

Curzon Crescent & Fawood Children's Centres Partnership



Learning, Teaching & Play Policy

Reviewed – Spring 2019

Next Review – Spring 2021

Policy Lead – Deputy Head

Approving Committee- Curriculum

Statement of intent:

This policy is centred around the aspirations of Curzon Crescent and Fawood Children's Centres Partnership (also known as the Partnership) for the care and education of children and families:

To create a culture where adults and children are working and thinking together in order to learn more. Children are supported and challenged by adults to develop a love of learning which inspires them to take pride in their achievements and build strong foundations for their future.

We believe that children have the right to an education and that they learn best through play and first-hand experience. We use our skills, experience and understanding as Early Years educators to ensure that children are encouraged to become lifelong learners who are highly disposed to learn. Our commitment to inclusivity and integration ensures that this policy applies to all children and families across the provision, to include Stay, Play and Learn sessions, all drop-in sessions, all crèches hosted by Curzon Crescent, Fawood, Rainbows Additionally Resourced Provision for children with autism, and the mainstream nurseries at Curzon Crescent and Fawood, including our NEG2 provisions.

We are informed by our guiding principles that children are active learners, that learning is social and collaborative and that the role of the adult is crucial. (Margaret Mallett, 2004) To this effect we aim to demonstrate through all aspects of our work our commitment to the four themes and principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage:

- **A Unique Child** – every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient , capable , confident and self-assured
- **Positive Relationships** – children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a keyperson
- **Enabling Environments** – the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning
- **Learning and Development** – children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected

We use the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to inform our work with children and families. The EYFS sets out the legal requirements relating to learning and development (the Early Learning Goals, the educational programmes and the assessment arrangements) and the requirements relating to the Safeguarding and Welfare of children. (DfE 2017).

Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

Areas of Learning and Development

The framework includes seven areas of learning and development. While all the areas of learning and development are seen as important and inter-connected the Prime Areas are seen as particularly important as they stimulate curiosity for learning and the capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive (DfE 2017: pg.7)

The Prime Areas are fundamental; they work together and move through to support development in all other areas. They are:

Communication and Language –	Listening and Attention	Understanding	Speaking
Physical Development –	Moving and Handling	Health and Self-Care	
Personal Social and Emotional Development -	Making Relationships	Self-Confidence and Self-Awareness	Managing Feelings and Behaviour

The Specific Areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. They are:

Literacy –	Reading	Writing	
Mathematics –	Number	Shape Space and Measure	
Understanding the World –	People and Communities	The World	Technology
Expressive Arts and Design –	Exploring and Using Media and Materials	Being Imaginative	

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These highlight the importance of the child's disposition and attitude to learning and ability to engage in exploration, play and creativity across all areas of learning.

The three characteristics are:

- **Playing and exploring** – children investigate and experience things and 'have a go'
- **Active learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements
- **Creating and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things (DfE 2012: pg.10)

How we work with children

To ensure that children are engaged in a range of different learning styles and opportunities we follow a cycle of Observation, Planning and Assessment. Observation is crucial to our understanding of children's learning and development. We notice what the child is doing, recognise the learning that is going on and respond both in the moment and after a period of reflection, by offering 'Next Steps', or 'Opportunities and Possibilities' for children to extend their learning. This way of thinking about children's learning, informs the Partnership's use of Learning Stories as one of the methods of evaluating and assessing children's learning and development, building on the work of Margaret Carr, (2001). After a child's settling

in period, Learning Stories are written and analysed as a way of celebrating children's achievements and of tracking progress through the Early Years Outcomes. The child's key person is responsible for documenting their key children's learning, including writing and sharing Learning Stories with children and families.

The Leuven Scales of Involvement and Wellbeing are incorporated within the observations taken and recorded in our on-line assessment tool, which is accessible to parents and carers.

Children's progress is tracked four times within the nursery year: on entry (baseline), at the end of the Autumn Term, at the end of the Spring Term and on exit at the end of the Summer Term. This enables the child's keyperson to track the child's progress and share it with the parents and carers, identifying areas of development together. Interventions and strategies can then be matched to each individual child to ensure the best possible opportunities for learning.

