

Assessment for reaccreditation

School name and postcode

Alfreton Nursery DE55 7JA

Headteacher

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School more able coordinator

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School context

- Alfreton is a former coal mining town located in the north east of Amber Valley Borough. The area adjoins the districts of Bolsover and North-East Derbyshire and it is approximately 14.4 miles north of Derby and 17 miles north-west of Nottingham.
- Historically the population is predominantly white British although 10% of the school's population are EAL.
- The 2021 Derbyshire Deprivation index has Alfreton as in the top 10% to 20% of deprivation nationally, with much of it in the top 10%. It gave 13.4% of children living in low income families in Amber Valley of which area Alfreton is the poorest ward. Crime rates are high, especially for shoplifting. Life expectancy is below the national average.
- Alfreton Nursery is a popular choice with local families and is careful to serve the community in which it is placed. The majority of pupils are disadvantaged with high levels of poverty and family distress. 104 pupils on roll currently and 22 attract Pupil Premium funding. The school works hard to support those in need.
- The school has enhanced resource for SEND.
- The school's EAL population is mostly Polish and Hungarian
- Alfreton Nursery School was accredited as a National Teaching School in September 2015 in recognition of its hard work and collective drive to constantly raise standards in school.
- Prior to government reorganisation, with Alfreton Nursery as the lead school, the Alfreton Nursery School Alliance was made up of 30 schools including Nursery Schools, schools with an SEN specialism, infant schools, primary schools and a secondary school. Schools in the alliance covered Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire. Wellbeing and high aspirations for all were key drivers in its work. School support is still offered through school visits and Specialist Leaders in Education (SLEs). With effect from September 2023 the school will become Derbyshire's Potentia lead on early years.
- The school has continuing OFSTED Outstanding Status (March 2019), it is a UNICEF Rights Respecting School; a member of the Forest school Alliance; a holder of the Eco Schools Award; also of the Carnegie Mental Health in Schools Award, and is a Workload and Wellbeing Charter School. Alfreton first achieved the NACE Challenge Award in September 2007, and it was awarded again in 2017. The MAT Coordinator is a NACE Associate.

Summary statement

- ‘Our underpinning philosophy for more able learners is Aspiration, Inspiration, Celebration. Aspire high, inspire all and celebrate everything, is an approach which promotes challenge through intrigue and embraces success.’ (School Website)
- Alfreton is an outstanding example of Nursery provision. It has a dedicated staff who work as extended professionals, seeking to enhance their knowledge and skills for the benefit of the children.
- The children are well understood and their individual needs catered for.
- The atmosphere is calm and positive, with a creative buzz.
- The children are happy, confident learners who spend their time in unobtrusively well managed experiences that aim to challenge and extend them.
- Parents are supported and involved and take evident pleasure in their child’s Nursery experience.
- The school is outward-looking and has a track record of sharing its expertise.

Progress towards previous identified key action points

1. ‘Many elements of Growth Mindsets appeared throughout the day. Formalising this so that it is a universal offer would be an appropriate development, both within the Nursery and as part of the Training Schools outreach in which the school. Is involved.

Progress: Metacognition has been embedded across the curriculum and specific teaching and learning programmes have been designed. An enquiry based curriculum is now embedded throughout the whole school. Growth Mindsets is used extensively, in open ended problem solving. The Atellerista, (‘Artist in residence’ cf. Reggio Emilia Approach) especially in the artistic and construction work done is following the lead of the children and linking it to a Mindsets approach.

2. ‘Continue to develop Tapestry Post in enabling parents to contribute to and understand their child’s learning journey. ‘

Progress: In developing Tapestry Post with parents, there has been a strong take-up amongst them, and especially amongst those with children in the Aspire Group. This is an area of deprivation so the parental participation is a very strong feature. The MAT Coordinator has worked to make it clear that feedback is wanted, and parents have moved beyond ‘likes’ on school posts to establishing a good dialogue between home and school. For example, parents contribute information about weekend experiences and can link them to what is happening in school. Parents were encouraged to look at Tapestry with the children before bedtime, and to discuss/reinforce/celebrate the day’s learning together rather than looking at Tapestry after the children have gone to bed. The school uses Tapestry to track the Aspire Group’s learning journey, rather than the paper based personal learning logs suggested at first accreditation, as being more effective.

Tapestry remains a source of high quality feedback and collaboration between home and school. This system has progressed to sharing group collaborations, rather than just individual, using the web tool Padlet.

3. Provide the Aspire Group with their own Learning Journey Log Books. The stickers given at the end of sessions, such as in the phonics session observed, could be duplicated in these to provide a longer lasting awareness of achievement.

Progress: Digital record created and applied into the practice for AMA children. Collective thoughts, questions and reflections stored and shared with peers and families at home.

