



CURRICULUM POLICY

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Curriculum Intent

The Hall School Nursery offers a broad and balanced curriculum that responds to the needs of its pupils and the wider school community. We are committed to ensuring that all children feel safe, happy and supported in their learning and development.

Our curriculum for children aged 0–5 years is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework. However, it also seeks to go beyond the statutory requirements to provide rich and meaningful learning experiences that enable every child to reach their full potential.

We are committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion throughout our curriculum. Protected characteristics are reflected in our approach to teaching and learning, helping children to develop an understanding of fairness, respect, acceptance and the value of individual differences.

The nine protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are:

- **Age**
- **Disability**
- **Gender reassignment**
- **Marriage and civil partnership**
- **Pregnancy and maternity**
- **Race**
- **Religion or belief**
- **Sex**
- **Sexual orientation**
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Through our curriculum and everyday practice, we aim to foster an inclusive environment in which every child and family feels valued, respected and represented.

We want children to:

- Form secure attachments with trusted adults and build strong friendships with peers
- Develop rich communication and language skills through rhymes, stories and a love of books
- Express themselves creatively in art areas where process art and self-directed exploration give autonomy and confidence
- Build physical strength, coordination and resilience through daily active play indoors and outdoors
- Understand the world around them through meaningful experiences such as growing plants, and cooking
- Gain independence through real and purposeful tasks such as helping with snack, gardening and tidying
- Develop curiosity and problem-solving skills through open-ended play, exploration and experimentation

Our intent is that children leave The Hall school Nursery as confident communicators, creative thinkers and resilient explorers with a joy for learning. They will have a strong sense of self, pride in their achievements and the skills they need for the next stage of their journey.

Our Golden Threads

Our curriculum is shaped by six golden threads. These threads run through everything we do, from the way we greet children at the door to the opportunities we provide in play, routines and the wider community. They make our curriculum unique and ensure that every child feels secure, inspired and able to flourish.

Belonging

Children feel that they are part of something bigger than themselves. We build belonging through strong key person relationships, predictable routines and warm welcomes. Displays reflect children's own work, photos of their families and their voices. Links with the community, such as visits to the local community and welcoming local people into nursery, help children see themselves as valued members of society.

Wellbeing

Emotional and physical wellbeing are at the centre of our practice. We create calm, unhurried routines, cosy spaces and opportunities for rest as well as energetic play. Adults support co-regulation through comfort, naming feelings and offering strategies to calm. Outdoor play, healthy food and daily opportunities for movement strengthen children's sense of balance and physical confidence.

Communication

Language and communication are woven throughout the day. Nursery rhymes, rhymes and book-based learning give children the rhythm and joy of words. Adults model rich vocabulary in play, stories and routines. We value children's voices, whether through babble, gesture, words or storytelling, and give them space and time to be heard.

Curiosity

We nurture children's drive to explore, experiment and ask questions. Open-ended resources, loose parts and sensory play invite investigation. Practitioners notice what fascinates children and extend it through talk, stories and new experiences. Curiosity also means encouraging children to look beyond their immediate world through visitors, outings and community projects.

Independence

Children are given real and meaningful opportunities to do things for themselves. From feeding, dressing and tidying in the early years to cooking, gardening and taking on daily responsibilities, independence builds confidence and pride. Adults step back when children can succeed on their own and step in with encouragement when needed.

Movement

Movement is essential for learning, regulation and joy. Children climb, balance, run, jump, dance and dig every day, indoors and out. We provide equipment and space for active play as well as fine motor experiences such as dough, threading, sewing and real tools. Movement is linked to self-expression through music, drama and dance.

How the Golden Threads Work Together

These six threads are interwoven across our curriculum. A child painting in the art area is exploring creativity but also developing independence and fine motor skills. A child digging in the garden is learning about the world while also building curiosity, belonging and movement. The golden threads help us ensure that every experience is rich, connected and meaningful.

Curriculum Implementation

At The Hall school Nursery our curriculum intent is lived out through daily practice. Implementation is not about delivering a rigid timetable or scheme. It is about the quality of our environment, the depth of our interactions and the richness of the experiences we provide. Every moment of the day, from greetings at the door to mealtimes, play, outdoor learning and story sessions, is part of the curriculum.

The Environment

- We see the environment as a co-teacher. Spaces are calm, welcoming and rich in invitations to play
- Natural materials, loose parts and open-ended resources encourage creativity, curiosity and independence
- Art areas provide spaces for process art where children direct their own exploration using a wide range of materials
Displays reflect children's work, photos of their families and their words
Outdoor provision includes space for running, climbing, cycling, digging, water play and large-scale
Construction

Routines and Care

- Routines are predictable, calm and unhurried. Arrival, mealtimes, rest and transitions are opportunities for connection and communication
- Care routines are rich learning opportunities. Adults narrate what is happening, model language and involve children in the process
- Snack and mealtimes are social, with children helping to serve and tidy food
- Children take responsibility for small tasks that build independence such as pouring drinks, watering plants or setting tables

Interactions

- Adults are present, attentive and responsive. We listen deeply, follow children's interests and extend learning through sensitive talk
- Communication is prioritised through nursery rhymes, rhymes, storytelling and high-quality picture books daily
- Adults comment on play, model and scaffold vocabulary in context and give children time to express themselves
- Co-regulation is central. Adults name feelings, offer comfort and teach calming strategies such as breathing or movement breaks Interactions are respectful, treating children as capable partners in their learning

