



 *The Learning
Naturally Method*

An independent review about *The Learning Naturally Method* at Beddington Infants' School

DR FIONA AUBREY-SMITH
EDD MA(ED) MMUS PGCE BA(HONS) FCCT FRSA FHEA

September 2025

Contents

Aim	3
Methodology	3
Context	4
Influences to pedagogy	7
Structural support for learning	11
Vision of learning	12
The school day and capacity for learning	13
Unlocking space for learning	16
The classroom as a concept	19
The learner as the centre of school gravity	22
Robust planning for responsive practice	26
Conclusion	31
References	33
About the author	37

Aim

The purpose of this report is to articulate Beddington Infant School's pedagogical approach (The Learning Naturally Method), and its underpinning rationale.

This report does not seek to duplicate insights from the many inspection reports, accountability frameworks, performance indicators and stakeholder feedback which each articulate the significant success of the Beddington Infant School approach to supporting learning. Instead, this report is intended to complement existing surface-level summaries through deeper research insights; forensically examining the rationale and nuance underpinning everyday practice across the school.

Importantly, this report attempts to articulate *why* and *how* the Beddington Infant School approach translates a contemporary vision into practice.

Methodology

Data generation for this research took part from September 2024 - June 2025, and consisted of research interviews and focus groups with Beddington Infant School's Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, SENCO, teachers, teaching assistants and children. These sessions were used to surface beliefs, intentions, operational plans and reflections.

Triangulating those interviews, multiple research observations across a diverse range of learning spaces were used to probe into the lived experiences of children and adults.

Furthermore, a wide range of internal and public facing documents and data sources were used to triangulate findings and stimulate further discussion.

Context

In the context of this report, it is helpful to locate Beddington Infant School within the broader national landscape.

Beddington Infant School is a three form entry infant school, with 285 children aged 3-7 (Nursery through to Year 2) on roll¹. Beddington is a local authority maintained school, working alongside 6 other schools as part of the Sutton Education Trust.

Located in outer London, the intake at Beddington Infant School is mixed in terms of deprivation and ethnicity, although Pupil Premium is slightly lower than national average. Almost half of the children at the school are summer born, and there are proportionally more boys than girls attending the school. Beddington Infant School's number of children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND), aligns with national averages,² and the number of children speaking English as a second language (EAL), is higher than the national average³.

Last inspected by Ofsted in 2023, Beddington Infant School's inspection report begins with the bold phrase that, **'Pupils thrive here'**⁴ - a sentiment triangulated by 100% of parents commending the school for their child's good progress and great teaching provision



¹ Figures correct at the time of writing.

² DfE (2024) Compare School Performance: Beddington Infant School - Absence and pupil population <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/school/102983/beddington-infants%27-school/absence-and-pupil-population>

³ ibid

⁴ Ofsted (2023) Inspection of Beddington Infant School. <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50229464>

in the most recent internal parent survey⁵. That holistic view was shared by Ofsted, who in 2023 identified (through inspection) that Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes, and Early Years provision, were all graded as **Outstanding**. The overall Quality of Education, and Leadership and Management earned high praise for **'strong expertise and knowledge'** amongst senior leaders, and staff commenting on how much they enjoy working at the school.

In 2024, children at Beddington Infant School **achieved well above national averages** for Reading, Writing and Maths both at Age Related Expectations (ARE), and for children working at Greater Depth. On average, over the last 3 years, Beddington Infant School children have **outperformed national averages** by 10-20% in Phonics, Reading, Writing and Maths⁶ (based on the latest externally moderated assessment data).



As a local authority maintained school, Beddington Infant School operates under the same national policies, curricula⁷, and frameworks as other state primary schools⁸.

In 2023, Ofsted confirmed that *"The school curriculum meets the ambition of the national curriculum and the early years foundation stage profile"⁹*, - underpinning the point that children

at Beddington Infant School benefit from the **high expectations and ambition of national policies**, whilst *simultaneously* benefiting from a **deeper pedagogy which values each individual child¹⁰**.

⁵ Beddington Infant School Parent Survey (July 2024) [[link](#)]

⁶ Beddington Infant School (2025) Attainment data compared to national averages <https://www.beddingtoninfants.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Beddington-Infant-School-Infants-School-Attainment-2019-2022-and-2023-compared-to-national.pdf>

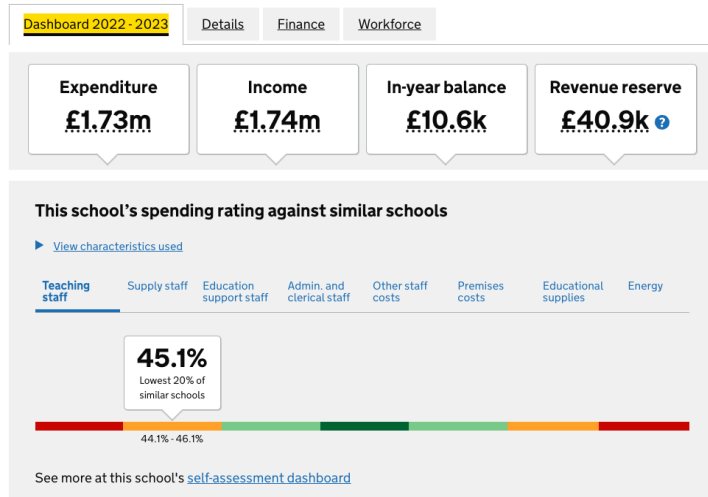
⁷ DfE (2014) The National Curriculum in England: Key Stage 1 and 2 framework https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425601/PRIMARY_national_curriculum.pdf and DfE (2024) Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

⁸ DfE (2024) Maintained Schools Governance Guidance <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/governance-in-maintained-schools/statutory-policies-for-maintained-schools>

⁹ Ofsted (2023) Inspection of Beddington Infant School. <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50229464>

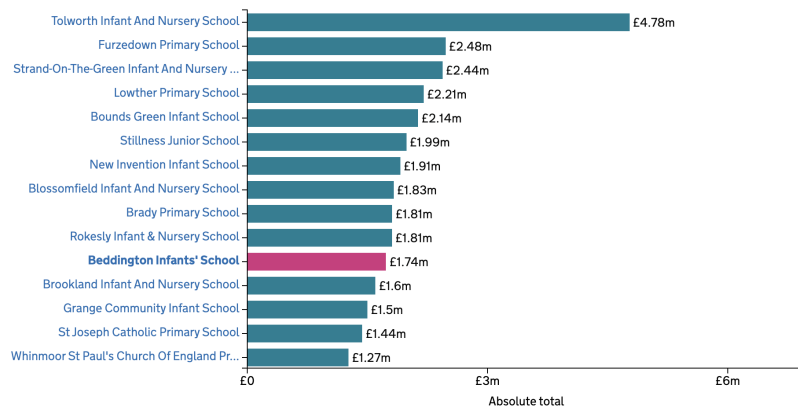
¹⁰ Beddington Infant School (2025) Learning and Teaching provision <https://www.beddingtoninfants.org.uk/provision/teaching-learning/learning/>

Beddington Infant School also work within the same financial landscape as other state primary schools¹¹, a national picture which is currently under significant pressure - with rising costs, falling birth rates and uncertain national budgeting



decisions particularly affecting small schools with young cohorts of children. Based on DfE financial benchmarking data, Beddington Infant School's **income is less than average** when compared to similar schools¹², yet Beddington Infant School's expenditure is comparable with those same schools¹³.

