Sheringham
Nursery School and
Children's Centre

Curriculum and assessment policy
Working draft, Autumn 2021

'In early years settings, the starting point must be the needs and characteristics of the child; the educator must assess these through observation and by collaborating with parents. The wide range of developmental stages and needs of very young children puts a great responsibility on educators to provide a curriculum which can take into account the similarities and differences within any group of under fives and also provide continuity with what went before and progression to what will follow.'

Starting with quality: the 'Rumbold Report' 1990

Our Curriculum

For most of the time, children at Sheringham are engaged in exploration and play-based learning which is well-resourced and well-supported.

This learning does not have immediate fixed outcomes. But practitioners are mindful of the outcomes we want children to reach, and guide children towards them.

Children have significant choice and independence as they play. This supports their developing confidence, independence, collaboration, persistence and self-regulation.

Exploration and play-based learning can be chosen entirely by the child or can be guided by the practitioners in a playful way. Children need both options.

Practitioners have a key role in supporting this learning by developing episodes of joint adult/child attention and listening to the children and developing conversations with them. Practitioners gently challenge children's thinking. They provide suggestions and resources over time which make the learning more challenging. They use new vocabulary naturally and repeatedly, so children use and learn those words. As practitioners interact with the children minute-by-minute, they are reflecting on how their interactions can support further learning.

Everything is underpinned by support for children's confidence and emotional wellbeing.

This is all crucial for the children. But it's not enough.

Children also need adult-guided learning and direct teaching to learn key skills and concepts. They need to learn new words which are not present in everyday speech ('tier 2 vocabulary'). For example, to count to five, a child needs to learn to:

- develop fast recognition of up to 3 objects, without having to count them individually ('subitising')
- recite numbers past 5
- say one number for each item in order: 1,2,3,4,5
- know that the last number reached when counting a small set of objects tells you how many there are in total ('cardinal principle')
- show 'finger numbers' up to 5
- link numerals and amounts: for example, showing the right number of objects to match the numeral, up to 5

That's why curriculum is important in the early years.

By 'curriculum' we mean: all the things that we want children to know, experience and be able to do as a result of their time at nursery. The top priority in our curriculum is communication and vocabulary.

We have an inclusive curriculum. Every child can access our curriculum, with extra help when needed. We call this help 'scaffolding' and we aim to 'scaffold up' to our inclusive curriculum rather than give children with SEND a watered-down, differentiated curriculum.

We have adopted the definition of learning as a change in long-term memory. If a child can't remember and retrieve what they have learnt, then they haven't learnt it at all. It's important that a child's learning is secure before moving onto new concepts or skills. Secure learning is more important than covering lots of things superficially.

We have adopted the definition of progress as 'knowing more and remembering more', not moving from one 'age band' to the next in a tracker.

When we think about the curriculum, we consider 'components' and 'composites'.

Components are secure, small building blocks of learning. In the example about counting, a component is subitising up to 3. Composites are the coming-together of components into a skilled performance – like counting accurately up to 5.

To use another example: you don't train to do a marathon by running lots of marathons. You focus on components: shorter runs, strength-building exercises, good nutrition, etc. All of those components support you to achieve the composite: running a marathon.
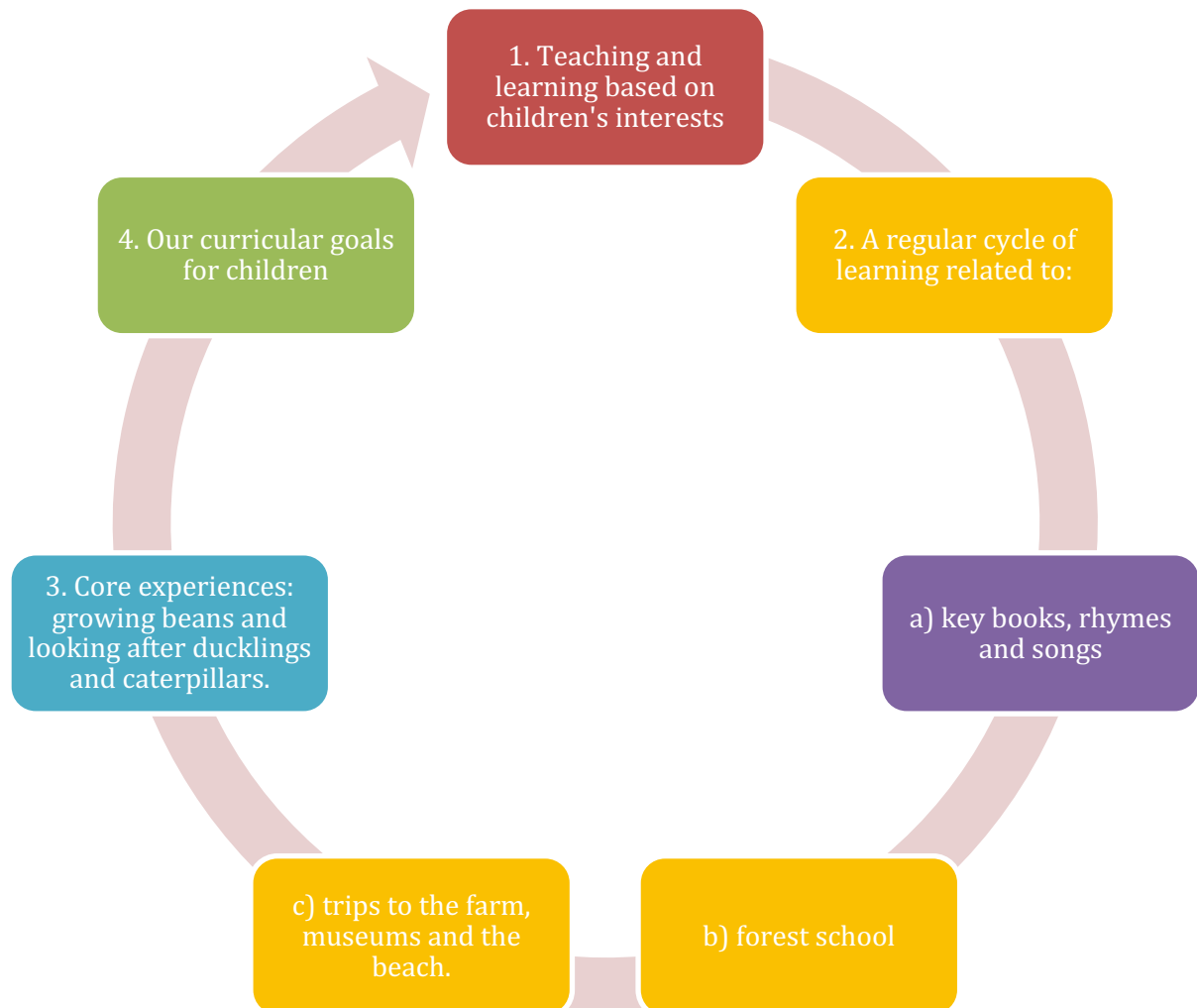

This [adapted quotation](#) from the American National Association for the Educating of Young Children (NAEYC) neatly sums up a lot of important ideas which our policy builds on. It's a discussion of Ann Epstein's book, *The Intentional Teacher.*

> An intentional teacher acts with knowledge and purpose to ensure that young children acquire the knowledge and skills (content) they need to succeed in school and in life. Intentional teaching does not happen by chance. It is planful, thoughtful, and purposeful. Intentional teachers use their knowledge, judgment, and expertise to organize learning experiences for children; when an unplanned situation arises (as it always does), they can recognize a teaching opportunity and take advantage of it, too.
>
> Intentional teaching means teachers act with specific outcomes or goals in mind for all domains of children's development and learning. "Academic" domains (literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies) as well as what have traditionally been considered early learning domains (social and emotional, cognitive, physical, and creative development) all consist of important knowledge and skills that young children want and need to master. Intentional teachers, therefore, integrate and promote meaningful learning in all domains.

