

EYFS – Nursery

Returning to school

The return of school saw the focus in Nursery being predominantly on the three prime areas of Development Matters: Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language and Physical Development. These prime areas are the basis of which further learning can be built. It was felt that these were the areas where most 'lost learning' would have happened. Opportunities for discrete assessments through play were planned so that 'gaps' could be quickly identified and lost learning could be recovered.

Children came back to school for shortened sessions which supported the transition from home to school. The sessions have been built upon and extended now that the children have joined Reception, supporting the transition into their new class.

PSE

All children came back to Nursery enthusiastically. The children were excited to be back, see their friends and teachers and adapted quickly to changes in routines, rules and safety measures that have been put in place. Children were introduced to the concept of a 'Class Bubble' and this was used as a tool to support the rebuilding of all relationships within the setting, which was a priority for the first two weeks of term. Carpet sessions were planned to support relationships, by reminding children of names of their peers and reflecting on their time in Nursery before lock down, using photographs and videos of children's prior learning. Opportunities for children to talk about their experiences during lockdown and what they missed most about Nursery were planned in smaller key worker groups. The smaller nature of the group and close relationship with their key person supported some children to reflect on 'lockdown' and verbalise their thoughts and ideas. The children's responses during this time were discussed in class teams and planning was influenced by the children's thoughts and comments. This saw the focus for provision being outdoor play and creative activities.



Physical Development

Practical activities to support self-help skills were planned to ensure a deeper understanding of the new, stricter rules around hand washing and staying safe whilst at Nursery. Activities such as 'Chasing away germs' and 'How germs spread' were taught during whole class carpet sessions. Children were shown the importance of hand washing and the use of hand gel by each having a pot with water and black pepper (germs). The children had the opportunity to see how, once they put on hand gel and touched the surface of the water, the black pepper would move to the edge of the cup, away from the hand gel. Through this first-hand experience the abstract concept of germs, became concrete for children and helped to develop a deeper understanding.

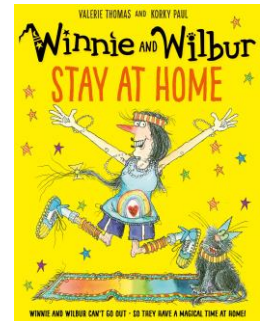
Opportunities for lost learning regarding gross motor and fine motor skills were also plotted. Mark making outside was a focus to ensure that children built upon and developed their gross motor skills when controlling equipment and tools on a large scale. The development of these skills will support the children when moving on to smaller, more controlled mark making.



Communication and Language and Literacy.

The focus for Communication and Language was the children as communication is a vital aspect of all learning. Staff were aware that some children may have spoken mainly in their home language whilst at home and this could possibly be the area of the curriculum with the greatest lost learning. Staff followed the children's lead during child directed learning and modelled language constantly, extending and bridging language gaps when needed.

The focus for Literacy for the two weeks was based around the story 'Winnie and Wilbur Stay Home.' This was a focus book that most children accessed as part of distance learning. It was decided to revisit this book as most children had previous knowledge to build upon and had already heard their Class Teacher read the story on the Storytime page on Seesaw. Children were also able to directly link and share their experiences of 'Lockdown' through this story as it discusses many aspects of lockdown and reinforces new safety measures such as washing hands. Children used this story to share their experiences such as:



"My daddy done exercise with me. Look my muscles!" (Anish)

"I made a rainbow with my sister. I showed you on the seesaw." (Sakina)

"We clapped because my dad has to drive the trains." (Suprajit)

Transition to Reception

Children were given the time and opportunity to discuss moving to their new class by having two weeks in a familiar classroom with a familiar, consistent teacher. The idea that children would be moving to a new class, with a new teacher was introduced through video messages, cards and photographs. Teachers recorded messages for their new classes and children responded by sending messages back.

Starting Reception

Children have transferred into their Reception Classes with ease. Staggered start times, separate classrooms (rather than double learning spaces) and demarcated outdoor spaces have ensured Class bubbles remain 'tight.' This will enable children to have access to a wider range of resources to support their learning and catch up on lost learning opportunities.

Gaps in provision have been identified and resources have been ordered to ensure the high quality range of provision is sustained now that double learning spaces have been divided.

