

Early Years Foundation Stage & Pre-formal Stage Learners

Curriculum Intent

Our EYFS Teacher is **Mrs Travers**

Our EYFS Practitioner is **Mrs Plant**

At Medeshamstede Academy, we place strong value on the importance of the EYFS framework for our pre-formal stage learners. Our experienced EYFS practitioners advocate how important it is for children to build firm foundations in order to develop as successful learners on their educational journey. Children may join us from low start points in relation to their neurotypical peers and therefore may be working significantly below age related expectations, particularly in their language acquisition. Therefore, the principles of EYFS form the basis of our curriculum pathway for pre-formal stage learners beyond their reception year to fully prepare them for their next stage in working from the National Curriculum.

In EYFS there are seven areas of learning and development. All areas of learning are important and inter-connected. Three prime areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The **prime areas** are:

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

The other four areas are known as **specific areas** and include:

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



We initially focus upon the prime areas when children enter our Busy Bees early learning provision, as these skills are needed to become successful learners. The children have daily 'wake and shake' music and movement, sensory story, phonics and maths sessions accompanied by well planned activities for children to access during their own independent learning time, honing their skills through exploration and play.

Adults observe the children during their play, asking questions, challenging their ideas and identifying next steps for individuals. Weekly planning takes account of individual needs, interests and the stage of development of each child. We provide indoor and outdoor activities across the areas of learning. Opportunities for consolidating learning, applying, creating and thinking critically and active learning are also planned for.



A basic principle of our early learning provision is that children learn through interest, play and their senses. Every opportunity to maximise such learning is exploited through our offer.

The pre-formal stage is a communication and language-based curriculum and children are fully supported through objects of reference, communication boards, symbols, PECS and visual schedules. We develop communication skills with highly motivating multisensory experiences that provide 'an invitation to learn', developing anticipation, joint attention and turn taking skills.

To ensure your child's transition into our school is as smooth and happy as it can be, we make links with your child's pre-school settings and provide opportunities for you and your child to visit school and become familiar with our staff. A transition meeting is held, prior to your child starting at Medeshamstede so that we can get to know you and your child individually. This helps us to learn about your child and their needs including likes, dislikes, food preferences, sensory needs, communication, toileting needs, etc so that we can be as well prepared for them starting as possible. Mrs Travers liaises with parents daily and we strive to work in close partnership with parents, as your child starting school is a very important milestone in their educational journey.

During the first 6 weeks, our early years practitioners observe children and carry out baseline assessment to find out what a child knows and can do and what their next steps need to be. A pupil profile detailing individual termly targets is then co-produced with parents. Your child's progress towards meeting targets reviewed each term and new targets set. These smaller step targets are the benchmarks towards meeting the long-term outcomes of their EHCP.

A positive behaviour support plan, individual risk assessment and personal pupil passport will also be co-produced with parents to ensure individual provision and needs are fully met within a personalised programme.

The focus of the first term is to establish behaviour for learning through clear daily routines, social rules for behaviour (e.g.: good sitting, looking, listening, etc) and how to navigate transitions. There is emphasis on developing secure relationships with adults and becoming familiar with peers during term 1.

We provide planned, short, interest led sessions preparing our children appropriately for the start of their school career that will bring them success in their future schooling, providing them with the foundations for reaching their full potential.

Our research-based autism provision in for our pre-formal pathway includes:

Our research-based Autism Strategies: pre-formal stage learners

Attention Autism

Aims

- To engage attention
- To improve joint attention
- To develop shared enjoyment in group activities
- To increase attention in adult-led activities
- To encourage spontaneous interaction in a natural group setting
- To increase non-verbal and verbal communication through commenting
- To build a wealth and depth of vocabulary
- To have fun!

Attention Autism is an intervention model designed by Gina Davies, Specialist Speech and Language Therapist. It aims to develop natural and spontaneous communication through the use of visually based and highly motivating activities. Gina's primary objective is that the sessions are fun and "*offer an irresistible invitation to learn*"!



Stage 1: The Bucket to Focus Attention

A bucket is filled with visually engaging objects and toys, aiming to gain the shared attention of the group. The adult leader shows each item to the group and uses simple repetitive vocabulary to comment on the various objects.

Stage 2: The Attention Builder

Visually stimulating activities are shown to the group by the adult leader, aiming to sustain attention for a longer period. The activities are fun, visually engaging and can often involve delightful mess!

Stage 3: Turn taking & Re-engaging Attention

The adult leader demonstrates a simple activity, often modelled with another adult in the group. Some children are then invited to have a turn but only if they are comfortable to do so. Not every child in the group will get a turn, which then teaches important emotional regulation skills, as well as the essential skills of waiting, turn-taking and learning through modelling.

