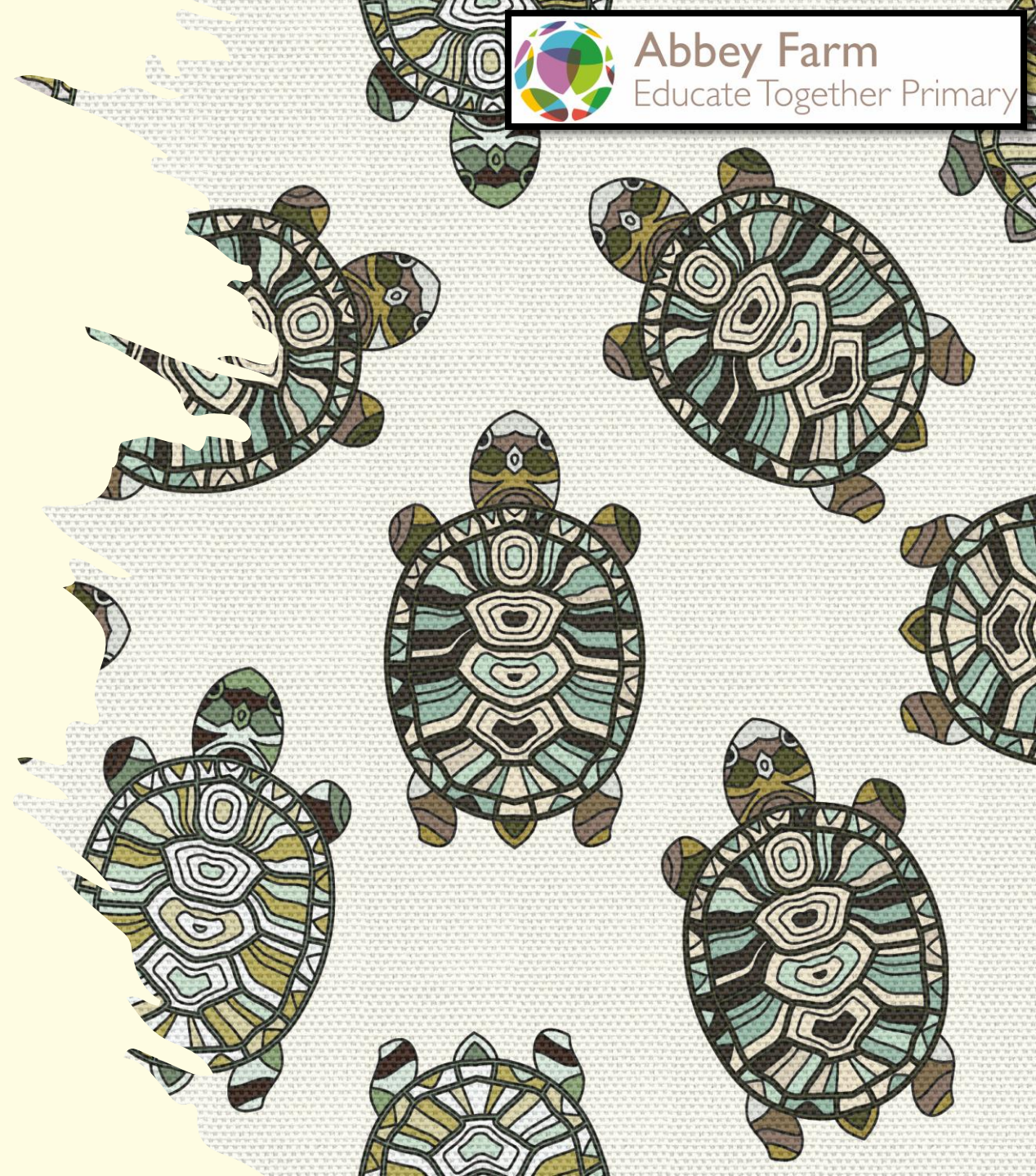


# Welcome to Preschool at AFET



Abbey Farm  
Educate Together Primary



# Meet the team



**Clare**  
Tortoise class  
teacher



**Ingrid**  
LSA



**Charlene**  
LSA



**Rebecca**  
LSA



**Tracey**  
SENDco

# Our school values Child-centered



Abbey Farm  
Educate Together Primary



*“Child-centered, in that we put the children at the heart of every decision and activity. If it is not for children's learning or welfare then why do it?” – Educate Together*

# Our school values Aspirational

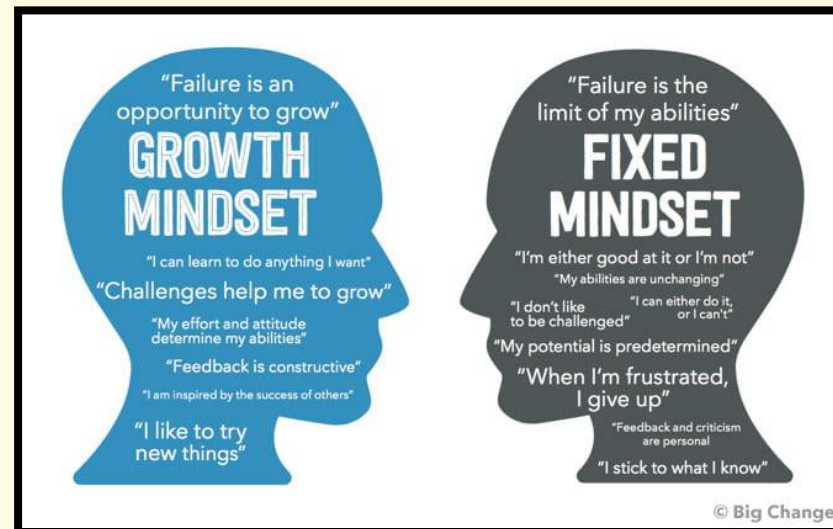
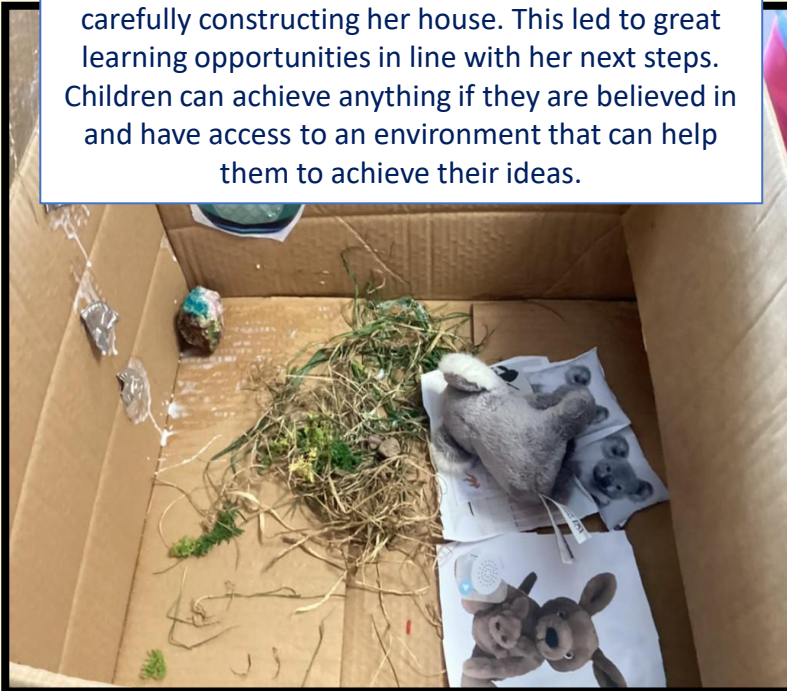


