

Carterhatch



Infant School

The best start in life for all our children - no
excuses - no compromise

***Early Years
Foundation Stage
Policy – Including
Teaching & Learning***

Updated September 2017



Sir Michael Wilshaw says:-

“Early years provision is only as good as the quality of interaction between adults and children.”

“Babies and young children are experiencing and learning in the here and now, not storing up their questions until tomorrow or next week. It is in that moment of curiosity, puzzlement, effort or interest – the ‘teachable moment’ – that the skilful adult makes a difference. By using this cycle on a moment-by-moment basis, the adult will be always alert to individual children (observation), always thinking about what it tells us about the child’s thinking (assessment), and always ready to respond by using appropriate strategies at the right moment to support children’s well-being and learning (planning for the next moment).”

From National Standards document Learning, Playing and Interacting P.22 - 23

Three Characteristics of Effective Learning (Revised EYFS)

Playing and Exploring – do they investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’?

Learning Actively – do they concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements?

Creating and Thinking Critically – do they have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

OFSTED – September 2015

“Teaching should not be taken to imply a ‘top down’ or formal way of working. It is a broad term that covers the many different ways in which adults help young children learn. It includes their interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities: communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating and setting challenges. It takes account of the equipment adults provide and the attention given to the physical environment, as well as the structure and routines of the day that establish expectations”



An enabling indoor environment

The environment supports children to be fully engaged in purposeful play of their own choice and interest. As with the outdoor area, the indoor area allows for learning in all areas of development, but the two areas do not mirror each other. This is the ideal place for children to be calm and quiet (and we enforce this requirement firmly and consistently), pursuing activities which require small equipment and using resources that will not survive the outdoor elements.

In the EYFS classes, the children choose where to go and what to do from the moment they arrive – they initiate their own learning and adults join them and support them in their pursuits. In order to support genuine choice we have a **workshop style environment** setup in classes. In all areas, the resources are available and accessible to the children at all times, but nothing is set out. **The areas are clear, stocked and tidy at the start of the day:-** the tables and carpet areas are free of equipment but the resources are available next to these areas. For example, the unit below contains a box of playdough and resources to be used with the playdough. It is placed near a table and the children can choose whether or not to go to this area and what to do if they do go there.



This allows **the children to be in control of their learning**. They are able to select the area in which to play, the resources to use in that area and what to do with them. Obviously their choices are limited by the areas and resources available and it is therefore crucial to have appropriate areas with varied, high quality, open-ended resources. It is also vital that the areas are well stocked, tidy, clearly labelled (with picture and word) or shadowed and arranged to allow optimum access. We constantly review and reflect on the environment to see which areas are proving productive and which need altering. For example, although we have opportunities for mixing sand and water outside, we want the indoor sand to be dry to offer different opportunities. Therefore it is necessary to keep the water tray and equipment away from the sand tray. We also try to avoid making new playdough every day – so this also needs to be placed away from the water and sand.



Shadowing resources (as seen with the water equipment above) helps children to be independent when tidying up. In the photo above, the contents of the larger boxes on the bottom shelf can be changed to meet emerging interests. We also use shelving like this indoors for blocks (seen below), playdough equipment, sand resources, individual items (timers, abacus etc) and creative equipment.



The resources (as well as the areas) are assessed and reviewed constantly with changes made as necessary.

We combine the creative area and the 'writing' area. Young children combine their different types of mark-making – they make a card and write a message; they draw a picture and write a story; they create a robot and add labelled controls. In many cases, they need creative equipment **and** writing implements – we therefore store them all in one area, as well as providing mark-making equipment in all areas.



Children experience maths in almost all areas of the indoor classroom and we ensure that there is equipment (including numicon) in all areas to facilitate this. Because the children select and access resources themselves, they know where they are from and they know where to put them back when they have finished using them or at the end of the session.