Experiences and Opportunities

- Language and stories: daily story times, rhyme sessions, puppetry, props, role play and small world play build communication and a love of books
- Creativity: children explore self-expression through art ateliers, music, movement, drama and process-based projects
- Physical development: daily opportunities for large-scale movement indoors and outdoors, and fine motor activities like dough, threading, mark making and real tool use
- Nature: we grow plants, and encourage wildlife in our lovely garden
- Curiosity and problem solving: open-ended materials, loose parts and project work allow investigation and experimentation. Adults extend curiosity with open questions and new challenges

Staff Practice and Professionalism

- Staff are reflective practitioners who observe carefully, notice children's needs and respond thoughtfully
 - We use planning to guide experiences but remain flexible, following emerging interests
 - Staff development is ongoing with regular opportunities for professional learning, reflection and collaboration through daily meetings.
- The key person role underpins all practice so every child has a trusted adult who knows them deeply

How the Golden Threads Run Through Implementation

- Belonging: predictable routines, family photos, community connections and welcoming spaces
- Wellbeing: cosy corners, calm transitions, co-regulation strategies, nutritious food and active play
- Communication: songs, rhymes, stories, talk-rich routines and attentive listening
- Curiosity: open-ended play, project work, experiments and exploration of the local area
- Independence: self-care routines, real responsibilities, choice in play and purposeful tasks
- Movement: daily outdoor play, active indoor opportunities, fine motor strengthening and expressive movement

Implementation in Practice

A day at The Hall school Nursery is full of curriculum in action. A baby being rocked while their key person softly sings is experiencing belonging, wellbeing and communication. A toddler pouring their drink at snack is developing independence, coordination and confidence. A preschool child painting freely in the art area is building creativity, autonomy and problem solving. Every moment connects to our ethos and our golden threads.

Curriculum Impact

The impact of our curriculum is seen in the confidence, curiosity and joy of our children. We know it is working when children arrive eager to explore, when they show pride in achievements and when families tell us their child feels happy and secure. They achieve highly for their age and show confidence and self-control in their social skills. They are eager to learn and have Cultural Capital ensuring they are well prepared for their next stage of education. Impact is not measured only by assessment but by daily evidence of progress, independence and wellbeing.

Children's Learning and Development

- Children form strong attachments with their key person and build friendships with peers.
- They show they belong by taking part in routines, celebrating with others and contributing to nursery life
- Communication develops rapidly. Children join in with rhymes and stories, share ideas in play and begin to ask and answer questions. By preschool they use talk to solve problems, retell stories and communicate with confidence in small and large groups
- Creativity shines through process art, music, role play and movement. Children learn that their ideas matter and that there are many ways to express themselves
- Physical development is evident in climbing, running, balancing and tool use. Fine motor strength grows through dough, threading, painting, drawing and real tasks such

as cooking and gardening

Children develop independence by serving food, tidying resources, dressing themselves and taking on real responsibilities

- Curiosity is visible in the questions they ask, the experiments they try and the way they investigate the world
- Wellbeing is shown when children regulate emotions with support, seek comfort when they need it and begin to use strategies to calm

How We Know It Works

- Daily observation and reflection guide planning. Practitioners notice what children are doing, record progress and adapt provision
- Progress is shared with families so home and nursery learning are connected
Staff reflect together on learning journeys and adapt the environment, routines and opportunities
Community feedback shows positive effects of our links, such as children talking proudly about flowers they have grown

The Difference for Children

By the time they leave The Hall school nursery, children are:

- Confident in themselves and proud of achievements
- Skilled communicators who enjoy stories, rhymes and talk
- Curious learners who investigate and solve problems
- Creative thinkers who express ideas through art, movement, music and play
- Physically capable and developing healthy habits for life
- Independent in self-care and eager to take responsibility
- Emotionally secure, able to recognise feelings and beginning to regulate themselves
- Reading and writing simple words

Longer Term Impact

Our curriculum prepares children for school and for life. They leave with a love of learning, the ability to form relationships, the resilience to try again and the independence to make choices. They carry the values of belonging, wellbeing, communication, curiosity, independence and movement into the years ahead.

The EYFS Curriculum

We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum (updated September 2025). This sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five. All children have the opportunity to learn through play, supported by experienced and qualified teachers and staff, in an inclusive, safe and secure environment with enjoyment and challenge. As the children grow, learning moves towards focused, adult led sessions in preparation for more formal schooling.

The EYLog is used to keep parents informed daily and involved and captures evidence of each child's learning journey. Each child's educational programme is tailored specifically for them and the high staff/pupil ratio facilitates this. We ask parents to support their child's learning throughout their time at the school and forge a strong partnership with us.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly

important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Each of these is broken down into...

- Communication and Language experiences are about:
 - Listening, attention and Understanding
 - Speaking
- Personal, Social and Emotional experiences are about:
 - Self-Regulation
 - Managing Self
 - Building Relationships
- Physical Development experiences are about:
 - Gross Motor Skills
 - Fine Motor Skills
- Literacy experiences are about:
 - Comprehension
 - Word Reading
 - Writing
- Mathematics experiences are about:
 - Number
 - Numerical Patterns
- Understanding the World experiences are about:
 - Past and Present
 - People, Cultures and Communities
- Expressive Arts & Design experiences are about:
 - Creating with Materials
 - Being Imaginative and Expressive

All the areas are delivered through a combination of planned, purposeful activity and opportunities for free play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. We aim to harness children's natural curiosity and motivation, and to capitalise on their strengths and interests in order to promote positive attitudes to learning. We encourage all children to be independent, confident and resilient and to develop effective communication skills. These attributes will provide a strong foundation for future learning.

