Tachbrook Nursery School
Curriculum Policy

'Happy, Healthy, High Expectations'

Reviewed: September 2024

Tachbrook Nursery Early Years Curriculum Policy

Introduction:

Our Early Years Curriculum Policy sets the framework for delivering high-quality education and care for children in their early years. This policy outlines our aims, principles, goals, and strategies that guide our staff in creating a nurturing, stimulating, and inclusive learning environment. It is designed to support children's holistic development and prepare them for future learning and life experiences.

Vision and Values

Our vision is to provide a safe, nurturing, and inspiring environment that fosters every child's holistic development, encourages their curiosity, and supports their individual needs and interests. We value inclusivity, diversity, respect, and collaboration among staff, children, families, carers, and the wider community.

OUR AIMS

We want every child to make good progress during their time at nursery. We know that children learn and develop at different rates, but we want every child to have a secure foundation at the end of their time here, with no child left behind.

Children need:

- play in order to learn
- to make their own choices
- repeat, to practice, to experiment, to investigate
- use all their senses and their bodies
- have space, inside and out
- have continuous access to an interesting garden
- have accessible, open-ended resources
- have long uninterrupted periods of time
- have interested, knowledgeable, confident, adults
- know their current knowledge, interests, ways of learning are the starting point
- know process is as important as product

We want each child to:

- have time and space to play
- be happy here
- make friends
- feel valued by the staff
- be excited about learning new things
- be proud of their achievements
- be reflective, questioning, experimental, curious, persistent
- learn to be effective communicators
- develop skills, knowledge and understanding across a wide range of experiences and areas of learning
- to respect each other, the school building and its equipment and the local environment and community.

We want each parent/carer to feel:

- confident in the education and care we give their children

- part of the school community
- able to approach us with any queries, worries or criticisms they may have

We want each member of staff to:

- Build warm and positive relationships with the children
- respect each child and their family
- implement all school policies
- contribute to the well-being and successful learning of each child and themselves
- maintain a safe and stimulating environment
- continue their professional learning throughout their employment here
- build on the work which parents/carers do with their children outside school
- ensure an active partnership with parents/carers about their child's development

Principles of Early Years Education at Tachbrook Nursery

1. A Child-centred Approach: We recognise that each child is unique, with their own strengths, interests, and learning styles. Our curriculum embraces child-initiated play, exploration, and active engagement in learning experiences.

2. Holistic Development: We promote the physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and creative development of each child, ensuring a balanced curriculum that addresses all areas of growth.

3. Play-based Learning: We acknowledge the importance of play as a primary vehicle for learning. Play is viewed as an essential tool for fostering imagination, problem-solving, social skills, and cognitive development.

4. Building Relationships: We emphasise the significance of positive relationships and interactions between children, staff, families, carers and the community. We believe that strong relationships enhance children's learning experiences and overall well-being.

5. Continuous Observation and Reflection: We use ongoing observation, half termly assessment, and reflection to inform our teaching practices, identify individual learning needs, and provide tailored support to each child.

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS Dfe 2021)

We follow the EYFS framework which sets out the following areas of learning:

The Prime areas

1. Communication and Language Development: We aim to foster children's language skills, including listening, speaking, and early literacy, we want to enable effective communication and provide a foundation for future learning.

2. Personal, Social, and Emotional Development: We support children in developing self-confidence, self-regulation, social skills, empathy, mental health, well-being and a positive sense of self-identity.

3. Physical Development: We promote children's physical well-being, fine and gross motor skills, spatial awareness, and coordination through a range of stimulating activities and experiences both inside and in outside.

The Specific Areas

4. Literacy: We promote early literacy through a combination of focused story sessions and playful and engaging activities that encourage children to explore language and books, develop phonemic awareness, build vocabulary and practice early writing skills.

5. Mathematical understanding: We encourage curiosity, problem-solving, logical thinking, exploration, counting, sorting, knowledge of number, shape, space & measure through hands-on activities and discovery-based learning.

6. Understanding the World: We help introduce children to the natural and made environment, local community and further afield through teaching about cultures, traditions, celebrations and diversity, fostering their curiosity and understanding of the world around them.

7. Expressive Arts and Design: We nurture children's creativity, imagination, self-expression, and appreciation of different art forms, including art, role play, music, drama, dance and our in-house artists in residence.

Implementing our curriculum:

1. Well-Qualified Staff: We have a multi-disciplinary team of staff who are well qualified, knowledgeable in child development, and have the experience and expertise to effectively implement the early years curriculum. We ensure all staff have ongoing professional development opportunities, to remain up to date with advances in practice.

