



Nurture | Grow | Succeed

Parklands Primary School
Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum Ambition
2025-2026

Vision and values

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Vision and Values

Parklands Vision – *nurture, grow, succeed*

Our Parklands vision reflects everything we strive for; the best for our children. Our children's best interests are at the heart of everything. At Parklands we recognise and value each child's individual strengths, talents and diversity and seek to encourage their full potential. We embrace our children as individuals. In Reception, we work collaboratively with the community we serve to ensure we ***nurture*** our pupils, thus allowing our children to ***grow***, which will enable them to ***succeed***.

Parklands Values – *Whole School Values*

We believe our values underpin everything we do in School. They are like a thread running through each of us, through each class, which ties us together. Throughout a child's educational journey at Parklands, they will be taught to practice these values in everyday life;

- **Perseverance**
- **Achievement**
- **Respect**
- **Kindness**
- **Love**
- **Accountability**
- **Nurture**
- **Determination**
- **Self-belief**

We strive to encourage the children to understand and demonstrate these values at Parklands. Every week, we focus on one of our school values. Each day, children who show that value in their actions may be secretly chosen as our 'Secret Student'—a special recognition for living our values!

'Because children grow up, we think a child's purpose is to grow up. But a child's purpose is to be a child.'

~Tom Stoppard~



Curriculum intent and implementation

Intent

The experiences offered in the Early Years at Parklands Primary School are designed to be exciting, inspiring and memorable. Encompassed within our vision, is the need for pupils to be taught a broad and balanced curriculum, which **nurtures** pupils individual needs. By exposing children to a range of experiences, which broaden their understanding, it enables them to **grow** as citizens and equip them with the skills needed to be confident, life-long learners, who **succeed** in reaching their full potential.

It is our intent to provide a high-quality curriculum tailored to suit the diverse needs of our children and the community we serve which reflects our School's local context. We pride ourselves on knowing our children and families well and use this knowledge to shape our curriculum that adds breadth and enrichment to our children's lives, embracing the significance of adding to our children's cultural capital from the curriculum we offer. We have high aspirations for our pupils to succeed, thus our curriculum is carefully planned to address potential gaps in pupil's knowledge and skills, that is progressively sequenced with assessment points throughout the year, to close gaps and ensure our pupils are on track for success. Our Early Years curriculum also incorporates the statutory requirements of the Early Years Framework (2025). Our curriculum is ambitious for all.

Preparing for later learning: The experiences, knowledge and skills gained in Reception have clear learning links which are built upon in KS1 and KS2 and evidence of this is seen in whole school progression and 'over-learning' for each subject taught in school. This allows children to embed and deepen their learning, making progress by knowing more and remembering more.

In addition to our curriculum, the most important way in which we prepare our children for later learning is by fostering and developing children's *Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning*; to create life-long learners which underpin children's attitudes towards learning and future success.

'The goal of early childhood education should be to activate the child's own natural desire to learn.'

~Dr. Maria Montessori~



Curriculum Implementation

Our curriculum **implementation** at Parklands is carefully planned and sequenced with our current cohort in mind, therefore differs year on year. Its foundations are rooted in the firm belief that we aim to teach key knowledge and vocabulary and offer educational experiences which typical Reception aged pupils should have. Therefore, this aims to address gaps for some of our pupils who require this upon starting School, and for those who have these solid foundations of learning in place, through the progressive curriculum and tiered teaching, we ensure progress for all.

Our curriculum approach – overarching principles

Throughout the year, over-arching topics and themes are planned for to ensure coverage of essential knowledge, skills and vocabulary, allowing children to master the underpinning knowledge and skills essential for each of the seven 'Areas of Learning'. This is carefully planned for to ensure progression in learning, to ensure specific vocabulary is taught, and to ensure progress is made by all. We implement systems of planned *over-learning* as '**Golden threads**' in our curriculum to ensure curriculum progression in knowledge and skills. The opportunities we offer through the planned curriculum experiences ensure they build upon our children's cultural capital. We ensure children 'experience the awe and wonder of the world in which they live, through the seven areas of learning' (Ofsted, 2019) and look upon this offer as our 'pupil passport'; an entitlement across the year from our unique curriculum.

Language and vocabulary: All staff who work in the Early Years setting have had training in *Blanks Level Questioning*, which is something which we tailor to each child to develop their verbal reasoning and abstract language skills. In addition, we also offer many language based interventions such as 'Time for Sounds' and 'ELKLAN' for those children who require further support, as well as working closely with our NHS Speech and Language therapist who works within school.