We very believe that children learn best when they are happy and secure. The number of children in each key group is limited so that each child receives the maximum attention and care possible from their key worker. Children are encouraged to be self-expressive and feel confident in themselves as

an individual. We slowly introduce the babies and toddlers to the older children and adults in the school. Children are not only given the opportunity, but are also encouraged to communicate and interact with the other children whilst being supported by their key worker.

Development Matters offers a top-level view of how children develop and learn for all early year's practitioners. The guidance can help meet the requirements of the EYFS Framework.

Active Learning through Play

We recognise that young children learn best when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning through play.

In the EYFS setting, practitioners provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities, inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences to support children to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity and help to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts. Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding.

Children are encouraged to eat a healthy diet and the importance of a healthy lifestyle is taught at an age-appropriate level. Toilet training is introduced when the child is ready, and parents and school work together to devise a plan to suit the child's needs. Children are encouraged to be independent within the setting, dressing and undressing when able as well as identifying their own needs.

Read Write Inc. - Our Phonics & Reading Scheme

We teach phonics and reading using the Read Write Inc. scheme, developed by Ruth Miskin. It is used by more than a quarter of the UK's primary schools and is designed to create fluent readers, confident speakers and willing writers.

Reading opens the door to learning. A child who reads a lot will become a good reader. A good reader will be able to read more challenging material. A child who can read more challenging material is a child who will learn. The more a child learns, the more he or she will want to find out.

Throughout RWI children will:

- develop their language structures;
- increase their vocabulary;
- begin to distinguish between sounds in words;
- speak clearly and audibly;
- become familiar with rhyme, rhythm and alliteration;
- listen attentively;
- explore and experiment with sounds and words;

Activities to support learning in Phase 1 include:

- storytelling;
- singing songs;
- listening to rhymes and repeating patterns and refrains;
- playing alliterative games;
- using creative language in role play, drama and dance;
- identifying sounds in names, words in the environment etc.

PROGRESSION

Progression in EYFS is important because it ensures children are not just “doing activities”, but are systematically developing the foundations they need for future learning and life. Below shows the developments by age that we expect to see from our pupils, divided into areas.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

0–2 Years

What we want children to learn and experience

- Form strong bonds with their key person through consistent and loving care
- Feel safe, secure and comforted in the nursery environment
- Express needs and feelings through cries, gestures, sounds and early words knowing they will be understood
- Relax into routines such as feeding, nappy changing, sleeping and play
- Anticipate familiar routines like snack time or bedtime songs
- Gain pleasure from face-to-face play such as peekaboo, clapping games and row row row your boat
- Show curiosity about other babies by looking, smiling or reaching out
- Develop confidence to explore when a trusted adult is close by
- Recognise their own name and familiar voices
- Enjoy spaces that feel calm, cosy and homelike

How we support this

- Allocate a consistent key person who builds a close bond with the child and family
- Welcome every baby with an individual greeting to create belonging
- Provide comfort items, family photos and cosy corners for security
- Respond warmly to all communication including cries, babble and gestures
- Keep routines predictable and unhurried with plenty of time for connection
- Use naming and narration during care routines
- Offer treasure baskets, sensory play and soft play for shared exploration

Progression

In the earliest years babies move from relying completely on adults for comfort and regulation to showing growing confidence in exploring short distances on their own. Communication develops from cries and babble to early words and gestures which let them express needs more clearly. At first, they notice other babies only in passing but gradually begin to watch, smile at and show interest in parallel play.

2–3 Years

What we want children to learn and experience

- Show pride in new independence such as feeding themselves or putting on shoes
- Take part in daily routines with less support such as tidying or finding their cup
- Express a wider range of feelings including excitement, frustration, sadness and pride
- Begin to use words for emotions and point out feelings in others
- Form simple friendships by copying, holding hands or laughing together
- Take turns with support in games such as rolling a ball or sliding down a ramp
- Make choices about play, food or books
- Enjoy role play based on family life
- Experience calm and consistent transitions with adult support
- Begin to understand simple group boundaries like waiting for snack or helping to tidy up

How we support this

- Celebrate independence with achievable tasks and choices
- Use visual cues, songs and familiar words to support routines
- Provide role play areas that reflect home life with real utensils and props
- Model naming feelings and provide calming strategies
- Provide turn taking games and cooperative activities daily
- Offer books, puppets and circle times that explore emotions and friendships
- Involve children in helping with snack, watering plants or carrying small items

Progression

Toddlers manage more routines independently and show pride in doing things for themselves. Play shifts from mostly side by side to short bursts of cooperative play such as rolling a ball or cooking together. Children move from simply naming feelings to noticing emotions in others and starting to respond with adult guidance.

3–4 Years

What we want children to learn and experience

- Build friendships that last and develop shared games
- Show empathy and care such as comforting a friend or including others in play
- Begin to solve conflicts with support, negotiating roles and sharing resources
- Take on responsibilities such as snack helper, plant carer or tidy-up leader
- Show resilience by trying again when something is difficult and celebrating success
- Develop self-regulation through simple calming strategies such as breathing, sensory breaks or talking
- Begin to understand perspective
- Work collaboratively on group projects
- Join in cooperative games with rules
- Reflect on feelings and actions and begin to talk about consequences
- Develop pride and belonging in the nursery community

How we support this

- Support children to negotiate play and model respectful words and actions
- Plan group projects that require cooperation, turn taking and problem solving
- Provide opportunities for real responsibility
- Introduce mindfulness activities and breathing games
- Offer a wide range of cooperative games indoors and outdoors

- Celebrate achievements with families and displays
- Model resilience and self-regulation, narrating calm responses
- Use circle times, stories and role play to explore fairness, kindness and friendship

Progression

Preschool children sustain friendships and work together on shared projects. They move from needing adults to resolve conflict to using their own words and simple negotiation. Self-regulation develops as they use strategies like breathing or sensory breaks. Understanding of fairness and perspective grows as they reflect on the impact of their actions and develop pride in their community.

