



A Mixed Reception/Year 1 Class





MIXED R/Y1 CLASS MYTHS

“Year 1 children will be held back.”→ Truth: They often thrive with responsibility, develop empathy, and rise to lead.

“Reception children can’t cope with Year 1 content.”→ Truth: They absorb like sponges – exposure sparks curiosity and stretch.

“You have to plan two completely separate lessons for everything.”→ Truth: Smart, layered planning can serve both groups with one focus and differentiated depth.

“It’s chaos – no one learns anything properly.”→ Truth: With clear systems and rhythms, it becomes a well-tuned dance.

“Play is only for Reception.”→ Truth: Purposeful play benefits Year 1 too – it deepens understanding and keeps motivation high.

“Assessment is impossible.”→ Truth: Observation, dialogue, and knowing your children makes assessment powerful and precise.

“Parents won’t get it.”→ Truth: With clear communication, they often become your biggest advocates.

“Only ‘certain teachers’ can handle it.”→ Truth: You don’t need to be superhuman – just reflective, responsive, and resilient.



THE RESEARCH

“Mixed-age groupings create a frame for deepening relationships for staff with children and their families.”

– Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center

“Mixed-age groups can help to nurture empathy, social skills and emotional intelligence. Younger children are exposed to different perspectives from their older peers and the older children learn patience while helping their younger peers.”

– Community Early Learning Australia (CELA)

“One of the benefits of mixed-age groups is that they provide a context in which older children’s dispositions to nurture can be strengthened.”

– Lilian G. Katz, ERIC Digest

“The teachers explain how the programme has benefited all pupils in their classes, providing firm foundations for later work in maths.”

– NCETM on Mastering Number at Reception and KS1

“Mixed-age classrooms better prepare children for the ‘real world,’ in which they’ll interact with other people of a range of ages, experiences, and abilities.”

– Applemontessori Schools



WHY MIXED CLASSES WORK

One class, one team, one journey

This isn't two classrooms squeezed into one. It's a single learning family, with shared routines, shared values, and a shared path – even if the milestones differ. Children thrive when they feel part of something bigger than themselves.

Natural mentoring – older children thrive as role models

The Year 1 children shine as leaders – guiding, showing, modelling. They don't just learn for themselves; they learn so they can teach others. And that, my friend, is where confidence blooms.

Deep understanding of each child over two years

You don't start from scratch for the Year 1s. You know their quirks, their cues, their quiet talents and they know you. This continuity builds trust – and with trust comes risk-taking, progress and joy.



WHY MIXED CLASSES WORK

Year 1's really do hit the ground running

Your Year 1s hit the ground running in September – no transition phase, no wobble, just straight into familiar routines, and rising to the challenge with a positive growth mindset. They really do step up with pride.

Consolidation and Stretch

For Year 1s, a mixed class offers vital consolidation – space to deepen, secure, and steady their skills.

For Reception, it offers stretch – gentle exposure to what comes next, sparked by real models and real purpose.

Confidence and Independence

This approach builds confidence and independence for all – Reception children step up with purpose, and Year 1s lead with pride. Everyone grows, just at their own pace. It really is magical.



WHY MIXED CLASSES WORK

Natural adaptation

In a mixed Reception and Year 1 class, adaptation is instinctive. Children adjust to each other: Year 1s learn to lead with kindness – Reception children stretch by imitation and curiosity.

Everyone finds their place through repetition and relationships.

Reception children rise to challenge and thrive with example

Reception children rise to the challenge, because they see what's possible. They thrive on example – the Year 1 role models, the shared routines, the quiet dare to try. “Show me how” becomes “Let me try.” They thrive because of this mix.

Shared experiences build a strong classroom culture

In a mixed Reception and Year 1 class, shared experiences are the glue.

One story, heard by all
One song, sung side by side
One routine, echoed in different ways.
These moments – repeated, familiar, joyful – build a culture of belonging.



