OUR CURRICULUM

HORNSEA NURSERY SCHOOL

Education is not preparation
for life; education is life itself.

JOHN DEWEY

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Curriculum Booklet

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The story behind

OUR CURRICULUM

The curriculum at the nursery school is built on four cornerstones, resulting in a holistic approach to learning that promotes active learning and exploration. The curriculum is designed to be age-appropriate and cover all seven areas of learning and statutory Educational Programmes in the EYFS.

The nursery school has a well-balanced and age-appropriate curriculum that covers all areas of development.

There are four cornerstones to the curriculum: Love of Language, STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, maths), Your Community, and Executive Functioning.

The curriculum was designed to meet the needs of individual children and promote active learning and exploration, as well as align with the statutory EYFS Educational Programmes and the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

It reflects local industry and employment to spark an interest in occupations and careers.

In addition, we recognise the importance of preparing children for the next stage of education; in designing the curriculum, we linked with our feeder schools to ensure we link as seamlessly as possible to their curriculums.

The routine is structured to include both specific teaching of certain concepts and child-initiated learning.

We recognise some subjects, like Maths, require direct teaching, while story and singing time are prioritised with sessions each morning and afternoon.

THE CORNERSTONES

Education with a Purpose

'THE WHOLE POINT OF SCHOOL IS CHILDREN COME FIRST AND EVERYTHING WE DO MUST REFLECT THIS SINGLE GOAL'

'The Four Corner Stones'

'Love of Language'

STEAM

Your Community

Executive Functioning

Each of the seven Statutory Educational Programmes are integrated into the "four cornerstones" of the curriculum.

Each area of the curriculum has an end goal that we want all children to achieve. The curriculum provides five progressive steps for each area, allowing children of different developmental stages to access the curriculum with a small-step approach. The final step is seen as aspirational, leading to mastery of the goal. The 'goal' for each area sits between steps 4 and 5.

Our assessment is split into the seven areas of learning, with statements developed from various sources to ensure children meet their milestones and progress through the curriculum. Children are assessed every four months as "Spotlight" children.

The Eight Strands

'LOVE LANGUAGE'

LINKING TO CL, LIT, PSED, EAD

LANGUAGE-RICH ENVIRONMENT:

Teachers are skilled in using vocabulary linked to the curriculum and exposing children to a rich and varied vocabulary. The nursery school provides a language-rich environment that fosters a love of language. Children are exposed to a variety of vocabulary and encouraged to communicate in different ways.
Children are surrounded by language in various forms, such as spoken language, written language, and non-verbal communication.

Opportunities for children to engage in conversations, a variety of resources, a supportive and inclusive environment, opportunities for children to use and explore language in different contexts, and a focus on developing children's vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension skills

CORE TEXTS & RHYMES:

The nursery school teaches literacy skills through half termly selected stories and rhymes. The books and rhymes have been carefully selected to be progressive in vocabulary and comprehension and support the curriculum. Children are introduced to a variety of books and reading materials within their learning enquiry / Floorbooks and literature in the environment.

VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT:

The nursery school focuses on vocabulary development. Children are taught new words and encouraged to use them in their everyday speech. Teachers provide a supportive environment where children can practice and develop their language skills. Key vocabulary is planned for and progressive.
The nursery has vocabulary lists linked to each curriculum area. Each list is split into three tiers ensuring children are exposed to age-appropriate words that are accessible and ambitious. Highlighted words within each tier indicate the words we want children to acquire and use.

MUSIC AND MOVEMENT:

The nursery school incorporates music and movement into language learning. Children are taught songs and rhymes and are encouraged to dance and move to music.

Eight Strands

LINKING TO CL, LIT, PSED, EAD

LANGUAGE & STORYTELLING:

The curriculum has the end goals; To make up my own story & to ask a relevant question.

The nursery school emphasises the importance of storytelling. Children are taught to tell stories and to listen to others through 'Helicopter Stories'. Children use their imagination and creativity to create stories, which are then enacted and performed in a group setting.

Teachers model creating a hypothesis, using the Sustained Shared Thinking prompts to encourage children to question and think. Teachers help children to frame questions.

SCRIBE:

The end goal for 'Scribe' is to be able to write their own name and scribe to communicate a message. Children are given opportunities to write their own stories, with the teacher as the scribe through Helicopter Stories. They are encouraged to develop hand and finger strength in order to work towards pincer grip for pencil grasp. Children use various mark-making tools and materials to create label and marks for meaning, before correct letter formation to write their name.

