



Principles for Early Years Education: Teaching and Learning Policy

Effective education requires both a relevant curriculum and practitioners who understand and are able to implement the curriculum requirements. Effective education requires practitioners who understand that children develop rapidly during the early years – physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

Children are entitled to provision that supports and extends knowledge, skills, understanding and confidence, and helps them to overcome any disadvantage. Practitioners should ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued. They must build positive relationships with parents in order to work effectively with them and their children.

Early years experience should build on what children already know and can do. It should also encourage a positive attitude and disposition to learn and aim to prevent early failure.

No child should be excluded or disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability.

Parents and practitioners should work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect within which children can have security and confidence.

To be effective, an early years curriculum should be carefully structured. In that structure, there should be three strands:

- Provision for the different starting points from which children develop their learning, building on what they can already do
- Relevant and appropriate content that matches the different levels of young children's needs and interests
- Planned and purposeful activity that provided opportunities for teaching and learning, both indoors and outdoors

There should be opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and also those that they plan or initiate themselves. Children do not make a distinction between 'play' and 'work' and neither should practitioners. Children need time to become engrossed, work in depth and complete activities. Here at Gamesley Early Excellence Centre we value this element of engagement and we measure children's levels of involvement in their play.

Practitioners must be able to observe and respond appropriately to children, informed by knowledge of how children develop and learn and a clear understanding of possible next steps in their development and learning. Well planned, purposeful activity and appropriate intervention by

practitioners will engage children in the learning process and help them to make progress in their learning

For children to have rich and stimulating experiences, the learning environment should be well planned and well organised. It provides the structure for teaching within which children explore, experiment, plan and make decisions for themselves, thus enabling them to learn, develop and make good progress. Above all, effective learning and development for young children requires high quality care and education by practitioners.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Nursery aged children are very dependent on adults, socially and emotionally. They need pattern and order in their day and a calm and caring atmosphere. They need to be in a safe and secure environment which is sensitive to their needs. Within that environment they need to be allowed to exercise choice, make decisions and to develop independence. They need to experience a variety of social contexts and be given opportunities to lead, follow, co-operate and develop self-confidence and self-esteem. We aim to help them become aware of the needs of others and develop their own social skills. They must be given time, space, encouragement, support and attention by adults.

Teaching And Learning

Staff aim to nurture and build upon children's natural energy, enthusiasm, and curiosity in order to help pupils learn and achieve. Our aim for our children is that they should be 'interested, excited and motivated to learn'. We aim to develop children's self confidence and belief in themselves so that they see themselves as positive, confident learners.

Children's growth is very individual at this stage and children vary greatly in their maturity in different areas of development. Their educational experience is therefore designed to take account of individual achievements and needs. We also believe that children need time to experiment, explore and to practice the same skills in different contexts. Such learning always involves first hand experiences and activities. Skill and confidence in using language is encouraged by providing a setting in which there is much to talk about, accessible, interested and interesting people to talk with, enough time to develop conversations satisfactorily, and an environment which is organised with thought given to fostering talk.

Play is the natural medium through which children learn and therefore play is the medium through which the curriculum is experienced. For much of the children's time in Nursery their own interests are followed and built upon by staff, who extend this play through careful questioning, modelling of language and providing resources and ideas. Adult led sessions have a playful element and are structured and recorded, in order to ensure progression

Ethos

In order to fulfil our aims we create an ethos that is: positive, purposeful, patient, respectful, stimulating, challenging, builds self esteem and the confidence to try new things and encourages thinking skills.

Partnership with Parents

Partnership with parents is more important in the foundation stage of learning than at any other time. For some children starting nursery school may be the first time the child has been away

from home. Even if a child has attended other forms of childcare, starting school is a big step that can be made much easier if the school works closely with parents.

When there is a two way flow of information between home and school, there is likely to be a positive impact on children's development and learning. Our effectiveness in communicating with parents is very important to us. We aim to inform parents not only through our induction programme but also through our newsletters, Tapestry learning journals, website and social media, sharing information about our planning and regular daily contact. We aim to discuss children's needs, interests and competencies when they start Nursery and throughout the year with regular feedback, information exchange and progress reports. We value parents' knowledge about their child and seek to share that knowledge on a regular basis throughout their time at Gamesley Nursery School either in person or by adding to their child's Tapestry learning journal.

