



St Michael's
C.E. Primary School

Nursery Curriculum: Rising 3s Adaptations



"Courage to Flourish in the Love of God"

Curriculum Intent

Our aim	At St Michael's C.E. Primary School, our Rising 3s are children who join Nursery during the Spring/Summer term shortly after turning three. They are part of our Nursery provision and access the Nursery curriculum through developmentally appropriate adaptations. We want our Rising 3s to feel safe, settled, valued and confident as they begin to explore a group setting. Through warm relationships, predictable routines, play, high-quality interactions and first-hand experiences, children begin to develop communication, social confidence, physical skills, independence and a positive sense of self.
Strong foundations	For our Rising 3s, we prioritise the prime areas of learning: communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, and physical development. These areas are essential for children's wellbeing and form the foundations for all future learning. Children are supported to listen, communicate, build relationships, manage simple routines, explore safely, move confidently and begin to develop independence.
Responsive teaching	We recognise that our Rising 3s enter Nursery with different experiences, needs and developmental starting points. Many children may be new to group settings and early education. Staff build strong relationships with children and families and use observation, interaction and knowledge of Birth to 5 Matters to understand each child's development. Adults model language, extend play, scaffold learning and provide sensitive support so that children feel secure and included.
Progression through Nursery	These adaptations prepare our Rising 3s to access the wider Nursery curriculum with increasing confidence and independence. Children gradually become familiar with Nursery routines, adults, provision areas, expectations and social experiences. Key information about each child's communication, relationships, self-care, physical development, interests and additional needs is used to support smooth progression through Nursery and into Reception.

Our Rising 3s access the main Nursery curriculum through developmentally appropriate adaptations. They join in with the half-termly themes, texts, songs, rhymes, visits and experiences from the Nursery curriculum where appropriate. Adults adapt language, routines, provision, adult support and expectations so that learning is matched to children's age, stage and starting points.

The full overview of themes, Cycle A/Cycle B vehicle texts, enrichment texts, vocabulary, rhymes, visits and parental involvement is included in the main Nursery curriculum document.

How this Curriculum Document is Organised

This document outlines the curriculum adaptations and progression for our Rising 3s from Spring to Summer. These children access the Nursery curriculum, but adults adapt provision, routines, language, interactions and expectations to reflect their age, stage and starting points. This document should be read alongside the main Nursery Curriculum document.

The progression shows how children develop secure relationships, communication, independence, self-care, physical confidence, play and early learning behaviours over time.

Learning is repeated and revisited frequently because young children need time, consistency and familiar routines to feel safe, practise new skills and build confidence.

Inclusion and Adaptation

All children access a broad and ambitious curriculum that is appropriate to their age, stage and starting points. Adults adapt teaching, provision, language, routines, resources and support so that children with SEND, disadvantaged children, EAL learners and those with lower starting points can participate successfully. Adaptations may include visual support, repetition, sensory support, simplified language, predictable routines, small-group work, targeted adult interaction and additional practice. Adaptations support access without lowering ambition.

Continuous Provision

Continuous provision is planned to help our Rising 3s practise, revisit and apply early knowledge and skills through play, exploration and high-quality adult interaction. Adults introduce resources, model how to use them and support children to develop communication, independence, relationships, curiosity, creativity and physical confidence over time.

Termly Progression in Foundational Knowledge and Skills

The prime areas remain the main priority for our Rising 3s. Specific areas are introduced lightly through play, routines, stories, songs, sensory exploration and high-quality adult interaction.

Communication and Language

	Spring	Summer
Listening and understanding	<p>Children begin to listen to familiar adults in short interactions.</p> <p>They respond to their name, familiar routines, simple songs, rhymes and repeated phrases.</p> <p>They begin to follow simple one-step instructions with adult support.</p>	<p>Children listen with increasing attention during familiar routines, stories, rhymes and play.</p> <p>They follow simple one-step instructions more consistently and begin to respond to simple two-part instructions with support.</p>
Speaking	<p>Children use sounds, gestures, words or short phrases to express needs, interests and feelings.</p> <p>They begin to name familiar people, objects and actions.</p>	<p>Children use short phrases and simple sentences more confidently to share needs, ideas, experiences and interests.</p> <p>They begin to talk about what they are doing in play and may ask simple questions.</p>