Communication and Language

0–2 Years

What we want children to learn and experience

- Tune into familiar voices, rhythms and sounds
- Communicate with eye contact, gestures, babble and first words
- Recognise their name and respond to simple instructions
- Enjoy daily songs, rhymes and simple stories with repetition and actions
- Imitate sounds, words and actions such as waving and clapping
- Take part in playful turn taking games such as peekaboo or ready steady go
- Hear rich language in care routines, songs and stories
- Experience communication supported by gestures, tone and facial expression

How we support this

- Respond immediately to gestures, babble and sounds, modelling back and forth exchanges
- Use a wide range of songs and nursery rhymes with props, actions and repetition
- Share sturdy picture books one to one with clear images and expression
- Name objects and actions during everyday routines
- Use gestures, signing and visual props alongside speech
- Provide cosy areas for story sharing and singing

Progression

Babies move from experimenting with sounds and babble to first recognisable words. Communication begins with gestures and eye contact and blends with words and actions to share meaning. At first, they respond mainly to tone of voice but over time they understand familiar instructions. Pleasure in songs, rhymes and repeated stories builds foundations for language and listening.

2–3 Years

What we want children to learn and experience

- Combine words into short sentences such as “me go park”
- Follow simple two-part instructions such as “get your cup and sit down”
- Grow vocabulary through everyday play and familiar routines
- Ask simple questions such as “what’s that” or “where’s mummy”
- Join in with patterned and repetitive stories and rhymes
- Begin to listen and take turns in short conversations
- Use talk in play to describe what they are doing
- Recognise and repeat familiar phrases from stories and songs

How we support this

- Comment on play rather than asking too many questions
- Provide role play, small world play and props to encourage conversation
- Share stories with strong patterns and repetition that invite children to join in
- Model new words in context such as tall tower or splashing water
- Use visual timetables, props and gestures to support routines
- Provide small group times where children practise listening and talking with peers

Progression

Toddlers link words into short sentences. Understanding develops from following single instructions to simple two-part directions. Vocabulary grows rapidly as they use descriptive and action words in play. Conversation emerges through short back and forth exchanges and familiar books and songs give phrases they repeat in their own play.

3–4 Years

What we want children to learn and experience

- Use longer sentences joined with and or because
- Ask and answer a range of questions such as why, what, who and where
- Retell simple stories and describe personal experiences in sequence
- Listen to others for longer periods during group times
- Understand and carry out longer instructions with several parts
- Use talk to organise play, share ideas and solve problems
- Use rich vocabulary connected to stories, experiences and the environment
- Experiment with imaginative language in play such as the dragon is sleeping
- Develop confidence in speaking to adults and peers in small and large groups

How we support this

- Plan daily group story times with props, puppets and repeated refrains
- Encourage children to retell and act out stories in their own words
- Model longer sentences and extend what children say with I wonder prompts
- Introduce new vocabulary through experiences such as cooking, gardening or outings
- Provide opportunities for drama, role play and collaborative projects
- Listen attentively and give children time to finish what they want to say
- Create environments that encourage talk such as role play shops, cafés or building sites

Progression

Children's sentences become longer and more complex with connectives like and and because. They move from answering simple questions to asking why and how. Attention develops from short bursts to sustained focus in small and larger groups. Talk becomes a tool for organising play and solving problems. Children move from talking about the here and now to retelling events and imagining possibilities through storytelling and role play.

Physical Development

0–2 Years

What we want children to learn and experience

- Gain control over head, arms, legs and body through tummy time, rolling, crawling, cruising and walking

- Explore different ways of moving such as wriggling, crawling, climbing, pulling and pushing
- Develop hand-eye coordination by grasping, shaking, transferring and dropping objects
- Strengthen muscles through climbing, crawling tunnels and pushing walkers or prams
- Develop balance by pulling to stand, cruising along furniture and taking first steps
- Build fine motor skills by grasping rattles, feeding finger foods and banging blocks together
- Explore sensory movement such as water play, messy play and soft play
- Begin to feed themselves with fingers and spoons
- Respond physically to music through swaying, bouncing and clapping

How we support this

- Provide daily tummy time, rolling mats, crawl spaces and low-level climbing
- Offer sturdy push toys, soft balls, tunnels, steps and ramps
- Ensure indoor and outdoor space for large movement
- Provide treasure baskets with varied textures, sizes and weights
- Encourage self-feeding with finger foods and supported spoon use
- Join children on the floor to model and encourage movement
- Provide safe sensory-rich play such as water, foam, paint and sand

Progression

Babies move from reflexive grasping to controlled movement. They learn to roll, crawl, pull to stand and take first steps with growing balance. Hand use develops from grasping to purposeful actions like shaking, banging and transferring objects. Sensory play builds fine and gross motor strength. Feeding progresses from finger foods to supported spoon use, strengthening coordination.

