



CENTRAL BRISTOL NURSERY SCHOOLS

The Limes,
Rosemary
and
St Werburghs Park
Nursery Schools

[Our Curriculum Overview](#)

Our Context

The Limes, Rosemary and St Werburghs Park Nursery Schools federated in June 2023, creating Central Bristol Nursery Schools Federation. We work collaboratively and creatively together to provide high-quality early education and care for 2–4-year-olds in central Bristol.

We have a shared commitment to the importance of early education and the positive impact it has on children's development, playing a vital role in building the foundations for learning. We recognise that those who are at the greatest disadvantage, benefit the most from high-quality nursery education. We aim to make all curriculum decisions with this in mind.

We appreciate each school's history and unique context. We work hard to ensure each school retains its unique identity within the federation and meets the needs of their communities.

We are passionate about inclusion and promote a positive culture ensuring everyone has a sense of belonging. We are proud to be a voice for children and a place for children to be heard.

We are committed to working in partnership with the families of our children.

Our staff teams are highly qualified and experienced. The federation of the three schools has enabled us to draw on a wealth of expertise and learn together to produce a shared curriculum document.



The federation's ethos is guided by 5 core principles. They apply to everyone in our learning communities: our governors, our staff, our children and families, and aim to support positive growth and wellbeing for all



C – Curiosity – seeking knowledge and willingness to explore the unknown



B – Belonging – feeling connected, valued and included within our community



N – Nurturing – caring and encouraging the growth or development of someone



S – Sustainability – making choices that protect the future of our children and planet



F – Flourish – growing, thriving and developing in a healthy and positive way



Our Approach

Our curriculum is not static. It is based on a commitment to child-led, open-ended play, giving children the space and freedom to explore, create and make connections in their own learning. It is designed with 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds in mind, allowing children to progress through a carefully planned sequence of skills and learning to support their development. They are given lots of opportunity to revisit and practise these skills and to take part in meaningful first-hand experiences through a regular cycle of learning, based on the rhythm of the year, allowing us to celebrate festivals and draw children's awareness to changes to the seasons and nature.

Our curriculum is evidence informed and reviewed each year. We are constantly reflecting and developing our practice and provision to support the best possible outcomes for children.

Our curriculum is inclusive. Our children come from diverse backgrounds, with different starting points and experiences. We provide an inclusive curriculum, enabling every child to thrive. We believe that we should make our experiences accessible to all by offering experiences that are appropriate and flexible enough to meet the needs of all children, including those with a range of special educational needs. There is a strong emphasis on inclusion, and our curriculum is ambitious for children with SEND. Rather than 'differentiating down', suggesting that children with SEND have limited access to the curriculum, we believe that 'scaffolding up' is a more suitable approach in our commitment to inclusion. By 'scaffolding up,' children with SEND are exposed to the concepts and skills in our wider curriculum with a suitable breadth and depth. Our commitment to 'scaffolding up' means that children are included in the wider curriculum and are not segregated from their peers.

Our Approach...

Is based on collaboration. We know that involving parents and carers in their child's learning has a positive impact. Our key persons make strong connections with children and their families. We use an online learning diary - Tapestry - to share individual children's learning during their focus observation weeks. Our website keeps families informed of weekly news from classrooms. Parents are invited in for 'stay and plays' and are encouraged to take part in their child's focus observation weeks three times a year, so we can talk about home and school learning in detail.

Is intentional. High-quality adult-child interactions are key. Our staff members interact intentionally knowing how to scaffold learning. The routine of the day is consistent. Our physical learning environment is thoughtfully considered so that resources are of a high quality, open ended and presented to ignite curiosity and exploration. These resources are organised so that children have independent access.

Is sequential. Each area of learning and our curriculum goals are planned in detail to ensure progression in skills and competency to support children to progress in their own unique learning journeys.

Is based on observation and assessment for learning. Staff reflect daily on children's interests and use 'in the moment' and weekly planning to follow children's interests and support their needs. We use focus observation weeks to assess children's individual progress towards our curriculum goals as well as 2 year old checks and WellComm (language screening) to ensure each child is assessed as an individual.



