



# Strawberry Hill Pre-School

## Learning and Development Policy

Strawberry Hill Pre-School aims to use the Early Years Foundation Stage to support, inform, guide and challenge all staff with responsibility for the care and education of children from birth up to the age of five years including those children with special educational needs or disability.

The staff of Strawberry Hill Pre-School believe that it is important to value all babies and children as competent learners from birth. All children have, from birth, a need to develop; therefore we recognise their individuality, efforts and achievements.

Relationships with adults and children are crucial in a child's life and a relationship with a key person is essential. Children learn best through interaction with people and active exploration of the world around them.

### **Learning and Development**

We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage, which comprises of seven areas of learning. These are split into three Prime areas and four specific areas. These are as follows:

#### **Prime Areas**

*Communication and Language* – involves giving children the opportunity to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations

*Physical Development* – involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; to develop their co-ordination, control and movement. Children will also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity and to understand healthy choices in relation to food.

*Personal, Social and Emotional Development* – involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

#### **Specific Areas**

*Literacy* – involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters to begin to read and write. A wide range of reading material is available to ignite their interest.

*Mathematics* – involves providing children to develop their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces and measures.

*Understanding the World* – involves guiding children to make sense of the natural world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

*Expressive Arts and Design* – involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play and design and technology.

We implement these areas of learning within the children's play either by adult-led activities or through child-initiated activities. We continually observe and assess your children during their play and document using learning stories, notes and photographs. These build up your child's learning journey whilst they are with us, this document is yours to keep and share with school at transition time. By using these documents we can plan for your child's next steps. We encourage you to provide information for the learning journeys, so that we can work together to ensure your child is ready for school when the time arises.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play by a mix of adult led and child-initiated activities. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems and relate to others.

We shall take into account the following ways that children learn to plan next steps and assess development.

*Playing and Exploring* – children investigate and experience things and 'have a go'. *Active Learning* – children concentrate and keep trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements.

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

The level of progress children should be expected to have attained by the end of the EYFS is defined by the Early Learning Goals. (The first year at school, known as the foundation stage, is the last year of the EYFS).

When your child is aged between two and three, practitioners will review their progress and provide parents/carers with a short written summary of their child's development in the prime areas. If concerns are identified or special educational needs or disabilities we will plan how to support your child's future learning and development, involving other professionals if applicable. Your consent will be required to proceed with this action.

Play supports all aspects of children's development. Through play, children learn by doing rather than being told. Young children are individuals and progress at different rates. Schedules and routines must follow the child's own needs.

Children learn when they are given the appropriate responsibility, allowed to make decisions, choices and errors and are respected as autonomous and competent learners.

The contexts in which children learn need to be relevant, meaningful, motivating and interesting to them. A play-based Early Years Foundation Stage supports all aspects of children's development. Through play, both indoors and outdoors, children learn by having practical, hands-on, meaningful opportunities to experience real life situations, make choices and have ownership over their actions and reactions.

The Early Years Foundation Stage supports the child's inbuilt curiosity and desire to make sense of the world around them and helps them discover that learning is interesting and fun; this is vital if children are going to be keen to learn for the rest of their lives.

The staff at Strawberry Hill Pre-School actively promote positive attitudes to diversity and differences within all children, parents and staff. The aim is to ensure that we help children and staff learn to value different aspects of their own and other peoples lives. This includes ensuring that all people who use the nursery feel included, safe and valued, that all children and adults are treated as individuals and are not discriminated against, and that all children are listened to and respected.

We believe that parents and families are central to the wellbeing of the child and should be involved in their children's experiences and development. Early years staff need to make visible children's learning to enable parents to understand, contribute to and support their child's learning.

At Strawberry Hill Pre-School, we believe a high quality early years experience provides a firm foundation on which to build future academic, social and emotional success. Key to this is ensuring continuity between all settings and that children's social, emotional and educational needs are addressed appropriately. Transition between nursery/childminder/school (or another nursery setting) should be seen as a process not an event and will be planned for and discussed with children (when appropriate) and parents.

The pre-school nursery puts into practice the four principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage which guide the work of all our staff and are grouped into four distinct, but complementary themes:

#### A Unique Child -

- Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured.

#### Positive Relationships -

- Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.

#### Enabling Environments -

- The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.

#### Learning and Development –

- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

At Strawberry Hill Pre-School we encourage all children to be active, autonomous learners; we do this by providing personalised learning, development and care through

- Treating each child as a unique individual
- Supporting all areas of their development
- Valuing and respecting the diversity of individuals and communities through inclusive practice
- Keeping them safe and protected

- Supporting their health and well-being
- Positive relationships
- Respecting each other
- Forming strong partnerships with parents
- Providing warm, trusting relationships that support learning
- A key person system which develops secure attachments and allows for every child to feel loved and supported.
- Enabling Environments
- Individualised observation, assessment and planning
- Providing a range of materials which support every child's unique learning journey
- A rich and varied learning environment indoors and outdoors which supports children's learning and development
- Working in the wider context by working in partnership with other settings, other professionals and the community in the wider context

### Learning and Development

Valuing all play and exploration which will reflect the interests and preoccupations of each child.