It is helpful too, to note the staffing at Beddington Infant School - with broadly similar costs for teachers and leaders to other schools, but a **higher than average child to teacher ratio** - the result of careful budget management and thoughtful approaches to staffing¹⁴.



¹¹ DfE (2024) Local authority schools financial reporting and assurance <https://www.gov.uk/education/local-authority-schools-financial-reporting-and-assurance>

¹² DfE (2025) Schools financial benchmarking and insights - summary <https://schools-financial-benchmarking.service.gov.uk/BenchmarkCharts#tabsSection>

¹³ DfE (2025) Schools financial benchmarking and insights - maintained schools compared to Beddington Infant School <https://schools-financial-benchmarking.service.gov.uk/BenchmarkCharts/GenerateFromSimpleCriteria?Ur n=102983&EstType=Maintained&ComparisonType=Basic&SimpleCriteria.IncludeFsm=true&SimpleCriteria.IncludeSen=true&SimpleCriteria.IncludeEal=true#tabsSection>

¹⁴ ibid

Collectively, these financial insights suggest a tightly managed school budget, despite challenging financial pressures. **It is notable therefore, that the context of this school is one of a high performing, and well managed organisation.**

The choices made by the leadership team about **structural support for learning** (i.e. pedagogy) are central to the school's efficacy.

Influences to pedagogy

Research evidence about effective pedagogy shows that there are many ways that educational excellence can be achieved, each stemming from a values and belief system about what it means to be a learner and to learn, what it means to be a teacher and to teach, views on the origins and context of knowledge, and views on the role of schooling in learner's wider lives.

In broad terms, there are 4 predominant pedagogical belief systems: Traditional Behaviourism, Individual Constructivism, Social Constructivism, and Sociocultural¹⁵. As human beings, we each hold belief systems (which we may or may not be consciously aware about, or able to articulate), which align with one of these aforementioned pedagogical belief systems. Generally, these beliefs are a direct result of an accumulation of our own prior experiences - stemming from our own childhoods and early education, through later education and professional experiences, alongside influences from significant people and events. Notably, our beliefs tend to either replicate what we have internalised as positive, or react against what we have internalised as negative¹⁶.

It is important to be aware that these belief systems exist in parallel and they are not hierarchical. However, our perceptions (which are based on our personal value systems) will lead us to feel - often quite strongly, that some belief systems are

¹⁵ For full definitions and further reading on these systems please refer to Chapter 4 of Aubrey-Smith, F., & Twining, P., (2024) *From EdTech to PedTech: Changing the way we think about digital technology*. Routledge: Abingdon.

¹⁶ For further detail about how pedagogical belief systems emerge in each of us with associated recommended reading, please refer to Chapter 5 of Aubrey-Smith & Twining (2024) - 'The Funnels of Influence'

preferable over others. This cannot be true in absolute terms - but is a simple result of perceptions that we have based on our own individual life experiences. In short, if we perceive that a system worked well for us, we are more likely to value that system - even if it does not necessarily work for others. Similarly, if we perceive a system as having been ineffective for us, we are more likely to view it as ineffective, even if it is highly positively impactful for others.

Current accountability and performance measures are aligned with particular pedagogical beliefs (largely pivoting around Individual Constructivism)¹⁷, which require all schools to adopt particular pedagogical approaches (e.g. preparation for high stakes individual summative assessments), and this tends to lead to the adoption of particular pedagogical practices (e.g. curriculum content based age related year groupings). These systems value individual acquisition of pre-determined knowledge (rather than, for example, developing knowledge specific to communities or social capital), and view outcomes as a metric based on the relationship between an individual (person or organisation) and its peers (rather than, for example, outcomes relating to community cohesion or long term employment). There are a range of political, economic and sociological reasons and influences for this which fall outside the scope of this report¹⁸.

However, established research demonstrates that it is common practice across the sector for an organisation to utilise pedagogical approaches which may not necessarily be aligned with the personal pedagogical beliefs of the educators within it, but which professionally, enable them to conform to system expectations¹⁹.



¹⁷See Aubrey-Smith, F., (2020) *An exploration of the relationship between classroom teacher's pedagogical beliefs, and their uses of technologies*. Doctoral thesis. <https://oro.open.ac.uk/75001/>

¹⁸ See Brighouse, T., and Waters, M., *About our Schools: improving on previous best*. Crown House: Carmathan.

¹⁹ *ibid*

For example, studies suggest that in 2024, approximately two thirds of teachers and leaders beliefs align with socially oriented models of learning (i.e. where learning itself is shaped through the process of social discourse), yet all of these colleagues are consciously enacting teaching and learning strategies which emphasise the individual nature of learning (e.g. learning largely recorded in individual portfolios - such as exercise books or files)²⁰. There are pragmatic reasons for this, which largely stem from a high stakes accountability system (e.g. leaders requiring teachers to produce tangible evidence in order to prove specific actions to those conducting monitoring and inspection visits).

Holding one belief system whilst using strategies and actions from a different belief system is not specific to education and is not unusual for humankind. Most of us are familiar with expressions such as 'believing one thing, whilst doing another'. However, research from sociology and psychology suggests that most people - children and adults alike - recognise a person who says or does one thing, whilst believing something different (Festinger, 1957)²¹. The reason that this is important is because of the way that children in classrooms interpret the actions of those around them. For example, nationally, we often underestimate just how perceptive children and young people are about the adults around them, and there can be very real consequences to this.



By means of comparison, in another part of England, as part of an unrelated study, a very articulate key stage two child explained that;

"My teacher was talking to us about [SATs] and they said you have to try hard and do your best and show what you can do.

²⁰ Aubrey-Smith, F., (2025) *PedTech: The Impact*. Crown House: Carmarthen [forthcoming]

²¹ Festinger, L. (1957) *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Stanford University Press.

Then they said afterwards 'but remember that it's only one test on one day and that we [teachers and families] know that you are more than just a test result'. But then basically all we do at the moment is prepare for the tests. When we're learning something, the teacher says how we have to do [a piece of writing] like this because that's how we will get marks in the test. I think that [SATs] matters a lot to them because it makes them look good if we get good marks and it makes them look bad if we do badly. So I don't believe what they said about we are more than just a test result. I think our test results matter more to them than helping us learn stuff that's actually useful for our lives".

This child recognised the friction between what the teacher said they believed (about valuing children's development holistically), and the beliefs underpinning their practical everyday practice (prioritising actions aligned with accountability measures). Whilst this child was unusually articulate, they are not alone in their awareness.

Post-pandemic research has shown in particular how traditional schooling models are seen as less and less relevant and appropriate for the needs and futures of the current generation of children (Generation Alpha) - with nationwide issues around attendance, behaviour, mental health and wellbeing and the consequent impact on attainment and social cohesion²².



²² World Economic Forum (2020) *Our Education Ssystem is losing relevance*. <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2020/04/our-education-system-is-losing-relevance-heres-how-to-update-it/>

Whilst change is clearly needed, few schools have the appetite to change established systems and ways of working beyond surface level rhetoric - instead preferring the safety of familiar models in a landscape of high accountability²³.



However, there are schools who think and work differently, probing deeply into the very purpose of their school and the roles of the individual human beings within it. These schools are deliberately moving away from models of schooling which were established to maintain order in a bygone era (Brighouse & Waters, 2021²⁴), and deliver a workforce suited to an industrial (rather than digital or global) era.

Beddington Infant School is one such school, and this report attempts to articulate the rationale behind their highly effective model.