Stage 4: Shifting & Re-engaging Attention

The adult leader demonstrates a simple creative task, and then gives each child an individual kit to copy the task. The children take their kits to a table, complete the task independently, and then everyone returns to the group to show their completed tasks.

More complex skills can be introduced as confidence and social skills develop e.g. sharing materials, working with a partner, problem solving. Attention Autism principles can then be generalised to curriculum activities (e.g. literacy and numeracy) to facilitate learning and skill development.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nFYnc4xcZ6k>

Intensive interaction

Aims:




To develop the fundamentals of communication based on the principals of parent-child interaction in the first years of life

Intensive interaction is a practical approach that can help children who are in the early stages of communication development or who have [complex communication needs](#) to relate, interact and share experiences with others on their terms.



The approach can be used if someone is reluctant to, or disinterested in, interacting with other people.

Techniques such as turn taking, mirroring, rhythm and repetition, and sharing personal space can be used to support communication exchange

	<p>that is initiated and led by the child, and in turn promotes a positive interaction. www.intensiveinteraction.co.uk</p>
<p>PECS Aims To help individuals who have no, or limited functional communication skills in a systematic and evidenced based manner. If taught properly the use of PECS has been shown to lead to rapidly acquired basic communication skills, and also helps with the development of speech, and often a reduction in behaviour management issues</p>	<p>The PECS training program was developed by Lori Frost and Andy Bondy at the Delaware Autistic Program. The Picture Exchange Communication System or PECS approach is a modified applied behaviour analysis (ABA) programme designed for early nonverbal symbolic communication training. It is not designed to teach speech, although the latter is encouraged indirectly and some children begin to spontaneously use speech. PECS training occurs during typical activities within the natural settings of the classroom and the home. The communication training occurs within a broader positive behavioural support context entitled the Pyramid Approach. Training techniques include strategies such as chaining, prompting/cuing, modelling, and environmental engineering. Professional training regarding PECS is required. There are 7 phases of PECS and PECS can be used across all ages to teach functional communication.</p> 
<p>Colourful Semantics Aims</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand information and produce sentences. • Follow discussions and to communicate their own ideas effectively • Develop competent use of simple and complex sentence structure • Develop a concept of narrative (e.g. what makes up a 'story') • Produce grammatically correct sentences in speaking and writing (through modelling) 	<p>Colourful Semantics is based on independent research carried out in the UK by Alison Bryan. What is unique about this approach is that children learn to associate different 'types' of words with particular colours whereby:</p> <p>Level 1 – Who? "the man" (Subject – Orange) Level 2 – What doing? "is eating" (Verb – Yellow) Level 3 – What? "the sandwich" (Object – Green) Level 4 – Where? "in the kitchen" (Location – Blue) Level 5 – Describe? "big" (Adjective – Purple)</p> <p>http://integratedtreatmentservices.co.uk/our-approaches/speech-therapy-approaches/colourful-semantics-2/</p> 
<p>Sensory Play Aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to build nerve connections in the brain • to support the development of motor skills • to supports language development • to support 'scientific thinking' and problem solving • to involve mindful activities which are beneficial for all children 	<p>From birth to early childhood, children use their five senses to explore and try to make sense of the world around them. Opportunities for children to actively use their senses as they explore their world through 'sensory play' is crucial to brain development. As adults, our senses provide us with vital information that we use to inform decision making thousands of times a day. We may take this ability for granted and barely notice it, but it's for this reason that helping children to learn about their own senses is so important.</p>  <p>What is sensory play? Picking things up and feeling their texture is what people often associate with sensory play, but it's about much more than touch. Sensory play includes any activity that stimulates a child's senses of touch, smell, taste, sight and hearing, as well as anything which engages movement and balance.</p>

Sensory play is only really limited by your own imagination, with of course some common sense being used around the materials and types of play appropriate for your child's age and ability.

With sensory play, there's so much more going on than meets the eye. Sensory activities encourage children to explore and investigate. Furthermore, these activities support children to use the 'scientific method' of observing, forming a hypothesis, experimenting and making conclusions.

Sensory activities also allow children to refine their thresholds for different sensory information, helping their brain to create stronger connections to sensory information and learn which are useful and which can be filtered out.

For example, a child may find it difficult to play with other children when there is too much going on in their environment with conflicting noises or sights. Through sensory play, the child can learn to block out the noise which is not important and focus on the play which is occurring with their peer. Another example is a child who is particularly fussy with eating foods with a wet texture such as spaghetti.

The use of sensory play can assist the child with touching, smelling and playing with the texture in an environment with little expectation. As the child develops trust and understanding of this texture it helps build positive pathways in the brain to say it is safe to engage with this food.

