



Phoenix Infant Academy
Together We Soar

Curriculum Offer: The Nest

GROWING STRONGER TOGETHER



**THAMES LEARNING
TRUST**

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Introduction

At Phoenix Infant Academy, we continuously strive to ensure children achieve their full potential. We pride ourselves on our inclusive environment where children with SEND can develop a range of skills.

With this in mind, we have designed our Curriculum offer for those children with SEND who access our Resource Base provision; also known as The Nest. By doing this, we provide a broad and balanced curriculum that prepares children for the future.

The Curriculum focuses on a range of skills that consolidate and extend children's knowledge and understanding. These skills are delivered individually, in groups or as part of their Mainstream class. Dependent on the skill, they are taught explicitly or implicitly and focus on the child's needs. It follows the TEACCH approach:

- Teaching – sharing autism knowledge and increasing the skill level of professionals and practitioners.
- Expanding – increasing own knowledge to provide high-quality services to autistic people and their families.
- Appreciating – appreciating the strengths and uniqueness of autistic culture.
- Collaborating and Cooperating with colleagues, other professionals, autistic people and their families.
- Holistic – adopting a holistic approach, looking at the person, their family and community.

www.autism.org.uk

This approach promotes an individualised approach that focuses on the child, their development and their interests. It has an emphasis on visual supports to organise the environment and promote independence.

The delivery of the Curriculum is overseen by the Assistant Principal and taught by the SEND Teacher. However, we recognise that it is the responsibility of all staff to implement the Curriculum successfully. Inclusion support staff receive fortnightly training in specific areas of the Curriculum. Teaching staff have opportunities to observe each other and have additional support from the Assistant Principal when needed.

Assessment

Children are assessed against their EHCP targets. Children's work is tailored towards these throughout the academic year. To develop this further, we use The Engagement Model to ensure children are making progress in core subjects.

We also assess children in the following areas of development, which we call the Key Learning Principles:

- Language and communication
- Social understanding
- Routines
- Keeping healthy
- Sensory awareness

These areas are incorporated throughout the Curriculum, as outlined later in this document.

Assessment reviews take place termly.

Daily routine

Children in The Nest arrive at school at their Mainstream classroom. They register and listen to a story with their peers. After this, they go to The Nest where they complete morning lessons.

All children have break and lunchtimes with their Mainstream year group.

After lunch, children attend their Mainstream class. Lessons are appropriately adapted for the children so they can access them. We have found this time invaluable as it develops key learning areas for the children.

Timetable

Each child has an individualised timetable to meet their needs. The lessons are taught either in small groups or 1:1 sessions. They are purposefully short to utilise children's attention.

All lessons are taught using a multi-sensory approach to maintain engagement whilst developing key skills. Children are encouraged to be independent and inquisitive learners, making full use of the classroom, Dance Studio and outdoor area.

The Curriculum and the Learning Principles

Each lesson is planned individually to ensure that each child can make progress from their starting points. They link to the Key Learning Principles and are explorative, engaging and purposeful.

○ Language and Communication

Learning to understand and communicate needs, wants, likes and dislikes are essential skills to be part of any community, now and in the future. Therefore, developing children's communication skills is a key area of the Curriculum.

Children enter our setting with a range of communication needs; from pre-verbal, to babbling, to aural, to using short phrases. Regardless of their starting points, all children are taught and encouraged to develop or consolidate early communication skills including:

- Vocalisation
- Eye contact
- Listening
- Joint attention
- Imitation
- Turn taking

We use a range of tools to support children with their communication and language skills. These are interchangeable and individualised to support children's needs. We gain support and feedback from Speech and Language Therapists to ensure the systems in place are appropriate. Support can include:

- **Makaton** - This is taught explicitly during the Welcome Song, which teaches children their name and greetings. Throughout the school day, Makaton signs are used so children become familiar with them. In particular, we use signs that promote independence and support children to communicate their needs, including food, drink, more, toilet, please and thank you.
- **Pictorial/visual supports** – The majority of our children have significantly delayed spoken language. In this instance, pictorial/visual supports are used alongside spoken language to encourage communication. We use both physical and online resources and is not a replacement for spoken language nor does it hinder speech development.
- **Speech and Language Sessions** – Children receive daily Speech and Language sessions that link directly to their individual targets. Staff are able to attend demonstration sessions delivered by Slough SALT to develop their knowledge and understanding.

