

Year 1 Elephants, Giraffes and Zebras

Welcome to Year 1! We hope you had a happy summer holiday. The first week of school was spent settling the children in and teaching them about Year 1 routines and behaviours through fun learning challenges across our year group both inside and outside, whole class and small group discussions and games, singing and daily runs. Please see the information below about how we learn in Year 1.

How do the children learn in Year 1?

In Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) we deliver the national curriculum via the Cornerstones Curriculum.

The Cornerstones philosophy is based on the **Four Cornerstones of Learning**, which brings the curriculum to life. Each stage of learning has its own unique characteristics, which help children learn and remain motivated throughout each **Imaginative Learning Project** (ILP). This simple sounding philosophy is very powerful and condenses the learning process down to its fundamental parts.

As teachers across the globe know, you need to **engage** the people in front of you before you can **develop** their skills or knowledge. Then, for them to retain this new knowledge, they have to be able to use and apply it in an **innovative** way that is meaningful to them (at whatever level of innovation that is). Finally, they need to **reflect on the learning and express** their knowledge and understanding meaningfully, so as to cement that knowledge and contextualise it.

This philosophy focuses on pedagogy; it develops teachers' skills in planning child negotiated, enquiry led learning and provides opportunities for teachers to develop their range of pedagogic skills. Above all, our philosophy is based around fun and challenge as we believe these are the building blocks of good learning.

Engage

At the 'Engage' stage, children:

- gain memorable first-hand experiences, such as going on a visit or inviting a special visitor into school
- enjoy 'WOW' experiences
- get an exciting introduction to a topic or theme
- begin researching and setting enquiry questions
- get lots of opportunities to make observations
- develop spoken language skills
- take part in sensory activities
- have lots of fun to fully 'engage' with their new topic.

Develop

At the 'Develop' stage, children:

- improve their knowledge and understanding of the topic
- develop and practise their new skills
- compose, make, do, build, investigate, explore, write for different purposes and read across the curriculum
- research their own questions and those set by others
- follow new pathways of enquiry based on their interests
- complete learning at home activities that support their learning.

Innovate

At the 'Innovate' stage, children:

- apply skills, knowledge and understanding in real-life contexts

- solve real or imagined problems using everything they've learnt
- get inspired by imaginative and creative opportunities
- revisit anything not fully grasped at the 'Develop' stage.

Express

At the 'Express' stage, children:

- become the performers, experts and informers
- share their achievements with parents, classmates and the community
- evaluate finished products and processes
- link what they have learnt to where they started
- celebrate their achievements!

In Year 1, the children will continue to learn both inside and outside. Over the week they will learn in the role-play area, library and other classrooms, just like when they were in Reception.

Throughout the week, the children will complete learning as part of an adult focus group in their own classroom. The children have whole class lessons and experience several guided group sessions during the week in English, maths and other curriculum areas. These sessions provide instant feedback on their learning, which can easily be tailored to the individual child's current level of understanding and need. Through discussion with the child, the adult is able to assess his/her understanding and move him/her on to the next step, making maximum use of the learning time.

In Year 1, each learning activity will have a 'challenge card', which explains what the children need to do in order to be successful at the given task. These activities always have a suggested extension to enable the children to further develop their skills and cater for the different needs of children with a range of learning styles. The supervised independent learning activities enable the children to practise and apply skills learnt during adult focus activities the previous week or to develop a deeper understanding of a learning objective for that week. They also provide the opportunity for children to develop basic core skills such as fine or gross motor skills, spelling, writing, reading or maths.

The completion of the independent activity develops their ability to learn without direct interaction from an adult, therefore developing their concept of themselves as an independent learner. This also helps the children to develop other key skills such as co-operation, resilience and problem solving, whilst taking responsibility for their own learning.

Curriculum Newsletters will be sent home to provide an overview of each part of the topic, this may be weekly or every fortnight depending on the length of the stage of learning. For example, the Engage stage lasts two weeks.

As when your child was in Reception, you are very welcome to come into your child's classroom at the end of the day to share his/her learning. If you would like to come and share learning with your child, we would appreciate it if you could wait until most of the other children have been collected before you come into the classroom. We look forward to seeing you.

Year One Team