



# Core Experiences for the Early Years Foundation Stage

*September 2009*

*Kate Greenaway Nursery School and Children's Centre*  
[www.kategreenaway.uk.org](http://www.kategreenaway.uk.org)



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**Version 1, September 2009**



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# PREFACE

## Professor Tina Bruce CBE



Past, Present and Future come together in this excellent book.

The past is there, because it is built on an edifice of sound Froebelian practice, handed down from one generation of practitioners to the next. Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852) was an educational pioneer whose influence remains deep, far-reaching and currently unacknowledged, in the UK today. This is evolutionary and leads to continuity.

In the last decade or so, there has been a focus in official documents on evidence-based practice. Although this is an approach which is exemplary in the way that it attempts to bring rigour and to ensure high standards of effective practice, it also leads to swings in one direction and then another as different research studies contradict each other. Research does not on the whole build on the past. It is revolutionary, and so it disturbs current practice. It makes us think about the way we work with children and families.

This book demonstrates the value of steady, handed down, principled, value led practice, which gives a more consistent shape to the practice, and encourages a clarity of understanding, paving the way for rich professional dialogues of a more sophisticated kind. Research then becomes a resource to be used thoughtfully, rather than something which dictates this and then that, with little sense of direction. It helps us to see what, how and when we need to change and modify our practice.

The core experiences in this book, and the ways in which they are offered, have their origin in the Froebel approach to early childhood education and care. Sheena Johnstone was a highly respected Froebel trained tutor at Moray House College, now part

of Edinburgh University. She helped her students in very practical sessions, to implement Froebel's principles, values and practice in ways that were effective, updated and cutting edge in the 1980s in the Scottish context.

The core experiences have, since then, been further developed at Southway Maintained Nursery School. Now, the team at Kate Greenaway Nursery School and Children's Centre have developed the core experiences and made important links with current official and legally enshrined English documents (*The Early Years Foundation Stage*, and *Every Child Matters*). The past is still guiding the present, providing navigational tools which also help practitioners into the future.

The charts at the beginning of the book will give a meaningful shape to the current official documents which are legally enshrined, making sense of practice now, while connecting you with past Froebelian practice that has stood the test of time.

It has been a great pleasure to read *Core Experiences for the EYFS*, and to write the preface for such an important publication.

***Tina Bruce, London, July 2009***

# INTRODUCTION

This booklet is a practical and theoretical guide to how we plan to provide a broad, balanced and rich nursery education to the children at Kate Greenaway Nursery School and Children's Centre. Although it has been developed by the staff team over a number of years, it is still a piece of work in progress to be rewritten and revised in the light of what we learn alongside children, parents, and fellow early years educators and researchers.

In this booklet, we state our conviction that young children develop and learn best through play and first-hand experiences, with the companionship of other children and of interested and supportive adults. All aspects of development and learning in young children are interlinked, and children are born and blessed with brains and bodies which are ready to learn and move in increasingly complex and co-ordinated ways, given favourable conditions. Historically, the nursery school has provided just such favourable conditions: space, freedom with responsibility, autonomy with comradeship, and companionable adults who have a sophisticated understanding of how children develop and learn, who can share in new discoveries, sympathise with setbacks and upsets, and prepare the nursery inside and outside for the child's interests and needs.

Play is neither easy to plan for, nor simple to support and develop moment by moment. It is tempting to plan for "free play" to keep most of the children occupied, so that an adult-led, formally-taught group activity can be carried out, ensuring the children are learning. The Core Experiences summarises how the provision of high-quality play and first-hand experiences can enable children to learn indoors and outside through social interaction, through play including heuristic and treasure basket play, communication in its widest sense and the development of language, and movement and multi-sensory experiences which develop health, strength, co-ordination and thinking. We take it as read that this takes place in an emotionally warm, secure and orderly environment underpinned by the key person approach.

In early childhood education, the richest play and discovery takes place when it supported by adults who are ready to judge when to join in, and when not to, and when to teach a new skill or introduce a new concept. We think that this is done best when children can revisit high-quality play opportunities every day, week, month and year, refining their skills and developing their thinking and understanding. Children need adults who understand how play and first-hand experiences can be made more challenging and broadened across different areas of learning. We think that the child who is able to sustain many hours playing with wooden blocks, using increasingly complex techniques to build ever more elaborate structures, should be seen as an expert, not as someone who is stuck. When children are playing in the nursery, it can look simple and easy; it is neither, and this booklet tries to provide some guidance and points of direction to help nursery staff in this difficult and important work.

***With thanks to:** staff members present and past at Kate Greenaway; Professor Tina Bruce, our pedagogue; the nursery schools and children's centres who have generously hosted visits to help us develop this booklet; Justin O'Hanlon for the photos and proof-reading; Carole Warden, for all her support in developing our practice for babies and toddlers, and Southway Nursery School for developing the "key experiences" framework, which provided the starting point for this policy and practice.*

# The Big Picture

**Aims for Early Childhood Education**  
Secure and confident children who are able to enjoy being in nursery.  
Competent and creative learners, curious about their world.  
Skilful communicators who connect with others through language, symbol-making and play

**Areas of Learning**

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Communication, language and literacy
- Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy
- Knowledge and understanding of the world
- Physical development
- Creative Development

**Interactivity**

- Relationships and attachments
- Communication
- Curiosity about the world
- Play
- Creative thinking

**Essential attributes**


- Dispositions to learn
- A sense of belonging and wellbeing
- Perseverance through difficulty
- Collaboration and co-operation

**Progress towards the early learning goals**

**Long and short-term curriculum planning**

Supports communication	Develops dispositions to learn
Develops relationships and attachments	In tune with child development
Provides opportunities for depth and breadth: widens horizons and provides rich first-hand experiences	Considers the entire planned learning experience

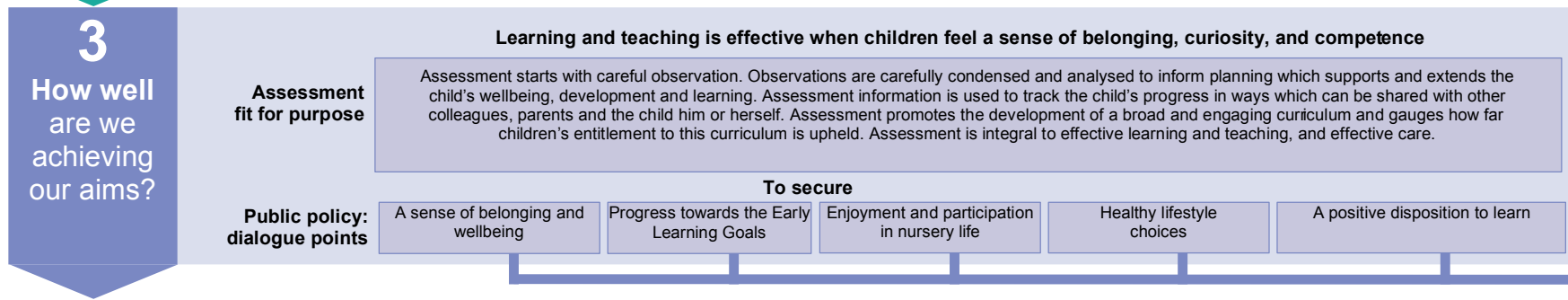
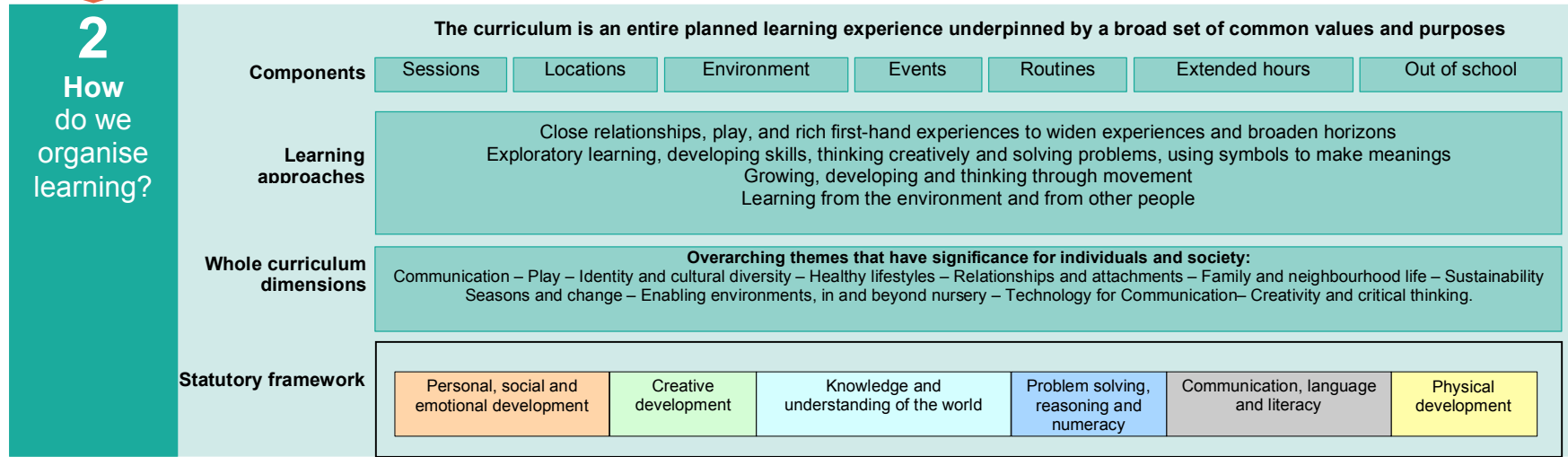
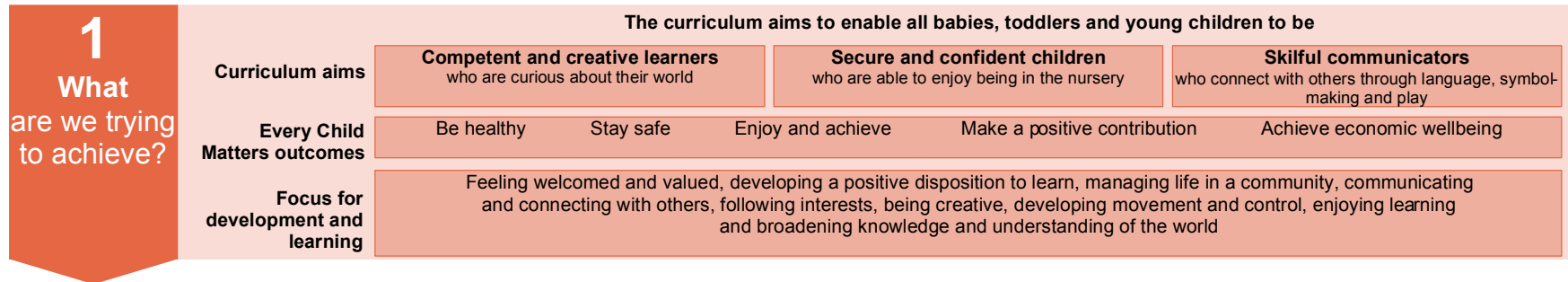
**The EYFS**