Learning and Development

We follow the educational programmes set out in the **Early Years Foundation Stage** Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework – GOV.UK and cover the seven areas of learning.

These are:

Three 'prime areas' that are *particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships, and thriving*:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

- Literacy (Reading and Writing)
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Communication and Language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, storytelling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures. EYFS Statutory Framework 2026

Communication and Language is listening, attention, understanding and speaking

We use the internationally recognised **Hanen Approach – Learning Language and Loving It**

We use this approach to teach using:

- High quality interactions with children
- Session times and routines
- Experiences which are carefully thought through so that children learn as wide a vocabulary as possible
- It also provides a framework for our staff professional development

Key elements include:

- Key persons identify children's styles and stages of language development so that they can plan an individual approach
- Talking with children, not *to* children – using **OWLing** – **O**bserve, **W**ait, **L**isten
- Moving the child's learning forward through shared conversations, commenting, open-ended questions
- Ways to extend the topic of conversation which includes what is sometimes described as 'sustained shared thinking'
- Links to our literacy curriculum – storytelling, reading, writing

Our Intentions and Curriculum Goals for Communication and Language

To be confident communicators (through preferred communication method) CL1

To be active and attentive listeners CL2

To be a motivated and creative storyteller CL3

To engage and sustain in social conversations – responding to back-and-forth dialogue with interest CL4

Physical Development

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence. EYFS Statutory Framework 2026

Physical development in the early years refers to the growth of the body and brain from birth through early childhood.

This includes changes in body size, muscle strength, balance, co-ordination, sensory development, and skills such as movement and handling.

Physical development is a foundational area that enables children to engage with the world around them and lays the building blocks for later physical capabilities and health.

The physical development skills of movement and handling are often divided into different groups, for example, gross motor skills, fine motor skills, and stability. Gross motor skills involve the use of the whole body and include movements like crawling, walking, and running. Fine motor skills involve the control of small muscles in activities like pinching, grasping, and handling. The development of motor skills is also needed for mark-making and letter formation. Stability is the ability to control and coordinate movement using core strength, for example, sitting and balancing.

Physical development also encompasses sensory development, which includes taste, smell, vision, hearing, touch, and spatial and positional awareness. Safety awareness is also developed whereby a child makes appropriate decisions based on risk and their own physical capability.

We actively promote physical activity indoors and outdoors and deliberately teach the skills children need for movement and handling

Our Intentions and Curriculum Goals for Physical Development

To use my whole body with energy and control PD1

To use my smaller muscles with control, to manipulate objects and tools PD2

To demonstrate strength, balance and coordination during play and movement, negotiating space and navigating obstacles PD3

To be able to assess risk and take risks (rise to physical challenges) PD4



Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life. EYFS Statutory Framework 2026

Personal, social and emotional development includes building relationships, managing self-care, and self-regulation.

We use the **Conflict Resolution** approach. These 6 steps are followed consistently and repeated in different contexts in which children experience conflict. Over time, children learn to use them independently. This will:

- empower children to have a voice
- help children to learn self-regulation and how to listen
- enable children to explore their own feelings and develop an understanding of others' feelings
- develop a sense of justice and a sense of community
- We also use **JIGSAW** which is a weekly, whole school, pre-planned programme which we use as part of our curriculum. It adopts a mindfulness approach to support children's emotional wellbeing, self-regulation and resilience.

In key groups, children talk, think about, and explore some quite complex ideas. We cover issues such as children's rights, inclusion, diversity, citizenship, the British Values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs.

We raise more challenging issues about safeguarding, e.g. online safety and peer-peer harm, in an age-appropriate way. We encourage children to think positively about their own mental and physical health including making healthy choices, learning about brushing teeth and developing independence. They learn about privacy and personal safety. In addition, we use the **Anti-bullying Alliance** materials, to reflect on our practice and provision as an anti-bullying setting.