Structural support for learning

Beddington Infant School describes itself as a “*school designed to be a learning community, reflecting a real-life experience*”. Recognising that ‘real-life’ for human beings is complex and multilayered (e.g. Bourdieu, 1973²⁵), this report has attempted to translate complexity into a set of accessible themes. What follows is therefore structured around 5 overarching themes:

- Vision of Learning
- The School Day, and Capacity for Learning
- The Classroom as a Concept
- The Learner as the centre of school gravity
- Robust planning for Responsive practice

²³ Edurio (2024) *National CST School Trust Report*.
<https://home.edurio.com/national-cst-school-trust-report/>

²⁴ Brighouse, T., and Waters, M., (2021) *About our Schools: Improving on previous best*. Crown House: Carmarthen.

²⁵ Bourdieu, P. (1977). ‘Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction’, in J. Karabel and A. H. Halsey (eds), *Power and Ideology in Education*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 487–511.

Vision of learning

Nearly all schools set out a vision that highlights the importance of each child being an individual with their own strengths, needs and aspirations²⁶. Similarly, most schools set out a vision about empowering young people to be responsible for themselves and to contribute to the world around them. Furthermore, most schools in the current landscape talk about evidence informed teaching and learning. These aspirations are well intentioned yet often much harder to embed into everyday practice.

In contrast, one of the notable features about Beddington Infant School's vision is the way in which it is so precisely articulated²⁷.



The vision at Beddington Infant School is described as a uniquely immersive learning experienced, inspired by Reggio Emilia²⁸, the work of Sir John Jones²⁹, and summarised as Seven Gifts of *Learning Naturally*:

- 1) Be a well rounded child
- 2) Be a good communicator
- 3) Be respectful and polite
- 4) Enjoy learning
- 5) Have strong core skills
- 6) Be a full member of the community
- 7) Be ambitious

The approach and impact of these seven gifts have been outlined in a number of documents created by Beddington Infant School³⁰, and this report does not attempt to duplicate those details in this report. However, the insights set out below

²⁶ Edurio (2024) *National CST School Trust Report*.

<https://home.edurio.com/national-cst-school-trust-report/>

²⁷ Beddington Infant School (2025) School Vision

<https://www.beddingtoninfants.org.uk/about-us/about-beddington/school-vision/>

²⁸ Reggio Emilia (2022) The Reggio Emilia Approach

<https://www.reggiochildren.it/en/reggio-emilia-approach/>

²⁹ Jones, J., (2003) The need for personalisation [link] - provided as an example for interested readers.

³⁰ Beddington Infant School (2025) School prospectus

<https://www.beddingtoninfants.org.uk/about-us/about-beddington/prospectus/>

correlate with the findings of those internal documents and offer a form of independent triangulation on internal judgements and evaluation³¹.

The school day and capacity for learning

In state funded mainstream schools in England, children spend approximately 1,265 hours per year at school (roughly 6.5 hours per school day, 195 days per year). Of this time, approximately 260 hours (21%) are spent at lunchtime and breaktime³², and approximately 130 hours (10% is spent transitioning in and out of lessons³³. Even though this equates to approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ of the school day, at most schools these portions of time are not viewed as capacity for learning, usually based on the premise that children *'need time to relax and play between lessons'*. The embedded assumption within this premise is that (a) children need to rest between lessons because they are under heavy cognitive or psychological load during the lessons themselves³⁴, and (b) that periods of time used for learning, automatically exclude mental and and physical rest or play - positioning the two as dichotomous.



The use of neurobiological theories touching upon cognitive load is relatively new within education, and thus far the focus has generally been concerned with raising educator awareness about: the basic principles of cognitive load (e.g. Sweller, 1988³⁵); the importance of breaking down complex ideas into manageable, spaced

³¹ Beddington Infant School (2025) Governing Body Reports and Minutes

<https://www.beddingtoninfants.org.uk/about-us/governance/full-governing-body-minutes/>

³² Based on a typical school timetable including a 20 minute morning break and a 1 hour lunch break (80 minutes per day, 195 days per year = 260 hours)

³³ Based on a typical 5 minutes at the beginning and end of each lesson, on the assumption of 4 timetabled periods per day in EY/KS1 = 40 minutes per day, multiplied by 195 days per year = 130 hours

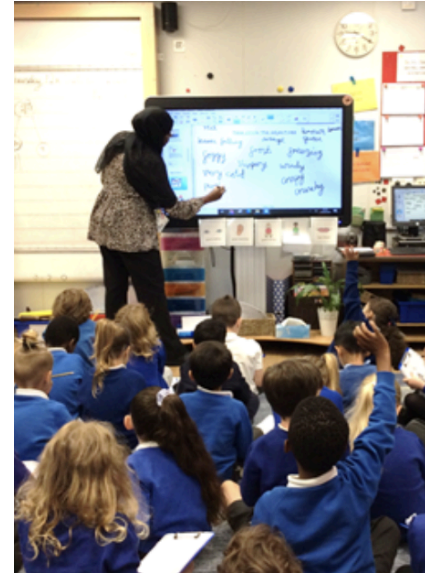
³⁴ Feldon, D.F., (2007) "Cognitive load and classroom teaching: The double-edged sword of automaticity". *Educational psychologist*, 42(3), pp.123-137.

³⁵ Sweller, J. (1988) "Cognitive Load during Problem Solving: Effects on Learning". *Cognitive Science* (12), pp.257-285.

chunks (e.g. Douglas-Fields, 2005³⁶), and the gravitational pull of attention being about how teacher behaviour affects the cognitive demand placed on upon learners (e.g. Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968³⁷). This type of attention is helpful when conversations are focused on individual timetabled units of time (e.g. single lessons or activities). However, there has been less contemporary discourse around the scale and nature of cognitive load demand placed upon learners over the course of the whole day.

Furthermore, discussion about the volume of cognitive load that children experience, and the importance of balancing high cognitive demand with lower cognitive demand, also tends to fall into another trap - assuming that cognitive burden largely originates from teacher direct instruction.

Whilst within individual lessons, this is the case for



many children, research from the fields of biology and psychiatry argues that there are at least two significant additional considerations which are vitally important (Camacho et al., 2020³⁸). The first being the cognitive load placed upon children as a result of other influences (e.g. social interactions, physical environment and resource interaction, emotional and behavioural regulation)³⁹. The second being the ways in which these loads and cognitive capacity

varies significantly between different children, and for different reasons (e.g. social,

³⁶ Douglas-Fields, R., (2005) "Making Memories Stick", *Scientific American*, pp.58–63

³⁷ Atkinson, R.C. and Shiffrin, R.M. (1968). 'Human memory: A Proposed System and its Control Processes'. In Spence, K.W. and Spence, J.T. *The psychology of learning and motivation*, (Volume 2). New York: Academic Press. pp. 89–195.

³⁸ Camacho, M., Quinones-Camacho, L., and Perlman, S., (2020) "Does the child brain rest? An examination and interpretation of resting cognition in developmental cognitive neuroscience". *NeuroImage* (212)

³⁹ e.g. Langerock, N., Oberauer, K., Throm, E. and Vergauwe, E., (2025) "The cognitive load effect in working memory: Refreshing the empirical landscape, removing outdated explanations". *Journal of Memory and Language* (140)

emotional, behavioural, physical needs, including both diagnosed and non-diagnosed special educational needs or disabilities).