**The Core Experiences and the planned programme at KGNSCC**



# Early Childhood Education and Care



Adapted - with thanks to colleagues at QCA and the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)

## Thinking about how young children learn

*This section of our policy draws on our work with Tina Bruce. To find out more, read [Early Childhood Education](#) by Tina Bruce*

Children's brains, from birth, have immensely powerful and flexible capacities to attend to sensory information (seeing, hearing, smelling, feeling the body's position in space, touching and tasting), including a developing awareness of the body, and the body's place and movement in space. From birth, the brain has a very powerful capacity to organise experience into categories and make connections between experiences. We view the birth to five age range as a "sensitive period" for children's development and learning.

Both under and over-stimulation are potentially damaging to children during sensitive periods of development. Therefore we always offer a rich, stimulating, multi-sensory environment for children, whilst avoiding overstimulation (e.g. too much visual stimulation for babies; letter flashcards for toddlers).

Children have very different temperaments. Some children need stimulating, questioning and communicative adults in order to encourage them to explore and experiment. But more outgoing children can have their development hindered by this type of approach, experiencing it as interfering. All children need adults who listen attentively, develop conversation, and think out loud together with them.

Children need to feel emotionally secure at nursery, if they are to have the confidence to explore and learn. They need to feel confident about the transition between home/parent and nursery/key person. Children in nursery need adults who can hold them in mind, can think about their emotional state, and can regulate their emotional state when it threatens to become overwhelming.

Children's powerful learning mechanisms mean that a lot of their development happens through playing and experimenting with high quality materials. For example, through many experiences of playing with water and other liquids, children move from simple

actions (e.g. a baby flicking water with her fingers) to more complex, co-ordinated actions (e.g. a four year old carefully pouring water from one container into another and then carrying the container over to the sand and mixing the two substances together). Through repeating and practising these physical actions and experiments, children develop concepts about shape, space, and the properties of substances.

Children are also learning through the movement of their bodies, and feeling sensations on their bodies. Moving the body builds brain as well as muscle; movements that start off with the body can then be extended to movements of tools and play materials. It is difficult to learn to write if you haven't mastered big movements with your shoulders and arms.

The development of language from the second year onwards gives children an additional and immensely powerful mechanism for organising experience and learning from it. Through conversation with adults and other children, they are increasingly able to distance themselves from what they are doing and reflect on it, or see another point of view. When adults engage with children co-operatively (e.g. thinking over a problem together; guiding a child by discussion through a process like cooking a cake which the child could not do independently), they are providing a very powerful structure to support children's learning.

Play is an integrating mechanism in children's learning, bringing together social, emotional, sensory, linguistic, and physical development.

Resources, adult help, and teaching need to be geared to the development of the child. For example, the first symbolic play is with props which closely resemble real things (a pretend tea cup, a pretend telephone) and is generally imitative. So resources and adult involvement in play need to be geared to this. In the third year, more complex pretend play develops, where an object can stand for almost anything the child imagines, and where the ideas for play are increasingly thought up by the child, rather than simply in imitation of adults; therefore resources which closely resemble real things start to become a hindrance to developing play, whereas previously they had been helpful.

## What is the adult's role?

Adults are needed to:

- Organise an environment which is rich in learning opportunities. For example, offering many natural materials and plenty of space will enable children to explore and experiment, building their concepts about materials and physical forces.
- Organise an environment that promotes play, enabling children to integrate their learning across different domains.
- Structure the environment so that it is geared to the child's development and progress. A logically ordered environment enables a child to move from simple and inflexible symbolic play, to rich, more imaginative play. This type of organisation also applies to puzzles (enabling a child to move from selecting and completing a simple puzzle, onto more complex puzzles), tools (ranging from big brushes, to very fine brushes) and all other aspects of the organised learning environment. However this should not be understood as an across-the-board assumption that children's learning develops in an orderly way from simple to complex. Some children will show little interest in 3-wheel trikes but want to go straight to using the 2-wheelers. The accessibility of resources at different levels of complexity, with help, guidance and teaching from adults, ensures that the right conditions for the child's development and learning are available.
- Interact with children's play and learning, showing due sensitivity (not interfering when children are deeply involved, and giving children time to explore objects, ideas and equipment without being directed).

## Some examples of the role of the adult

**Adult-led experiences.** An adult plans an experience which is matched to the interests and development of a group of children. The adult provides encouragement and guidance for the children to work collaboratively together towards a shared end, sharing discussion and tasks along the way. This will often include the adult directly teaching new skills and ideas.

**Adult co-operation with the child's agenda.** An adult becomes involved in a child's play, or the play of a group. The adult shows an interest, takes part, and may suggest some ideas, but does not attempt to steer the direction or the theme of the play.

**Taking advantage of a *teachable moment*** An adult may shift from observing a child, to interacting, through spotting a "teachable moment". If a child really wants to cut a piece of paper to a particular size, it is the right time to teach the use of scissors!

**Reflecting on learning** In all of the types of interaction outlined above, adults can often provide useful, ongoing feedback to the children, though it is important not to bombard a child with language, and important also to judge when a child needs quiet and stillness to maintain concentration. Ongoing feedback is not empty praise, but an intervention to help the child. So you might say something like, "You've *nearly* cut all the way through now, let's see what's stopping the saw going through that last bit"; "You're doing really well with this, but you look a bit stuck on this bit of the recipe, shall we look at it together".

It is very helpful if children can look back at their learning over time. Little photo-books about significant learning episodes, PowerPoints on the computer with photos and video, posters and wall displays, and an adult taking time to look through the Profile Book with a child are all ways of doing this.

# Listening, conversing and sustained shared thinking

This section of the policy draws on the EPPE Project. To find out more, Google EPPE or go to <http://eppe.ioe.ac.uk/>

## 1. Types of questioning and conversation

It is important to become aware of the types of questions which adults direct to children in nursery, and the types of reply the children give.

Some questions are really tests of knowledge, and the adult will either wait until the right answer is given, or give the right answer (“what colour is this Lego brick?”). This type of conversation and questioning does not support or extend children’s thinking.

The EPPE Project recorded a large number of interactions between children and adults in settings which had already been judged effective. The common feature of these conversations was that they were sustained (not just question-answer) and they involved the child and adult in thinking together. The EPPE researchers coded all these as “Sustained Shared Thinking” (SST).