Abbey Farm  
Educate Together Primary

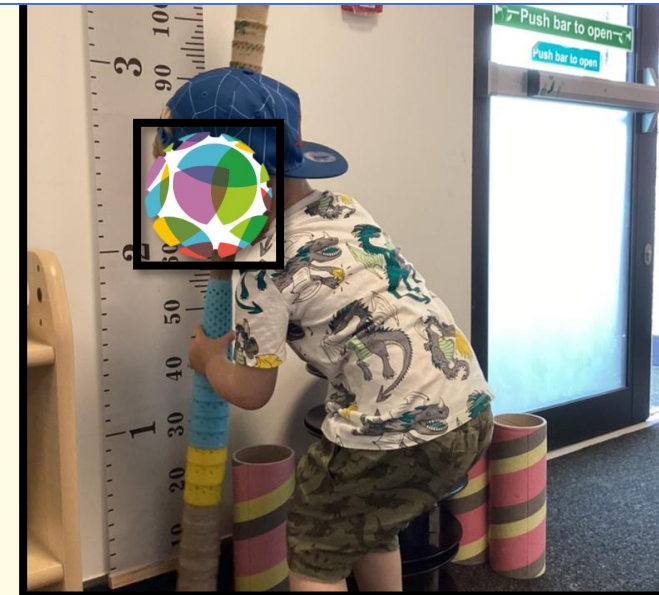
*"You have brains in your head, and feet on your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose...you're off to great places, today is your day. Your mountain is waiting, so get on your way!" - Dr Seuss*

At Abbey Farm we aspire for the children to be the best that they can be. There is no ceiling on what the children can achieve. We share this idea with the children by encouraging them in our interactions and instilling a growth mindset (the belief that your brain can grow and learn new things if you work hard and try your best). If a child says 'I can't do it' we respond with 'you can't do it yet'.

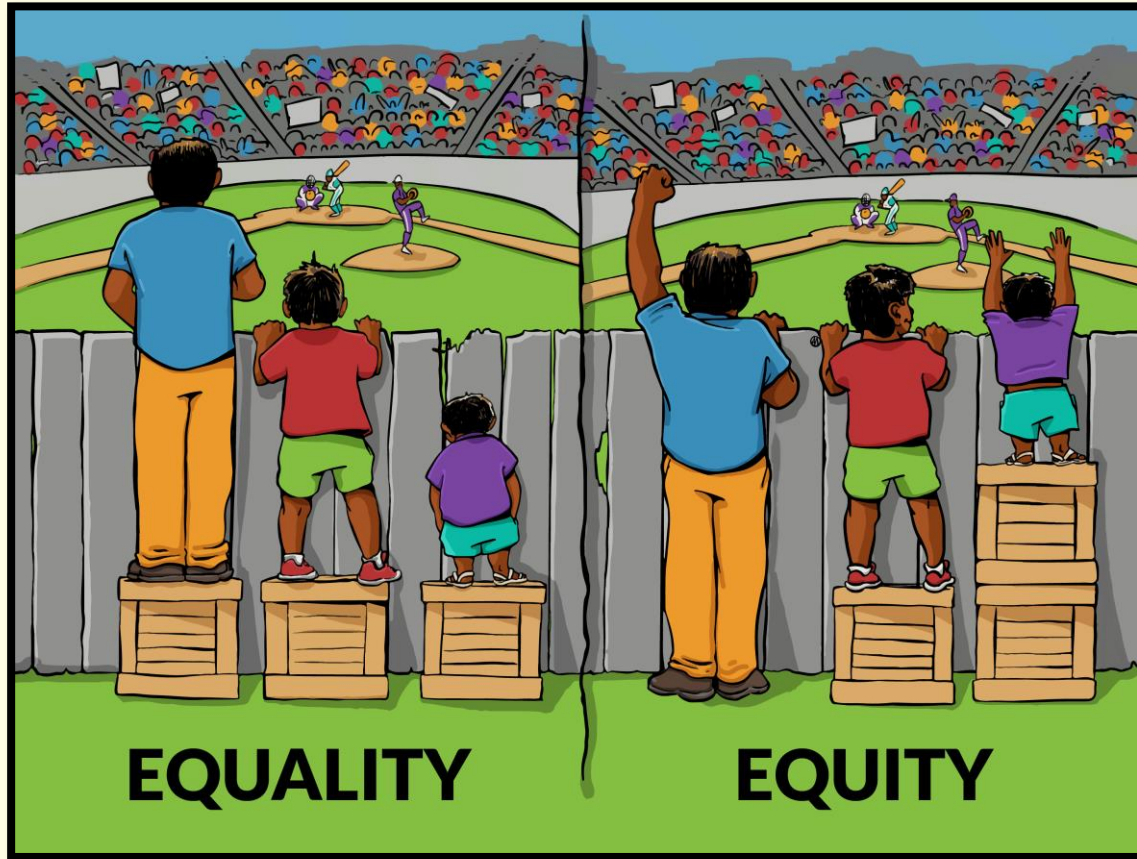
A child decided she wanted to make a house for her toy koala. We encouraged her to think of ways to do it and off she went, spending most of her afternoon carefully constructing her house. This led to great learning opportunities in line with her next steps. Children can achieve anything if they are believed in and have access to an environment that can help them to achieve their ideas.



This child simply said, "I want to reach number 4." The teacher observed as he tested out different ways to achieve the goal he had set. The building he had made was protected all day so that he could keep his work safe – he felt so much pride over his achievement.



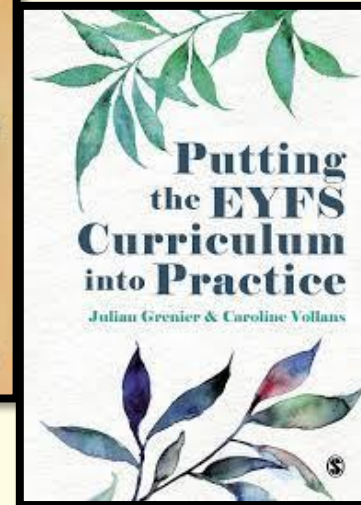
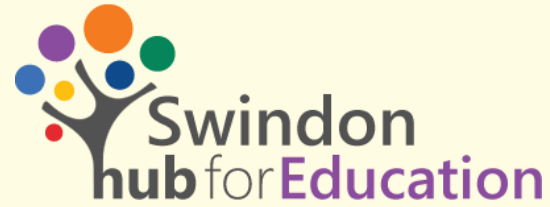
# Our school values Equity-based



We aim to provide every child with what they need so they experience the same opportunities as their peers. We work collaboratively with yourselves as parents to achieve this.



# Our school values Collaborative



We collaborate with external agencies, such as SBC, and also work closely with other members of the Trust to share ideas and improve our practice. As a staff team we attend lots of training throughout the year, such as Representation Matters with Aisha Thomas, as well as lots of wider reading to develop our understanding. We are dedicated to constantly improving our knowledge of Early Years.



# Our learning environment



In our learning environment (both indoors and outdoors) it is important that everything has a home. All of our baskets and boxes are labelled so that the children can act with independence when tidying up/playing. We encourage the children to take care of the environment through our tidy up rule 'choose it, use it and put it away'.

