



Pre-Formal Learning at Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Primary Academy

Pre-Formal education places children at the centre of the curriculum, with their strengths and interests used as the basis for learning. Our pre-formal curriculum is adaptable, responsive, and will grow with an individual child through their time in school. We believe there are no limits to what a child can achieve and work to ensure our children are secure, happy and valued in school, to ensure they are able to achieve their very best.

Pre-Formal learners require a higher level of adult support, both for their learning needs and their personal care, and are likely to need sensory stimulation with their curriculum broken down into very small steps. Therefore, the pre-formal curriculum is personalised to meet the needs of individual children who are not yet able to access the national curriculum.

Pre-Formal children's attainment may remain within the early school assessment levels and their learning may not follow a straight, linear pathway because of their individual needs and strengths.

Aims for children learning a Pre-Formal Curriculum:

- To be able to form trusting relationships with familiar adults
- To be able to communicate needs and preferences
- To become as independent as possible
- To make sense of the world around them
- To be challenged to reach their true potential
- To feel safe, secure and happy

The Pre-Formal Learning Pathway

The Pre-Formal Learning Pathway aims to meet the needs of children through a personalised curriculum that:

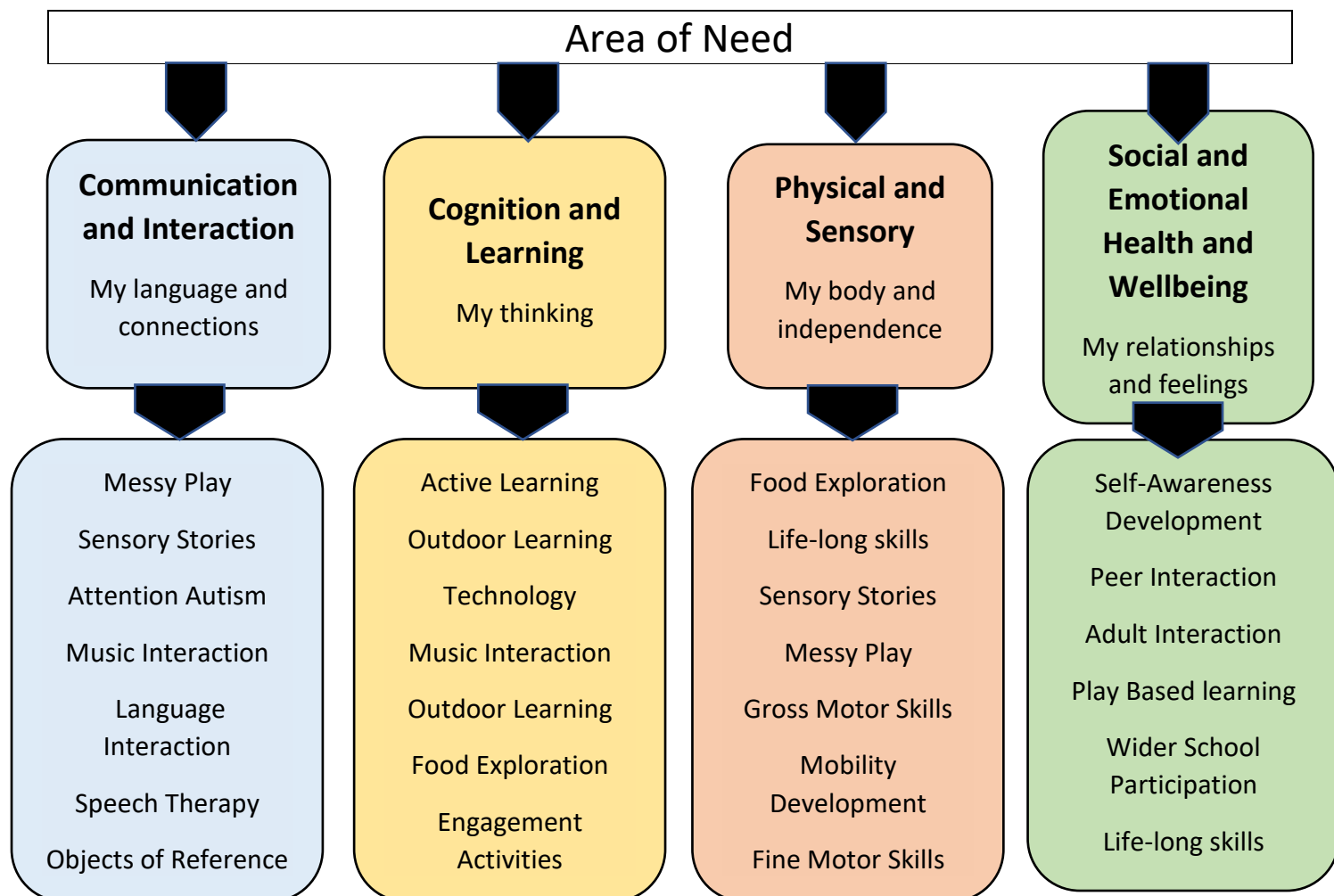
- focuses on early communication, cognitive, social and emotional skills as a foundation for learning
- ensures learning is holistic with all parts of the curriculum interconnected
- recognises the importance of movement and play in a child's development
- builds in sufficient time for children to repeat, practise and consolidate skills
- recognises children's need for consistency
- develops children's levels of engagement by finding out what interests and motivates them
- places children's targets at the centre of the curriculum with their interests as the teaching approach
- recognises children's need for different levels of sensory stimulation
- is rooted in the Catholic faith and ethos of our school