Learning through play: The way in which our curriculum is delivered to our children is carefully balanced in Early Years. We believe our pedagogical approach allows children to thrive by experiencing an enriched learning environment where they can learn through play, both indoors and outdoors. Most recently the Early Years Teachers have worked closely with Early Excellence to re-design the layout of the classroom and audit the resources available for children to access. Through this process of investing a huge amount of time, money and resources we feel our children really are at the heart of ensuring a language rich, thought provoking and challenging environment.

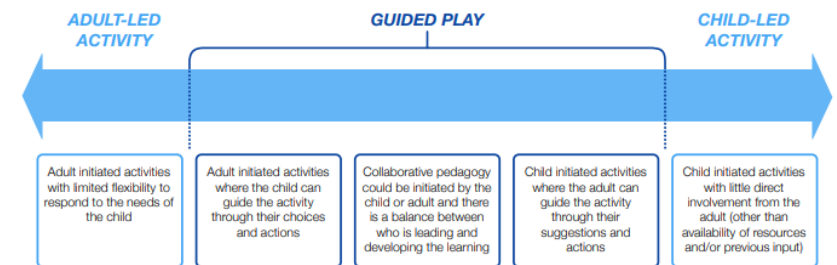


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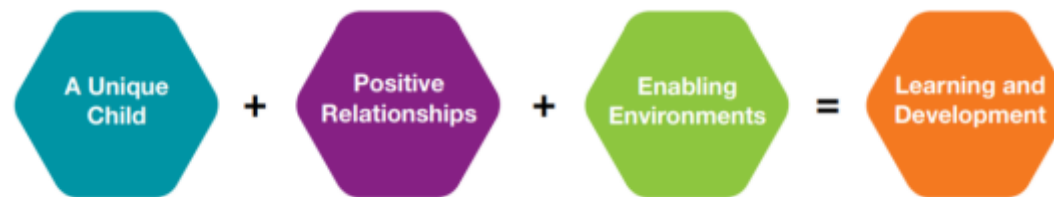
'It takes approximately 400 repetitions to create a new synapse in the brain – unless it is done with play, in which case, it takes between 10 and 20 repetitions.'

~Dr. Karyn Purrviss~

Children learn through a balance of both adult and child led learning opportunities, which our daily timetable is structured carefully to allow. This changes throughout the year, taking into consideration the changing needs of the children. Our trained staff ultimately aim to provide a careful balance of both adult and child led to allow for Guided Play, which is recognised where optimum learning takes place (EEF Pedagogical Continuum, 2023). This includes: communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what children are doing, facilitating and setting challenges.



Learning and development is a continuum that is different for every child. No child learns the same way; this is what makes each child unique.