*It is important to note that SST is a coding used by researchers. For nursery practitioners, it is not advisable to use this as a model for interaction. It is preferable to use this research to prompt reflection on how we work. What sort of questions do we ask children? Do our questions prompt a longer discussion, clarifying thinking and ideas? Most fundamentally: do we listen to children enough to begin to understand the ways they are thinking, the ways they see the world?*

In SST, the child contributes to the developing ideas, rather than just giving a right or wrong answer to a question. “*Individuals ‘work together’ in an intellectual way to solve a problem, clarify a concept, evaluate activities, or extend a narrative.* This can also be achieved between peers.” (Siraj-Blatchford, 2009)

Here is an example from the EPPE data (Siraj-Blatchford, 2009):

1.20 BOY 3 (3:11) has finished his cake and starts to sing 'Happy Birthday' to NURSERY OFFICER 1.

NURSERY OFFICER 1 pretends to blow out the candles. "Do I have a present?"

BOY 3 (3:11) hands her a ball of playdough.

NURSERY OFFICER 1 "I wonder what's inside? I'll unwrap it." She quickly makes the ball into a thumb pot and holds it out to BOY 3 (3:11), "It's empty!"

BOY 3 (3:11) takes a pinch of playdough and drops it into the thumb pot "It's an egg."

NURSERY OFFICER 1 picking it out gingerly "It's a strange shape."

BOY 1 (4:0) tries to take the 'egg'.

NURSERY OFFICER 1 "Be very, very careful. It's an egg." To BOY 3 (3:11) "What's it going to hatch into?"

BOY 3 (3:11) "A lion."

NURSERY OFFICER 1 "A lion?.... I can see why it might hatch into a lion, it's got little hairy bits on it." She sends BOY 3 (3:11) to put the egg somewhere safe to hatch. He takes the egg and goes into the bathroom.....

BOY 3 (3:11) returns to the group.

NURSERY OFFICER 1 "Has the egg hatched?"

BOY 3 (3:11) "Yes."

NURSERY OFFICER 1 "What was it?"

BOY 3 (3:11) "A bird."

NURSERY OFFICER 1 "A bird? We'll have to take it outside at playtime and put it in a tree so it can fly away."

## 2. How learning is organised and initiated: some further findings from EPPE

The EPPE Project found that in the most effective settings, the curriculum is largely play-based, with children choosing and initiating for themselves most of the time. This depends on the nursery being well-organised, with challenging equipment and activities available to the children all of the time. For three and four year olds, the optimal ratio was two thirds child-initiated to one third adult-initiated. EPPE rated activities most highly when they really “pushed” the child intellectually, found that the most common cognitive challenge occurred when the practitioner extended a child-initiated episode. Many of the most successful pedagogical interactions took place in pairs (an adult with a child); likewise, much of the richest learning was by children working together in pairs.

EPPE rated the learning environment with the ECERS-E scale, which we use as one of our self-evaluation tools. EPPE calls this “pedagogical framing” - the “behind-the-scenes” work including provision of materials, arrangement of space, and the establishment of daily routines to support cooperation and equitable use of resources”.

Read on: [www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR356.pdf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR356.pdf)

### Reference:

Iram Siraj-Blatchford (2009) *Conceptualising Progression in the Pedagogy of Play and Sustained Shared Thinking in Early Childhood Education: A Vygotskian Perspective*





## Where does planning come from?

The majority of our planning is outlined in the “Core Experiences” section (see below). Most Core Experiences are offered every day, with a few offered less frequently. Each Core Experience promotes learning across all six areas in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This enables children to learn through repeated experiences which can be differentiated to match and extend their development, all the way from the earliest stages of EYFS to the ultimate Early Learning Goals. So staff can start with a child’s interest in a particular area (like small world play) and extend the child’s learning across the full curriculum. This helps the child to develop skills through frequent practice, and to extend thinking and understanding.

Whilst entitlement to a broad, balanced curriculum is important, it must be balanced by an emphasis on the individual child building learning over time: curriculum coverage matters, in the end, less than the child sustaining progress, overcoming difficulties, and developing the key dispositions to learn: communication, collaboration, involvement and persistence with difficulty.

The development of children in this first phase of education is very variable, and also unpredictable. This can result from differences in age (some children leave nursery before they are even four years old; others are nearly five by the summer term), natural differences in development, special needs and difficult early circumstances. Whilst there is an important role for targeting extra help to specific areas of difficulty (for example, communication, or social and emotional development), the curriculum needs to be rich and stimulating for all children, to foster excitement and joy. Creativity runs through the whole curriculum, with each Core Experience offering opportunities for children to make choices, think through solutions to problems and find unique ways of expressing their ideas through talking, drawing, painting, making models, making music, singing, dancing and moving. For this reason, each Core Experience must be carefully presented to the children, with a rich range of resources to choose from, and an emphasis on practical function (knowing where you can find things, and where they go) together with aesthetic appeal. Following William Morris, we hope to have nothing that we do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful.

The Core Experiences are mapped out to outline progress: but this is curriculum progression, not the child's development and learning. The EYFS section of each Core Experience is designed to support the assessment of children's progress, and help staff to consider what sort of interaction, help and teaching will help further progress – the adult role which Tina Bruce summarises as *observe, support, extend*. So where a child is observed to be deeply involved in woodwork, the Core Experience document supports the child's key person in thinking about what development and learning can be found in the observation, and what support might enable further extension – for example, offering further tools; helping the child to measure or otherwise work with more accuracy; reflecting with the child on the finished work and thinking about what to do next; helping the child to learn new skills, like joining *etc.*

The Core Experiences give a context for the child's learning: so, for example, sophisticated mathematical learning is illustrated in a Core Experience like cooking, so the child develops and applies an understanding of number, measure, shape and space in order to meet the requirements of cooking and to solve real problems.

## Rhythms of the year at Kate Greenaway

Responding to the seasons and the calendar gives a “shape” to the year and provides special, one-off opportunities for exploration and learning as outlined below:

	<b>Festivals (visits/links)</b>	<b>Seasonal</b>	<b>Educational visits</b>
<b>Winter Term (September-December)</b>	<p><b>Eid-UI-Fitr</b> (Mosque, cooking)</p> <p><b>Diwali</b> (Hindu temple, candles and lamps)</p> <p><b>Harvest</b> (food grown in the KG garden and in children’s homes)</p> <p><b>Guy Fawkes</b> (sparklers, bonfire)</p> <p><b>Christmas</b> (cooking; church)</p>	<p>Fallen leaves, Hampstead Heath or Epping Forest</p>	<p>Science Museum</p>
<b>Spring Term (January-March)</b>	<p><b>Chinese New Year</b> (cooking, Chinatown)</p>	<p>Spring planting in the garden. Trees in blossom around Islington. Lambs at the City Farm.</p>	<p>Natural History museum Freightliners/ Mudchute city farm</p>
<b>Summer Term (April-July)</b>	<p><b>African-Caribbean Carnival</b> (commemorating the first carnival in London which took place close to Kate Greenaway, at St Pancras Town Hall)</p>	<p>Summer Planting and taking plants home. Trees in leaf, Hampstead Heath or Greenwich</p>	<p>Docklands Light Railway, River Thames</p>

The rationale for the festivals chosen is that they are celebrated by groups of people together with traditional practices. In early childhood, the emphasis is on togetherness and participation, mirroring some cultural practices from home in the nursery. Children experience togetherness, and there are rich learning opportunities in the visits and other aspects e.g. cooking and enjoying special food together. Festivals which are more spiritual (e.g. Easter, Eid ul Adha) are more appropriately part of children's education when they are older. Other festivals (e.g. Mothers' Day) we see as most appropriately celebrated by families in individual ways.

Additional festivals may be celebrated at Kate Greenaway, depending on the cultures and faiths of children on roll.

We use <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/> for background information in all cases, attempting to represent each religion and festival in an appropriate way. We always invite families to lead aspects of celebrating different festivals.

Children's time at Kate Greenaway has its own cyclical rhythm. On starting, the child's photo will be stuck into the Profile Book, which will then record the child's development, growth and learning over time.

We have a special ceremony to mark the transfer from one key person to the next, with a small celebration in the new key group and a photo being specially added to the group's board.

When children leave Kate Greenaway, they are given a special goodbye and a small present.



## Block Play

Children need many opportunities to become competent in their block play, to master, control and practise their skills. The experience starts with the babies and toddlers, when the young baby grasps, sucks, releases, bangs and plays hide and seek with a single block. At Kate Greenaway we provide carefully designed blocks easy for the youngest children to hold, manipulate and explore.

Gradually, through this exploration and interaction, the child explores the properties of each of the different blocks, separating out their differences and similarities, establishing common physical characteristics, and 'knowing the blocks'. Through block play children are encouraged to explore mathematical ideas of area, shape and spatial relationships. By playing with blocks children acquire a basic repertoire of building techniques. As the children get older, their symbolic representations and abstract sculptures become more detailed and intricate.

