



# Aston St Marys Primary School

## Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Curriculum



Click here to  
explore our  
EYFS curriculum

*Every child is a treasure – small in size, growing in God's love.*

Click on each part of our broad and varied curriculum, filled with rich and challenging learning opportunities.

What we believe is  
right for the children  
to learn

Experiences we  
want the  
children to have

Planned topics  
and themes

The way we  
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The Unique  
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curriculum  
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curriculum

Safeguarding

Forest  
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Maths skills

What we are  
required to  
teach


The role of  
the adult

Teachable  
moments and next  
steps



*'Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable and self-assured.'*

EYFS Statutory framework 2021



## The Unique Child

Every child is unique and we want to know all about them and their interests. This information drives our curriculum and allows us to plan for individual needs and interests.

Parents complete 'All about me' sheets which introduce us to things that their children particularly like to do as well as completing 'Summer Journals' to share at the start of the term. This is also a chance to gather information about specialist skills, hobbies and jobs that our parents and carers have that they may be able to share with the class.



Home Visits



Preschool visits



School Visits

We meet with each child at least three times before they start school at Aston St Mary's. We use these opportunities to get to know each child better by seeing them in their home environment as well as previous settings.



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## Safeguarding

‘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.’

**Early Years Foundation Stage Framework 2021**

Safeguarding at Aston St Mary’s School is the responsibility of everyone. Every child has the right to learn in an environment that is nurturing and safe, as well as meeting each of their needs. In the Early Years foundation Stage we take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well. It is the role of all staff to safeguard children, promote good health, manage behaviour and maintain records, policies and procedures. It is also essential that steps are taken to ensure the suitability of adults who have contact with our children.

The safeguarding policy and procedures are kept up to date and can be found on our school website:

<https://www.astonmarys.herts.sch.uk/school-policies/> Risk assessments specific to the EYFS are also made and kept up to date in order to keep children safe in the classroom environment. This includes policies around ‘intimate care’ for children who need this.

Training in the safeguarding of children and in child protection are regularly undertaken and is in line with statutory guidance. This includes the statutory guidance:

- ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ 17
- ‘Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales’ 18.
- ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ 20

Staff also have up to date knowledge of any safeguarding issues.

One of the EYFS class teachers is a Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) for the school



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Below are links to the statutory and non-statutory documents that we use to inform and support our curriculum planning.

What we are  
required to teach

[Birth to five  
matters](#)

[Statutory  
framework for the  
Early Years  
Foundation Stage](#)

[Development  
matters](#)

**The EYFS learning and development requirements comprise:**

- [the seven areas of learning and development](#) and the educational programmes
- the early learning goals, which summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that all young children should have gained by the end of the reception year
- the assessment requirements (when and how practitioners must assess children's achievements, and when and how they should discuss children's progress with parents and/or carers)

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# The 7 areas of learning and development

There are seven areas of learning and development. Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving.

These are the prime areas:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development

We also have a focus on four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The specific areas are:

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

All of these areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.



Click here  
to explore  
the 7 areas



The following educational programmes are set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. It also maps out expectations and end point measures.

At Aston St Mary's school we have designed our curriculum to cover the 7 prime and specific areas of learning and development.

This happens through 3 key approaches:

1. **Adult-planned and led sequences of lessons.** These have clear starting and end points and follow a progressive sequence.
2. **Adult interactions.** Adults have high quality interactions with children and seek opportunities to progress learning 'in the moment'.
3. **Child-led learning.** Our enabling environment encourages deep, open-ended learning through play for all children during child initiated learning. Here they practise the knowledge and skills that have been taught.

## Communication and language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

EYFS Statutory framework 2021



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## Personal, Emotional and Social Development

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

EYFS Statutory framework 2021



## Physical Development

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives<sup>7</sup>. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

EYFS Statutory framework 2021



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## Literacy

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

**EYFS Statutory framework 2021**



## Maths

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

**EYFS Statutory framework 2021**



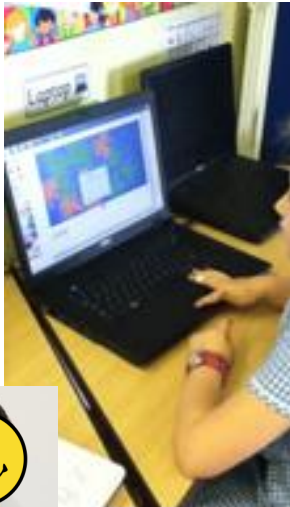
[Click for next page](#)



## Understanding the world

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

EYFS Statutory framework 2021



## Expressive arts and design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

EYFS Statutory framework 2021





# The Early learning goals (ELGs)

## **Communication and Language**

ELG: Listening, Attention and Understanding

ELG: Speaking

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

ELG: Self-Regulation


ELG: Managing Self

ELG: Building Relationships

## **Physical Development**

ELG: Gross Motor Skills

ELG: Fine Motor Skills



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The 17 early learning goals summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that all young children should have gained by the end of the reception year as set out by the Statutory framework.

These are used as a guide to see where the children are expected to be by the end of Reception.

Our curriculum is designed with these in mind but they **do not limit** the broad and varied experiences that we want our children to have.

## **Literacy**

ELG: Comprehension

ELG: Word Reading

ELG: Writing

## **Mathematics**

ELG: Number

ELG: Numerical Patterns

## **Understanding the World**

ELG: Past and Present

ELG: People, Culture and Communities

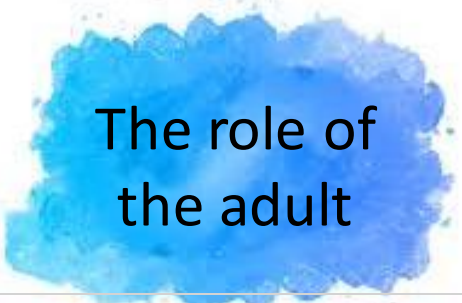
ELG: The Natural World

## **Expressive Arts and Design**

ELG: Creating with Materials

ELG: Being Imaginative and Expressive





## The role of the adult

The adults in our EYFS classroom are key to the way that the children learn and the curriculum that we are able to design. It is essential that the adults are able:

- To safeguard all children at all times.
- To encourage independence (i.e. dressing, using equipment, problem solving).
- To support a culture that values mistakes and allows mistakes to be used as opportunities to learn.
- To form positive relationships that inspire, challenge and provide emotional support.
- To have high quality interactions that help to move learning on.
- To embrace all children and their uniqueness.
- To provide a safe, secure and caring environment.
- To find and act on teachable moments.
- To be flexible and be able to move with the interests of the children.
- To foster and nurture children's self confidence and self esteem.
- To teach children how to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- To understand the importance of play.
- To know the child's learning journey.
- Make assessments through observations which form further planning based on children's individual needs.