The Language of Learning

Building on the principle that even infants can recognize culturally specific icons such as the McDonald's 'M', we introduce children to the language of learning via the use of icons to support children's understanding of themselves as learners and to ensure every interaction, conversation and question counts. During group sessions, adult-led experiences and throughout the workshop areas of the environment, language of learning sheets are evident with prompts to enable adults to maximize every learning opportunity. (Appendix 1 ~ Learning Icons)

Learning Behaviours

In order to maximise opportunities for children to become autonomous and creative learners, we focus our interactions with children in identifying and promoting a range of positive learning behaviours which help us to concentrate on children as individuals and to personalize their learning. These behaviours are reinforced through the use of Core Texts which are used across the Partnership. (Appendix 2 Examples of Learning Behaviours in Core Texts)

Core texts also offer the potential to widen the children's experiences and visit many different aspects of learning and development. They are used to anchor children's learning, to offer provocations that stimulate children's thought and language, also to encourage children's belief in themselves as readers and writers from the earliest stages.

Examples of Learning Behaviours:

Confidence:	The disposition to be confident as a learner
Curiosity:	The disposition to find things out
Problem-solving:	The disposition to work things out
Resilience:	The disposition to persist when the going gets tough
Involvement:	The disposition to become involved as a learner
Playfulness and Joyfulness:	The disposition to be playful, to bring creativity and imagination to learning so that it contributes to the emotional wellbeing of the individual
Communication:	The disposition to communicate, to share and collaborate as learners

Keyperson System

At Curzon Crescent and Fawood we operate a key person system whereby key people are responsible for liaising with children and their families, creating a special relationship with each child, and recording each child's progress through our record-keeping systems. However, we value the contribution of all adults who come in contact with children and share responsibility for children's learning and development; this is to include our students and volunteers, as well as adults who work in the crèche or support the children during lunchtime. Observations are gathered from the different adults who work with children and are collated by the child's key person.

The role of the adult is essential to facilitate children's learning in three ways:

- 1) by becoming a play partner following children's lead, and modelling language, behaviour and 'ways of being' at nursery
- 2) by being a participant observer of children in a variety of social contexts, 'holding children in mind', interacting with them and sharing observations with other key people, parents and carers or other practitioners
- 3) by being an initiator of adult-led experiences based on close observation of children's interests, 'scaffolding' (Bruner) children's learning, and leading them through their 'zone of proximal development' (Vygotsky) in order to consolidate, extend and provoke learning. (Fisher, 2016: 122)

In each of these roles all adults working with children should seize every opportunity to engage in Sustained Shared Thinking in order to extend and challenge children's thinking. The EPPE Project (2004) has demonstrated the importance of Sustained Shared Thinking which is now included as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage practice guidance:

Sustained Shared Thinking:

We believe that by supporting and challenging children's thinking and by getting involved in the thinking process with children, we will support and extend children's learning and engage in the learning process with the child.

We use 'Sustained, Shared Thinking' strategies to do this. These strategies involve the adult being aware of the children's interests and understandings and the adult and children working together to develop an idea or skill. Sustained shared thinking can only happen when there are responsive trusting relationships between adults and children. The practitioner shows genuine interest, offers encouragement, clarifies ideas and asks open questions. This supports and extends the children's thinking and helps children to make connections in learning.

Project Work and Mind-mapping

We use Project work to deepen children's knowledge and understanding. Project work presents many opportunities for young children's ideas to be valued, their creativity encouraged, their interests nurtured and for their learning needs to be met. Projects emerge from the questions children raise and can develop over time. Using Mind Maps encourages children to share their current knowledge of particular concepts. The adult then engages in a process of reciprocal exchanges with the child, offering further provocations to encourage children to develop their thinking. The adult or child records the individual thinking. As concepts are explored over time, photographs and further pathways of learning are added to the Mind Map for children to visually recognise how their thinking has changed and developed.

Multi Sensory Learning

We are aware that there is a growing body of evidence from neuroscience that learning which engages two or more sensory channels is more effectively assimilated by the human brain. Young children are hardwired to use all their senses to explore and learn about their environment. We believe giving children lots of opportunities to use as many sensory channels as possible, including different forms of movement, is good educational practice. For children we identify as having sensory processing needs, we provide tailored experiences to meet their individual sensory processing style.

Partnership with Parents

It is important that the significant adults in the child's life, at home and within the Partnership, work together and appreciate their complementary contributions to the child's development and wellbeing. Parents and educators have different skills and experiences to offer which are both valuable. We respect parents as children's first and most enduring educators and seek to involve them in their children's learning at every opportunity. Home life provides many opportunities for learning and the Partnership builds on these. We place particular emphasis on parents' involvement in their children's learning and encourage this through:

- Application visits for prospective parents
- Induction visits
- Home visiting
- Settling in period
- Newsletter
- Regular parent/keyperson meetings
- Informal daily contact
- Displays of children's work
- Surveys of parents' views
- Loan of learning resources for use at home
- Workshops and courses
- Children's Centre programmes
- Access to our on-line assessment tool
- Weekly Home Learning

The Learning Environment

Across the Partnership we are committed to promoting children's development as independent and autonomous learners. We therefore provide a stimulating purposefully planned learning environment for children to work within. We encourage them to make choices about where they would like to work, indoors or outdoors and create plenty of opportunities for children to engage in free flow play through the way we resource our learning environments.