Block play encourages collaboration, co-operation and conversation: building together, and helping each other to lift heavy blocks.

Block play can also support and extend stories (for example, using blocks to retell the story of the Three Billy Goats Gruff) and interaction with non-fiction books (e.g. about buildings).

## ***Block Play as a context for development and learning in the EYFS***

Block Play enables children's **personal, social and emotional development** by providing opportunities for making independent choices, sustaining interest and involvement for increasing periods of time, and collaborating with others.

Whilst using the blocks, children can develop their **communication, language and literacy** as they discuss ideas with each other, talk about what they want to do, listen to the ideas of others, and use language to describe size and position. Children can also refer to books about building and structures whilst taking part in block play, and they can record their constructions by drawing and making marks.

Block play supports the development of children's **problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy** by providing opportunities to count for a purpose and use the language of quantity and size (more, fewer, longer, shorter etc). Children gain direct experience of the properties of shapes, how to describe shapes, how to use the correct mathematical terms to describe shapes, and how the different blocks fit together. Both building with blocks and tidying up at the end provide opportunities to sort blocks by their properties and sizes. Block Play enables children to develop problems which they need to find solutions to, for example balancing different shapes in a structure or finding the right block to place.

Children can also develop their **knowledge and understanding of the world**, exploring the shape, texture and smell of the blocks at first, and finding out how to build different types of structures and how to make them stable.

Block play helps **physical development** because children need to develop their gross motor skills, picking up and moving the blocks (sometimes needing to work with another to move the largest hollow blocks), and also their fine motor skills to position and manipulate smaller blocks precisely.

Children's **creative development** is fostered by the open-ended nature of the blocks, allowing them to create many different types of structures, explore ideas and use their imagination. Block play can be linked with small world play, with children developing stories around their constructions (e.g. princes and princesses in a castle) and large-scale role play, like the swimming pool created with hollow blocks recorded in the *Tuning into Children* video. Children can reflect on how far they have achieved what they intended to with the blocks and think about how they might modify what they have made or do it differently next time.







## Introducing children to literature and books

The youngest children are introduced to songs and rhymes with whole-body movement, finger play and actions. Gradually props and pictures are introduced to support songs and rhymes. Nursery rhymes engage children in small manageable chunks of text, giving children experiences of alliteration, rhyme and rhythm in a context which develops their speaking and listening.

Towards the end of second year, simple stories are introduced, again supported by props. Props match well to the developmental emergence of symbolic understanding where there is a close relationship between the symbol and the real object. Simple stories for young children deal with familiar events; props represent familiar objects and animals.

Through involvement in stories and playing with props, children move from beyond the “here and now”, enhancing their imaginative life.

Towards the end of the fourth year, children rely less on props and can sustain involvement in more complex stories through the text and illustrations alone, though props remain important to play with the ideas and storylines.

We keep groups of children as small as possible, so that we can tailor the experience to the individual needs of each child, and so that children

have an opportunity to speak and actively listen (rather than just “sit up nicely”). The pace of group sessions is carefully planned, with a mixture of stories, songs and rhymes. In small groups, children are helped to focus their attention to sounds – musical (instruments, listening to music, making sounds with the body), environmental, and the sounds of letter and words. Children experiment with their voices making a wide range of sounds, at different pitches and volumes.

The skills of segmenting and blending are founded on the earlier experiences of enjoying rhymes and songs, and developing an ability to focus attention to sounds. They are developed through in-context fun with words and sounds: alliteration, stumbling as we say “p-p-p-penguin” and identifying the initial sound in words and how they rhyme e.g. reading *The Cat in the Hat* and getting children to guess the word from just the initial sound or from the rhyme) and then further breaking words down (segmenting into their individual phonemes). Children are encouraged to play with sounds, experimenting with new rhymes (e.g. “Twinkle twinkle chocolate bar”). Staff model pronunciation of sounds with care.

Through the enjoyment of stories, the children learn about the characters, about the formal arrangement of books (with covers, titles, text and sometimes speech bubbles) and that a story has a structure – a beginning, middle and end. All story books are very carefully selected for rich and engaging language, often with repetition and refrains; for high quality illustrations; and to show a range of ethnic groups, cultures, types of families, women and men in various roles, different places, etc. Children’s knowledge of print in books is built on their awareness of print in the environment – signs, logos, brands etc. In the third year, we help draw children’s attention to letters and words in environmental print. Staff make books with children about memorable experiences, and children are also able to make their own books when they please. ICT resourcing enables the use of photos (taken by children or adults) to be incorporated, and to develop electronic forms of books (e.g. recording a trip through making a PowerPoint).

Non-fiction books begin with the simplest board books about familiar objects, people and animals for babies, and range to carefully structured and accessible books (e.g. books and leaflets which categorise birds into different species) that help children to structure and reflect upon their experiences of the world around them, and learn new facts. These books are used to support displays, and to

add information to enhance and deepen the experiences that the nursery provides. The book corner is a place where children can share a book with another adult, or experience a book on tape. It is a place with a special atmosphere of calm, reflection and thoughtfulness. Our stock of books is uniformly high quality and includes books in different languages and books which represent the diversity of the children who come to Kate Greenaway. Children are able to borrow books and to repeat the experience of their favourite stories in the intimate environment of their homes.

## ***Books and children's literature as a context for development and learning in the EYFS***

Books support children's **personal, social and emotional development** from the very earliest stages by providing a context for snuggling in with an adult, making choices and developing preferences like having a favourite story or book, and feeling a sense of belonging by joining in with others. The well-organised book areas enable children to select books on their own, as well as with an adult, for increasingly long periods of time. Books can give children a sense of identity by reflecting cultural and social practices.

Whilst enjoying books and literature, children can develop their **communication, language and literacy**. From babies vocalising as they see pictures, to toddlers joining in with repeated refrains and older children being able to talk for extended periods about pictures, characters and the main events of the story, books help to develop children's communication and expand their vocabulary. They support language for thinking, wondering why and how things happen in stories, and imagining how characters might feel – which enriches role play and small world play. Books and rhymes help children to become active listeners, tuning into and delighting in different sounds like rhymes or individual letter sounds, and being able to sustain and enjoy listening over periods of time. Books, leaflets, posters and computer programmes can all give children additional information whilst they are engaged in other experiences, like Block Play or finding out about different insects in the garden.

Books and rhymes help children to develop their **problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy** by providing opportunities to join in with counting and number rhymes, and to count as part of their enjoyment of a story (e.g. how many holes did the hungry caterpillar make in the leaf?) Children can learn to recognise numbers in books and identify patterns and shapes in illustrations and photographs.



Children can also develop their **knowledge and understanding of the world** through books: nursery-made books enable children to reflect on, talk about and celebrate their earlier experiences and think about the past, the seasons, and their own growth and change.

Books also help children to widen their knowledge, for example by showing in pictures animals they are unlikely to see first-hand.

Holding books and turning pages with care helps children's **physical development**.

Children's **creative development** is supported because books, rhymes and stories enrich pretend play, and children can enjoy performance by remembering and saying or singing rhymes and refrains from books.

## Emergent writing and book-making

At Kate Greenaway young children are given opportunities to respond to the world with marks and symbols, exploring experimenting and playing. Discovering that one thing can stand for another, creating and experimenting with their own symbols and marks and recognising that others may use marks differently.

The older children are given a variety of different mediums with which to write or mark-make. They are encouraged to make books, represent their life experiences, their family, to try to write for themselves. There is a specific mark-making area with the equipment



such as stapler, tape, hole punch etc, and mark-making is also encouraged in other areas, such as role-play and the garden, so the children can write lists for shopping etc. Early writing is a good context for learning about letter names and sounds, often starting with the letters most important to the child in her or his name.

Children are helped to learn to use a tripod grip through the use of very small pieces of chalk and crayon, and as they start to plan correct letter formation they are shown correct direction.

Children at Kate Greenaway are regularly involved in book-making: enjoying home-made books about life at home and in nursery, and

making their own books, including the use of digital photography. Books can be made very quickly and entirely to a child's own agenda in the resourced area; with adult help, books are developed including photos from trips and significant nursery events, and in different forms e.g. leaflets, small posters, PowerPoints. Writing in these different forms allows children a context to think about how they have grown and changed over time, and to reflect on their own learning and experiences.

## ***Emergent writing and book-making as a context for development and learning in the EYFS***

Emergent writing and book-making helps children's **personal, social and emotional development** by providing opportunities for making choices, sustaining interest and involvement for increasing periods of time, and collaborating with others. Children often use drawing, mark-making and writing as a context to talk about their home and family, and books with photos can enhance children's sense of their own community, family, and personal history. As children become more able to form letters, especially to write their own names, they feel a sense of pride in achieving a complex skill.