Providing many opportunities for active learning which involve other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.

Supporting children's creativity and critical thinking and supporting all seven areas of learning and development

### Organisation of the Nursery Provision

Research shows that the best form of quality practice for young children involves structuring of the provision in terms of: Space, Time, Materials and Equipment

At Strawberry Hill Pre-School we:

- provide a stimulating environment with easily accessible resources both indoors and outdoors allowing children time to become engrossed in activities, complete them and return to them later if they wish.
- Offer children a range of well planned play opportunities which offer continuity and progression, e.g. physical play, creative play, imaginative play, social play, play with natural materials.
- Provide play contexts which are well planned and resourced to foster all aspects of children's development (physical, emotional, social and intellectual).
- Provide situations which will enable children to appreciate the multicultural society in which they live and provide appropriate, good quality materials and resources that reflect careful planning and enable children to interact at their own level of development, allowing for progression by exciting children's interests and curiosity.

Staff Interaction (which requires knowledge of child development and pedagogy (teaching).

- Partnership with Parents

- Relationships with other agencies
- Staff and Parents
- At Strawberry Hill Pre-School, Early Years staff develop close relationships with children in their key person groups.
- Involve parents and encourage them to contribute to and support their child's learning.
- Understand the importance of play and enjoy playing alongside the children indoors and outdoors.
- Encourage children to explore everyday situations in their play.
- Respect and value children's play and learning and are able to intervene sensitively in it using language to support and extend children's thinking.
- Help children to become independent learners and to develop their creativity and imagination.
- Have time to observe children at play and monitor their development in all areas (including outdoors) in order to form future planning of play provision and experiences.
- Respond to observation and assessment of the children's developmental needs and interest.
- The Early Years Staff at Strawberry Hill Pre-School use the Early Years Foundation Stage as a planning framework. The Nursery offers a broad curriculum using the 6 areas of learning and development: Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication, Language and Literacy, Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy, Knowledge and Understanding of the World, Physical Development and Creativity.

At Strawberry Hill Pre-School we work with other agencies in order to share expertise and knowledge for the benefit of all or individual children and for the development of staff.

These agencies may include: Children's centres, Health visitors, The Area SENCO, Portage workers and the child development unit, Community paediatric nurses, The Local Authority Early Years team, Initial response team (IRT), Local Early Years cluster groups, National Early Year's organisations (NDNA- NCMA- PLA-Montessori), Specific voluntary health information organisations such as Asthma UK, Meningitis Trust, Health protection agency and any other relevant local or national agencies

Broad Guidelines for: Adults

- Enable children to initiate their own learning as well as take part in adult-initiated experiences
- Positively encourage all children to have equal access to all play experiences indoors and outdoors
- Challenge stereotypical ideas about play
- An effective key person system ensures that children form strong and secure relationships with a key person and benefit from high quality experiences which build upon their interests and respond to their needs.

- Men and women are encouraged to take part in all types of play to challenge stereotypical ideas about what is suitable for girls and boys.
- Adults interact sensitively with children to heighten the quality of experiences and build upon the children's interests.
- All staff see parents as partners in providing care and education for their children, and will be encouraged and supported to take part in that process.
- We have a parents rota that enables parents to sign up and see what the day-to-day routine is like and join in and help with the children in various activities.

### Environment and resources

Children will be consulted and encouraged to help staff plan and organise the environment and resources giving them opportunities to learn and help them value learning.

The learning environment in and out of doors is planned carefully to ensure that children can access and participate in all areas of provision.

Resources are organised to allow children to access them independently by appropriate use of the floor, treasure baskets, low shelving, silhouettes and picture labels.

Resources include bought, found (e.g. recycled materials, shells) and improvised items (old curtains to make dens, shawls etc.).

### Observation

Adults take time to look, listen and note while working with the children. Observation helps adults to get to know the children and identify their interests and abilities in order to plan experiences appropriately.

### Planning

Play experiences are planned in response to observations of the children and knowledge of the child gained from parents and other sources. They include possible learning and development but also allow for play to arise spontaneously from children's own ideas.

Possible learning intentions in short-term planning are drawn and developed from the Early Years Foundation Stage and long term planning. Short term planning is completed weekly informed by observation, assessment and evaluation, but may be altered daily in response to children's interests, needs and responses.

Adults regularly evaluate, reflect on and develop the provision they make for play.

Outdoor exploration is important for all children.

Outdoors is half of the play environment.

### Assessment

Planning, observations and evaluation of play and experiences are provided for all children (Children's Individual Files).

Staff monitor what has been covered, learning priorities are identified for each child and any gaps are identified and incorporated into future planning.

Parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning through discussion, parents evenings, daily feedback, diaries and jottings.

This policy should be kept in the staff file and should be signed by all members of staff at the Pre-School.

Also to be signed by the parent.

Parent signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Policy written on 19 November 2010 by Lisa Neagle

Reviewed on 8.9.11, 8.9.12, 8.9.13,

*Updated September 2014, reviewed July 2015*

*Next Review July 2016*

*All Staff have signed to say that they have read and understood this policy*