



Castlefield School Early Years Curriculum: Understanding the World

An overview of Understanding the World:

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, nonfiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

(Development Matters, 2021)

Understanding the World in Context at Castlefield School:

At Castlefield School, a significant number of pupils who start school with us lack life experience outside their home. For many, family life is rich and there is a great sense of community in the local area. This means that some aspects of baseline assessment, e.g.- aspects of 'People, Culture and Communities', are stronger than pupils' starting points in 'The Natural World' or 'Past and Present'.

We are very aware of the fact that many pupils have limited experiences outside their home and classroom, our curriculum is tailored around key topics and texts that will broaden their knowledge. This includes a range of fiction and non-fiction age appropriate texts to further pupils' curiosity and knowledge. Enrichment activities and experiences are planned throughout the provision and are adapted to follow pupils' interests. Alongside this, we are mindful that children may have developed familiarity with their local area, but often have limited experience of visiting contrasting places; Where we cannot physically address this issue we endeavour to expose children to materials that help them learn about the wider world, including the use of VR headsets.



Progression of skills and knowledge

- Development matters
- Castlefield Curriculum

	Skills	Knowledge	End points
Nursery Two Year Olds will be learning to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use all their senses in hands on exploration of natural materials. • Explore collections of materials with similar and/or different properties. • Talk about what they see. • Show interest in different occupations. • Explore how things work. • Develop positive attitudes about the differences between people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Plant seeds and care for growing plants. ○ Begin to understand the need to respect and care for the natural environment and all living things. ○ In small world play, begin to represent knowledge of different settings and what may happen there e.g. – A farm, a building, site, a house, a shop etc. ○ Understand the difference between hot and cold. ○ Understand ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ ○ Understand some language associated with the weather. ○ Understand some language associated with different areas of learning. ○ Name some simple vehicles, e.g. – car, bus, train ○ Name basic body parts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Talk about what they see.
Nursery Three Year Olds will be learning to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about what they see, using a wide vocabulary. • Continue to develop positive attitudes about the differences between people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to make sense of their own life-story and family’s history. ○ Know the members of their family, understanding the difference between them e.g. - ‘brother’ and ‘cousin’. • Understand the key features of the life cycle of a plant and an animal. (Growing Beans / Eggs > Chickens lifecycle) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To develop positive attitudes about the differences between people. ➤ To begin to make sense of their own life-story and family’s history. ➤ To understand the key features of the life cycle of a plant and an animal. ➤ To talk about their own experiences



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plant seeds and care for growing plants. ○ Name some common pets and their 'young' e.g. – cat / kitten, dog / puppy. ○ Use simple adjectives to describe common pets e.g. big, brown, spotty. ● Talk about the differences between materials and changes they notice. ● Understand the purpose of objects. ● Know that there are different countries in the world and talk about the differences they have experienced or seen in photos. ● Talk about simple geographical features, e.g. woods, river, road. ● Name a few different 'People who help us'. ● Develop an awareness of seasons. ● Recognise some special festivals and talk about how some familiar festivals may be celebrated. ● Identify a house, shop, forest, playground / park and explain what happens in each. ● Name common fruit / veg and use simple adjectives to describe taste. ● Use simple language associated with weather. ● Name different types of clothing. ● Name some simple kitchen utensils and dining equipment. ● Name some different foods. ● Name basic body parts ○ Explore and share treasured items from home 	
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<p>Reception Pupils will be learning to:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about members of their immediate family and community. • Name and describe people who are familiar to them. • Comment on images of familiar situations in the past. • Compare and contrast characters from stories, including figures from the past. • Make simple comparisons between old and new objects. • Explore the natural world around them ○ Describe what they see, hear and feel whilst outside, making observations of the natural world and naming familiar plants and animals. ○ Describe what the weather is doing, how it may change and suitable clothing required for different types of weather / seasonal changes • Use a range of technologies to aid learning about the world e.g.- IPads / Internet / IWB ○ Share ideas, discussing beliefs, values and practices and learning from each other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Know what country their family come from and what language(s) they speak at home. ○ Understand that some places are special to members of their community. • Recognise that people have different beliefs and celebrate special times in different ways (including - Eid, Diwali, Christmas, Chinese New Year, Easter, Advent) ○ Be able to recall some facts about familiar professions e.g. doctor, dentist, firefighter, police officer, head teacher. ○ Know that 'first aid' is meant to make us feel better and can talk about some common, familiar, injuries i.e. – bumps, bleeding, broken bones. • Recognise some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries. ○ Recognise the fact that families can be different to one another ○ Understand the need to treat everyone with respect. ○ Know that some places in the world are hot and some are cold. • Draw information from a simple map, encouraging children to comment on what they notice e.g.- roads, buildings, open spaces. • Recognise some environments that are different to the one in which they live. ○ Know that our school is in a place called High Wycombe and this is where we live. 	<p>➤ To be awarded the ELGs for Understanding the World</p>
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Understanding the World- Early Learning Goals

ELG: Past and Present

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society;
- Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.

ELG: People, Culture and Communities

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps;
- Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and – when appropriate – maps.

ELG: The Natural World



Children at the expected level of development will:

- Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants;
- Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.

Planned opportunities to support Understanding the World in Early Years:

- Share photographs of children's homes, families, friends, pets or favourite people.
- Use props such as puppets to tell stories about diverse experiences, ensuring that negative stereotyping is avoided.
- Provide opportunities for children to share experiences and knowledge from different parts of their lives.
- Share a range of non-fiction books which present realistic representations of places around the world.
- Share stories that help children to make sense of different environments e.g. - We're going on a bear hunt / Handa's surprise.
- Invite children and families with experiences of living in other countries to bring in photographs and objects representative of experiences.
- Display a globe and 'world map'. Highlight family connections and use EYs friendly 'map' books to look at similarities and differences in the world.
- Aid children in developing positive attitudes towards all – Challenge stereotypes through books, displays, visitors etc.
- Visit different parts of the local community, including areas where some children may be very knowledgeable, e.g. local church or mosque.
- Celebrate and find out about festivals and special occasions as a class.
- Provide role-play areas with a variety of resources reflecting diversity.
- Share stories that reflect the diversity of children's experiences and backgrounds.
- Provide plenty of opportunities to explore and observe the natural world.
- Provide opportunities to observe things closely through a variety of means, including magnifiers and photographs.
- Provide play maps and small world equipment for children to create their own environments.
- Ensure there are opportunities for looking at local maps, aerial view photographs and Google Maps.
- Plan and implement practical activities that develop skills and knowledge e.g. learning about the characteristics of liquids and solids by involving children in melting ice cubes / exploring how to keep a teddy bear dry, investigating waterproofing and cooking.
- Use the local area for exploring both the man-made and natural environment.
- Use 'Curiosity Cubes' to stimulate curiosity and discussion.
- Provide opportunities to record findings by e.g. drawing, writing, making a model or photographing.
- Provide stimuli and resources for children to create simple maps, paintings and models of observations of known and imaginary landscapes.



- Provide enrichment opportunities for pupils to experience a farm, to experience animals – e.g.-wildlife parks, to meet ‘People Who Help Us’, to hatch Butterflies / Chicks,
- Encourage pupils to upkeep environments, e.g.- taking care of the growing areas outdoors.
- Provide a range of materials and objects to play with that work in different ways for different purposes e.g.- whisk, torch, pulleys, construction kits.
- Support children to use technologies which support learning e.g.-IPads, internet, IWB.