WHY MIXED CLASSES WORK

Language and social skills skyrocket through peer interaction

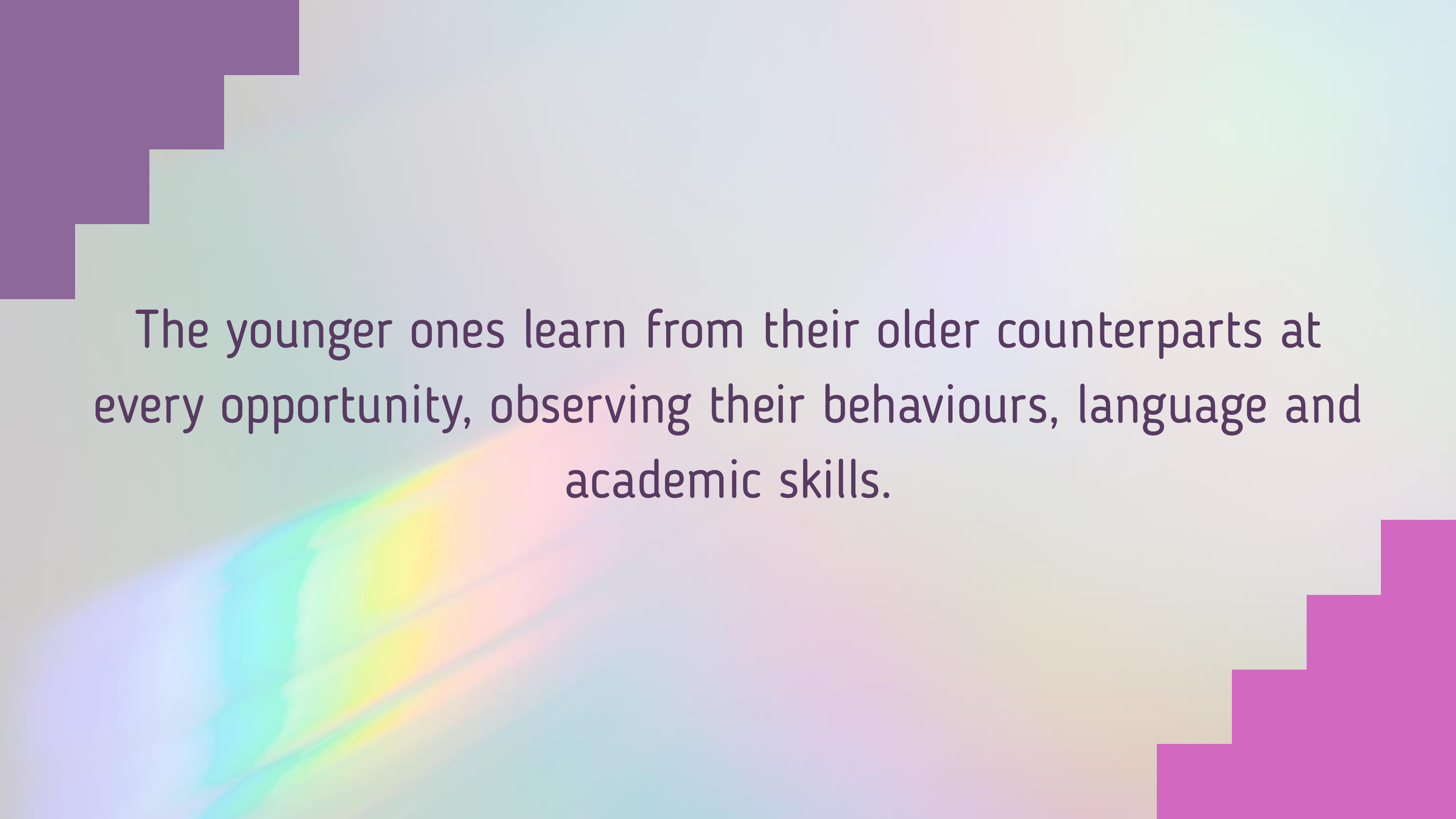
In mixed classes, the talking never stops – and that’s a good thing. Older children stretch their vocabulary, younger ones soak it in. Conversation becomes a huge part of the curriculum.