Early writing develops their **communication, language and literacy** as they begin to use marks, circles and lines, letter-type shapes and finally correctly-formed letters to represent words and sounds. This can be supported in a range of contexts – inside and out, in the book-making area and by the blocks – and can often have a real purpose, like putting together a shopping list or putting up a sign to ask that a model should be kept, not tidied away. As children attempt to represent the sounds of words they say on paper, they are learning how letters represent sounds and can be taught the names and sounds of letters of the alphabet. When children choose to browse, share or show others books they have made, they are showing that they know that information can be recorded in print.

Emergent writing supports the development of children's **problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy** by providing opportunities to make marks to stand for numbers, and in time write some numbers correctly.

Children can also develop their **knowledge and understanding of the world**, using different tools to make marks and also using ICT for early writing and illustration.





**Physical development** is helped as children learn to use a range of tools to make marks, both on large and small scales, and gain increasing control and co-ordination through practice.

Children's **creative development** is supported as they experiment with making up symbols and explaining how these stand for other things, and experiment with shapes, colours and forms (e.g. enclosures, grids, etc) in their mark-making, using different media and types of paper. Children can talk about their books and emergent writing, explaining what they mean and reflecting on what they have done.



## **Malleable materials**

From the earliest days of infancy, children need experiences of different types of materials. Malleable materials can be transformed into different shapes and sizes, and their properties can be changed (e.g. by adding water). Playing with them provides for thinking about shape, space and area – and the foundations of chemistry.

Malleable materials encourage children to use each of the five senses. The programme at Kate Greenaway has been planned with the involvement of the Occupational Therapy Service in Islington, to provide satisfying experiences for children with low-arousal (where sensory feedback has to be strong, in order to help the nervous system to a state of equilibrium – so children can bang, bash, and push hard) and equally to help

children who have a highly-aroused nervous system (who are easily overwhelmed by sensory experiences, and so have to be introduced to them very gradually, perhaps a tiny dot of shaving foam on a fingertip or a just few grains of sand to touch). This approach helps children to manage the flow of sensory information, integrate it, and enjoy the stimulation of their senses.

Malleable materials can also be used by children from the third year onwards to express symbolic and creative thinking – for example, the bowls of porridge for the three bears. Children can talk and think about the transformation of materials from one state to another (what happens when you put water in the freezer; when you add cornflour to water, baking powder to flour in cooking). They are given experiences of reversals (from water to ice back to water). Children are helped to develop technical competences and skills – for example, learning the different ways of making pots (thumb and coil). Every day, malleable materials are presented at floor and table level, to encourage different styles of interaction, and to suit the different ages and levels of development of the children.

## ***Malleable materials as a context for development and learning in the EYFS***

Playing with malleable materials supports children's **personal, social and emotional development** by providing opportunities to explore materials, develop skills in using tools and manipulating the materials, and develop confidence and autonomy, sometimes becoming involved for long periods of time with or without the support of an adult. The materials can provide a further challenge as children seek to develop skills for particular processes, e.g. making a small pot out of clay and feel a sense of accomplishment.

Malleable materials provide a context for children's developing **communication, language and literacy** as they talk about what they are doing and develop ideas with others.

Children's **problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy** are developed through exploring quantities and how a large amount of a material can be split into smaller amounts, and by having real problems to solve around quantity (sharing playdough out fairly, for example) and number (e.g. checking the number of people at the table and the numbers of tools to share). Using shape cutters and other tools, they can develop their understanding of shapes and their names. Children can count the number of items they have made and know how groups change in quantity when items are added or taken away.

Children can develop their **knowledge and understanding of the world**, exploring materials with their senses and finding out about how actions have effects (rolling, squashing etc) and how materials can be changed (e.g. adding water to the clay).



They can use tools for a purpose, also helping their **physical development** as they manipulate materials in different ways with fingers, hands and feet, and use tools, developing their fine motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination. Sensory exploration helps children to feel calm, and in making lines and circles children are experimenting with their first mark-making (and reading for blind children).

Children's **creative development** is supported as they develop a "feel" for different textures and materials, and use malleable materials to make objects according to their ideas and plans, and as representations in imaginative play (e.g. making animals out of playdough and playing with them). Children can develop ideas and plans, and reflect on how pleased they are with the results of what they have made and what they might do differently next time.

## Cookery

Younger children mainly engage with tasting, knowing the names of different foods, cutting and holding them. Simple cooking ingredients are combined together for the experience of mixing and transformation (e.g. adding water to flour and making a sticky mixture).

For older children, the cooking area is structured to promote independence. Ingredients are stored where children can reach them and are clearly labelled. Recipes are laid out so that children can follow them, first with adult help, and then independently. Children gain experience of how to gradually add liquids, to stir, beat, and fold ingredients together etc.

Cooking is an accessible way for children to find out about different cultures and traditions, and develop positive attitudes about diversity. By taking part in preparing and clearing up after meals, children have a strong experience of living in a community, sharing out work and making a positive contribution to the smooth running of the day.

The whole cooking process is important, from the decision to choose a recipe, to the washing up at the end, sharing food (or taking it home) and reflecting on the processes of change.



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Core Experiences for the EYFS

## ***Cookery as a context for development and learning in the EYFS***



Cooking helps children's **personal, social and emotional development** by providing opportunities for exploration, developing skills, confidence and autonomy, and sometimes involvement for long periods of time with or without adult support. Cooking can be difficult, so children feel a sense of pride and satisfaction when they eat or take home what they have made. Older children can cook independently, following a recipe, selecting ingredients and tools themselves and asking for support if they need it from other children or adults.

Cooking also supports children's developing **communication, language and literacy** as they talk about what they are doing and

collaborate with others. Children will often have to follow precise instructions from adults, and use talk to organise, order and clarify what they are doing. In following recipes, children are learning how to select and retrieve information from books.

Children develop their **problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy** by finding out about quantity, starting with ideas of “more”, “a lot”, and over time developing more sophisticated ideas of exact measurement (of quantity, weight, size and time). Cooking presents a “real context” for the use of number – counting out the spoons of sugar, for example, correctly reading a number in a recipe, or placing muffin mixture into cases to experience division and one-to-one correspondence.

Cooking is a good context for children to expand their **knowledge and understanding of the world**, finding out about different ingredients, what happens when things are mixed together and how heat and cold changes substances. Through preparing and eating food, children can find out about other cultures and traditions. Whilst cooking, children can observe materials closely and explore them with all their senses, and talk about what they see and how things change. They can gain first-hand experience of cause-effect relationships, and observe which changes are one-way and which are reversible (you can melt ice, but can’t get the flour and butter back from a cake you have baked).

They can use tools for a purpose, supporting their **physical development**, and learn about keeping safe whilst experiencing risks (e.g. cutting with sharp knives). They can find out how substances can be changed by tools, for example by whisking egg whites.

Children’s **creative development** is supported as they develop their own ideas and tastes in cooking (e.g. choosing to make a chocolate or plain cake, cutting cookies like animals, or into mathematical shapes). They can talk about and evaluate what they have done.



## Role Play

For the youngest children this is initially based on their experiences of their home life. Role-play begins with props which closely resemble real objects in the world (pretend telephones, pretend cups and saucers, etc); for older children, the transformative power of their imagination enables one thing to stand for almost anything else they choose. Therefore the home corner for younger children is mainly resourced with props which resemble real objects, whilst the home corner for older children has more open-ended and adaptable resources.

For all children, the potential for sustained play is developed through adding different sensory experiences to the home corner by the inclusion of pasta, dough, flour etc to stir and mix.

We do not provide plastic food for the older children, so that they can use their imaginations to transform materials: a ball of playdough can become an orange, for example, and a pan of lentils a stew that is being cooked.



## ***Role play as a context for development and learning in the EYFS***

Role play enhances children's **personal, social and emotional development** by providing opportunities for playing with others, using developing social and communication skills, for developing autonomy, and sometimes sustaining involvement for long periods of time with or without adult support. Through role play children can explore other people's points of views and respond to the feelings and wishes of others. Play can also be a medium for children to explore their life experiences and both joyous and sad emotions.

In role play, children develop their **communication, language and literacy** as they talk about what they are doing, initially using just one or two-words and later developing conversation, having to take turns, negotiate and listen to the ideas of others to imagine and create roles and scenarios. Role play can offer children a context for making marks and emergent writing, for example writing notes and lists, and an opportunity for emergent reading, browsing magazines, recipe books and other texts in the home area.

Children develop their **problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy** by exploring size, placement and quantities – which clothes fit which dolls, for example, setting the table, and hanging up dressing-up clothes. In role play children can use numbers, counting the number of people at the picnic, deciding how many plates and how much food to pack, or counting up the aliens who are dead on the ground.

It can provide a context for children to expand their **knowledge and understanding of the world**, as they imagine different events and explore different roles and jobs.