Classroom Management and Resources

The environment is seen as a learning tool. A rich and varied environment is set out both indoors and outdoors. The environment is consistent so that children are able to revisit their learning, over and over to embed and extend their skills. Enhancements are made to this environment linking in with children's interests and needs. We organise resources so that they are available, labelled and accessible, thereby maximising children's independence and autonomy.

Our role is to:

- Value what children already know and can do
- Provide an environment where learning can take place
- Enable, support and extend children's learning
- Plan the curriculum to meet the learning needs of each child
- Observe in order to make judgements about how children's learning is progressing
- Review and evaluate planning and provision in the light of assessments of children's progress and needs

The role of the adults

Our activities fall mainly into two categories. These are adult led and child led.

Adult Led –

Each day adult led activities are planned for small groups. These are planned and led by the adults and small groups of children will access it, at an appropriate level. Activities in these sessions cover all areas of learning with a strong focus on stories and communication and language.

Child Led Activities - The Adult as 'Scaffolder'.

For a large part of each session the children move freely around the Nursery choosing to explore from the variety of activities that has been planned and made available that day. To maximise learning from this free play staff will act as 'scaffolders' to support but not lead the children in their play. This role has many facets and includes: observing and standing back, interacting, playing alongside, questioning, aiding negotiations, modelling, questioning, and providing additional resources.

Organisation Of The Curriculum And Planning

Our school curriculum, based on the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021) refers to all the experiences we provide which promote the development of the whole child. Learning encompasses many different areas of the curriculum and, although staff plan in 'areas', learning is not compartmentalised by the young child. Skilled planning plays an important part in our teaching and learning. We acknowledge the need to share clear aims and learning intentions, and all staff are involved in planning the environment, routines and the curriculum.

Planning

The EYFS framework is based upon 3 characteristics of effective learning : Playing and Exploring, Active Learning and Creating and Thinking Critically. There are 7 areas – 3 prime areas (PSED, Physical Development and Communication and Language) and four specific areas (Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding of The World and Expressive Arts and Design)

Our continuous provision covers these areas of learning.

Each area of Continuous Provision within the classroom helps children to develop these characteristics, as do the adults who are working alongside the children. The areas of provision also support the prime areas and specific areas of Learning and Development.

To enable children to develop the characteristics of effective learning and then go on to achieve the Early Learning Goals staff know that children have to have their interests followed and built upon. Therefore at Gamesley Early Excellence Centre Nursery School we have developed a planning system which builds upon children's interests and allows staff the flexibility to follow up interests immediately and because staff know children so well they are able to move learning on through sustained shared thinking using children's play and current interests as a foundation to build this on. Much planning is done in retrospect, as much of the children's interests, thoughts and ideas are 'here and now' and need acting on immediately. In addition to this provocations and enhancements are made to areas by staff, in order to further develop children's learning.

Continuity And Progression

Children come to Gamesley Nursery School from a variety of backgrounds. Each child will bring a diverse range of experiences and abilities to the school setting. This learning has taken place in the home and the wider community, in real life contexts and through children's first hand experiences. It is important for us to acknowledge the wealth of learning children have acquired. The experiences and interests which children bring with them to school need to be the starting points for their learning, and should be extended in such a way that complements their previous experiences and stimulates further learning. By building on the children's experiences and planning for the next steps to be taken, we are emphasising the essential part continuity and progression play in children's learning.

Monitoring of each child's progress is essential to ensure that they are making progress and that particular concerns in any of the areas of learning, whatever the cause, are identified and addressed. This process needs to start before the child starts nursery, with practitioners listening to parents' accounts of their child's development and noting any issues. Prompt and appropriate action at this stage could help to prevent children from developing learning difficulties later in their school career. There will be a small number of children who have special educational needs or disabilities that will require specific provision, such as specialist teaching, adapted equipment or support from an adult, for particular activities. It is essential that these children are identified as soon as possible and appropriate support provided. Other children may be more able and need

activities that offer an appropriate challenge. Monitoring of each child's progress throughout the foundation stage will also ensure that their achievements can be celebrated.