Curriculum Overview

We offer a high quality broad and balanced curriculum which has four main elements:

1. Teaching and learning based on children's interests

2. A regular cycle of learning related to:

a) key books, rhymes and songs

b) forest school

c) trips to the farm, museums and the beach.

3. Core experiences: growing beans and looking after ducklings and caterpillars.

4. Our curricular goals for children

1. Teaching and learning based on children's interests	All aspects of our curriculum require practitioners to be flexible and take account of children's interests. This is especially true of the first element.
2. A regular cycle of learning **3. Core experiences: growing beans and looking after ducklings and caterpillars.** **4. Our curricular goals for children**	All aspects of our curriculum have a 'progress model'. When we are building on children's interests, we are planning to broaden or deepen those interests. But the 'progress model' is especially true of the second, third and fourth elements. For example, our cycle of 'Key books, songs and rhymes' begins with very simple, repetitive books, songs and rhymes. Over time, children progress onto books with more complex vocabulary and structures. They progress onto rhymes and songs with more complex vocabulary and rhythms. We have a high mobility rate and children arrive at different points in the year. For mid-year arrivals, the curriculum is modified to meet their needs (e.g. focusing on simpler rhymes and books in the early weeks).

Learning at Sheringham Nursery School

- Learning is play-based and takes place indoors and outside.
- There is a balance between adult-initiated experiences (guided learning) and child-initiated experiences.
- Adults take children's interests and strengths as a starting point, seeing each child as a competent learner.
- Parent involvement is crucial. We learn a great deal about each child from their parents. Parental support and a high-quality home learning environment make a huge difference to children.

We designed our curriculum with the particular strengths and needs of the children of Manor Park in mind. For example, many children are multilingual: we celebrate the different languages children speak, and staff use a range of languages when interacting with children. We also put a strong focus on helping children to learn English. Many children live in overcrowded housing. We offer lots of learning outdoors to build children's confidence and physical strength and coordination, for example through Forest School.

The goals are ambitious. They provide an overview of many of the different things we would like children to know and be able to do.

The goals are adaptable to the particular children on roll. We offer scaffolding and extra support to help every child to access the curriculum and to ensure they make progress through it. Practitioners sensitively reduce their support so that children become more independent in their learning.
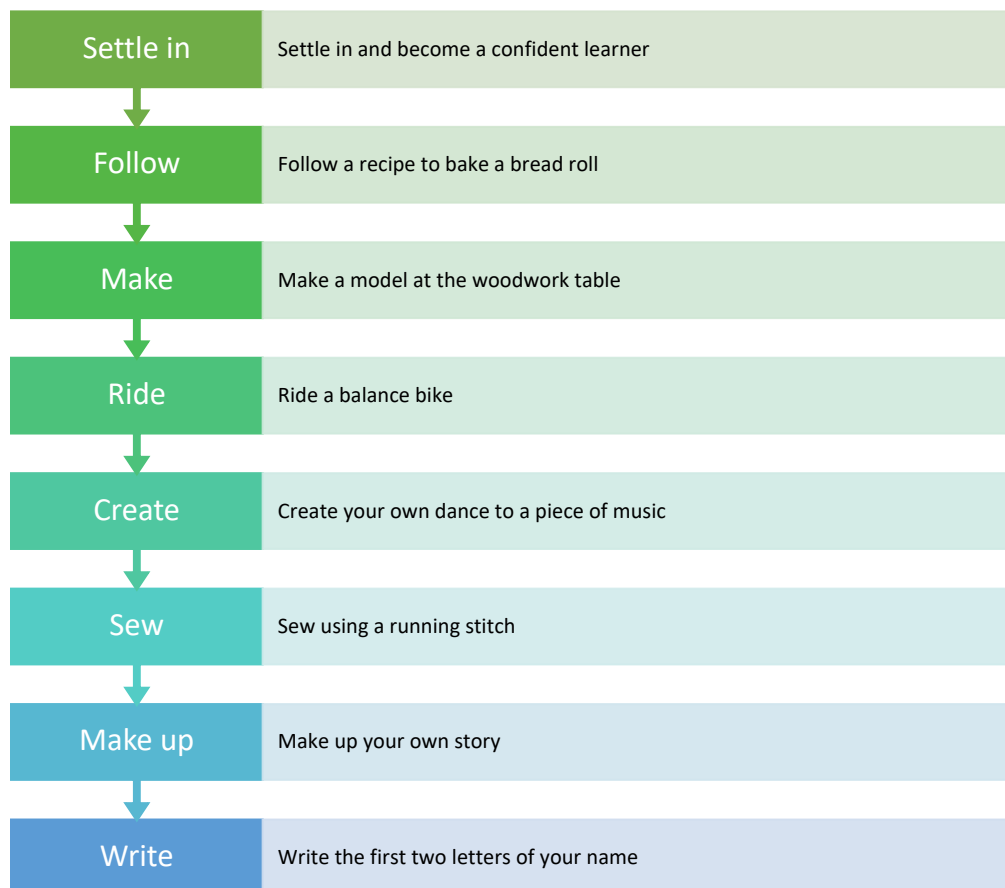
We recognise that every child will not make the same progress through the curricular goals. Many children will learn to bake bread. For some children with complex needs, managing to tolerate the feel of flour and water, and mix it together to make playdough, will represent strong progress. All of those children are participating in the same curriculum.

Stages of scaffolding
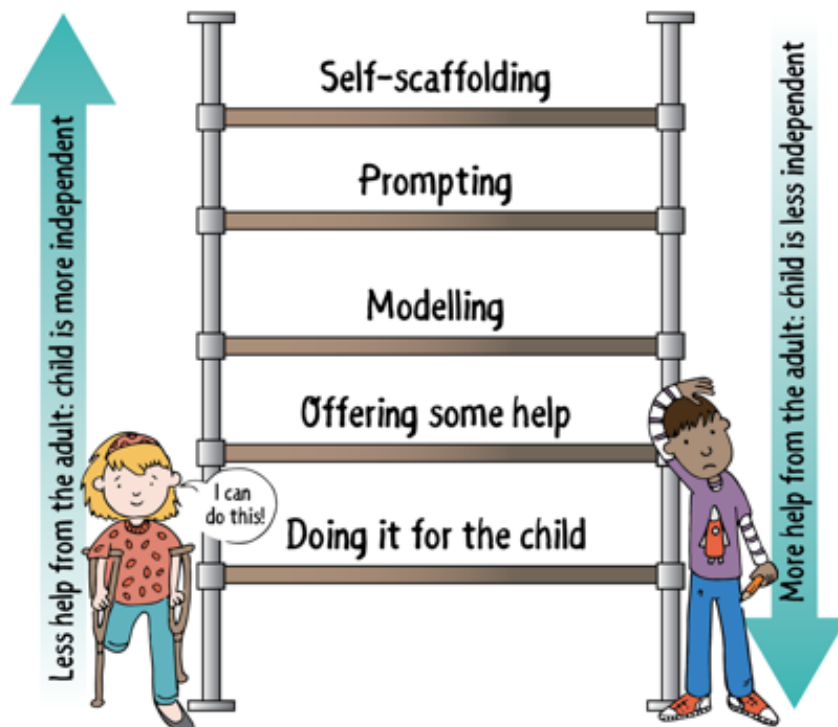
Where children move on quickly, our emphasis is on deepening their learning rather than introducing new skills or concepts. For example, a child may follow different recipe cards to make different types of bread, and may help other children.