Role play supports their **physical development**, through outdoor role-play involving running and climbing, and through developing their fine motor skills to dress babies, put on dressing-up clothes and put home-corner and picnic items in and out of boxes and cupboards.

Children's **creative development** is supported as they develop their imagination and also play by imitating what

they know about adults and other children. In role play children can use their imagination to devise and act out storylines, put together sequences of movements, and develop ideas with others.



## Outdoor play and gardening

There is a special quality to being outdoors: experiencing the changes in natural light, feeling wind, rain, snow and sleet, or getting warm in the sun. So whilst we offer a broad and balanced curriculum outdoors, covering all six areas of learning, that does not mean that all indoor experiences are available outdoors (or vice versa).

Being outdoors has a special importance to children growing up in a busy, noisy, crowded environment like Kings Cross. The garden has been very carefully planned to give children a sense of tranquillity and an enjoyment of natural textures and colours in a densely built and large-scale environment.

We provide a range of learning opportunities outdoors at Kate Greenaway for children of all ages, and the environment particularly enables children to make strong progress in their physical development. High quality wheeled toys, from the push-along trolleys which help young toddlers with balancing and walking, link our collection of 2-wheeled bikes enabling children to develop their balance, co-ordination, stamina and strength. There is small and large scale climbing equipment which is safe for all children to use independently: children are never lifted onto equipment. Children have opportunities for large-scale building in the

garden with the hollow blocks. A range of balls and bats is available, in different sizes and with different levels of hardness/softness.

Emergent writing is supported with clipboards, and with paintbrushes and pots of water to “paint” the back wall. Large-scale and whole-body painting can also be provided outdoors. Imaginative play is particularly supported by many of the design features of the garden (for example, trees to hide behind, hills and hidden corners, the thick planting of bamboos) encourage imaginative play and hide-and-seek.

For the youngest babies, we provide secure spaces for crawling and exploring the outdoors, with large rugs and baskets/boxes for a sense of enclosure. Children can also sleep outside in the covered area by the sleep room.

The all-weather clothing (for children and staff) enables the garden to be used in any weather and for children to have the experience of standing in the rain, splashing in puddles, being out in the snow, making snowballs and snow-structures.

In the early stages the younger children enjoy digging and turning the soil, finding the creatures and minibeasts that live in it. They can explore how wet and dry soil feels, and look for stones. With the help of an adult, they can pick a range of vegetables and fruits.

As they get older they learn about the changing seasons in the garden, how weather affects plant growth, the need for sun, light and water, and the life cycles of butterflies. ICT enables closer observation, using the digital microscope, and recording through digital photos and video.

## ***Gardening and outdoor play as a context for development and learning in the EYFS***

Gardening and outdoor play helps children's **personal, social and emotional development** by providing opportunities for exploring the environment with interest, finding and enjoying new features, developing skills, confidence and autonomy, and sometimes involvement for long periods of time with or without adult support. The garden provides physical challenges which children will enjoy at first with support, and then independently, managing a small number of rules and boundaries, gaining confidence in their own abilities and recognising risks and dangers. The garden provides large-scale experiences which encourage children to link up with others and work collaboratively, and in using bikes and other individual equipment children learn about how to share resources and also to be appropriately assertive.

Gardening and outdoor play also supports children's developing **communication, language and literacy** as they talk about what they are doing and collaborate with others. Children will often have to follow instructions from adults, and when they work and play collaboratively they need to listen carefully to each other, respond to each other's ideas and negotiate. Gardening particularly provides a context for learning new vocabulary, and supports mark-making (putting in labels) and early reading. Children can also enjoy making marks in the sand, and developing large and fine motor skills which will support their emergent writing.





Children develop their **problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy** by exploring capacity (sand and water), length (e.g. observing the growth of a plant) and counting and sharing out items (e.g. when planting seeds or seedlings). Children also have opportunities to sort when they select a particular seedling or bulb to plant. The environment is rich in different shapes and textures to observe, enjoy and identify. There are many different materials to enjoy putting in and tipping out of containers. Whilst climbing, running and crawling, children experience being in, out, under and over, and can develop their understanding and use of positional language.

The outdoor area is also a good context for children to expand their **knowledge and understanding of the world**, exploring the greater space and number of materials, sometimes focussing on specific features or processes and observing actions and their effects. Outdoors, children can find out and talk about the features of different living things, notice and talk about patterns and become aware of change (both immediate, e.g. what happens when you add water to soil, and also over time, e.g. noticing the leaves drop in autumn, the growth and harvesting of vegetables year-round). The outdoors also provides a space for large-scale construction, making dens, and also using pulleys and the water pump to explore forces and structures. Children can use ICT to record their work and things of interest (e.g. the digital camera; taking insects and leaves in to observe under the digital microscope).

Outdoors, children can use tools for a purpose, supporting their **physical development**, and learn about keeping safe whilst experiencing risks. They can make large-scale movements and enjoy their increasing mobility, delighting in changes of

perspective as they walk and climb. Children experience negotiating the space, making, developing and sequencing movements, and using a range of ways to move around like slithering, shuffling, rolling, crawling, walking, running, jumping, skipping, sliding and hopping. They can change speed and direction, go backwards and forwards, negotiate equipment, climb up and also crawl into structures, and balance. Children can move to express their feelings and ideas, and to represent ideas (e.g. being a superhero, running and dancing in response to seeing a butterfly). They can gain skills in using bats, rackets and balls. When they put on and take off all-weather clothes and boots, they are developing their small-motor skills and their autonomy in managing clothing. Children can use gardening tools outside, at first with very close supervision and then increasingly manage their own safety and be able to put away and take out tools safely and correctly.

Children's **creative development** is supported as children respond in different ways to the rich textures, sounds, smells and things to see outside in different ways. They may explore and represent what they see, think and feel through drawing, painting, making music and dance. Outdoors, children can develop movement and dance on a large scale, and can also take part in ring-games. Outdoor role play can develop stories across large areas and at different levels, involving large numbers of children.





## Small world

Small world play offers some special learning opportunities for children. Acting out narratives and ideas through the manipulation of small equipment (animals, dolls, Lego people etc) helps children to reflect on feelings and events in their lives in a safe way. Small world play is also rich in possibilities for learning about spaces and positions, with many opportunities for putting things inside structures, on top, next to and underneath.

Doll play is also carefully presented and structured. Each doll has clothes, bedding etc which fit and the children are encouraged to imagine the dolls as a real person and respect them as such: we discourage the naked doll face down in the water tray, and other forms of play which devalue the dolls and limit the imaginative richness of play.

Dolls, clothes and bedding all reflect a range of cultural practices.

Children are encouraged to take dolls out, push them in prams and take them around with the same care and respect they would show a baby: if children simply want an object to put somewhere and zoom around, then an alternative is found.

## ***Small world play as a context for development and learning in the EYFS***

Small world play supports children's **personal, social and emotional development** by providing opportunities to enjoy familiar and new play equipment, with others or individually, developing confidence and autonomy, and sometimes involvement for long periods of time. Small world play provides a context for children to make connections with others, drawing them into their play. In play, children can explore and experiment with different emotions and play out aspects of their experiences.

Small world play also helps children's developing **communication, language and literacy** as they vocalise, make sounds, talk about what they are doing and collaborate with others. It is a good way to experiment with the language of possession and position. Children will sometimes develop narratives with others, having to listen to and take account of different ideas and negotiate. Small world play is sometimes set-up to extend book experiences (e.g. the props for the *Very Hungry Caterpillar*) or first-hand experiences (e.g. trains and blocks following a trip on the underground); this allows children to reflect on experience or a story, sequence actions and events, and reflect on experiences and feelings.

Children can develop their **problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy** by exploring sets of objects, holding things in their hands and grouping them together, experiencing things that are larger and smaller, using language like "more" and "a lot", and counting. Small world play provides problems to solve: sorting objects by their properties (e.g. putting all the farm animals in the farm) and finding out about adding and taking items away from sets, and finding the total number by counting. Children can also explore capacity and size e.g. dressing the dolls, building train tracks, and position e.g. putting Lego people into a house.



Small world play is also a context for children to expand their **knowledge and understanding of the world**, exploring objects with all their senses, finding out about causes and effects (e.g. how pushing the train makes it move along the tracks) and exploring ideas about the world through play (e.g. a garage set, farm or train station).

Their **physical development** is supported with opportunities to develop large and small motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination during play.

Children's **creative development** is supported as they enjoy and respond to familiar playthings, making noises and movements,

and start to pretend and in time develop stories, sometimes based on their own life experiences.

## Painting and colour-mixing

At Kate Greenaway we provide multi-sensory paint experiences for children so that they explore through all five senses e.g. finger painting, foot painting and body painting, as well as using tools e.g. paintbrushes.