We review our provision in terms of levels of involvement. If an area or a resource is not engaging children in purposeful play, then we remove it or change it. For example, threading beads might engage a few children in nursery, but cutting fabric and sewing it to make a real bag will be far more engaging and lead to higher levels of learning. Areas that deliver the highest levels of involvement are the role play areas, creative area (including sewing), small blocks, sand, water, playdough and small world equipment (including cars and dinosaurs). With regard to role play, we ensure that there is always a “home corner” (either indoors or outside) as this is what is familiar to the children – this is where they can practise being the adults that they know (and in doing so, develop the vital life skill of empathy). Other role play is set up as and when an interest emerges – as seen below with a vet’s office.



We have ipads, digital cameras, CD players and interactive white boards readily available to support and record learning.

We ensure that our book areas are as inviting as possible. We have a sofa, cushions, puppets and props to make the experience engaging. We also have books in numerous areas of the indoor classroom – craft books in the creative area, cookery books in the role play, construction and reference books in the small world area. The children have a folder each and these are stored in low units so that they can take theirs out and look at them whenever they wish.



The most valuable resource in any setting is the group of adults. The adults are there to teach, they do this through observing and interacting. We ensure that our adults receive training so that they can spot a ‘teachable moment’ while the children are engaged, they know the children very well and have a sound understanding of child development. This ensures that the adults enhance and extend the learning at the appropriate level for each unique child. Generally, the adults go to the children. The children become involved in activities of their choice. The adults observe the children carefully, join them, when appropriate, and engage in quality interactions (teaching) to move the learning on, they “teach” through modelling, suggesting, providing vocabulary or resources, explaining or encouraging. In this way, if a child encounters a challenge, then they will not give up. Rather they will be supported to persevere, overcome the challenge and move forward in their learning.

In summary, any area or resource can be evaluated by assessing the levels of involvement that the children display. Children display the highest levels of involvement when they are pursuing their own interests in an environment that allows them to take risks and challenge themselves in their endeavours. The physical environment needs to be well laid out and equipped with high quality, open-ended, varied resources. The adults are key in creating the emotional environment that supports them in this – ensuring that they feel confident and independent, ready to try new things in the knowledge that the adults will help them if necessary, without taking over. As Sugata Mitra says “Children will learn to do what children want to learn to do” so we support them by creating an enabling environment including enabling adults.

‘In the moment’ planning

“Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all the areas of learning and development.” (Revised EYFS) Our practitioners continually plan “in the moment”. Each time they interact with a child, they are observing, assessing, planning for, and responding to, that individual child.

The traditional cycle of observation, assessment and planning is recommended in numerous documents including Development Matters and The National Strategies document “Learning, Playing and Interacting”. In this document we wish to highlight the section that states:-

“Babies and young children are experiencing and learning in the here and now, not storing up their questions until tomorrow or next week. *It is in that moment of curiosity, puzzlement, effort or interest – the ‘teachable moment’ – that the skilful adult makes a difference.* By using this cycle on a moment-by-moment basis, the adult will be always alert to individual children (observation), always thinking about what it tells us about the child’s thinking (assessment), and always ready to respond by using appropriate strategies at the right moment to support children’s well-being and learning (planning for the next moment).”

So what then does this look like in practice? The indoor environment has been explained above and the same principles apply outdoors. The aim is to organise the setting - including the time, the resources and the adults - to ensure that the majority of the children display deep levels of engagement for the majority of the time. If that happens, then we can be confident that they are making good progress. When deeply engaged, their brains will be “lit up”, adults will notice when support is needed, interactions will ensure that obstacles are overcome or that new directions and possibilities are available and learning will be meaningful and fun!!

As mentioned, an enabling environment is critical. ***When the children arrive, nothing is set out but everything is available and accessible.*** The doors to the outside are open immediately. From day one, the children are supported to explore the environment to see what is available, to select the resources they would like, to use them appropriately and to tidy the area when they have finished. Tidy up time is very short – most areas have been tidied during the session. Because the children have got the resources out themselves, they know where to return them to. The induction period is always critical – even more so when the children have so much autonomy and choice. Small groups with high ratios of adults is the ideal and part time attendance in the first two weeks can ensure that the routines and expectations are established efficiently. Ground rules are essential when so much freedom is given – all the children need to feel safe. Clear and consistent expectations are key. For example, indoors the children will walk and use quieter voices – running and shouting can be done outside.

