

Learning and Teaching (Curriculum) Policy

Equalities Statement:

The ethos of the Centre supports the development of self-respect and self esteem in all children, staff and the community it serves. We place a high value on diversity and treat every member of the Centre as an individual. In this respect, we aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion, belief and sexual orientation. In addition to this we also aim to take into account social circumstances.

Aims

- To provide information and guidance for staff and parents on the provision and delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in the Centre.
- To outline how the Statutory Framework for the EYFS is interpreted and implemented at the Centre.

Principles

- Parents are their children's primary educators and as such, they are best placed to support us in providing for their learning and development.
- Play should be at the centre of young children's experiences and learning.
- The outdoor area is of particular importance and as such is constantly developed to support and challenge children's learning.
- Children have access to the outdoor area in all weathers and are provided with clothing for this purpose.
- Children have access to green spaces as part of our outdoor ethos.
- Children who are emotionally secure are more able to learn new things. Therefore Personal, Social and Emotional Development and wellbeing is given high priority.
- Great emphasis is placed on the development of communication and language skills as these are very important for all future learning.
- Children's voices are important and their views on the environment, experiences and learning will be sought in a developmentally appropriate way.
- Parental contributions to providing an insight into the diversity of faiths, cultures, history, languages and places are highly valued.

Learning

- Young children's learning is not a linear or compartmentalised process, therefore it is important to think of learning in a holistic way. An interaction or activity may present many learning opportunities planned and unplanned for the child.
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.
- The environment is organised to stimulate the natural curiosity of children.
- There are a number of activities (continuous provision) which are available every day
- The activities offer children opportunities for open ended exploration across all of the EYFS areas of learning and development in Prime areas- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED), Communication and Language (C&L) and Physical Development (PD) and Specific areas- Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive arts and Design (as outlined in Development Matters in the EYFS DfE).
- Through observation of children's interests, characteristics of learning and schemas (see Appendix B) staff plan to enhance the continuous provision on a daily and weekly basis introducing 'provocations' where possible to stimulate children's imagination.
- Some activities need adult involvement to enable children to access them more effectively. These are planned and differentiated through the delivery of the activity (adult initiated).

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- Staff plan focus activities for their Key Children based on their observation and assessments of their schemas, interests and needs (adult initiated).

The Learning Journey (Child's story)

- Children's learning is documented through observations and photographs and collated in diary form in their 'Learning Journeys' (LJ).
- The document is a shared one, between the parent, the child and the Key Person.
- Parental involvement in the LJ is actively encouraged and they are available for parents to read and comment on at any time. All parents are asked, through the focus child process, to contribute observations from home.
- Parents meet with staff to discuss their child's progress and decide on their 'Next Steps'. For Willow this happens in the Autumn and Spring terms, in Cherry this will happen in line with the child's development or when parents requests meetings.
- Summery data and any significant information is passed on between phases in the centre as well as to schools as part of our transition arrangements. Transition meeting are arranged with primary schools where possible.
- Children are encouraged to reflect on their own learning through use of their LJ as a starting point for discussion.