2–3 Years

What we want children to learn and experience

- Move confidently using walking, running, climbing, kicking and jumping
- Develop coordination through throwing, catching and rolling balls
- Explore different ways of moving such as hopping, twirling, crawling, sliding and dancing
- Use gross motor skills in active play such as riding trikes, pushing prams and pulling wagons
- Use climbing equipment with more control, exploring height and balance
- Develop independence in feeding with spoons, forks and open cups
- Show interest in self-care such as washing hands, brushing teeth and dressing with support
- Strengthen fine motor skills through puzzles, threading, peg boards, small blocks and dough
- Begin to use simple tools such as paintbrushes, chalks, large scissors and glue sticks
- Explore movement to music with ribbons, scarves and instruments

How we support this

- Provide safe outdoor areas with climbing frames, slides, trikes and push or pull toys
- Encourage ball games that involve rolling, throwing and kicking
- Offer dough, clay, sand and water daily to strengthen hands and fingers
- Provide chunky pencils, brushes, crayons and simple scissors
- Build self-care into the day with visual cues and time to practise
- Plan music and movement sessions with dancing, action songs and simple yoga
- Model independence by showing how to wash hands or put on coats

Progression

Toddlers refine gross motor skills, moving from early walking to coordinated climbing, jumping and kicking. Ball skills develop through rolling and throwing. Movement becomes varied and expressive with hopping, twirling and dancing. Fine motor control progresses through puzzles,

peg boards and dough. Tool use begins with chunky brushes, crayons and scissors. Independence grows in feeding with cutlery and open cups and in early self-care.

3–4 Years

What we want children to learn and experience

- Move with confidence and control using running, climbing, hopping, skipping and jumping
- Show strength and balance on large equipment such as climbing frames, obstacle courses and balancing beams
- Develop coordination through ball skills such as throwing, catching, kicking and aiming
- Use movement to express themselves in dance, drama and imaginative play
- Build stamina through active outdoor play such as running games, digging and cycling
- Develop fine motor skills for tasks such as threading beads, using tweezers and cutting with scissors
- Hold tools with control such as pencils, paintbrushes and scissors
- Use real tools safely such as spades, hammers, rolling pins and glue spreaders
- Take increasing responsibility for self-care such as toileting, dressing, washing and eating
- Develop awareness of health and wellbeing through active play, rest, eating and hygiene

How we support this

- Provide daily outdoor play with large equipment, bikes, balls, ropes and balance activities
- Plan obstacle courses and games that encourage coordination, problem solving and teamwork
- Offer fine motor resources such as tweezers, threading, peg boards, sewing cards and construction sets
- Provide mark making tools of different sizes and textures indoors and outdoors
- Involve children in cooking, gardening and woodwork to use real tools with care
- Encourage independence in dressing, toileting and hygiene through consistent routines
- Model healthy habits and provide calm rest spaces alongside active play
- Offer dance, drama and music sessions that invite expression through movement

Progression

Preschool children move confidently on larger equipment, catch and throw with aim and kick with control. Movement becomes creative through dance and drama. Fine motor control supports cutting, drawing and real tool use. Mark making becomes more controlled and purposeful. Self-care becomes more independent and children show stamina and resilience in physical challenges.

Literacy

0–2 Years

What we want children to learn and experience

- Develop a love of books by exploring cloth, board and bath books independently
- Hear stories, rhymes and songs every day with repetition, rhythm and actions
- Sit close with an adult to share books one to one, enjoying touch, eye contact and voice
- Explore books with bold images of faces, animals and familiar objects
- Turn pages with help and point to pictures with excitement
- Copy sounds, gestures and actions linked to books and songs
- Recognise familiar logos and symbols such as food packets and family photos
- Explore sensory mark making such as finger painting or marks in flour, sand or soft foods

- Experiment with chunky crayons, chalks and brushes
- Anticipate repeated phrases in familiar rhymes and stories

How we support this

- Provide cosy book corners with cushions, drapes, baskets of sturdy books and soft toys
- Share the same stories often so babies become familiar and join in
- Place books in every area of provision including outdoors
- Exaggerate voices and facial expressions when reading aloud
- Provide safe messy mark making daily in trays, highchairs or outside
- Sing action rhymes during daily routines such as nappy changing or snack time

Progression

Babies begin by mouthing and exploring books before pointing at pictures and turning pages with help. They move from babbling and copying sounds to joining in with gestures and repeated phrases. Mark making starts with random swipes and becomes intentional with crayons, chalks and brushes.

2–3 Years

What we want children to learn and experience

- Join in with favourite rhymes and songs with growing independence
- Repeat predictable lines in familiar stories
- Handle books carefully and begin to turn pages one at a time
- Talk about pictures in books, naming characters or describing what is happening
- Anticipate what might happen next in a familiar story
- Recognise signs and logos in the environment such as shop signs or bus numbers
- Understand that pictures and symbols carry meaning
- Act out familiar stories with puppets, small world play and role play
- Use a wide range of tools for mark making including crayons, pens, chalks and paintbrushes
- Give meaning to their marks such as that says mummy or this is a car
- Explore large scale writing outdoors with chalks, sticks in mud or brushes with water

How we support this

- Provide daily story times with props and puppets and invite children to join in
- Place books across the environment including outdoors and in role play areas
- Use real print in the environment such as menus, labels, signs and posters
- Model writing with purpose such as a shopping list or a card
- Encourage children to talk about their marks and display them with their words
- Provide clipboards, notepads and chalkboards in all play areas

Progression

Toddlers move from enjoying refrains to retelling short parts of stories in their own words. They handle books with care, turn pages one at a time and talk about characters and events. Marks develop from scribbles into purposeful representations with simple explanations. Recognition of meaning grows from spotting logos to noticing real print and understanding that it carries information.

