

We use the 'Floorbook Approach' in our reception and year 1 classes to develop communication skills.

Purpose of the floor book in our school.

The floor book is both a planning tool and a way of recording children's learning and development across a particular topic. It encompasses all areas of learning and is particularly good for developing personal and social skills through the group work situation. We use floor books to teach all areas of the EYFS curriculum in the reception classes, and study unit work (history and geography) in Year 1, in an exciting and interactive way. The children always look forward to completing their floor book tasks and they take great pride in their book.

How often do you use a floor book?

Floor books are used each afternoon to record the children's learning during topic work. We begin an afternoon with a 10 minute whole introduction based on the topic but not related to the floor book task. After this, the teachers will work with one group on their task. So each child completes one floor book task each week.

How long does a floor book 'run' for?

Each floor book usually runs for half a term, or for the length of each new topic.

Contents of your floor books - How are they organised? What do they look like?

The front cover of the floor book has the title (which may not be decided until the book is completed) and also the names of all the staff and children who have been involved in the development of the book.

Who is involved in developing the floor books?

Teachers and children are involved in developing the floor books. Teachers plan the contents of the "Talking Tubs" to stimulate ideas and questions from the children and to ensure that the EYFS curriculum is covered at the appropriate level. Children are involved in the planning of the content of the floor book through the mind map and "Talking Tub" at the beginning of the topic. The pages in the floor book reflect the children's thoughts and ideas and also contain any suitable samples of children's work.

How is the development of the floor book managed?

The floor books are organised by the teachers with support from the children who have input both at the planning stage and in the development of the floor book pages. The children enjoy compiling the pages by sticking in their contributions to activities and investigations. They may also add to the content by writing directly onto the floor book pages. When the books are complete, they are kept close to the book boxes in the classroom for all of the children to read and discuss. They are also available for parents to look at during Parent Activity Afternoons and Parent Consultation Meetings.

Parents and children are involved in contributing to and/or developing floor books

Items from home may be included, such as 'Star Moment' certificates, if they are relevant to the content of the floor book. Sometimes class work is followed up at home and this work may also be included in the floor book. For example, when the children made bird food cake, they completed a simple tick sheet survey of the birds that they observed visiting their garden to enjoy the cakes. These sheets were then added to the floor book.

Using floor books to consult/involve children in the planning process:

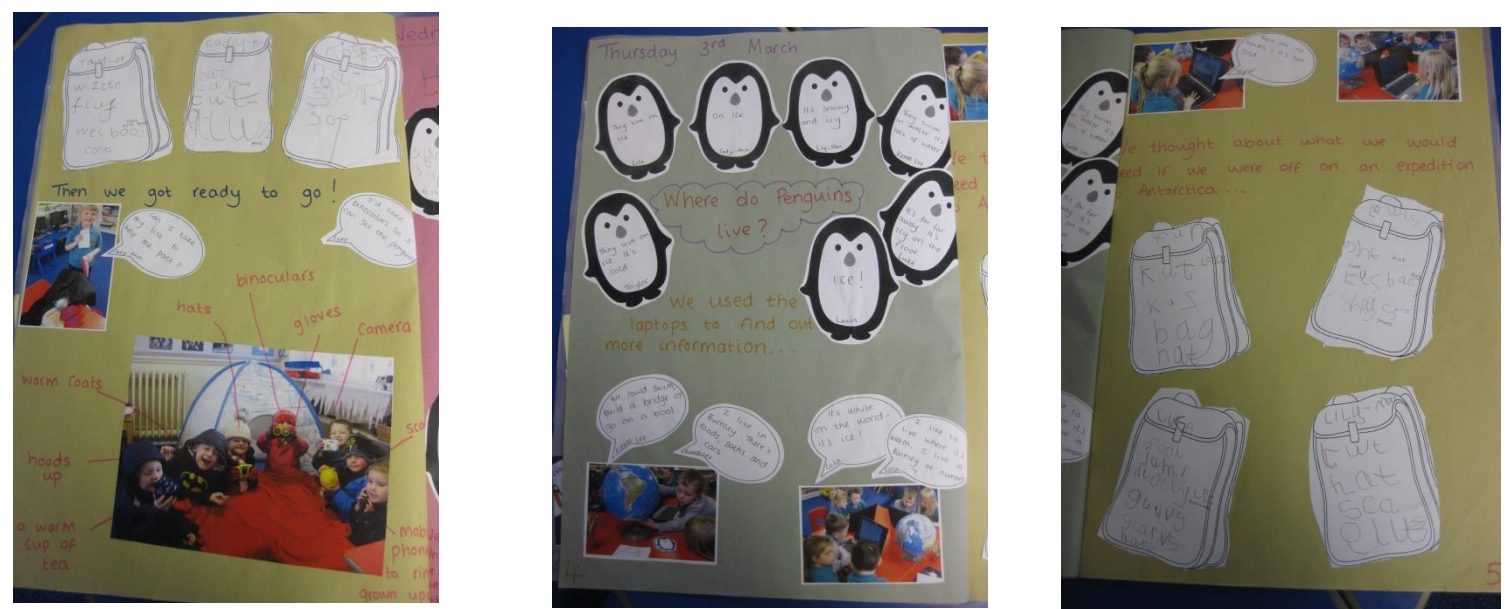
The children work in small mixed ability groups. Each group of children is involved in the planning process by sharing in the creation of a 3D mind map using a "Talking Tub" and a story as a starting point. This reflects their interests' and previous experiences that are relevant to the subject of the floor book. This may be different for each group of children. Each group are invited to suggest ideas for further learning about the different areas of the mind map.

Using floor books to plan across all areas of learning and development

Most areas of learning and development are covered in the floor books. Although the children help to plan what work they want to complete, the teachers do guide the planning to ensure good skill coverage. The additional adult initiated activities which arise from the children's contribution to planning the floor book, ensure that the children's needs are met in terms of progress and development at the appropriate level.

How are children involved in developing/using floor books?

When the mind map is complete, the children are asked to show which parts of the mind map interests them the most and what they would like to know about these areas. These questions then form the basis of the activities and investigations which are recorded on the floor book pages. Children's ideas and thoughts are captured for the floor books by the adult who is working with the children. These are written onto speech or thought bubbles and are a genuine record of their thoughts, ideas and comments.



What are the positives for using floor books?

Floor books allow the children to have input into their learning at the planning stage. The teacher is able to understand the children's interests and needs through their input at this early stage.

Floor books are a valuable stimulus for communication. At the planning stage, the mind maps and "Talking Tubs" motivate the children to ask and answer questions, and to connect ideas and vocabulary. During group work, the children are encouraged to listen and respond to their peers' contributions, as well as to share their own thoughts and experiences.

Floor books are very motivational as the children enjoy creating floor books and seeing their work and ideas used in this way. They also enjoy having access to the floor books to look at and to share with friends. In addition to following the children's existing interests, the floor books enable the children to learn from other's ideas and experiences and to develop new interests.

Floor books can be used to enable the children to revisit and reflect on their learning by looking back through previous books or earlier pages in current floor books. Floor books from different groups can be used to introduce learning and generate ideas from children who might need a visual stimulus to enable them to generate ideas.