

NURSERY EDUCATION

Information for Parents & Carers

Areas of Learning and Early Learning Goals



4: Knowledge and Understanding of the World

At Burton Latimer Day Nursery we aim to provide the highest quality nursery care and pre-school education to ensure children are effectively prepared for the next stages in their development.

The Foundation Stage Curriculum (as laid down by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority [QCA]) covers a range of educational experience organised in six areas of learning: 1) Personal, Social and Emotional Development; 2) Communication, Language and Literacy; 3) Mathematical Development; 4) Knowledge and Understanding of the World; 5) Physical Development; 6) Creative Development. This information sheet covers one of the six areas of learning. For information on the other five please visit our website www.bldn.skynet.co.uk.

The information below details QCA text within the box, showing the Early Learning Goals that most children will achieve by the end of their reception year in school. This is followed by details of how we, in the Nursery, work towards these goals with progressive activities that form 'stepping stones', building on what children have already learned whilst continuing to practise, refine and use their previous learning.

Investigate objects and materials by using all of their senses as appropriate. Find out about, and identify, some features of living things, objects and events they observe. Look closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change. Ask questions about why things happen and how things work. Build and construct with a wide range of objects, selecting appropriate resources, and adapting their work where necessary. Select the tools and techniques they need to shape, assemble and join materials they are using. Find out about and identify the uses of everyday technology and use information and communication technology and programmable toys to support their learning. Find out about past and present events in their own lives, and in those of their families and other people they know. Observe, find out about and identify features in the place they live and the natural world. Find out about their environment, and talk about those features they like and dislike. Begin to know about their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people.

The area of Knowledge and Understanding of the World within the Nursery curriculum consists of opportunities for historical, geographical, scientific and technological learning. We aim to develop children's awareness of their immediate environment, far away places, different cultures and people and features of the natural and man made world. Children are always encouraged to look for similarities and differences, patterns and change.

Geography

This begins with children learning about the environment around them, their homes and the journey between home and the Nursery. We aim to develop an awareness of different buildings, why they have been built and their different uses, of open spaces, space and size, the pattern of seasons, the weather and the effects it has upon us and our everyday lives. We also examine natural features such as rivers, farm land, the sea and the life within it.

Children have first hand practical experience whenever possible. They are taken on outings, for example a housing estate behind the Nursery, to look at how houses are constructed, the patterns of the bricks, the shape of the roofs etc. Children are encouraged to talk about their own homes and to note similarities or differences between them. Whenever children have been on an outing staff reinforce their learning by using discussion about what the children have seen, by using books and posters, and by providing activities for children to record their observations. Children are able to use many mediums such as drawing materials, paint, clay, playdough etc. Children are also able to role-play situations they have observed, such as builders laying bricks etc.

Natural and Man Made Features

Through the range of planned themes and activities children have many opportunities to explore the natural and man made world. We are able to talk about different uses for buildings, about factories and shops, roads and railways etc.

There are many activities planned around the natural world. Many of our themes allow the opportunity to look at wildlife, birds, insects etc., not only from our immediate environment but also from other countries, and far away places.

NURSERY EDUCATION

Information for Parents & Carers

Areas of Learning and Early Learning Goals



4: Knowledge and Understanding of the World (cont 1)

The weather is discussed in great detail. We look at the different seasons and the effects different types of weather can have upon us and wildlife. Whenever possible children are encouraged to learn by first hand practical experiences, such as reaching a hand into the rain, melting ice cubes in warm water etc. Again the learning is reinforced by discussion, reading together (in this case about water) and by further planned activities.

Distance and Direction

These are concepts that are difficult for pre-school children to understand. Within the Nursery we begin by using the journey from home to Nursery. How did they get here? What did they see on the way? We talk about familiar journeys to the shops and supermarkets or to a relative. We discuss holidays and why we need aeroplanes and trains. Books and stories about journeys and far away places are used regularly.

History

Within the Nursery the concept of history is concerned with how different people lived and the passage of time. The daily Nursery routine marks time with children recognising snacktime, storytime etc. Children are encouraged within group time to discuss past and future events such as birthday parties etc.

Again the themes are used to plan activities to develop children's knowledge of past and present. For example 'Toys - Old and New' gave children the opportunity to look at toys their parents and even grandparents played with. They were then able to compare them with their own toys and to look for similarities and differences. Photographs are taken regularly of the children and displayed around the Nursery. These provide the opportunity for discussion on how much they have grown, clothes they used to wear, and how much they have changed.

Science

The curriculum for science is concerned with children being able to ask questions, to investigate and to solve problems, and to observe. Children are encouraged to be curious about how things work and why. Activities are carefully planned and provided to allow children to predict what is likely to happen next. They are able to carry through the activity and to find out the outcome for themselves.

Children are also encouraged to sort, classify and to make comparisons. There are many opportunities to sort and classify both natural and man made materials. Initially children will be able to sort one item at a time but will move on to sort two items such as red dinosaurs or pink shells.

Investigating and Observation

Children are encouraged to investigate through first hand practical experiences. A wide range of natural and man made materials are available to children at all times. Activities are carefully planned to allow children to use all their senses. There are many opportunities for children to investigate and observe, within the Nursery, and the immediate outside environment. Children have access to magnifying viewers, balancing scales and a giant thermometer to observe and record findings. A tropical fish tank and timber plant troughs allow children to observe growth and change.

Technology

Technology is used within the Nursery to promote and support children's learning across the curriculum. A computer desk, multi-media computer and colour printer are available to children at all times. Computer programmes are available for all ages and stages, enabling even the youngest children to master mouse skills and manipulation. The programmes for older children support learning in all areas, but particularly language and literacy and mathematics.

NURSERY EDUCATION

Information for Parents & Carers

Areas of Learning and Early Learning Goals



4: Knowledge and Understanding of the World (cont 2)

Children have access to a listening station consisting of a tape recorder and two pairs of child size headphones. A range of pre-recorded stories are available to children to aid their imagination and listening skills.

Within the Nursery videos are used to support themes and activities, for example children were able to watch extracts of 'The Lion King' when we were discussing Africa and The Jungle.

To further aid technology skills, activities are carefully planned to allow children to design and construct models, to be able to cut and join, to question and investigate. Everyday artefacts, some multicultural, are used to aid children's investigation skills. We also use cogs and wheels, hinges, colour prisms etc. Children are given time and space to investigate freely for themselves with an adult available to support and answer questions when necessary.

The Extended Curriculum

As with the other areas of learning an extended curriculum for Knowledge and Understanding of the World is planned and delivered for four year olds. This allows children to stretch their thinking and investigation skills still further. Children are able to complete simple experiments under supervision and to record their findings through drawing, painting and model making.