Literacy



An Early Years Curriculum Document

The Lilycroft and St Edmund's Nursery Schools' Federation, Bradford

Literacy

Literacy is about understanding and being understood. Early literacy skills are rooted in children's enjoyable experiences from birth of gesturing, talking, singing, playing, reading and writing. Learning about literacy means developing the ability to interpret, create and communicate meaning through writing and reading in different media, such as picture books, logos, environmental print and digital technologies. It involves observing and joining in the diverse ways that different people and communities use literacy for different purposes. Most importantly, literacy is engaging purposeful and creative.

Developing literacy competence and skills is a complex, challenging yet rewarding journey that requires high-quality pedagogical activities to enhance learning. Young children need to be listened to by attentive adults who recognise and value children's choices. They need enjoyable, playful opportunities of being included and involved in the literacy practices of their home, early years setting, and community environments.

They need experiences of creating and sharing a range of texts in a variety of ways, with different media and materials, with adults and peers, both indoors and outdoors, as well as learning about using different signs and symbols, exploring sound and developing alphabetic and phonetic skills.



Birth to 5 Matters

Characteristics of Effective Learning

- The areas of learning and development outline what children may learn. The characteristics of effective learning describe how they learn. These dispositions and behaviours are important in the EYFS as they build the foundations needed to support children to become strong lifelong learners and independent thinkers.
- The 3 characteristics are:
- Playing & Exploring
- Active Learning
- Creating & Thinking Critically.
- The characteristics will run throughout literacy and are highlighted using these 3 colours.

Reading
In the 0-2 room we:

Use our mouths to explore and copy sounds.

Notice and engage with sounds and images in the environment. Babies will be encouraged to explore sounds e.g. banging familiar objects or using simple instruments. Children respond to sounds outdoors such as cars, sirens & birds.

Use our senses to touch and handle books or digital reading devices when in provision. This includes showing an interest in pictures and symbols - knowing what these stand for in our familiar experiences. We turn pages in cloth or board books.

Enjoy sharing books and digital material (including hardback and sensory) with familiar people and also being read to. This includes having 1:1 and small group stories with an adult. We begin to have favourite rhymes and books.

Have a daily rhyme session using props and learn a new rhyme each half term. We move in response to familiar rhymes and songs such as waving our arms, bouncing or stamping to simple rhythms.

Join in with key actions and sounds and use Makaton signs to reinforce key words. We repeat familiar words and phrases from books, songs and rhymes during play.

Are encouraged to persist if we find something difficult and will continue to build on our concentration so we are able to focus on our self-chosen tasks.





Reading
In the 2-3 room we:

Have 1 group time with a reading focus each week. We have a new core story each half term. When sharing core stories we explore the meaning of key vocabulary so we understand it more fully.

Repeat, fill in missing words, use actions, Makaton and copy repeated refrains.

Have adults that share stories 1:1 and in small groups throughout each session.

Use lots of props when sharing stories including puppets, small world resources and photographs.

Use our bodies to help retell stories using actions and sounds.

Look at books and digital materials independently and learn to handle them carefully. We show an interest in illustrations when looking at books.

Have some favourite stories, songs, poems or jingles and join in with familiar words.

Learn to listen to different sounds e.g. musical instruments and environmental sounds such as cars, aeroplanes etc.

Recognise familiar logos, print and icons for apps including You Tube or the school logo.

Fill in a missing word in a known story, rhyme or game.



Enjoy musical activity with percussion instruments, actions, rhymes and songs, clapping along with the beat (how you naturally tap your foot or clap your hands) and joining in with words of familiar songs and nursery rhymes.

Make links to our own personal experiences and predict missing words in stories and rhymes. Will continue to pay attention to detail using the illustrations.

Physical links

- Turn pages in a book, sometimes several at one time.
- We are encouraged to engage in new experiences relating to the core stories.
- Children act out core stories e.g. planting a bean seed just like Jasper or by using illustrations on a story board.
- Children will persist at handling and turning pages carefully.

A core story is a specifically chosen, age appropriate book. It is used over a number of weeks over a half term. Core story group time sessions are carefully planned with a focus, always starting with key vocabulary. This may influence provision enhancements so children are able to make links to this learning during their play.

Reading
In the 3-4 room we:

Have a weekly group time with a reading focus and at least one core story each half term. When sharing stories we listen carefully, exploring the meaning of key vocabulary so we understand the meaning of new words more fully.

Share stories with an adult 1:1 and in small groups throughout each session.

Join in with repeated refrains and anticipate key events in rhymes and stories.