3–4 Years

What we want children to learn and experience

- Retell simple stories with a beginning, middle and end using props, puppets and their own words

- Enjoy rhyme, rhythm and alliteration in games, songs and poems
- Invent their own stories and share them through play, talk or drawing
- Sequence events from stories using story maps, role play, small world and drama
- Recognise their own name in context such as on a peg or picture card
- Notice familiar words and signs in the environment such as STOP or EXIT
- Understand that stories and books can be imagined or factual
- Build stamina for mark making, moving from large sweeping lines to more controlled shapes and patterns
- Use drawing and early writing in play such as maps, shopping lists, menus or birthday cards
- Enjoy a print rich environment with displays, posters and their own marks or captions

How we support this

- Provide varied daily story times with a wide range of genres and chances to retell
- Use oral storytelling, drama and role play to encourage children to invent and perform stories
- Provide meaningful writing opportunities in play areas such as tickets in a travel office or notes in a post box
- Offer a wide range of tools indoors and outdoors including chalks, brushes, crayons, pens and sticks
- Model writing for real purposes and narrate the process aloud
- Display children's attempts at writing with their words explaining what it means
- Invite families to share favourite stories, songs and rhymes from home

Progression

Preschool children retell full stories and invent new ones, showing awareness of sequence and structure. They recognise their own name and familiar signs and notice environmental print more widely. Mark making becomes controlled with shapes, patterns and early letter-like forms. Drawing and writing are used purposefully in play such as writing menus, maps or birthday cards.

Maths

0–2 Years

What we want children to learn and experience

- Notice differences in size, shape and quantity through everyday play e.g. one spoon, two cups, big ball, little ball
- Experience repeated actions that build early maths concepts such as filling and emptying containers or stacking blocks
- Explore objects with different shapes, textures and weights such as balls, rings, boxes and pebbles
- Hear number language naturally in routines such as two socks, one more spoonful, all gone
- Enjoy songs and rhymes with counting and actions such as Two Little Dickie Birds or Five Little Ducks
- Explore patterns with sound and movement through clapping, stamping or peekaboo
- Begin to show awareness of order in routines such as snack before sleep or shoes before outdoors

How we support this

- Provide nesting cups, stacking toys, shape sorters and containers for filling and emptying
- Count aloud during everyday routines such as one arm in, now the other arm in
- Use repeated number rhymes with props such as ducks, frogs or teddies

- Provide treasure baskets with objects of different sizes, shapes and weights
- Encourage exploration of patterns with scarves, instruments and clapping games
- Model comparative language such as big apple and small apple, more water and less water

Progression

From mouthing and banging objects to purposeful filling, stacking and sorting. From noticing differences in quantity to responding when an adult counts out loud. From reacting to routines to anticipating what comes next.

2–3 Years

What we want children to learn and experience

- Count in play up to three and begin to match numbers with small groups of objects
- Join in with number songs and rhymes, holding up fingers or collecting props
- Begin to understand more, lots, all gone and one more
- Explore size and capacity by pouring, tipping, building and comparing
- Sort objects by simple attributes such as big and small or red and blue
- Build towers and enclosures with blocks noticing height, length and balance
- Use shape names such as circle, square and triangle through puzzles and play
- Notice and copy simple patterns in movement, sound and colour
- Begin to use positional language such as in, on and under in play
- Anticipate familiar parts of the day using time language such as after snack or home time soon

How we support this

- Provide practical counting opportunities such as cups at snack or stairs when climbing
- Play number rhymes with props and finger puppets
- Use construction blocks, shape puzzles and posting boxes daily
- Encourage children to compare towers, plates of food or groups of objects
- Provide sorting trays with buttons, shells, beads or natural loose parts
- Introduce simple pattern activities such as threading beads, stamping or printing
- Model positional language during play such as the bear is under the chair

Progression

From reciting number words to counting small sets accurately. From noticing size and shape informally to naming and comparing. From copying patterns to creating their own simple sequences. From using positional words with support to applying them in independent play.

3–4 Years

What we want children to learn and experience

- Count objects with one-to-one correspondence and understand that the last number tells how many
- Subitise small quantities such as instantly recognising three dots on a dice
- Compare quantities and begin to solve practical problems such as sharing food fairly
- Understand and use more, fewer and same in play
- Begin to explore early addition and subtraction through play such as two cars add one more now three
- Recognise and name common 2D shapes such as circle, square, rectangle and triangle
- Explore 3D shapes in block play such as cubes, cylinders and spheres
- Create and extend repeating patterns using beads, blocks, paint or movement
- Use positional language confidently such as beside, behind, in front or next to
- Explore length, weight and capacity with sand, water, blocks, dough and cooking

- Talk about time using language such as morning, afternoon, yesterday and tomorrow
- Sequence events in stories and routines with props or story maps

How we support this

- Provide rich counting opportunities through games, snack routines, outdoor play and songs
- Play dice and board games that encourage counting on, recognising amounts and turn taking
- Provide scales, measuring jugs, rulers and tape measures for exploration in play
- Encourage children to build and compare in block play, modelling shape names and balance
- Offer natural loose parts for sorting, patterning and sequencing
- Use stories and rhymes that involve problem solving, quantities and sharing
- Introduce cooking, gardening and real life maths such as weighing, measuring and pouring
- Model maths language daily such as let's share these apples two each or this tower is taller

Progression

Preschool children count objects with one-to-one correspondence, showing that the last number said represents the total. They recognise small groups without counting and compare amounts with words such as more, fewer and same. Through play they begin to solve problems with early addition and subtraction. Their shape knowledge extends to 2D and 3D forms. They create and extend repeating patterns and explore length, weight and capacity through play and cooking. Their use of positional language becomes confident and they use time words more securely, sequencing events in stories and routines.