Our 8 curricular goals

Settle in	Settle in and become a confident learner
Follow	Follow a recipe to bake a bread roll
Make	Make a model at the woodwork table
Ride	Ride a balance bike
Create	Create your own dance to a piece of music
Sew	Sew using a running stitch
Make up	Make up your own story
Write	Write the first two letters of your name

Curricular goals are shared with parents throughout the year. We designed them as a result of consultations with our parent group. Their clarity helps parents to get involved and support their children's learning at home.

We regularly review our curriculum and the resources we use. In the words of Bennie Kara, we want a curriculum that includes 'meaningful and culturally diverse material' and which 'usualises and commemorates diversity'.

Case study of a child with SEND and the curricular goals

Tara was a very energetic girl with a diagnosis of Autism. She loved to run around, climb and jump, and because of her sensory processing difficulties, she could not stay still for longer than a minute. She did not engage with peers and was very self-directed, often pushing children out of her way.

Through discussions with her parents, we discovered that she loved music. At home, she would spend a long time sitting on the sofa and watching her iPad, listening to one song after the other. This was the only instance where she would stay focused. We jointly decided with Tara's parents, that we would like to focus

on curricular goal five. Her parents recognised the earlier steps as being something they would like her to achieve, particularly to develop her PSED.

With specialist support, we engaged Tara in Intensive Interaction with her key person, developing the fundaments of her communication. She began to be more responsive to people games and rhymes such as "if you're happy and you know it." Tara started to bang the drum too instead of clapping her hands, thinking of different ways to join in. We also noticed her moving her body rhythmically to her favourite song 'Baby Shark'. We shared some of these strategies with parents at home. Very soon, music and dance became the main activity that would maintain Tara's attention for up to five minutes which was a very exciting milestone.

Soon after, we encouraged a peer to join in with the specialist music interaction, and we played Tara's favourite songs in the company of her peers in the garden. Through careful scaffolding up, Tara was dancing alongside her peers. She loved to watch her peers shake and wave the ribbons, and very soon, she started to have a go too. Tara loved to spin the ribbon when she heard a certain part of the song, therefore using props to create different actions. Tara's parents and the nursery were so pleased by how she had reached such milestones in her PSED and creativity. At home, they also noticed a difference in her interactions which were more sustained. Tara had a brilliant birthday party filled with music and dance and a few friends - something that her parents thought would never be achievable.

Planning and assessment

In the first term, the majority of our planning is focused on the three prime areas. These are communication, self-confidence and awareness and physical health.

Key people spend quality time getting to know their key children and their families.

This trusting relationship helps children to settle into nursery and grow in confidence in their new environment. Our assessment starts with home visits and a five-day settling-in and starting points assessment.

Home Visits

Every child is offered a home visit or video call via Zoom if the home visit is not possible. The key purpose of the home visit is to establish a respectful partnership with the parents and a strong relationship with the child, so it's important to avoid asking too many questions. During the home visit and settling-in period, the key person asks parents to share information about their child's interests, communication, confidence and physical health. The key person will use the information shared by parents to add to the child's starting points document. They will also build the child's interests into the planning of the provision.

5-Day assessments

Practitioners meet with parents after their child has had five sessions in nursery. They discuss how the child has settled in and what they have observed. This is a snapshot of a child's starting points and is a joint assessment with the parents of the child. The key purpose of this assessment is to check that the child can access our curriculum. Where there are barriers to taking part, the practitioner may refer to the checkpoints in *Development Matters* before discussing concerns with their team leader, SENCO and the parent. Where children have barriers to taking part, we need to work together to help them over those barriers. Overall, this assessment informs the discussion with parents about how well their child is settling.

If children settle quickly and engage in a wide range of play in their first five days, there will be no need to set out 'next steps'. Next steps from children's starting points are usually linked to how the children have settled into nursery or anything of significance e.g. toilet training.

Once children have settled and can access the nursery environment, we begin thinking with more detail about how they will access the curriculum and we support learning around their interests. For the children who settle quickly and are confident, especially those who were in the two-year-old provision, we can move into using the wider curricular goals quickly.

If we notice that a child might be having difficulties with their development, we will act quickly. It is important that we get to know and understand these 'vulnerable starters' so we will spend time observing them closely and reflecting on what we notice. We will continue to develop a strong relationship with their parents, supporting them to also give their child the extra help they need. The curriculum for these children will remain ambitious and inclusive. It is important that we focus on support, scaffolding and helping children overcome barriers to their learning.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

For children with SEND, precise assessment needs to focus on what the child can do, and what the barriers to their learning are. If a child has specific difficulties with their communication, for example, they may need to have aids like a core vocabulary board so that they can make choices and share their ideas. All children are entitled to the whole of the early years curriculum. Of course, they won't all manage to do and know everything that's mapped out: but some who appear vulnerable at first may thrive later in the year.

Rather than 'differentiating down', we believe that 'scaffolding up' is a more suitable approach in our commitment to inclusion. By 'scaffolding up', children with SEND are exposed to the concepts and skills in our wider curriculum in a suitable breadth and depth. Whereas 'differentiating down' suggests that children with SEND have limited access to the curriculum. Our commitment to 'scaffolding up' means that children are included in the wider curriculum and are not segregated from their peers.

Example of 'scaffolding up'

Lee was born with a chromosome deletion and was later diagnosed with Autism. He loved to play outdoors, draw and piece together lego. When he was upset, threading pasta through string helped to regulate him. He would proudly take these home. We linked this interest to our curricular goal number six. We introduced Lee to different ways of weaving such as outdoors on large frames using ribbon and indoors on paper frames. Lee was a skilled climber, and continued to develop his upper body strength.

During time with his keyperson, Lee learnt how to hold a needle and thread the floss through the eye of the needle too. He began threading onto Binka too. This required a great deal of concentration, yet we noticed that Lee found this activity very calming and regulating. He could persist despite distractions. Lee actively sought out this activity during the session, and when not in sight, he would request the activity using his core vocabulary board and a visual.

Overtime, Lee was threading onto Binka using different colours. His favourite colour was blue and so shades of blue were his preference. He also liked to thread on the edges of his Binka and create frames. Whilst initially Lee needed adult support, by the end of the year, he was very independent at doing this.

Therefore rather than adapting the activity so that it was SEND specific, by scaffolding up, the wider curriculum was made accessible to Lee – and the results were fantastic.

Assessment and tracking overview

We are not driven by assessment and tracking. Assessment serves children's learning and our curriculum.

Most assessment is formative, so that it quickly helps us to make a difference to children's learning. However, we also need to have an overview of children's progress, so that we can take further actions where needed, and so we can monitor equalities. Our aim is for the system to be proportionate, and to ensure it is not overly burdensome.