	They may answer simple what and where questions with adult support.	
Vocabulary	Children begin to learn vocabulary linked to routines, people, objects, feelings, songs, stories and familiar provision. Adults repeat and model key words throughout the day.	Children use a wider range of vocabulary linked to Nursery routines, stories, songs, play, people, places and experiences. They begin to use new words with increasing confidence in meaningful contexts.
Story and explanation	Children begin to enjoy songs, rhymes, picture books and simple stories. They may join in with actions, repeated words or familiar parts.	Children engage with familiar stories, songs and rhymes with increasing confidence. They join in with repeated refrains, actions and familiar songs, and begin to recall simple parts with adult support.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development / Behaviour for Learning

	Spring	Summer
Settling and relationships	Children begin to separate from parents/carers with sensitive adult support. They build relationships with familiar adults and seek comfort, reassurance or help when needed. They begin to play alongside others.	Children show growing confidence with familiar adults and peers. They begin to seek out adults or children to share experiences and may join in with shared play for short periods.
Self-regulation and feelings	Children begin to express feelings through words, gestures, behaviour or facial expressions. Adults support children to recognise simple feelings such as happy, sad, cross or tired.	Children begin to use simple words to express feelings and needs with adult support. They begin to accept comfort, boundaries and help during moments of frustration or change.
Routines and independence	Children begin to learn familiar routines such as coming in, washing hands, snack, tidy up and home time. They begin to make simple choices and explore provision with adult support.	Children follow familiar routines with less prompting. They choose resources, join in with daily tasks and begin to tidy or help with simple responsibilities.
Self-care and personal needs	Children begin to participate in simple self-care routines with adult support, including handwashing, feeding, drinking, toileting communication and putting on coats.	Children develop increasing independence with handwashing, feeding, toileting and simple dressing routines. They begin to tell adults when they need help, food, rest or the toilet.

Physical Development

	Spring	Summer
Gross motor and movement	<p>Children explore moving in different ways, such as walking, climbing, squatting, crawling and balancing.</p> <p>They begin to move safely around the Nursery environment with adult support.</p> <p>They use large-muscle movements in outdoor play, action songs and physical activities.</p>	<p>Children move with increasing control, balance and spatial awareness.</p> <p>They run, climb, step, jump, dance, ride, move over and around equipment, and begin to combine movements safely.</p>
Fine motor and tool control	<p>Children begin to use hands and fingers to explore objects and materials.</p> <p>They begin to use one-handed tools such as spoons, paintbrushes, chunky crayons and dough tools.</p>	<p>Children use small tools with improving control and purpose.</p> <p>They develop hand strength and coordination through playdough, threading, tearing, pressing, puzzles, construction and mark making.</p>
Physical foundations for mark making	<p>Children use whole-arm movements in action songs, painting, outdoor mark making and sensory play.</p> <p>They begin to make large marks using hands, fingers, brushes or chunky tools.</p>	<p>Children make marks with increasing control using shoulder, elbow and wrist movements.</p> <p>They explore lines, circles, dots and patterns and may begin to give meaning to marks, pictures or early drawings.</p>

Literacy

	Spring	Summer
Stories and books	<p>Children begin to enjoy sharing picture books with familiar adults.</p> <p>They look at pictures, listen to short stories and begin to handle books with support.</p>	<p>Children show increasing interest in books and stories.</p> <p>They begin to join in with repeated words, phrases or actions, point to pictures, name familiar objects and choose familiar books independently.</p>
Songs, rhymes and sound awareness	<p>Children join in with familiar songs and action rhymes.</p> <p>They explore sounds through voice, instruments and everyday objects.</p>	<p>Children enjoy a wider range of songs and rhymes.</p> <p>They begin to anticipate missing words, copy sounds, rhythms and words, and notice sounds in the environment.</p>
Early mark making	<p>Children explore making marks using hands, fingers, paint, chalk, crayons, sensory trays and large surfaces.</p>	<p>Children begin to make marks with increasing control and may talk about what they have made.</p>

They may give meaning to some marks, pictures or drawings.