Our outdoor areas are designed to support all areas of the children’s development. The sand area is large and is surrounded by shelving and baskets stocked with resources. The resources available are traditional sand toys, as well as natural shells, sticks, stones, etc and cooking utensils, plates, cups, cutlery etc. to support a variety of play ideas. A water supply is essential, this allows for cooking, chemistry, cement mixing, moat filling or alchemy! There are lots of opportunities for risk – rope ladders, trees to climb, PE equipment for the children to set up, woodwork with adult-sized hammers and saws, two-wheeler bikes. Again the crucial induction period ensures that the children know how to use equipment and are encouraged to think about the risks themselves. (All our “risk assessments” have been re-written as “benefit/risk assessments” – listing all the benefits of the activities before the possible risks. This has been a rewarding exercise – leading practitioners to evaluate why we encourage certain activities, even though there may be a small risk attached).

The sessions are organised to maximise the amount of “free-flow” time available. Just making this one change in the behaviour of staff can bring about a complete shift in emphasis and focus. The children become the focus instead of a particular activity that the adult has planned. About 20 minutes before the end of the session, the children tidy up and come together for about 15 minutes before lunch and/or home time. (These group times may be used for phonics, stories, maths, songs, etc, as appropriate.)

The weekly organisation is as follows:- Each Friday 3 children are selected who will be the “focus children” for the following week. These children are given a form to take home for their parents to complete – asking about current interests of the child, any special events in the family and any questions the parents may have. We also send home cameras with the focus children and the families take photos over the weekend and return the camera and form on the Monday.

On Monday an A3 “Learning Journey” sheet for each of the focus children is put on the planning board. These sheets are blank (except for a couple of words to indicate areas that the staff or parents would like to try and capture). During the week any adult who has a productive interaction with a focus child records the event on the learning

journey. It is important that the whole cycle is recorded – i.e. the initial observation, the assessment, the planning, teaching and the outcome. An example of such an entry might read:-

“Ross was looking at the plants and said ‘I need some carrots for my soup’. He started to pull up some onions. I joined him and explained how to look carefully at the leaves and told him what the leaves on the carrot plants looked like. He examined the plants carefully and then pulled up three carrots.”

Another example might be:-

“Jenna was standing by the rope bridge watching a boy go across and back. I joined her and she said ‘I want a turn on there!’ I encouraged her to repeat the phrase ‘Can I have a turn please?’ After a few minutes Jenna approached the boy and said ‘Can I have a turn please?’ The boy went across once more and then jumped down ‘there you go’. Jenna played with the boy for a long period taking turns independently.”

Quality interactions should, and usually do, lead to progress. In both the examples above, the “plan” was formulated and delivered “in the moment”. Entries on the learning journeys are often accompanied by a photo. The sheets are gradually filled up over the course of the week and become a wonderful individual record. Teachers meet with the parents of the focus children in the week following their focus week – they therefore do 3 parent meetings each week throughout the year. The discussion revolves around the completed learning journey – a truly individual picture of the child’s experience.

Example of a completed Learning Journey

Learning Journey For IWO Term Autumn / Date 5/10/15

Entries should include the initial observation (& assessment), the teaching and the outcome. *see photo in 16*

P	COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE	✓
E	PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	✓
S	PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	✓
E	LITERACY	✓
S	MATHEMATICS	✓
P	UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD	✓
E	EXPRESSIVE ARTS AND DESIGN	✓
C	Other school Curriculum contribution	✓

Identified Areas For Focus:
 General/Parents: Speaking?
 Profile:
 • Settling into reception.
 • enjoying a wide range of activities.

Iwo draws a spider web & sticks on sequins he shows T food T praises/wonders spider T asks Iwo to write his name Iwo uses namecard Iwo indicates his face by facepaint T points Iwo's face & shares pic at carpet time with class

Iwo watches Kayla-Kae make a puppet show w puppets. Iwo says Iwo if he would like to help yes he selects lolly stick and sticks on material, a animal he says which animal, a bear

Iwo makes wooden cat he holds wood up to puppet & laughs. Tio says out so big he goes back to wood work bench & makes them smaller. Iwo supports him when cutting out puppet theatre.