Progression and continuity can be ensured by:

- Regular opportunities to liaise with parents
- Assessing the stage at which each child is at and building on this
- Careful planning, evaluation and review of teaching and learning
- Planning for differentiation
- Recording achievements
- Liaison with the primary phase by working together, visiting and passing on records

Record Keeping and Assessment

Assessment is an important and integral part of the work of the nursery. It provides the means by which individual children's needs are planned for, and early specific needs are identified.

Assessments and record keeping are part of the planning cycle. Our records help us to plan for continuity and progression. All staff are continually engaged in the assessment of pupils, whether formally or informally, thus enabling work to be matched to the needs of the child. Staff make observations, question, discuss and collect work samples.

Reporting to parents takes the form of VIP meetings and a leaver's report as they leave Nursery.

How do we assess:

- By observing, listening, interacting, talking together
- By using Tapestry a profile learning journals and taking account of parent's comments on these
- By highlighting specific skills
- By collecting information from parents
- Staff discussion at VIP meetings
- By regular monitoring and observation
- Assessments are carried out on entry and then at six monthly milestones

We feel it is important that:

- Observations and discussions inform future planning
- Our records identify the progression children are making
- Summative assessments are shared with parents and primary schools

How Gamesley Nursery School achieves this:

- Observations of children/staff
- Collaborative planning
- Use of critical friends
- Parents and pupils views
- External school review
- Record keeping
- Quality development dialogue
- Governing Body involvement

Equal Opportunities

Providers have a responsibility to ensure positive attitudes to diversity and difference – not only so that every child is included and not disadvantaged, but also so that they learn from the earliest age to value diversity in others and grow up making a positive contribution to society. It is not enough to provide a curriculum and leave children to benefit from it. The school's role is to promote access to it and development through it. An accessible curriculum will have elements in it that attract all children, because they are recognised and valued by all. This includes planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, children with special educational needs (SEND), children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social, cultural and religious backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups including travellers, refugees and asylum seekers, and children from diverse linguistic backgrounds. At Gamesley Nursery School in order to meet children's diverse needs and help all children make the best possible progress we:

- plan opportunities that build on and extend children's knowledge, experiences, interests and skills and develop their self-esteem and confidence in their ability to learn
- remove or help to overcome barriers for children where these already exist
- are alert to the early signs of needs that could lead to later difficulties and respond quickly and appropriately, involving other agencies as necessary.
- use a wide range of teaching strategies, based on children's learning needs
- stretch and challenge all children
- provide a wide range of opportunities to motivate, support and develop children and help them to be involved, concentrate and learn effectively
- provide a safe and supportive learning environment, free from harassment, in which the contribution of all children is valued and where racial, religious, disability and gender stereotypes are challenged
- use materials that positively reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- plan challenging opportunities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills
- monitor children's progress, identifying any areas of concern, and taking action to provide support, for example by using different approaches, additional help or other agencies
- expect that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender or ability should have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development

Special Educational Needs, Disabilities and More Able

At Gamesley Nursery School we plan for each child's individual learning requirements, including those children who need additional support or have particular needs or disabilities. We work with parents, and where necessary staff from other agencies, to identify learning needs, develop effective strategies to meet these needs and provide the best learning opportunities. We also take specific action to help children with special educational needs or more able children by:

- Providing for those who need help with communication and language skills
- Planning for full participation in learning and in all physical and practical activity
- Helping children who have particular difficulties with behaviour to take part in learning effectively
- Extending and offering challenge to the more able

School Management

The Headteacher may need to:

- Liaise with staff and Governors to develop or review policy
- Update colleagues on all issues concerned with policy development
- Attend courses and disseminate information to the rest of the staff
- Advise staff on professional opportunities
- Help to arrange/organise professional development
- Co-ordinate, organise and arrange the ordering of resources and equipment
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum programme through liaison with staff, observation of teaching and monitoring planning
- Develop relationships with other professionals outside school
- Organise awareness meetings/displays for parents
- Organise and oversee any trips, visitors or school based events
- Liaise with the Governing Body

This policy should be read in conjunction with the curriculum policy and the Our Curriculum document.

Policy will be reviewed in: September 2025