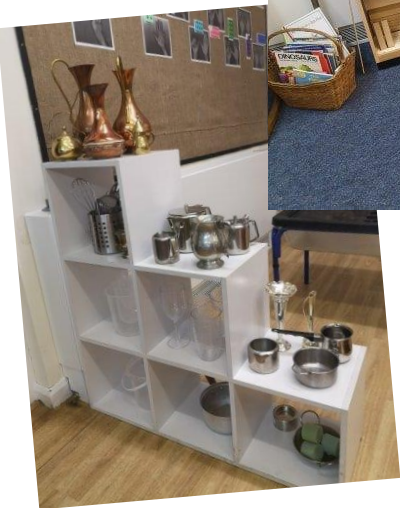


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## Enabling environments

Our indoor and outdoor classrooms are carefully planned to enable and encourage deep learning for all children during child initiated learning. The environment and continuous provision are an important part of our curriculum. It sets the scene for children to explore and direct their own learning in new and exciting ways.

Common play behaviours are thought through carefully and resources are provided to meet the needs of all children.



Time is spent teaching the children how to use each area effectively.

The indoor and outdoor environments are carefully planned to meet the needs of all abilities and enable skills progression.

Continuous provision - Common play behaviours

Behaviour	Sand Area						
	Dig	Pour	Fill and Empty	Mould	Mould tools	Sieve and sift	Mark making
High level/ Exceeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fingers</li> <li>Small scoop</li> <li>Teaspoon</li> <li>Tablespoon</li> <li>Dessert spoon</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small vessel with side handle</li> <li>Large vessel (heavy)</li> <li>Vessel with tap</li> <li>Smaller vessel no handle, no spout</li> <li>Larger vessel no handle, no spout</li> </ul>	As dig and pour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fingers</li> <li>Self-made moulds</li> <li>Small natural materials</li> <li>Small irregular shapes</li> <li>Small regular shapes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fingers</li> <li>Small scoop</li> <li>Teaspoon</li> <li>Table spoon</li> <li>Dessert spoon</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fingers</li> <li>Fabric - small weave</li> <li>Comb</li> <li>Tea leaf straining spoon</li> <li>Tea strainer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lolly sticks</li> <li>Paint brushes</li> </ul>
Mid level/ Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spatula</li> <li>Wooden spoon</li> <li>Slotted spoon</li> <li>Serving spoon</li> <li>Long handled spade</li> <li>Short handled spade</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pouring vessel long spout</li> <li>Small vessel - irregular</li> <li>Small vessel - tall</li> <li>Large vessel - irregular</li> <li>Large vessel - tall</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smaller irregular shape</li> <li>Large irregular shape</li> <li>Smaller tall container</li> <li>Large taller container</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fingers</li> <li>Small scoop</li> <li>Teaspoon</li> <li>Table spoon</li> <li>Dessert spoon</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potato masher</li> <li>Mesh sieve - large</li> <li>Sieve - small holes</li> <li>Sieve - large holes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sticks</li> <li>Wooden spoons</li> </ul>
Emergent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scoop</li> <li>Smaller regular container</li> <li>Large regular container</li> <li>Hand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smaller vessel no handle</li> <li>Larger vessel no handle</li> <li>Smaller vessel with handle</li> <li>Larger vessel with handle and defined spout</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smaller regular container (bucket)</li> <li>Large regular container</li> <li>Hand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scoop</li> <li>Smaller regular container</li> <li>Large regular container</li> <li>hand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fabric large weave</li> <li>Colander</li> <li>Grain sifter</li> <li>Fingers/hands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fingers</li> <li>Spades</li> </ul>



Click for more enabling environments





Enhancements are planned to spark interest or to further develop skills.



Adult directed tasks can then be linked into areas of the environment.



Tidy looks like this:



Respecting the space and tidying up are made a priority right from the beginning so that children understand that it is our learning area.

Loose parts enable creativity and provides an open-ended workshop style environment. A cross over of areas and resources is encouraged so that children feel free to use resources in different ways.



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## Planned topics and themes

Throughout the year we teach our curriculum through a variety of approaches. We follow the interest of the children in each unique cohort, asking them about things they would like to learn, as well as using the expertise of parents and carers to enrich our learning opportunities.

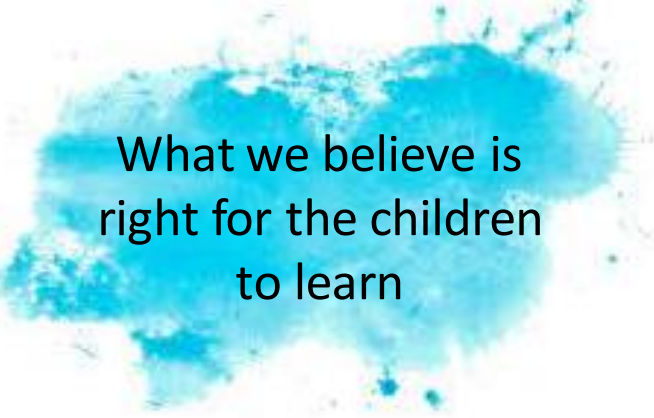
Where appropriate we also plan themes and topics that fit with the flow of the year, or may be a good starting point for teaching specific skills and knowledge bases that we want the children to learn. These are subject to change at short notice as we are guided by our ongoing assessments and the children's learning and development.

### Possible themes that we will use this year:

- Harvest and Autumn
- Diwali
- Bonfire night
- Remembrance day
- Christmas
- Chinese new year
- Superheroes
- Fairy tales
- Growing
- Exploring other cultures and countries
- Under the sea
- Space and light



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What we believe is  
right for the children  
to learn



Learning  
manners and  
how to be  
polite and  
show respect.