Our Intentions and Curriculum Goals for Personal Social and Emotional Development

To make connections with others PSED1

To make healthy choices and have a healthy body (self care) PSED2

To recognise understand and express their emotions PSED3

To have a sense of belonging PSED4

To have a positive sense of self – to know who I am and where I come from PSED5



Literacy

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).EYFS Statutory Framework 2026.

Literacy includes comprehension, word reading and writing.

Our curriculum gives a balance between incidental teaching and pre-planned learning in Group Times at the beginning and end of each session. Our teaching of reading is closely connected to our teaching of communication and language (see above).

Reading

Reading is a complex process, and a skilled reader needs to learn language comprehension as well as word reading strategies.

Our approach to **Reading** is underpinned by the following key strategies:

1. Core Books
2. Helicopter Stories
3. Phonics - Letters and Sounds Phase One (see below)

Core Books

The quality of books is crucial, so we use an approach devised by the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education which is known as Core Books. This involves selecting high quality texts reflecting the diversity within the nurseries and offering role-models of different gender/cultural backgrounds.

These selected texts are read with, to and by the children regularly. They are available indoors and outside. They are made up of three collections: the learning to read collection, the literature collection and the information collection.

Helicopter Stories

Through this approach we help to connect children's love of play with their love of stories, narrative and character. Children have opportunities to role-play familiar stories and their own stories. These stories are recorded and acted out by a small group with a familiar adult.

Phonics

Phonological awareness is fundamental to word reading. We use the Letters and Sounds document to teach these concepts to children. These activities are planned in our group time sessions and reinforced incidentally in children's play and interactions.

Phonics is taught systematically in Reception. In Nursery however, we focus predominately on Phase One of Letters and Sounds which includes:

- phonological awareness – the ability to reflect upon and consciously manipulate the sound structures of language at each level – word, syllable and phoneme
- phonemic awareness is one aspect of phonological awareness and refers to the skill of manipulating the smallest unit – phonemes. For example, isolating the initial sound 'd' in 'dig'
- Phase One of Letters and Sounds concentrates on developing children's speaking and listening skills and lays the foundations for the phonic work which starts in Phase Two



Writing

Writing is physically and intellectually demanding. We recognise that spoken language and children's physical development underpins the process of becoming a writer. Children's readiness to write varies, and we support children when they are ready to move from making marks to writing.

Our approach to writing supports children's motivation and capability to write.

How we do it...

Motivation to Write

We show children that writing is a form of communication and self-expression by acting as a model using writing in our interactions with them and acting as a scribe whilst recording their words during story telling.

We use the children's interests to engage them in writing for a purpose.

The learning environment is resourced with high quality writing materials that are freely accessible to children both indoors and outdoors.

We offer resources in role play scenarios – encouraging children to take on a role and write as a shopkeeper, traffic warden, doctor etc.

We show an interest in children's early mark making and developing writing by asking children to talk about what they have done. We display their learning in the environment.

We create an audience for children's writing, reading, and sharing it with them – appreciating that a piece of writing only comes to life when someone reads it.

Exposure to hand-written print is important and we ensure that it is displayed in the environment.

Capability to Write

We support the children's physical development – both gross and fine motor skills help to build children's core strength, dexterity and hand-eye coordination; these skills are all required as a foundation for writing.

When children are ready physically, we:

- teach children that there are rules to print both through reading and writing, such as moving from left to right across a page
- introduce correct letter formation to children through modelling writing, describing the movements they need to make, where they need to start each letter. We use their name as a starting point
- encourage children to hold and use writing tools using a tripod grip once they are physically able



Reading and writing float on a sea of talk (James Britton)

Our Intentions and Curriculum Goals for Literacy

To be a confident mark maker and later, an emerging writer Lit1

To develop a lifelong love of reading Lit2

To be tuned into sounds, songs and rhymes Lit3



Mathematics

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers up to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding – such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and five and ten frames for organising counting – children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measure. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go' and talk to adults and peers about what they notice and to not be afraid to make mistakes. EYFS Statutory Framework 2026

