



NURSERY Progression of Skills – a brief overview

All children are unique and develop at their own pace. However typically children follow a similar progression in the development of key skills and understanding. Staff are mindful of this as they interact with the children during the session.

Please also see our Progression of skills (or common play behaviours) for areas of the unit.

Area of Learning	Early Nursery	Mid Nursery	Later Nursery
COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE			
Listening, attending and understanding	Listens and engages with simple stories	Answers 'who' 'what' 'where' questions	Asks and answers 'why' questions
Speaking	Responds to simple questions with 1 or 2-word answers.	Uses longer phrases during play and in response to simple questions.	Can explain actions, thoughts and feelings using full sentences.
PERSONAL SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT			
Self-regulation	Leaves carer and plays in the unit but may need adult support. Understand the concept of happy or sad.	Follows the nursery routine more independently. Starts to name more complex feelings including angry, frightened, shocked.	Anticipates events and is able to say how they are feeling and understand how others might be feeling too.
Managing self	Goes to the toilet, washes hands and puts on coat with support.	Increasingly independent with personal needs.	Can wash and dry hands effectively, fasten coat, manage snack time and simple tasks independently
Building relationships	Plays alone or watches other children.	Plays alongside and may engage with others doing the same activity offering comments.	Plays cooperatively with other children, listening and responding to what they say and taking turns with the resources. May seek out particular friends
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT			
Gross motor skills	Enjoys running and chasing games but may struggle to swerve or stop. Is able to climb steps and may start to jump. Explores a variety of outdoor play equipment. Starts to catch and throw using balloons.	Moves with increasing control and is able to avoid obstacles. May start to hop, balance, kick and throw using large balls. Pedals a tricycle and may ride a balance bike. Uses a wide range of large and small scale movements during songs and rhymes	Moves with agility and control. May start to skip and ride a 2 wheeled bike. Can balance on one foot and hold a position for games like musical statues. Can carry planks and tyres with strength and control with awareness of safety. Begins to throw and catch with increasing accuracy.
Fine motor skills	Joins in with simple action songs and finger rhymes. May use whole hand grasp during play but developing a pincer grip to pick up small objects.	Increasingly uses a pincer grip during play e.g. in the small world area. Developing strength in hand and finger movements to use brushes and small tools such as rollers and cutters in the playdough area.	Uses a range of tools such as hole punches, scissors and screwdrivers with growing control. Starting to use a tripod grip to hold a pencil and learning to write their name with increasing control.
LITERACY			

Comprehension	Enjoys looking at books and understands its different parts e.g. words, pictures, front, back and spine	Enjoys books by themselves, can talk about characters and events in a story and predict what might happen next.	Can retell a simple story, recall events in some detail and understand simple cause and effect situations. Able to discuss characters, events and settings.
Word reading	Start to recognise their own picture and use it to identify their name-card, coat peg etc.	May recognise their name and some of its letters. Can use alliteration and knows when a word starts with the same sound. Starts to clap out the syllables in a word	Begins to write their name and possibly surname. Is aware of rhyming words and can continue a rhyming string. May enjoy sounding out simple words and using the correct grapheme to represent phonemes in words of their choosing.
Writing	Enjoys making marks with a wide variety of resources	Start to give meaning to marks they have made	Draw with purpose and increasing attention to detail. Increasingly use letters and words in their play.
MATHEMATICS			
Number	Uses words like 'one', 'lots', 'more' and 'none' during play. Subitise 1,2 and 3 items. Recite numbers correctly in songs and rhymes.	Knows the correct number order to 5 and says one number for each item when counting in play. Starts to use the language of position and comparison e.g. 'behind' 'taller'	Able to recognise numerals to 10 and match them to quantity. Compares quantities, shapes and properties of a wide variety of items using mathematical language.
Numerical patterns	Use words like 'spotty' and 'stripy' to describe patterns around them.	Identify, copy and continue some repeating patterns.	Create their own repeating patterns using movement, sound and concrete items, recognising when the pattern is incorrect.
UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD			
Past and present	Understands and is beginning to use the language of time such as 'before' 'after' 'now' and 'next'.	Sequences a story using 'first', 'then'. Can talk about special times for their family such as the birth of a new baby or special holiday	Begins to make sense of their own family's history and significant life events. Might start to use words like 'yesterday', tomorrow'.
People, cultures and communities	Talks about their family and things that have happened to them in the recent past. Explore different cultures through food, music, festivals, songs and stories	Talks about people and places in their locality. Begin to recognise that people may look, dress and behave differently and that is a good thing.	Talks about the things they see around them. Have a sense of places near and far and how they differ and how they are the same.
The natural world	Explore a range of natural materials using all of their senses. Sow seeds and plants with support. Observe the weather and seasons.	Talk about the differences between materials and changes they have seen in the weather and seasons. Show care and concern for living things and the environment e.g. watering plants or feeding the birds.	Begin to understand the needs of living things and give explanations about what they observe around them e.g.in the weather, seasons and natural world
EXPRESSIVE ARTS AND DESIGN			
Creating with materials	Freely explore a wide range of materials including clay, paints, glue and recycled packaging.	Learn a variety of joining skills and use them to create (or copy) simple pictures and models	Build and create with a purpose in mind. Decide how to do things and feel confident to try new ideas and express themselves.
Being imaginative and expressive	Engage in simple pretend play with small world resources. Enjoy songs music and dancing.	Create worlds and stories while playing with their friends. Explore sounds and music and how they can be changed.	Extend their play using props, sounds, and thinking of new ways to do things. Use instruments, crafts and movement to express their ideas and feelings.