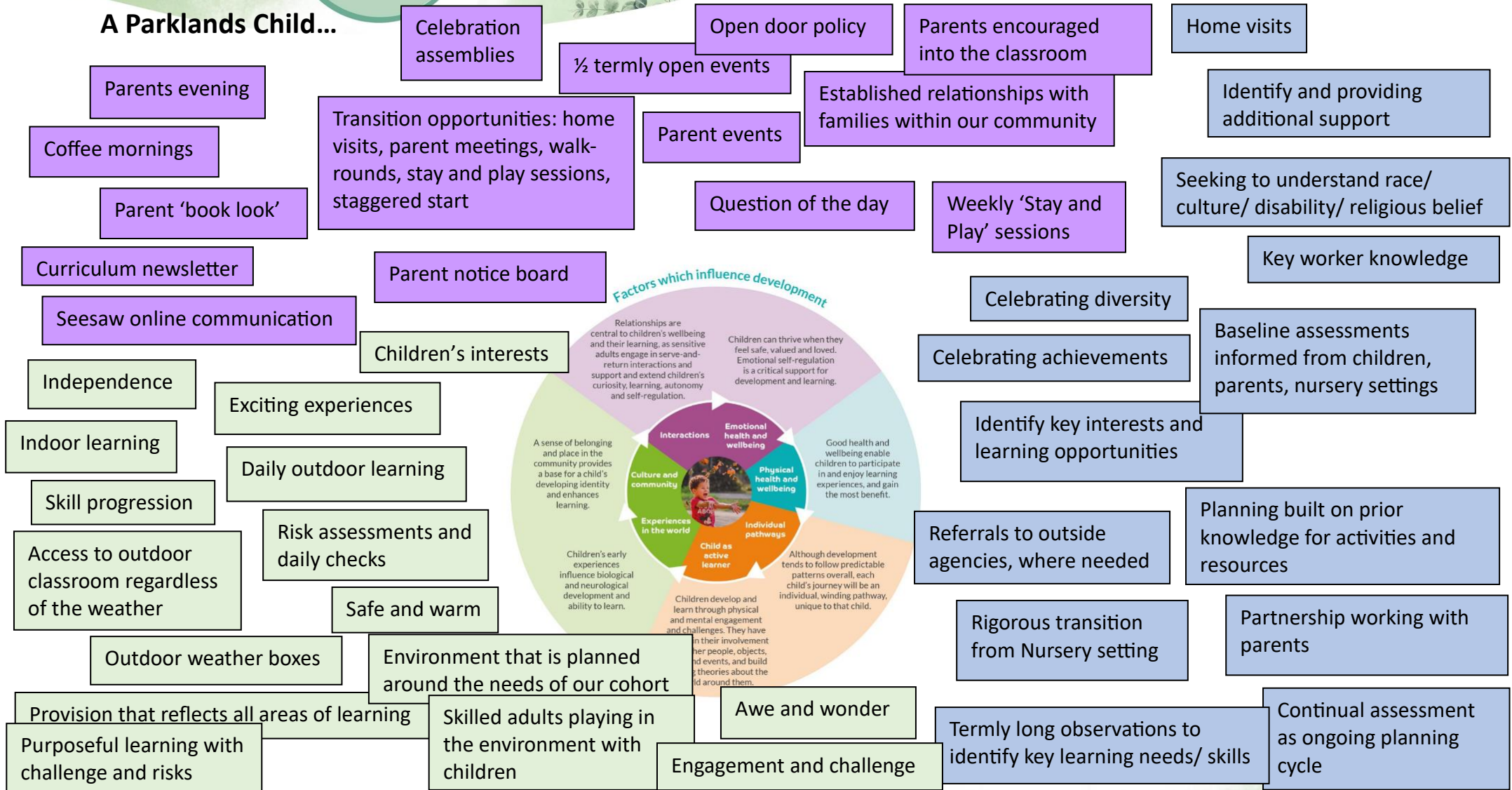


At Parklands we continually work in partnership with parents, carers, other settings and our community to understand our children, then in turn and provide the best start at School. Through this, we ensure each child reached their full potential from various starting points. A snippet of how we collaboratively support the **unique child**, **positive relationships** and **enabling environments** at Parklands, to ensure **learning and development** takes place.



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A Parklands Child...





Parent Engagement

We recognise that working with parents and carers is an extremely powerful tool in early childhood education, which is why we constantly work hard to consistently promote engagement. We value communication, conversations and information sharing throughout a child's time in Reception.

There are many ways in which we as staff engage with parents and carers throughout the year;

- various transition activities before children start school, such as
 - a new parent information session where parents meet their child's new teacher,
 - small group 'stay and play' sessions for both parents and children,
 - goodie bags for children;
 - information leaflet with pictures of the staff and the classroom which are shared with both nursery settings and parents;
 - visits to children at their current nursery settings and handovers with key workers;
 - attend ISAR reviews for SEND children held in the summer term;
 - Parklands SENDCo contacts parents and works with the previous nursery setting to arrange further transition activities if required;
 - children starting Parklands from the adjoining children's centre visit the setting with their key worker for further transition time at school;
 - the offer of home visits;
 - weekly 'stay and play' sessions;
 - termly parent workshops to deliver information sessions regarding phonics, maths, transition to year 1;
 - ½ termly sharing of independent skills to promote at both home and school;
 - Reception parent notice board which is regularly updated;
 - parents evening twice a year;
 - opportunity for daily parent-teacher ad-hoc conversations;
 - 'Born to Read' events - invitation for parents to come into school at story time to listen to a story with their child;
 - Class Dojo;
 - end of year report to parents.



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Prime and Specific Areas of learning

Through all we do, we aim to provide the best possible start for our children in the Foundation Stage, by building the strongest foundations for future learning and development. We do this by placing a strong emphasis on the Prime Areas of Learning, as these are universal core aspects of early child development, which are fundamental for children to progress and succeed in the Specific Areas.

Prime Areas of Learning

Communication and Language

Physical Development

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Specific Areas of Learning

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design.

Communication and Language

Our curriculum at Parklands is underpinned by the development of effective **communication and language**, including the explicit teaching of expected and ambitious vocabulary and early literacy skills. This programme of study, therefore takes a higher proportion of our curriculum time, to ensure a wider level and depth of exposure. The development of speech, language, vocabulary and communication skills are at the heart of our planned curriculum.