2. Enabling Learning Environment: We have created a well-designed learning environment that is safe, stimulating, and flexible, with resources that reflect children's interests and promote independent exploration.

3. Outdoor play: We believe outdoor play is essential to children's physical development, having a healthy lifestyle and making healthy choices. Children have year-round access to the garden designed to support their gross motor development, schematic play, planting, growing, harvesting, knowledge of seasons, wildlife, minibeasts and some forest school style activities.

4. Collaborative Partnerships: We foster strong relationships and open communication between staff, families, and the wider community to support children's learning, well-being, and smooth transitions between home, nursery, and previous and future educational settings.

5. Individualised Learning & Special Educational Needs: We recognise not all children learn in the same way and in the same order, so we respond to each child's unique needs and abilities, providing differentiated learning, individualised support, and scaffolding to help maximise every child's potential.

6. Assessment and Progress Monitoring: we use termly assessment to track children's progress, identify areas of strength and areas for improvement, and inform teaching strategies and interventions for each child/ groups of children.

6. Professional Reflection and Evaluation: we use end of day evaluation meetings, staff and weekly planning meetings to encourage reflection and evaluation of teaching practices and curriculum effectiveness by all staff, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE LEARNING

We plan for children's development as learners- that is, how they learn and their attitudes and beliefs about learning. Through sensitive interactions during play and planned learning activities, we teach children how to develop effective learning characteristics, such as: showing curiosity, initiating challenges, persevering when a task is difficult and bouncing back from setbacks. We want children to leave nursery with effective learning skills and attitudes that will equip them in their ongoing education and life.

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICE

We are committed to equality of access for all children. That means that all children receive a high quality education, which gives them what they need in order to develop to their full potential- socially, emotionally, physically, cognitively and spiritually. We have high ambitions for all learners, including those with SEND. Our curriculum is designed to give all learners, particularly the most disadvantaged and those with SEND the knowledge, skills and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. We make the most of the opportunities in our community to enrich children and families lives, such as trips to the farm and the Tate and community resources such as the toy library and the Family Hub. We also are aware of the disadvantages of living in our community, such as the lack of gardens- which is why we put such importance on outdoor learning in our nursery garden and forest area.

We know that it is not enough to be inclusive, but that we must also be anti-discriminatory. We will challenge racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism and any other attitudes or behaviour that discriminates against children, families or staff. We will celebrate our differences and similarities and equip children to be responsible, respectful citizens who contribute to society.

CURRICULUM ORGANISATION

We offer a high quality, broad and balanced curriculum tailored to the needs of every child living in our local community. It has 4 aspects:

1. Curriculum Progression Map
2. Focused Weekly Activities
3. Child Initiated Learning
4. Home Links & Enrichment

1. Curriculum Progression Map

Our Curriculum Progression Map sets out a sequential programme of planned learning objectives across the nursery year, covering the prime and specific areas of the EYFS statutory framework. These statements cover the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes we want children to learn. They are linked to a half- termly topic tied to the learning objectives in our curriculum.
Half Termly Overviews set out key questions, topic books, vocabulary, key concepts, core songs & rhymes, circle time, focused activities, phonological awareness, progression reading skills, maths and rhymes staff teach over each half term.

2. Focus Weekly Activities

Focused weekly activities are taught by key people ensuring all planned learning objectives from the Curriculum progression map are covered over the year. Focused activities incorporate key questions, key concepts and vocabulary we want all children to learn, know and remember.

3. Child Initiated Learning

Child initiated learning empowers children to take an active role in their own education by following their interest, curiosity and natural inclination to explore. Staff are skilled at encouraging children to have hands on learning experiences, freedom to make choices, solve problems and engage in self-directed play. Through doing this we want to foster children's independence, creativity and a deeper understanding of the world around them. Our staff are skilled observers, who are trained to join in with play, use open ended questioning and model specific vocabulary to help deepen children's learning. Daily evaluation meetings are used to evaluate child initiated play, build on children's interests and plan next steps.

4. Home Links and Enrichment

Home links and enrichment is the accumulation of all the other knowledge, skills and experiences we want children to gain through our relationship with them, their families, community and cultural surroundings. We want children to be exposed to the diversity of languages within our school; to the arts, literature, traditions and celebrations which we believe play a vital role in shaping children's identities, cultural capital, broadening their perspectives and fostering social integration.

Our Curriculum Policy serves as a guide for creating a rich, stimulating, and inclusive learning environment for young children. By embracing the principles outlined and implementing the strategies provided, we aim to foster each child's holistic development, ignite their curiosity, and prepare them for a lifelong love of learning.

Other polices of interested:

Assessment & Record Keeping
Special Educational Needs
Individual Curriculum Policies