



Fairfield Nursery School Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy February 2024



At Fairfield Nursery School we strive to develop positive learning dispositions in the children. In order to have this, they must have secure attachment experiences and be stimulated and encouraged to try new challenges. Children should never be made to feel that they can not do something. They should be given opportunities to assume some responsibility and learn how to take risks in a safe environment. Through this child-centred approach children should be able to develop into active rather than passive learners. This involves initiating activities, seeking information and seeing themselves as a resource for others. Our philosophy and principals follow the ten trans global principals for Early Years Education that Tina Bruce has set out:

- The best way to prepare children for their adult life is to give them what they need as children.
- Children are whole people who have feelings, ideas and relationships with others, and who need to be physically, mentally, morally and spiritually healthy.
- Subjects such as mathematics and art cannot be separated; young children learn in an integrated way and not in neat, tidy compartments.
- Children learn best when they are given appropriate responsibility, allowed to make errors, decisions and choices, and respected as autonomous learners.
- Self-discipline is emphasised. Indeed, this is the only kind of discipline worth having. Reward systems are very short-term and do not work in the long-term. Children need their efforts to be valued.
- There are times when children are especially able to learn particular things.
- What children can do (rather than what they cannot do) is the starting point
- Imagination, creativity and all kinds of symbolic behaviour (reading, writing, drawing, dancing, music, mathematical numbers, algebra, role play and talking) develop and emerge when conditions are favourable.
- Relationships with other people (both adults and children) and the natural world are of central importance in a child's life.
- Quality education is about three things: the child, the context in which learning takes place, and the knowledge and understanding which the child develops and learns.

Tina Bruce – *Early Childhood Education 2015 (5th edition)* Hodder education: London

We have also been inspired by the work of Carlina Rinaldi and Loris Malguzzi from the pre-schools of Reggio Emilia and the work of Pen Green and their Making Children's Learning Visible project. Our pedagogy of supporting children is encapsulated by:

- Co-exploring the learning experiences with the children
- Provoking ideas, problem solving and resolving conflict
- Valuing and celebrating children's work
- Taking ideas from the children and returning to them for further exploration
- Helping children see the connections in their learning and experiences
- Organising the environments and materials to be aesthetically pleasing
- Organising materials to help children make thoughtful decisions about the media
- Helping children express their knowledge through representational work
- Forming a cooperative between staff and parents
- Having a dialogue about projects with parents and other staff
- Fostering the connection between home, school and the community

Our pedagogical strategies are the core strands that support and enrich our teaching and learning and are integral to the foundations of our work with the children. Carlina Rinaldi (1998) states

"If we believe that children possess their own theories, interpretations and questions, and that they are co-protagonists in their knowledge-building processes, then the most important verb in educational practice is no longer to talk, to explain, to transmit, but to listen."

Our approach to teaching and learning is that of an on-going action research project that evolves and develops and is continually being reflected upon. Staff, children and families all contribute to this important research.

All staff have carefully considered how they support children's learning and development. The image of the child has been developed as a team and also working closely with parents. Our image is:

Communicator

A child that is able to express themselves effectively in their own unique way, showing awareness of others

Reflective

A reflective child is one that has an awareness of self, is thoughtful and considerate. They are motivated to try again, find out more and review their work and test ideas

Explorer

A child, who is curious, fascinated and inspired by the world around them. They take risks and can be independent in their experiences

Creative

A child that embraces learning in a creative and imaginative way. They try different methods to problem solving using remarkable and interesting approaches

Resilient

A resilient child is confident. They are secure emotionally and in their environment. They are able to learn by trial and error and bounce back when they are confronted with difficult situations

Aims

- The Intent of the curriculum is followed and provides the teaching and learning framework for all children
- Implementation of the curriculum is exciting and challenging and stems from the children's lines of enquiry and fascinations
- The impact of the curriculum is clear showing how children make progress in line and beyond developmental milestones
- The image of the child guides all staff in their pedagogic strategies
- Every child and family has a nominated key worker in the nursery setting who will work closely with the teachers and wider team to develop an in-depth knowledge about the child and family
- All children are welcomed, included and valued
- Children are closely observed, listened to and their ideas valued
- Positive attitudes and dispositions to learning are encouraged at all times
- Children are encouraged to initiate their own projects that may be returned to at any time
- The process of learning is fundamental to children having deep levels of involvement
- Well planned play is both challenging and fun and is central to the child's learning
- Children are encouraged to interact with groups of children to encourage them to see things from other's viewpoints

- Resources are organised to encourage children's independence, choice and development of learning dispositions
- An even balance between child-initiated and adult initiated learning is provided
- Planning for both indoors and outdoor recognises individual children's interests, needs and levels of support
- Activities and experiences are planned and organised to incorporate both prime and specific areas of learning concentrating on the development of learning strategies and nurturing the effective characteristics of learning.

