



Intent, Implementation and Impact of the Curriculum

Stockingford Maintained Nursery School

September 2021



Our Intent :

We aim for our school to be a place of possibilities for children and their families. A place where children and childhood are recognised, respected and understood, and their ideas and abilities valued and nurtured. We look to motivate, inspire and challenge children in their learning, and to create learning spaces where fascination, creativity and endless possibilities for learning are at the heart of what we do.

We acknowledge that when teaching and learning is relevant, challenging and inspiring, children will develop a true passion and disposition for learning. This passion will support every aspect of growth – physical, social, emotional, intellectual and moral.

We know that when a child has the freedom to explore the world around them and share memorable experiences with their peers and highly trained practitioners who skilfully support and extend learning, learning becomes joyful and long-lasting.

Our Implementation:

The implementation of our curriculum is based on a clear pedagogy which recognises the following key principles:

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and capable
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents / carers
- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

(DFE, Statutory Framework the Early Years Foundation stage, 2021)

Our curriculum supports and extends in the following ways:

- ✚ **Child-led learning** - Children are born with a natural desire to explore and learn and practitioners can support them in this. We do this by creating an enabling environment (both physical and emotional) and through the relationships and interactions that the children experience. In continuous provision we do not plan ahead, rather we remain “in the moment” with the children as they explore and learn. We observe carefully, and enhance the learning whenever we spot a “teachable moment”.

“The concept of sensitive periods refers to distinct phases during early childhood when the brain is best able to receive and use information gained from experience, in order to learn specific skills. The period of birth to five specifically represents a sensitive period for babies and children as it represents a time of fervent growth and development, with neural connectivity being at its most prolific.” (Mine Conkbayir)

- ✚ **Adult directed/supported learning** – Children experience ideas, provocations and knowledge that can support and enhance their child-led learning.
- ✚ A sensitive balance of child-led learning supported by adult directed/supported learning ensures a broad and balanced holistic learning experience over time, dependent upon the child’s cognitive skills, knowledge and development.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning:

These characteristics explain how young children learn.

Playing and exploring – engagement

Relevant learning experiences that are engaging and interactive that facilitate challenging and sustained learning. Learning is defined as the progress in one or more of the following areas:

- ✚ **Skills** – being able to do something, such as a being able to pedal on a trike
- ✚ **Knowledge** – knowledge such as knowing where the small world resources are kept, or knowing that your heart needs to beat to all the time
- ✚ **Concept** : development of an understanding: such as some materials can alter their form: water to ice
- ✚ **Dispositions** – displaying of behaviours that enhances learning such as a willingness to persevere, to ask questions, to have a go

Active learning – motivation

For learning to flourish children need rich opportunities that promote engagement, challenge, inspiration and fascination, for example working collaboratively to build a bridge across a stream.

Creating and thinking critically – thinking

For children's thinking to flourish, practitioners need to know the child and establish secure relationships. It is once such secure relationships are established that practitioners can tune into children's thinking. The use of thinking language can facilitate the means for children to reflect on their learning this includes: open ended questions, running commentaries, wondering and repeating children's language back to them to highlight their thinking.

Extending Children's Thinking and Learning

We value these teaching strategies which are underpinned by a knowledge of child development and warm, trusting relationships.

Observe to Understand

- + “Stand aside for a while and leave room for learning, observe carefully what children do, and then if you have understood well, teaching will be different from before” (Loris Malaguzzi)
- + Use your words wisely

Open ended questions to promote thoughtfulness.

- + A commentary of thoughts and actions to model language
- + Ambitious, rich language to inspire children
- + Specific praise so children know what they have done well

Benign Neglect

- + “non-interference that is intended to benefit someone or something”

- ✚ Allow children to persevere, overcome challenges, develop independence

Model and Guide

- ✚ The Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky) “What a child can do in co-operation today, they can do alone tomorrow”

The environment as the third educator

- ✚ Our Nursery school is a place of possibilities!
- ✚ New experiences in a rich environment to encourage new ways of thinking.
- ✚ Time, permission, open ended resources and a risk-taking culture.

IMPACT of our Teaching and Learning

What Children know and can do?

- ✚ Children's' learning will be closely monitored in close collaboration with parents to ensure that all children are supported to reach significant milestones for their age.
- ✚ Cultural Capital: The essential skills and knowledge that children need to prepare them for future success.
- ✚ As a result, children's well-being and involvement can flourish. They are empowered to have a belief in themselves and their abilities. They are empowered to recognise that they are loved and respected, that they are strong, capable and unique. They will be supported to develop resilience and the perseverance needed to keep on trying when things are challenging.
- ✚ They will supported to have the confidence to try new things, to take risks and be physically active. High quality teaching and learning experiences will enable children to communicate their ideas, beliefs and feelings, choosing different and relevant ways to do this. They will have experienced and remembered a wide range of words through stories, rhymes and poems. They will have the skills to make friends and will show kindness to others. They will know how to look after themselves, their friends, their school and the environment.
- ✚ They will know about important mathematical and scientific concepts. They will have an understanding and respect of the world around them and the world beyond. They will have a desire to learn and be ready for their next stage in education.

Our Approach to Assessment

As a Nursery School we have a responsibility to develop a model of *effective, meaningful and principled* assessment of young children's learning.

- ✚ By effective, we mean a method of assessment that ensures that all children are supported in reaching significant milestones in their development.
- ✚ By meaningful, we mean that the observations made inform our everyday practice and curriculum. By gaining an insight into children's thinking, feeling and needs we can plan our environment and actions to provide future possibilities for learning.
- ✚ By principled, we mean that our focus is on observing to understand children.
- ✚ We will not spend unnecessary amounts of time writing observations or gathering evidence of children's learning. We believe that if we are capturing the moment, we cannot be part of the moment. Instead we have structures in place that enable us to regularly discuss each child as a team.

With thanks to Barnet Early Years Alliance for the opportunity to engage in professional pedagogy discussions, literature review and training opportunities.