Our Mathematics curriculum is based on recommendations by the Education Endowment Foundation

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/early-maths>

We dedicate time for children to learn mathematics and integrate it throughout the day:

- We dedicate time within key group times for mathematical experiences to be specifically planned/sequenced/using intentional teaching
- Planned activities using key resources
- Songs, rhymes and mathematical stories
- Mathematical resources both in our classrooms and in the outdoor environment

We use manipulatives and representations to develop understanding

A manipulative is an object that children or practitioners can interact with and move to represent mathematical ideas. Manipulatives could include everyday objects such as pinecones, buttons and small toys as well as specific mathematical resources like interlocking cubes, Cuisenaire rods, Dienes blocks and building blocks. A 'representation' refers to a particular form in which mathematics is presented. Representations include informal drawings, mathematical symbols, and more formal diagrams, such as a number line or graph [*Education Endowment Foundation, Guidance Report, 2020*]

At Central Bristol Nursery School federation each classroom has:

- 'loose part' resources, open-ended counting representations (e.g., conkers, shells), puzzles, number lines, resources to support experimental measuring, scales, timers, large and small building blocks, numerals, and props to represent number in songs and rhymes.
- 5 and 10 frames
- block area
- range of construction resources
- puzzles
- open-ended resources for counting, shape, measure
- water area with resources that support the concept of capacity such as different sized jugs and containers, some of which have measurements on them
- graphic materials for mark making and real-life connections (maps, calendars)

How we do it...

The use of high-quality targeted adult support to help all children achieve their mathematical potential.

We understand that children may develop several skills in parallel and therefore there is considerable overlap in their development.

We engage with children's mathematics in their play – posing problems, modelling language and developing play skills, scaffolding learning and helping children to explore mathematical reasoning. Through these interactions, we enable children to understand mathematical concepts and the associated mathematical language.

We allow plenty of time and support for children to explore, manipulate and practise these skills by integrating maths throughout the day into both indoor and outdoor learning environments.

Our Intentions and Curriculum Goals for Mathematics

To be a meaningful Mathematician M1

To notice and communicate my observations using mathematical language, symbols, representations or manipulatives M2

To be a problem solver M3

To spot patterns and connections M4



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 relevant members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, 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. EYFS Statutory Framework 2026

Understanding the World includes exploring past and present, people, culture and communities and the natural world.

We base our approach to this area of learning on our community, using the diverse backgrounds and experiences of the children and their families and our local environment to inform and add richness to our curriculum.

Celebrations, experiences, and events that reflect the children's cultures and faiths are organised throughout the year and the resources and displays in the nursery, reflect our diverse world.

Opportunities to explore a range of cultures and language are provided continuously through experiences such as preparing and experiencing food from a range of different countries to storytelling, books and songs.

The physical environment is organised both indoors and outdoors so that it invites children to explore concepts and be curious about the world around them. Concepts may reflect the children's interests or naturally occurring phenomenon of interest such as puddles, insects or seasonal changes, that adults use to support teaching and learning opportunities.

The nursery garden offers lots of opportunity for the children to explore their natural world alongside their peers and adults. Planting, growing and caring for our garden is a core experience for children.

We make local trips with the children to the library, park and shops, as well as organising experiences in nursery to help children learn about the city that they live in.

Technology is used with the children to find out about the world around them, to document learning and to involve the children in their own learning.

Our Intentions and Curriculum Goals for Understanding the World

To be a Scientist UW1

To be inquisitive about the world around me UW2

To have a sense of the past, present and future UW3

To make connections with others and contribute to the wider community UW4

Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe. Expressive arts and design, involves enabling children to create with materials and access opportunities for being imaginative and expressive sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through art, music, dance, role play and design and technology. EYFS Statutory Framework 2026

Art and Design

We aim to foster a passion for creativity and the arts, by offering children high quality experiences that focus on the process of creative learning not just the product.