This is in line with Development Matters 2021: *“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.”*



Parklands Communication Offer: Daily planned communication and language opportunities.

- Teaching literacy through '**Talk for Writing**' model, enables children to become confident and creative storytellers. Children learn language and vocabulary through memorable stories, internalising language patterns of stories which they go on to imitate and innovate to create their own stories.
- Alongside language rich texts chosen for Talk for Writing, a wide range of topic books supplied by the **Leeds Library Service** are available for children to access to support and enrich the development of topics.
- At Parklands we also teach **Drawing Club** which is focused on exposing children to extraordinarily rich language and vocabulary as well as nurturing our little ones' imaginations and enhancing their writing skills.
- '**Fab 5 stories**' – a selection of 5 core texts which are carefully selected for a range of purposes, that are read frequently during story time over the course of the ½ term. This ensures children are exposed to not only a multitude of different texts which may be selected to expand cultural or disability awareness, but also allows children multiple exposures to new language and vocabulary and the opportunity to internalise different language patterns.
- Robust approach to teaching vocabulary both through our curriculum and via interactions with staff using **Blanks Level Questioning**. Blank Levels of Questioning is a Language of Learning model that categorizes questions into four levels, moving from concrete to abstract, to develop a child's verbal reasoning and abstract language skills. Level 1 involves naming concrete objects and actions in the immediate environment, while Level 2 requires describing attributes. Level 3 moves to retelling and prediction, using a child's prior knowledge for abstract thought. Level 4 involves complex reasoning, problem-solving, and justifying thoughts, requiring a significant leap in abstract thinking. The model helps educators assess a child's understanding and appropriately support their language development.
- The re-development of our **classroom environment** has been designed with early communication development in mind. Our indoor classroom provides a mix of wide-open space for the development of movement, freedom of space for the imagination and play to flow, as well as small cosy spaces which are designed to make children feel comfortable and safe to talk. Lighting, colours and textures are chosen carefully to create a calming space. Our outdoor environment provides children with the freedom to take risks and challenge.
- Our skilled staff also provide the additional **language intervention: 'ELKLAN'** and '**Time for Sounds**' for those children who have been identified via assessment as requiring further support to develop age-related language skills. This runs alongside our topics/ themes and equips children with further language skills, as well as acting and pre and post teaching strategies. These small groups are regularly reviewed to ensure children get the maximum out of the discreet sessions.



- At Parklands, our highly trained staff have adopted the **4 comments to one question** method in which we interact with children. This ensures that children are not over-burdened or bombarded with questions when engaging in play. These comments may take the form of commenting, repetition, expansion or explanation before asking a question. In addition, our skilled staff are trained in **sustained, shared thinking**, to add value, foster and develop play as well as language, vocabulary and sentence structure.
- Weekly, our children access **ARTIS** sessions with their teacher 'Boom', which are communication and drama workshops. They bring the curriculum to life through songs, dance, movement and music, building children's confidence, self-esteem and resilience, as well as advocating the arts through learning.
- Daily story time ensures children are **read a story** to minimum twice per day. We believe children are entitled to listen to and enjoy a story at least twice a day, every school day, offering a range of skill development as they do so.
- Some of the Early Years support staff have experience in speech and language and can offer specific speech sound support if identified by a professional.
- For those who have an NHS speech and language plan in place, our **on-sight NHS Speech and Language therapist** offers direct work.

Personal, social and emotional development

Alongside communication and language development, personal, social and emotional development is key to unlocking a child's development and "is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development" (EYFS Statutory Framework). Our children at Parklands enter school with a range of additional needs, which many are underpinned by their personal, social and emotional development. To address this, in addition to quality first teaching, staff are trained to support children in many different ways to meet their needs. This ranges from children working in smaller groups to form friendships and learn how to be resilient, accessing multi-sensory activities, having a higher level of adult support during parts of the school day and direct work to support self-regulation and manage emotions in an appropriate way.

We recognise that it is essential to teach PSED lessons weekly due to meet demand, whereby we follow a progressive scheme that children can relate through via stories and activities. Our curriculum is responsive to children's needs, therefore is flexible to respond to issues arising or current worries or concerns, for example transition. Through direct teaching in lessons and in provision, language of feelings is modelled as are how this often feels 'inside' to equip our children with the vocabulary to enable them to express themselves.