Use lots of **props** when sharing stories including puppets, role-play, small world resources and photographs. The adults sometimes **take on a role** to act out simple stories. They model the use of props to help retell familiar stories and encourage this in play during provision time. Photographs and video clips help us to understand the meaning of key words.

Look at books independently or with a friend, hold them the correct way up and try to turn pages carefully one at a time. We also handle technology carefully.

Use props and images to help us retell our own stories and are beginning to understanding that stories have a beginning, middle and end. We use story boards to help us sequence these events.

Sing (and sometimes sign) a range of rhymes & songs using props and instruments, keeping in time to the beat. This is like a clock's tick or how you naturally tap your foot or clap your hands to music.



Identify words in texts and the environment and know that words carry meaning. We know that words are read from left to right and top to bottom in English.

We start by recognising our own name when self registering or by finding it in our learning journey.

Recognise familiar signs and labels in the environment, printed material, advertising logos and apps. Adults display familiar logos to encourage discussion.

Talk about key events, story setting and characters from familiar stories.

Predict what may happen next and suggest how the story might end.

Reading
In the 3-4 room we:

Know that some books give us information and know we can also find out further information using the internet.

Know the names of different parts of a book such as the front cover and title page.

Begin to navigate apps and websites on digital devices safely with an adult.

Create our own books that evidence our learning & experiences such as visits from people who help us.

Have games or resources that support the aspect we are focussing on in phonics, so we are able to apply these skills independently.

Clap or tap the syllables in words during sound play. (This is part of a word that is unbroken. You will need to change the shape of your mouth to say the next syllable in a word e.g. the word Rabb-it has 2 syllables.)

Physical links

Able to turn pages of a book one at a time.









Reading
Early Phonics

We have a weekly phonics session that follows the Letters and Sounds document. This can be found online at: Letters and sounds-GOV.UK In addition to this we use other resources i.e. the actions from Jolly Phonics. We will continue to look at other ways of enhancing this in response to the review of the Letters and Sounds document. However, the early phases are still very valid to support our teaching.

Autumn 1 - Environmental Sounds

We learn to use our ears to listen to sounds all around us. We name what is making the sound and describe the sound we can hear. We begin to segment words in a simple sentence and count the number of words.

Autumn 2 - Instrumental Sounds

We name and listen to the sounds musical instruments make. We talk about the sounds, copy a given sequence of sounds and differentiate between the sounds of the instruments.

Spring 1 - Body Percussion & Voice Sounds

We use our bodies to make different sounds. We talk about the sounds they are making and follow a sequence of sounds. This helps us to recognise rhythm (a strong regular, repeat pattern of movement or sound) in spoken words, songs and rhymes.

We use our mouths to explore sounds. We create sounds in the environment such as a ball bouncing or the CH sound when moving a small world train.

We use the Little Wandle reading scheme for children that are beginning to blend and segment.



Spring 2 - Rhythm & Rhyme (Words with the same sound at the end)

We sing a range of familiar nursery rhymes and share stories that have rhyming words. We talk about why words rhyme and complete a range of games such as rhyming pairs. We begin to create our own rhyming strings orally. We begin to segment and blend the onset of the rime e.g. p-in, t-in, w-in.

Summer 1 - Alliteration (Words that begin with the same sound)

We make up alliterative phrases and complete a range of games such as silly soup. We can identify initial letter sounds in our names and key objects, and begin to segment and blend the initial sound of objects e.g. p-an, p-in, p-at.

Summer 2 - Oral Blending & Segmenting

We complete a range of games involving toy talk (oral bending and segmenting). Segmenting is when we break a word down to identify each sound in sequence. Blending is when we put the sounds and syllables back together to identify the word.

We may introduce the first set of graphemes (This is the written form that corresponds to the sound) to ensure we are challenged. This may involve reading books that contain simple CVC words such as cat or mop. (Consonant—Vowel—Consonant)

Reading
More experienced children

Use a range of vocabulary and forms of speech that are influenced by our reading experiences.

Describe the main story characters, events and settings in detail.

Re-enact and reinvent familiar stories in our play.

Know that information can be found in books, computers and other digital devices such as iPads.

Discuss and recall information and stories that we have read or shared with adults.

Recognise some familiar written names such as “mum” “dad” or the name of a sibling or peer.

Phonological awareness

- Continue a rhyming string orally and identify alliteration.
- Hear and say the initial sounds in words.
- Begin to link sounds to letters and can name and sound letters from the alphabet.
- Begin to link sounds to some frequently used digraphs such as th, sh & ee.
- Begin to segment and blend words.
- Begin to read some high frequency words (including tricky words) and use our knowledge of letters and sounds to read simple phonically decodable words and simple sentences.
- Our play often includes literacy artefacts such as labels, envelopes, signs, instructions etc.



