



# E.Y.F.S

## at Sandcastles Children's Nursey

Health Context: Local health epidemic statistics inform us the life expectancy divide between different communities in our area is approaching 19 years! 1/5 of Lancashire's children have tooth decay and this is the most common reason for paediatric hospital admissions across Lancashire! May 24 local Health Visitors notice that fewer 26m old children can jump than 5 years ago.

EYFS profile context: Summer born white boys consistently remain the largest underachieving demographic within local schools. In line with Lancashire wide pattern local children's speech, communication and language skills are immature in over 50% of 2 year olds, for much of Lancashire this continues into later years. Maths development remains somewhat of an uphill battle. A fall in self-regulation skills has been observed in recent years. One of our feeder primary schools reported 16/60 children arriving in nappies for their first induction event in June 2023.

All aspects of development and learning in young children are interlinked. Children are born with brains and bodies which are **eager to learn** in increasingly complex and co-ordinated ways, given favourable conditions.

Different theorist use different terms but all agree for children to achieve 'Deep level learning' a.k.a 'Sticky Learning' a.k.a working within 'Zone of proximal development' requires the child to be like a fish in water, radiating vitality relaxation and inner peace. For significant learning to happen children need to feel **comfortable, happy & confident**.

Young children develop and learn best through **play and first-hand experiences** with the companionship of other children and of interested and supportive adults. **Learning must feel relevant to child.**

**Play is children's learning mode. It is neither easy to plan for, nor simple to support.** Sandcastles plans holistically using a flexible range of provocations, experiences, continuous provision and adult inputs to deliver our comprehensive curriculum. We introduce PreSchool children to the wider world through our 'Cooking' 'Beach' and 'Garden' clubs. Whilst the seasonal rhythm of our year repeats our planning varies widely responding to the interests and needs of the current cohort.

**Each child will experience our curriculum uniquely.** We provide extended periods of free flow indoor continuous provision empowering children to choose much of their 'subject' time table each day. With adult support (observation, reflection, planning) children can experience all areas of learning within any single continuous provision area, however for children to develop mastery exploring their agenda across a range of continuous provision areas adds depth, context and value.

**Internal aims and targets linked to local factors:**

- Children joining PreSchool class are toilet trained within one term.
- Children's Communication and Language skills are monitored and supported – typically 40-50%+ of baseline WellComms score green whilst over 80% of exit to school with a green level score.
- Self regulation –co-regulation, healthy habits, wider health, promoting value of sleep, meeting children's needs for physicality, diet and hydration – physical & blue/green spaces.
- All children leave us for school having mastered B-2-5 Range 5 Maths skills competently or with full EHCP / SEND transition celebrating their progress, the support we have provided and our assessment of continuing intervention needs.
- We share our knowledge with families and promote full body and Dental health from our initial 'all about me conversation' to our leavers parties. We use our internal tapestry portal and also our open tapestry account for this work.
- Children feel part of and custodians of nature, demonstrating and expecting respect, understanding and interest in the world around them.
- Induction into Sandcastles and transition into PreSchool is planned to meet individual child's needs. Relationships and well-being underpin all learning.

**Broader targets:** we work with **Birth to Five matters** and keep Early Learning Goals in mind. We use the B-to-5 ranges as a guide to adapt our provision and teaching to match the needs of each cohort to excite, inspire and equip children or their future.

**How do we put this into practice?**

**Our Explorers group 24-40m:** Our tuned in staff join children in their play, we also use daily short term adult led planning (max one planned adult led activity each day, ideally repeated within the week / fortnight) alongside continuous provision enhancement to introduce new experiences and ways of playing. We use the adult led focus plans to introduce new experiences / resources to children. Whilst each child has a designated key person our age phase teams meet each term to reflect on each child's development and agree our priorities for the term ahead.

**PreSchool 36-59m:** Our team engage in a responsive style of teaching and planning, with provision enhancements extending over the course of a week (or two) aiming to extend and harness children's interests whilst provoking leaps in their learning. We use a large white board to share our term long foci with parents and across our team. We use weekly provision plans to consider each week within each term. Our PreSchool team discuss learning opportunities with our 'club' leaders and whilst we don't follow a topic style pedagogy at times we find layering experiences can maximise learning e.g. if we're exploring Diwali our 'Cooking club' might make Indian food, 'Garden club' might look at fragrant herbs and spices whilst 'Beach school' might play with shadows.

