



Please find below information about the early years curriculum we use in Bubbles Nurseries and how this is supported through play.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is a statutory framework that sets the standards all childcare providers in England must meet in order to ensure that children learn and develop well, are kept healthy and safe, and have the necessary knowledge and skills to thrive in school.

In September 2021 the Department of education delivered a revised
Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

The reasons the EYFS was updated was to:

- improve outcomes at age 5, particularly in early language and literacy and especially for disadvantaged children
- reduce workload and unnecessary paperwork so practitioners and teachers can spend more time with the children in their care

Educational programmes, referred to by some people as the 'early years curriculum', are the areas of learning and development which shape the activities and experiences that children experience in nurseries and reception classes at school. Reception classes in schools follow the same curriculum we do.

The 7 areas of learning and development remain the same.

The 3 prime areas:

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

The 4 specific areas:

- Literacy
- Maths
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design



There is a new focus on early language and extending vocabulary, with more examples on how to embed and develop vocabulary skills across all 7 areas.

The areas of learning and development above are all introduced to nursery children through play. The EYFS recognises that 'Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.'



Please see below some of the changes to the EYFS we have implemented:

- ✚ One of the biggest changes in a nursery setting is the shift in focus away from paperwork and checklists. Ofsted inspectors will be less interested in seeing written records of progress and more interested in how well teachers and early years practitioners know the children in their care; their interests, development and progress.
- ✚ There is specific guidance that practitioners assessing pupils' progress should rely on their own professional judgement and should not be required to prove their judgements with physical evidence. This is a clear and significant change in the expectation regarding paperwork.
- ✚ Oral health has been added as an element of children's health that should be promoted and supported in an EYFS setting.
- ✚ Extra guidance has been added about what to check when ensuring sleeping children are safe.
- ✚ The new framework instructs practitioners to decide what they want children to learn and then choose the most effective method to teach it. It states that children's interests must be stimulated, and their needs responded to through positive interactions and secure routines.
- ✚ Similarly, the guidance for teachers of children in reception is that there should be a greater focus on teaching the knowledge and skills of the specific areas of learning, rather than a shift towards more adult-led activities as was suggested in the previous framework document.
- ✚ From September 2021, it will be a statutory requirement for all children entering reception year to be assessed within six weeks of starting. This is known as the Reception Baseline Assessment or RBA.

Development Matters

Alongside the revised EYFS we also refer to non-statutory guidance called Development Matters. This sets out the



pathways of children's development from birth to a child's year in Reception. It previously had defined age stages which staff used to link observations and assessments to. This has also been revised. It is now arranged into broader ages and stages and includes examples of how practitioners can support children at each stage. Despite this, it is understood that young children do not learn in linear, neat, orderly ways. Therefore, the purpose of these pathways in Development Matters is to help practitioners to assess each child's level of development, and not to be used as checklists.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/development-matters--2>

Planning for the EYFS curriculum at Bubbles Nurseries

In line with the new curriculum, we have changed all Bubbles Nurseries planning to be 'in the moment'.

We have been looking at this new approach for a while now and feel it has already allowed us to make a real difference to the children's learning by seizing the moments when children first show interest and curiosity and immediately supporting their next steps. That is not to say that this was not happening before but the way in which we are doing this is different.

Planning in the moment is nothing new, it is exactly what a responsive parent does every day with their child, it is also exactly what a skilful practitioner has always done. Every time an adult looks and listens to a child they are assessing and planning how to respond. The adult will be considering whether they can add anything in the moment to benefit the child (teachable moment). If so, they will respond and interact accordingly.

What is in the moment planning?

"Let the children choose what to do, join them and support them in their pursuits."

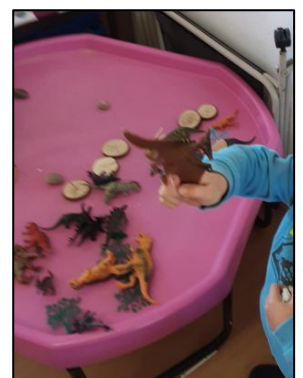


And in theory, it really is that basic. Instead of taking the familiar long-term cycle of observation, reflection and planning, staff will do all of this instantly. That means they are able to work more closely with the children to observe their interests and extend them in the moment.

The basis is that children have a natural desire to learn and explore. So instead of holding their hand through a variety of pre-set activities, staff will allow them to find their own interests, and use this to enhance and build upon their existing knowledge.

It's often broken down into three stages:

- **The Child's Spark** – This is when a child first shows an interest in something. There should be an air of fascination around the object and concentration in what they are now doing.



For example: Bruce always heads straight to the dinosaur's tray, if they are not out, he will help himself from the dinosaur box. He spends a long time talking about and naming the dinosaurs and he shares his interest with other children.



- **The Teachable Moment** – The teacher (nursery staff) will notice this and approach the child. This is the opportunity to extend their interest and learning by asking open-ended questions and considering ways to apply this interest to other options within the environment. Also, staff consider their intentions for the child's next stages of learning and how these can be linked to and enhanced through the child's interest.