Repetition for Reception; Reinforcement for Year 1

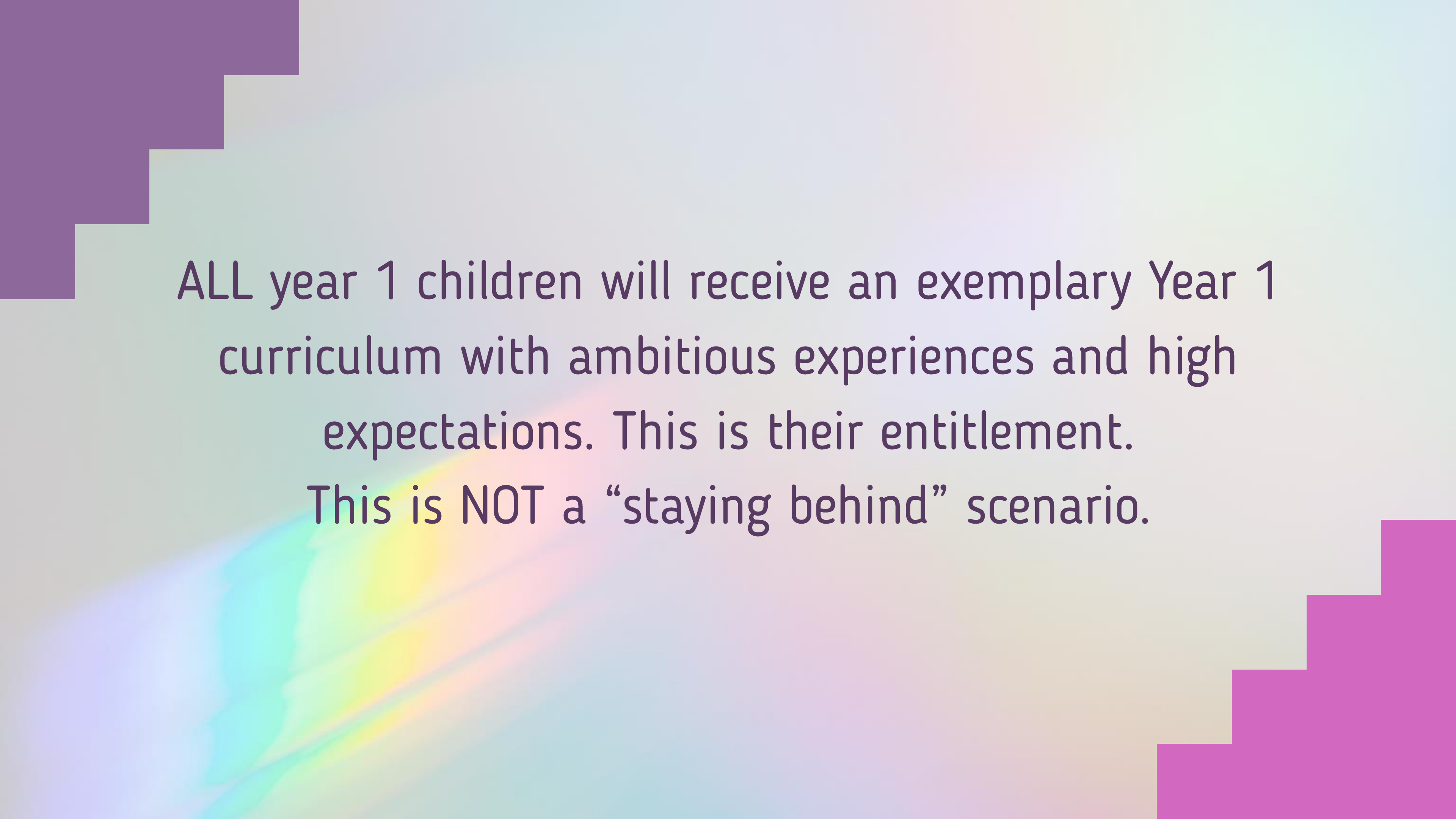
What might feel like repetition to you is vital rehearsal for them. Reception children need it to embed learning. And for Year 1? It deepens understanding and strengthens fluency. Win-win. By Spring, there is a flow that is priceless.