We have an emphasis on free flowing indoor and outdoor play and consider it an essential part of children's learning. We are committed to outdoor provision being available at all times, whatever the weather. Children are engaged in a balance of child-initiated exploration and adult led experiences both indoors and outdoors and

they are encouraged to investigate and make decisions about their learning. They are able to engage in free-flow play (Tina Bruce, 2005) for most of the nursery day, but with some structured sessions when children come together to learn in groups with their key person, or other adults.

Relationships and attachment underpin our interactions with children and we take every opportunity to deepen our understanding of individual children as learners.

We recognize the influence of different social contexts on children's learning and organize the 'Rhythm of the Nursery Day' to take account of this. (Appendix 3 – example of daily routine within the mainstream nursery)

Equality of Opportunity

We recognize that discrimination and bias exist within society and seek to ensure that all children, especially those already disadvantaged have the opportunities they are entitled to in order to thrive.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Children with SEND, whether short or long term are entitled to the same access to the curriculum as other children. This category includes children who are disabled and those identified as gifted and able. We fully support each child's right to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum and promote access to the curriculum through the implementation of Individual Plans that focus on particular areas of challenge for the child. In this way a child may receive additional support to encourage and accelerate their development. Close collaboration with parents ensures mutual goal setting and review of progress. We utilise expertise within the Centres and guidance may be sought, following parental agreement, from other professionals e.g. Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Psychologist, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist, Music Therapist, Play Therapist etc.

English as an Additional Language ~ Bi and Multi-lingual children

Many children at our Centres have English as an Additional Language. It is important that the home languages of bi and multi-lingual learners are accorded respect and status and are seen as assets rather than hindrances to learning. Children who are encouraged to use their own language at home and in nursery make better progress in the new language they are acquiring. Multi-lingual children also enrich the learning experiences of the mono-lingual children by providing first-hand experiences of the different languages in use. All children are encouraged to develop their use of English, both verbal and written, and when children are new to English, additional support is given to help them reach the same level as other children of their age.

Ethnicity and Culture

We seek to reflect the rich cultural, religious and linguistic diversity of our community in all aspects of our work, including resources and the curriculum. We monitor the achievements of children from different ethnic groups and plan learning opportunities which match their particular needs. Every area of provision needs to reflect the different cultural backgrounds and interests of the children. We draw on the cultural and religious diversity in our locality and that of the wider world.

Gender

We monitor activities and actively encourage participation by all children, trying to break down stereotypes through discussion with children, parents and carers. This ensures that all children benefit from the full range of experiences on offer.

Our commitment to the learning and development of children:

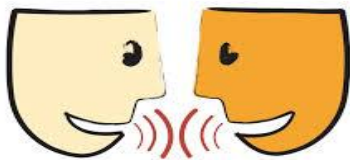
We aim to provide all our children with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, we will:

- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of children;
- Monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender, SEND and action any gaps;
- Take account of the achievement of all children when planning for future learning;
- Ensure equality of access for all children and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the Partnership, population and local community in terms of race, gender and disability, without stereotyping;
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- Provide opportunities for children to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.

Appendix 1 The Language of Learning



We are thinking about...



We are talking about...



We are looking at...



We are practising ...

Appendix 2

Examples of Learning Behaviours within Core Texts

Core book title	Learning behaviour to be promoted
Please Mr Panda	Mr Panda is a keen observer who notices things
A range of starting school books/	Becoming involved and communicating with others Being playful and joyful Coping with separation ~ developing confidence as a learner
Owl Babies	Being courageous
So Much!	Being affectionate and curious
Author Study ~ Julia Donaldson	
The Gruffalo	The mouse is an adventurous explorer
The Gruffalo's Child	Being resilient and persistent
Stick Man	Being adaptable and flexible

Appendix 3

An example of the Daily Routine at nursery

Rhythm of the day

9:00 – 9:15: Arrival and self-registration

9:15-9:30: Group time

9:30-9:45: Focused Learning

9:45-11:35: Free flow play

11:35-11:40: Phonics

11:40 Washing hands

11:45-12:30/40 Lunch

12:40-12:50 Write Dance

12:50-14:30 Free flow

14:30 Tidy up time

14:40 Group time

15.00 Home time

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