For example: Staff add paint to the dinosaur tray and introduce open ended questions about colour names and textures. They enhance Bruce's mathematical understanding by adding paper and using dinosaur footprints to encourage Bruce to explore simple counting and size recognition.

- **The Documentation** – Staff record the child interest and how they plan to use this to enhance the child's experiences in a brief note. These are added to planning boards which show each of the areas of learning in the EYFS. Staff include the spark, the teachable moment and what they did next. This will help them to map out each child's interests and plan an environment that works for that child and supports their learning and development. Observations recorded on Family show 'wow' moments and the different play opportunities children are exploring.

Why are we using in the moment planning?

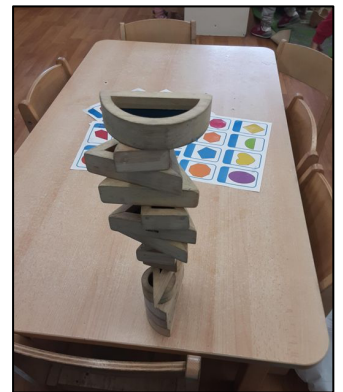
The EYFS explicitly states that "Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care."

Child-led learning is widely regarded as one of the most effective ways of doing that, while 'in the moment' planning is one of the most effective ways to introduce child-led learning.

Child-led learning is particularly effective because it means children are engaged and involved. This is linked to better brain development in developing children.

Many of children's interests will be changing from week to week. By being 'in the moment', staff can observe and work on a child's interests as they arrive, rather than turning towards a pre-planned task when they might already have disappeared.

Finally, it's paperwork. It is taking a little time to get used to, but with less planning comes less time staff spend completing this and being away from the children.



How do we implement in the moment planning?

1. Skilled practitioners

One of the first things you might notice about this process is that it requires practitioners to complete their usual observation cycle almost on the spot.

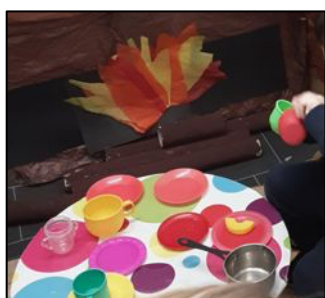
Of course, the process is completely different when you're working so closely with a child. But there's no doubt that we need strong, instinctive practitioners to make in the moment planning work. This is why we are working with our staff to ensure that they are:

- **Strong Observers** – Who have the ability to pay close attention and see exactly what a child is doing.
- **Look Beyond The Obvious** – Staff will look beyond the obvious and see the real interest that is being displayed.
- **Improvisation** – Staff have the confidence and ability to think on their feet, answer the right questions, and come up with suggestions that is central to the whole approach.
- **Child Development Knowledge** – Staff have an excellent understand of sustained shared thinking, schemas and a broad understanding of how children develop, this helps practitioners to find a child's interests more precisely.

It is less like planning and more like enhancement. Staff are doing looking at current interests and planning an environment that is an interesting, intriguing and evolving place for children to develop.

Basically -

- Staff don't ask a child what their interests are. They are allowed to play freely while staff interpret these interests.
- We have stopped thinking in terms of week-to-week planning. Instead it's about creating a constantly changing environment that changes as the children do.



- Staff observe and listen closely to every child that they are focusing on.
- Staff ask more open-ended questions. These are usually 'How' or 'Why' questions.
- Staff go to the child. By asking them to come to us, we are disrupting the flow of their play.

A hugely important part of our new planning is to ensure that we offer experiences that are relevant and meaningful to our children. This is why we have been asking for lots of information from home.

By sharing a child's interests at home, trips they have had at the weekend and occasions you celebrate, it enables nursery staff to ask lots of open-ended questions, put meaning to children's choice of play, enable children to share experiences and interests with each other and even engage a child in a new experience. All while playing and learning.

Helping children be 'ready for school'

There are lots of myths about what being 'school ready' means and there is no one set answer to this, it could mean something different for every child. However, generally being 'school ready' means that children:

- have strong social skills
- can cope emotionally with being separated from their parents
- are relatively independent in their own personal care
- have a curiosity about the world and a desire to learn. (PACEY)

This is supported by the reception class teachers that visit the nursery from local schools. They follow the same EYFS curriculum that we do so the children's learning journey continues from nursery to reception class in school.

In the moment planning means that staff use their understanding of individual children's skills and interests to provide tailored opportunities for each child to practice and develop their skills further to be ready for the next stage of learning.

We feel sure that In the Moment Planning is the best way for us to go and if we all work together each child will flourish. The nursery staff will be more than happy to talk with you about all of this please feel free to ask.

I hope that gives you an idea of how we are working alongside yourselves to support your children to be confident, happy and independent young learners.

If you would like to discuss any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Amanda Vidler