Iwo shows T his woodwork T wonders if horse T praises. wonders about eyes & hair yes T provides some ribbon Iwo chooses length & cuts he nails to head & adds eyes. T provides paper to search hobby horses Iwo spots ears and wheels. Iwo adds ears then shows T his moult T models cutting wood with saw to show-line for mouth Iwo adds to horse using same technique. T provides wheels Iwo hammers first one on top but he adjusts by hammering nail out a bit then checks wheel can turn he repeats with second wheel is like Bruno's T praises

Iwo is looking at books in reading area T's 10 little monkeys jumping on the bed very loud. T praises/reminds Iwo to be quiet

Iwo made a puppet show + wanted to write a story for it. Iwo wrote his name independently Iwo introduced letter card + showed T the letters he needed. Iwo wrote these, some letter formation. Iwo showed T the number line. Iwo suggested counting along the line looking for the numbers he needed. Iwo shared his story with the class. *see 3 & 16*

Iwo works with Andrew in tree house pulling up bucket & pulling up. Iwo models pull up. Iwo helps Andrew. Iwo repeats to pull up in sand area. Tio says continue to work together

Areas For Future Focus:
 Iwo's interests: At home model language if Iwo speaks English
 Profile:
 • Building confidence with speaking by modelling lang when he uses one word.

It is particularly important that the adults’ input is recorded.

The symbol “T” indicates “adult”. Adult input (teaching) is highlighted in yellow:-

“T suggests ... encourages ...models ...asks ponders ...helps ... offers resources .. etc.”

So, "What about all the other children?" Well they too are pursuing their own learning, in the same environment, supported by the same adults. However, their journey is not recorded in such a detailed way, except when they are a focus child. Any "Wow!" moments are recorded for individual children and added to individual records – whether focus children or not. In addition staff complete another sheet which is really a group learning journey to record any significant events that occur in the class and that involve a group of children and essentially it contains the same observation cycle – observation, assessment, planning, observation. An example might read:-

"Group building a bridge with blocks. The bridge was very wobbly. T joined the group and encouraged them to consider if the bridge was safe and how it could be improved. Several children had ideas and the group tried several different designs. The final bridge was much more stable."

In almost all cases, the "next step" is completed immediately - in this case 'discuss safety and re-design the bridge.'

"In the moment" planning is a very simple idea – observing and interacting with children as they pursue their own interests and also assessing and moving the learning on in that moment. The written account of these interactions becomes a learning journey. This approach leads to deep level learning and wonderful surprises occur daily.

We work in this way because ... high level involvement occurs in child initiated activity. When children show high levels of involvement, that is when there is progress and development occurring – when the brain is at its most active. High level involvement occurs most often when children are able to pursue their own interests in an enabling environment, supported by skilful staff.

Planning in the moment helps to make this possible.

Woodwork in the Early Years



If we could scan the brain of this three year old child, we would see great activity – powerful learning and rapid progress. Such deep-level involvement is always found at the woodwork benches. Woodwork can always be seen in both the nursery and reception classes, with children accessing the resources and tools independently, working safely and creatively at the very limits of their capabilities. The children choose to go to the work bench and can make whatever they want. Adults are available, when needed, to model skills and techniques, to give vocabulary, to encourage and to make suggestions. The interactions, therefore, allow the children to realise their ideas and to overcome any obstacles.

The assessment below demonstrates that the benefits of woodwork clearly outweigh the risks.

Benefits

Woodwork is the perfect activity in which children can demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning:-

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 achievements; and

creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Also all the seven areas of learning in the current EYFS framework will be developed:-

Physical development:- With the use of real tools and hard wood (rather than balsa wood), the muscles in