- **Phonics** – Children are taught initial sounds using the Read, Write Inc approach. This supports children with articulation and exposes them to spoken language and sounds taught in an explicit way.

The assessment criteria are:

- Responds positively to familiar adult
- Responds positively to unfamiliar adult
- Takes turns within interactive exchange or play routine
- Demonstrates shared enjoyment within interactive exchange
- Touches item to make request
- Points at item or its visual representation to make request
- Communicates refusal using sign or visual system.
- Communicates refusal using learned phrase
- Communicates for adult to continue interaction or stop using sign or visual system.
- Communicates for adult to continue or stop interaction using learned phrase
- Communicates request for help using sign or visual system
- Communicates request for help using learned phrase

○ Social Understanding

Well-developed play skills can allow children to develop their knowledge in a range of other areas, including language and communication, social skills and gross motor skills.

Children have access to a well-resourced classroom, outdoor area and the main playground. By utilising these spaces, we consider children's development and encourage them to explore and interact with different toys, games and resources. In particular, we use Group play sessions and Occupational Therapy to promote:

- Playing with an adult/adults
- Playing with a peer/peers
- Imaginative play
- Turn taking
- Explorative play

The assessment criteria are:

- Accepts the presence of others in familiar environment
- Takes turns with shared resources
- Accepts an adult playing alongside them
- Accepts a peer playing alongside them
- Accepts an adult playing with them

- Accepts a peer playing with them
- Initiates interaction with peer / s
- Joins others already involved in activity / play
- Joins structured group play activity for a short period

○ Routines

Routines are an important part of everyday life. The school day is purposefully structured to ensure smooth transitions between learning activities and when moving within the school. Visual aids are used throughout the day to support children with these.

However, we recognise that there are changes in routine and we need to support children to cope with these. We do this verbal and pictorial supports. Grab bags filled with personalised resources are used in some cases, for example fire drills.

The assessment criteria are:

- Accepts change within familiar situations
- Makes successful transition with visual prompts
- Makes successful transition independently
- Recognises visual cues for parts of the day (lunch time, home time)

○ Keeping Healthy

Children are encouraged to take more responsibility over their health and self-care as they progress through the school.

Healthy lifestyles are taught as part of the PSHE curriculum, but also covered in The Nest through:

- Promoting and modeling healthy eating
- Maintaining personal hygiene
- Promoting exercise

We support parents through workshops and signpost/refer to external agencies when appropriate, for example the School Nurse or Dietician.

For those children who are not toilet trained, we encourage independence and support parents when children are ready to start toilet training. We put an emphasis on children becoming familiar with their toileting routine and maximising their involvement (as appropriate). This includes:

- Pulling clothing up and down
- Participating in personal hygiene routines

The assessment criteria are:

- Indicates when they are unwell or in pain
- Identifies location of pain
- Communicates that they need to use toilet with visual cues
- Communicates that they need to use toilet using verbal communication
- Adjusts clothing to use toilet
- Uses toilet without help
- Puts on clothing in correct sequence
- Asks for help with fastenings
- Does fastenings independently

○ Sensory Awareness

Sensory stimulation can impact a child's regulation, language and interaction. The daily routine purposely includes explicit time for sensory input – through OT and specific sensory play. If it is felt a child needs more sensory opportunities, this will be accommodated.

OT exercises are taken from children's EHCPs/OT reports and include alerting, organising and calming activities.

Lessons are multi-sensory and use a range of resources to expose children to different textures.

The Nest has a sensory room that children can access. We are hoping to rejuvenate this.

The assessment criteria are:

- Expresses likes / dislikes of sensory experiences
- Identifies own sensory needs
- Calms / alerts / regulates behaviour in response to environmental adaptation being made
- Participates in sensory activities