Overview documents and milestones:

- Children needing extra help and/or family early help, identified during the settling-in period. We review this document the week before half term in teams and in the Room Leader meeting.
- End of term 1: complete Toolbox assessments and use the information to inform a professional decision about children needing extra support. Room Leader discussion: are there groups of children at risk of poor outcomes?
- End of term 2: second Toolbox assessment

The key purposes of Tapestry are:

- to promote the partnership with parents in support of children's learning. This involves us finding out about significant learning at home, and us sharing significant learning with families
- to support children to reflect on their own learning, using the child login

We do not use Tapestry to create a comprehensive overview of everything a child has learnt.

Room leaders check that all parents are logged into Tapestry, unless they have chosen to decline. They check monthly that parents who need extra help to use the system get the support they need. They check that there is ongoing dialogue with every family about the child's learning and development.

Our objectives:

- Dialogue with parents, so that we can work in a respectful partnership to support children's learning at home and in the nursery. This dialogue is underpinned by sharing and discussing *What to expect in the early years foundation stage: a guide for parents* which we produced for the Department for Education

- Dialogue with children, focused on how they learn, to promote metacognitive thinking
- Early identification of children who need temporary extra help, and children who may have special educational needs
- Checking that individual children, and groups of children, are making progress and taking prompt action where this is not the case
- Reporting formally to parents and to the receiving reception teacher in the summer so that children can continue their learning journey through the EYFS as seamlessly as possible.
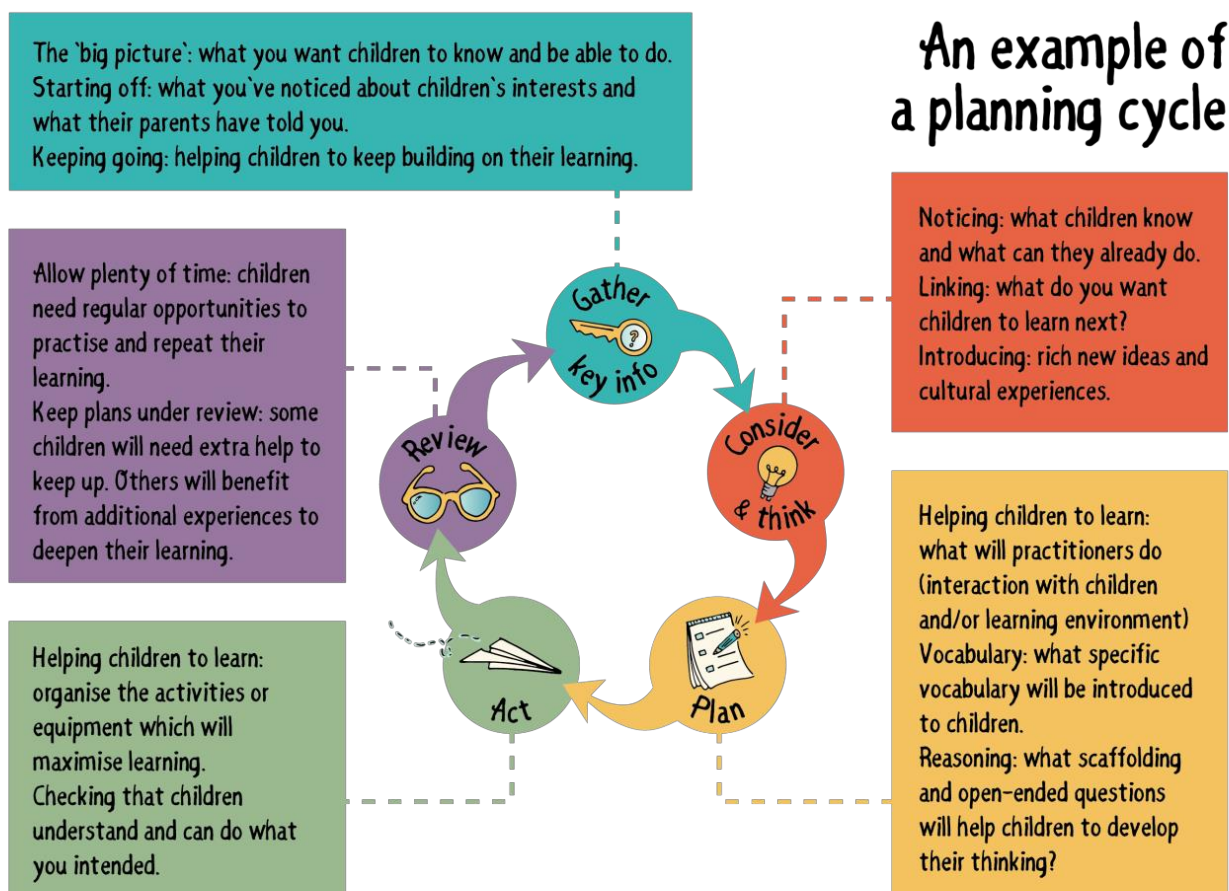
Activity	Key features of the activity	Planned outcomes
AUTUMN TERM		
5-day assessment	Co-written with the parent Will include next steps in settling-in, if needed	Most children will be on the 'universal' pathway, accessing the curriculum with appropriate scaffolding and support. Some children will be on the 'universal plus' pathway, eg: Early Help for their family, Box Clever to support their language etc. Some children will be referred to the SENDCo to assess whether they have emerging needs.
Two-year old check	This is integrated into the 5-day assessment.	Where possible this is a multi-agency check including the Health Visitor, ASQ2 assessment, and the Best Start in Life Practitioner.
Learning Journal (Tapestry)	These observations should be based on significant learning related to the child's interests, our cycle of learning, core experiences or the curricular goals. Observations should also show how children are persisting with difficulties, ignoring distractions (self-regulation) and what children say about their learning (metacognition). Children will be supported to reflect on their learning with child login Parents will be supported to login and share significant learning from home It may show barriers to learning as well as strengths.	These observations help us to develop the partnership with parents and to celebrate the child's learning. These observations always include a focus on the three Prime Areas of learning.
Toolbox Assessment (all children) **Checkpoint Assessment (targeted)**	iPad-based assessment of the child's communication and maths. The Child Self-Regulation and Behaviour Questionnaire (CSBQ) will be targeted.	The age-related assessment information from Toolbox helps to inform our professional judgement about children's progress and wellbeing: ● Universal: accessing the curriculum and making sound progress ● Universal plus: needing more support in nursery and/or at home to make sound progress. ● Emerging needs: more fine-grained assessment work is

		needed to check whether the child may have a special educational need and benefit from adaptations to the curriculum/environment or extra staff support

The analysis of this assessment information helps us to monitor equalities.

The CSBQ helps us to identify children who may need extra support with the social and emotional development. This may include family support e.g. Triple P Parenting or Early Help.

Where a key person is concerned about a child's progress, the 'checkpoints' will help them to form a judgement about whether the child needs extra support (universal plus or emerging needs) in one or more of the prime areas. |
| **Progress day meeting** | We meet with every parent to celebrate the child's learning. We summarise and evaluate how we are working together in partnership and agree on what we will do next. This is stated plainly and briefly, in the form of a SMART target that helps all parties to work together.

This information is woven into the Tapestry entries so parents have joint access and ownership.