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS:

Phonics is taught through short, daily sessions that are lively, playful and engaging. **Launchpad for Literacy** is used as the main approach, helping children explore sounds through listening, movement, rhyme and talk. Activities are carefully planned to support the playful principles of **Letters and Sounds Phase 1**, developing skills such as tuning into environmental and body sounds, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds, and oral blending and segmenting. These daily experiences help children build strong listening skills and a confident foundation for reading and writing.

MULTILINGUALISM:

The nursery school celebrates multilingualism and encourages children to learn new languages / words through songs. Children are exposed to different languages and cultures, and are taught to appreciate and respect diversity.

STEAM

LINKING TO CL, PD, PSED, KUW, EAD, MATH

SCIENCE

Children will learn:

To **make a prediction and test their ideas** and to **identify characteristics of an animal, plant or insect**.

Exploring the environment: Children will start by exploring objects using their senses, and then progress to linking different approaches to explore a wider range of objects. They will also start to ask questions about what they are seeing and doing.

Identifying characteristics of animals, plants, and insects: Children will start by exploring the natural world and learning about different animals, plants, and insects. They will then progress to recognising detail in these organisms and observing that they change over time. Finally, they will be able to talk about habitats and lifecycles in more detail.

These science learning outcomes are important for nursery age children;
They help children develop their curiosity and love of learning. When children are curious about the world around them, they are more likely to be engaged in learning.
They help children develop their problem-solving skills. When children are asked to explore and investigate, they learn how to solve problems and come up with their own answers.
They help children develop their language skills. When children talk about what they are seeing and doing, they are developing their vocabulary and communication skills.

TECHNOLOGY:

Children will learn to make a cake and to grow a vegetable.

Multi-sensory exploratory activities help children develop technology skills by exposing them to materials, tools, and technology. They learn to follow instructions, solve problems, and create new things.

Children explore the natural world through hands-on experiences. They learn about plants, animals, lifecycles, and habitats. They also learn about food processing and how to care for the Nursery garden.

ENGINEERING:

Children will learn to make a model with wood and to make an electrical circuit.

Children explore wood as a material and learn about tools through hands-on experiences. They learn how to use tools safely and develop confidence and problem-solving skills through tinkering.

Children learn about cause and effect, energy, and simple circuits through exploration of battery-operated toys. They learn how to control energy and make their own circuits.

STEAM

ARTS:

Children will learn to create a masterpiece in dance, drama, painting, sculpture and music.

Through dance, drama, painting, sculpture, and music, children can explore different movements, materials, and techniques. They can also learn to coordinate and control their bodies, use their fine and gross motor skills, think creatively, and solve problems.

In dance, children can explore different movements to music, such as walking, sliding, jumping, twisting, bobbing, and bending. They can also learn to coordinate and control their bodies through dance. Dance can help children develop their gross motor skills, their spatial awareness, and their sense of rhythm.

In drama, children can engage in imaginative play, such as pretending to be different people or animals.
They can also create and act out stories or narratives. Drama can help children develop their creativity, their imagination, and their social skills.

In painting, children can explore different materials and techniques to create their own paintings. They can also learn to represent objects through shape and colour. Painting can help children develop their fine motor skills, their creativity, and their sense of observation.

In sculpture, children can manipulate malleable materials to create 3D objects. They can also learn to represent familiar landmarks or objects in 2D or 3D. Sculpture can help children develop their fine motor skills, their spatial awareness, and their creativity.

In music, children can respond to music and sound stimuli, move to music, and create their own music. They can also learn to use different instruments and to sing. Music can help children develop their fine motor skills, their gross motor skills, their cognitive skills, their communication skills, and their creativity.

LINKING TO CL, PD, PSED, KUW, EAD, MATH

MATHS:

- Shape recognition and spatial awareness: Children will learn about shape recognition and spatial awareness through exploring objects of different shapes and sizes. They will understand how objects can stack, line up, and fit together. They will start recognising shapes in everyday items and in their environment. They will learn to copy pictures and combine shapes to create representations.
- Numbers, counting and amounts: Through songs and rhymes, children will learn about numbers, counting and amounts. They will be introduced to the concept that amounts can change. They will learn words such as more, lots, less, fewer and start to make comparisons. They will learn about combining sets to find totals and subtracting small amounts from larger amounts.