Begin to  
understand their  
role in the  
community and  
the wider world.



Be accepting  
of each others  
differences.

There are some key things that we want  
to teach our children during their time at  
our school. These are really important to  
the ethos and Christian values of our  
school and we designate specific time to  
work on these.




Care for each  
other and our  
environment.

Many of these are explored in  
our **unique curriculum  
ambitions** which you can  
explore by clicking below:



Our  
curriculum  
ambitions



Learning how  
to interact  
with the older  
children in our  
school.



Develop an  
awareness of  
their own  
identity and  
spiritual  
development.



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## Our curriculum ambitions

At Aston St Mary's School we have established some overarching curriculum ambitions that we would like our cohort of children to achieve during their time in Reception. These are things that we feel are important for the children in our unique setting to experience, learn or be able to do by the time they leave Shackadell class and are part of the vision and values of our school. Each of these curriculum ambitions require core skills which the children will need to develop and learn in order to achieve them. Such core skills will then be taught, either during child-initiated learning or as adult directed small groups or whole class lessons.



### Make our own books

Enjoying books and developing a life-long love of reading is an important aim at Aston St Mary's. It is important that children explore books and have the chance to create their own fiction and non-fiction books which begin as picture books and progress to words, captions and eventually stories, which are then shared with each other.




### Write and post a letter

Writing for a purpose is the best way for children to see a real value in their writing. Across the year there are many opportunities to write and post letters for a purpose such as writing a letter to our Buddies, to Father Christmas and when other appropriate reasons arise linked to things that the children are interested in.



### Become 'Forest School Rangers'

Forest school and the skills that the children develop in this area is at the heart of our curriculum. The opportunities to collect wide ranging vocabulary and knowledge and understanding are unending. The core skills learned when becoming a 'Forest School Ranger' are transferable across every part of the curriculum and allow space for children's spiritual development and mental health and wellbeing.



More curriculum ambitions





### **Arrange a fundraising event**

It is a fundamental Christian value of our school that children are able to show love, kindness, empathy, compassion and generosity to the people in our lives and also to those who live in the wider world. It is very important to us that we teach children to know who they are in the world, but also to know how they can have a positive impact on the world and those around them.



### **Take part in a performance**

Developing a child's confidence and self esteem to the point that they are comfortable to express themselves and perform in front an audience is so important. Being able to use a performance voice in a variety of scenarios is a key skill for life. Working collaboratively to make a fun and entertaining performance brings joy, not only to the performer but also to the audience.



### **Make an intricate junk model**

Junk modelling is an excellent way for children to apply such a wide ranging set of skills in one process. Imagining, planning, designing, joining, cutting, fixing, evaluating and then enjoying playing with the final product provides so many opportunities for learning, developing and applying critical thinking skills. Due to the work shop style provision, children are encouraged to self select all the resources that they need.

Each of these ambitions have core skills that the children need to be able to do in order to achieve them. As a team, we have thought carefully about how children progress through these skills. This informs our planning of lesson sequences as well as the resources available to our class through continuous provision. Click to the next page to see some examples of our core skills.





# Core Skills

We have identified core skills which the children will need to develop and learn in order to achieve our chosen curriculum ambitions. The core skills are taught, either during child-initiated learning or as adult directed small groups or whole class lessons.

**Core skills:** Folding paper to make cards and books

**Working towards curriculum ambition:** Making our own books.

**Possible sequence of learning:**

- Explore and notice that books and cards have pages that can be opened and closed and that these have a specific orientation.
- Exploring how to change the form of paper by scrunching, tearing and crumpling.
- Wrapping large pieces of fabric around toys such as dolls.
- Folding fabric up in order to tidy away in the role play area.
- Exploring how to fold paper to make a flat fold anywhere on the page.
- Lining up the corners of paper in order to make a neat edge.
- Using flat fingers to press along the folded edge against a flat surface.
- Learning to make different accurate folds to make portrait and landscape folds.
- Make a paper aeroplane following instructions.

**Things adults can do:**

- Make available a variety of different types of papers and cards.
- Provide a range of different fabrics to fold.
- Demonstrate how to use new techniques for folding paper and card.
- Model the language needed to fold such as fold, press, line up.

**Links to statutory framework:**

PD - Fine motor skills  
EAD - creating with materials

[illegible]



**Core skill: Storytelling**

**Working towards curriculum ambition: Making our own books.**



**Possible sequence of learning:**

- Have some favourite stories which they can repeat or use action words and phrases from.
- Play alongside other developing a relevant narrative, using props and dressing up clothes as they rehearse and rehearse at once.
- Listen to a wide range of stories, understanding what is happening with the help of pictures and engaging in at any time.
- Enjoy listening to longer stories and remember much of what happens and predicting possible endings and events. Engage in extended conversation about these stories.
- Begin to be aware of the way stories are structured.
- Confidently take on the role of a familiar fictional character.
- Act out familiar stories using story phrases and props.
- Be able to talk about and retell familiar stories using story maps. Sometimes using exact repetition and sometimes using their own words.
- Develop their own stories with the use of props, puppets and toys. Describe main story settings, events and characters in increasing detail.
- Tell their own stories to an audience.
- Write their own stories (see writing core skill progress list).

**Things adults can do:**

- Encourage children to predict possible endings to stories and events.
- Encourage children to develop narratives in their play.
- Use different voices to tell stories and encourage children to join in where possible.
- Find quality time every day to tell and read stories to children using props, puppets etc.
- Provide stories, pictures and puppets to a flow children to explore and talk about his characters freely.
- Make a classroom book of children's own stories.
- Provide story maps and aid to books to encourage a life long love of reading.