We acknowledge and celebrate the '100' Languages of Children (Reggio). We support children in developing their preferences for forms of expression and value their contributions. We hope to engage with the creativity of parents and invite them to share their expertise and to invite artists to the setting, visit art galleries, street art, theatres, and music events.

Our art and design provision is based on a workshop approach. Children have independent access to media and materials, as part of our continuous provision. We provide a range of different sized and types of paper and mark making equipment – pencils, pens, chalks, crayons, paints and water colour palettes, and a range of different sized paintbrushes. We have different coloured shaped and textured materials for collage as well as glue, scissors, string, sticky tape, masking tape and clay.

We recognise that children need support in learning new techniques or skills such as cutting, printing, colour mixing, observational drawing, representation of shape and form, collage or joining. Teaching new skills is based on/or around children's interests and is supported by an adult introducing new media and skills. We model, explain and support children in learning about new techniques or possibilities alongside examples of art from different cultures and our local community (Bristol Artists) as provocations.

We use transient art as a technique/approach for children to freely explore creating (use loose parts to create a non-permanent piece of art).

Well-resourced block and construction areas in each classroom allow children to design and build using open-ended resources.

Music and Dance

Music curriculum delivery is supported by the Early Education Musical Development Matters (Nicola Burke) document.

There are a range of musical instruments and sound makers in the garden, allowing children to be loud and active when exploring music and dance.

Children take part in exploration and learning based on the themes of:

- Hearing & Listening
- Vocalising & Singing
- Moving & Dancing
- Exploring & Playing

Children can listen to a range of music, carefully chosen by members of staff.

Children have access to many different musical instruments.

Children are taught ring games and songs during group times.

Imaginative Play (pretend play/role play)

Each classroom has a well-resourced home corner that reflects the children's cultural backgrounds.

Adults support children taking on roles in their play by engaging in pretend play and modelling pretending.

The Helicopter Stories approach offers scaffolding for taking on and exploring different roles.

We have a well-resourced small world area with additional props to encourage children to build and create their own props for play.

There is an outdoor 'loose parts' area supported by provocations to encourage themed play such as wooden blocks, crates, tyres, nets, tubes and blankets.

Our Intentions and Curriculum Goals for Expressive Arts and Design

To be inspired by a variety of things such as nature, artists and artefacts EAD1

To have skills to make, design and explore – to speak the 100 languages EAD2

To be creative thinkers EAD3

To be able to imagine and pretend EAD4



Our Curricular Goals

Communication and Language	Personal Social and Emotional Development	Physical Development
To be confident communicators (through preferred communication method) CL1	To make healthy choices and have healthy body (self-care) PSED1	To use my whole body with energy and control
To be active and attentive listeners CL2	To recognise, understand and express my emotions PSED2	To use their small muscles with control (fine motor) - use hands and fingers to control and manipulate objects and tools
To be a motivated and creative storyteller CL3	To have a sense of belonging PSED3	To demonstrate strength, balance and coordination during play and movement, negotiating space and navigating obstacles
To engage and sustain in social conversations – responding to back-and-forth dialogue with interest CL4	To have a positive sense of self (to know who I am and where I come from) PSED4	To be able to assess risk and take risks (rise to physical challenges)

Literacy Development	Mathematical Development	Understanding the World	Expressive Art and Design
To be a confident mark maker and later, an emerging writer Lit 1	To be a meaningful mathematician M1	To be a Scientist UW1	To be inspired by a variety of things such as nature, artists and artefacts EAD1
To develop a lifelong love of reading Lit 2	To notice and communicate my observations using mathematical language, symbols, representations or manipulatives M2	To be inquisitive about the world around me UW2	To have skills to make, design and explore – to speak the 100 languages EAD2
To be tuned into sounds, songs and rhymes Lit 3	To be problem solver M3	To have a sense of the past, present and future UW3	To be creative thinkers EAD3
	To spot patterns and connections M4	To make connections with others and contribute to the wider community UW4	To be able to imagine and pretend EAD4