YOUR COMMUNITY

LINKING TO CL, PD, PSED, KUW & PERSONNAL DEVELOPMENT

THE COMMUNITY WE LIVE IN:

Children will learn to recognise and talk about landmarks in the local community and understand the roles of important people in the community. We help children discover **the community we live in** through exciting, hands-on experiences that build curiosity and confidence. Children go on local walks, look closely at familiar landmarks such as parks, shops and important buildings, and talk about what they see and why these places matter. They meet and learn about people who help us every day, such as nurses, firefighters, shopkeepers and police officers, through visits, visitors and imaginative play. By sharing stories, asking questions and acting out real-life roles, children develop a strong sense of belonging, understand how their community works, and begin to see themselves as an important part of it.

MANAGING OUR BEHAVIOUR:

We support children to **manage their behaviour** through calm, caring and consistent approaches that help them feel safe, understood and confident. Our practice is trauma-informed, which means adults respond with empathy, recognising that behaviour is a form of communication. We use **Theraplay Sunshine Circles** to build strong relationships, emotional security and a sense of belonging through playful, predictable routines.

When challenges arise, adults use **restorative scripts** to help children talk about feelings, understand the impact of their actions and learn positive ways to repair relationships. **Social stories** are used to gently teach expectations, routines and social situations, helping children know what to do and why. Through this supportive approach, children learn self-regulation, empathy and resilience, giving them the skills they need to thrive with others.

ACHIEVE:

Children will learn to become independent learners and have a positive self-image. Through ACHIEVE, we help children grow into confident, independent learners who believe in themselves. Children are encouraged to make choices, try new things and solve problems with supportive adults close by. We celebrate effort as well as success, helping children understand that mistakes are part of learning. Warm encouragement, clear routines and meaningful responsibilities help children develop a positive self-image and pride in what they can do. Over time, children learn to say "I can try", "I can keep going" and "I can do this", building resilience, independence and confidence that supports their learning now and prepares them for the next stage.

Personal development & wider opportunities

LINKING TO CL, PD, PSED, KUW & PERSONNAL DEVELOPMENT

RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE) AND HEALTH CURRICULUM

The curriculum intends to help children understand the importance of families, healthy family life, and the characteristics of stable, caring relationships. It also aims to teach children about the significance of friendships, including respect, trust, and support, and how to recognise and manage conflict. The curriculum promotes respectful relationships, emphasising respecting others, courtesy, and self-respect. It also addresses online relationships, teaching children about online behaviour, safety, and reporting concerns. Lastly, the policy aims to help children understand how to keep themselves safe, including setting boundaries, recognising inappropriate contact, and seeking help when needed. The curriculum incorporates various strategies, such as cultural suitcases, diverse books, restorative practice, and teaching materials from Childnet and the UK safer internet centre. Regular parent workshops are also provided to support parents in understanding their child's learning and safety topics.

SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL, AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (SMSC)

In terms of Spiritual Development, the school focuses on fostering imagination, emotional resilience, critical thinking, curiosity, and self-esteem**.** The school provides moments of stillness and reflection, encourage discussions about beliefs and personal experiences, and celebrate the wonders of life. The school also aims to develop children's enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others, and the world around them.

For Moral Development, the school helps children recognise the value of each individual, listen and respond to others' views, and act responsibly with consideration for others. They teach children to understand right and wrong, manage their own behaviour, show respect for others and the environment, and make appropriate decisions and choices. The school also encourages children to learn from mistakes and develop qualities like honesty, consideration, independence, and self-respect.

In terms of Social Development, the school focuses on helping children understand their identity, develop positive self-image, form and maintain relationships, and learn social skills like cooperation, turn-taking, and effective communication. They also teach children to be helpful to others in school and the wider community, develop personal qualities valued in society, exercise leadership and responsibility, and engage in a range of activities requiring social skills.

Regarding Cultural Development, the school aims to help children understand their own social and cultural environment, appreciate social and cultural differences, and recognise the value of cultural diversity in Britain. Staff also introduce children to different cultural experiences, such as festivals and celebrations, and provide opportunities for children to explore artistic, sporting, and other cultural activities. The school also promotes community engagement and extends links with different cultural groups.