Our children often start school with different life experiences, therefore look to school as a place of safety which is warm, offers comfort and security which meets our children's sometimes unmet needs. As staff we work hard to form positive relationships with children where they feel



safe, valued and equal. This is through positive daily interactions, play, and key worker time. In addition, we routinely follow the whole school behaviour policy to ensure all children are treated fairly and with respect, which is based upon restorative practice.

Physical development

Children start school with a wide range of physical abilities and experiences. We provide opportunities offered through play and exploration for progression of gross and fine motor skills to continue the development of children's core strength, coordination, stability, balance, spatial and positional awareness and agility. The purpose being, that before children are ready to write, read, concentrate and retain information, they need to develop the ability to practise crossing their 'midline' and continue the development of children's proprioception, vestibular and tactile senses. We offer a range of rich activities both indoor and outdoor in our environment, planned to specifically develop skills that children need to acquire or practise. This may be developing gross motor strength and coordination in their shoulders, elbow and wrist before they can hold and use a pencil effectively, or this may be developing fine motor skills of making a range of marks that are vertical, horizontal, circles, crosses, dots and dashes before forming letters.

Early Reading

At Parklands we aim to encourage a love of reading. We offer 'reading' in many forms throughout the school day. Reading for pleasure is a key feature of our early years practice, with all staff regularly sharing their love for books and stories. Within Literacy sessions, we use books as hooks into learning. These books are chosen specifically to develop vocabulary and comprehension skills, awareness and understanding of language patterns and are embedded in our provision through a range of supplementary activities. Through these stories and activities, children begin to internalise new vocabulary, language patterns and retell stories themselves. As mentioned above, to supplement these chosen texts we invest in the local library service and offer further reading around topics/ themes to broaden children's experiences and knowledge, ensuring access to fiction, non-fiction and poetry. In addition, we invest in 'Fab 5 Stories' which again are easily accessible for children to look at for pleasure, which have been thoughtfully selected and are read time and time again at story times over the course of the half term. These stories are selected for a range of reasons, be it rhyming/ rhythmic repeated refrains, traditional or twisted tale, the exposure of diversity of cultures and/or family dynamics, BAME lead characters or PSED/ wellbeing. All of these features are incredibly important to widening our children's understanding and life experiences, which is why a small selection of texts are selected to represent each area and are read, re-read and loved by all.

Phonics teaching begins in Reception, where children are exposed to daily teaching of Read Write Inc (RWI) synthetic phonics programme that ensures success in early reading, writing and phonics. Our highly trained reception staff, including Reception Phonics Lead, ensure a robust system



of daily teaching and learning of phonics gets our children off to the best start possible. Supplementary phonetically matched reading books and resources are used, as well as regular assessment of children's understanding and the monitoring of the teaching of phonics lessons.

In Autumn 1, staff also focus on developing speaking and listening skills via games in addition to phonic lessons, which lays the foundations for phonics, as many children start reception without these skills in place. The emphasis is to get these children attuned to the sounds around them and ready to begin developing oral blending and segmenting skills. As children move through reception, they quickly develop grapheme-phoneme correspondence (GPC) and segmenting and blending skills needed to decode and read words and simple sentences. By the end of the Summer term, we aim for all children to be confidently reading simple sentences, in line with the Early Learning Goal, whilst some may progress further.

We work hard to support parents to understand early reading skills and phonics and how to support their child at home to help them develop a love for reading. Children are encouraged to read at home regularly with their phonetically decodable books which are matched to their phonic knowledge in order for them to apply their learning with the aim of becoming successful, confident, fluent readers.

Writing

Children are taught 'writing' in a variety of ways. At Parklands we balance this teaching through literacy lessons and teaching and consolidation in the classroom environment. We advocate Pie Corbett's 'Talk for Writing' in Reception, which is an approach to teaching writing that encompasses a three-stage pedagogy: 'imitation' (where pupils learn and internalise texts, to identify transferrable ideas and structures), 'innovation' (where pupils use these ideas and structures to co-construct new versions with their teachers), and 'invention' (where teachers help pupils to create original texts independently). We find this strategy to teaching writing very successful for our children, which gives children an understanding of the structure and elements of written language. The story telling, regularly seeing adult modelled writing, proves extremely successful in sparking children's imaginations and love for writing too.

The classroom environment is carefully set up in such a way that throughout continuous provision, both inside and outside, there are many opportunities for children to mark make and write. Presenting writing resources in different areas of provision enables children to learn to write for a variety of purposes. Practitioners are skilled in recognising when to suggest mark making opportunities, for example: making road maps and labelling them in the construction area and writing shopping lists in the home corner. They often arise from successful interactions during play.