A change to the assessment system for EYFS sees children's levels of Wellbeing and Involvement being tracked and assessed by class teachers. This will allow teachers to identify which children in their class have low levels of Wellbeing and Involvement which can then be addressed during year group discussions. Action plans will be developed to support these children as soon as on entry assessments have been completed. Targeting, tackling and raising low levels of wellbeing and involvement early on in the academic year will enable staff to support the children to develop a greater resilience and readiness for learning.

EYFS – Nursery transition to Year R

We have developed a transition procedure over time for all of our children and families which has been very successful. It has allowed us to reassure the families of our youngest children that we will do all we can to ensure that their child/ren is safe, happy and supported when they start at our setting. This transition procedure has included:

- Contact with myself and discussions about their child's development, strengths, barriers, etc.
- A meeting with the Executive Head to share the school prospectus
- Visits to the setting with the child
- Visits to the home or current setting by staff
- A planned staged transition
- Parents able to stay in classrooms to comfort distressed children
- Parents having twice daily contact with teachers

As we approached the 'wider opening of schools' in June, we knew that we would not be able to deliver the same package to the 196 children due to start in our nursery and fifth Reception class.

With consultation with the Executive Head and considering all aspects of the school's risk assessment it was agreed that myself and one of our nursery nurses would meet the 44 children (new to our school setting) due to begin in Reception in September. We met families outside in the nursery outdoor area. Families were briefed on the protective measures we would follow and all were happy to comply. Meeting the children at these visits gave us an opportunity to observe them, although briefly and to impart to families the essence and ethos of our school.

The decision was taken to bring the children back in September for the first two weeks into the classes they left in March and to the teachers that they had formed close relationships with. Our youngest children (two-year olds) attended for just one hour, the nursery children for 2 hours.

Following this valuable spell, the children were introduced to their new classrooms and their new teachers. Again, to support the transition of our Nursery children as they moved up to Reception, Faye our Nursery Year Group leader moved up with the children. This will give us continuity regarding planning and assessment for this group of children. Initial observations reveal that they are working well below the point we would usually expect as they begin Reception.

On 21st September, Reception 20/21 opened. Instead of having 5 classes split across three learning spaces, each class is in a separate room. This allows us to provide learning opportunities in a way more suitable to young children. Provision is set up on the carpet, at tables, in tuff trays as well as each class having a designated space outside of their classroom to allow provision to be accessed outside.

The first week the children have stayed until 12.00 p.m. the second week the children have eaten a school packed lunch in their classroom with their teachers and from the third week almost all children will be staying for a full day. At this point all classes will begin and finish at the same time. To ensure that teachers know each child and their corresponding adult, classes have arrived through different gates at staggered times. They have then been collected by their parents at the classroom door. Safeguarding always the priority.

The children have responded so positively to each of the steps with very few children having a 'wobbly' moment on arrival. Lunch time has also been a success. Parents have been so incredibly supportive.

Once the Reception children were attending, we began to plan how we could replicate in some way the transition for the 120 three-year olds. To maintain continuity for those children who will be returning to nursery for the next academic year, they returned to Meena in the Green room and will move into Red and Blue classes when they re-open. Again, our plan had to be within the bounds of the risk assessment. I consulted with my nursery team and we agreed that we would again meet parents in the nursery outdoor area. Each member of staff would meet one child and parent to discuss the child and observe them at play for an hour. Six parents attended with their children, we saw 18 families each day and had valuable face-to-face discussions with all of our parents. We observed a number of children that we have initial concerns about, most regarding speech and language needs. Four children we observed displayed language and communication needs.

The nursery team have now allocated the children to the four nursery classes and the returning children will move up on 30th September with the remaining children due to begin attending on 5th October. With the agreement of the Executive Head the nursery sessions have been reduced from 3 hours to 2.45 hours. This is to enable enough time for the nursery classrooms to be 'fogged' before the next group of children arrive.

Once the nursery children have all been to visit the setting, Meena and the team in the Green room will be free to meet with children and families eligible for the 15 hours free child care for two-year olds (FFE2). Many of these children are considered as vulnerable and as they are our youngest children and often find it difficult to settle/separate from their family.