**Links to other frameworks:**


CL - Speaking

EAD - Being imaginative and expressive

L - Comprehension



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The way we  
want children  
to learn

*'Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.'*

EYFS statutory framework 2021

At Aston St Mary's we have carefully constructed a curriculum that allows children of all abilities and development stages to learn effectively. We plan by taking into consideration the following factors:

- A focus on the [characteristics of effective teaching and learning](#).
- Sequences of lessons planned to create challenging and enjoyable experiences for each child in all areas of learning and development. These help children to work towards the [Early Learning Goals \(ELGs\)](#).
- Planning provides opportunity for children to collect knowledge, giving them the broad range of knowledge needed to provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.
- Providing opportunities to gain independence.
- Our [enabling environment](#) is multisensory which allows all children to access the curriculum in a way which best suits their learning style.
- An equal focus on indoor and outdoor learning gives children the chance to learn in an environment which best suits their needs.
- A skills based curriculum which enables children to develop transferable skills. (See [Core skills](#))
- This is informed by a [Strength Gap Analysis \(SGA\)](#) taken at strategic points in the year.



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# Characteristics of effective teaching and learning

The emphasis on how children learn has huge potential to empower children as confident, creative lifelong learners. At Aston St Mary's children are encouraged to follow their interests, make independent choices about their learning and are supported to develop their thinking skills through skilful adult interactions. The characteristics are interconnected but each has distinct features. The characteristics are:

**Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'

**Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements

**Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things



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# Strength Gap Analysis (SGA)

At set points in the year, we gather a 'snapshot' of where the cohort are in terms of their progress and make assessments which inform our future planning. These normally take place after Baseline assessments, the end of the Autumn term and at the end of the Spring term. This is also the chance to identify children who are going to need Special Education Needs (SEN) support or targeted interventions.

Our Strength Gap Analysis is how we use the information gathered to show where the greatest areas of need and strength are within our cohort. We then make sure that the environment and provision that we put in place directly reflect the needs that we have identified. It also enables us to plan which of our skills progressions need more focussed teaching time.

## **Areas of strength:**

These are identified to show where we can provide extra challenge through both our teaching and continuous provision.

## **Skills gap:**

This is also a chance to identify gaps in learning across the cohort, as well as for small groups of children who may be performing below their age related expectation.



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Phonics and  
reading skills

# Phonics

At Aston St Mary's School, children are taught to read and write through daily phonics lessons. Throughout the EYFS and KS1, teachers follow the 'Little Wandle for Letters and Sounds revised', a complete systematic, synthetic phonics programme. The programme is effective and ensures learning stays in children's long-term memory and enables children to apply their learning to become highly competent readers. There is a high expectation on the progress of all learners.

## Phonics lesson structure

Each day the whole class phonics lesson structure is the same and provides direct teaching in short bursts. It allows a consistent approach which maintains and secure, systematic progression for phonics learning.

The pace of learning and repeated practice means that children become secure readers. The application of phonics is made through fully decodable books, aligned with learned phonemes. Effective keep-up support is put in place for children who are at risk of falling behind. These pupils are identified in the moment during whole class teaching and keep-up support is targeted quickly and effectively and half termly assessments are made to check that all children are 'on track'.



Structure of a phonics  
lesson

# The structure of a daily whole class phonics lesson

Revisit and review	Teach and practise	Apply
<p>Each session begins with a revisit and review of previously taught GPCs. This is done using the same mantras each lesson to ensure a consistent approach and to avoid cognitive overload.</p> <p>The repetitive nature of revisiting and reviewing recently taught GPCs allows these to move into the pupils' long-term memory.</p>	<p>New GPCs are introduced in the same way each day using the Little Wandle resources to allow children the consistency they need to take on the new information quickly.</p> <p>Mnemonics and catchphrases for digraphs are effectively used to help children to remember the phonemes. Formation phrases are used to help children to form each grapheme.</p> <p>There is a focus on oral blending which leads into teacher lead blending of words. This then leads to independent reading of words.</p> <p>New tricky words are taught and previously taught tricky words are reviewed.</p>	<p>During the application stage, pupils are taught to read simple sentences, being encouraged to locate recent new learning in the sentence.</p> <p>Pupils are also given the opportunity to practise spellings and sentence writing.</p> <p>Current phonics learning is further applied and practised during the 3 weekly reading practise sessions.</p>





























Find out about phonics in the environment

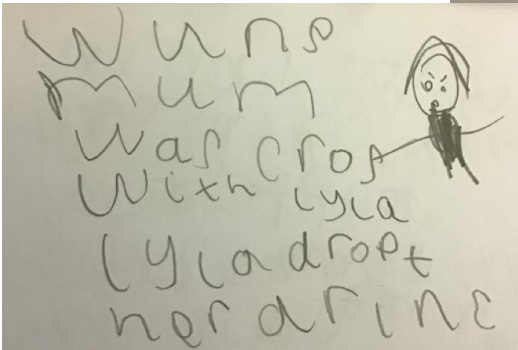
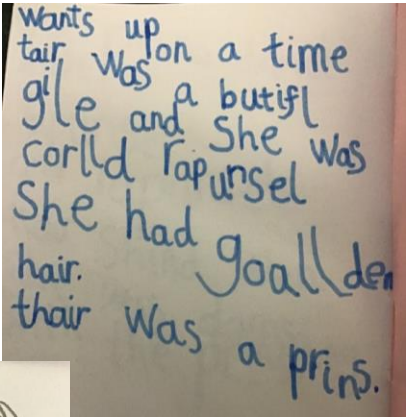
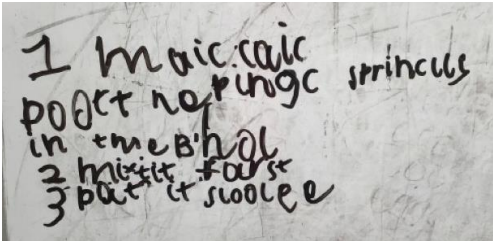


# Supporting phonics in the environment

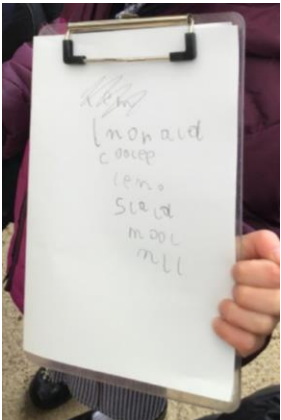
It is important that the children are able to use their phonics knowledge independently and apply it to their own writing in a natural way once they have been taught the phonemes that they need. Our classroom environment is planned to enable this kind of independent phonics application.