When it clicks, it really clicks – it becomes magic

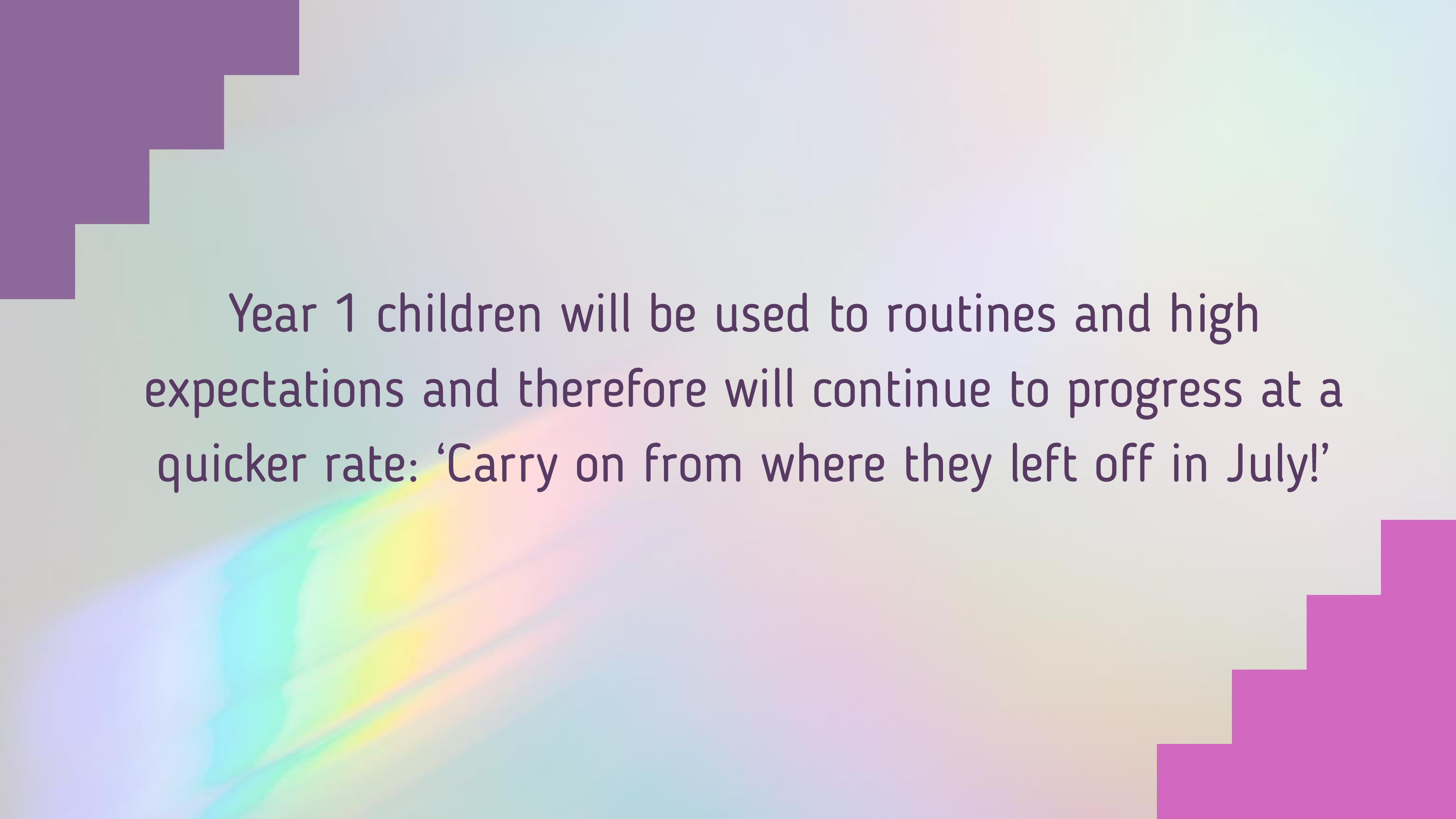
And that moment – often in early spring – where the class just works. They are one. They help each other. They buzz with purpose. And you realise: this is what it’s all for. This is powerful. No ceiling limit. ‘Reach for the stars’ is your class mantra!



The younger ones learn from their older counterparts at every opportunity, observing their behaviours, language and academic skills.



ALL year 1 children will receive an exemplary Year 1 curriculum with ambitious experiences and high expectations. This is their entitlement. This is NOT a “staying behind” scenario.



Year 1 children will be used to routines and high expectations and therefore will continue to progress at a quicker rate: 'Carry on from where they left off in July!'

Reception and Year 1 Vision

Honouring all that has come before – and building all that is yet to be.

In our Reception and Year 1 classrooms, we believe every child arrives already learning – curious, capable, and rich in experience. These early school years deepen and extend that journey, laying strong foundations for a lifetime of **learning, confidence, and joy**.

Our classroom is a place of wonder and stretch, where play is **treasured**, exploration is **encouraged**, and every child is known, noticed, and **nurtured**. Children are supported to aim high, **believe in their brilliance**, and take pride in who they are becoming.

Here, mastery is nurtured and independence blossoms.

