 'experiments'; and work with a range of materials.

*"Children's brains are programmed to see the world around them for patterns of meaning."*

Robert Fisher

**Exploration and Investigation** – is about how the children investigate objects and materials and their properties, learn about change and patterns, similarities and differences, and question how and why things work.

**Designing and Making** – is about the ways in which the children learn about the construction process and the tools and techniques that can be used to assemble materials creatively and safely.

**ITC (Information, Communication and Technology)** – is about how the children find out about and learn how to use appropriate information technology such as computers and programmable toys that support their learning.

**Time** – is about how the children find out about past and present events relevant to their own lives or those of their families.

**Place** – is about how the children become aware of and interested in the natural world, and find out about their local area, knowing what they like and dislike about it.

**Communities** – is about how the children begin to know about their own and other people's cultures in order to understand and celebrate the similarities and differences between them in a diverse society.

## Goals of Knowledge and Understanding of the World

- Investigate objects and materials by using all of their senses as appropriate.
- Find out about, and identify, some features of living things, objects and events they observe.
- Look closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change.
- Ask questions about why things happen and how things work.
- Build and construct with a wide range of objects, selecting appropriate resources and adapting their work where necessary.
- Select the tools and techniques they need to shape, assemble and join materials they are using.
- Find out about and identify the uses of everyday technology and use information and communication technology and programmable toys to support their learning.
- Find out about past and present events in their own lives, and in those of their families and other people they know.
- Observe, find out about and identify features in the place they live and the natural world.
- Find out about their environment, and talk about those features they like and dislike.
- Begin to know about their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people.

## 5: Physical Development

The children are encouraged to be active and interactive and to improve their skills of coordination, control, manipulation and movement. They learn to use all of their senses to explore the world around them and to make connections between new information and what they already know. They are supported in developing an understanding of the importance of physical activity and making healthy choices in relation to food.

“If children learn to love physical exercise, that physical activity will greatly increase their 'academic' learning skills.”

Jerome Hartigan

**Movement and Space** – is about how the children learn to move with confidence, imagination and safety, with an awareness of space, themselves and others.

**Health and Bodily Awareness** – is about how the children learn the importance of keeping healthy and the factors that contribute to maintaining their health.

**Using Equipment and Materials** – is about the ways in which the children use a range of small and large equipment.

## Goals of Physical Development

- Move with confidence, imagination and in safety.
- Move with control and coordination.
- Travel around, under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment.
- Show awareness of space, of themselves and of others.

- Recognise the importance of keeping healthy, and those things which contribute to this.
- Recognise the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active.
- Use a range of small and large equipment.
- Handle tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with increasing control.

## **6: Creative Development**

The children's creativity is encouraged with opportunities to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, design and technology, music, movement, dance, imaginative and role-play activities.

*“To learn anything fast and effectively, you  
have to see it, hear it and feel it.”*

Tony Stockwell

**Being Creative** – is about how the children respond in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch or feel and how, as a result of these encounters, they express and communicate their own ideas, thoughts and feelings.

**Exploring Media and Materials** – is about the children's independent and guided exploration of and engagement with a widening range of media and materials. Finding out about, thinking about and working with colour, texture, shape, space and form in two and three dimensions.

**Creating Music and Dance** – is about the children's independent and guided explorations of sound, movement and music. Focusing on how sounds can be made and changed and how sounds can be recognised and repeated from a pattern, it includes ways of exploring movement, matching movements to music and singing simple songs from memory.

**Developing Imagination and Imaginative Play** – is about how the children are supported to develop and build their imagination through stories, role-plays, imaginative play, dance, music, design, and art.

### **Goals of Creative Development**

- Respond in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch and feel.
- Express and communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings by using a widening range of materials, suitable tools, imaginative and role-play, movement, designing and making, and a variety of songs and musical instruments.
- Explore colour, texture, shape, form and space in two or three dimensions.
- Recognise and explore how sounds can be changed, sing simple songs from memory, recognise repeated sounds and sound patterns and match movements to music.
- Use their imagination in art and design, music, dance, imaginative and role-play and stories.

## Theme Teaching

The teachers use themes to organize instruction of the curriculum. In the nursery class the children might spend one week learning about 'Zoo Animals' whilst in the kindergarten class the children might spend a whole month learning about 'Environments'. In developing a theme teachers select topics that they believe to be relevant and of interest to the children. They then build an array of lessons around that central idea. Such activities usually cut across the curriculum and take place either simultaneously or within a relatively condensed period of time.