Camacho et al., (2020), argues that adults often have a misplaced belief that children are resting cognitively, when often they are instead displaying physically restful behaviours (e.g. sitting or standing still), or socially acceptable behaviours (compliant playtime games), whilst still burdened by a very high cognitive load. Thus, the notion of a 'calm lesson' or children 'resting from learning at playtime' is problematic as it infers that attention to cognitive load, and to children's physical and psychological wellbeing which is not necessarily being translated effectively into children's lived experiences and realities. It is possible that this widespread educator misconception is a significant



trigger for dysregulated classrooms, potentially contributing towards the alarming statistic that nationally, 1 in 5 school aged children are experiencing some form of emotional disorder or anxiety (NHS, 2023⁴⁰). These insights suggest that it is vitally important to review the balancing of children's cognitive load holistically.

At Beddington Infant School, children's 1,265 hours on site are viewed as precious capacity for learning. The headteacher describes the importance of ensuring that **every minute at school brings value to the individual child** and that they themselves consequently see the value in attending school.

Notably, at Beddington Infant School, children's 1,265 hours at school are viewed holistically (8:45am - 3:15pm) rather than as a separate, timetabled, units of time (individual lessons, break time, lunchtime). This ensures that cognitive load is conceptualised academically, socially, pastorally and cumulatively. The simple operational decision to consider **every minute as potential learning time** demarcates the way that educators plan, schedule, facilitate and support children each and every day.

Closely tied into this approach is that the physical school site is also viewed holistically - with **every square foot of space indoors and outdoors viewed as**

⁴⁰ NHS England (2023) Mental health of children and young people
<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england/2023-wave-4-follow-up>

being able to offer a stimulus or an environment for any point in that 8:45am-3:15pm capacity. At Beddington Infant School, the whole school site and environment is seen as space for learning, with **every place and moment used as an opportunity to stimulate and nurture children's development.**

Unlocking space for learning

Historical models of schooling have often viewed learning as something that happens within timetabled, classroom based, often seated, moments. This creates a false illusion where other units of time (e.g. transitions between lessons, break times), and other locations (e.g. playgrounds, school field, corridors, lunch halls), are viewed as places that counterbalance classrooms⁴¹. For example, in some schools, playtime is conceptualised as somewhere for children to *recover* from the last lesson in order to be able to conform in the next lesson. Or, school sites are viewed somewhat like an archery board - where the further away physical places are from the teacher's board, or classroom, the less valuable they are perceived as being. This mindset creates false limits on time and space that can be used as a core part of everyday learning provision.



This nuance is important, because often in schools, learning is seen as something that happens predominantly in a fixed space - usually 1 classroom, with 30 chairs and a number of tables clustered or in rows, and physical resources (e.g. stationary, topic objects, digital tools).

In many schools there are timetabled 'outdoor learning' periods which either tend to be timetabled Forest School type provision, or occasional activities linked to curriculum subjects and utilised for motivational purposes (e.g. creating a

⁴¹ Beddington Infant School (2025) Overview of Learning Experiences
<https://www.beddingtoninfants.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Overview-of-Learning-Experiences-Key-Stage-1-Curriculum-Year-2-24-25.pdf>

numberline on the playground, or sitting under a tree to engage with a writing lesson on a clipboard).

At Beddington Infant School, there is a very deliberate rationale about viewing the 1,265 available hours for learning in harmony with a view on the school site itself as being one overarching space for learning.

That rationale encourages the process of planning for children's learning to:

- 1) **Identify holistic intentions for each individual child** (based on knowledge of the child's individual needs and aspirations, child development knowledge, and the national curriculum - *a more comprehensive form of assessment for learning*)
- 2) **Identify how best to stimulate, nurture and reinforce those intentions** - for individuals, and groups of children (considering time of day, role of stimulus, forms of support, role of peers and adults, potential outcomes) - *a more equitable form of individual educational plans*,
- 3) **Identify where and when those intentions stand the greatest chances of success**, based on these considerations, with alternatives planned in order to provide individual children with agency (meaningful choice) - *a more human centred form of timetabling and resourcing*.

Over an 8 year period, Beddington Infant School have converted this approach into a highly successful operational model, with the following notable features:

- Children at Beddington Infant School benefit from approximately **323 extra hours of capacity for learning every year** (nearly 25% more time for learning). The whole of the morning (8:45am-12) and the whole of the afternoon (1-3:15pm) are used for carefully planned holistic provision (see later section on Robust Planning for Responsive Provision) - balancing children's need to physically move around or rest, socialise or work alone, engage in multisensory input or reduce stimuli, - thus **removing the need for artificially separated 'playtime'** mid morning or mid afternoon.
- Lunchtime periods **explicitly incorporate pastoral and social learning activities** (e.g. structured social skills activities over mealtimes), alongside deliberate consolidation activities which move shallow learning to deep

learning⁴² (e.g. adult led number bonds or phonics reinforcement games on the playground) - achieved by the effective collaboration and communication between staff, and deliberate. For example, it is notable that leaders spoke about a Year 1 child who tracked their stepcount as 12,000 steps in a single day, whilst simultaneously achieving at least age related expectations across the curriculum - illustrating that **attainment is not the preserve of the seated child**.

- Continuous provision for all year groups ensuring that every curriculum subject offers activities and tasks which are **both indoors and/or outdoors** (varying environment), and which offer both close-up, middle-distance, and non-visual dependent stimulus (**varying eyesight focus** and reducing risk of strain)
- Children being offered a 'menu' of activities on personal clipboards which they then have **agency** to work through at their own pace over the period of a day or week. Children track their own coverage on their clipboard, and task completion at the 'stations' (each activity has a space which offers instructions, stimulus or parameters to work within, the resources required to do so, vocabulary and questions to respond to, and means to record or evidence completion). **Teachers triangulate** this information to ensure equity and effective provision - **targeting their time** where it can have greatest impact.
- Children are **pro-actively taught skills** that **enable them to be agentive learners**. For example, how to choose the order of activity engagement to complement their individual needs (e.g. higher stimulus task followed by a familiar task, or social task followed by an alone task), their wellbeing needs (e.g. alternating indoor and outdoor, or close work with middle-distance activities⁴³), and their behavioural needs (e.g. a task which may be less appealing followed by a favourite or highly motivating task - supporting self-management of deferred gratification)⁴⁴.
- **All spaces are used as opportunities for consolidating, stretching or assessing learning** by embedding reinforcement in everyday experience.

⁴² William, D. (2018) *Creating the schools our children need: Why what we're doing now won't help much (and what we can do instead)*. Learning Sciences International.

⁴³ Ku, Po-Wen et al. (2019) 'The Associations between Near Visual Activity and Incident Myopia in Children: A nationwide 4 year follow up study'. *Ophthalmology* 126(2), pp.214 - 220
[https://www.aaojournal.org/article/S0161-6420\(17\)33464-4/fulltext](https://www.aaojournal.org/article/S0161-6420(17)33464-4/fulltext)

⁴⁴ Mischel W., Shodda, Y., and Rodriguez, M., (1989) "Delay of Gratification in Children" *Science* (244) pp.933-938

For example, classroom signs have phonic dots on them for pre-readers, and bicycles on outdoor roadways have bags for children to load with numbers of items (reinforcing cardinality of number), and real-life tasks which require children to apply curriculum skills (e.g. instructions to collect and deliver objects to particular places on those bicycles and tracking one more/one less each time), physically riding and mathematically calculating for purpose - whilst active and outdoors.