	Sandcastles focus	Seasonal / Clubs	Parents
Autumn PreSchool	<p>Depends on the cohort... the PreSchool team led by Helen will outline their learning intentions (relevant to the group) and then build from there.</p>	<p>Noticing, Seasons, Harvesting, Bonfires, Halloween, Fireworks, Light up Lancaster, Diwali*, Hanukah*, Samhain*, Christmas.</p> <p>We lightly touch religious festivals presenting a respectful but broadly agnostic view where all faiths and cultures are welcome.</p> <p><b>Garden club:</b> Harvest and sleep. Sun flower – flower and seeds, apple tree harvest, bird feeders, empathy for plants – mimosa seeds</p> <p><b>Cooking club:</b> Attention and listening, sensory experiences, establish rhythm of session, link with apple harvest, building enthusiasm and cooking vocab</p> <p><b>Beach School</b> – safety, weather, tides, terrain, familiarity, literacy &amp; maths – patterns, listening walks, visual noticing skills.</p>	<p>Children learning to dress themselves.</p> <p>P/S Literacy workshop Sept</p> <p>Monthly Extending learning tapestry posts</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Sept - Listening walk (Literacy).</li> <li>2) Oct – talking about past experiences, decontextualised lang, verbal memory (Literacy).</li> <li>3) Nov – Rhyming (Literacy)</li> <li>4) Dec – fine motor (PD &amp; Literacy)</li> </ol>
Spring/Summer PreSchool	<p>Depends on the cohort... the PreSchool team led by Helen will outline their learning intentions (relevant to the group) and then build from there.</p> <p>Typically we will set out our outline vision of spring in the final week of Dec</p>	<p>Noticing – seasons, weather, cycles, dark-light, Bay light festival, growth, festivals – Burns night, Valentines, Mothers day, Pancake (shrove tues), Easter, Wray Scarecrows</p>	<p>Parent workshop – Maths Jan</p> <p>Monthly extending learning at home:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jan - Maths with home activity cards x 2</li> <li>• Feb – Maths with home activity cards x 2</li> <li>• March – depending on cohort may be ready to share more complex early literacy activities</li> <li>• April – school readiness – what key foundations</li> <li>• May – school readiness</li> <li>• June – school readiness</li> </ul>

Explorers – all learning is based on out relationship with children.	<p>Relationships and attachment</p> <p>Typically Sept and Jan are our main intakes of the year with many new children joining us. Over this term we stagger inductions to ensure children each receive extended periods of adult support whilst they start to feel confident and comfortable here. Our older children spend this term looking ahead to their promotion to PreSchool – visiting lots and slowly transitioning over to their new key people.</p>	<p>Noticing, Seasons, Harvesting, Bonfires, Halloween, Fireworks, Light up Lancaster, Diwali*, Hanukah*, Samhain*, Christmas.</p> <p>We lightly touch religious festivals presenting a respectful but broadly agnostic view where all faiths and cultures are welcome.</p> <p>Explorers age group do not routinely attend our ‘clubs’ instead our team support and inspire children to build their skills more individually through interactions in play and very short bursts of adult led teaching. Whilst we hold play in high regard as the most valuable learning mechanism for this age group we also value introducing children to new experiences and techniques – e.g. occasionally we deliver 1980’s style art / craft activities to introduce techniques and media to children.</p>	<p>Induction</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Prospective parent &amp; child tour</li> <li>2) Stay and play</li> <li>3) Key person and parent phone meeting</li> <li>4) Parents completing ‘Baseline’</li> <li>5) Series of short unaccompanied plays (1-5 usually)</li> <li>6) Key person termly assessments – WellComm &amp; broader development</li> <li>7) 2 year progress conversation with parents (2-4 months after joining)</li> </ol> <p>Children being promoted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent infor session &amp; tour of PreSchool hosted by PS team</li> <li>• Parent hard copy info summarising info</li> <li>• Visits to PreSchool during quiet periods of the day/week</li> <li>• Slow overlapping hand over of key people</li> </ul>
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## Sandcastles Curriculum

We constantly collaborate and define our curriculum. Our curriculum isn’t a written syllabus style document listing skills/ understanding children must master rather it flows from the termly conversations each age group team have considering the current children’s skills and interests and learning opportunities anticipated ahead.