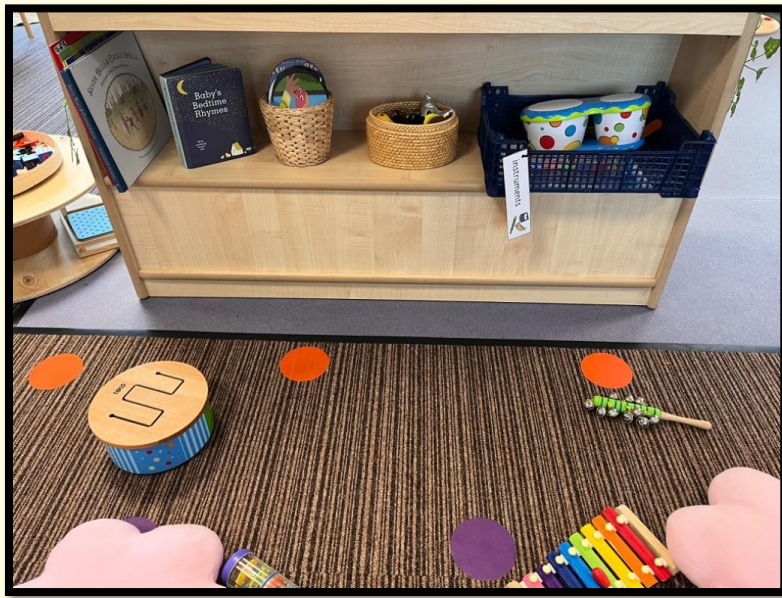
Although areas are set up e.g. a maths area and a construction area, the resources are not restricted to these areas and the children often use them very imaginatively in other areas of the environment.

As the children settle they become extremely confident to access the environment and take charge of their play, which in turn leads to engaged and focused learners.

# Our learning environment



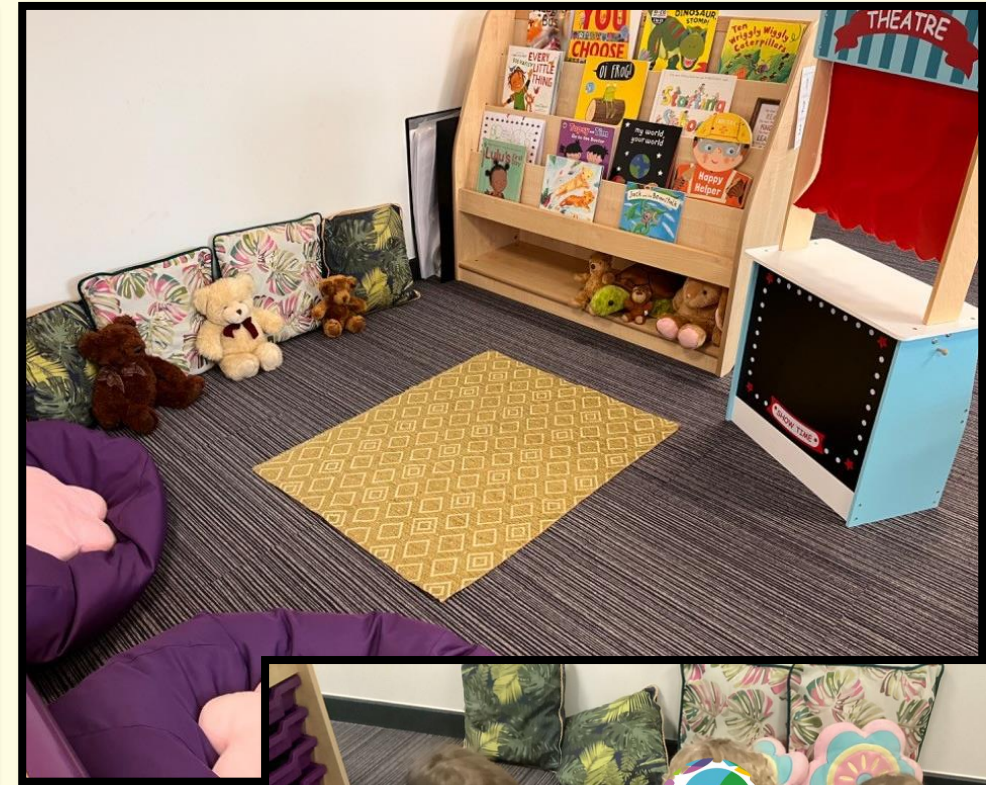
Abbey Farm  
Educate Together Primary



Music



Our reading  
and storytelling area



The children vote for a story each day – this is an introduction to fairness and democracy. It is also a great way to practise counting skills!





# Our learning environment



Maths



The Message Centre



Our home corner



Small world



Construction

# Our learning environment



Abbey Farm  
Educate Together Primary

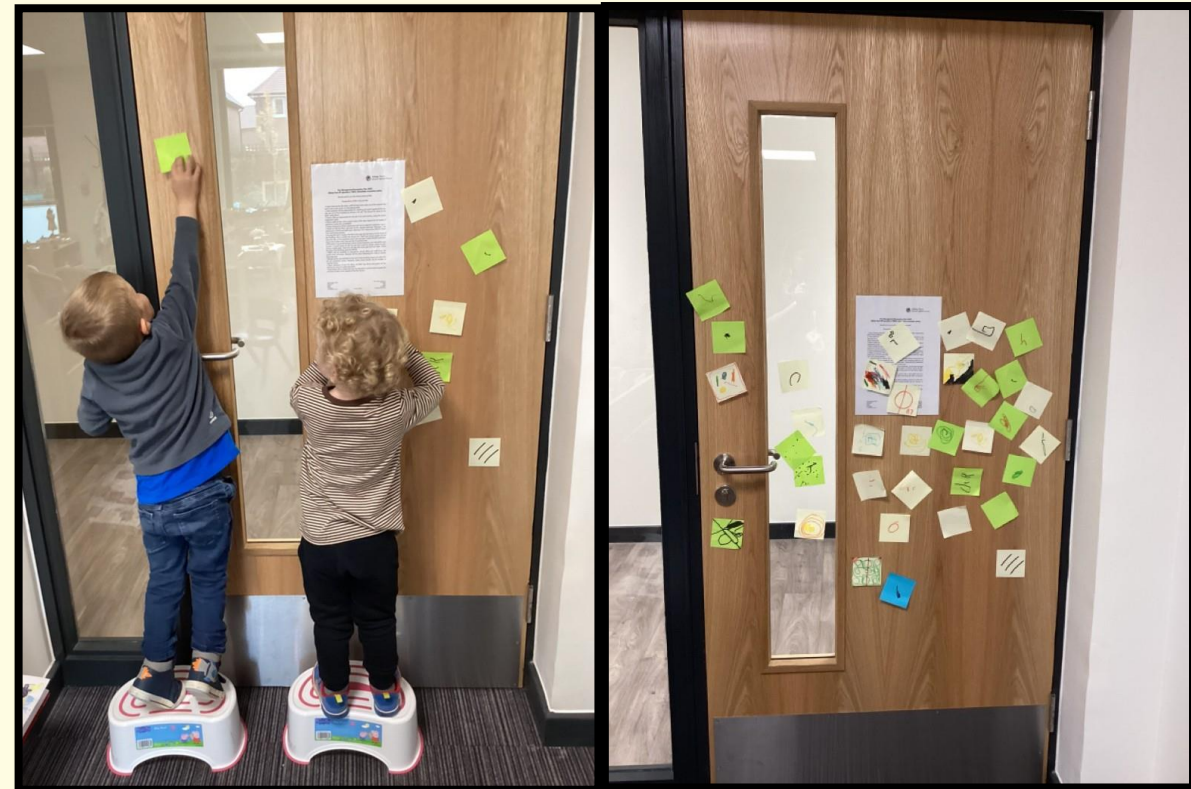
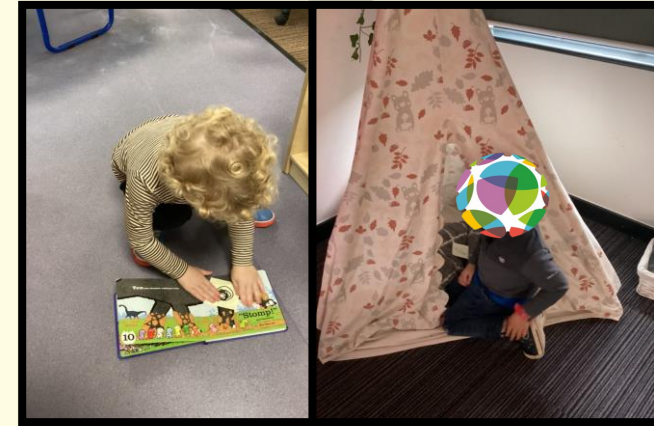
## The power of the Message Centre