The statutory framework for the EYFS details that assessment is shared by and with parents. This supports parents understanding of their child's expected development and provides an insight into a child's interests and the skills that they demonstrate when away from the setting. Previously we have produced a paper version which parents share and add comments to, supporting the assessment of the whole child. We needed to consider how we would be able to continue to do this with the reduced parental contact. We have purchased the assessment tracker system from Early Excellence which allows us to record our assessments and share these with parents electronically. We are able to report on the seven areas of learning, the characteristics of effective learning and also learning journeys. The tracker will support parents to also be made aware of their child's next steps, all supported with photographs.

Provision in early years has changed due to the need to thoroughly clean resources each day. However, staff have thought very creatively about how children can have the broadest experience.

Finally, we are in the process of sourcing a range of additional outdoor equipment to allow the children to work in the open air. This equipment will be funded by the Government's COVID additional funding grant. The equipment will include outdoor tables, tuff trays and stands and barriers to ensure bubbles do not mix.

EYFS - RECEPTION

Returning to school

Following the school closure, we felt it was important for the children to return to school in smaller groups so that they can positively integrate back into the classroom with their friends; teachers would have the opportunity to spend more time with children, getting to know how their time at home has been spent. On Monday 7th September 15 children from each class returned to school, with the other 15 returning on Tuesday 8th September.

Most children were very excited to return and see their friends and teachers again, and settled back in very quickly. It was very important for teachers to reassure the children that it was safe to be back in school, and understand why teachers were unable to come to school to teach them over the last few months. On their first day back, children took part in lots of discussion about what we have all been doing during our time at home, and why we have been away from school for so long. Many children were very aware of the virus and the need to socially distance, and were able to talk to their class about how practising good hygiene is very important to keeping the virus away. All classes were taken on a walk around the school to show them that we must now use a one-way system in the building, and that we have designated toilets only for children in our year group.

Teachers talked to their classes about being in a 'bubble'. In Reception, children stayed within their class bubble of 30, so they did not mix with children in other Reception classes. To help children understand this concept, we blew bubbles in the classroom and children popped them with their fingers. We talked about how bubbles pop when we touch them, and that is very similar to what will happen when children from other bubbles touch us, or if we touch children in another bubble.

Menaal in Class 3 explained to her class *"if we play with the children in another class then they will pop our bubble and then germs will come inside our bubble"*.

Keeping clean and healthy

To learn more about how we were going to keep ourselves safe from the virus, the children watched the programme 'Get Well Soon' on Cbeebies, where Dr Ranj, who explained what the virus was, how it spreads, and how to keep the virus away by not spreading germs. The children then took part in an activity they had done earlier in the year when learning about doctors as part of the 'People Who Help Us' topic. To demonstrate how easily germs spread, children took part in an activity using glitter to represent germs. They sat in a circle and teachers covered their hands in lots of glitter and then held hands with the child next to them. Children then continued transferring the glitter around the circle to see how germs pass around from person to person. By the time they got to the last child, the whole class was covered in glitter! Repeating the same activity again was a great way of reminding the children how germs spread. They then watched Dr Ranj show how to wash hands for 20 seconds so that we wash all the germs away properly.

Talking about our time at home

Over the two weeks the children spent in Reception, they took part in lots of opportunities to paint and draw about what they have been doing at home during the lockdown and in the summer holidays. This was a great way of encouraging children to open up about their time at home, and talk to their teachers about how they have been finding the last few months away from school and friends. Teachers were then able to identify any children who may have experienced loss of family members, children who have had a difficult time at home, and those who needed further support to positively integrate back into school.



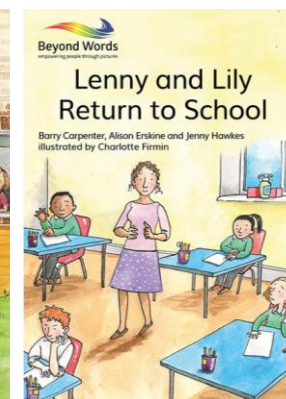
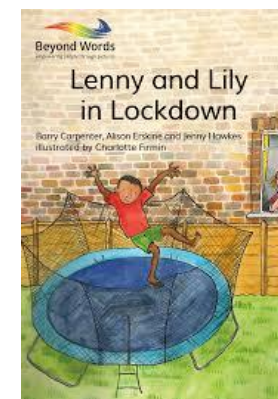
"I was at home with my family. My family was a bit sick. We played lots of games and I watched movies and played with my dollies".