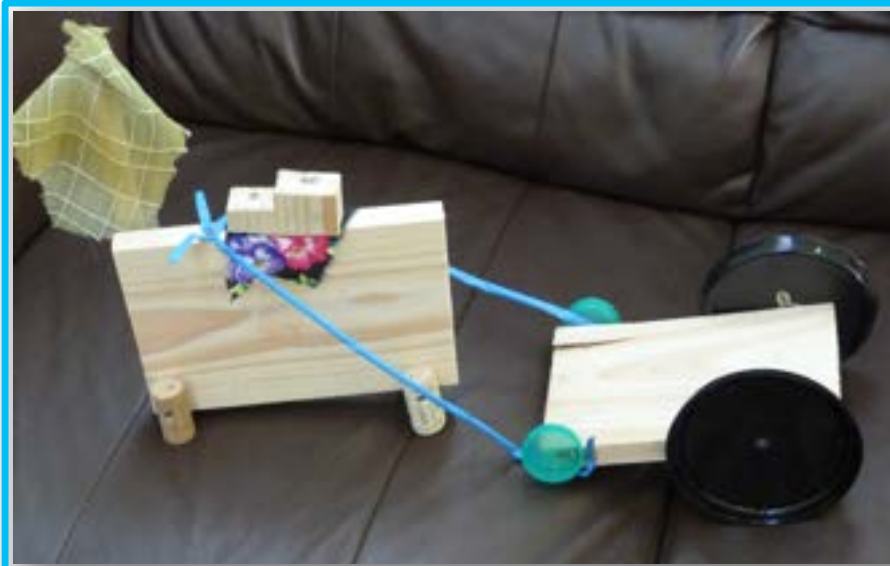
the hands and arms become stronger and the children develop more control of these muscles. They learn to vary the amount of force used - with hammers and saws. They also develop hand-eye co-ordination in order to hit the nails. Fine motor control is developed as children hold the thin nails in place. Through experience they learn how to keep their fingers out of the way of the hammer.

Personal, social and emotional development:- children demonstrate deep levels of involvement when undertaking a woodwork task. It is often noticeable that children who normally will not persevere at a task are prepared to try for far longer at woodwork - perhaps because they realise it is something truly challenging but also "real". Children will return to unfinished work the following day if necessary. They learn to share and take turns, negotiating and discussing routines and rules. They learn how to keep themselves and others safe. They realise that a real hammer can do serious harm and they do treat the tools with respect. They learn to follow agreed rules. Children who find it difficult to conform are often so keen to participate, that they do manage to comply with requests and boundaries at the woodwork bench - just so that they get their turn. They take great pride in their achievements and therefore their self-esteem is boosted. For most children woodwork is a new activity and therefore they are taking a risk just by becoming involved - they take further risks using the equipment but learn to do this safely and independently and the results are greatly appreciated.



Communication and language development:- There is always a lot of discussion at the work bench and therefore language is developed. Children have to follow instructions and will often be heard explaining the rules to other children. They encounter problems all the time and discuss solutions. They explain what they are doing and learn the vocabulary associated with the activity.

Creative development:- With many activities for young children, the process is as important (if not more important) than the product. This is definitely the case when children are first starting at woodwork. They need to develop the techniques. Eventually, they will start to use their imagination, combined with their knowledge of the task, to plan what to make. With support, they will have learnt how it is possible to combine various materials and media and this will increase their options and possibilities. Many of the models become the starting point for a story which also supports creative development, as well as language skills.



Knowledge of the World:- Clearly through working with wood, the children will learn about its properties and the properties of other materials that they combine with the wood. They will learn about how to use tools and how to combine different materials. With appropriate interactions, they could learn about the source of wood and various types of wood. They will be experiencing the process of 'design, make, review'.

Mathematical development:- This pervades every aspect of the task - from experiencing the weight and size of the wood to deciding how many wheels to add to a truck. Children will be thinking about size and shape, as well as number. Again, with appropriate interaction, their thoughts can be vocalised, refined and developed.

Literacy development:- Children will often combine mark-making with woodwork - adding drawn features to their models. They also add their name to ensure their work is not lost. They will use books to refer to for ideas or information. Many models will feature in stories and the literacy possibilities within this are infinite.

There are not many activities which appeal to so many children and have such broad and deep learning potential.