Planning

Planning for promoting children's development is built upon our pedagogic strategies, our image of the child and where children are working within our progressive descriptors, in line with the Intent of the schools curriculum. These form the foundation of children's experiences, learning and development. The characteristics of effective learning from the Early Years Foundation Stage also provide a framework for planning possibilities and opportunities for children's learning and making assessments and judgments on their progress and development.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning are:

Playing and exploring - engagement

Finding out and exploring
Playing with what they know
Being willing to 'have a go'

Active learning – motivation

Being involved and concentrating
Keeping trying
Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically – thinking

Having their own ideas
Making links
Choosing ways to do things

There are seven areas of learning in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (September 2021). It states that:

“...seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected”.

The Prime Areas are:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

The Specific Areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

The statutory framework states what all learning programmes in school must follow:

Communication and Language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These

attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

Physical Development

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

Literacy

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

Mathematics

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of

knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

Understanding the World

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe

Implementation of the Schools Curriculum

At Fairfield, we have a balance between focused adult led teaching and child initiated fascinations and lines of enquiry. There is a robust daily and weekly routine that includes key groups planned by teachers and early years practitioners, focused core books with clear learning objectives and teaching early reading, a programme of progressive phonics, planned mathematical enquiries and games, weekly woodland sessions, project groups following the Arts Award and access to well planned and enhanced continuous provision. Each area of

learning in the schools curriculum, details the Intent. The implementation shows the progressive descriptors stating what the children and adults are doing.

Assessment

At Fairfield we believe in providing our children with a holistic education. Assessment of the children's learning and development is provided through a wide range of evidence that identifies the children's strengths. It is carried out on a cyclical basis: noticing – recognising – responding – recording – revisiting. Children have a learning journey that documents their learning linked to the schools Image of the Child. This follows the children as they spend the time in the nursery. An important aspect of the journey is that the children are supported and encouraged to reflect on photographs, films, Images and significant events.

We have carefully identified progressive descriptors that encapsulate and describe where children are in their learning journey. Each descriptor relates to the intent of the curriculum and enables staff, parents and wider professionals to understand and identify the stage of development the children are working. In order to ensure children are making progress, teachers and key workers place children on the descriptors. Alongside this, children are also assessed against our Image of the Child and placed on our wheel. These assessments are made each term and shared with parents. When children arrive at Fairfield, a baseline assessment is completed within 3 weeks of entry. The majority of children start Fairfield at two years old – the statutory two year check is completed and used as the on entry baseline assessment. Children are also assessed and tracked using The Welcomm Speech and Language programme, Lancashire's tracker identifying if children are working above, in line or below expected developmental levels and also Red Rose Phonics.

Children who have specific needs and special rights are supported through individual Targeted Learning Plans. Their small significant learning steps are documented and shared with parents every four to six weeks.

All staff are responsible for making observations on children throughout their time in nursery. It is important to remember that there are many significant events that need to be recorded. These will often be repeated in a variety of ways, especially if a child is following a particular schema. Recording repetitive behaviour helps all staff understand the current learning journey of the individual child. It allows all staff to build relationships with a wider group of children, not only their own key children.

Filming of children's learning and development is a tool we use to share information with parents. This will be part of the daily routine and allow us to compile studies of the children over a period of time. Collecting a series of film observations enables us to see the progress children are making focusing on the curriculum, schemas, well being and involvement.

Focusing on our Image of the Child is a key way of documenting the children's learning in their learning journey. All staff contribute to observations of the children and how they are working in our Image of the Child. They 'find the magic' moments. Learning journeys follow the children during their time at Fairfield. It is important that the children and parents are able to look back, enabling them to reflect on their own learning. Images are placed in each child's learning journey folder and are always accessible for children, parents and staff.