 Around the ant's head and down into space.	 Down bee's back, up and round his big tummy.	 Curl around the cat.	 Around the duck's body, up to its head and down to its feet.	 Around the elephant's eye and down its trunk.	 Down the fairy's neck, all the way to its feet, then across its wings.	 Round the goat's face, up to his ear, down and curl under his chin.	 Down, up and over the helicopter.	 Down the iguana's body, then draw a dot at the tip.
 All the way down the jellyfish; dot on its head.	 Down the kite, up and across, back and down to the corner.	 All the way down the lily; dot on the stem.	 Down, up and over the mouse's ears, then add a flick on the nose.	 Down the stick, up and over the net.	 All around the octopus.	 Down the penguin's back, up and around its head.	 Round the queen's face, up to her crown, down her robe with a flick at the end.	 From the cloud to the ground, up the arch and over the rainbow.
 Under the snake's chin, slide down and round its tail.	 From the tiger's nose to its tail, then follow the stripe across the tiger.	 Down and around the umbrella, stop at the top and down to the bottom and flick.	 Down to the bottom of the volcano and back up to the top.	 From the top of the wave to the bottom, up the wave, down to the wave, then up again.	 Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box.	 Down and round the yo-yo, then follow the string round.	 Zip across, zig down and across the zebra.	

Phoneme mats are available at all times which encourages children to use their phonics knowledge in their independent writing. This is especially true in child initiated learning (CIL), where the child has decided to write for their own purpose.



Above are examples of how children use and apply their phonics knowledge during CIL, using the environment to support them.



All taught phonemes are displayed as they are taught. This means that children know where to look to remind themselves when writing.

An alphabet is displayed that children can add to with words and pictures relating to each letter. This is particularly useful at the start of the year as letters, such as the one at the beginning of their name, are significant to them.



# Early reading

At Aston St Mary's school there is a high profile on reading and building a life-long love of reading. This starts in the early years where early reading is taught through a variety of ways during phonics lessons and reading practice. It is focussed on decoding the text, prosody or use of performance voice and comprehension.

Books are matched to the child's current phonic level in order to give each child the confidence to apply their phonics knowledge to word, caption and sentence reading.

These books are then sent home where children are able to confidently read to their families with fluency and accuracy.

The classroom environment is set up to ensure that a love of reading is encouraged in different areas. The early years practitioners take opportunities throughout the day to promote reading, having story times, reading poetry and encouraging children to refer to non-fiction texts during their child-initiated play.

Core texts are chosen to support the teaching of all areas of the curriculum. These are displayed as a class reading journey and allows the children to see what they have learned so far. The children often talk about the core texts previously used and have access to these in the provision.





## Reading practice

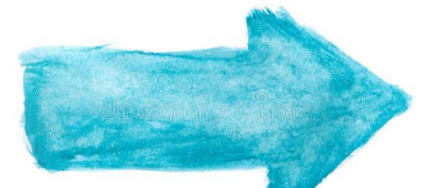
Each child takes part in three reading practice lessons a week. Each lesson has a different focus and allows children to become fluent when reading the text.

The first lesson focuses on decoding the text, with the children concentrating on applying their phonic knowledge and developing fluency when reading the words.

The second reading session provides the opportunity to read the book again and practise reading with prosody so the children develop reading with appropriate meaning, stress and intonation. It provides an opportunity to explore characters' feelings, what words mean and how punctuation adds to the meaning. At Aston St Mary's school we call this our performance voice.

By the third session, the children should be automatically applying their decoding skills to read with greater accuracy and fluency, enabling their working memory to be freed up to focus on comprehension. The purpose of the reading practice session for comprehension is to develop the children's comprehension skills by using the reading content domains (2015 Key Stage 1: English reading test framework).

- Draw on their knowledge of vocabulary to understand texts.
- Identify/explain key aspects of fiction and non-fiction texts.
- Identify and explain the sequence of events in the text.
- Inference and deduction.
- Prediction

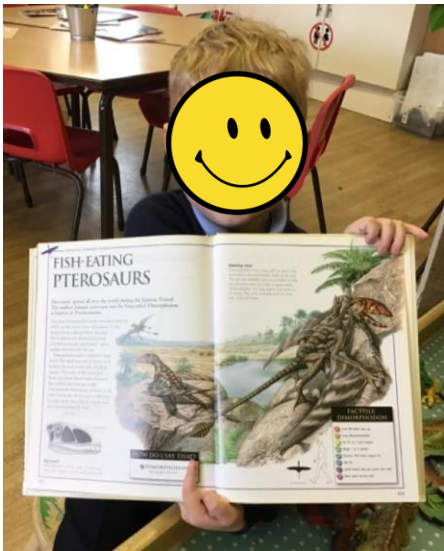


**Reading for pleasure** is promoted throughout the school. We have a well-stocked library as well as reading corners in each class room.



Puppets, roleplay and storytelling stones are used during CIL.

Once there was a butterfly in the rainbow but she had no friends. And then flamingo was her friend. And then she gives butterfly her favourite food. And then posted butterfly a letter. And they played under the rainbow all day long.  
The End.



Our continuous provision includes the planned use of books to support children's learning, normally around a child's particular interest. Using books to enhance learning in this way is often spontaneous and 'in the moment' which sparks a child's love of books and reading.



## Performance voice

Children in Reception will learn to retell stories using their best performance voice even before they begin to read. They enjoy learning to read aloud from fiction, non-fiction and poetry appropriate to their stage of development.

Regular modelling by adults is vitally important and 'echo reading' is a useful strategy which we use to help children develop their expressive, fluent reading.

Children the use their performance voice in other areas of our curriculum such as when performing on stage, which is one of our [curriculum ambitions](#).