Risks and actions:-

Hazard	Possible scale of injury	Precautions to put in place to reduce risk	Risk rating
General risk of injury through use & misuse of tools	Medium	Staff will ensure that children are closely supervised during the induction period until all children have been trained in the use of the tools and comply with the "2 children at each bench" rule. Staff will then remain vigilant in watching the woodwork area. Adults all aware of how to get first aid help if necessary.	Low
Children with behavioural difficulties/developmental delay might not adhere to the rules and might not use the tools safely	Medium	Staff will ensure close supervision of these children if they are near the woodwork area.	Low
Sawdust in eyes	Low	Children to wear goggles.	Low
Hit fingers with hammer	Low	Train children to tap lightly to fix nail in place and then move hand away when they hit harder.	Low
Children get hit by moving tools	Medium	Strict imposition of 2 children only limit at the bench. Staff will be scanning and monitoring the area at all times.	Low
Cut with saw	Low	Strict rule - 'wood in vice'.	Low
Splinters	Low	Wood will be checked. Children shown how to use sandpaper.	Low
Sharp nails cause injury	Low	Protruding nails will be hammered down. Children will not remove nails from work area.	Low

Practicalities:-

Induction and access:- The benches are outdoors and in an area that can be seen at all times. When the children first start in our classes, woodwork is available immediately and we have an adult beside the bench at all times. We encourage parents to help ensure that the children adhere to the very simple rules:- two children at each bench, two hands on the saw. There is zero tolerance of any dangerous behaviour and the children quickly learn to behave appropriately if they want to be involved. The woodwork is part of our continuous provision – it is always available and, therefore, does not cause a ‘mad rush’ to have a turn. After the induction period, adults ‘keep an eye’ on the woodwork area, but an adult is not always ‘stationed’ there.

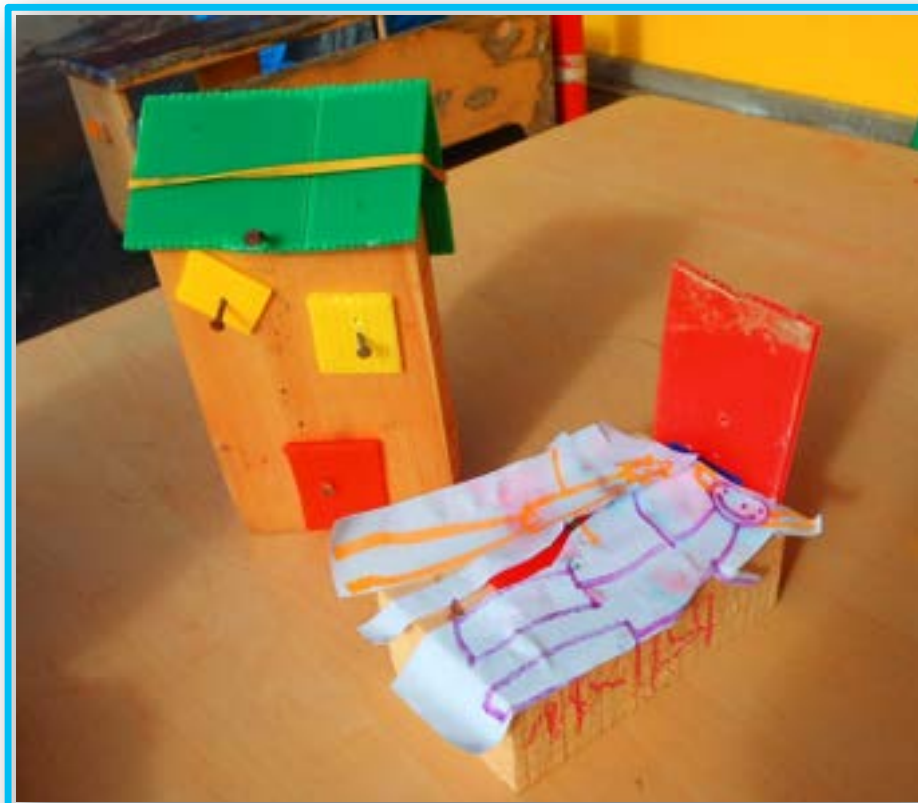
Equipment:- Small claw hammers, smooth fine nails and adult-size hack-saws. The work bench needs to be sturdy and an appropriate height.