### *Painting*

Initially children will feel, taste, smell and explore the texture of paint between their fingers, toes and all over their body. Gradually



they learn the names of the colours and learn how to mix the different colours. Over time and lots of repetition the child will be able to mix paint to the consistency that h/she needs to paint, learning the names of the primary colours. Then using this knowledge the child will be able to mix paint to reach the specific shade or tone needed for their painting.

Painting with the body remains an important part of the experience of paint throughout nursery, with hands, fingers, feet. Creativity begins with the confidence to explore and enjoy the materials.

As children's control and their planning develop, this is matched by the provision of small and delicate brushes alongside big chunky ones, and opportunities to observe closely and remain involved in painting for periods of time. The process of creating (with paint or any other material) is what matters, not the product: so children are not guided into producing identical daffodil paintings with the same shades of yellow and green, but they are encouraged to enjoy and respond to objects, and express themselves using the materials freely. Mixing paints with increasing control extends children's scientific understanding, for example of what happens when different colours are combined, and it can support their growing sense of their identity as they mix the colours they need to paint their hair, eye and skin colours.

## ***Painting and colour mixing as a context for development and learning in the EYFS***

Painting and colour mixing supports children's **personal, social and emotional development** by providing opportunities to show curiosity, develop new skills, develop confidence and autonomy, make choices and sometimes become involved for long periods of time. In painting themselves and friends, children can enhance their self-confidence (e.g. about appearance, hair, eye and skin colour) and feeling of belonging.

Painting and colour mixing also help children's developing **communication, language and literacy** as they vocalise, make sounds, talk about what they are doing and collaborate with others. Children will sometimes negotiate as they paint on a large scale together and talk about their ideas. When learning about mixing colours, children will need to listen carefully and follow instructions, and as their competence develops they may talk about what they are doing and what they observe. Painting with fingers, feet, hands and brushes enables children to make marks and to talk about the different marks and what they stand for. Children can use brushes and tools with increasing control, making lines and circles and starting to draw letter-like shapes and conventional letters.

Children can develop their **problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy** by exploring quantity as they paint, covering space



and making shapes. They may paint an intended number of objects and count these, and represent size and position in their painting. When mixing colours, they will need to solve problems involving quantity in order to make the colour they want.

Painting and colour-mixing are also contexts for children to expand their **knowledge and understanding of the world**, exploring materials (paint, brushes and other tools, paper and other materials to paint on) with all their senses. Whilst painting, children can observe changes, including how the paper becomes damp, how paint behaves when it is thicker and thinner, how different techniques of applying paint have different results, and how colours change when mixed.

Their **physical development** is enhanced with opportunities to develop large and small motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination using their whole body, hands, feet, fingers, and tools including brushes.

Their **creative development** is supported as they enjoy and respond to experiences by painting, enjoying the texture of the paint and paper, making different types of movements, shapes and representations on large and small scales and carefully differentiating and mixing colours.



## **Modelling and making with boxes and other materials, including woodwork**

Woodwork begins with pushing and hitting large-headed plastic nails into soft objects (marrows, play-dough, etc). Children need plenty of experiences at this larger scale, before they are ready to use the metal hammers and nails, hitting nails into soft wood and corks. As children become more skilful, they have the opportunity to hammer nails into wood, saw wood, and join pieces together (with nails or glue) and then to complete a small project which involves planning, discussion, solving problems, and using the acquired skills of sawing and hammering.

### **Box modelling**

Cardboard boxes, tubes, plastic bottles and other recycled materials are enjoyable in their own right (as containers to fill up with sand, water or other materials; as props for play) and also provide for rich creative experiences, creating models that have a special meaning for the child. Box-modelling can be a powerful medium for exploring the imagination and developing narratives.

During modelling work, children can practise and develop their skills in cutting, gluing and sellotaping, exploring the property of materials by finding out what you can (and can't) glue together, and how strong sellotape joins can be.



## ***Box modelling and woodwork as a context for development and learning in the EYFS***



Model-making and woodwork supports children's **personal, social and emotional development** by providing opportunities to make choices, show curiosity, develop new skills, develop confidence and autonomy, make choices and sometimes become involved for long periods of time. Woodwork especially is challenging, and can therefore give children a powerful sense of satisfaction and pleasure in their increasing skills and independence, and a context to learn about tackling problems and managing possible dangers, turning to adults for

help when necessary.

Children's **communication, language and literacy** are supported as they vocalise, make sounds, talk about what they are doing and collaborate with others. Children will sometimes need to listen carefully and follow instructions, in order to learn new skills and to work safely.

Children can develop their **problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy** by exploring size and shape as they select materials, sometimes counting and sorting by size or properties, and experiment with joining them together. Many problems have to be solved: applying the right amount of glue, cutting off the right amount of sellotape, sorting wood into sizes, and measuring and cutting accurately. Children gain experience in fitting shapes together.

Modelling and woodwork also provide a context for children to expand their **knowledge and understanding of the world**, exploring the properties of materials (what sticks, and what does not; the properties of wood). Children can explore cause-effect relationships, for example when they hammer into soft materials or wood, and can develop skills and knowledge about the function and use of tools. They can learn how to select the right tool for the job, or the right material to make a join.

Their **physical development** is enhanced with opportunities to develop large and small motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination, keeping safe when they use saws and hammers.

Their **creative development** is supported as they use their imagination to create objects, sometimes talking through their ideas and plans and reflecting on the final product. Children can explore materials, shapes and colours in two and three dimensions. They can make props out of resources to support their imaginative play.

## Music, movement and dance, including Developmental Movement Play (DMP from Jabadao)

This starts with the younger children with action songs and nursery rhymes, children are encouraged to actively participate in being a 'Little Bunny', or "Winding the Bobbin Up". A lot of work goes in to turn-taking and call response games.

As they grow older children experience different rhythms and have access to a range of music on the CD player and on musical instruments. They learn loud and soft, high and low etc.

Children participate in adult led music sessions, where they are encouraged to warm up their body and their voice before starting to use the musical instruments or to join in with the activities offered during this session.

A lot of time is spent on how to play the instrument correctly and how to get the best sound from their choice of drums, shaker etc.

We always have the Orange Zone (DMP Area) available indoors, where children can develop movement, and develop through movement. Developmental Movement Play (DMP) allows for crawling, rolling, pulling and pushing, going in, over and under things, and experimenting with the body in space (and as many other movements as the children can imagine). We encourage children to move freely and to become more aware of their bodies: instead of saying "no running indoors", we support children in moving safely and considerately without losing the joy of being two and wishing to skip to the door and out into the garden.



## ***Music, movement and dance as a context for development and learning in the EYFS***



Music, movement and dance supports children's **personal, social and emotional development** by providing opportunities to explore and respond to the environment and music, sometimes individually but often with others. In DMP, children can develop confidence in their movements and physical abilities, enjoying challenge and learning how to stay safe. DMP and dance also require increasing attention and concentration, sometimes with periods of watching and listening.

Music, movement and dance also help children's developing **communication, language and literacy** as they vocalise, make sounds, talk about what they are doing and collaborate with others. Children will sometimes negotiate and talk about their ideas. They may move and dance in response to favourite rhymes and songs, following rhythms and action-words. During reflection times for DMP, they may talk about what they have been doing, expressing and elaborating their ideas.

Children can develop their **problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy** by exploring space as they move, having first-hand experiences of being inside, on top, underneath etc. Action rhymes and dances can involve counting and responding to concepts of large and small, fitting-in or being too big.

Children can increase their **knowledge and understanding of the world**, exploring materials (e.g. the elastic cloth in DMP) and using their whole body to explore the world from different perspectives.

Their **physical development** is enhanced with opportunities to develop large and small motor skills, gradually moving in ways which are more controlled, including stopping and starting, balancing and holding positions, going backwards and forwards, jumping on and off. Children gain skills in negotiating space and objects, moving spontaneously and in response to music. They can move freely with pleasure in a range of ways, including slithering, shuffling, rolling, crawling, walking, running, jumping, skipping, sliding and hopping.

Movement can express feelings and represent ideas to support **creative development** as children enjoy moving and exploring spaces and their bodies, sometimes imitating actions in sequences and sometimes expressing themselves freely. Children might talk about their intentions and describe their movements. They can move in response to music and rhythms and show their preferences. Children might introduce a storyline or ideas into their movement and dance, and might move co-operatively, freely or in a structured context (e.g. a ring game or action song).

## Sand and water

**Sand** is an adaptable natural material which children enjoy touching and being in. Indoors, the younger children have a mini-beach-like experience where they can sit in sand, wallow and feel, using all five senses. This is mirrored in the outdoor experience of sand where they can do deep digging; the sand is coarser to the touch and can be made into castles, or shapes. The sand area is resourced with natural materials for imaginative play, as well as buckets and spades for digging and building. Often being in the sand prompts children to develop small world and imaginative play, and will involve making structures and using the sand to pretend with. The older children can transport the sand, add water to it, mix it to use it for their imaginative play, cook with it, make a hole to go to another place etc. In the sand, footprints and shoe prints can be carefully examined and various mark-making materials such as combs and sticks can be used to experiment and make patterns.