Communication and language

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.

Health & Self-care
What the evidence says

“There can be few things as powerful as regularly reading to a young child. It has astonishing benefits for children: comfort and reassurance, confidence and security, relaxation, happiness and fun. Giving a child time and full attention when reading them a story tells them they matter. It builds self-esteem, vocabulary, feeds imagination and even improves their sleeping patterns. “ National Literacy Trust January 2020

Evidence suggests that children who read for enjoyment every day not only perform better in reading tests than those who don’t, but also develop a broader vocabulary, increased general knowledge and a better understanding of other cultures. Pearson 2020

Reading enjoyment has been reported as more important for children’s educational success than their family’s socio-economic status (OECD 2002).

If all children in the UK read for pleasure almost daily, the number getting five good GCSE grades could increase by 1.1 million over a generation (30 years) which would boost lifetime earnings and improve life chances. (British Land, 2021)

We will gift core story books to our EYPP (Early Years Pupil Premium) children. The evidence indicates the importance of supporting parents/carers with the knowledge and skills to be able to do this rather than just giving them the book.





Provision
In each room we use a range of reading materials including comics, dual language, fiction, non-fiction, rhyming, leaflets, instructions, recipes and digital books. Our ROA’s/Files are available for us to reflect and talk about our experiences.

Parental involvement:
Library – children have access to taking books home every day. We encourage and support parents to sign up to their local library by arranging visits. Inform parents of key events such as World Book Day in March. Sharing stories week event each term.

A book mark is given to each parent relating to the core story they have observed. This will contain key vocabulary and questioning.

Christmas presents books are delivered by Santa at our Christmas party. Eid presents - books are given out at our Eid party. Bookstart books - This scheme provides every child with a free book. A session is delivered to parents on how to share this before these go home.

Children with SEND (some links are underlined)
All children will be given the opportunity to share stories. This is provided in a range of ways such as bringing the book to the child where they have a physical disability. This will be appropriate to their needs. An objective of reference approach is also used to provide a routine and to encourage children to engage in a wider range of experiences.

Reading opportunities will be provided through this approach. This may also be supported through the use of work baskets. A number of activities are provided in baskets. Books may be placed into a basket to ensure children are accessing a range of books.

A range of books will be used to support particular needs including those that are sensory.

50 things to do before you're 5

The 50 Things project is about getting parents involved in a range of activities with their children, along with appropriate guidance that will make an impact. Activities have been carefully developed by education experts.

We've made sure that we consider children with special education needs and that they reflect our culturally diverse community.

50 Things To Do Before You're Five gives you 50 activities that parents and carers can support their children to try out and repeat.

#10 involves sharing stories.
Sharing stories runs throughout all the activities. Lists of appropriate books are also available to support each activity.

More information can be found at: Bradford.50thingstodo.org or can be downloaded on the app store.

Dialogic reading

In dialogic reading, the adult helps the child become the teller of the story through conversation. The adult becomes the listener, the questioner and audience for the child.

Questions will help children to explore the text at a deeper level, including defining new words, analysing the different parts of a story and being able to talk about the text.
No one can learn to read just by listening to someone else read. Children learn most from books when they are actively involved.

Talk

Talk is important throughout all rooms when sharing stories. This impacts on all areas of learning including reading and is highlighted in the statutory
Framework for the EYFS.





Writing

Writing systems are complicated ways to symbolise meaning, and children need to learn many skills and develop a lot of knowledge as they begin to write.

Writing skills and understanding start to develop in babies and toddlers. Firstly, children begin to understand that written texts are symbolic and carry meaning. Later they begin to produce and read written marks purposefully .

What is often referred to as “early mark-making” is the beginning of writing. It is a sensory and physical, and cognitive experience for babies and toddlers, which enables them to see the connection between their actions and the resulting marks, recognising their own agency. (Agency refers to children’s initiative, decision-making and self-choice in play.)



In 0-2’s we:

- Explore by moving our hands and feet.
- Reach out our arms to be picked up.
- Point at objects we want to handle.
- Use our hands to hold objects and sometimes show a preference.
- Pick up objects using fingers and thumb using either hand.
- Use our wrists to tip and pour e.g. when using the sand, water
- Begin to understand the cause and effect of our actions when making marks.
- Know the marks we make are of value.
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- **Physical links**
- Grasp objects using a fist or pincer grip. Use
- everyday, open-ended materials to support
- overall co-ordination such as squeezing
- sponges in the water.
- Pass toys from one hand to another
- **Hold** objects in each hand and bring them together
- Make marks in damp sand or paint and **enjoy** a range of **sensory experiences** such as shaving foam, corn flour or playing with food.



