

Through close partnerships with children and their families Lower Covey Montessori Nursery ensures that the best possible learning opportunities are offered to all children during their time at nursery.

## 1. Early Years Foundation Stage

At Lower Covey Montessori Nursery all children are supported in developing their potential at their own pace. Our 'key person' system enables us to ensure that opportunities offered to all children are tailored to meet their individual needs. All opportunities offered within the learning environment are developmentally appropriate and children's interests are included through child and parent input and staff observations.

The principles that guide our work within the nursery are grouped into four themes within the EYFS, the four themes work together, to underpin effective practice in the delivery of the EYFS. They cover all legal requirements of caring and supporting children. They are as follows:

### **A Unique Child**

Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured

### **Positive Relationships**

Children learn to be strong and independent from the base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person

### **Enabling Environments**

The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning

### **Learning & Development**

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected

## 2. Learning & Development

Learning & Development opportunities are focused around the seven (3 'Prime' and 4 'Specific') areas of learning within the EYFS. 'Playing & Exploring', 'Active Learning' and 'Creating & Thinking Critically' are the characteristics that underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner' (EYFS 2012). All staff promote positive attitudes to diversity and difference in all children, through teaching children to value different aspects of their own and other people's lives. Each area of learning supports specific aspects of learning. The seven areas of learning are:

### 2.1. Prime

To 'begin to develop quickly in response to relationships and experiences, and run through and support learning in all areas. The prime areas continue to be fundamental throughout the EYFS;

- 1) **Personal, Social & Emotional Development** – Making relationships. Self-confidence. Self-awareness. Managing Feelings and Behaviour.
- 2) **Physical Development** – Moving and handling. Health and self-Care.
- 3) **Communication & Language** – Listening and attention. Understanding. Speaking.

### 2.2. Specific

To include essential skills and knowledge. They grow out of the prime areas, and provide important contexts for learning;

- 4) **Literacy** – Reading. Writing.
- 5) **Mathematics** – Numbers. Shape, Space and measure.
- 6) **Understanding the world** – People and communities. The World. Technology.
- 7) **Expressive Arts & Design** – Exploring and using media and materials. Being imaginative.

Each Key Person will use observations and information gathered from children and their families to develop monthly individual learning plans. These provide a base for the months activities and are displayed within each Key Persons Group.

In addition to the 7 areas set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage (2012), Lower Covey Montessori Nursery also follows two further frameworks to support learning and development; these are 'Rainbow SEAL' and 'Letters and Sounds'.

### 2.3. Rainbow SEAL

Rainbow SEAL is a non-statutory National Curriculum that, in addition to the EYFS, further supports the social and emotional aspects of learning. It is organised in to 7 themes, that are sequenced, progressive and developmental, and are taught from the beginning of the academic year through to the end of it. Each theme is intended

to be introduced to all the children with the setting, engineering a whole school approach. The 7 themes are;

- 1) New beginnings,
- 2) Getting on and falling out, including;
- 3) 'Say no to bullying',
- 4) Going for goals,
- 5) Good to be me,
- 6) Relationships,
- 7) Changes.

#### **2.4. Letters & Sounds – Principles & Practice of High Quality Phonics (phase 1)**

A Primary National Strategy that ensures children are well-placed to read and spell words with fluency and confidence by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 1. It fosters children's speaking and listening skills by practitioners working with children at their current level of development.

There are seven aspects to the Letters & Sounds framework for learning, these are;

- 1) General sound discrimination – environmental sounds,
- 2) General sound discrimination – instrumental sounds,
- 3) General sound discrimination – body percussion,
- 4) Rhythm and rhyme,
- 5) Alliteration,
- 6) Voice sounds,
- 7) Oral blending and segmenting.

Letters and Sounds activities are planned to take place during large and small group circle times daily.

### **3. Observation, Assessment and Planning – For EYFS, Rainbow and Letters & Sounds**

Our system of observation, assessment and planning enables us to meet the national requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Rainbow and Letters & Sounds.

#### **3.1. Observation & Assessment (Unique Child)**

On-going assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Through information gathered from children and their families and staff at Lower Covey Montessori Nursery we are able to assess the progress of each child according to the EYFS, Rainbow and Letters & Sounds. These assessments are then used to inform planning for future learning opportunities for the children. Learning experiences are planned based on children's interests and specific needs. Through observation and close working relationships with families, staff can identify children's current level of development, along with any areas of concern that will be supported appropriately. Lower Covey Montessori Nursery gathers information/evidence in partnership with parents from the start date for each child.

The wide variety of observation and assessment techniques used allow 'everyone' (children, parents, families and staff) to be actively involved in the plans to support children's learning and development across all 3 frameworks (EYFS, Rainbow and Letters & Sounds).

#### **3.2. Formal Assessments**

Staff at Lower Covey Montessori Nursery complete 2 types of assessment, 1 - Progress check at age two, 2 – Transition to school or another setting.

##### **3.2.1. Progress check at age two**

Lower Covey Montessori Nursery's key persons complete a progress check for all children on or around their second Birthday as a requirement within the EYFS (2012). This assessment recognises a child's strengths and plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support learning. If there are significant emerging concerns, or an identified special educational need or disability, key persons will develop a targeted plan to support children's future learning and development, involving other professionals as appropriate.

##### **3.2.2. Transition into School or another setting**

We recognise the importance of a smooth transition from nursery to school. All Reception Teachers will have the opportunity to meet with the children starting school in September during the Summer Term providing parents inform Lower Covey Montessori Nursery of their accepted chosen school. Using the same format as the '2 year old progress checks' 'Transition Forms' are completed during the Summer Term and given to parents to pass on to their child's Reception Teacher, all parents are provided with the opportunity to input their own information on to these forms. This document will provide the school with as much information as possible on where the child is developmentally.

### **3.3. Planning (Positive Relationships & Enabling Environments)**

Careful planning is the key to making a child's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. It enables staff to build up knowledge of how each child learns and progress. All staff are responsible for planning for the children within their key group. Although plans are made for each week, these plans are flexible and are often changed to follow children's or the whole group's interests throughout the week.

Regular information is provided for parent/carers about the activities that are taking place within the nursery, this may be in the form of newsletter, handouts, photo's, notice boards, "All about You" books and children communication books, parent open evenings etc.

### **3.4 Play**

Play underpins the learning and development for all children. Children are offered opportunities to play spontaneously, with support from adults, and both indoors and outdoors. Play underpins the delivery of all the EYFS, Rainbow and Letters & Sounds and supports a child's intellectual, creative, physical, social and emotional development.