

EYFS Curriculum

At Great and Little Shelford School, we base our approach to learning in Reception on Anna Ephgrave's 'Planning in the Moment' method. Please see below for an explanation.

Planning for learning

- Topic Overviews set the scene & act as 'provocations' for independent learning
- The cycle of observation, assessment & planning is however also carried out on a *moment-by-moment* basis.

We have focus children each week (normally 3 or 4 children) who lead this 'planning for learning'.

We work in this way because ...

"Babies and young children are experiencing and learning in the here and now, not storing up their questions until tomorrow or next week. It is in these moments of curiosity, puzzlement, effort or interest - the 'teachable moments' - that the skilful adult makes a difference."

By using this cycle on a moment-by-moment basis, the adult will be always alert to:

- individual children (*observation*) &
- always thinking about what it tells us about the child's thinking (*assessment*) &
- always ready to respond by using appropriate strategies at the right moment to support children's well-being and learning (*planning for the next moment*).

The National Strategies document 'Learning, Playing and Interacting' (p.22-23) tells us that:

"Teaching is all those different things that you do as adults to help young children learn...*communicating, modelling language, working with children* as they initiate their own play and activities... *being ready to intervene* in the moment, *demonstrating* how to do something, *explaining* why something is as it is, *showing* children something, *exploring* ideas with them, *encouraging* them, *questioning* them, *checking* what it is they are understanding, *helping them to*

record something that they did so that they get the structure and sequence of events, *providing a narrative* for what they are doing, *facilitating* what they are doing, *setting challenges*, all those sorts of things are the sorts of things we mean when we talk about teaching.”
Jane Wotherspoon - Lead HMI for Early Years.

“Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development.” Revised EYFS 2014.

At Great and Little Shelford, we aim to:

- Spot ‘teachable moments’
- Engage in quality interactions
- Record the progress each child makes.

To achieve this we:

- Go to the children & take the learning to them.
 - Wherever possible, the adult goes to the child. i.e. The child is not called to come to the adult.
- Try to enhance learning and not interrupt it.
- Ask ‘I wonder...’ questions.
- Try not to speak until the child requests it &
- Remain relaxed with the range of activities that are occurring..

We aim to have *focus children* NOT *focus activities*.

We work this way because research has shown that high-level involvement and learning occurs in child-initiated activities.

Progress and Development

When children show high levels of involvement, we can see progress and development occurring. The brain is at its most active.

High level involvement occurs most often when children are able to pursue their own interests in an enabling environment.

‘Planning in the Moment’ makes this possible and data in research schools supports this.

An Enabling Environment

We have a workshop style environment both indoors and outside. We do not 'set out' activities for the children, but rather support the children to choose their own interests.

The children are supported to select what they want to do (based on their learning and development needs) in each area.

The principal is that resources are accessible to the children and they are varied, open-ended and high quality. This gives children the opportunity to select resources to support their chosen activity.

The Role of The Adult

The adults are there to facilitate learning. They do this through observations and interactions.

It is important the adults know the children very well and have a sound understanding of child development. This ensures that the adults enhance and extend the learning at the appropriate level.

Meaningful Interactions

The children and the adults have time and space to engage in meaningful conversations. The children set the agenda and the adults are there to show interest and engage with the children. The modelling of conversation skills is then adopted by the children who have long conversations in pairs and groups.

Planning In The Moment

We use the observation cycle on a moment by moment basis. The focus children are given extra attention, but all the children are busy and learning all the time.

It is particularly important that the adults' input is recorded.

"T suggests ... encourages ...models ...asks ...models ...helps ... offers resources .. etc."

In addition, "Wow" moments are recorded for all children as and when they occur.

With a system of focus children, a workshop style environment and records kept on 'Planning in the Moment' sheets and Learning Journals, the children are learning effectively all the time!!

The Characteristics of Effective Learning (CoEL)

In conjunction with this approach, throughout their time in Reception, children are also assessed against 'The Characteristics of Effective Learning'. These focus on *how* children learn, rather than what they learn i.e. process over outcome.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning identified by the EYFS are:

Playing and Exploring:

- Do they investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'?

Learning Actively:

- Do they concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements?

Creating and Thinking Critically:

- Do they have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things?

These assessments are recorded within our EExAT tracking documentation.

We also assess children against the 'Leuven Scales of Well - Being and Involvement'.

Well-being is linked to self-confidence and good levels of self-esteem and resilience.

Involvement refers to being intensely engaged in activities and is believed to be a necessary condition for deep level learning and development.

Both of these need to be present for children to make leaps in their learning and development.

Examples of Observations on EExAT:

Ryan wanted to pick some more carrots. He was not sure which plant was a carrot. I showed Ryan the carrot plant and pointed out what the leaves looked like. Ryan pulled up more carrots.

Beverley was trying to cut a piece of tape. She did not know how to use the dispenser. TA modelled how to cut the tape. Beverley persevered and eventually managed to cut the tape independently.

One-off 'Wow!' Moments are recorded too by practitioners and parents alike.

E.g. Mary (a child with Social and Emotional difficulties) approached Jane and asked "Would you like to play?" (for the first time)