Children become **confident, motivated learners with high expectations** of themselves and others – thinkers, questioners, collaborators, and creators.

Our classroom balances early discovery with structure and challenge. Whether forming letters or writing stories, building towers or building friendships, children rise with **care, freedom, and belief**.

Our team works as one – professionals who plan with insight, adapt with heart, and teach with joy.

We don't just prepare children for what comes next.

We honour where they've come from – and launch them toward all they can become

ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS

Carefully curated continuous provision opportunities linked to current learning

Open-ended resources that grow with the child, not outpace them

Familiar areas: writing table, construction, role play, small world

Year 1 provocations – ‘play’ – with serious intent behind them

WHY IT MATTERS:

Because the environment is the second teacher – it scaffolds when an adult can't

Because it allows children to revisit, explore, and deepen their learning independently

Because in a mixed class, the room must teach too – not just the adult

Clear labels, cosy corners, quiet zones – spaces to rest and reset

Challenge cards or invitations to extend for both year groups

Independence tools: clipboards, visual timetables, mini whiteboards, checklists

‘Our’ room – all have their place – team approaches. Access resources independently

OVERVIEW:



Development Matters

Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage

First published September 2020
Revised September 2023





Early years foundation stage statutory framework

For group and school-based providers

Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five

Dated: 11 October 2024
Effective: 01 November 2024

1

EYFS / Year 1 Expectations		
Mathematics: Number and Numerical Pattern		
3 and 4 Year olds	- Develop fast recognition of up to 3 objects, without having to count them individually ('subitising'). Recite numbers past 5. Say one number for each item in order: 1,2,3,4,5. Know that the last number reached when counting a small set of objects tells you how many there are in total ('cardinal principle'). Show 'finger numbers' up to 5. Link numerals and amounts: for example, showing the right number of objects to match the numeral, up to 5. Experiment with their own symbols and marks as well as numerals. - Solve real world mathematical problems with numbers up to 5. Compare quantities using language: 'more than', 'fewer than' Talk about and explore 2D and 3D shapes (for example, circles, rectangles, triangles and cuboids) using informal and mathematical language: 'sides', 'corners'; 'straight', 'flat', 'round'. - Understand position through words alone – for example, "The bag is under the table," – with no pointing. Describe a familiar route. Discuss routes and locations, using words like 'in front of' and 'behind'. - Make comparisons between objects relating to size, length, weight and capacity. Select shapes appropriately: flat surfaces for building, a triangular prism for a roof etc. - Combine shapes to make new ones - an arch, a bigger triangle etc. Talk about and identify the patterns around them. For example: stripes on clothes, designs on rugs and wallpaper. - Use informal language like 'pointy', 'spotty', 'blobs' etc. Extend and create ABAB patterns – stick, leaf, stick, leaf. Notice and correct an error in a repeating pattern. Begin to describe a sequence of events, real or fictional, using words such as 'first', 'then...'	
Children in Reception	Count objects, actions and sounds. Subitise. Link the number symbol (numeral) with its cardinal number value. Count beyond ten. Compare numbers. Understand the 'one more than/one less than' relationship between consecutive numbers. Explore the composition of numbers to 10. Automatically recall number bonds for numbers 0–10. Select, rotate and manipulate shapes in order to develop spatial reasoning skills. Compose and decompose shapes so that children recognise a shape can have other shapes within it, just as numbers can. Continue, copy and create repeating patterns. Compare length, weight and capacity.	
ELG	Number - Have a deep understanding of number to 10, including the composition of each number. Subsite (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5. - Automatically recall (without reference to rhymes, counting or other aids) number bonds up to 5 (including subtraction facts) and some number bonds to 10, including double facts.	Numerical Patterns - Verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system. - Compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity. - Explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally.
Year One	Number and Place Value Count to and across 100, forwards and backwards, beginning with 0 or 1, or from any given number. Count, read and write numbers to 100 in numerals; count in multiples of twos, fives and tens. Given a number, identify one more and one less. Identify and represent numbers using objects and pictorial representations including the number line, and use the language of: equal to, more than, less than (fewer), most, least. Read and write numbers from 1 to 20 in numerals and words. Addition and Subtraction Read, write and interpret mathematical statements involving addition (+), subtraction (-) and equals (=) signs. Represent and use number bonds and related subtraction facts within 20. Add and subtract one-digit and two-digit numbers to 20, including zero. Solve one-step problems that involve addition and subtraction, using concrete objects and pictorial representations, and missing number problems such as 7 = [] - 9. Multiplication and Division Solve one-step problems involving multiplication and division, by calculating the answer using concrete objects, pictorial representations and arrays with the support of the teacher. Fractions Recognise, find and name a half as one of two equal parts of an object, shape or quantity. Recognise, find and name a quarter as one of four equal parts of an object, shape or quantity. Measurement	