**Water** is another natural material that is enjoyable to experience and supports well-being. Children use all their five senses to explore it. Suitable clothing is provided so that the children can experience the rain, splashing in puddles, both on bikes and on foot. They can feel the rain running over the exposed parts of their bodies. The pump helps children to experiment with the sensations of running water, to observe levels changing and how water can cascade downwards, and experience how much energy is needed to move water. Water also adds to the children's play scenarios and is experienced, like the sand, both indoors and out.

Both sand and water promote mathematical thinking (exploring quantities as you transfer the material from one size of container to another) and scientific thinking (experiencing the force of "uplift" which makes things float, knowing that plants and animals need water to survive and finding out about how materials are washed with water, for example).

## ***Sand and water as a context for development and learning in the EYFS***

Sand and water enhance children's **personal, social and emotional development** by being interesting and also calming materials to play with on your own, alongside others and collaboratively. Children can explore with enjoyment and can sustain involvement for periods of time, with or without adult support, developing their confidence and their skills.

Sand and water play also helps children's developing **communication, language and literacy** as they vocalise, make sounds, talk about what they are doing and collaborate with others. Children will sometimes negotiate and talk ideas through. Sand and water can provide a context for pretend play (making cakes with the sand, playing with small world equipment in sand or water, for example) enabling children to develop narratives and extend their experiences and ideas through play. Children can make marks in sand using their fingers and using tools, supporting their emergent writing.

They can develop their **problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy** by exploring capacity as they fill and empty different containers. Sand and water provide a first-hand experience of dividing a large quantity of a material into smaller amounts, and a context for counting





(e.g. the number of cakes), matching (giving one cake to each person), comparing sizes (e.g. different-sized sandcastles) and weights (small and large containers of sand and water). Children can increase their **knowledge and understanding of the world**, exploring these natural materials and how they can be changed, for example how adding water changes the properties of sand, and that this is a reversible change as the sand will dry out again, and how water is used to wash materials.

Their **physical development** is enhanced with opportunities to develop large and small motor skills, from picking up big heavy buckets and containers to using tiny teaspoons in the sand or pouring with care from one container to another. Children can use tools, like whisks in the water and spades in the sand, manipulating the materials to achieve the results they want and developing their skills in using the tools and their eye-hand co-ordination.

**Creative development** is enhanced as children use their senses to connect to natural materials and use sand to make models, exploring textures and sometimes adding marks and decorations. Sand and water can also support imaginative play (pouring out drinks, for example).

## Treasure Basket and Heuristic Play

The treasure basket (Goldschmied, E and Jackson, S, 1994: 86-100) offers babies the opportunity for exploring and playing with objects from the real world instead of toys. Objects in the Treasure Basket have interesting textures, shapes and smells which babies can explore by touching, dropping, sucking, smelling. Because the baby takes the lead in the exploration of the objects, the experience is stimulating without being over-stimulating and it allows babies to control the amount of time they spend exploring, and also to return to favourite objects. The Treasure Basket also enhances the social awareness of the baby, with several babies sitting around the basket often interacting with each other and starting to mirror each other's movements and communication. The role of the adult is primarily to provide secure space and time, with emotional security from her/his presence close to the baby. The adult should be very careful not to interfere or guide the baby, but sensitive interaction and communication will add to the richness of the experience.

For babies not yet sitting up, materials from the Treasure Basket can be presented hanging from an arch (in the style of a "baby gym") or by the adult carefully holding materials for the baby to explore with her/his feet in an age-appropriate chair. The youngest babies can explore more with their feet than with their hands.

As babies start crawling and moving around, their mobility enables them to extend



their exploration of objects. A large tin, or a number of large tins, placed near the Treasure Basket will support their desire to transfer objects in and out of different containers.

Heuristic play (Goldschmied, E and Jackson, S, 1994: 118-131) extends this opportunity by providing the child with a large number of different kinds of objects and containers to explore and play with. As with Treasure Basket play, the structuring of the materials, the place and the time are all crucial to the quality of this special part of the nursery day for children in their second year. Driven by the child's impulse to explore and discover, heuristic play matches the young toddler's fascination with materials, how they behave in space, and how they can be moved from one place to another and scattered, piled or contained.

The resources for heuristic play are special (they are not available in the free-flow environment) and time and space need to be carefully organised and protected by the adult. As with Treasure Basket play, the objects are a large variety of things from "real life", not toys, and the children make their own choices as they explore without interference or guidance, but with the warm and secure presence of adults who interact with sensitivity and care. The resources are carefully selected, and specially organised in draw-string bags, and the children are provided with large tins to support the play.

## ***Treasure Basket and Heuristic Play as a context for development and learning in the EYFS***



Treasure Basket and Heuristic Play support **personal, social and emotional development** by providing the very youngest children with a play experience in which they can make choices and play autonomously, delighting in the exploration of very carefully chosen objects with all their senses and responding with excitement and interest to new items as well as remembering and returning to familiar ones.

Treasure Basket and Heuristic play also help children's developing **communication, language and literacy** as they vocalise and make sounds, often using a range of communication with each other from the youngest ages including making eye-contact, using facial expression and gesture, and using their whole bodies expressively. However these are not forms of play for the development of conversation between adults and children, nor a context for learning the names of things, as a flow of language would interrupt the child's involvement and exploration.

Children can develop their **problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy** by exploring matching (one item in each hand, for example, gives a first

experience of one and two) and capacity as they fill and empty different containers. The structured materials of Heuristic Play especially give children an opportunity to experience different sizes, to find out about putting things in and taking them out, and at the end an opportunity to sort materials as they tidy up and put everything back into the correct bags.

Children can increase their **knowledge and understanding of the world**, exploring materials and their properties with all their senses and finding out about cause-effect relationships (e.g. the noise the chain makes when dropped into the tin).

Their **physical development** is enhanced with opportunities to develop large and small motor skills by manipulating and exploring a range of objects large and small, developing hand-eye co-ordination to put objects into tins or to move them towards the mouth to taste, chew or suck.

**Creative development** is enhanced as children use their senses to connect to natural materials and enjoy moving and making sounds spontaneously.

## Local trips and educational visits

It is important that the nursery feels connected to its community, that if we were not here local people would miss us. Children (of all ages) are taken out on little trips, to the shops, to post a letter, to feed the ducks etc. For the youngest toddlers, it is important that they have plenty of time to walk at their own pace.

Through local visits, children learn about shops and parks; where different types of food are bought, where the park, library and bookshop are, and about local landmarks. They learn about using money and about staying safe by the road.

Children are also taken to visit the big London museums (the Science Museum and the Natural History Museum) where they can experience play, materials and displays on a very large scale, and enjoy travelling by tube and bus. Children also visit Hampstead Heath and Epping Forest to experience openness, space, large leaf-falls, strong winds and sense of size, number and scale of trees.



## ***Local trips and educational visits as a context for development and learning in the EYFS***

Trips enhance children's **personal, social and emotional development** by providing opportunities for exploring the environment with interest, finding and enjoying new features. Going out helps children to learn about staying safe around people they do not know, and around traffic. Children can learn to manage changes in routine, to feel safe in new situations and adapt their behaviour.

Going out of the nursery also supports children's developing **communication, language and literacy** as they talk about what they are doing and collaborate with others. Often there is a "language explosion" as children see cars, trains, pets and shops and vocalise or talk in response to what they see. Children will often have to follow instructions from an adult, listening carefully. Taking sketch pads provides an opportunity for emergent writing; looking at and talking about print in the environment, including street signs, shop and car logos supports early reading.

Children can develop their **problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy** in large open spaces by locating themselves relative to other children and adults, using the language of position. Tube and bus journeys provide opportunities to recognise numbers for a purpose and to count, and to follow maps and routes using the language of position and direction. There are many opportunities to respond to and recognise different shapes in the environment, and to observe symmetry.

Trips out help children to expand their **knowledge and understanding of the world**, exploring large unfamiliar areas and observing change associated with the seasons. Children may talk about what they see and the features of different environments. Travelling by bus and tube provides a context for discussion about how things work. Children can operate ICT (e.g. a digital camera, Pelican Crossings, lift buttons).

Children's **physical development** is supported by opportunities to explore through movement, with toddlers especially relishing having plenty of time to stop and take an interest. Older children can develop their strength and stamina by walking for long periods and using stairs.

Children's **creative development** is supported as children respond in different ways to the rich textures, sounds, smells and things they see, which will often enhance their pretend play back in nursery, especially when adults resource this (e.g. by setting up a tube station).