This discussion may include an exploration of a child's barriers to learning and how we can work together to help the child overcome these. | This discussion is central to our partnership approach. We ensure that parents are kept fully informed. We act in the best interests of every child. Our approach is open, honest, supportive and accountable. |

SPRING TERM		
Learning Journal 2	As above.	Teachers and senior leaders continue to review progress of children in the 'universal plus' and 'emerging needs' groups. Additional assessment tools may be used if appropriate e.g. Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, Universally Speaking.
Spring 2		
Toolbox Assessment 2 (all children) **Checkpoint Assessment 2 (targeted)**	As above. CSBQ only for children whose families have accessed Triple P or other Early Help, so that we can check impact.	This information helps us to review children in the Universal, Universal Plus and emerging needs groups. It helps us to review equalities.
Progress Day 2	As above	
SUMMER TERM		
Summer 1		
Learning Journal 3	As above.	
Summer 2		
Progress day 3 and summative report	Focus is on progress, access to the curriculum, and any barriers to learning identified and how these have been overcome. Includes parent voice and child voice.	This supports the child's transition into reception. It helps reception teachers to be ready for children with barriers to their learning.

Assessment and planning

Our planning cycle

The 'big picture': what you want children to know and be able to do.
Starting off: what you've noticed about children's interests and what their parents have told you.
Keeping going: helping children to keep building on their learning.

An example of a planning cycle

Noticing: what children know and what can they already do.
Linking: what do you want children to learn next?
Introducing: rich new ideas and cultural experiences.

Allow plenty of time: children need regular opportunities to practise and repeat their learning.
Keep plans under review: some children will need extra help to keep up. Others will benefit from additional experiences to deepen their learning.

Gather key info

Review

Consider & think

Act

Plan

Helping children to learn: what will practitioners do (interaction with children and/or learning environment)
Vocabulary: what specific vocabulary will be introduced to children.
Reasoning: what scaffolding and open-ended questions will help children to develop their thinking?

Helping children to learn: organise the activities or equipment which will maximise learning.
Checking that children understand and can do what you intended.

Figure 3: An example of a planning and review cycle in the early years

Planning will always include new vocabulary, beyond the everyday words children hear and use. Practitioners introduce those new words naturally and repeat them whilst interacting with the children, so that children use the new vocabulary confidently. It is important to be conversational, rather than hammering new words.

Assessment

One of the most powerful forms of assessment takes place in the here-and-now, not on-screen or in learning journeys. This is when we notice something important about a child's learning and respond to it to help them build their learning. That response can take different forms – we might:

- stand back and be encouraging;
- get involved to extend the learning, by joining in with the play, engaging in a conversation, or showing the child a specific skill to help them accomplish what they want to do;
- reflect afterwards and bring in new resources or plan something special in response to what we noticed.

This type of assessment work is not written down. It often focuses on the key milestones on the way to the curricular goals. It shows how we can assess what children know and can do, and help them to progress, through our minute-by-minute interactions.

Examples of assessment in the here-and-now

Adam was using the wooden spoon to stir a lumpy mixture of water and flour. For the first time, he tentatively put his fingers into the mixture to feel it. His key person sat near him and smiled encouragingly. A few moments later, she took some of the mixture out and kneaded it. Adam watched her doing this and pressed the mixture a few times with his fingers. This helped Adam, a child with an ASD, towards achieving the first milestone in the goal of baking bread.
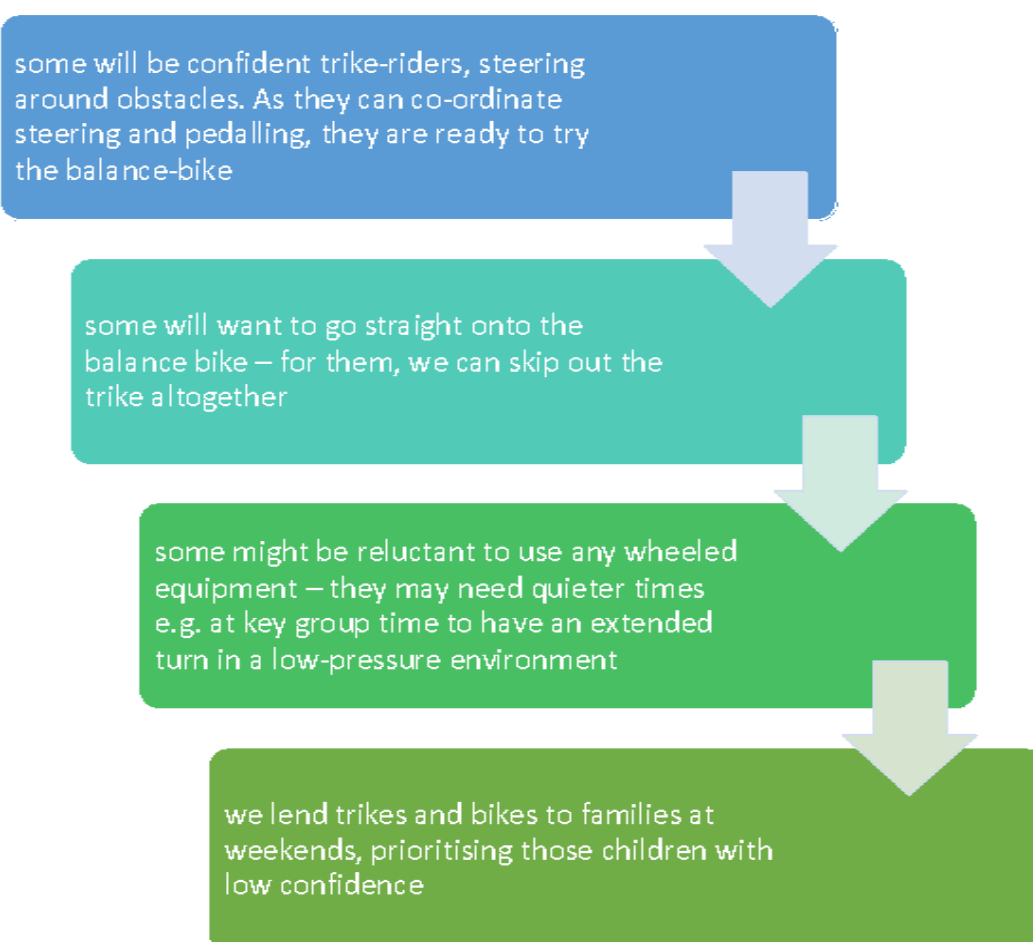
Shopna was playing in the home corner, stirring a pot with some conkers in it. Her key person joined in with the play. They had a long conversation about how Shopna's mum makes dhal. Then her key person pretended to be the child in the family and Shopna served up dinner. After dinner, her key person noticed that Shopna had used up all the lentils and the onions, so she encouraged her to write a shopping list. This helped Shopna towards achieving the second milestone in the goal of writing the first two letters of her name.

Peter wanted to join wheels onto a small block of wood to make a car. The practitioner with him showed him how to grip the block of wood in the vice and then hammer a nail in to secure the wheel. She hammered one nail in whilst he watched. Then she talked him through all the steps so he hammered in the second nail. Peter hammered the other two nails in completely independently. This helped Peter towards the third milestone in the goal of making a model at the woodwork table.

Jamila played with the small world dinosaurs for most of the morning. Reflecting on what she had observed, her key person set up a much larger area for dinosaur play the following day, supported with books about dinosaurs. The next day, during Jamila's play, they looked at some of the model dinosaurs and found them in the books. Jamila was interested to learn about what they ate, and she memorised their names. This deepened Jamila's learning about animals, linked to the core experiences of seeing ducklings hatch and the lifecyle of the butterfly.