Our curriculum is our unique mix of experiences, teaching interactions, skills and behaviours which Sandcastles delivers comprising:

- ✓ Effective & responsive use of continuous provision – with attuned adults joining children at play, skill development & character building opportunities available.
- ✓ Teaching interactions & our philosophy (Sustained Shared Thinking). Our balance of child led/initiated & adult initiated/extended/led.
- ✓ If relevant we use Weekly focused plans and or ‘clubs’ – why these have been designed, how they are delivered and what impact these have.

How our team put our curriculum into practice:

1: **Get to know all children** and specifically key children & their families. For children to achieve outstanding progress they **have to feel happy and relaxed** therefore building relationships and nurturing their confidence has to come first. The best practitioners understand child development and use this knowledge to their advantage e.g. if a new child appears to take joining nursery in their stride our **key people stay close regardless of not appearing to be 'needed'** with the intention of building deep relationships so that when inevitably the child decides the novelty of nursery has worn off after a few weeks the key person is well placed to tune in and help the child enjoy their day.

2: Team discussions planning our **continuous provision and activities to inspire and engage** current children. What worked last term or last year is rarely well suited to the next term of children.

3: Once we have met children and they have had chance to express their interests and skills our practitioners discuss and **define any group target key skills** we would like children to master over the coming term often this is not relevant within our Explorers class where planning needs to be much more individualised. Sharing these targets with parents also helps to communicate our expectations and open conversations with parents.

4. Individual key people hold their children's development and possible next steps in mind and design their interactions and activities to equip children to meet these more individually. We ask that key people briefly **document one learning experience per week** for each key child flagging these to inform termly assessments.

5: **We deliver our curriculum through our interactions with children.** We believe in PLAY. Research evidences that the deepest learning happens during **'tuned in' back and forth interactions** and when children are motivated to 'discover' and 'practice' things themselves. Whilst parents are children's first educators and our environment their 3<sup>rd</sup> educator our daily practice, conversations and manner are their second teacher. Pre-planned lessons can be inspirational but are unlikely to create eureka moments for young children.

6: Each term we spend time in conversation with colleagues reflecting on individual children's progress. This leads us to reflect on the efficacy of our continuous provision, teaching and interactions. This is where this cycle dips back to point 2 above. Our **continuous provision curriculum needs to evolve though the year** – e.g. construction resources – lego building or knotting string is an achievable PreSchool challenge in summer term before school whilst planks & larger easily joined bricks will be more suitable in autumn and in Explorers.

7: Each term key people meet with our SENDco/Manager to discuss any worries regarding individual children's progress.

**Example Induction process Explorers**

- 1) *Parent contacts nursery enquiring about a place – poss telephone conversation discussing child's interests and attendance needs etc*
- 2) *Parent and child invited to visit 1:1 with Manager, Parent given registration form and if enough info also given fee quote.*
- 3) *Parent returns registration form and requests attendance and start month*
- 4) *Judith / Helen contact parent to acknowledge receipt of registration form and discuss available place and start*
- 5) Key person assigned based on attendance pattern, age, existing relationships with family, key person's capacity to take on more key children.
- 6) Parent and child visit for **stay and play session with key person**, key person gives parent 'What to expect when' to complete at home and share as an on entry baseline. During this stay and play so much happens incidentally – parents get a feel for the nursery and how we speak to children, they witness our routines, witness your enthusiasm. They often like to know if you have children, your career experience and about other staff their child will get to know. During this session you will keep the focus on the child balancing the need to build a relationship with the parent and the child. During this session it can be very helpful if you explain the EYFS and that children learn through play e.g. by describing what the child is demonstrating and learning whilst playing today and how this is likely to develop over the coming 2 years.

- 7) **Parent and key person phone conversation** – All About Me
- 8) Child attends a series of **short sessions** building up as quickly as child is ready for to booked attendance. If child demonstrates not settling easily further short session / plan will be adapted.
- 9) Key person will **observe and assess development and interests constantly** in your head in play and start to design activities and experiences to engage progress.
- 10) Once child is settled (some children settle in a month others take longer) key person completes **WellComm Screening**.
- 11) Depending on when in a term a child joins or settles key person will either fully complete our **termly 'on track' / 'needs support'** or postpone until next term.
- 12) Once WellComm screening & on 'track / support' is complete key person will prepare **2 year check document** and **schedule a conversation with parent** (if you have concerns to discuss please ensure Judith / Helen accompanies this chat).

**2 year chat / discussions with parents**

We are honest

We are kind

We are respectful

We have high expectations of ALL children

We share knowledge and support parents