As part of our inclusive ethos at Our Lady's, lessons are taught through a cross-curricular approach using topic themes reflected in the relevant key stage medium term plan. This provides a consistent approach between formal learning and pre-formal learning in our school.



Pre-Formal Key Curriculum Areas

Pre-Formal learners follow personalised timetables, with a curriculum that include the following areas:



Communication and Interaction – my language and connections

Communication is how we let someone know what we think, need or want, and how we understand what other people think, need or want. Therefore, as language and communication skills are vital for children to reach their full potential in life, children are taught the skills that underpin communication such as shared attention, responding, turn taking, anticipating, showing preference and making choices as well as more formal pathways such as objects of reference, symbol exchange, verbal language and signing.

Cognition and Learning – my thinking

The development of thinking and cognition comes about as a child can perceive themselves as part of a world in which they belong and their interaction within it. A child will develop their thinking by receiving many opportunities to become aware of and to explore this world. Opportunities are designed and constructed to develop exploration, engagement and manipulation of objects and their environment, with a



child's strengths and interests used as a starting point. Our children learn to develop thinking skills, problem solve and notice relationships, sequences and patterns.

Physical and Sensory – my body and independence

Children develop best through directly engaging with their world, moving and exploring with their senses and taking in information from their environment. Sensory integration is taught to encourage children to develop self-regulation skills and help them to become more independent in their thinking and learning. Opportunities are planned to help children develop gross and fine motor skills, their vestibular sense in order to manage their body's balance and motion in space, and their proprioceptive sense, which processes information on individual parts of body movement, particularly muscles and joints.

Social and Emotional Health and Wellbeing– my relationships and feelings

Social communication skills are crucial for children to be able to interact appropriately with others, develop friendships and negotiate with others. This area develops the learner's sense of belonging; understanding their community can be achieved by a child through developing their body awareness and their ability to operate confidently with an environment and with other people. Children are nurtured to love themselves and others, appreciate their own unique qualities, develop self-esteem and to feel a strong sense of belonging within our school community.

Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning within the Pre-Formal curriculum. It enables us to be certain about the appropriateness of the personalised curriculum we aim to provide for each child. Progress is measured through summative assessment using the developmental frameworks, Pivats. This is used alongside the Engagement Model, which is a tool that identifies and celebrates all children's progress at a level that is appropriate for them. Through the Engagement Model, we are able to assess:

- How well our pupils are being engaged in developing new skills, knowledge and concepts in our curriculum
- How effective our bespoke and personalised provision is in empowering pupils to progress against the agreed outcomes in their EHC plans and how effectively pupils are making progress against these plans
- Pupils' achievements and progress towards their EHCP outcomes

The Engagement Model assesses linear and lateral progress for learners as well as their consolidation and maintenance of knowledge, skills and concepts in the following five areas:

- Exploration
- Realisation
- Anticipation
- Persistence



- Initiation

Each of the 5 areas are interrelated and are not hierarchical so there is no expectation that pupils need to demonstrate progress in all 5 areas at any one time. Instead, each of the areas represent what is necessary for pupils to fully engage in their development and reach their full potential. The areas also provide the scaffolding to enable pupils to become independent in developing a new skill or concept.