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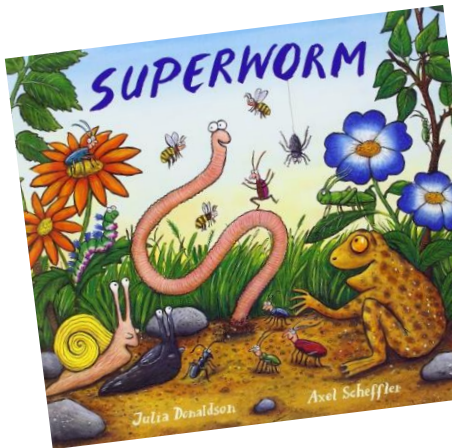
# Drawing club

We use 'Drawing club' to support our children's love of reading, their early writing, enhanced vocabulary and maths skills. Three times a week the children explore one of three themes:

- The Adventure of Books – Using high quality texts
- The Adventure of the past – Using animated cartoons from the past
- The Adventure of Tales – Using traditional tales

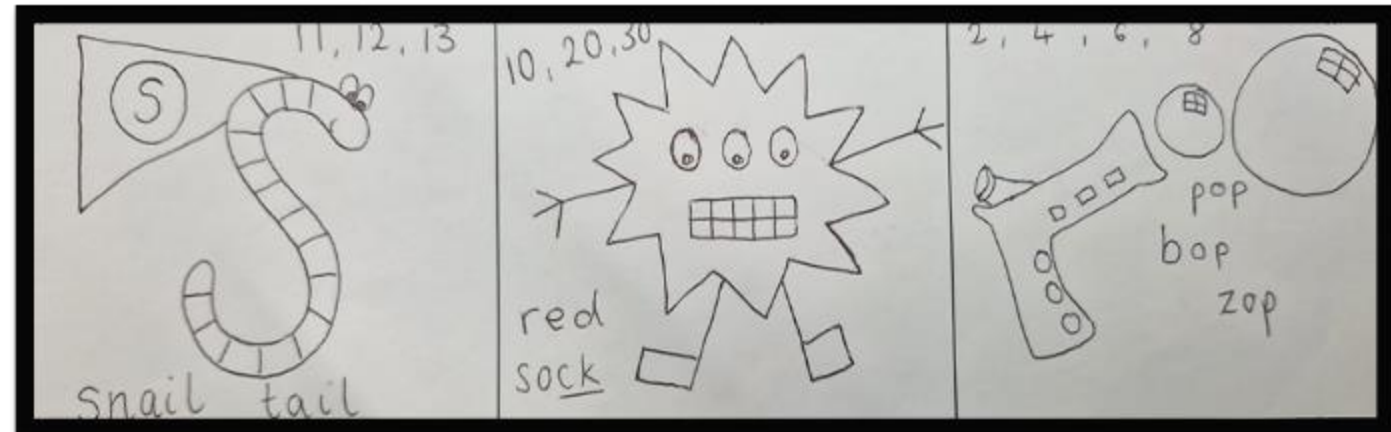
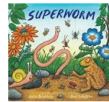
Each session encourages children to use actions and movements to remember high quality vocabulary. We then explore the 'adventure' by looking at characters, settings and creating our own twists and turns in the story.

The children use number and written codes to bring magic to their own stories. They are highly engaged and thrilled by how to make stories come to life!



## Vocabulary list:

Zooming	Calamity
Superhuman	Wriggling
Courageous	Indestructible
Heroic	Transform





# Maths skills

‘Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically.’

**Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework 2021**



At Aston St Mary's the maths curriculum across the school has been chosen to:

- achieve deep levels of understanding and mastery within fluency, problem solving and reasoning.
- be flexible in their understanding of Mathematics and select which approaches are most effective in different scenarios.
- become inquisitive and resilient learners who can apply their mathematical understanding in different contexts and make meaningful links across their learning.

As a school we have chosen to use the NCETM 'Mastering number' program as well as supporting this with Herts for Learning – Essentials Maths Planning, as this strongly implements our intent and embeds the mastery approach.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage this means an implementation of 'Reception ESSENTIAL maths' which is written to support our curriculum.

The teaching sequences are written as a spiral curriculum in which learning is built upon step by step, sequence by sequence, providing for a progression in the children's conceptual understanding. These are then taught through carefully structured sequences which we adapt to meet the needs of our children.

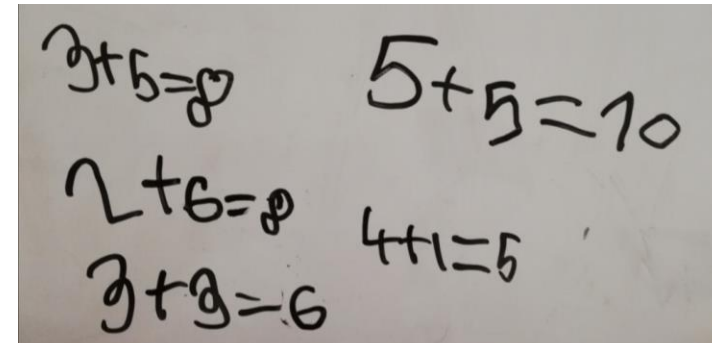
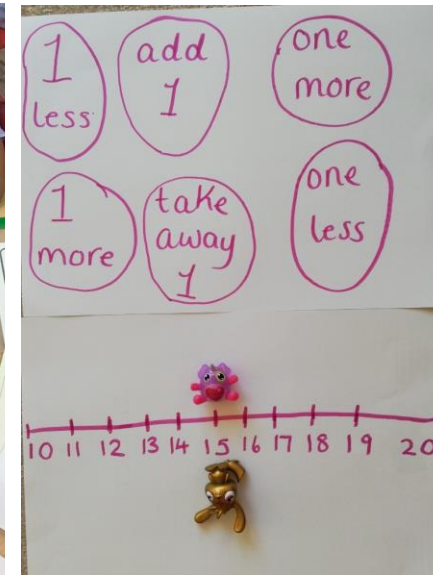


## Adult-led maths lessons

The sequencing of the learning in 'Reception ESSENTIAL maths' informs our direct teaching and allows us to plan sequences that progressively build on the children's knowledge and understanding. The adult role is key when responding to the children's learning and their mathematical thinking to allow them to develop their reasoning skills.

Maths is taught every day across the week through 'Quick maths' lessons and focussed adult-led tasks.

A wide range of resources are used to support children with their maths learning and to give them a deep understanding of number, numerical patterns, shape, space and measure. Children are encouraged to explain their thinking and explore and experiment with numbers, giving them a deep understanding.