The classroom as a concept

By observing the behaviours and actions of children and staff across a typical school day at Beddington Infant School, it is possible to see not only the innovative approach to provision, but also the way in which it has become **embedded and sustainable**.

For example, there is a part of each day where children focus on synthetic phonics. In most schools, phonics lessons tend to be carpet or desk based, with direct instruction from the teacher (often oriented around the teacher's board), followed by an independent or small group reinforcement activity (often paper and pencil based). There are some elements of this which are important given that the learning of synthetic phonics is an approach based on knowledge transferral⁴⁵. In addition, the political framework that schools work within (i.e. national phonics checks in Year 1 and Year 2, with associated accountability and reporting), requires detailed reporting about individual knowledge acquisition. This generally results in a high level of individualised working in order to form individual children's evidence portfolios (often exercise books or folders).



⁴⁵ Wyse, D and Styles, M., (2007) Synthetic phonics and the teaching of reading: the debate surrounding England's 'Rose Report'" *Literacy* 41(4) pp.35-42

In a political system of high accountability and low trust⁴⁶, nationally, these evidence portfolios are often seen as a safety net to justify professional judgements. Thus, an unintentional consequence of the political framework behind synthetic phonics (and arguably other aspects of the curriculum as well), is that an individualised, evidence-generating pedagogy tends to dominate.

However, the team at Beddington Infant School have taken a different approach to this where the **pedagogy pivots around child development rather than political accountability**⁴⁷. Over a period of

years, staff have invested in professional research and deep collaborative discussion in order to identify the variables which will most impact children in their acquisition of phonic knowledge. As these children are aged 4-7, staff have deliberately invested time in



understanding theories of child development, as well as educational theories, learning sciences and pedagogical theory⁴⁸. Consequently, there is a **deep understanding of what, how, where, when and why children learn** - above and beyond that which has been set out in the National Curriculum⁴⁹ and in the Teacher Standards⁵⁰ and National Professional Qualifications⁵¹.

For example, phonics was observed being taught through a DfE approved phonics programme which has been embedded across enhanced provision. Children experienced a combination of chalk writing letters on the playground in pairs and groups, playing a physical game moving objects to consolidate initial sounds, finger tracing using a range of tactile materials (e.g. sand, shaving cream), and using auto-marking digital games to see, hear and match phonemes to images. Children

⁴⁶ Cook, V., (2024) *Rethinking Accountability*. Chartered College of Teaching: London.

⁴⁷ Beddington Infant School (2025) Guide to expectations for each year group <https://www.beddingtoninfants.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Beddington-Infant-School-Infants-Guide-to-expectations-for-each-year-group.pdf>

⁴⁸ Beddington Infant School (2025) School Vision <https://www.beddingtoninfants.org.uk/about-us/about-beddington/school-vision/>

⁴⁹ DfE (2014) The National Curriculum in England: Key Stage 1 and 2 Framework <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum>

⁵⁰ DfE (2021) Teacher Standards <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards>

⁵¹ DfE (2021) National Professional Qualifications: Frameworks <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-professional-qualifications-frameworks-from-september-2021>

are highly engaged and active in their activities, but, critically, **sophisticated teacher planning ensures that this is physiologically balanced** so that they:

- a) experience regulated **rhythms of high and low cognitive demand**;
- b) **move and rest** as a natural part of their learning experiences;
- c) use the **range of sensory stimulus** that is appropriate for their individual sensory needs;
- d) engage with **both socialised learning and individual actions**, and
- e) maintain **healthy levels of natural light and fresh air** - within learning time, not just between lessons;
- f) experience **variance in eyesight focal length** - preventing eye strain and fatigue.

Importantly, children are **not** being asked to maintain long periods of close work⁵², become over stimulated by the sensory complexities of traditional whole-class teaching⁵³, see socialisation as separated from learning, or be physically constrained to a chair for age-inappropriate periods of time⁵⁴.

It is not unusual to see these activities in reception and key stage one classrooms in other schools, but **the noticeable difference at Beddington Infant School is the way in which these are planned - by staff and children.**

For example, during observations, where children were engaging in independent activities, it was clear that **a disciplined set of routines and expectations had been embedded**, such that children experienced **equitable access and coverage** of the different learning activities - these were not 'enhancements' but part of **everyday provision.**



⁵² Turburt, D., (2024) Vision Development: Childhood *American Academy of Ophthalmology*. <https://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/children-vision-development>

⁵³ Thompson, S.D. and Raisor, J.M., (2013) *Meeting the sensory needs of young children*. *YC Young Children*, 68(2)

⁵⁴ Schwenke P., and Coenen M., (2022) "Influence of Sit-Stand Tables in Classrooms on Children's Sedentary Behavior and Teacher's Acceptance and Feasibility: A Mixed-Methods Study". *International Journal of Environmental Research in Public Health* 19(11)

Furthermore, each activity was designed to ensure robust formative assessment (e.g. small groups with an adult monitoring individual understanding, digital activities utilising auto-marking and teacher insight dashboards). This meant that teachers had a clear real-time view on which children understood, retained and applied their phonic knowledge, and were able to provide highly targeted, immediate interventions. It is **this level of real-time insight and precision, working in harmony with the creative, flexible, and physical provision that underpins impact.**



The focus on utilisation of real-time data to adapt provision and intervene with **forensic precision** is something that is not widespread practice within free flowing learning environments. This is most likely to be because it requires a high level of **consistent, independent, sustained, and purposeful engagement** across the whole class in order to create the teacher capacity to reflexively target their teaching actions. In short, it is the **highly effective planning and embedded classroom management norms** that creates an environment where children can be routinely independent.

It is the children's independence that in turn creates teacher capacity to add value rather than merely orchestrate practical processes (e.g. activity instruction, task management and formative assessment processes).

The learner as the centre of school gravity

As outlined above, everyday practice in a school is underpinned by pedagogical beliefs (i.e. belief systems about the role and purpose of schooling, the role of a teacher and teaching, the role of a learner and learning, and views about how knowledge is formed). These beliefs may be explicit or implicit and there are many

different theories spanning across psychology and sociology that attempt to explain these from a theoretical perspective⁵⁵. Pedagogical belief systems are complex and multi-faceted, and to meaningfully unpack their implications it is most helpful to focus on specific elements. One such element relates to **how the roles of teacher and learner are conceptualised**.



Put simply, in any classroom, the centre of gravity in a moment of practice will pivot around *either* the teacher, the learner or the organisation.

This consideration is vitally important because that centre of gravity is often implicit rather than explicit and often more complex than it first appears. It is

helpful to illustrate this. Most schools or educational organisations will frame themselves as being about serving the needs of their children. For example, most



school visions will use phrases which talk about child-centred learning, empowering children to meet their potential, or nurturing learners to be ready for their futures. These are good and admirable intentions which infer children being at the centre of school gravity. However, when provision is objectively scrutinised through school development planning, or observed in action, there is often a subtle yet important difference⁵⁶. For example, a vision may talk about supporting children to follow their interests, yet offer provision which is structured solely around the National Curriculum with extra curricular activities based on wraparound care or enhancements to curriculum subjects. Or, a vision may talk about a child meeting

⁵⁵ See Twining, P., et al., (2017) *NP3: New Pedagogies, New Practices, New Purposes*. <https://oro.open.ac.uk/50630/> for further reading.

