

Huntingdon Nursery School

Curriculum Statement

July 2023- 2024



We view Huntingdon Nursery School for everyone where staff and families come together to deliver a broad-ranging, interesting and exciting curriculum which aims to give all children the best possible start to life and their education.

Intent

To provide a warm, welcoming and inspirational School that everyone contributes to and feels part of, whether they are children, staff, parents, volunteers or those who train with us.

To help children develop shared common values of kindness, understanding and respect for each other.

For children to gradually develop an understanding of their own, and each other's feelings and views, with adults supporting and helping them to develop self-regulation of their behaviour.

To help children to develop independence and confidence during their time at Huntingdon Nursery School, a key factor if they are to become resilient adults in the future.

To follow the statutory early years framework to create our own curriculum to provide a broad and exciting education across all seven areas of the curriculum which are: Personal Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language, Physical Development, Literacy, Maths, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design.

For staff and children to focus not only on what they learn, but also on how they learn. We use the EYFS 'Characteristics of Effective Learning', to support and encourage children as they play and explore, actively engage in their learning, and develop the skills of concentration and perseverance. Our aim is that they become independent critical thinkers, who are able to plan how best to execute their ideas, whilst problem solving along the way.

To have a creative, fun and playful approach to activities, fostering children's curiosity about the world around them, and a love of life and learning. At Huntingdon this might be through our regular cooking, or planting sessions.

We aim to develop a deep love of rhyme, reading, and storytelling. This is achieved through a carefully planned developmental curriculum of nursery rhymes and songs, core books and helicopter story telling sessions. We also enjoy walking to our town library

To develop an understanding of Maths in many practical ways, especially at group times and snack times, for example when children help by getting the correct number of cups for the number of children in their group that day.

To celebrate the diverse and rich wealth of languages and cultures that make up the community of staff and families; we plan to share, celebrate, and learn about each other through parents sending in photos or sharing special food that they have enjoyed as part of their family celebrations. We try to learn key words to enable us to use each child's home language as part of their day. We are developing home language sheets to support us with extending our knowledge and confidence to use a range of home languages.

For staff to be fully involved with sharing their own passions and interests with children whether they be in cooking, poetry, gardening, growing food to eat or enjoying the outdoors. Staff enthusiasms are both infectious, and a very good way of extending children's knowledge and vocabulary.

Implementation

All staff put children at the heart of everything they do. They work sensitively to establish caring and nurturing relationships with children, developing activities and an environment that ensures that every individual child feels safe, happy, secure and ready to develop their friendships and learning.

Staff are knowledgeable about child development, and the areas of learning they teach. They ensure children have rich and varied experiences, working supportively together with families to make sure that every child has a positive, progressive time in nursery.

The curriculum is planned and sequenced with half termly plans which build on children's skills and knowledge through the year. These plans are reviewed regularly by staff and a sample shared with governors. We share the focus of learning with Parents through our Facebook page. Our curriculum is broad-ranging, covering the overlapping areas of Personal Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language, Physical Development, Literacy, Maths, Expressive Arts and Design and Understanding the World.

Both our indoor and outdoor areas, are equally valued. We have a Level 3 and 2 trained Forest school leaders on the staff team and we are developing the use of our neighbouring Primary school to extend our children's outdoor experiences. Parents are invited to come and help with these outdoor sessions which supports positive parent partnerships. Children are able to make choices to play inside or out throughout their day.

Environmental awareness is encouraged in the children through the sharing of books, discussions at group times, and many practical activities such as recycling paper, or turning off taps and lights.

Parents are kept informed of activities and events which take place to support different areas of the curriculum via our Facebook page. Parents are also encouraged to get involved with supporting the curriculum by coming in to visit, sharing their skills, languages, special cultural or religious events, all of which help to bring alive children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

There is a focus on preparing children for their future, both in the short and longer term, ensuring children are ready to move onto Reception with the confidence, knowledge and skills that they need for happy and successful life.

Huntingdon Nursery School adopts a 'continuous provision' approach where children can access various resources that are always available and plan projects for themselves with these. The environment is resourced and organised to support active, varied, independent, play-based learning. We ensure that the environment supports the staff's pedagogy and understanding of how children learn.

A mixture of child-led and adult-led experiences are provided. The majority of time is given to active, free-flow indoor/outdoor play activity, following children's leads. Adults provide enhancements to the environment based on observations of children's interests and needs, designed to support emotional well-being, learning across the curriculum and engagement.

Planning is child centred and is based on children's interests. It is flexible and responsive to children's needs, informed by ongoing assessment, grounded in the EYFS framework and adapted to the different ages and stages of each individual child. It is strengthened by input from staff at all levels and regular evaluation. We meet regularly to review planning, sharing observations and agree focus for individual child and finally developing ideas to engage with parents as partners in their child's nursery journey. The EYFS 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' form an integral part of the learning experiences provided for children as they play and explore, becoming active learners and creative critical thinkers.

The staff at Huntingdon Nursery School have a great love of the outdoors and believe that being outside, and physically active, in these early years is vital for setting patterns for life. All are encouraged to enjoy being outside and taught about the health benefits that this will bring to them.

Our free-flow approach to the indoor and outdoor spaces gives children variety, freedom, and choice over the activities and environments they wish to learn and play in.

Impact

We observe children to ensure that they are happy and engaged in activities both in class, and out in the outdoor area. Most children make strong bonds of friendship during their time here and have an understanding of working together as a class group.

We measure the impact of the above through our conversations with children as they share with us their excitement and delight when they have developed friendships or mastered a physical, intellectual or creative challenge that they previously could not do.

Children develop their confidence share ideas with adults, and each other, about their skills and knowledge, whether in constructing a 3D structures or acting out a story during helicopter story sessions.

Our parental feedback, both verbal and written, is very positive. Here are just a few quotes from recent parent surveys in July 2023

The best thing about the nursery is how well it has eased the children in settling them in the environment and encouraging them to try new activities.

The Nursery actively engages the kids during their sessions

The environment is so friendly and homely.

The fact that children often come to us on the personal recommendation of previous parents shows that we have had a positive impact on the lives of previous children and families.

Using ongoing observations and assessments we can see that good progress is made from individual starting points for all children, including for those who are vulnerable, or have additional needs.

We have begun to implement OPEL – observation, playing and learning approach to support our ongoing assessment and monitoring of progress as children reach age appropriate milestones.

Our feeder Primary schools meet with us throughout the summer term to support smooth transitions to the next phase. Visiting teachers are welcome to visit each child within the setting, they also find an opportunity for a professional conversation with the child's keyworker beneficial. On the whole our children are quick to settle into reception classes, are happy, enthusiastic learners, who are ready for the challenges ahead as they move onto the next stage on their educational and life journey.

We work in partnership with Huntingdon Child and Family Centre (HCFC) to support families to develop the confidence to support children's learning at home.

To reduce isolation and help to meet the challenge of feeding children through the holidays, HCFC invite our families to activity groups where they can access a food bag and join fun activities for all the family.