



SHIRLEY DAY
NURSERY

PART OF YMCA HEART OF ENGLAND

YMCA

Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you



A guide to our curriculum
for **families growing,
belonging and thriving**
together



Welcome

At YMCA Shirley Day Nursery, we believe childhood should be filled with happiness, wonder, curiosity and a sense of belonging.

Every day, we provide children with opportunities to **play, explore, build** relationships and **discover** the world around them.

We know that the experiences children have in their earliest years help shape their confidence, wellbeing and love of learning for the future.

Our curriculum has been carefully designed to support every child to grow, belong and thrive. We celebrate each child as a unique individual and help them develop the skills, knowledge and confidence they need for life.

What do we mean by curriculum?

Our curriculum is everything your child experiences during their time with us.

It includes:

- The relationships they build
- The activities they take part in
- The conversations they have
- The environments they explore
- The skills they develop
- The values they learn

We believe children learn best when they feel safe, happy and loved. That's why strong relationships and exciting play experiences sit at the heart of everything we do.

How children learn

Children learn through:

- Play
- Exploring their interests
- Building relationships
- First-hand experiences
- Repetition and practice
- Movement and physical activity
- Talking and communicating with others

Our practitioners carefully support children's learning through meaningful interactions, shared experiences and skilled teaching.



The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

All early years settings follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which sets out areas of learning and development for children from birth to five years.

These include:

Prime Areas

- Communication and Language
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development

Specific Areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

At Shirley Day Nursery, we place a particular focus on communication, relationships, wellbeing and physical development because these provide the foundations for all future learning.

Every child belongs

At YMCA Shirley Day Nursery, we celebrate every child as a unique individual.

Children develop at different rates and may need different levels of support. We work closely with families and, when appropriate, other professionals to ensure every child can access our curriculum, achieve success and feel a strong sense of belonging.

We are committed to creating an inclusive environment where all children are valued, supported and able to thrive.

What makes Shirley special?

Outdoor Learning

The outdoor environment is an important part of our curriculum and is used every day.

Outside, children can:

- Climb, balance and move their bodies
- Explore nature and wildlife
- Solve problems and take risks safely
- Build confidence and resilience
- Investigate and ask questions
- Enjoy fresh air and open-ended play

We believe some of the richest learning experiences happen outdoors.

Enrichment Experiences

We provide a range of additional experiences that help broaden children’s learning and interests.

These include:

Sports Coaching

Helping children develop:

- Coordination
- Balance
- Teamwork
- Confidence
- Resilience

Yoga and Mindfulness

Supporting children to:

- Manage emotions
- Relax
- Build concentration
- Develop body awareness

Makaton and Signing

Helping children:

- Communicate confidently
- Develop language skills
- Express themselves
- Feel included

Cooking

Giving opportunities to:

- Count and measure
- Follow instructions
- Explore healthy foods
- Learn about different cultures

Gardening and Growing

Supporting children to:

- Care for living things
- Learn about nature
- Understand life cycles
- Develop responsibility

These experiences help children develop important life skills while having fun.

Preparing Children for School and Life

We believe school readiness is about much more than recognising letters and numbers.

It includes developing:

- Confidence
- Independence
- Communication skills
- Emotional resilience
- Curiosity
- Problem-solving skills
- Positive relationships

By the time children leave us, we want them to feel excited, capable and ready for their next adventure.

Our YMCA values

Caring

We help children learn to:

- Be kind
- Show empathy
- Build friendships
- Care for themselves and others

Honesty

We encourage children to:

- Express their feelings
- Share their thoughts
- Learn from mistakes
- Develop confidence

Respect

We celebrate:

- Diversity
- Different cultures
- Family backgrounds
- Individuality

Children learn to value both themselves and others.



Responsibility

We support children to:

- Make choices
- Become independent
- Care for resources
- Help others
- Understand the impact of their actions

These values help children become positive members of their community.

Communication and Language

Language is at the heart of everything we do.

Throughout the day, children enjoy:

- Stories
- Singing and rhymes
- Meaningful conversations
- Small-group activities
- Imaginative play
- Rich vocabulary experiences

Our practitioners listen carefully, ask thoughtful questions and help children develop the confidence to communicate their ideas and feelings.

What learning looks like

Babies (0-2 Years)

At this stage, children are learning:

- To feel safe and secure
- To communicate
- To build relationships
- To explore their senses
- To move and develop physically

You might see:

- Singing and rhymes
- Sensory exploration
- Early communication
- Crawling and climbing
- Warm, responsive interactions



Toddlers (2-3 Years)

At this stage, children are learning:

- Independence
- Confidence
- Friendship skills
- Self-regulation
- Problem solving

You might see:

- Pretend play
- Exploration
- Questioning
- Building and creating
- Developing independence



Preschool (3-5 Years)

At this stage, children are learning:

- Early literacy and mathematics
- Critical thinking
- Resilience
- Independence
- School readiness skills

You might see:

- Storytelling
- Early writing
- Counting and problem solving
- Scientific exploration
- Collaborative play

Every child develops at their own pace, and we support each individual on their unique learning journey.



Broadening Children's Experiences

We believe all children deserve opportunities to experience the world around them.

Children will have opportunities to:

- Learn about different cultures and celebrations
- Explore the local community
- Meet people who help us
- Enjoy music, art and creativity
- Develop new interests and aspirations

These experiences help children develop confidence, knowledge and a sense of belonging in the wider world.

Working Together with Families

Parents and carers are children's first and most important teachers.

We value strong partnerships and work closely with families through:

- Open communication
- Sharing observations and achievements
- Listening to parent voice
- Celebrating family cultures and traditions
- Supporting learning at home

Together, we can provide the best possible experiences and outcomes for every child.



Our Vision for Every Child

When children leave YMCA Shirley Day

Nursery, we hope they are:

- Happy and confident
- Caring and kind
- Curious and enthusiastic learners
- Independent and resilient
- Respectful of others
- Effective communicators
- Ready for the next stage of their learning journey

Most importantly, we want every child to leave with wonderful memories, a love of learning and the confidence to embrace new experiences.

YMCA Shirley Day Nursery Growing, Belonging and Thriving Together



Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

YMCA enables people to develop their full potential in mind, body and spirit. Inspired by, and faithful to, our Christian values, we create supportive, inclusive and energising communities, where young people can truly belong, contribute and thrive.