Additional resources:- We add a variety of resources for children to fix to the wood such as milk bottle tops, elastic bands, fabric, corex, corks, string etc. Paint, felt pens and pencils are available to decorate models as well.



Woodwork leads to deep learning and outstanding progress in all areas of development. Children are attracted to the challenges it brings and fascinated by the possibilities. Adults can be anxious about this activity but the resulting engagement and learning amazes and delights adults and children alike.



Transition to Nursery and Reception

When a child sets off for their first day at school, they should be full of positive emotions – excitement, confidence and happiness. This happens if they know exactly where they are going, who will be there, what they will be able to do when they get there and how long they will be staying there. A successful transition means the child settles quickly into school, learning and developing from day one. Practitioners welcome a class of children and these children are settled, confident and ready to learn.



Transition will be successful if:-

1. Practitioners know each child, including their interests and needs
2. The school is able to meet these interests and needs
3. Practitioners have formed a relationship with each family
4. Children know the practitioners
5. Children are familiar and happy with their new school environment, its routines and expectations
6. Children have met and made friends with some of the other children who will be in their class

Getting to know the new Reception children

Visit the pre-schools:- Most Nursery age children attend a pre-school setting and practitioners there will know them very well. In the Summer Term, the Reception teachers visit children in their pre-school and see them operating in an environment which they know, with staff that they trust. At the visit, before the child knows who we are, we observe them to assess their social skills, independence, confidence, language and physical ability. After about 20 minutes, we have a good picture of the child and can then play with them for a while, having some fun so that they have a happy first impression of us. Finally we spend time talking to the key person and looking at any records or “special books”.



Play sessions in school:- Children from our Nursery visit and play for an hour at a time, with a few of their friends. For children from outside the school, we invite 3 or 4 at a time (with a parent) to come and join in with a free-flow session in Reception. This allows the children a chance to explore their new class and to meet some of the staff and children that will be coming to school with them.

Home visits:- We spend the first week of the Autumn Term carrying out home visits and making final preparations to the class environment. This visit is crucial as the starting point for building a relationship with the families, a time to exchange information and a further opportunity to gain a better understanding of the children.



Prepare the environment:- Staff prepare the environment to ensure that every child will have a wide choice of activities and also that routines and expectations are established from day one. For example, coat pegs, self-registration, resource storage and labels must all be ready so that routines are established from the first day.



Photos of families are on display when the children come to school for the first day. This is just one more way to help them feel welcome and valued.



Induction:- The induction period is carefully planned to ensure the children remain happy and confident at this time. Once we have some knowledge of the children, we decide which children would benefit from starting school in the first sessions. These are the quieter and least confident children, possibly the youngest children and we also bring some good role models into this group. We have morning and afternoon sessions.

This means that in the vital first few days there are small numbers of children in each class with all the staff meaning the children get quality adult attention and that routines and expectations are established immediately. It also means that staff get to know the children so well, that initial assessments are completed with confidence. Parents also play a crucial part during the induction period. We encourage them to stay with their child for as long as necessary and they help teach the routines too. This is especially valuable for children with English as an additional language as the parent can translate the messages from the staff.



By the time the children arrive for their first day at school, we already have a relationship with the children, and their families, and the children are already familiar with the school. Therefore, many children settle immediately and the parents are able to leave them within minutes. For a few children, they may need a parent with them for several weeks and we accommodate this for as long as necessary. Eventually, we will make the decision, along with the parent, that they should leave. The most important aspect of this decision is that it is made jointly with the parents and also that the child is aware of what is happening.

The final aspect of transition is to decide when the children should stay full time (for Reception Children) or stay for their full five sessions (for Nursery Children). Rather than have a set timetable for this, we treat each child as an individual and decide what is appropriate for that child. We have devised a list of criteria that we would like the children to meet before they stay, the benefits of this are discussed with parents at the home visit.



Get transition right and you will reap the benefits for the whole year. You will have a group of children who are deeply engaged in their learning because they are with adults who know and understand them in an enabling environment that meets their needs and interests. It is definitely worth investing time and energy in this vital aspect of our work.