The national curriculum in England

Framework document

December 2014

Compare, describe and solve practical problems for:

Lengths and heights [for example, long/short, longer/shorter, tall/short, double/half]

Mass/weight [for example, heavy/light, heavier than, lighter than]

Capacity and volume [for example, full/empty, more than, less than, half, half full, quarter]

Time [for example, quicker, slower, earlier, later]

Measure and begin to record the following:

Lengths and heights

Mass/weight

Capacity and volume

Time (hours, minutes, seconds)

Recognise and know the value of different denominations of coins and notes

Sequence events in chronological order using language [for example, before and after, next, first, today, yesterday, tomorrow, morning, afternoon and evening]

Recognise and use language relating to dates, including days of the week, weeks, months and years

Tell the time to the hour and half past the hour and draw the hands on a clock face to show these times.

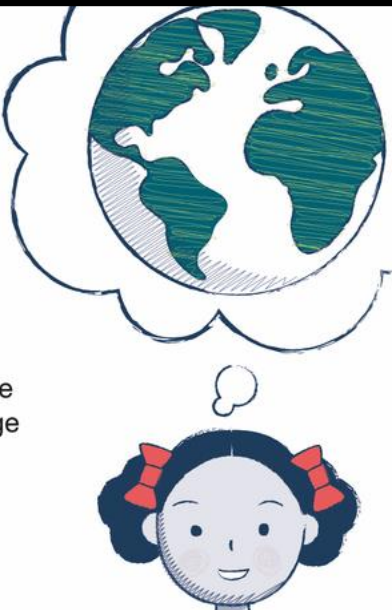
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Science / Understanding the World			
3 and 4 Year olds	Use all their senses in handson exploration of natural materials. Explore collections of materials with similar and/or different properties. Talk about what they see, using a wide vocabulary. Begin to make sense of their own life-story and family's history. Show interest in different occupations. Explore how things work. Plant seeds and care for growing plants. Understand the key features of the life cycle of a plant and an animal. Begin to understand the need to respect and care for the natural environment and all living things. Explore and talk about different forces they can feel. Talk about the differences between materials and changes they notice. Continue developing positive attitudes about the differences between people. Know that there are different countries in the world and talk about the differences they have experienced or seen in photos.		
Children in Reception	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. Draw information from a simple map. Understand that some places are special to members of their community. Recognise that people have different beliefs and celebrate special times in different ways. Recognise some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries. Explore the natural world around them. Describe what they see, hear and feel whilst outside. Recognise some environments that are different to the one in which they live. Understand the effect of changing seasons on the natural world around them.		
ELG	Past and Present 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.	People, Culture and Community Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, nonfiction 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.	The Natural World 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.
Year One	<u>Working scientifically</u> During year 1 and 2, pupils should be taught to use the following practical scientific methods, processes and skills through the teaching of the programme of study content: Asking simple questions and recognising that they can be answered in different ways. Observing closely, using simple equipment. Performing simple tests. Identifying and classifying. Using their observations and ideas to suggest answers to questions. Gathering and recording data to help in answering questions. <u>Plants</u> Identify and name a variety of common wild and garden plants, including deciduous and evergre Identify and describe the basic structure of a variety of common flowering plants, including trees <u>Animals, including humans</u> Identify and name a variety of common animals, including fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and n Identify and name a variety of common animals that are carnivores, herbivores and omnivores. Describe and compare the structure of common animals (fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and n including pets.) Identify, name, draw and label the basic parts of the human body and say which part of the body associated with each sense.		

Everyday materials

Distinguish between an object and the material from which it is made.

Identify and name a variety of everyday materials, including wood, plastic, glass, metal, water and rock.

Describe the simple physical properties of a variety of everyday materials.

Compare and group together a variety of everyday materials on the basis of their simple physical properties.

Seasonal change

Observe changes across the four seasons.

Observe and describe weather associated with the seasons and how day length varies.

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