The Message Centre is thought up by Greg Bottrill and begins in the early stages as hiding and finding 'mystery marks' (which are mark making symbols, great to practise before writing letters). This evolves over time to creating buttons – I have been covered in post it notes many times and become a robot that can do lots of silly things (all thought up by children and their wonderful imaginations).

The children pictured began hiding mystery marks around the room, inside books and tents, under boxes and chairs...

This then led to choosing to cover the door in mystery marks.

As you can see, there were lots created at the end. Each post it note contains a careful drawing, inspiring a love for mark making and the development of fine motor and early literacy skills.





# How you can bring the Message Centre home

Dear Parent/Carer,

You may have heard your child talking about the Message Centre and messaging when they come home from their school or setting, and you may even have found some messages in your child's shoe by now!

This is because they are exploring the joy of messaging, an approach to sprinkling extra joy over the top of their day, by showing them how reading, writing and mathematics can be hidden in and around their room and outdoors too. Children love hiding and finding - think pass the parcel, birthday presents, egg hunts and hide and seek. There is a buzz to be had and it is this buzz that the Message Centre approach has at its heart.

So how can you join in? It doesn't take too much effort you'll be glad to hear!

You can take part in several ways:

- Chat to your child about messages that they may have found and hidden in their day, and what they may have said. I call this Happy Talk, the chit-chat about the little things, sharing the joy of being together.
- You can add to the Happy Talk by hiding messages for your child to find at home within the rhythm of the day - it can be as simple as a piece of paper that is placed inside the bedtime book, placed under their breakfast bowl, popped in their shoes to find, or even in their lunchbox. Maybe they could hide messages for you to find too!
- As you walk in the street, play in the park, or visit the countryside why not look out for great message hiding places together - it's amazing how they will pop out to you when you begin to look!
- And finally, if you have access to the internet, you may like to share five minutes' time together watching Adventure Island TV on the Greg Bottrill YouTube channel - you can discover the joy of messaging there too and it's where the magic of the Message Centre truly lives.

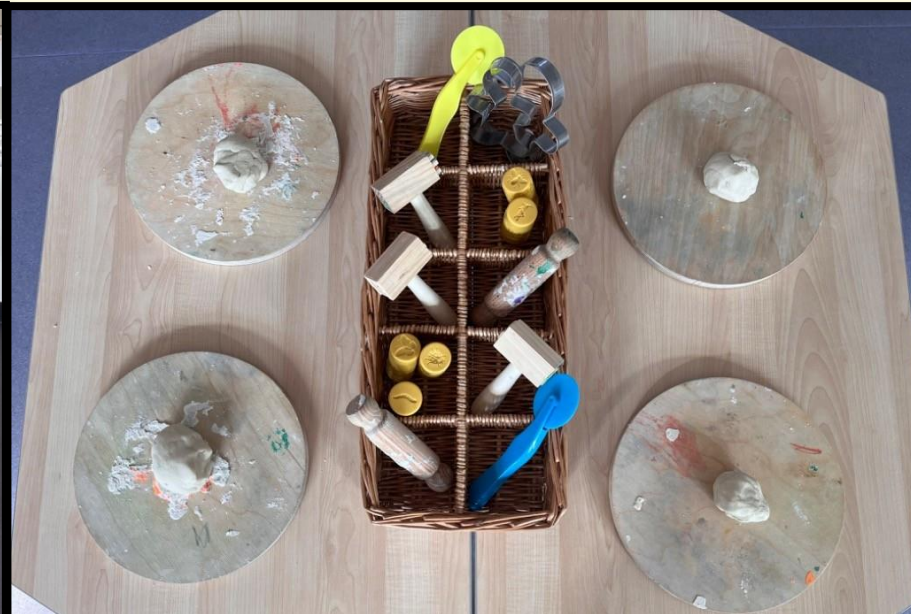
Happy messaging!

Greg

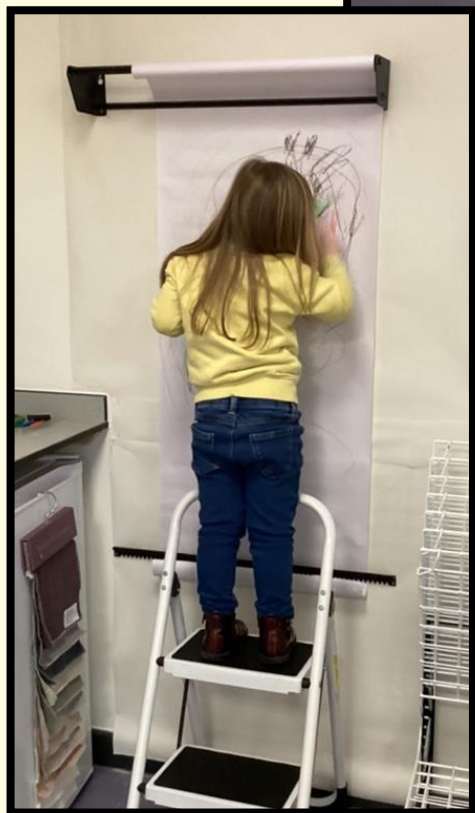
Author and creator of The Message Centre

[www.canigoandplaynow.com](http://www.canigoandplaynow.com)

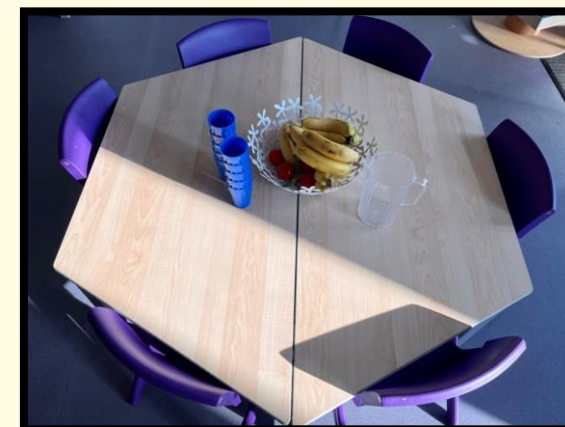
# Our learning environment



Creative area



The children enjoy making their own play dough. This involves listening to and following instructions, exploring textures, turn taking, learning about capacity, playing imaginatively, new language, developing fine and gross motor skills, number recognition and counting and so much more...

