

Understanding the World

Understanding the World is about how children get to know about other people, the place where they live and about all aspects of the environment. It gives them the understanding, knowledge and skills needed to make sense of the world around them. It encourages children to explore, experiment and be creative thinkers. It forms a foundation for later work in science, history, geography.

At Ditton Nursery we offer a wide variety of activities and experiences in play, to support the children to begin to develop a range of skills and concepts such as observation and experimentation.

Young children learn and develop through:

- using their senses to explore their immediate indoor and outdoor environments; and
- freely exploring their immediate surroundings through play-based learning, both indoors and outdoors.

To help children develop skills and concepts related to the world around them, we offer them opportunities to engage in interesting activities that provide them with first-hand experiences to explore through their senses.

These may include opportunities to:

- observe water, discussing and experimenting with how different objects behave in water, what happens when colour is added to water, the uses of water and importance of not wasting it, and water in the environment such as raindrops on windows and puddles;
- explore the properties of wet, damp and dry sand, using sand to build and make models;
- discuss changes in materials in real contexts such as cooking, freezing and making dough;
- show respect for living things and discuss the importance of handling them with care and sensitivity, for example by helping to look after indoor and outdoor plants or caterpillars
- planting and growing throughout the year, for example growing seeds and plants or bulbs in soil and water;
- the life cycle of, for example butterflies or frogs;
- a range of natural and man-made materials and sounds, using their senses to explore foliage, fruit and vegetables, foods made in the setting, metal objects, magnets, and environmental sounds such as birds singing or traffic;
- creating stimulating areas of interest, which may include photographs, magnets, magnifiers, mirrors, the insides of clocks, light boxes, plants at different stages of development, shells, and representations of seashore, jungle or ice landscapes;
- the properties of different materials and their appropriate uses, putting things together in a variety of ways, for example making models with natural and man-made materials
- Opportunities for children to talk about: relevant topics or festivals that are a natural part of their own experiences and those of the wider community, for example holidays, celebrations, birthdays or the arrival of a new baby, using photographs, drawing or making models to record events, if appropriate;
- the weather and the seasons at appropriate times during the year;

Understanding the World

- themselves and their body parts, for example by talking with adults, engaging in role-play and listening to appropriate stories, rhymes and songs;
- where they live, the members of their extended family and events in their lives (both past and present);
- playing with simple floor maps and small vehicles
- Discussing road safety, by keeping safe in the home and community, and by discussing how to keep safe in the sun and the importance of wearing appropriate clothing;
- the local environment and visitors;
- the work of some people in the local community, eg fire officer, shop assistant and/or doctor, through role-play or arranging visits to or from the Nursery ; and
- Taking some responsibility for caring for their own environment, becoming aware of environmental issues like litter and the use of paper and bottle banks.

Technology also used to support children's learning – computers, iPads, Listening stations, Bee Bot, remote controlled cars; etc