Teaching

- Each child is assigned a Key Person and significant second within the team. The key person observes, assesse and plans for the individual child's needs, development and interests.
- Teaching happens in all interactions between children and adults, so for this reason, it is important that staff maintain a positive view of children and their families.
- For adults working with young children, the opportunities for teaching are all through play and talk at a developmentally appropriate level for the unique child.
- Adults have high expectations for all children.
- Teaching is a social process and children learn much from their peers. Adults will encourage peer tutoring, where appropriate, to develop language for thinking skills and self esteem.
- Children are assessed on a daily and weekly basis informally through their LJs and termly through the Learning and Development Summary Tracker. Children who are learning English as an Additional Language (EAL) will have a language assessment termly.
- Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), in addition, will have a targeted plan which is reviewed regularly (See SEN Policy).
- The Tracker and EAL assessment tool provide a baseline on entry for each child to gauge the level of support they may need in the Prime areas to reach expected age outcomes (or to enable them to exceed age expectations in some cases). It is used to assess cohorts of children and vulnerable groups within each cohort, so that the appropriate support can be planned for groups and individuals.
- The Tracker is most useful for the collection of data for cohorts and to enable senior managers to target resources appropriately to monitor and support children's achievement.
- A named person has responsibility for a Prime area of the EYFS – a yearly plan is formulated with the Curriculum co-ordinators who have overall responsibility for the EYFS. The responsibility for co-ordinating the curriculum lies with the Senior Leadership Team.
- The plans for Prime areas will maintain, develop and enhance the existing provision to improve outcomes for children.
- The Centre's Policy for Learning and Teaching (Curriculum) is kept under regular review by the Curriculum and Equalities Committee, the Head of Centre and the Senior Leadership Team.
- The Head of Centre informs the Governors about the curriculum through the Head's Report. The Curriculum and Equalities Committee monitor provision and practice through regular meetings to review the progress of children.

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Links to other Policies/Documents:

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE)

Development Matters in the EYFS (non statutory guidance)

Positive Behaviour Policy

Equalities Policy

Special Educational Needs Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Appendix A- What are schemas and how do we use the information they provide about children?

Appendix B- Most Able Children

Appendix A- What are schemas and how do we use the information they provide about children?

What is a schema?

A schema is a pattern of behaviour. Children can and generally do have several schemas that they are interested in at any one time, but commonly have one dominant schema that will remain with them into adulthood.

When do schemas begin?

Schemas begin from birth. Initially schemas are very simple but they will develop rapidly if they are supported. Research has shown that brain paths develop faster when connections are supported; schemas are a way of supporting children and extending their learning.

How do we know about schemas?

Schemas were first identified by Piaget, a childhood theorist. His work was further developed by Chris Athey during the 1970's. Additional research has now been undertaken about how children learn and how their brains develop. Because schemas follow interests, they can develop high levels of concentration and learning in children.

How do schemas work?

A child will have an area in which they are mainly interested at any one time. To learn about how this interest works, they will repeat an action over and over again until they understand about this interest.

If adults can tune into the child's interest we can support a child to develop their knowledge and extend their interest so further increasing the knowledge.

When a baby is dropping things from a high chair repeatedly they are exploring vertical trajectories or up and down schemas, this can be extended by showing them a yo-yo on a string or lifting them up and down.

It has been known for many years that we learn from doing, when a child is repeating an action, they are learning from what they are doing. In addition to repeating an action, a child will look for other ways to explore their interest.

When a toddler carries everything to you they may be exploring transporting of items- giving them bags and trucks they can put things in will support this. Extensions can be made by encouraging them to help with the shopping in the supermarket or going on a picnic. Older children may become interested in how people are transported and trips could be made to an airport or train station- maps could also be drawn showing how we get to places. Supporting children in areas they are interested in will enable them to continue their interest. Schemas can be seen in children's play and artwork, as well as in body language and heard in speech.

How do we use our knowledge of schemas?

We collate information about children's schemas to help us understand what they are interested in. We use this information to inform our planning on a daily and weekly basis. The continuous provision is enhanced daily to support and extend children's particular interests. We plan activities for groups of children to support the development of their schema and their language for thinking skills.

Appendix B- Most Able Children

One group of children to be tracked to discern strategies for intervention and to ensure progress are the 'Most Able'.

Children who are 'Most Able' are identified as those children who are achieving at a level above the average for their year group, across a range of areas of learning.

These children will be identified by the usual methods of:

- Teacher observation through Learning Journeys
- Teacher assessment (including, but not exclusively, through tracking)
- Parent information
- Discussion with the child

Children who are identified as 'Most Able' will have learning experiences planned and differentiated appropriately for them by their Key Person.

Focus activities planned for the whole group will also be differentiated to take account of their specific needs and abilities.

Where possible, outside agencies may be involved to provide unique experiences or assess individual children according to their abilities and needs.