4. Formalise and consolidate the experimental use of P4C.

Progress: P4C is now an aspect of continuous provision, indoors and out for all children. The 4Cs for learning (Caring, Collaborative, Critical and Creative) have been adopted by the whole school to underpin learning. The MATCo has trained with SAPERE and has adapted the methodology for Nursery, breaking it into manageable chunks and developing an eight-stage enquiry approach in her Aspire (MAG&T) sessions. In the week prior to any learning block, there is now a P4C week using stimuli that will be brought back into the more teacher-led sessions in following weeks. This enables the learning to begin from the child's perspective rather than that of the teacher.

Examples: Neuroscience Block. The P4C stimulus was a key, this was offered for open consideration of what a key was for/could unlock. The teacher-led section then started with a return of the key stimulus and this time a direct suggestion that 'the key could be a key to your learning' with time then spent on considering what kinds of 'keys' suited the different children in different learning situations.

Ecosystems Block. P4C stimuli were a feather and an apple 'Where was the apple yesterday?' as one child's question. Teacher-led learning following the P4C week, started with the suggestion that the feather and the apple were examples of two of the five factors needed for an ecosystem. As a teaching school, Alfreton plans to roll out P4C into other nurseries, and the Head has been in discussion with another Headteacher, a P4C Trainer, about using the school's outdoor pavilion as a P4C training location.

Summary of strengths for provision and outcomes

- A key strength in provision is the care with which the school assesses each pupil's needs and tracks their progress against this Hierarchy of Need Index.
- The school self-assesses its provision through ECRS (Early Childhood Environment Rating). Having had to re-create their spaces following Covid 'Bubbles' they were able to achieve a score of 216/249.
- Resource provision is rich, varied and carefully curated. The school has reflected indoor and outdoor provision with two STEM areas; two ateliers for creative activity; two kitchens, literacy prompts and story corners everywhere; and two forest school areas, with their attendant assistants trained to Forest School Alliance Level 3 (2) and to level 2(1). Items are carefully chosen and include lots of 'real world' items such as art catalogues and magazines in the indoor atelier and a real bus stop and road signs in the balance bike area. Home photographs formed one current and very popular display featuring family dogs.
- Accounting for post Covid changes in home circumstance features in school planning. The close family links it builds, has provided the school with valuable insights into home circumstances. Issues such as domestic violence, poverty, family break-up, bereavement, and poor mental health have all had significant impact on children's emotional and physical wellbeing, attendance and security.
- In order to better understand and support vulnerable families/learners in school, the school has compiled a Hierarchy of Vulnerability and closely monitors it, enabling the school to ensure an inclusive and responsive offer to pupils and support their families.

- The children come from a variety of family models and the school aims to validate every child's experience through its inclusion work and it has applied for the Rainbow Flag Award.
- More Able children are monitored individually against the Hierarchy of Need, noting concerns, 'curriculum blockers' and areas of Talent/ Interest.
- The identification of more able pupils includes some with emotional and behavioural difficulties and one child in care.
- Monitoring in spring 2022 identified that areas of greatest success in terms of children recovering from concerns and moving into a stable learning status, were those involving metacognition and learning environments (Maths and STEM).
- The school's focus on outdoor learning and the STEM curriculum has seen consistent progress in the area of Physical development. Adaptations have been made to improve the flow of learning from space to space. Interventions have been consistently implemented, with the intention of offering a differentiated level of enhancement to learners. EYFS Assessments of the transition group in March 2022 show a high level of children matching the applied filters, therefore 'no concern' with 14 individual items of 'concern' out of 210 assessment points. Leavers for 2023 are already benchmarked and concerns addressed.
- Concerns related to Communication and Language are being addressed through intensive ECAT support, as well as a whole school approach to the modelling of language and Intensive Interactions. Literacy has been a focus for development both inside and out.

More Able Action Plan 21/22 Priority Items completed

- CA1 To reconstruct a specialist area in school dedicated to cognitive challenge and timetabled for use with more able children
- CA2 Construction of identification criteria, based on new EYFS, from September 2021
- CA3a Teaching and learning environment is rich in creative, currently relevant, differentiated materials to support all learners. There are focus areas in school clearly designed to meet the more able learners' needs. Displays everywhere offer cross curricular links and metacognitive prompts. The 4C's for learning are embedded in all areas of school.
- CA3c Inclusion within more able programme of mental health and wellbeing education
- 5a Electronic system in place to record learners' reflections and views
- 5b Tapestry accounts, embedded with Padlet, are used as a communication tool, providing feedback and opportunities to share and reflect.
- CPD and Governor involvement is ongoing.
- There are plans to reach out internationally with a visit next year to the Reggio Emilia

Summary of strengths for teaching and learning

- This is a vibrant and purposeful learning environment, with a relaxed and happy atmosphere. The children are very well behaved, open and busy. Any small conflicts are immediately homed in on and everyone is referred to as a friend.
- Photos from home ('Our Dogs' at present) are carefully displayed with comments and conversations occur around the display.