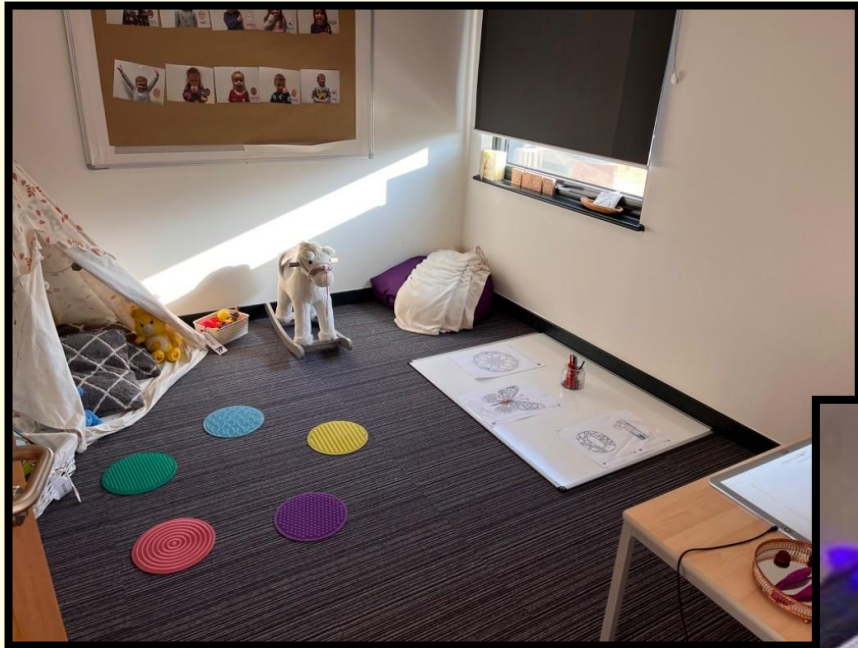


Snack table

# Our learning environment

## Our quiet and calm space

This room is freely accessible to the children throughout the day. Lots of children use it as a place to relax and have some quiet time. We model to the children ways to calm down, such as deep breaths, yoga and playing with fidget toys. The children are learning about their emotions at this stage so this area focuses on this, with resources accessible for the children to explore emotions in their play.



when little people  
are overwhelmed by  
big emotions, it's our job  
to share our calm,  
not to join their chaos.  
-l.r. knost

# Our learning environment

## Outdoors



# A sneak peek into our child-led learning



Drawing around our bodies to compare heights and features after a child said, "I'm taller than you."



Working together to make pancakes. Learning about how people celebrate Shrove Tuesday.



Exploring the different parts of a flower and working on our scissor skills.

"Children learn as they play. Most importantly, in play children learn how to learn."



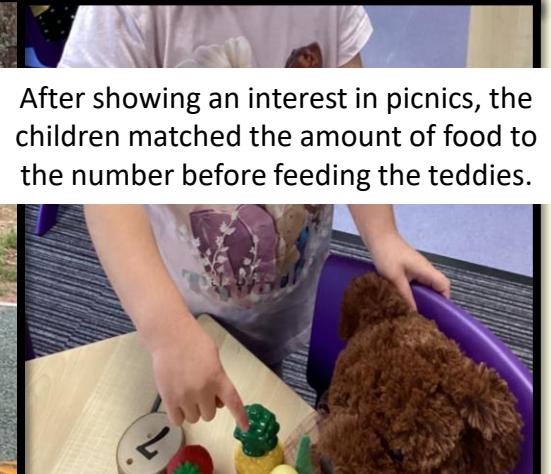
Experimenting and problem solving with channeling water. Great team work and communication!



Mixing different textures together to explore the changes that happen (flour, water, mud, sand etc).



Exploring a very windy day with streamers – learning about their natural world.



After showing an interest in picnics, the children matched the amount of food to the number before feeding the teddies.

# A sneak peek into our child-led learning

“For a child, it is in the simplicity of play that the complexity of life is sorted, like puzzle pieces joined together to make sense of the world”

LR Knost

Fantastic communication and construction, working together to build a large ramp for cars. Problem solving when things did not work.



Colour mixing in the rain with blue and red powder paint. The brooms are a great way to work their gross motor muscles in preparation for writing.



Ordering the numicon from the smallest amount to the largest amount. Lots of reasoning here e.g. ‘How do you know this number comes next?’



After having caterpillars visit us, we made some smoothies with the fruit from ‘The Very Hungry Caterpillar’. This was a chance to practise our cutting skills and try new foods, learning new language such as ‘delicious’, ‘juicy’, ‘sweet’ and ‘sour’.



Making wanted posters after a monster crash landed in our classroom and made a huge mess! Lots of great language and imaginations at play.



Two children were found reading to each other in the home corner, practicing early reading such as holding the book the right way up, looking at the illustrations and turning the pages one by one.



Communicating with each other to construct the tallest tower. This involved counting each brick to compare which tower was the largest.





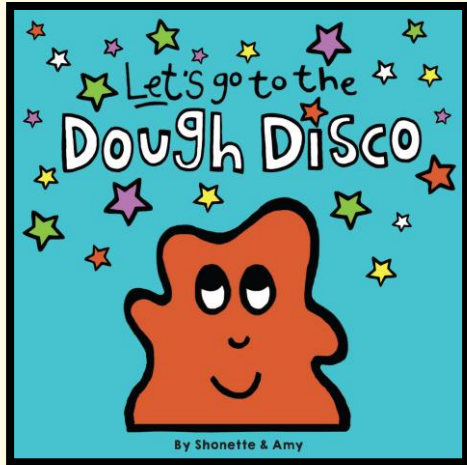


# A typical week in preschool

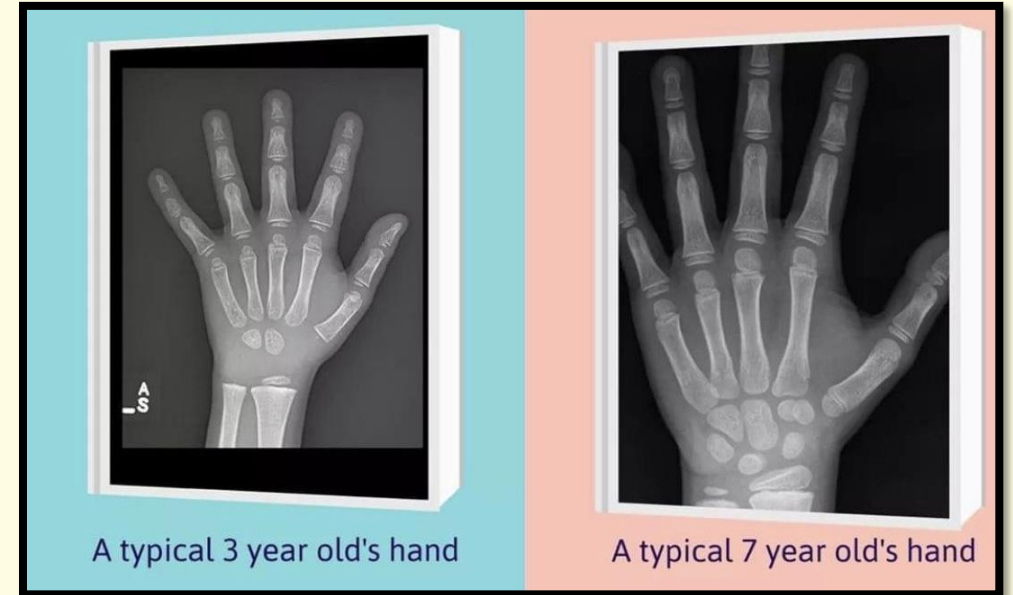
This is how the timetable will look in Autumn Term 2. In Autumn Term 1 we focus on settling in and establishing routines. We have different intakes throughout the year and always encourage them to join in with aspects of the routine and usually find they settle into this really well.