An example of different pathways children might take to achieve the curricular goal of learning to ride a bike (goal 4)

some will be confident trike-riders, steering around obstacles. As they can co-ordinate steering and pedalling, they are ready to try the balance-bike

some will want to go straight onto the balance bike – for them, we can skip out the trike altogether

some might be reluctant to use any wheeled equipment – they may need quieter times e.g. at key group time to have an extended turn in a low-pressure environment

we lend trikes and bikes to families at weekends, prioritising those children with low confidence

The focus of our assessment is on clear and specific things that a child needs to be able to do, or needs to know. In order to do this practitioners need to understand how the different elements of the curriculum fit together to help children build their learning over time. Reflective discussions about practitioners' key children after school and during planning meetings support this understanding.

Practitioners also need to have a secure understanding of child development, as well as the features of effective pedagogy. This will help with judging when to get involved and when to encourage and knowing how to scaffold children's learning so we support them to keep trying without over-helping them.

Some children will need a lot more help and scaffolding to access that curriculum. This is a strength of the practitioners at Sheringham Nursery. We will notice what children can and can't do. We are good at deciding when it will be helpful to step in and support, and when it's best to be encouraging but hang back. It is important that we are certain that children are secure in what they know and can do, before introducing them to something new.

Key people will bring important observations of their key children to our weekly planning meetings and we will then think about this observation as a team. It's an important opportunity to learn from each other about the children and their development.

At the meeting the practitioner talks about their observations and what they think it shows about the child. We discuss what the child knows, what they can do, and any barriers to learning. In collaboration with the team the practitioner then decides what action to take next in order to support the child's learning. We will discuss things like; what is going to help develop this child's learning, broaden their horizons, help them through this difficulty, give them more of what they need so that they can become an expert.

The majority of assessment and responsive action or teaching will happen in the here-and-now. Discussions at planning often involve talking about the actions practitioners had already taken, how successful they were and what will happen next.

This responsive action is often linked to the provision planning. For example we may plan to keep a particular part of the provision the same to allow the child more time to explore and master a skill, or if the practitioner decides that a child has reached a particular milestone in a curricular goal we might introduce a new resource that allows the child to progress on to the next stage of learning. We might also plan for a part of the provision that is linked to a child's particular fascination. Our plans are flexible to ensure both curricular and child-initiated learning are included. Where learning is child-initiated, practitioners are mindful of the longer-term outcomes children need to achieve, and sensitively guide the learning towards them.

Room leaders must ensure that all children are discussed at least once a term. We spend the most time thinking about and planning for children who are at risk of not making progress. We also think about children who are in danger of being unchallenged. This focus on challenge is beneficial for all children as it creates an exciting learning climate in nursery. Room leaders take this information and turn it into weekly plans, which allow for flexibility and adaptation.

Practitioners record significant observations in Tapestry. The aim of these records is to 'bring the child's learning to life' and engage parents in their child's learning. Observations should show significant examples of the child's learning related to the child's interests, our cycle of learning, core experiences or the curricular goals. Observations should also show how children are:
- developing conversations and using new vocabulary
- persisting with difficulties, ignoring distractions (self-regulation)
- talking about their thinking and learning (metacognition)

The teaching input will also be documented. The entry will describe what the practitioner did to support or extend the child's learning and how the child responded. We will include the child's voice.

Metacognition and Feedback

Practitioners are skilled in modelling metacognitive thinking for children and this in turn helps children to develop a growth mindset.

Metacognitive thinking enables children to talk more specifically about thinking in different contexts. It enables children to use a plan do review approach in their learning. They become independent and more powerful learners. This in turn supports their approach to managing their own learning later in their school years.

A practical example of this is:

- Child A is trying to build a tower using the blocks. The tower is wobbly and keeps falling down.
- Practitioner comments by saying "Oh no, it has fallen down. I wonder why that happened?" This enables the child to think about why the tower has fallen rather than continuing with the same strategy.
- Child comments by saying "It is too wobbly."
- Practitioner responds by saying "I wonder why it is wobbly. Let's have a look at the shape of the blocks you have used."
- Child looks closely at the shape of the blocks whilst the practitioner talks to the child about this. The practitioner asks "What do you think you need to do differently?"
- If the child doesn't know then the practitioner could model this by building their own tower alongside the child using the blocks. Practitioner thinks aloud to model this process. Practitioner says "I need to make sure I balance these blocks one on top of the other to make my tower sturdy."
- The child manages to build a tower that is sturdy. The practitioner provides instant feedback by saying "That is amazing. You took your time to look at the way you were placing the blocks and worked out that you needed similar shapes and kept trying until you built the tower."

The majority of our assessment of children's learning is done through feedback in the here-and-now. Feedback is a powerful minute by minute assessment tool. The Education Endowment Foundation'sTeaching and Learning Toolkit (2021) shows that feedback has the most impact on children's progress out of all the approaches listed.

Feedback can be seen as giving information to the learner, about their progress towards a goal or outcome, to help them improve. The curriculum (key skills, attitudes or concepts) gives the scaffold for the feedback we want to give.

For an interaction to be feedback, it needs to make a difference to children's learning. It might look like this:

- A practitioner interprets what a child does or says (*What does this tell us about the child's learning needs or level of development? Assessment in the moment*)

- This information enables the practitioner to give feedback that changes the child's approach (*what do they need to do differently to make progress with their skills or understanding?*)

Sustained Shared Thinking (SST) is a form of feedback with a focus on exploring solutions to problems. In SST, a child and another person (generally an adult) 'work together in an intellectual way to find a solution for a problem, clarify a concept, extend a narrative, evaluate activities, etc. Both parties should contribute to the thinking, and it must develop and extend the understanding.' (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002, p. 8). SST is powerful, and only needs to happen occasionally.

Most children who are making sound progress do not need frequent diagnostic feedback. We can focus our attention on children who are struggling with their learning. For these children we need to be curious about why they are struggling and offer sustained support and feedback.

For older children we can also use feedback with elements of critique. This is descriptive feedback that includes honest comments about their work. Here it is about giving kind but precise feedback that helps them to reflect on and develop their learning.

Specific praise is helpful. Supporting children to look carefully at their work and see if it can be improved, is even better. This feedback needs to be age appropriate and tailored specifically to the child. It is important to ensure that the feedback is kind, specific, helpful and related to the work, not the child.

Supporting children to give and receive feedback teaches them that effort and revision are valuable and that the things they do can be improved. This develops the mindset of continuous improvement.