Writing

- Extend our arms when we move, dance or climb.
- Know the marks we make are valued by adults.
- Begin to understand the cause & effect when making marks.
- Move our hands and fingers through dry and wet textures when playing and exploring such as sand or dough.
- Grasp mark making tools and move them backwards and forwards, making circular movements.
- Move our arms to make large movements.
- Move our hands to make smaller movements such as rotating an object or a toy.
- Can distinguish between the different marks we make.
- Enjoy drawing and writing on paper and using touch screen technology & on different textures such as sand or dough.
- Begin to understand that our marks are symbolic and give meaning.

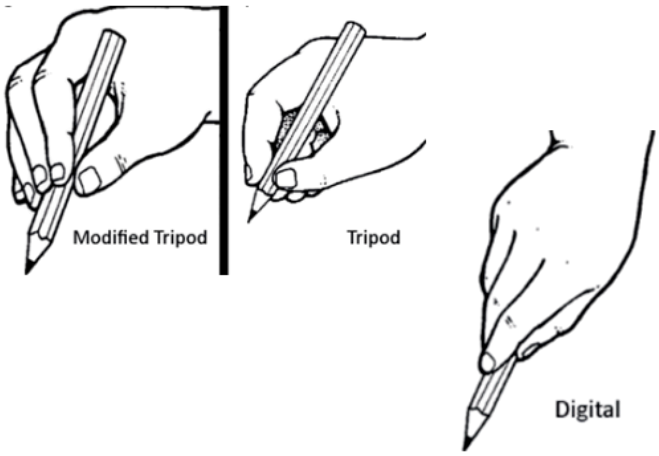


In 2-3's we:

Physical links

- Pick up and hold objects with precision including hand over hand with an adult.
- Use a fist or pincer grip when holding tools. Specific resources are provided in the environment that promote a pincer movement such as tweezers.
- Make connections between movement and the marks we make.
- Begin to use three fingers (Tripod grip) to hold mark making tools.
- Imitate drawing shapes such as circles and lines.
- Begin to show a preference for a dominant hand.





Adults model and comment on how they hold their own pencil when making marks. Children will never be encouraged to a hold a mark making tool in a particular hand. Adults may encourage children to hold a pencil nearer the tip to improve their control.

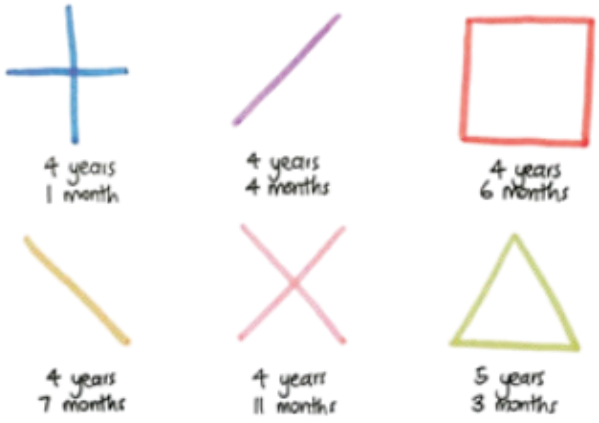
Writing

- Make up stories, play scenarios and draw in response to experiences such as outings e.g. to the park.
- Use tools and our fingers to make marks using a range of media such as shaving foam, clay or play dough.
- Use our thumb and forefinger (pincer) to grip objects and foods.
- Make marks during our play and sometimes give meaning to these, such as our drawings and paintings.
- Create enclosures using vertical and horizontal lines.
- Imitate adults' writing by making continuous lines of shapes and symbols from left to right.
- Begin to make letter like shapes to represent the initial sound of our names and other familiar words.
- Communicate and create messages through our play such as using pictures or paintings. We can communicate these as we make them.
- Use lines, circles, curves, groups of letters or letter-like shapes to represent letters, words or numbers including our name.
- Give meaning to marks we see in different places such as logos, signs, symbols and our names. This also includes marks we make ourselves.
- Show interest in the letters on a keyboard and begin to identify the initial letter of our names and other familiar words.
- Create marks for a range of purposes including lists, Christmas cards, Eid Cards, shopping lists for snack, party invitations, tally charts, story maps etc.