Tortoise Class Timetable										
	8.50-9.05	9.05-11.10	11.15-11.20	11.20-11.30	11.30-11.45	11.45-12.45	12.45-2.25	2.25-2.40	2.40-3	3-3.15
Monday	Register and Dough Disco	Free play and snack	Tidy up	Phonics	Get ready for lunch with songs/story	Lunch and outdoor play	Free play	Tidy up indoors and outdoors	Get ready for home time	Songs/story Home time
Tuesday	Register and Squiggle	Free play and snack	Tidy up	Phonics	Get ready for lunch with songs/story	Lunch and outdoor play	Free play	Tidy up indoors and outdoors	Get ready for home time	Songs/story Home time
Wednesday	Register and Dough Disco	Free play and snack	Tidy up	Phonics	Get ready for home time/lunch with songs/story	Lunch and outdoor play	Free play	Tidy up indoors and outdoors	Get ready for home time	Songs/story Home time
Thursday	Register and Squiggle	Free play and snack	Tidy up	Phonics	Get ready for lunch with songs/story	Lunch and outdoor play	Free play	Tidy up indoors and outdoors	Get ready for home time	Songs/story Home time
Friday	Register and Dough Disco	Free play and snack	Tidy up	Phonics	Get ready for lunch with songs/story	Lunch and outdoor play	Free play	Tidy up indoors and outdoors	Get ready for home time	Songs/story Home time

# Dough Disco and Squiggle Whilst You Wiggle

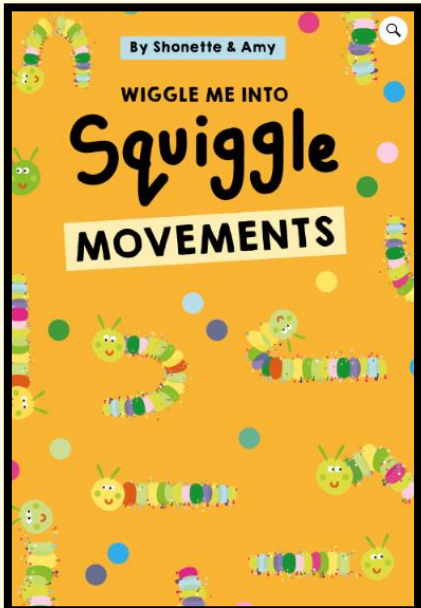


Dough Disco is such a fun way to start the day! We turn on the disco lights, put on a fun song and have a party with our fingers! Dough disco includes different moves such as making sausages, balling the dough and squeezing the dough. All of the moves help to develop fine motor movements to prepare the children for writing and everyday tasks eg zips, opening food packets, getting dressed, using a knife and fork etc.



A typical 3 year old's hand

A typical 7 year old's hand



Squiggle Whilst you Wiggle is also a fun way to the start the day! Again, we put on our disco lights and a fun song, but this time we stand up and hold pieces of fabric (called flipper flappers). Squiggle focuses on gross motor movements, such as moving our arms up and down, rolling and hopping. It is so important to develop gross motor movements as when children write they need strong core strength for balance and stability (e.g. when sitting to write), it is also supports coordination and makes sitting and handwriting more comfortable as they progress onto this. Gross motor movements are also important to carry out a range of tasks such as walking, running, playing on the climbing frame, catching and throwing etc.

Dough Disco, Squiggle and resources in our learning environment help develop fine and gross motor skills. You can see in the x ray above the difference between a 3 year old's hand and a 7 year old's hand. They are not ready for writing yet, but we are building the foundations to prepare their hands for when they are ready.

# Phonics



Abbey Farm  
Educate Together Primary

We follow a scheme called 'Little Wandle'.

Phonics sessions are daily from Autumn Term 2 and we focus on 7 aspects:

- Aspect 1: General sound discrimination – environmental sounds
- Aspect 2: General sound discrimination – instrumental sounds
- Aspect 3: General sound discrimination – body percussion
- Aspect 4: Rhythm and rhyme
- Aspect 5: Alliteration
- Aspect 6: Voice sounds
- Aspect 7: Oral blending and segmenting

Phonics is also interwoven into their play and there are opportunities to extend their learning in the environment.





# Reading and rhymes

We read stories and sing rhymes every day in preschool. This should be continued when your child goes home too.

*“One of the greatest gifts adults can give is to read to children.” – Carl Sagan*

## Tips for sharing a story

- Make the story sound as exciting as you can by changing your voice.
- Talk with your child as much as you can:
  - Introduce new and exciting language
  - Encourage your child to use new vocabulary
  - Make up sentences together
  - Find different words to use
  - Describe things you see

**“IF A CHILD KNOWS 8 NURSERY RHYMES BY HEART BY THE TIME THEY ARE 4 YEARS OLD, THEY ARE USUALLY AMONG THE BEST READERS AND SPELLERS IN THEIR CLASS BY THE TIME THEY ARE 8”.**

©CREDIT: MEM FOX, READING MAGIC



**Nursery Rhymes are like rocket fuel for a child's development.**

- language and communication
- creative expression
- physical development
- numeracy skills
- confidence & independence
- knowledge & understanding



# Learn Together Curriculum

The Learn Together curriculum is covered in the moment, in line with the children’s interests, and also through special carpet times.

## Moral and Spiritual Development



## Equality and Justice



## Ethics and the Environment



## Belief systems



# What your child needs...

- A bag with changes of clothes, including multiple pairs of bottoms, pants and socks, tops (this bag is to stay at preschool and not return home unless it needs topping up)
- If your child is still in nappies, please provide nappies and wipes in their bag
- A drinks bottle that they can open themselves
- A lunchbox if staying past 11:45 (unless they are having hot dinners)
- A pair of wellies and a puddle suit that can stay at preschool
- Appropriate shoes – preferably trainers that slip on or have velcro straps. No cros, sliders or sandals please – these do not support independence or physical development. The children will be running, jumping, climbing etc so trainers are most appropriate

**Please name everything your child brings so that their things do not get mixed up with someone else's.**

# More about clothing

At AFET we learn in lots of different ways and are outside in all weathers...

This means our clothes may get:

- Wet
- Muddy
- Splashed with paint
- Smudges of chalk
- Pen marks

All of which are evidence of the learning we have done that day 😊

We encourage children to be independent in getting changed, putting on waterproofs and changing footwear.

The children are at an age where part of their development is to get themselves ready, please support us with this by dressing them in clothes they can do themselves. Clothing items such as dungarees or dresses with lots of buttons are often difficult for the children to manage themselves.