CENTRAL EXPERIENCES:

Our **central experiences** are at the heart of the curriculum and give children rich, meaningful learning that they remember and build upon. Children learn by *doing*: growing sunflowers and vegetables, observing a butterfly life cycle, caring for worms, exploring hydroponics, baking and preparing food safely using Montessori knives, and creating with real tools such as making a wooden robot or using a potter's wheel. They explore music by playing the djembe drum and learn about the wider world through visits to local places such as the park, place of worship and library. These experiences are not "add-ons"; they are carefully planned and deeply rooted in the curriculum to build **cultural capital**, widen horizons and connect learning to real life. Through these authentic experiences, children develop curiosity, confidence, vocabulary and a strong understanding of the world around them.

PHYSICAL

Children will learn to catch and throw a ball, climb and a rope ladder or tree and ride a bike. Through **Physical Development**, children build strength, coordination and confidence in a fun and supportive way. Activities such as catching and throwing a ball help children develop balance, hand–eye coordination and teamwork, while climbing a rope ladder or tree builds core strength, resilience and careful risk-taking. Adults support children to move safely, try again and feel proud of what their bodies can do. These experiences help children grow in confidence, develop perseverance and enjoy being active, supporting both their physical wellbeing and their readiness for learning.

LINKING TO CL, PD, PSED, KUW & PERSONNAL DEVELOPMENT

Executive Functioning

Executive Functioning – SEED

Executive Functioning supports children to develop the skills they need to manage their emotions, behaviour and learning. Through **SEED**, children learn how to focus, follow routines, regulate their bodies, reflect on their learning and work positively with others. This cornerstone is carefully woven through everyday practice and incorporates four key areas that together help children feel safe, settled and ready to learn.

Snack & Shared Meals (Regulation Readiness)

Snack and shared mealtimes support children's physical and emotional regulation. Children develop independence, practise social skills and learn predictable routines that help them feel calm and secure. Adults prepare children through clear expectations and language, supporting readiness to learn, while hydration awareness helps children understand how to care for their bodies.

Emotional & Behavioural Readiness

Children are supported through trauma-informed, nurturing approaches that recognise behaviour as communication. Sensory diets, movement-based experiences and Theraplay-informed practices, including *Calm and GLOW* and *Sunshine Calm and Connect Circles*, help children regulate emotions, build strong relationships and feel emotionally safe. These experiences support self-control, resilience and positive behaviour.

Evaluate Learning – 'Floor Book' Reviews

Children reflect on and revisit their learning through *floor book* reviews. This shared process helps children remember experiences, make connections and develop language, while building confidence and pride in their achievements. Reviewing learning supports early metacognition, helping children begin to understand how they learn.

Discovery Outdoors – Forest School Principles

Outdoor learning, rooted in Forest School principles, strengthens executive functioning through physical activity, exploration and play. Children develop coordination, creativity, teamwork and environmental awareness while building resilience and confidence. Learning outdoors supports emotional regulation and curiosity, helping children apply executive functioning skills in meaningful, real-life contexts.

HOW WE TEACH

We teach through a rich, play-based yet highly intentional curriculum that recognises children as capable, curious and motivated learners. Learning is enquiry-based, developing through carefully planned projects and investigations that grow from children's interests while being guided by clear end goals.

Skilled adults use observation, assessment and progressive teaching to ensure learning builds step by step, helping children deepen knowledge, extend vocabulary and develop key skills across all areas of learning.

Children are encouraged to ask questions, explore ideas and test their thinking through hands-on experiences, supported by thoughtful interactions and high-quality resources.

Floor books are used to capture children's voices, ideas and learning journeys, allowing children to reflect, revisit and make sense of their experiences while helping adults plan meaningful next steps.

Strong relationships, emotional security and consistent routines ensure children feel safe and confident to take risks in their learning.

Through this carefully sequenced and responsive approach, children make strong progress towards the end goals of the EYFS, developing confidence, independence, problem-solving skills and a genuine love of learning that prepares them well for the next stage.

COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE C&L

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures

PERSONAL, SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT PSED

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and

happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT PD

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and ***active lives7.*** Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

STATUTORY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

LITERACY LIT

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

MATHEMATICS Maths

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD UTW

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension

EXPRESSIVE ARTS & DESIGN EAD

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

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