Understanding the World

0–2 Years

What we want children to learn and experience

- Explore the world through their senses such as mouthing, banging, splashing, crawling, reaching and tasting
- Notice differences in light, sound, texture and temperature indoors and outdoors
- Experience natural materials such as sand, water, mud, leaves, shells and pinecones
- Explore everyday objects from home such as brushes, spoons, pots and keys
- Watch animals, pets and people with fascination by following them with eyes or reaching out
- Recognise familiar adults, family members and carers in person and in photos
- Experience seasonal changes such as sunshine, wind, rain or frost
- Begin to anticipate familiar routines and patterns in the day
- Explore cause and effect by pushing a button to make a sound or dropping a toy to watch it fall
- Notice differences in people such as voices, hair, clothing and skin

How we support this

- Provide treasure baskets with natural, household and sensory objects
- Offer sensory trays with sand, water, fabric, wood, metal and natural materials
- Take babies outdoors daily to feel the wind, watch trees move and notice birds or insects
- Display family photos and use them in songs, stories and conversations
- Encourage early exploration with simple cause and effect toys and household objects
- Describe what babies notice such as cold wind, soft teddy or loud sound

Progression

From exploring with the whole body and mouth to using hands and tools more purposefully. From watching animals and people to recognising and responding with gestures or words. From experiencing routines passively to anticipating them with excitement.

2–3 Years

What we want children to learn and experience

- Explore a wider range of natural materials such as soil, stones, feathers, sticks and flowers
- Take part in planting, watering and growing experiences
- Notice and talk about animals, insects and pets with simple words such as big dog or tiny bug
- Experience seasonal changes by collecting leaves, watching frost or playing in puddles
- Begin to notice similarities and differences in people, homes and families
- Explore role play based on family life such as cooking, cleaning or caring for babies
- Show interest in machines and technology such as toy phones, torches, buttons or wheels
- Begin to use positional and descriptive language in play such as up, down, fast, slow
- Build with blocks and loose parts to explore balance, height and design
- Talk about past and future in simple terms such as yesterday park or tomorrow Nana

How we support this

- Provide bug hunts, magnifying glasses and nature walks
- Involve children in planting seeds, watering plants and caring for the garden
- Use real objects in role play areas to connect to home experiences
- Share books and stories that show different families, communities and homes
- Provide construction resources such as blocks, crates and tubes for building
- Encourage children to talk about past experiences using photos and memory boxes
- Offer simple technology such as push button toys, torches and wind-up gadgets

Progression

From exploring nature with curiosity to beginning to care for plants and animals with support. From noticing differences to talking about similarities and differences between people and places. From imitating daily routines in role play to creating their own storylines.

3–4 Years

What we want children to learn and experience

- Talk with pride about their family, culture and community
- Celebrate and respect festivals and traditions from their own and other cultures
- Notice and describe similarities and differences between themselves and others
- Explore lifecycles of plants and animals such as frogs, butterflies and beans
- Care for the natural world through planting, recycling, feeding animals and looking after the setting
- Use simple tools such as magnifying glasses, magnets, torches and measuring tapes to explore
- Begin to understand past, present and future by talking about what happened, what is happening now and what will happen
- Use maps, globes and photos to learn about places beyond their immediate environment
- Explore technology for real purposes such as taking photos, recording sounds or programming toys
- Take part in real-world tasks such as cooking, cleaning, building and gardening with adults
- Ask questions about how things work and why things happen

How we support this

- Celebrate home cultures with cooking, music, books and contributions from families
- Plan seasonal walks and outdoor projects such as making bird feeders or exploring ice
- Provide real-life lifecycle resources such as caterpillars or seeds to grow

- Invite visitors into the setting such as parents, community workers or people with pets
- Provide opportunities to use maps, photos and globes in play
- Offer real tools and resources for exploration such as tape measures, magnets and cameras
- Support children to use simple technology with purpose such as taking photos or recording a story
- Create displays and discussions around daily routines, family photos and the local community

Progression

Preschool children build on early experiences with a deeper curiosity about the world. They investigate how things work, ask questions and notice patterns in the weather and seasons. Their awareness of cultures and communities broadens as they celebrate traditions and learn about similarities and differences between people. Their time awareness develops into sequencing events in stories and routines. Construction and play become more purposeful as they plan and test ideas. They develop a stronger sense of belonging as they connect family and community experiences to the wider world.

Expressive Arts and Design

0–2 Years

What we want children to learn and experience

- Explore sounds with their voices, bodies and objects such as babbling, squealing, banging, shaking and tapping
- Experience music daily through lullabies, action songs, clapping games and repeated rhymes that build memory and rhythm
- Begin to copy actions such as clapping, waving, stamping or patting in time with music
- Explore the sensory properties of materials such as paint on their hands, dough squeezed between fingers, sand sprinkled or water splashed
- Make marks with whole hand movements before progressing to tools such as large brushes, rollers and chalks
- Discover light, shadow and reflection with mirrors, shiny objects, torch play and sensory lights
- Take part in very early pretend play such as holding a toy phone, stirring with a spoon or hugging a doll
- Express joy in sensory rich play such as rustling paper, scrunching foil, banging pans or twirling scarves

How we support this

- Daily singing and rhyme times with puppets, props and scarves to make actions memorable
- Treasure baskets filled with natural and household objects that provide different textures, weights and sounds
- Low level messy play with edible paint, safe gloop, yoghurt painting, jelly play and finger paints
- Provide sturdy musical instruments that encourage exploration such as shakers, drums, rain sticks and tambourines
- Adults model pretend play in parallel with children such as pretending to drink, stir, rock or feed
- Use mirrors and reflective surfaces in play areas so babies can watch their own expressions and movements
- Create cosy areas where music, movement, sensory play and storytelling are blended

Progression

From random banging and shaking to repeating sounds with intention. From copying one action to combining actions into short play sequences. From making marks with the whole hand to beginning to use lines, swirls and dots. From imitating adult pretend play to beginning to initiate their own.

