

EYFS outdoor learning

Intent

At Abbey Gates we highly value the importance of outdoor play and learning. Young children require a breadth of opportunities to engage with the outdoors to enhance their mental and physical health and wellbeing and to extend and embed their knowledge and understanding of the world. Our aim is that all children have access to a stimulating outdoor environment that fosters their natural curiosity and complements and extends our inside provision. We understand the importance of providing outdoor provision that is flexible and versatile, a place where children can challenge themselves and take risks in a safe and secure environment, where children can work collaboratively, solve problems, explore and interpret and experience play on a larger scale whilst connecting with nature. Our outdoor provision is not simply a replica of indoor provision; children are invited to engage in play that is complementary but different, further developing their skills across the whole early year's curriculum, including, but not limited to, their early literacy and maths skills.

Implementation

In the foundation stage, all children have access to outdoor provision throughout the day. Open-ended and child-led learning is highly encouraged and adults observe, interact and extend ideas alongside children for maximum learning opportunities. It is essential that our outdoor provision is different from our indoor provision - giving children the freedom that the outdoors offers to move on a large scale, to be active, noisy and messy and to use all their senses. In addition to the natural environment and opportunities that being outdoors provides, a range of resources and challenges are provided to enhance learning and guide children to new experiences.

Provision in our outdoor environment includes, but is not limited to, the following.

Large scale construction materials are provided for children to develop their physical skills, collaborative play, problem solving and reasoning. Loose parts are available for water play, encouraging children to self-select, design and explore water travel. Outdoor literacy sheds provide a breadth of opportunities for children to enhance their play with reading and writing and a maths shed provides resources to enhance learning involving counting, measuring and recording. Bikes and scooters encourage children to develop their balance, coordination and overall physical skills whilst promoting turn taking and sharing. Our large mud kitchen encourages children to collect and explore natural objects, develop their speaking and listening skills, develop

relationships with others, take on a role in play and explore textures and changes to materials. A large outdoor stage and resources allows children to demonstrate their creativity through music, song, dance and drama. Physical development is promoted through large spaces to run, climb and balance.

All types of play are encouraged outdoors and adults support children in their play by providing enhancements where required and carefully considering their next steps. Interactions with children include careful observation, interactions, questioning, vocabulary development, scaffolding and an understanding of how learning can be extended in the moment.

Alongside open-ended opportunities for children to work outdoors, specific, targeted sessions are planned for to ensure children experience the full potential that nature has to offer. These include searching for seasonal changes, observing plants as they grow, looking for and closely at living things, exploring habitats in our school pond and experiencing different weather conditions.

Impact

By providing children with high quality learning experiences outdoors, we aim for all children to leave the foundation stage with:

- A love of the outdoors and an understanding of, and respect for, nature.
- The ability to work collaboratively with others and develop strong relationships with other children.
- The confidence to manage and take risks, solve problems and show resilience when faced with challenge.
- The ability to develop and apply their early literacy and maths skills in a range of contexts.
- A strong foundation in their physical, emotional and social skills.