⁵⁶ Beddington Infant School (2024) School Development Plan 2024-2025 <https://www.beddingtoninfants.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/School-Development-Plan-2024-2025-Summary.pdf>

their potential, yet organise provision and intervention that pivots around whether children are working towards, meeting, or exceeding national curriculum age related expectations - often prioritising children who are borderline between those classifications. The important distinction is not to infer a value judgement upon such provision, but rather more surface that these are illustrations of *organisation-centred* leadership rather than *child-centred* leadership which may not be immediately obvious when reading a school vision or development plan. The nuanced difference is in the operationalisation of that vision or plan.

At Beddington Infant School infant school, there is a subtle yet important distinction in the way that leadership approach provision, with an **unapologetic focus on the ways in which the actions of adults affect the experiences of children**. For example, leaders have invested time in discussions with teaching staff about which activities require an adult (whether teacher or teaching assistant), and which tasks or activities do not require an adult - **moving away from historical or default assumptions**.

As Ofsted (2023) reported, "*Leaders have strong expertise and knowledge*", and this can be seen consistently in practical application. Subtle but important indicators can be seen through everyday classroom interactions. For example, in most schools nationwide, when a teacher wants to work with a group of children, it will be the teacher that brings those children to the relevant place. This may be by physically locating young children and shepherding them to a designated table, or by calling across a classroom -



often disrupting cognitive engagement of other children. At Beddington Infant School, it was recognised that this transition from one group to another often uses around 12% of the teacher's time in a typical lesson⁵⁷, equating to around 40 minutes of teacher capacity per day that could instead be spent on targeted interventions supporting children's learning⁵⁸. Furthermore, that teacher-oriented

⁵⁷ Based on 5 minutes to call and group 6 children to a designated table space in a typical free-flow classroom environment, and a lesson period of 40 minutes.

⁵⁸ Based on 2 rotations per lesson period, and 4 lesson periods per day.

classroom management techniques (i.e. calling out children's names across a room) disrupt children's cognitive flow, and thus their focus on learning.

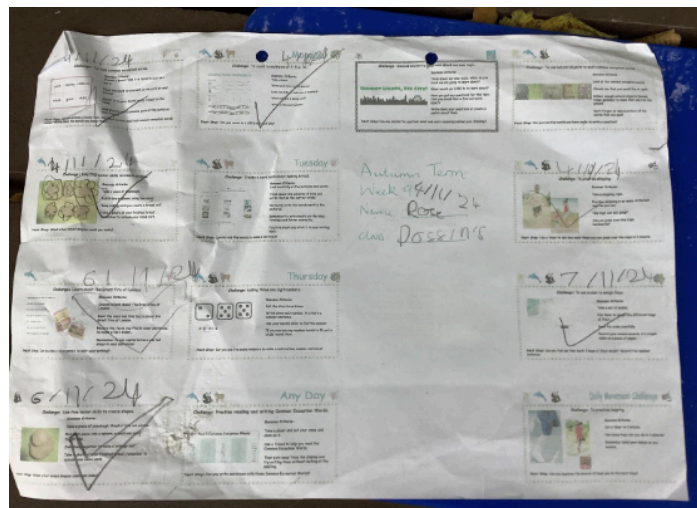
Therefore, the approach at Beddington Infant School is that once a child has been working with a teacher in a focused group, and has completed their task, they will



take responsibility for passing the opportunity to learn on to another child. The responsible child will take a book out of the box on the designated teacher table, and that book is the book of the child who is next due to come and work with the teacher. The child will go to the 'next' child, and inform them that they are now due to go to work with the teacher, and as this is a normalised way of working, children then move to the teacher's table and begin their

intervention. Importantly, the order of the books in the box is **pre-determined by the teacher to reflect the learning and intervention needs of the children** in the class (e.g. with the teacher pre-planning which combination of children they will have with them at any given point, and the order in which the children will come - ensuring effective working groups and understanding the concentration arc of the lesson timing, as well as individual behavioural and emotional regulation needs of children). As Ofsted reported in 2023, this also ensures that *"Pupils with SEND learn the intended curriculum alongside their peers"*.

Importantly, at the beginning of the lesson, the teacher explains to all children when they will be called, such that **children are supported to plan their time around the range of things that they know they will be required to do.** Observing this classroom management approach in action illustrated that it is an embedded



and familiar way of working - with children aged 5-7 confidently able to explain how they planned their time ('before, during and after' their teacher task), how they responded if they were called mid-task ('pausing' an activity and later resuming it), and how they respected their peers instructions (with a mutual understanding that another time, the request may be in reverse). At surface level this simple classroom management approach appears to be just the encouragement of children's independence within the classroom.

However, the implications are striking. First, that this **creates notable capacity for the teacher to support learning**, and second, that the embedding of this approach builds a sense that the classroom is a **mutually supportive community focused on helping each other's learning** - notably, democratising ownership of everyday classroom interactions. This ensures that children become professional learners - equipping them for life beyond the classroom rather than just learning school compliance skills.

Robust planning for responsive practice

Earlier sections in this report have identified a number of ways in which Beddington Infant School have created capacity in the classroom, democratised access to learning, and developed **a learning environment that pivots around the gravitational field of each learner**. However, achieving this has not been simple and is the result of **extensive research and consideration on the part of the leadership team**, and comprehensive thinking on the part of the teaching staff.

Fundamentally, the provision is made possible because of **highly robust planning that ensures that practice can be highly responsive to children's needs**⁵⁹.

For example, each school day at Beddington Infant School is structured around 4 interactive teacher inputs (a maximum of 20 minutes each). Of those inputs, 2 will be whole-class (1 in the morning and 1 in the



⁵⁹ Beddington Infant School (2024) Curriculum <https://www.beddingtoninfants.org.uk/about-us/about-beddington/curriculum/>

afternoon), and the other 2 will be smaller focus groups. Around those inputs, children's time is dedicated to robustly planned independent learning time. This ensures that **children pre-learn core concepts and skills, have the opportunity to practice, consolidate, reinforce and build upon those skills and concepts, and are able to apply them in a range of different contexts.**

In order to plan for children to learn independently in a way that is meaningful, and impactful, children are offered a 2 page list of learning challenges each week, and have individual clipboards which they use to tick off which challenges have been completed. They are able to determine the order that they work through the challenges, with each challenge having a clearly demarcated place, expectations, success criteria and logistical rules. **Accessibility is built into task design** (e.g. sound buttons for pre-readers, dual coded instructions, physically accessible resourcing)⁶⁰.



Importantly, the **provision is spread across all indoor and outdoor space** that is available for a given year group - with equal weighting given to each area of learning and both indoor and outdoor spaces used for all subject areas. This reinforces the Beddington Infant School belief that **learning is not bounded to traditional classroom structures** (i.e. just indoors), **nor all teacher-dependent**. It also **embeds variance in movement, eyesight focal distance, social groupings and autonomy** - all deliberate elements of Beddington Infant School's planned provision.

Significantly, **tasks are designed and structured to encourage task specific oracy**. For example, with purposeful, structured discussion points and vocabulary lists built into task design. This **ensures that children are talking throughout the day - nurturing oracy and vocabulary development alongside social skills**. It also reduces off-task talk, because **children are communicating with purpose**

⁶⁰ CAST (2024). Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 3.0. Retrieved from <https://udlguidelines.cast.org>

and authenticity with a range of peers and adults. Consequently, oracy levels across the school are high. Notably, at Beddington Infant School, Speech and Language SEND issues are low in relation to current national averages - suggesting that the value placed upon oracy in the earliest years of school, are having a significant impact on children's formative years⁶¹.