Sensory Stories

Aims:

- To enable enhanced learner comprehension of each aspect of the tale as it unfolds;
- To bring the story to life;
- To better enable the learners to play an active role;
- To be enjoyable for each learner;
- To provide sensory experiences that relate directly to the narrative;
- To provide sensory experiences that relate directly to the individual;

To help develop the Learner's understanding of his or her world.

These are stories told through a combination of text and sensory stimuli, eg: a drop of water can be trickled down a pupil's face to give meaning to a piece of text that talks about someone crying.

Sensory stories offer the opportunity to practise interacting with stimuli in the safety of a story. Research has shown that stories hold a special power over us; within a story we are braver and can face topics that in real life we find overwhelming. A child who needs practice at interacting with sensory stimuli may feel more able to do so within the context of a story, and by repeating the story you build security. You can grade stimuli and increase the challenge when you revisit the tale. For example, if a child finds a sticky-touch experience challenging, you can begin with touching water, then gradually make the substance stickier each time you tell the story.

Sensory stimulation is a vital part of our cognitive development. The more of our senses we use when we learn, quite literally the more of our brain gets involved in our learning, giving us better odds of understanding and remembering. In sensory stories, meaning is conveyed through language and sensory stimuli which to support spoken communication. Sensory stories can be used to add an extra dimension to creative writing and to stimulate the use of exciting vocabulary.



TEACCH

Aims

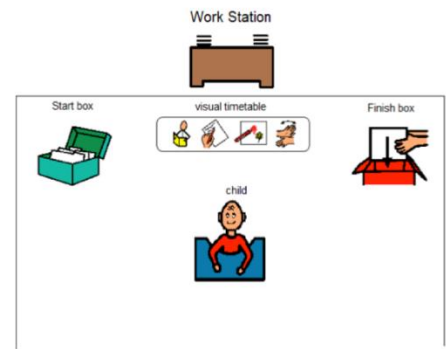
- To structure teaching to fit the 'culture of autism' through:
 - ❖ organising the physical environment
 - ❖ developing schedules and work systems
 - ❖ making expectations clear and explicit
 - ❖ using visual materials to develop skills
- To allow individuals with autism to use these skills independently of adult directing and cueing.

Structured teaching via the **TEACCH method** was developed by Professor Eric Schopler and colleagues at the University of North Carolina. The TEACCH method is not considered an actual therapy but rather a therapeutic tool to help individuals with ASD

understand their surroundings and associated difficulties with receptive and expressive language, sequential memory and handling changes in their environment. The TEACCH method provides the individual with structure and organisation and relies on five basic principles:

1. **Physical structure** refers to the actual layout or surroundings of a person's environment, such as a classroom, home, or group home. The physical boundaries are clearly defined and usually include activities like: work, play, snack, music, and transitioning.
2. **Scheduling.** A visual schedule through words, photographs, drawings, or objects of reference is set up which indicates what the person will do, when and what happens next.
3. **Work system** tells the person what is expected of him/her during an activity, how much is supposed to be accomplished, and what happens after the activity is completed. The goal is to teach the person to work independently. The work system is also organised in such a way that the person has little or no difficulty figuring out what to do. For example, the activity or task should be performed from top to bottom and from left to right.
4. **Routine.** According to the TEACCH method, the most functional skill for autistic individuals is a routine which involves checking one's schedule and following the established work system. This routine can then be used throughout the person's lifetime and in multiple situations.
5. **Visual structure** refers to visually-based cues regarding organisation, clarification, and instructions to assist the person in understanding what is expected of him/her. For example, a visual structure may involve using coloured containers to assist the person in sorting coloured materials into various groups or displaying an example of a stamped envelope when the person is asked to place stamps on envelopes.

The TEACCH method is primarily used to assist the individual in better understanding his/her environment. The techniques described above are not faded out over time; but rather, they are to be consistently used across a variety of environments.



Numicon

Aims

- To develop fluency by using a visual, practical base to develop conceptual understanding and fluent recall.
- To develop mathematical reasoning through the use of concrete objects and spoken language to explain and justify.
- To develop children into confident problem-solvers.

Numicon is a multi-sensory mathematics teaching programme using visual Numicon images in a series of practical teaching activities currently comprising three stages – Foundation, Stage 1 and Stage 2. When Numicon patterns are arranged in order, pupils begin to notice important connections between numbers for instance that each number is one more than the last and one fewer than the next, odd and even numbers and place value. Numicon illustrates number bonds, addition and subtraction, place value, doubling and halving, estimation, division and multiplication. For more details visit www.numicon.com