Exploration:

This shows whether a child can build on their initial reaction to a new stimulus or activity; e.g. whether they display more than an involuntary or startled reaction to the activity. Initially, the child may be interested in and curious about the stimulus or activity; e.g. they may notice or reach out to it. Eventually, they make me able to explore cause and effect independently: e.g. using a toy for its intended purpose. Exploration becomes more established when the child is still responsive to the same stimulus or activity when it is presented in different contexts or environments; e.g. a different time of day, a different place or with different people.

Exploration is important in identifying which stimuli or activities interest the child and motivates them to pay attention and investigate them further, so that they can develop new knowledge and skills.

Realisation:

This shows how a child interacts with a new stimulus or activity or discovers a new aspect of a familiar stimulus or activity. They will display behaviours that show they want more control of the stimulus or activity, e.g. by stopping it or trying to make changes to it. The pupil will often show what familiar adults consider to be 'surprise', 'excitement', 'delight', 'amazement', 'fear'.

Realisation becomes more established when the child uses the newly developed skills or knowledge in new ways and in different contexts or environments. This is important as it can keep the child excited in their education and prevents an activity from becoming routine.

Anticipation:

This shows how much the child predicts, expects or associates a stimulus or activity with an event. They may anticipate that a familiar activity is about to start or finish by interpreting cues or prompts such as auditory (what they hear), tactile (what they feel), and visual (what they see).

Anticipation becomes more established when the child shows awareness that a familiar activity is about to start or finish, even when cues and prompts are reduced.

Anticipation is important in measuring the child's understanding of cause and effect; e.g. if they do this then something will happen.

Persistence:

This shows whether the child can sustain their attention in a stimulus or activity for long enough that they can actively try to find out more and interact with it. Persistence becomes more established when learners shows a determined effort to interact with the stimulus or activity.

Persistence is important so that the child maintains an activity long enough to develop, reinforce and apply their skills or knowledge so they can achieve their desired outcome.

Initiation:

This shows how much, and the different ways, a child investigates a stimulus or activity in order to bring about a desired outcome. The child will act spontaneously and independently during a familiar activity without waiting for direction.




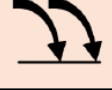



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Initiation becomes more established when learners shows they understand how to create an impact on their environment in order to achieve a desired outcome. Initiation is important to establish how well the child is developing independence, which is required for more advanced progression.

The Engagement Model – 5 Areas of Engagement

Exploration 	I can check out new things and keep being interested, even in different places or times. It helps me learn and get better at things I like!	"React, explore, learn something more, in different places, new things to adore!"	'I react and explore to learn something more!'
Realisation 	I can play with new toys or do new things, and sometimes I might stop or try to change them. I show feelings. When I learn new things, I can use them in different ways, which helps me stay happy in learning and makes sure it's not always the same.	"Playing, feeling, learning in different ways—keeping it fun every day!"	'I can play, change, feel and learn in every way!'
Anticipation 	I can feel and see when something is going to happen. I know that if I do something, something else happens. It helps me to remember and understand things.	"Magic moments, I feel and see, learning happens when I do things, just for me!"	'I know what's next!'
Persistence 	I can pay attention for a long time while playing or learning, and I keep trying even when it's a bit tricky, changing how I look and move, so I can get really good at what I'm doing and achieve what I want.	"Focus and try, even when it's tough, changing how I look and move, getting better, that's enough!"	'I'll keep having a go!'
Initiation 	I can explore and do things on my own, making a difference and achieving what I want, showing that I am getting better at doing things independently for more advanced learning.	"Exploring on my own, making a change, getting better every day, for advanced learning, I arrange!"	'I can do things on my own!'

Teaching and Learning

Staff at Our Lady of Perpetual Succour agree the following as necessary elements of teaching for our children learning a pre-formal curriculum:

- Increased time – the curriculum is broken down into smaller steps, with increased opportunity for repetition of skills and understanding, alongside periods of rest and brain break opportunities
- Imagination – lessons are thoughtful, imaginative and engaging. Children learn best when they are having fun and enjoying activities which match their strengths and interests
- Challenge – we provide a broad and balanced, ambitious curriculum which is accessible to our learners and challenges each and every child to reach their full potential
- Inclusion – we ensure inclusion opportunities allow our children and their families to feel a strong sense of belonging to our school community and children develop social relationships with their peer group and wider adults in the school.
- Teamwork – we recognise the importance of placing a 'team' around each and every child in our school, including senior leaders, teaching and support staff, outside agency support and parents/carers. Together we work to provide the care and support our children require.
- Celebration – small steps and success are celebrated with the child, across school and with parents. We want our parents to know what their child is learning, how they are responding and what the next steps will be.



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