

# **Mandeville Primary School**

A Curriculum For Learning: Early Years

2026-2027



## **Aims**

At Mandeville Primary School, we are committed to ensuring that we meet the needs of all our pupils through meaningful learning. Our curriculum aims to be ambitious and to build on what children know and can do in order to support their progress. We recognise that pupils develop at their own rates and in their own ways. We aim to support children in developing, consolidating and deepening their knowledge, understanding and skills across all areas of learning. In particular, we have a key focus on ensuring that pupils acquire a wide vocabulary, communicate effectively and secure a knowledge of phonics, which gives them the foundations for future learning.

## **Requirements**

We meet the aims of the early years foundation stage (EYFS), ensuring appropriate implementation of the 'Statutory Framework For The EYFS Framework' and 'Development Matters'. We use these statutory and non-statutory documents to support our curriculum planning and assessment. As a result, the content of our curriculum is appropriately planned and sequenced to ensure effective progression in the 7 areas of learning:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development
- literacy
- maths
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

## **The unique child**

Every child is unique and each individual brings with them something different to school, including backgrounds, needs, interests and experiences. At Mandeville, we respect and encourage this through the variety of opportunities we provide. We want to get to know each and every child, and this process begins before he/she even joins our school. This information drives our curriculum and allows us to plan for individual needs and interests.

Parents/carers are encouraged to complete the 'All About Me' booklet before their child starts school and to send in 'Magic Moments' observations over the summer.

During the summer term, before a child starts school, we undertake pre-school visits, home visits and school visits. We aim to meet each child at least two times before they join Mandeville.

## **Our approach**

At Mandeville, we value all of the different ways that children learn. We teach through a mixture of whole class, small group and 1-1 teaching, as well as through adult-directed and child-initiated activities. Adults carefully plan for learning based on observations and next steps, as well as teach key skills or address gaps identified in learning.

Children learn from their environment, experiences and activities. We provide opportunities to develop pupils' attitudes and behaviours through the key characteristics of effective learning:

- playing and exploring
- active learning
- creative thinking and thinking critically

## **Enabling environments**

Our indoor and outdoor classrooms are carefully planned to enable, encourage and promote learning for all of our children within rich environments. Our recently refurbished outdoor area has been designed to support all areas of learning. Through careful observations and interactions with individuals (following the SHREC approach), the physical environment and equipment provided aim to meet the current needs and interests of children, as well as allow them to practise, rehearse and consolidate key skills. Each pupil is able to choose and direct their own learning. Time is spent at the beginning of each year teaching children how to use all areas of the classroom and to show possibilities for learning.

### **Phonics and reading skills**

At Mandeville Primary, we teach children to read systematically by using synthetic phonics. We follow 'Smart Kids Letters and Sounds – The Code', which is an accredited systematic, synthetic phonics programme. Children start their phonic journey in Nursery where they are taught to listen to and tune into sounds. As pupils move into their Reception year, they begin learning phonemes and graphemes. Children are taught how to blend and segment, setting them on the start of their reading and writing journey. Pupils take home books closely matched to their phonic knowledge so they can practise. Children should be able to read these books independently as their phonic skills grow. In Reception, pupils also take part in weekly guided reading sessions.

### **Maths skills**

We believe that maths is everywhere and children are constantly rehearsing and practising number skills. Pupils are introduced to different mathematical concepts through short whole class and small group sessions. Planning is based on the Herts for Learning 'Essential Foundations for Counting' resource and the 'Reception Essential Maths' materials. This leads on to what children will be learning throughout the school.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

We follow the 'Coram Life Education' scheme to support pupils' personal, social and emotional development. Key skills are taught through adult directed activities and through interactions with children throughout the day. Adults are constantly modelling and encouraging these skills.

### **Understanding the world**

To support children's understanding of the world, we follow the Emmanuel Project (RE)'. We learn about various festivals and celebrations throughout the year, including harvest and Christmas. We also visit the local church.

### **The hidden curriculum**

Our curriculum supports the development of children's character, including key values. This involves developing positive attitudes to learning through the use of our growth mindset approach and 8 learning powers:

- Have a go
- Don't give up
- Keep improving
- Concentrate
- Be curious
- Use your imagination
- Be co-operative
- Enjoy learning

We have identified the following skills and attributes to be of the utmost importance for our children. They are central to the vision and ethos of our school:

- To develop an awareness of their own identity
- To develop respect for people and property
- To be accepting of others
- To develop a sense of responsibility
- To develop confidence and resilience
- To develop skills to learn independently and collaboratively
- To develop good manners, understanding how to be polite and kind
- To develop a rich and varied vocabulary
- To develop a love of reading
- To develop a sense of community
- To become lifelong learners

## **Experiences**

At Mandeville, we know children will bring a whole range of experiences with them to school every day. Our aim is to celebrate and enhance these.

Throughout the year, we take part in themed days and weeks, and go on visits both within the local community and beyond, as well as welcome visitors into our school. We believe in providing children with new experiences beyond those that they may have had at home. This involves knowledge of each child and their family, and ensuring that experiences are carefully linked to the developmental age of the children.