- Children's work is valued and displayed carefully and they are expected to write what they can on their work. 'We celebrate children's achievements with them and with each other. We do tell them that we are proud of them-of all their achievements.'
- Other displays and activities are chosen to stimulate curiosity and individual or group activity. Learning opportunity is intended to be offered in a variety of interconnected ways across the physical areas of the nursery. One HLTA observed 'We do differentiated teaching all the day.'
- The 'Our Home' project in current focus included exploring building materials and tessellations; children were cutting out images of stones and bricks, collaging, and printing with Duplo Lego. It also involved the Aspire group discussing ecosystems, referred to as such, and demonstrating that they knew ecosystems comprise creatures, plants and homes. Learning was supported by 'John', a pet giant cockroach. One child asked 'Is he real?' reflecting recent P4C discussion, and this led to a discussion where his abilities, (sight, movement) and needs were considered. A count of how many legs he has, led to talk of defining insect features. Later in the day, one of the group was thrilled to find a toy grasshopper and brought it to our attention, 'It's an insect it has six legs'.
- Leaders use empowering academic vocabulary on a routine basis and the children do too. The whole school uses the ethos of Caring Collaborative Critical and Creative thinking to explore what kind of interaction in enquiry is taking place. The younger ones are encouraged to identify caring and collaborative thinking and later the critical and creative are added.
- 'Meta Me': Further to the '4Cs' the school is developing the use of metacognition through 'Thinking Moves' (Roger Sutcliffe, Nick Chandley). A selection from this set of 26 metacognitive 'tools' has been divided up so that some are used in STEM, others in Art, others in Language /Story areas. The children are being made aware of what kind of thinking they are engaged in in an accessible way.
- Each area is defined and children move in and out of them in a planned way with a 'big friend' who has a play and learning opportunity ready for them to opt into. The 'opt into' stance is important in that the pace is set by engagement with the children as they explore. Open questioning is the key driver, 'I wonder what would happen if..'
- The staff do a lot of planning together, they are proud of their work and very much look to develop their subject knowledge further. A question to the HILTA in an Atelier session regarding its underpinning Reggio Emilia pedagogy elicited the information that she has published an article on the subject in Nursery World.
- At present, staff are engaged in one of three action research projects for presentation as a digital resource package to the whole team in October. These are: Metacognition, STEM and Makaton. The overall aim of all three is to embed these current practices further.
- Student placements are part of Alfreton's extended learning offer. Here is a feedback from a recent student *'Until my training placement at Alfreton Nursery School, I had not been introduced to the concept of metacognitive learning. Through my observations of expert teachers at Alfreton Nursery, seeing the metacognitive approach being used in practice has been inspiring. In its simplest form, the very use of the metacognitive language (A-Z thinking moves) is seen throughout nursery, and daily I hear the children talking in this way, allowing them to learn and grow their thinking using the skills they have developed through this approach.'*
- Parents are constantly offered engagement in the learning through, 'Meta Monday', a Facebook thinking focus; through Tapestry and through Padlet where they can feed back their comments on learning: *'X Has also been chatting away about extinct dinosaurs, and we've been looking at our big atlas and exploring the world. Her little brain is lit up at the moment. Thanks for putting the time into expanding her perspectives.'* *'Thank you for sharing this video for us to enjoy at home, Y has been so inspired learning about this at nursery and has been teaching us all about it at home.'*

Case Study

This was a P4C based study of an elective mute child who found - through careful introduction to and adaptation of the P4C method - that he could use his voice. His further progress was enhanced by his experience. Here is the summary:

'The value of P4C was undeniable. 'X' found his voice. He chose when and how to engage in his learning because it was safe, connected to his interests, creative and open ended. As a result of this increase in confidence, I decided to build on X's success. He was included in the Aspiration Group. This group is built on the foundations of cognitive challenge and metacognitive thinking. X flourished and began to ask 'big questions'. The cognitive discourse through which he expanded his knowledge and curiosity, led to attainment levels increasing and his progress rate accelerating across all curriculum areas.

P4C is a sustainable offer in school. It is embedded into many areas of our enquiry based curriculum, for all children, and more able learners experience the P4C pedagogy through our highly aspirational approach to more able provision.

Areas for development

- Wider dissemination of the CPD Action Research project findings.
- Start Parent P4C Group
- Further embed Metacognitive Tools for Thinking
- Continue to enhance the language provision identified in ECRS supported by ECAT
- Link Makaton with the Metacognitive tools in use.
- Re-establish the equivalence of teaching school status through Derbyshire's new professional development structure. Restart free workshops for schools.

Key issues

Key action points:

*to be included on the school's **Key issues matrix***

- Further develop Meta Learning throughout school.
- Further parental involvement by continuing Meta Monday or its equivalent and setting up Parent P4C Community Enquiries
- Share the work being done through NACE communication channels and others.

Date of Challenge Award reaccreditation

June 20th 2022

NACE lead assessor signature

PM Purcell

Date Challenge check-in due

(+ 18 months)

December 2023

Deadline for next reaccreditation

(+ 3 years)

June 2025