## Child-led maths

Our workshop style continuous provision provides many opportunities for children to consolidate their mathematical thinking, knowledge and understanding. Children are able to use a wide variety of resources and often create patterns, make up counting games and explore shape, space and measure through their chosen activities.

Children often investigate length, capacity and money through their play. Children particularly enjoy exploring maths through role play such as shops and cafes and the use of mobile phones for number recognition.





# RE

## Religious Education

At Aston St Mary's School, Religious Education and our Values Education underpin everything that we do. We believe that children should be taught to become religiously literate, meaning that they gain an excellent knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principle religions found in Great Britain and the World. We want our pupils to not only know about and understand the importance of religion, faith and spiritual practises, but also be able to clearly articulate their own thoughts and beliefs as a result.

In Shackadell class we learn about Christianity and other religions through stories, parables, morals, roleplay and many other fun and exciting ways. We have created a carefully planned curriculum using **Understanding Christianity** and **Discovery RE**. We work with the children to think through six deep questions and allow them to express and articulate their own thoughts and feelings.

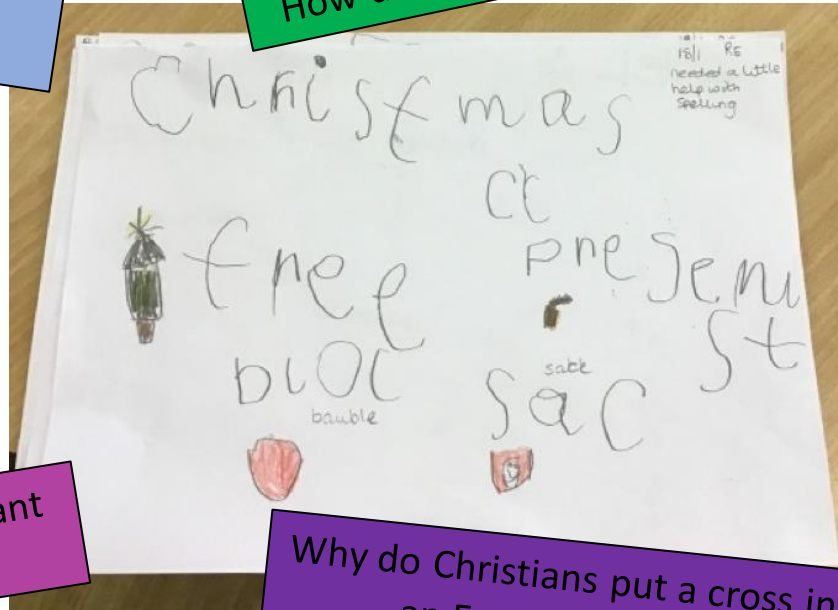
What makes people special?



What can we learn from stories?



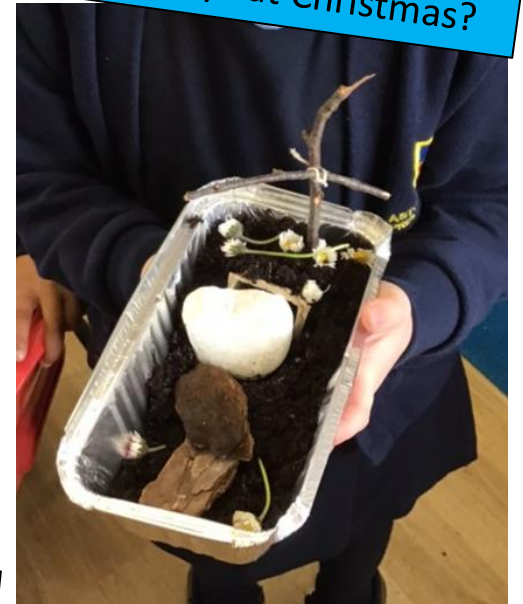
Why is the word 'God' so important to Christians?



How do people celebrate?

Why do Christians put a cross in an Easter garden?

Why do Christians perform nativity plays at Christmas?



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### Values education

As a whole school community we explore a Christian value each half term. We think about where this value is shown in the Bible and how Jesus showed them to other people. We also look at how they affect our everyday lives and build our characters. All values are modelled by the staff.

Some of our values include love, forgiveness, patience and generosity. The children are actively encouraged to act towards others using these values which supports our PSED curriculum.



### Collective worship

It is a priority at Aston St Mary's school that the children in our Early Years Foundation Stage take part in daily acts of collective worship. These include classroom worship, whole school worship and acts of collective worship at St Mary's church.

Our children have the opportunity to develop their spirituality by reflecting on themselves and thinking about how their actions affect others in the World. This is the case for pupils who have a Christian faith, another faith or none at all.



### Supporting charities

It is a fundamental Christian value of our school that children are able to show love, kindness, empathy, compassion and generosity to the people in our lives and also to those who live in the wider world. It is very important to us that we teach children to know who they are in the world, but also to know how they can have a positive impact on the world and those around them. This is why it is one of our six [curriculum ambitions](#) to arrange a fundraising event for charity.



Recycled flower paper made for donations towards Christian Aid week





# PSHE

PSHE is an integral and important part of our curriculum at Aston St. Mary's School. Our aim is to provide a programme of learning through which the children can acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to manage their lives now and in the future. It enables them to develop their unique character and the qualities and attributes needed to thrive as individuals and members of their families, school and society.

In Shackadell class, adult-led PSHE activities are taught through many exciting and interesting ways. These are both adult-led, as well as through our planned continuous provision enhancements. The PSHE curriculum is organised into three core themes:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Relationships (including Sex and Relationships Education)
- Living in the Wider World – Economic wellbeing and being a responsible citizen



Learning about making healthy choices and how to look after ourselves.



Understanding how to make good relationships and demonstrating an awareness of each others needs.



Learning about our place in the wider world and taking responsibility..

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# The hidden curriculum

The hidden curriculum is the part of our curriculum which is spontaneous, unexpected and unplanned. These learning opportunities come from a wide range of sources and situations. These could include the following:

Things that children notice in the environment that interest them.

New experiences that the children have had at home such as a new baby, a holiday or trying a new sport.

Outside activities like clubs and sports groups that the children then share in school.

Changes in the seasons and weather. For example snow fall, frost and ice formations or heavy rainfall.