Maths

	Spring	Summer
Number and counting	<p>Children hear number names through songs, rhymes and routines.</p> <p>They begin to show interest in counting and quantities such as more, lots, one and two.</p>	<p>Children join in with number songs and counting routines.</p> <p>They begin to notice small quantities, use number words in play and compare amounts using words such as more, same and fewer.</p>
Shape, space and measure	<p>Children explore objects, containers, blocks and shapes through play.</p> <p>They begin to fill, empty, build, stack, move objects and explore simple position language.</p>	<p>Children use simple spatial and measure language in play, such as big, small, full, empty, up, down, in, on and under.</p> <p>They explore size, position and simple shapes through construction, puzzles, water, sand and small world play.</p>
Pattern and sorting	<p>Children notice repeated actions, sounds and routines through songs, rhymes and daily patterns.</p> <p>They begin to match or group familiar objects by simple features.</p>	<p>Children begin to sort objects by simple features such as colour, size or type.</p> <p>They begin to copy simple patterns through movement, music, construction, art and play.</p>

Early Wider Curriculum Foundations

Although the prime areas remain the priority for our Rising 3s, children are also introduced to early experiences across the specific areas of learning. These are delivered through play, routines, stories, songs, rhymes, sensory exploration, mark making, construction, outdoor learning and high-quality adult interaction. The purpose is not formal coverage, but to build curiosity, vocabulary, confidence and readiness to access the wider Nursery curriculum over time.

	Spring	Summer
Understanding themselves and others	<p>Children begin to learn the names of familiar adults, children and places in Nursery.</p> <p>They talk about themselves, family members and familiar routines with adult support.</p>	<p>Children talk about familiar experiences, family, friends, Nursery and places they know with increasing confidence.</p> <p>They begin to notice similarities and differences between themselves and others.</p>
The natural world	<p>Children explore natural materials through sensory play and outdoor provision.</p> <p>They begin to notice weather, leaves, water, mud, plants and living things.</p>	<p>Children observe seasonal changes and begin to talk about what they see, hear, touch and feel.</p> <p>They explore growth, change, animals, plants, weather and outdoor spaces with increasing curiosity and vocabulary.</p>

Expressive arts and design	Children explore colour, sound, movement, materials, role play and sensory experiences.	Children use materials, movement, music and role play to express ideas and experiences.
	They begin to join in with songs and simple pretend play.	They begin to make choices about materials, sounds, movement and imaginative play with increasing confidence.

Assessment and Responsive Teaching

Assessment is purposeful and manageable. Adults prioritise knowing the children well, responding in the moment and adapting teaching. Assessment is used to identify what children know, what they can do, what they need to practise further and what support or challenge is needed next.

Staff use professional knowledge, interactions and observations, supported by Birth to 5 Matters and Development Matters, to understand children’s starting points and next steps.

High-quality interactions are central to assessment and responsive teaching. Adults listen carefully, join play sensitively, model language, introduce vocabulary, extend thinking and notice gaps. These interactions help adults respond immediately through modelling, scaffolding, repetition, reassurance or additional practice.

Assessment point	What staff check	What happens next
On entry	Staff identify starting points in communication, relationships, confidence, physical development, self-care, toileting, play, attention, interests and any additional needs.	Staff prioritise settling, relationships, routines, language, independence and emotional security. Provision and support are adapted to meet children’s needs.
Ongoing daily assessment	Staff notice who is settled, who is communicating, who needs modelling, who needs support with routines or self-care, and who is ready for challenge.	Adults respond in the moment through high-quality interactions, modelling, repetition, targeted support, adapted provision or additional practice.
End of term checkpoint	Staff review children’s development against the Rising 3s foundations, especially communication, PSED, physical development, self-care, play and early learning behaviours.	Staff adapt provision, routines, adult support and next steps. Children who need additional support are identified early.
Progression through Nursery	Staff consider children’s readiness to access the wider Nursery curriculum, including communication, relationships, independence, self-care, attention, physical development and play.	Key information is used by Nursery staff so children can continue to build on their progress and access the wider Nursery curriculum successfully.

These adaptations align with the Nursery and Reception curriculum by securing the earliest foundations for learning. Our Rising 3s first develop safety, relationships, communication, routines, self-care, physical confidence and curiosity. These foundations are built upon in Nursery through wider curriculum experiences and developed further in Reception through more explicit teaching of reading, writing, mathematics and wider curriculum knowledge.