*“Relating activities through a common theme facilitates the children's generalization of knowledge and skills from one experience to another”*

Eliason and Jenkins

A thematic curriculum enables the children to immerse themselves in a particular area of study; they often want to know “all” about it. Whilst many of the activities during that week or month will be related to the topic of course not every experience will focus on the theme. However having an overall theme helps the children to develop a sense of direction and purpose in their learning. It enables the teacher to present new information which the children can then combine with what they already know. As a child becomes involved in a topic and demonstrates to what extent they understand it the teacher can assess more readily what further information and skills would benefit them.

Theme teaching keeps the curriculum varied and interesting and enables the teacher to:

- Build activities around the children's current interest.
- Create activities in which the children use all of their senses.
- Develop the children's knowledge and skills based on what they already know and can do.
- Relate learning to real life experiences and situations.
- Provide opportunities for the children to practise and use information in different contexts.
- Accommodate children's need for movement and physical activity, social interaction, independence and positive self-esteem.
- Provide opportunities to use play to translate experience into understanding.
- Help the children to develop an overall sense of direction and purpose in their learning.

Through theme based activities the children are able to integrate learning from all six areas of Learning and Development: Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication, Language and Literacy, Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy, Knowledge and Understanding of the World, Physical Development and Creative Development. By experiencing and exploring a theme through these different areas the children can gain access to the topic in a way that suits their individual style.

## **Principles for Care, Development and Learning**

The Early Years Foundation Stage principles, which guide the work of our staff, are grouped into four distinct but complementary themes:

A Unique Child  
Positive Relationships  
Enabling Environments  
Learning and Development

These principles help the staff to provide effective care, development and learning for all the children at the English Garden Pre-School.

**A UNIQUE CHILD** recognises that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. The commitments are focused around development; inclusion; safety; and health and well-being of the children.

### **Child development**

Every child is a unique individual with their own characteristics and temperament. Every area of development – physical, cognitive, linguistic, spiritual, social and emotional, is equally important.

### **Inclusive Practice**

The diversity of individual children is valued and respected. No child or family is discriminated against.

### **Keeping Safe**

Young children are vulnerable. They develop resilience when their physical and psychological well-being is protected by adults.

### **Health and Well-being**

The children's health is an integral part of their emotional, mental, social, environmental and spiritual well-being and is supported by attention to these aspects.

**POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS** recognises how the children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and teachers. The commitments are focused around respect; partnership with parents and supporting learning.

### **Respecting Each Other**

Every interaction is based on caring professional relationships and respectful acknowledgement of the feelings of the children and their families.

### **Parents as Partners**

Parents are the children's first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the children's development and learning.

### **Supporting Learning**

Warm, trusting relationships with knowledgeable adults support the children's learning more effectively than any amount of resources.

### **Key Person**

Each child is placed in a class and a "key" teacher is assigned to oversee the learning, development and care of that child. This teacher has special responsibilities for working with a number of children, giving them the reassurance to feel safe and cared for and acts as the key point of contact with that child's parents.

**ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS** recognises that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development and learning. The commitments are focused on observation, assessment and planning, supporting every child and their learning environment. Together they help insure that the children are healthy, safe, enjoying and achieving.

### **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

The children are individuals first, each with a unique profile of abilities. Schedules and routines should whenever possible flow with their needs. All planning starts with observing the children in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning.

### **Supporting Every Child**

The environment supports every child's learning through planned experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable.

### **The Learning Environment**

A rich and varied environment supports the children's learning and development. It gives them the confidence to explore and learn in secure and safe, yet challenging, indoor and outdoor spaces.

**LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT** recognises that the children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates, and that all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected.

### **Play and Exploration**

The children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play the children learn at their highest level. Playing with their peers is important for the children's development.

### **Active Learning**

The children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve the children for sustained periods.

### **Creativity and Critical Thinking**

When the children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult

support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.

### **Areas of Learning and Development**

Learning and Development occurs as an outcome of the children's individual interests and abilities. There are six areas of Learning and Development which are detailed under our Education Programme. All areas of Learning and Development are connected to one another and are equally important. All areas of Learning and Development are underpinned by the Principles for Care, Development and Learning listed above.

*“Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.”*

EYFS Statutory Framework

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