2–3 Years

What we want children to learn and experience

- Join in with songs and rhymes, filling in missing words and singing repeated lines
- Use instruments to experiment with volume, speed and rhythm
- Respond physically to different types of music such as stamping to drums, twirling to strings or swaying to gentle sounds
- Explore a wide range of media such as paint, chalk, clay, sand, dough, collage materials, recycled boxes and natural resources
- Make marks intentionally and begin to talk about them, for example saying that's mummy or that's my house
- Choose colours, tools and materials to match their ideas, showing preference
- Combine textures and media such as sticking fabric, pressing sequins into dough or printing with sponges and leaves
- Take part in imaginative play that mirrors daily life such as shopping, cooking, going to the doctor or looking after babies
- Begin to link role play to familiar stories or rhymes
- Use small world play to create simple narratives such as animals on a farm or cars on a road
- Enjoy process based creativity such as splashing paint, squeezing dough or scribbling vigorously

How we support this

- Provide open access to creative areas with paint, chalks, crayons, fabric, glue and scissors
- Stock role play with real and familiar objects to help children copy what they see at home
- Offer music and movement sessions with beanbags, ribbons and scarves
- Introduce props for storytelling such as puppets, masks, costumes and small figures
- Provide sensory trays for creative exploration such as shaving foam, pasta, mud, flour, cornflour and gloop
- Adults join role play as co players, introducing new vocabulary and extending children's ideas
- Display children's work at their eye level with their own words describing what they did

Progression

From joining in with actions and words to singing whole songs. From random marks to purposeful patterns and recognisable shapes. From solitary pretend play to cooperative play with one or two peers. From exploring materials to making deliberate creative choices.

3–4 Years

What we want children to learn and experience

- Sing familiar songs confidently and invent their own new verses or songs
- Experience music from a wide range of cultures and styles and respond with movement, clapping, drumming or dancing
- Create their own dances or movements to express feelings, rhythms or ideas
- Use tools and media with increasing skill such as cutting, folding, rolling, stapling, gluing and painting
- Explore clay and dough in more sophisticated ways such as rolling, coiling, joining, imprinting

and modelling

- Mix colours with purpose and predict what will happen when they blend
- Combine materials to create imaginative work such as collaging with paper and fabric, building junk models or layering paint and chalk
- Develop small world and role play into sustained narratives with peers such as running a café, going on a journey or building a zoo
- Take inspiration from books, real artists, musicians and performers, copying techniques then adapting them
- Play instruments with control to create rhythms and begin to copy or invent patterns
- Join in group music making such as call and response singing, drumming circles or making sound effects for a story
- Express emotions and ideas through art, music and drama such as stamping when angry, twirling when excited or choosing colours to show feelings
- Talk about their creations with detail, describing what they did and why
- Return to unfinished work to add detail, showing pride in developing their ideas over time

How we support this

- Provide varied, high quality creative materials and tools both indoors and outdoors
- Plan provocations inspired by artists, illustrators, musicians or cultural events
- Encourage large scale collaborative projects such as murals, sculptures or music performances
- Use role play linked to children's interests and new experiences, from a home corner to a vet's surgery or a garden centre
- Provide real instruments alongside homemade ones, encouraging children to experiment
- Adults join in play and creative activities to model imagination, resilience and risk taking
- Introduce digital tools such as recording voices, photographing models or projecting artwork as another creative medium
- Celebrate process over product, valuing exploration and invention

Progression

Preschool children develop confidence as creative thinkers and performers. They sing familiar songs with assurance and invent new verses or rhythms. Their pretend play evolves into complex, negotiated storylines shared with peers. In art and making, they combine techniques such as cutting, folding, collaging and modelling to produce more detailed outcomes. Their use of materials becomes intentional, from mixing colours with purpose to returning to unfinished work to refine ideas. Music making becomes more collaborative as they keep a steady beat, copy rhythms and contribute to group performances. They reflect on their work with detail, describing not only what they made but also how and why, showing pride and ownership in the process.

Inclusion and Adaptation

Our curriculum is for every child. We adapt provision so that all children can take part, make progress and feel proud of their achievements. Staff notice what each child needs and adjust the environment, routines and interactions accordingly. This may include offering sensory breaks, using visual timetables, providing additional adult support or creating quieter spaces. We work in close partnership with families to understand each child's strengths and challenges so that our approaches feel consistent across home and nursery.

Impact and Review

The impact of our curriculum is seen in children's daily joy, independence and sense of belonging. We know it is working when children arrive eager to explore, when they persevere with challenges and when they build strong friendships. Staff review progress regularly through observations, reflections and team discussions, looking at both small steps and longer-term growth. Families share what they notice at home so we gain a rounded picture of each child. Termly reviews help us evaluate progression across all areas and check that the golden threads are woven through our practice.

Final Vision Statement

At the Hall school Nursery we believe childhood should be joyful, secure and full of discovery. Our golden threads run through everything we do so that children feel safe, valued and curious. We nurture strong relationships, provide rich experiences and encourage independence so that children grow with confidence and curiosity. When they leave us, they are ready for school and for life, proud of who they are, excited to learn and connected to their world.