A powerful example of feedback in critique is shown in the short film Austin's Butterfly, with kindergarten children from Presumpscot Elementary School in Portland, America.
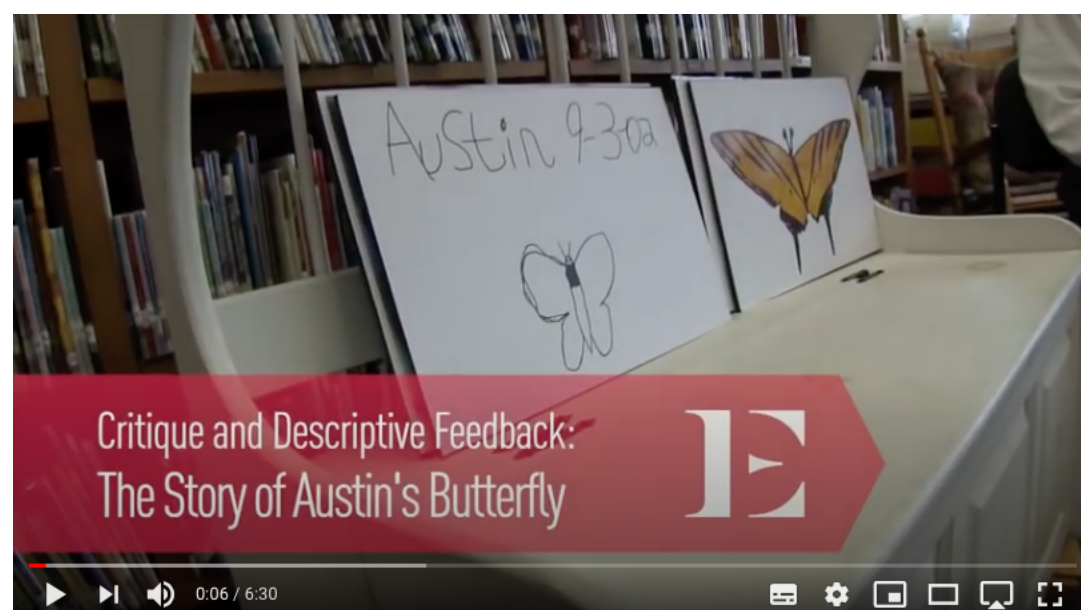
Our 8 curricular goals

1. Settle in and become a confident learner	
First milestone: children make a strong relationship with their key person. Increasingly, they separate confidently from their parent at the start of the session and become involved in their play. They use their key person as a 'secure base' throughout the session, 'touching base' as/when needed.	Where children need individualised and additional help, this will be offered promptly. Help includes: individual meetings with parents to map a way forward; Early Help support for parenting; Triple P parenting.
	As children grow in confidence, their involvement in nursery activities deepens. They explore a wider range of activities. They play for longer periods of time. They play alongside friends. They play collaboratively. They develop their pretend play.
Component	Spend 3 hours in nursery, managing their emotions with support.
Second milestone: children take part in pretend play, communicating and negotiating with their friends.	As children's engagement and perseverance grows, they either challenge themselves with more difficult activities, or they respond positively to adults challenging them.
Component	Spend 5 minutes or more in pretend play with another child/ren
Third milestone: children persevere with difficulties. They make comments about their learning and play in Tapestry. They show pleasure/pride in what they have done.	Children play and learn more collaboratively, over longer time periods. They take part in more challenging activities. They talk about and reflect on their learning.
Component	Talk about what they are doing or have done, using the words 'thinking' or 'learning'
Final milestone (composite): children reflect on their learning, through their Special Books. They comment on their 'thinking' and the ways they go about their learning. They reflect on what helps them to persevere through difficulties and what helps them when they find things hard. Children talk about what they and others are learning and thinking (metacognition).	
Tier 2 vocabulary: co-operate, eventually, refine, persistent	

2. Follow a recipe to bake a bread roll

First milestone: with adult support, children mix different ingredients, including: sand and water, and flour and water to make simple playdough. They use the following tools: wooden spoons, sieves, scoops, rolling pins, cookie cutters and knives. They mix substances outside in areas such as the mud kitchen.	As children take part in these activities, they become more precise in using scoops (filling the scoop carefully to the top); they count the scoops as they tip them out; they use a wide range of different-sized buckets, tins and other containers. Children become confident in using tools at the snack table to prepare their own snack e.g., spreading butter on toast.
Component	Mix 2 substances together using tools.
Second milestone: in a small group, children follow the steps in making a chapati with an adult. The adult draws children's attention to the recipe card. With adult scaffolding, children use measures (teaspoon, tablespoon, cup etc) and tip in the ingredients. With adult scaffolding, they knead the flour until it becomes soft and cover it. With adult scaffolding, they roll the dough into small balls and flatten. They help to cook these and reflect on the process.	As children become more used to cooking, the adult reduces their support for the group. Children also mix other substances together carefully, with adult guidance, e.g., mixing water and powder paint.
Component	Follow all the steps in the recipe card, with support.
Third milestone: In small group cooking activities, children follow the steps in making a bread roll with an adult. They independently fill measures carefully to the top (teaspoon, tablespoon, cup etc). They recognise the numerals in the recipe card. When they count out quantities (e.g., 3 teaspoons of salt) they say the numbers in the correct order (1-2-3) and the know that the last number they say (3) is the total number of spoonfuls they have added.	As children become more independent, there is minimal adult support as they follow recipe cards and follow paint-mixing cards.
Component	Fill measures accurately to the top.

Final milestone (composite): children follow the steps of a recipe independently. They measure ingredients, mix them and create their own bread roll by placing the mixture onto a greased proof tray ready to be baked.

Tier 2 vocabulary: predict, precise, accurate, instructions, sequence, knead

3. Make a model at the woodwork table

First milestone: Children explore using one handed tools such as: one-handed scissors, knives to spread/cut and wooden spoons to stir/pour.	With adult support, children learn how to use these tools correctly and understand their use. Children begin to understand how to use tools safely and are supported to do so by the adults. Children take part in junk modelling and use scissors and Sellotape to join things together.
Component	Grip a tool and control its movement.
Second milestone: children confidently use one handed tools to create changes in materials e.g. Use a peeler at forest school to whittle the bark of a stick.	As children grow in confidence they are introduced to the woodwork tools and shown how to use these safely. They access the woodwork bench and explore using some tools with adult support e.g. hammering nails into pieces of soft wood.
Component	Control a tool safely and change a material.
Third milestone: children have repeated experiences at the woodwork bench. They think about what they are creating and how they want it to look e.g. "I'm making a car, it has four wheels." They are introduced to more tools and how to use these safely.	With support children use tools such as: hammers, hand drills, screw drivers, saws and the glue gun safely and with increasing confidence. They have an idea of what they want to make and how they want it to look.
Component	Talk about what they plan to make, in advance or during the making.

Final milestone (composite): children decide on the model they will make. They choose the materials they want to use, shape materials with tools, and join materials together.

Tier 2 vocabulary: estimate, create, design, link, technique, resources

4. Ride a balance bike

First milestone: children sit on a trike with good balance and scoot along.	As children become more confident at scooting, they will develop more control through steering and stopping/starting. They will not crash into so many things.
Component	Balance and move on a trike
Second milestone: children pedal and steer their trike.	As children become better at co-ordinating pedalling and steering, they will be able to navigate challenges e.g. riding in and out of cones, or over a set of hollow blocks.
Component	Steer safely round obstacles
Third milestone: children sit on a Balance Bike with good balance, with both feet on the ground.	Once children become confident at balancing, they scoot slowly along keeping one or both feet on the floor. They begin to use the handlebars to avoid obstacles and other children. Adults will slowly raise the seat to encourage balancing.
Component	Balance and move on a 2-wheel bike

Final milestone (composite): children ride a Balance Bike, balancing with both feet off the ground, and maintaining control by steering and being able to slow down or speed up. They can ride a Balance Bike safely along the pavement.

