



TEACHING AND LEARNING

1. Introduction

This policy outlines the principles, values, and approaches to teaching and learning in the early years, focusing on the foundational period of development from birth to the age of five. The aim is to ensure that all young learners receive a high-quality, inclusive, and engaging education that supports their holistic development, fostering a love of learning and laying the foundation for lifelong learning.

2. Vision and Purpose

Our vision is to create a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment where young children are encouraged to explore, experiment, and engage with the world around them. The purpose of this policy is to guide teaching practices, learning experiences, and the educational framework in early childhood settings, ensuring that the needs of all children are met.

3. Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles inform our approach to teaching and learning in the early years:

- **Child-Centered Approach:** Teaching and learning are responsive to the individual needs, interests, and abilities of each child. Every child is valued, respected, and given the opportunity to reach their full potential.
- **Play-Based Learning:** Play is the primary mode of learning in early childhood. Children engage with the world through structured and unstructured play, which fosters creativity, problem-solving, social interaction, and cognitive development.
- **Inclusive Education:** All children, regardless of background or ability, have the right to participate fully in early learning. Teaching practices will be adapted to ensure accessibility for children with diverse learning needs.

- **Collaborative Partnerships:** Collaboration between educators, families, and the wider community is essential for creating a strong support network for children’s development. Parents are seen as partners in their child’s learning journey.
- **Holistic Development:** We believe in the interconnectedness of cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and creative development. Teaching and learning strategies will promote the whole child, recognizing the importance of social and emotional well-being.
- **Cultural Responsiveness:** Our teaching will respect and reflect the diverse cultural backgrounds of all children. Materials, teaching methods, and activities will be inclusive of different cultural perspectives.

4. Early Years Curriculum Framework

We follow the Development Matters guidance as a non-statutory curriculum framework to support the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). In line with Ofsted requirements, we ensure that all practitioners use Development Matters to guide planning, observation, and assessment of children’s learning and development.

As part of our commitment to the EYFS statutory framework, we carry out a Progress Check at Age Two for every child between the ages of two and three. This check is typically completed when the child is between 24 and 32 months, and it provides a short-written summary of the child’s development in the prime areas of learning. The curriculum in the early years is designed to support all aspects of children’s development and learning, communication and language, physical development, and Personal & Emotional development. Where possible this summary is shared with the child’s health visitor to support integrated working and ensure a holistic understanding of the child’s development.

This curriculum is structured around the following key areas:

- **Language and Communication:** Supporting the development of language skills through meaningful interactions, storytelling, reading, and expressive communication.

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development:** Helping children develop self-regulation, empathy, social skills, and emotional resilience through group interactions and emotional expression.
- **Physical Development:** Fostering fine and gross motor skills, physical health, and well-being through active play, movement, and sensory activities.
- **Literacy:** Ensuring that all children develop a strong foundation in Literacy skills, including early reading, mark making, phonemic awareness, and the recognition of letters, sounds, and words. Children will engage in storytelling, shared reading, and mark making activities that support both emergent and formal literacy development.
- **Mathematical Thinking:** Introducing basic mathematical concepts, such as numbers, shapes, patterns, and measurement, through exploration and play.
- **Understanding the World:** Engaging children in inquiry-based learning about the natural and social environments, fostering curiosity and the development of scientific thinking.
- **Creativity and the Arts:** Encouraging creative expression through art, music, dance, and imaginative play, which helps children build problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

5. Teaching Strategies and Approaches

- **Responsive Teaching:** Educators will observe, listen, and respond to children's interests and developmental needs, offering a balance of guided and child-initiated learning.
- **Scaffolded Learning:** Educators will provide support at various levels to enable children to progress from what they know to what they can learn next, using questions, prompts, and activities to build upon existing knowledge.
- **Active Engagement:** Learning is most effective when children are actively involved. Activities and teaching methods will encourage children to question, experiment, collaborate, and reflect.

- **Real-World Connections:** Wherever possible, learning will be connected to real-life experiences, enabling children to understand the relevance of their learning to the world around them.
- **Assessment for Learning:** Ongoing formative assessments will be conducted to track children’s progress and inform teaching practices. Observations, discussions with children, and interactions with families will form the basis for this process.

6. Environment and Resources

- **Safe and Stimulating Environment:** The learning environment will be physically safe, emotionally nurturing, and intellectually stimulating. Spaces will be designed to allow for both structured and unstructured play, with clear zones for quiet activities, group work, and exploration.
- **Learning Materials:** Resources will be carefully selected to be developmentally appropriate, diverse, and reflective of children’s interests and cultural backgrounds. Learning materials will include books, art supplies, building blocks, and technological tools where appropriate.

7. Professional Development

Educators are encouraged to engage in ongoing professional development to stay current with best practices in early childhood education. Training will focus on areas such as child development, inclusive practices, play-based learning, and assessment techniques.

8. Role of Families and Communities

Families are integral to a child’s learning journey, and their input will be actively sought and valued. This policy encourages:

- Regular communication between families and educators.
- Opportunities for families to be involved in learning activities and nursery events.
- Workshops and resources for parents to support learning at home.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of teaching and learning will be regularly monitored and evaluated against the goals outlined in this policy. This process will involve:

- Ongoing formative and summative assessments of children's progress.
- Regular reflection and feedback from educators, families, and other stakeholders.
- Adjustments to the curriculum and teaching strategies based on the evaluation outcomes.

10. Conclusion

The teaching and learning policy for the early years is designed to ensure that every child experiences a positive, enriching, and engaging educational journey. Through a child-centred, play-based approach, we aim to nurture curiosity, develop essential skills, and lay the foundation for future academic and personal success. By working together with families and the wider community, we can create an environment where every child thrives.