

Policy for Teaching and Learning in the Nursery

The purpose of this Policy is to promote and ensure that the school community has a shared understanding of the following: -

- The contribution of Nursery Education to the child's learning and development.
- The value of play.
- The importance of the planning, participation, monitoring and evaluating of the curriculum by professionals.

Our School's Mission Statement

"We believe that childhood should be valued as a time to develop independence, curiosity and a sense of worth."

During the year in nursery class we aim to: -

- Help children develop the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes needed for learning.
- Develop children's self esteem, self confidence and independence.
- Enhance their social and emotional development.
- Provide opportunities for physical development.
- Create an environment where children's language can flourish and develop.
- Encourage a sense of wonder and curiosity in children.
- Offer opportunities and support for children to represent their learning through story, song, rhyme and art.

In addition we believe: -

- The nursery year is a unique episode in a child's life, to be enjoyed in its own right.
- Children in nursery learn and develop best through play.
- Children at this age have individual differences and needs which must be recognized and met.
- All children should have equality of opportunity regardless of gender, race, culture or individual needs.
- Young children need the encouragement, support and help of the adults in the nursery to learn.
- Parents are children's first educators and continue that role in partnership with the nursery staff.

Practices

The Role of the Board of Governors

- To develop an understanding of Nursery Education.
- Support the Principal and staff and develop an optimal environment for the children.

The Role of the Principal

- To lead and manage every aspect of the learning environment.
- To develop a team approach to teaching and learning among the nursery staff.
- To involve parents as the children's main educators.
- To liaise with all parties who contribute to the school community.

The Role of the Staff (meeting children's needs)

- To give priority to settling the children happily in school and continue to promote their confidence, co-operation and self-esteem.
- Provide a rich and stimulating environment, which promotes the children's all-round development.
- Value, and encourage children's play; interact with children as they play, and use it as the main vehicle to promote learning.
- Promote the children's abilities to make choices and decisions for themselves.

- Have high expectations of the children's developing abilities.
- Agree and implement the curriculum, management of the children, assessment and the general aims of the nursery.
- Model for the children, open communication, a sense of mutual trust, effective teamwork and respect for others.

The Role of the Parents

- To support their child in ways that will enable the child make the best possible progress during the nursery year, *eg*
 - making sure they are refreshed and rested ready to work in school, having had adequate sleep and rest the night before;
 - **food???**
 - physically able to come to school – keep at home if sick;
 - they attend for all of the session available;
 - to take an active interest in the life of the nursery;
 - to build on nursery experiences in their role as main educators.

The Organisation of the Nursery Day (Time, space, materials, equipment, parents)

- Children are given time to engage in free play with access to a wide range of equipment, materials and stimulating activities.
- All aspects of the pre-school curriculum are offered including music, story and physical play indoors and outdoors.
- The necessary routines, *eg* toileting and snack are organised efficiently so children are not waiting about or curtailed in their play.
- The beginning and end of the session is organised to facilitate informal contact between staff and parents.

Planning and Monitoring the Curriculum

- Staff plan the nursery programme as a team in line with the pre-school curricular guidance.
- Identify the learning potential and ensure that everyone working with the children understands it.
- Take account of the needs of the children through systematic assessment.
- Evaluate the children's progress and use it to inform future planning.
- Use assessment of children to meet individual needs.
- Provide parents with regular and comprehensive information about their children's progress.

Staff Interaction to ensure optimum Learning and Development

- They interact easily and spontaneously with children.
- They support the child's chosen play.
- Promote safe productive play.
- Exploit the learning potential of the activities and equipment.
- Encourage through open questioning and comments, children's curiosity, imagination, abilities to solve problems.
- Develop children's language and learning across the curriculum
- Staff show a sense of humour and a high level of energy.

Monitoring, Recording and Reporting the Children's Progress

- Staff systematically observe children and record all aspects of their development.
- Keep a profile of each child's progress and achievements.
- Use this information to provide the planned educational programme.
- Use the information to inform parents and encourage them to help their children at home.

Provision for Children with Special Educational Needs

- Staff organise activities and materials to provide for the special needs of children.
- Ensure the children have equal access to the curriculum where appropriate.
- Provide the necessary support when the special educational needs are identified and if necessary keep individual education plans.
- Seek appropriate help and advice from other relevant professionals.
- Keep the child's parents fully informed and involved.

Links with Parents

- Staff ensure that parents feel welcome on a daily basis, and know that staff care and are approachable and will deal with enquiries promptly and effectively.
- Parents are made aware of the aims of the nursery and encouraged to express their views about the work.
- They are given regular information on the curriculum through photography/displays/newsletters, and how it is contributing to their child's learning and development.
- Parents are encouraged to contribute to the nursery through taking part in classroom activities, educational visits, providing materials, eg dressing up clothes or fundraising.

Liaison with Others

- The staff recognise the vital importance of a smooth transition from home to school, and from nursery to Primary 1.
- A child's settling-in to nursery is proceeded with slowly and monitored with the parents.
- Primary 1 Teachers visit the nursery in the third term to begin to build relationships with the children. They are given verbal and written information on the children's progress.
- Primary 1 Teachers are encouraged to keep contact with the nursery staff during the first term of Primary 1.
- Staff maintain relationships with other external agencies, eg Health Visitor, Dental Hygienist, Social Worker, Speech and Language Therapist, Educational Psychologist, etc in order to improve the provision for the children including those with special educational needs.

The Community

- The staff recognise the school/local community as a valuable resource which enables them to extend the children's opportunities for learning.
- The staff use the local community to make a contribution to the life of the nursery through educational visits, open days, trips, competitions and concerts.