Most importantly, we celebrate and display our children's mark making and writing around the classroom, and specifically on children's individual WOW WALL.



Maths

Children's love for maths is continually fostered and developed through games, songs, rhymes and play using concrete manipulatives and pictorial structures and representations which are then rehearsed and applied within children's child-led exploration. In addition to these opportunities, we progressively teach a wide range of early mathematical skills following NCETM. This employs a mastery approach, which ensures children acquire a deep, long term, secure and adaptable understanding of the subject, where units of work progress through the year, with an emphasis on consolidating and building on previous learning.

High quality learning environments, intentional purposeful activities and meaningful interactions with adults allow children to consolidate and develop mathematical thinking. Children engage in daily meaningful mathematical learning opportunities to develop fluency, revisit key concepts and address misconceptions in meaningful ways. This is embedded in our daily routines, for example:

- Daily visual timetable – we talk about the 'parts' of the day and the 'whole' day
- Linear calendar – this illustrates the whole month and the events that occur, including: school days, weekends, holidays, special occasions, e.g. birthdays and festivals. Structured conversations, such as "today is ..., what was yesterday? What will tomorrow be?", "how many more days until's birthday?" "What happened yesterday?" "What is happening tomorrow?"
- 'Vote for your favourite' – the children vote for which story they would like to listen to. We count the votes to see which story has the most votes and which story has the least votes
- Self-registration – we use 10 frames to count how many children are in school each day, how many children are absent and how many staff are supporting us in class that day.

Wider curriculum

Our wider curriculum is taught through the areas of learning 'Understanding of the World' and 'Expressive Arts and Design'. Exciting, purposeful and contextual activities are carefully planned to ignite and extend children's natural curiosity as well as progressively build on children's skills, knowledge and understanding. For example, planning, designing and building a boat to sail across water enables them to think like a 'Scientist' and an 'Engineer' in DT as they explore a range of materials to test their ideas.

This further builds upon our curriculum communication focus, where children are encouraged to use subject specific language and terminology in foundation subjects, where this is supported and modelled by supporting practitioners. Our inclusive approach means that all children learn together, support one another and grow together: ***nurture, grow, succeed***.



Characteristics of Teaching and Learning – the key to succeed

“To learn well, children must approach opportunities with curiosity, energy and enthusiasm. Effective learning must be meaningful to a child, so that they are able to use what they have learned and apply it in new situations. These abilities and attitudes of strong learners will support them to learn well and make good progress in all the Areas of Learning and Development.” (Birth to 5 matters) We believe this is key to not only learning that takes place in Reception but beyond; the way children approach learning throughout their school career, which is why it is the key to succeed!

The behaviours children use in order to learn is what makes them successful life-long learners, which underpin children’s attitudes towards learning and future success. We foster, develop and empower children with these skills dispositions they need to be successful in the way they approach learning.

- Playing and exploring - **engagement**
 - Finding out and exploring
 - Playing with what they know
 - Being willing to ‘have a go’
- Active learning - **motivation**
 - Being involved and concentrating
 - Keeping trying
 - Enjoying and achieving what they set out to
- Creating and thinking critically – **thinking**
 - Having their own ideas
 - Making links
 - Choosing ways to do things



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Curriculum Impact

The impact of our unique educational setting, unique environment, unique curriculum, unique staff are our unique children. The impact of our curriculum can be measured by how effectively it helps our children develop into life-long learners who ***nurture, grow and succeed***. Parklands children are well-rounded, consensus individuals who make a valid contribution to our unique school and their community.

Our children have varied and diverse starting points. The individual progress our children make in Reception from their starting points is remarkable, which can only be attained through rigorous, thoughtful and continuous planning, implementation and assessment cycle. We have high expectations for all and ensure the best start children can receive in Reception, which quickly and progressively builds not only towards the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Reception year, but also over their educational career at Parklands.

By the time our children leave the foundation stage, our Early Years curriculum will have enabled them to:

- Achieve a good level of development and skills in readiness for future learning
- Demonstrate high levels of engagement with activities and learning
- Have secure phonic knowledge to enable them to make a good start in year one
- Have a good deep and secure understanding of the number system
- Have good communication skills to communicate effectively with peers and adults
- Form positive attachments and relationships with peers and adults
- Have an awareness of how to manage and control their own emotions; developing a positive sense of self.

We ensure that all children are given the best possible start to their education and they create memories and develop skills to have a successful school life!