

The Essa Curriculum

The whole curriculum at Essa is built on our mission of 'All Will Succeed.' We know that every child in our school has talents, passions and the potential to be amazing - we aim for all children to achieve that potential and reach their goals. We want all children to become successes in their lives. We aim to prepare them to rise to personal and professional successes through a broad and balanced curriculum that takes into account our local context and intake and allows the children to become more invested in their local area and community. The curriculum is accessible to all and goes beyond the scope of the National Curriculum to equip our children with the knowledge, skills and experiences that they need to be ready for the next stage in their educational journey, and to become valuable global citizens in Modern Britain. The curriculum has the following aims:

- The curriculum is unique, interesting, creative and appropriate for the children we teach
- The curriculum is knowledge-rich with many opportunities for the children to apply their skills and work independently
- The curriculum promotes inclusion and diversity, valuing the children's existing life experiences and giving them the opportunity to widen their knowledge of other cultures, people and communities
- The curriculum fosters a positive attitude to learning and develops life-long learners with a thirst for knowledge
- The curriculum is challenging and raises the aspirations and opportunities for children in their local community and the wider world.
- The curriculum offers opportunity for children to increase their cultural capital.
- The curriculum is an area-based curriculum with rich connections to our locality; it explores the complexities and the beauty of our location, its history, the politics of its geography, and its contributions to the worlds of art, music and industry

Our curriculum begins in Early Years, where we give the children the very best start to their education by providing appropriate foundations for learning, as well as a Montessori style learning environment tailored to the needs of the cohort which prepares them for future learning. The curriculum and associated environment enables all of our children to learn through purposeful play-based activities, designed to promote curiosity and a love of learning from the outset. This ensures that they develop verbally, socially, emotionally, physically and cognitively so that they are ready to transition into Year 1. Our curriculum values child-initiated, free flow activities between our indoor and outdoor areas but also provides opportunities for quality interaction with adults through scaffolding activities, focused groups and whole class core teaching sessions.

Our curriculum intent is led by our core values; these underpin why we have developed our curriculum offer:



Effort - the curriculum challenges the children and enables them to show resilience



Spirit – the curriculum gives the children the opportunity to build character and develop energy and enthusiasm for learning



Standards – the curriculum has high expectations for learners and enables them to be interactive learners



Achievement – the curriculum enables our children to aim high, set challenging goals and sets them on the path to success

The aims are achieved through 4 key drivers. These lead and shape how our curriculum has been developed:



Our curriculum has three distinct features and these are evident throughout the individual subjects:

Entitlement

All children have an entitlement to access all subjects and programmes of study from the National Curriculum.

Excellence

Children who display a talent for a particular curriculum area are given opportunities to explore this either through enrichment in the curriculum or extra-curricular activities. This may go beyond the depth and breadth of the National Curriculum.

Enjoyment

Children who express an interest in or who show enjoyment for a particular curriculum area are given opportunities to explore this further. This may include through classroom activities, extra-curricular clubs or through non-competitive events.

Curriculum Implementation

In EYFS, learning is divided into seven key areas:

1. Communication and Language

This area runs through the heart of EYFS provision. Whole class teaching sessions all have a focus on vocabulary and encouraging language development for children. Within continuous provision, specific vocabulary and language is given within each of the areas for staff to encourage children to use. Staff enhance provision by modelling and developing spoken language within conversations.

2. Physical Development

Children have regular access to a wide range of activities and equipment to develop their fine and gross motor skills. They also take part in weekly PE lessons so support coordination and movement skills. Children have regular access to the outside area which provides opportunities for them to ride bikes and scooters as well as climb and jump. Within all lessons, children are encouraged to sit correctly at the table, holding their pen using a tripod grip. Letter and number formation is explicitly taught and practised within phonics lessons and then embedded in all writing activities.

Children are further encouraged at mealtimes to eat correctly with a knife and fork.

3. Personal, Social and Emotional development

Children's personal, social and emotional development is paramount in reception and is developed throughout the whole school day. Children are encouraged with their personal care and hygiene including washing hands and toileting. Healthy snacks are given within the classroom for the children to enjoy and they are supported to make healthy choices at lunch time also. Staff discuss the benefits of keeping healthy both in PE and PSHE lessons. Children have explicit PSHE lessons each week using the SCARF scheme of work.

Throughout the week, children have allotted times with their key worker to build on positive relationships with staff and other children.

4. Literacy

Children have access to a varied literacy curriculum including explicit teaching alongside enhancements in other curriculum areas and continuous provision. Children are taught phonics daily using Little Wandle and, as necessary given interventions to ensure good progress and attainment. Daily Literacy sessions are also delivered to the whole class, followed by targeted group work with a key adult. Literacy skills are enhanced further in continuous provision both explicitly in the writing and reading areas alongside challenges embedded in other areas.

Children enjoy regular story and rhyme times throughout the week as well as 'Surprise Reader' sessions delivered by volunteers.

5. Mathematics

Children take part in daily maths sessions which are followed by guided and independent activities to consolidate learning. Children also take part in daily 'Mastering Number' sessions. Maths is further enhanced in different continuous provision areas both inside and outside where children are encouraged to apply their mathematical knowledge.