## **Planned themes**

At Mandeville, the children are at the heart of our curriculum. We are keen to follow their interests and needs. Experiences are carefully planned for and the table below shows some of the themes we may cover throughout the year.

| <b>Term</b> | <b>Key events</b>                                          | <b>Nursery</b>     | <b>Reception</b>         |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Autumn 1    | Season - Autumn                                            | All about me       | Who am I?                |
| Autumn 2    | Diwali<br>Christmas<br>Bonfire Night                       | Light and dark     | Our changing world       |
| Spring 1    | Season - Winter<br>Chinese New Year                        | People who help us | Tell me a story          |
| Spring 2    | Season - Spring<br>Easter<br>Holi<br>EID<br>World Book Day | Tell me a rhyme    | Tell me a story          |
| Summer 1    | Season - Summer                                            | Changes around me  | The world around me      |
| Summer 2    |                                                            | Animals            | Journey around the world |

## **Curriculum planning (based on 'Principles of Planning' (Herts for Learning))**

Integral to our curriculum is how we assess what children know, understand and can do, as well as take account of their interests and dispositions to learn (characteristics of effective learning). We use this information to plan children's next steps in learning and to monitor their progress.

At Mandeville, we believe that effective planning is derived from three main principles:

- it is purposeful
- it is responsive and child-centred
- it is sequential and builds upon what children can do

Planning that reflects these principles will ensure that children receive and experience a curriculum that encompasses and invites learning across all areas. It will enable children to develop holistically and establish positive attitudes to learning such as:

- resilience
- perseverance
- motivation
- high levels of involvement

### **Planning that is: Purposeful**

Planned learning experiences should be as a result of rich discussions and collaboration with all adults and children. Any written plans should be concise, flexible, and adaptable to meet the range

of differing needs. The potential learning of planned activities or enhancements to the continuous provision in the learning environment should be understood by all involved in teaching children.

Purposeful planning should:

- involve everyone that knows the child – including staff, parents/carers and children
- be relevant, clear, concise and manageable
- be informed by what adults know children can do and what they need to learn next
- engage, enthuse and excite children so that they immerse themselves in learning experiences across all areas of learning
- focus on knowledge and skill development

#### Planning that is: Responsive and child-centred

Each child is unique and their individual needs must be considered when planning daily experiences. Staff must be aware of individual children's stage of development and have a clear view of their developmental goals. Consequently, planned responses should be based on individual children's learning needs and interests.

Responsive planning should:

- be flexible
- create exciting, and challenging learning experiences that facilitate learning and nurtures independent learners
- allow for sufficient child initiated learning (CIL) that provides opportunities for children to practise, rehearse and consolidate taught knowledge and skills
- take into account adult deployment and interactions during both adult-led sessions and CIL to enable progress in all children's learning, regardless of their background, circumstances or needs
- acknowledge, incorporate and build upon previous learning and reflect current interests and fascinations of the children
- include enhancements that motivate and excite children enabling them to pursue their interests and revisit taught knowledge and skills
- meet young children's developmental needs and address gaps in learning
- reflect and support the development of the characteristics of effective learning
- ensure the environment reflects the needs and interests of all children
- follow children's interests and be tailored to suit individual learning styles

#### Planning that is: Sequential and builds upon what children can do

A robust understanding of each child's knowledge, skills and attitudes should inform the professional judgement about how individual children learn best. This information informs planning that supports individual children's progress across all areas of learning by providing activities that challenge them to take the next step in their learning and development. This is enabled by opportunities for children to practise, rehearse and consolidate new knowledge and skills to effect long-term memory.

Sequential planning should:

- start by taking into account children's prior knowledge, understanding and skills
- be based on assessments of children, knowledge around their gaps in learning and their developmental needs
- effectively use children's interests as a context to build upon and deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills
- ensure adult led learning is playful, inspiring, and motivates children to engage in activities that extend learning and development
- ensure the context of the EYFS curriculum is taught in a logical progression reflecting the needs of the cohort and individual children

#### **Teachable moments and next steps**

Adults are constantly observing children, acting on teachable moments when they arise. Staff aim to move learning on through 'building on learning'. Adults will observe children – looking at what they are doing, who they are with, where they are and what they are saying. Through sustained shared thinking, children's learning is brought on and new vocabulary is introduced. Adults will look

at what skills they have observed, what they have noticed about a child's learning and how it can be developed further. This may be through an adult led activity, instant teaching or through the enhancement of the environment.

### **The role of the adults**

Adults are key in enabling children to achieve their full potential. Through careful observation and interactions, in both adult directed and child initiated learning, staff are able to support and guide children in their learning, as well as provide appropriate levels of challenge. Our adults will:

- Safeguard children at all times
- Provide a safe, secure and caring environment
- Form positive relationships that support, inspire and challenge
- Know each child as a unique individual
- Support and promote the use of our eight learning powers
- Foster and nurture each child's self-confidence and self-awareness
- Be good role models
- Have high quality interactions
- Encourage independence
- Listen to children
- Promote talk and vocabulary
- Foster a love of reading in children
- Be flexible and follow the interests of the child
- Understand the importance of play
- Make observations and assessments that inform future planning and learning