(Zaynab, Class 5)

PSHE

The children took part in lots of circle time activities, where they talked about how they have found returning to school, what they have missed, and what they are enjoying about being back. Planning in lots of circle time activities supported the children's speaking and listening skills, and also helped with the social skills of holding a conversation with others. Children were learning again how to take turns when speaking, to listen to one another and respond appropriately. The circle time activities were also a lovely way to support children to re-establish important friendships through engaging in group discussions. Through such activities it was evident that some of our children's language skills and social skills had regressed, and that extra support and more opportunities for speaking and listening activities will need to be planned into teaching.

Children took part in visual literacy sessions through the use of wordless books. In their first week back at school, we looked at the books '*Lenny and Lily in Lockdown*' and '*Lenny and Lily Return to School*' by Prof Barry Carpenter, Ali Erskine and Jenny Hawkes. These are both online resources on the '*Books Beyond Words*' website, designed to give teachers a way of opening up conversations around SEMH (social, emotional and mental health) issues. The children were making meaning from information in the pictures, which led to them relating the story to their personal experiences. The books encouraged children of all abilities to take part in discussion and share their experiences with others.



"Lenny has to wash his hands because he was playing outside and now, he has to wash his germs off."

(Menaal Class 3)

"I washed my hands for 20 seconds when I watched the video at home on Seesaw. I know how to wash it properly now."

(Muhammad Class 3)

Outdoor Play

When playing outdoors, each class had a designated play area so that bubbles did not mix together. Classes were given the opportunity to play outdoors as much as possible so that children would be out in the fresh air, and have more space to explore and play.

Teachers took out a box of outdoor toys which included beanbags, hoops, quoits, bats and balls and stilts to support children's physical development. Each class had their own box so that the children from different classes would not share resources.



Each day teachers would also take out resources from inside as an extension of the indoor learning to support other areas of development. These would include a variety of construction resources such as large wooden blocks or Lego to build and create, water in buckets with large paint brushes to make marks on the ground, large paper on clipboards with crayons, large animals, small world cars and people for storytelling. Due to the restrictions in place, children were taken outside when taking part in singing activities. As the weather was lovely and warm, each afternoon classes would sit outside in their designated area and sing nursery rhymes, counting songs, and play ring games. The children also had twice weekly sessions of P.E with Coach Rich.

Assessments

Lots of practical maths activities were planned over the two weeks focussed on number to give teachers the opportunity to be able to assess the children's abilities in recognising numbers and counting amounts. Teachers worked with every child in small groups and were able to make a teacher assessment through practical activities that were engaging for the children.

Writing opportunities were planned throughout the two weeks. Children took part in class discussions about what they did over summer and wrote about their holidays. At the end of the first week, the children wrote about what they have enjoyed in their first week back at school, and in the following week they completed fact files about themselves for their new teacher. Children were encouraged to use their sound mats to support them with spellings, so that they could put their phonics knowledge into practise, and teachers could make a general assessment of which children have made progress in phonics over the last few months, and those who have regressed.



The assessment information collected was then passed on to the new Year 1 teachers so that they would be able to use it to inform planning.

Transitioning to Year 1

Children were first shown photographs of all the teachers and teaching assistants in Year 1, along with the classroom they would be located in. We felt this was very important for the children to know so that they were aware of all the changes to classroom locations, and also became familiar with all the different adults that would be helping them with their learning. Children made predictions about who they think their teacher would be, which created a great opportunity to incorporate maths into the session. Teachers recorded children's predictions in a tally chart and children counted the totals and talked about which teacher was voted for most and least. They were then told who their teacher was and looked at how many children predicted correctly. Each class met their new Year 1 teacher for a story time at the end of the day, where they were able to also ask questions to their new teacher and find out more about them. As parents are unable to come into the school building, teachers and teaching assistants made videos in their new classrooms, introducing themselves to the children and their families. These videos were posted on Seesaw so that all children and parents were able to see the classrooms and meet the new teacher.