As children complete tasks at given stations, they tick their name off on a list (with older children editing coloured cells of a spreadsheet to ensure progression even in this simple task). This **enables teachers to track robustly, intervening if necessary to ensure that all children engage meaningfully with each activity.** At each station, children are directed to work individually, in pairs or small groups, with the tasks structured accordingly. Resources may be partially or fully at



the station - with children scaffolded through task instructions to source additional resources, **encouraging further self-sufficiency.**

Teachers and teaching assistants are assigned to specific stations and areas - providing **highly planned intervention that adds value to the children's development**, rather than simple task management and compliance. Importantly, teachers and teaching assistants work inside for half a session and outside for half a session, and over a day will work equitably across all groups, stations, and children so that members of staff do not become associated with particular children, subjects or places - keeping their focus and association directly on targeted intervention. Consequently, as Ofsted (2023) reported, *"Expectations are clear and pupils are highly engaged in learning"*.

The layout of the school is such that each year group has three classes but those classes operate as free flow space across the year group. This means that each class has its own space suitable for what might be termed carpet time direct instruction with the teacher or whole class group, and also then a range of small

⁶¹ DfE (2025) Special Educational Needs in England 2023-2024
<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england/2023-24>

group spaces suitable for independent learning tasks free continuous provision - both indoors and outdoors.

Teachers plan and resource as a whole year group teams, with provision and resourcing (including adults and their interactions) purposefully designed to be consistent and familiar - **minimising working memory and cognitive load for functions which are not integral to progression in learning.**

There is a sense of shared community across each year group - with multiple adults all sharing responsibility for all the children in that year group. Critically, this means that whichever space a child is working in, and at whichever activity station, the adult (teacher or teaching assistant) responsible for intervention in that space is familiar with the child, their needs, their aspirations and ways in which adult intervention will add value (rather than just micro-manage the task).



The decision for year groups to plan, resource, support and review learning for children across the whole cohort is a key factor in making free flowing provision achievable. The number of available adults means that multiple physical spaces can be staffed safely, which in turn means that children have greater access to meaningful, varied, learning spaces. In addition, for staff, the shared planning and resourcing shares out the associated workload freeing up professional capacity to redeploy more meaningfully.



Significantly, staff spoke about the **increased sense of collegiality** (Hargreaves, 2000)⁶², and in turn, the way that the sense of shared responsibility consequently **increases quantity and quality of professional discussion about targeted interventions and support.** In other words, children's

⁶² Hargreaves, A., (2000) "Four Ages of Professionalism and Professional Learning". *Teachers and Teaching*, 6(2), pp.151–182 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/713698714>

needs are discussed and planned for with greater precision as a result of this shared way of working.

The sophisticated level of professional knowledge held by majority staff across Beddington Infant School infant school is profound in terms of its breaths and depth. Leaders talk about things like balancing provision with a very precise focus on the multitude of influences that affect children's experiences. For example, Generation Alpha (children born 2013-2022), are growing up in an era known for increased levels of screen exposure⁶³. At Beddington Infant School, a typically thoughtful approach has been taken, which does not simplistically ban screen use (e.g. teacher digital boards or classroom tablets/laptops), but instead investigates the specific issues, draws upon research, and then adapts provision accordingly.

For example, provision at Beddington Infant School ensures that children have a **range of physiologically planned activities throughout the day**: varying eyesight focal distance (near work - whether digital or paper based, and far-sight activities); varying lighting (e.g. natural light outdoors, natural light indoors, darker cosy spaces, minimising artificial lighting); a range of resources for activities - spanning physical objects, natural objects, digital resources, paper based resources; and a range of interactivity - ensuring individual, paired, small group and whole class activities.

Furthermore, where **digital resourcing can be personalised to become more accessible for individual children's needs and preferences**, this is encouraged and enabled. For example, simple screen background adjustments from blue light to warm light, or screen overlays for digital activities, clear fonts on printed materials, personalised activities and calm boxes for children with particular anxiety or social/emotional difficulties. The focus for Beddington Infant School is not on a simplistic 'digital or not digital' mindset, but far more thoughtfully, about how to achieve a **meaningful, healthy, contemporary and age appropriate balance of experiences across each and every day**.

⁶³ Flewitt, R., et al., (2025) Toddlers, Tech and Talk. Manchester Metropolitan University.
<https://www.mmu.ac.uk/about-us/faculties/health-and-education/research/projects/tech-and-talk>

Conclusion

In traditional schooling structures, children are taught to become dependent upon a classroom teacher in order to access, engage with, and evaluate learning. A typical lesson in most traditional schools provides a teacher input based on some form of presentation, followed by a structured test of children's understanding. This test of understanding is often framed as an independent task and progress through that task will be evaluated by teacher praise or corrections. Towards the end of the lesson in most schools, children will offer their submission to the teacher, hoping that it conforms to the requirements or expectations previously set out. This traditional behaviourist form of schooling has changed very little since the Victorian era⁶⁴. It offers a reliable mechanism for achieving consistent test outcomes - based on the belief that learning is ultimately varying forms of knowledge recall. To use a metaphor - this system bears fruit for each harvest, but often exhausts the tree. We see this in contemporary issues surrounding this generation of children's levels of anxiety and school reluctance.

However, if children learn the foundation of skills required to become self-aware, competent, confident learners when very young, the many influences that affect them as they grow older are less likely to be detrimental and more likely to support and enhance their future capabilities (Manyukhina & Wise, 2019⁶⁵). The role of the teacher - shaped by the school - that plays a vital part in the development of children's agency - and ultimately the ability of each little person to become a confident, responsible learner⁶⁶.

We can all look back and think about our schooling experiences and recall a teacher that had a profound impact on how we see ourselves as learners - either positively or negatively (Biesta, 2015⁶⁷). Therefore, if we recognise the impact on us as adults, then we also need to recognise that today's educators also create this impact on today's children. Such educators are in part classroom teachers, but also include teaching assistants, catering and lunchtime staff, office and administrative staff,

⁶⁴ Brighouse, T., and Waters, M., (2021) *About our Schools: Improving on previous best*. Crown House: London.

⁶⁵ Manyukhina, Y., & Wyse, D. (2019). Learner agency and the curriculum: A critical realist perspective. *Curriculum Journal*, 30(3), 223–243.

⁶⁶ Manyukhina, Y., & Wyse, D., (2021) Children's agency: What is it, and what should be done? *British Educational Research Association*.

<https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/childrens-agency-what-is-it-and-what-should-be-done>

⁶⁷ Biesta, G., Priestley, M., & Robinson, S. (2015) "The role of beliefs in teacher agency" *Teachers and Teaching*, 21(6), pp.624–640.

leaders, and most importantly parents. That combination of influences creates a narrative that is consumed by each child - setting the tone not just for their schooling experiences today, but in forming a learner identity that they take forwards into their future life.

The leaders at Beddington Infant School have undertaken extensive research and professional discussion about how best to meet the needs of *this* generation of children - combining insights about teaching and learning with insights about child development and wellbeing. Consequently, a holistic approach has been designed, implemented, and embedded across the whole school, with outstanding results both in terms of attainment outcomes as well as wellbeing and inclusion. Children and staff at Beddington Infant School are happy, thriving, successful and attain very well across all areas of the curriculum.

There is a great deal for the wider sector to learn from this inspirational school.