Abbey Farm  
Educate Together Primary

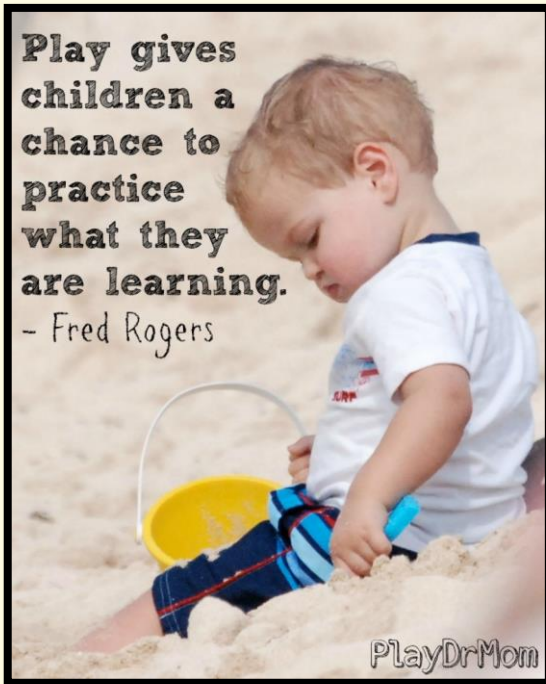


“There’s no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing.”

The children are learning about the world around them so we actively encourage them to explore with their senses, no matter the weather.

Please support this by sending your child in appropriate clothing. As you can see from the pictures we get very messy indeed (staff included!)

# In the moment planning



We follow in the moment planning in our preschool because children learn best when they are motivated, interested and engaged. In the moment planning is a very simple idea – **observing and interacting with children** as they pursue their own interests and also assessing and moving the learning on in that moment.

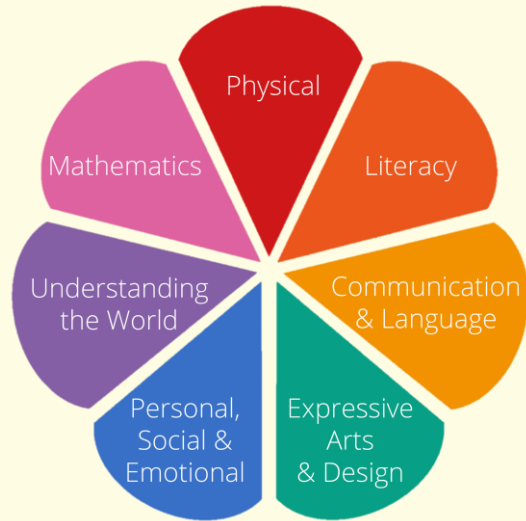
It aligns well with the Trust value of being child-centred, as this approach is all about following the interests of your child.

Children learn best when they are playing. The preschool environment is designed to allow the children to act with independence, make choices and take charge of their play through the wide range of open-ended resources accessible in the provision.

There is a great article about learning through play here: [Why Do Children Learn Through Play? | Family](#)



# Assessment/sharing of progress



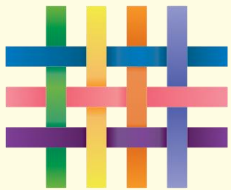
There are 7 areas of learning that are regularly assessed through our interactions with the children. The prime areas (communication and language, personal, social and emotional and physical development) and the specific areas (mathematics, literacy, expressive arts and design and understanding the world). The prime areas are important because they lay the foundations for children's success in all other areas of learning and of life. The specific areas provide the range of experiences and opportunities for children to broaden their knowledge and skills.

- A baseline assessment will be undertaken during the first few weeks, this will allow the staff to assess what your child can do and what they may need some support with.
- You will see updates on Tapestry of progress made, including a snapshot of their first day, first 2 weeks and WOW moments.
- 2 parents evenings (autumn and spring term) and a report in the summer term.
- We will be using Development Matters to track progress. You can view a great parent guide here: [https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/17677/what\\_to\\_expect\\_in\\_the\\_eyfs.pdf](https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/17677/what_to_expect_in_the_eyfs.pdf)



# Tapestry

- Tapestry is a secure online learning journal for you to see and share what your child has been up to.
- You will see *WOW* moments, which will include written observations from the team and photos of your child busy in their play.
  - There is also a weekly class update posted every Friday.
- You can upload photos/videos from home and like and comment on observations.
- Consent forms will be sent on Arbor and once completed you will be sent an email to activate your parent account.
- You will be set up manually so the email will not instant and may take up to 48 hours.



# Parental contribution

Dear parents/carers,

This term we are focusing on your child. We will be observing them while they play to find out more about their interests and how they are progressing. We would love to see some pictures of your child/family enjoying activities outside of school, so that we can learn more about their interests and give them an opportunity to share these pictures in class.

We value the knowledge and understanding you have of your child and would really appreciate it if you would share this with us so that together we can plan activities to meet your child's needs and interests. This will help us to plan for their future learning and development.

- Is there anything significant happening in your child's life at the moment e.g. visits, holidays, new pets, family celebrations?
- Is there anything you would like to tell us about your child?
- Any areas of strength that you have recognised?
- Any areas that you would like us to work on with your child?
- Do you have anything you would like to ask us about your child's progress and development in preschool?

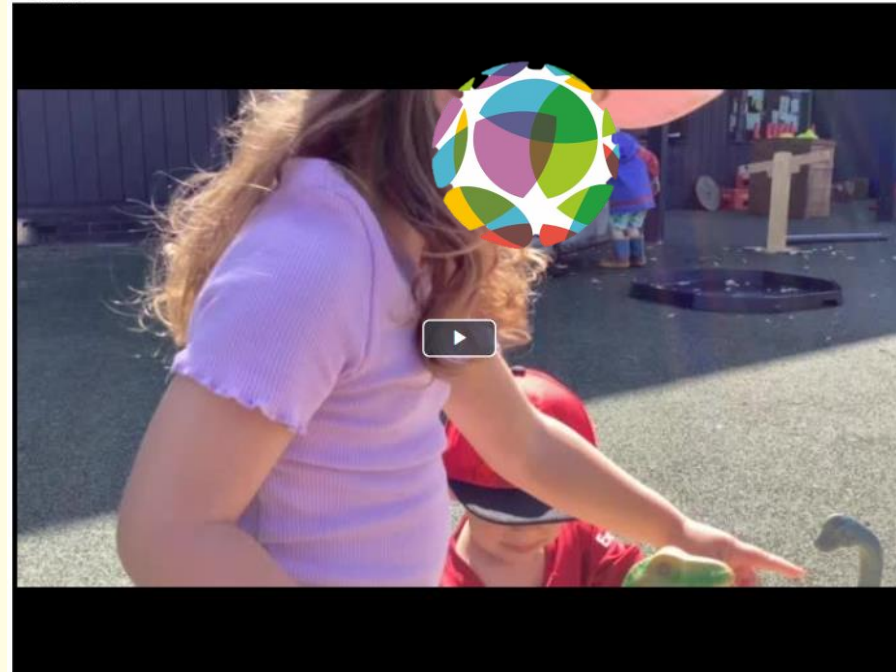
Please answer the above questions by commenting in the comment box below so that we can add your thoughts and ideas to the planning process.

Many thanks,

The Preschool Team 😊

You will receive this letter on Tapestry each term. It is a great way for us to work together on your child's development and interests.