6. Understanding the world

Children are encouraged to develop their understanding of the world in numerous ways. This is done in a meaningful way and is linked to real-life events and places. Children learn about various religious and non-religious festivals and events throughout the year and are encouraged to try different aspects linked to these such as clothing and food. Children have access to outdoor provision as well as forest school. Staff enhance children's learning outside through conversations around topical features including the seasons. Continuous provision reflects any events and interests the children may have and provides ways to encourage their curiosity and learning. Children also take part in regular trips and visits.

7. Expressive arts and design

Throughout the school week, children are given a variety of opportunities to develop their expressive art and design skills. Children regularly enjoy song and rhyme times and this is further enhanced by events such as Christmas shows and nativities. Each term, children are introduced to key artists and encouraged to draw and paint in this style within the creative area. Further activities are planned in the week which are linked to topics and events. Within continuous provision children have access to a role play area to develop their imaginative skills as well as a creative area with a variety of mediums to use and explore.

In Key Stage One and Two, our curriculum is organised into 13 discrete subjects:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Art and Design
- Computing
- Design Technology
- Geography
- History
- MFL (French)
- Music
- P.E.
- P.S.H.E.
- R.E.

In order to ensure consistency across the school, all KS1 and KS2 timetables have the following components:

Daily Maths sessions

Maths is taught each day following the White Rose 'small steps' and supplementing the White Rose scheme of work with material from other sources.

Daily English sessions

English is taught daily and lessons are planned using bespoke medium term plans and a spine of books developed for the school context. Sessions may include reading, writing, speaking and listening, drama or grammar activities.

Daily Reading sessions

Children in Reception and Key Stage One have daily phonics sessions following the Little Wandle scheme of work. Children in Reception and Year One also have three reading practice sessions each week. Children outside of Key Stage One may also access phonics sessions.

Children from Years 3-6 have daily reading fluency and comprehension lessons. These are extract based and linked to the book spine where possible.

Two P.E. sessions per week

Children from Reception to Year 6 access one indoor and one outdoor P.E. session each week. These are delivered by their class teacher and a qualified sports coach. The school supports staff by using the Get Set 4 PE scheme.

One Science session per week

Children have the opportunity to learn Science knowledge and investigation skills on a weekly basis (Science may also be blocked if necessary). The school supports staff by using the Developing Experts scheme of work, which is then adapted for classes.

One Computing session per week

Teachers use Purple Mash planning to plan digital literacy, computer science and information technology sessions. All classes have access to sets of iPads or Chromebooks to support learning.

One History or Geography session per week

The school have adopted the Northern Education Trust scheme of work. This is a knowledge rich curriculum which has been adapted to have connections to our own locality and to meet the needs of our context. History and Geography are taught in alternate half terms.

One Art and Design or Design Technology per week

The school have adopted the Northern Education Trust scheme of work. This is a knowledge rich curriculum which has been heavily adapted to have connections to our own locality and to meet the needs of our context. Art and Design, and Design Technology are taught in alternate half terms.

One P.S.H.E. session per week

Teachers use SCARF planning to support their planning and teaching. This is supplemented by a programme of workshops and visits to address the needs of our school community.

One R.E. session per week

The school has adopted the Bolton SACRE scheme of work and teachers use this scheme to plan and adapt lessons. Due to the religious character of our school community, events and visits are also used to celebrate diversity.

One Music session per week

Teachers use the Charanga scheme of work to plan and deliver music sessions. These are supplemented by music teaching from specialist teachers at Essa Academy.

Quality First Teaching

Quality first teaching is the most important lever that we have to improve pupil attainment. At Essa, we ensure that staff are supported to deliver high quality teaching. When implementing the curriculum offer in each subject, staff consider how children learn, how they develop knowledge and skills and how they build schema to lay firm foundations for later learning.

Most teaching sessions will include the following:

- Recap or retrieval of prior knowledge
- Introduction of new information
- Teacher modelling and worked examples
- Student practice
- Adaptive teaching (e.g. support, scaffolding, focus groups)
- High quality questioning
- High quality formative assessment leading to adaptations
- Collaborative learning and opportunities for oracy
- Recap of new learning/Exit tickets to check for understanding

Learning Environment

The learning environment supports quality first teaching and facilitates high quality learning experiences. All classrooms have working walls for Maths and English that support retrieval, cognitive and metacognitive learning. Books and reading have a high status in the classroom with current and recommended reads displayed prominently. In order to support children with additional needs, classrooms are not over stimulating.

Focused Assessment

Formative assessment takes place in every session; this enables teachers to make adaptations in the current or subsequent sessions. Formative assessment takes the following forms:

- Questioning
- Mini whiteboards
- Quizzes
- Assessment cups

Children's learning is formally assessed in Maths, Reading, Writing and GPS three times each year using standardised tests. These are analysed and the results used to plan and adapt teaching sessions, and inform interventions. In Humanities and Science, children complete a review at the end of each unit and this is used for assessment purposes. Our curriculum is purposely designed as a 'keep up, not 'catch up' model and children are given opportunities throughout a unit of work to revisit knowledge and skills.