School Contact

Beddington Infants' School, 269 Croydon Road, Wallington, Surrey, SM6 7LF

Liz Kearney (Headteacher)
lkearney@beddinf.school
020 8647 7813

beddingtoninfants.org.uk
learningnaturally.org.uk

References

Atkinson, R.C. and Shiffrin, R.M. (1968). 'Human memory: A Proposed System and its Control Processes'. In Spence, K.W. and Spence, J.T. *The psychology of learning and motivation*, (Volume 2). New York: Academic Press. pp. 89–195.

Aubrey-Smith, F., (2025) *PedTech: The Impact*. Crown House: Carmarthen [forthcoming]

Aubrey-Smith, F., & Twining, P., (2024) *From EdTech to PedTech: Changing the way we think about digital technology*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Aubrey-Smith, F., (2020) *An exploration of the relationship between classroom teachers' pedagogical beliefs, and their uses of technologies*. Doctoral thesis. The Open University.

Biesta, G., Priestley, M., & Robinson, S. (2015) "The role of beliefs in teacher agency" *Teachers and Teaching*, 21(6), pp.624–640.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). 'Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction', in J. Karabel and A. H. Halsey (eds), *Power and Ideology in Education*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 487–511.

Brighouse, T., and Waters, M., (2021) *About our Schools: Improving on previous best*. London: Crown House.

Camacho, M., Quinones-Camacho, L., and Perlman, S., (2020) "Does the child brain rest? An examination and interpretation of resting cognition in developmental cognitive neuroscience". *NeuroImage* (212)

CAST (2024) *Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 3.0*. Retrieved from <https://udlguidelines.cast.org>

Cook, V., (2024) *Rethinking Accountability*. Chartered College of Teaching: London.

DfE (2025) Special Educational Needs in England 2023-2024

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england/2023-24>

DfE (2025) Schools financial benchmarking and insights - summary

<https://schools-financial-benchmarking.service.gov.uk/BenchmarkCharts#tabsSection>

DfE (2025) Schools financial benchmarking and insights - maintained schools compared to Beddington Infant School

<https://schools-financial-benchmarking.service.gov.uk/BenchmarkCharts/GenerateFromSimpleCriteria?Urn=102983&EstType=Maintained&ComparisonType=Basic&SimpleCriteria.IncludeFsm=true&SimpleCriteria.IncludeSen=true&SimpleCriteria.IncludeEal=true#tabsSection>

DfE (2024) Compare School Performance: Beddington Infant School - Absence and pupil population

<https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/school/102983/beddington-infants%27-school/absence-and-pupil-population>

DfE (2024) Local authority schools financial reporting and assurance

<https://www.gov.uk/education/local-authority-schools-financial-reporting-and-assurance>

DfE (2024) Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

DfE (2024) Maintained Schools Governance Guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/governance-in-maintained-schools/statutory-policies-for-maintained-schools>

DfE (2021) Teacher Standards

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards>

DfE (2021) National Professional Qualifications: Frameworks

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-professional-qualifications-frameworks-from-september-2021>

DfE (2014) The National Curriculum in England: Key Stage 1 and 2 framework https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425601/PRIMARY_national_curriculum.pdf

Douglas-Fields, R., (2005) "Making Memories Stick", *Scientific American*, pp.58–63

Edurio (2024) *National CST School Trust Report*.
<https://home.edurio.com/national-cst-school-trust-report/>

Feldon, D.F., (2007) "Cognitive load and classroom teaching: The double-edged sword of automaticity". *Educational psychologist*, 42(3), pp.123-137.

Festinger, L. (1957) *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Stanford University Press.

Flewitt, R., et al., (2025) *Toddlers, Tech and Talk*. Manchester Metropolitan University.
<https://www.mmu.ac.uk/about-us/faculties/health-and-education/research/projects/tech-and-talk>

Hargreaves, A., (2000) "Four Ages of Professionalism and Professional Learning". *Teachers and Teaching*, 6(2), pp.151–182

Ku, Po-Wen et al. (2019) 'The Associations between Near Visual Activity and Incident Myopia in Children: A nationwide 4 year follow up study'. *Ophthalmology* 126(2), pp.214 - 220

Langerock, N., Oberauer, K., Throm, E. and Vergauwe, E., (2025) "The cognitive load effect in working memory: Refreshing the empirical landscape, removing outdated explanations". *Journal of Memory and Language* (140)

Manyukhina, Y., & Wyse, D., (2021) Children's agency: What is it, and what should be done? *British Educational Research Association*.
<https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/childrens-agency-what-is-it-and-what-should-be-done>

Manyukhina, Y., & Wyse, D. (2019). Learner agency and the curriculum: A critical realist perspective. *Curriculum Journal*, 30(3), 223–243.

Mischel W., Shodda, Y., and Rodriguez, M., (1989) "Delay of Gratification in Children" *Science* (244) pp.933-938

NHS England (2023) Mental health of children and young people
<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england/2023-wave-4-follow-up>

Ofsted (2023) Inspection of Beddington Infant School.
<https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50229464>

Reggio Emilia (2022) The Reggio Emilia Approach
<https://www.reggiochildren.it/en/reggio-emilia-approach/>

Schwenke P., and Coenen M., (2022) "Influence of Sit-Stand Tables in Classrooms on Children's Sedentary Behavior and Teacher's Acceptance and Feasibility: A Mixed-Methods Study". *International Journal of Environmental Research in Public Health* 19(11)

Sweller, J. (1988) "Cognitive Load during Problem Solving: Effects on Learning". *Cognitive Science* (12), pp.257-285.

Thompson, S.D. and Raisor, J.M., (2013) *Meeting the sensory needs of young children*. *YC Young Children*, 68(2)

Turburt, D., (2024) Vision Development: Childhood *American Academy of Ophthalmology*.
<https://www.aaopt.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/children-vision-development>

Twining, P., et al., (2017) *NP3: New Pedagogies, New Practices, New Purposes: Meta-analysis report*. Society for Educational Studies. London.

Wiliam, D. (2018) *Creating the schools our children need: Why what we're doing now won't help much (and what we can do instead)*. Learning Sciences International.

Wyse, D and Styles, M., (2007) Synthetic phonics and the teaching of reading: the debate surrounding England's 'Rose Report'" *Literacy* 41(4) pp.35-42

World Economic Forum (2020) *Our Education Ssystem is losing relevance*.
<https://www.weforum.org/stories/2020/04/our-education-system-is-losing-relevance-heres-how-to-update-it/>

About the author

Dr Fiona Aubrey-Smith EdD MA(Ed) MMus PGCE BA(Hons) FCCT FRSA FHEA

Named in 2024 as one of the Top 5 Visionary Women in Education, Dr Fiona Aubrey-Smith is an award winning teacher, leader and academic with a passion for supporting those who work with children and young people. As Founder of The National PedTech Partnership and Founding Director of One Life Learning, Fiona works closely with schools and trusts, professional learning providers and education partners and is the co-author of the best selling book *From EdTech to PedTech: Changing the way we think about digital technology*,

She is also an Associate Lecturer, PhD supervisor and Consultant Researcher at a number of universities, and sits on the board of a number of multi academy and charitable trusts.

Fiona is a Founding Fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching, and has been awarded Fellowships by RSA, NAACE and the HEA. In 2023, Fiona was made a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Educators and in 2024, Fiona was granted Freedom of the City of London. In 2025, Fiona was named EduFuturist of the Year 2025.

Contact: fiona@onelifelearning.co.uk

Cite this report as

Aubrey-Smith, F., (2025) *Growing Futures. An independent review about the Learning Naturally Method at Beddington Infant School*. London. 37pp.