## WOW moment example:



### Notes

\_\_\_\_\_ is playing with the dinosaurs. She notices there are 5 and independently makes a math problem, "We have 5 dinosaurs now I will take one away." She then counts 1-4. T repeats this with other scenarios and \_\_\_\_\_ counts to check how many she has left. Well done \_\_\_\_\_

# Your input matters

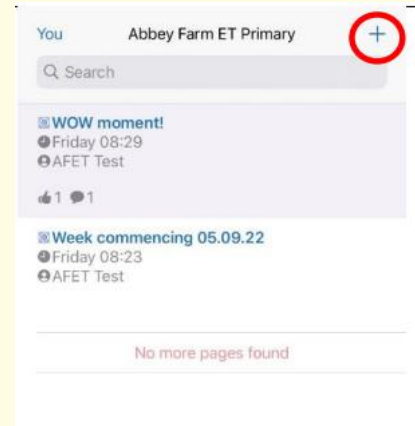


You can also upload photos and videos onto Tapestry.

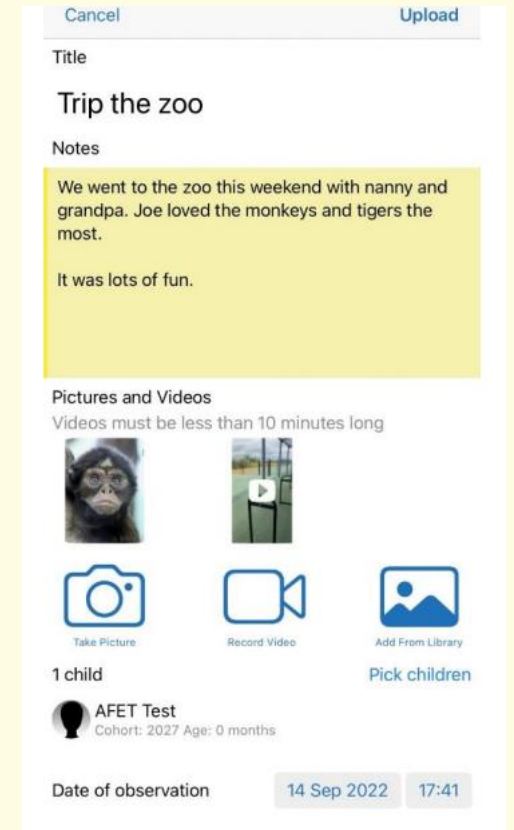
It is always so lovely for the children to be able to share special events from home.

It really gives them a confident voice as they can share things that are important and familiar to them. As a class we use this time to practise listening skills, conversing and asking questions.

## How to upload



1. Login to Tapestry via the app or website, then click + or 'add observation'.



2. Add a title and a description, then click 'add from library' to begin uploading photos/videos. Click 'upload' when finished.

# Starting school – school readiness and key dates

## Applying for a place for September 2024

You must apply for a primary school place a year before your child can start school. Applications open in September and close on 15 January. Your child will be 3 or have just turned 4 when you apply.

Councils will send offers of school places for primary schools on 16 April.

If either date falls on a weekend or a bank holiday, offers are sent the next working day.

You must accept the offer by the deadline given in the offer letter. Otherwise it may be withdrawn and the place given to someone else.

The local council must provide a place at another school, if your child is not offered a place at any of the schools you've applied for. This is usually your nearest school with places still available.

You can book a school tour to see reception in action by visiting the parents and community tab on our website:  
<https://abbeyfarmet.org.uk/parents-community/>

Follow this link to submit your application to schools:  
[https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20071/school\\_places\\_and\\_admissions/427/primary\\_school\\_places\\_and\\_admissions](https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20071/school_places_and_admissions/427/primary_school_places_and_admissions)



Home > Schools and education > School places and admissions > Primary

## Primary school places and admissions

1. Primary school admissions for September 2023
2. [Before making your application](#)
3. [Make your application](#)
4. [Receiving and accepting your offer](#)

### Primary school admissions for September 2023

Most children start school at the start of the school year following their fourth birthday. They can't start school before this. Unless you decide to [educate your child at home](#), your child must start school by the school term

#### Related items

[Changing or transferring to a Swindon school](#)

[School admission appeals](#)

[School admission arrangements](#)



# Welcome Wednesdays

We have stay and plays once every half term on a Wednesday, which we have called 'Welcome Wednesdays'. This is an opportunity for you to come and join your child's world, to learn more about your child's time with us and to see how they learn through play. It will be a lovely chance for you to see your child settled and confident in their environment. It will also be an opportunity for you to connect as parents.

The timings will alternate each half term to allow as many people to attend as possible. We understand it is not always possible for parents to attend due to work or other commitments. We ask that when you attend you are responsible for your child as the staff may have to keep a closer eye on the children without family members present due to the number of people that may be attending.

Keep your eyes on the Sway newsletter for event specific details nearer the dates of each one.

<b>Autumn Term 1</b>	<b>No Welcome Wednesday to allow children to settle</b>
<b>Autumn Term 2</b>	<b>Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November AM session</b>
<b>Spring Term 1</b>	<b>Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January PM session</b>
<b>Spring Term 2</b>	<b>Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March AM session</b>
<b>Summer Term 1</b>	<b>Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May PM session</b>
<b>Summer Term 2</b>	<b>Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> June AM session</b>

# Who do I contact?

There are different people in the school, all of whom play a different role and can respond to certain queries. If you are ever unsure who to contact, please just ask.

## **General class/learning enquiries**

Clare at [tortoises@abbeyfarmet.org.uk](mailto:tortoises@abbeyfarmet.org.uk)

## **Admin enquiries and reporting absences/lateness**

Sally at [info@abbeyfarmet.org.uk](mailto:info@abbeyfarmet.org.uk)

## **Urgent enquiries to the school Head Teacher**

Emma at [emma.lindsay@abbeyfarmet.org.uk](mailto:emma.lindsay@abbeyfarmet.org.uk)

- Class emails are monitored between 8am-5pm, Monday-Friday.
- You are always welcome to have a chat in person, I am always available on the door in the mornings and afternoon. Separate meetings can be scheduled if needs be.



# Key things to note

## To bring to school every day:

- Water bottle
  - Waterproof coat
  - Lunchbox (if needed)
  - Nappies/wipes (if needed)
- All labelled with your child's name.

## To stay in school:

- A bag of spare clothes (inc. socks and underwear)
  - Pair of welly boots
  - Puddle suit (optional)

**All clearly labelled with your child's name.**



Ensure you have activated your Arbor account. See Sally or send [info@abbeyfarmet.org.uk](mailto:info@abbeyfarmet.org.uk) an email if there is any trouble.



Once you have confirmed your consents on Arbor, you will receive an email to login to Tapestry.

We can't wait to share our learning with you 😊



Remember to sign your child up for milk.

## Clothing

- Trainers without laces
- Comfortable and assisting independence
- Appropriate clothing for the weather forecasted

## Toys from home

Toys from home must stay at home. A transition object can be agreed with Clare if needed.

If your child is not yet toilet trained we can support you with this. If you would like any information about this, please speak with Clare. If your child is going through the process of toilet training then we can continue your routine in the preschool to ensure consistency.

**Welcome Wednesdays alternate each half term to allow everybody to access them, dates on previous slide.**

**I have an open door, please do not hesitate to speak with me in person/over email with any queries you may have - Clare**