In 3-4's we:

Physical links

- Use one handed tools and equipment such as making snips with scissors.
- Hold a pencil near point between thumb and first 2 fingers—using it with good control.
- Copy some letters e.g. from my name
- Use resources that require twisting, turning and rotating such as screws or a water wheel.
- Use simple tools to effect changes to materials such as dough or clay.
- Show a preference for a dominant hand.
- Form recognisable letters.
- Handle tools with increasing control.
- Use anticlockwise movements and retrace vertical lines.
- Produce letters that are formed correctly.





Writing
More experienced children

- Begin to break the flow of speech into words.
- Hear and say the initial sound in words.
- Segment the sounds in simple words and blend them together.
- Link sounds to graphemes. (This is the written symbol of a sound)
- Segment CVC words such as c-a-t and write the appropriate grapheme for each sound in the correct sequence.
- Write our name producing recognisable letters.
- Write simple rhyming strings.
- Enjoy creating texts to communicate meaning for an increasingly wide range of purposes, such as making greetings cards, tickets, lists, invitations and creating our own stories and books with images and sometimes with words, in print and digital formats.
- Give meaning to the marks we make as we draw, write, paint and type using a keyboard or touch-screen technology.

Children with SEND

Children will be given the opportunity to make a range of marks regardless of their need. This is provided in a range of ways such as bringing the resources to the child where they have a physical disability.

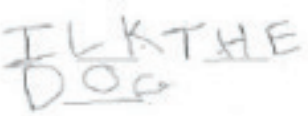
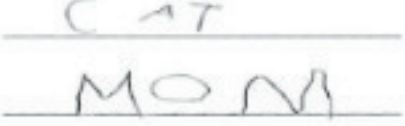
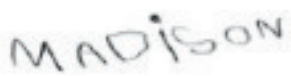
A hand over hand approach may be used when using mark making tools. An objective of reference approach is also used to provide a routine and to encourage children to engage in a wider range of experiences. Mark making opportunities will be provided using this approach.







Writing

Stages of Emergent Writing		
Stage	**Description**	**Example**
Drawing	Drawings that represent writing	
Scribbling	Marks or scribbles the child intends to be writing	
Wavy scribbles or mock handwriting	Wavy scribbles that imitate cursive writing and have a left-to-right progression; child pretends to write words	
Letter-like forms or mock letters	Letters and marks that resemble letter-like shapes	
Letter strings	Strings of letters that do not create words, written left to right, including uppercase and lowercase letters	
Transitional writing	Letters with spaces in between to resemble words; letters/words copied from environmental print; letters often reversed	
Invented or phonetic spelling	Different ways to represent the sounds in words; the first letter of the word or beginning and ending sounds represent the entire word	
Beginning word and phrase writing	Words with beginning, middle, and ending letter sounds; short phrases	
Conventional spelling and sentence writing	Correct spelling of words, generally the child's name and words such as *mom* and *dad*; sentences with punctuation and correct use of uppercase and lowercase letters	

50 Things To Do Before You're 5

The *50 Things project* is about getting parents involved in a range of activities with their children, along with appropriate guidance that will make an impact.

The activities have been carefully developed by education experts and we've made sure that we consider children with special education needs and that they reflect our culturally diverse community.



50 Things To Do Before You're Five gives you 50 activities that parents and carers can support their children to try out and repeat. The activities that relate directly to writing include:

#4 Making your Mark.

#20 Mini Artists

#38 Posty

More information can be found at: Bradford.50thingstodo.org or can be downloaded on the app store.

Key events that allow children to make marks with a purpose



Mud Day.

Creating cards for key events such as; Eid, Easter, Diwali, Chinese New Year, Christmas, Mother's Day, Father's Day & Bonfire night.

Observational drawings linked to the seasons.

Shopping lists for snack.

Ofsted Outstanding Provider

Ofsted

Read our report

WEBSITE

REVIEWS ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Absolute fantastic nursery school! Teachers and staff are very supportive, friendly and always their for parents and children. They provide fun activities indoors and outdoors. My son really enjoyed it here and it has build his confidence. Cant wait to put my daughter in nusery next Sept.
Thankyou for everything x

This place is amazing, so inviting from the moment you walk down the street. Staff are lovely and friendly. The children are happy and smiling. The provision and activities are well thought through and educational. The children are learning all the time. Outdoor activity is ongoing in all weathers and staff never complain!
So many opportunities for parents to join in various activities. I love this place. And so does my son! 😊

50 things to do before you're five™

Scan the QR code below to view all activities

Last Reviewed: 27th Maj 2026
Approved By: Sian Hudson - Executive Headteacher
Next Review Due: 28th May 2029