Tier 2 vocabulary: achieve, navigate, challenge, reverse, goals

5. Create your own dance to a piece of music

First milestone: Children respond by moving their whole bodies to sounds they enjoy, such as music or a regular beat. As children join in with repeated experiences they grow in confidence and begin to join in with repeated words or actions e.g. "If you're happy and you know it clap your hands."	Children develop their spatial awareness and enjoy moving to music, listening to rhymes/songs and joining in.
Component	Respond to music through movement or joining in.
Second milestone: children enjoy joining in with dancing and ring games. They can follow simple instructions such as "Clap your hands" or "Let's turn around."	As children's interest and understanding of music develops they begin to move rhythmically and in response to the music they hear. They can use props such as ribbons or pom poms to create different actions.
Component	Respond to music through rhythmical movement.
Third milestone: children explore a wide range of music from different cultural backgrounds and can describe the sudden changes they hear e.g. Loud, fast, slow etc. They explore different ways of moving their bodies and can follow an adult's lead.	As children become more confident in themselves and the space they can follow a simple dance routine led by an adult. They can then perform their dance routine in front of a small group.
Component	Follow a simple dance routine accurately.

Final milestone (composite): children choose a piece of music individually or in a small group. They create their own dance routine, moving in time to the pulse of the music being listened to and physically responding to changes in the music, e.g. jump in response to loud/sudden changes in the music.

Tier 2 vocabulary: similar, previous, final

6. Sew using running-stitch	
First milestone: children use upper body strength to hang on A frame or ropes etc. Children weave ribbons in and out of a large frame outdoors on a large scale with adult support. As they grow in confidence, they begin to do this independently on a smaller scale.	With adult support children thread beads/pasta etc. onto a piece of string. Adults model how to thread the floss through the eye of the needle.
Component	Independent simple threading.
Second milestone: children will begin their interest in sewing by looking at examples and designs. Adults will model the process and they will observe. Children will select their colour of floss and continue practising threading the floss through the eye of the needle.	Children will start to think more purposefully about their designs i.e. what colour floss for what purpose and in which direction they want their pattern to flow. They will begin to master the skill of threading the needle and using a running stitch.
Component	Use running stitch, with support.
Third milestone: children will thread the needle through the aida/binka cloth using the desired coloured floss. Children will think about the size of the aida/binka cloth that they need as part of the design and can cut it out themselves. Children are thinking about how their design will fit into a space.	Children will reflect upon and discuss the challenges they faced whilst taking part in this activity.
Component	Talk about their design, in advance or whilst making it.
Final milestone (composite): children think about the pattern or design they want to create. They cut out the binka or aida cloth they need, choose the colour floss they want, and thread the needles. They use running-stitch to create their pattern or design.	
Tier 2 vocabulary: design, technique, persistent, concentration, resources	

7. Make up your own stories	
First milestone: children take part in pretend play, making up or developing a story.	Children may begin by pretend-playing on their own with toys like farm animals, wild animals, dinosaurs or Duplo people. They may put on a costume to become a superhero or another character. Over time, their play becomes more complex. They are able to play with other children, developing the play together (e.g. deciding who will play what role in the home corner, or telling a story with the Duplo people where different Duplo people have different characters).
Component	Play out a simple story with toys.
Second milestone: children take part in shared reading. They respond to the features of the story. Children engage in number rhymes with props and join in with the actions.	As children become more used to shared reading, they ask questions and make links between what happens in the story and their own experiences. Children join in with rhymes and songs e.g. repeating words or following actions. Children play with props to retell/make up their own stories.
Component	Play out a story based on a book or a story they've heard.
Third milestone: children take part in telling a story using Tales Toolkit with adult help or can create their own story of their day using a visual timetable. They begin to become familiar of the way stories are structured	As children become more used to using Tales Toolkit, they can increasingly take over and use the symbols and the props They can make up their own story or 'tell the story of their day in nursery' with little prompting from the adult.
Component	Use the Tales Toolkit symbols and props to tell a story or narrate an event.
Final milestone (composite): children use the Tales Toolkit materials to develop the character, setting, problem and solution for their story. They tell their story to one or more people.	
Tier 2 vocabulary: resources, create, eventually	

8. Write the first two letters of your name

First milestone: children can use the muscles in their hands and arms to make big movements and bring together hand and eye movements to fix on and make contact with objects. Children will increasingly become confident in engaging in activities such as: throwing and catching balls, pushing the wagon, exploring a musical instrument, playdough and paint.	As children build up their large and fine motor skills they engage in activities for a longer period of time. They can grasp objects and can focus on what they are doing e.g. hold arms out and wait to catch a ball, thread beads on to a piece of string or build a stable tower of up to 10 blocks etc Where children need individualised and additional help, this will be offered promptly. Help includes: individualised support from key person; small group work; individual meetings with parents to map a way forward.
Component	Co-ordinate movements of both hands.
Second milestone: Children make marks with their fingers and some tools. Children will engage in a variety of ways to make marks e.g. making marks in dough/clay/sand, holding a paint brush to make marks or using chalk on the ground in the garden etc.	As children become more confident in making marks they begin to talk about their marks with others and give meaning to these e.g. "That's mummy" or "It's a dinosaur."
Component	Use hands, fingers and tools to make marks.
Third milestone: as children's mark making develops they make more small controlled movements and can draw lines and circles. They can distinguish between these marks e.g. 'line, circle, zig zag' etc. They begin to use anticlockwise movements and retrace vertical lines. Children are familiar with language of directionality such as 'up, down, round and round.' Children can find their name card and are look at it when attempting to write their name.	As children use their name cards repeatedly and becoming familiar with the RWI formation sheet they become more confident in attempting to form letters. Some children will begin to form recognisable letters.
Component	Copy or make lines, circles and zig-zag

Final milestone (composite): children hold their pen or pencil with a comfortable grip. They write the first two letters of their name clearly and with correct directionality. Correct formation is more important than appearance.

Tier 2 vocabulary: similar, technique, concentration, precise, accurate, refine, persistent

Settling-in and starting points

Sheringham Nursery School and Children's Centre

2021

Child's full name	
Child's date of birth	
Date	
Child's age when they started	
Member of staff completing this form	
Member of staff moderating this form	

Playing and exploring

Home visit and 'All about me' booklet

- Please record a few bullet points about the child's interests, any concerns, parents' hope and dreams

In nursery

- Please record a few bullet points about the child's play and exploration in the first 5 days. Give one or two examples of the child playing and exploring OR examples of their difficulties in this area.

Communication

Home visit and 'All about me' booklet

- What did the parent say about their child's communication?

In nursery

- Please record a few bullet points about the child's communication in the first 5 days. Is communication a barrier to the child taking part in our curriculum?

Personal, social and emotional development

Home visit and 'All about me' booklet

- What did the parent say about their child's self-confidence?

In nursery

- Please record a few bullet points about the child's self-confidence in the first 5 days. Are there barriers to the child taking part in our curriculum like a lack of confidence, or difficulties in making new relationships with adults or children?

Physical development

Home visit and 'All about me' booklet

- What did the parent say about their child's self-care skills (eating, toileting etc?)
- What did the parent say about their child's movement?

In nursery

- Please record a few bullet points about the child's physical development in the first 5 days. Is the child having difficulties walking, running, climbing etc which are barriers to accessing our curriculum? Is the child

having difficulties with playing with any of our small equipment like blocks, duplo, sand/water play?.

Settling-in summary and next steps

Child voice

Parent voice

Concerns?

- · Look at the Checkpoints in Development Matters
- · Discuss with your team leader
- · If appropriate refer to SENCO
- · In all cases: discuss openly with the parent and consider how we're going to work together to help the child settle in positively and take part in our curriculum.