Things that children bring in from home to share with the class.

Unusual events such as a bee swarm on the school field or a paramedic arriving in the local area.



## Experiences we want the children to have

Our children are encouraged to have fun, enjoy life and build their resilience. In our inclusive environment, we provide opportunities for our children to use their imagination and creativity by exploring our world, learning outside the classroom and developing important life skills alongside generating a love of life itself.

We have experiences that we would like our children to take part in during their time in Shackadell class. 'The Aston adventures' then continue each year as they progress through their school life. The following lists some of the things that we expect our children to experience during their 'Aston adventure' in Early Years. Many of these are experienced through our [Forest School](#) curriculum:

- Go on a birdwatch
- Climb ladders and trees
- Swing on a tyre
- Hug trees and experience forest bathing
- Spend time watching clouds
- Build dens
- Visit a wildlife park
- Spend our own money at the supermarket
- Jump in puddles




- Toast marshmallows
- Make a bird box
- Plant bulbs to grow fruit and vegetables
- Take seasonal walks around the village
- Visit an allotment
- Build a bug hotel
- Prepare flash the tortoise for hibernation
- Litter pick our local area
- Meet the police and firefighters




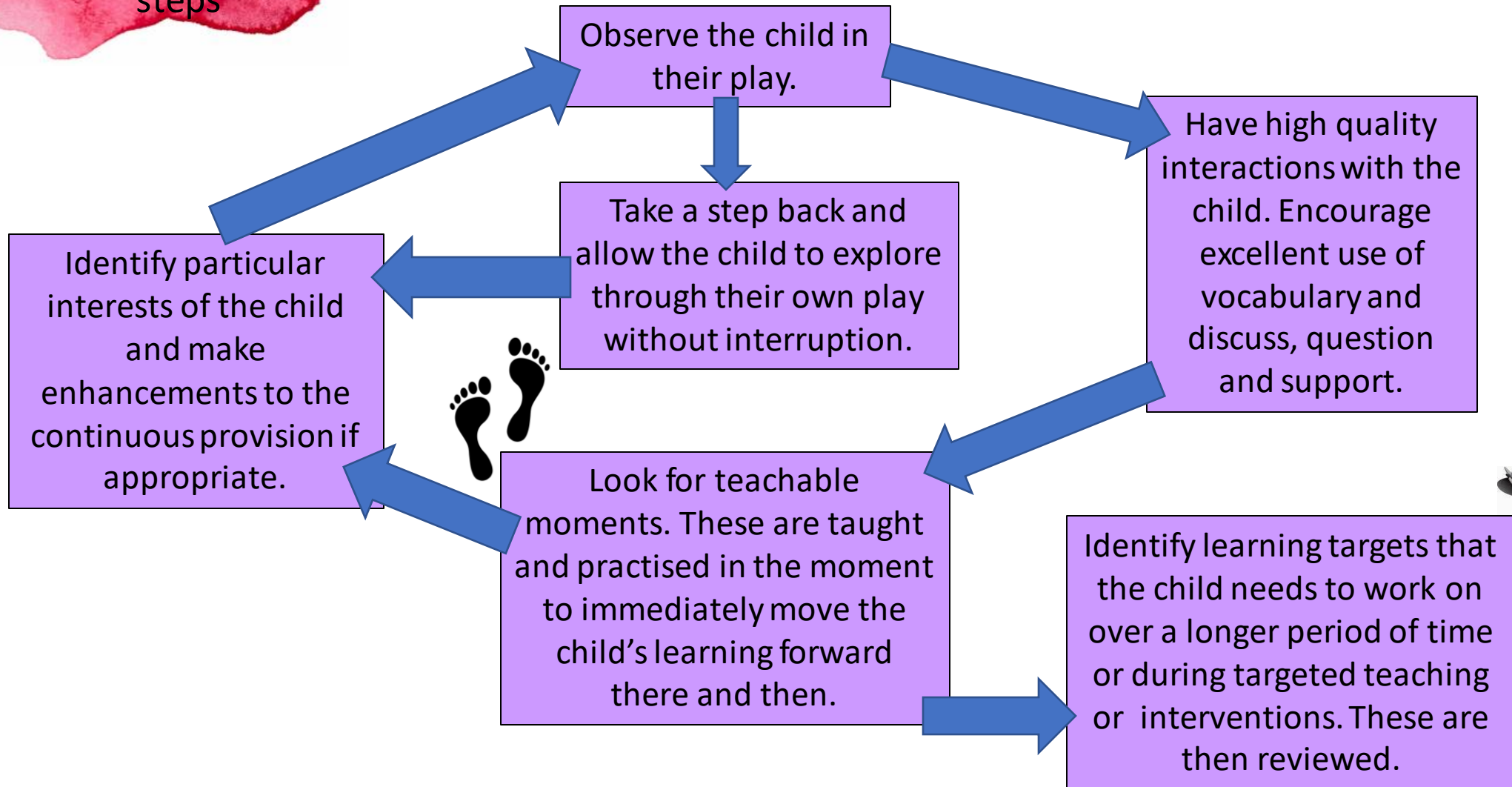
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## Teachable moments and next steps

It is important that as practitioners we know each child's level of achievement and interests which then shapes the teaching and learning experiences for each child. In our interactions we respond to the day-to-day observations that we make on the children's progress. We also take into account the observations that parents and carers share.



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Aston St Mary's school has an excellent forest school and our forest school leader is also a full-time member of our EYFS team. This means that we are able to frequently use her expertise to teach forest school skills during a weekly forest school session as well as in the moment during Child Initiated Learning.

We use both the designated forest school area in our school grounds as well as having adapted an area in our own outdoor classroom to encourage these skills during CIL.

Forest school:

- Child-led with some adult direction around specific skill acquisition.
- Progressing through skills and gaining knowledge about our environment.
- Focusses on new and interesting vocabulary.
- Linked to other curriculum areas e.g. exploring The Gruffalo story.



[Click here for more forest school](#)





We spend time working on schemes and awards such as 30 days wild and RSPB birdwatch. We explore seasonal changes in our environment and encourage children to do this outside of school.

We use lots of non-fiction texts to support our learning.

