



Play in the curriculum policy

Aims: To give the children opportunities to develop as individuals through interactive play experiences.

To provide exciting play activities which stimulate curiosity and imagination.

To allow scope for social interaction, collaborative learning and the exploration, extension and development of relationships.

To use play in supporting the acquisition of skills in all curriculum areas.

Children learn by experimentation and exploration of the relationships between themselves and everything else in the world. Play is the vehicle which enables these relationships to develop into understanding. At school we harness play as an effective tool for teaching young children.

During the school day, the children will have opportunities for engaging in a variety of different types of play. These play situations are planned and generated to give scope and space for the children to explore aspects of the curriculum and broad social skills. Each planned activity is backed with clear learning objectives.

Adult intervention and interaction within Play is central and integral to the process of helping children to deepen their understanding of complex and inter-related issues. Sometimes this is from a central role in the play situation, sometimes from a “visitor” role and sometimes from more distant intervention, such as providing resources.

Role play and imaginative play are catered for in every classroom, with each having an area reserved as an experiential base. There is a rolling programme throughout the year to bring everyday situations into the classroom to enhance and extend the learning process. Drama and dance sessions within the planned curriculum give additional opportunities for children to express their feelings whilst developing their imagination and creativity (see Policy for Drama). Role play, including Small World play, gives opportunities for the children to interact with their peers in working through problems, trying out different roles, listening to ideas and projecting into the feelings of others. Our role-play clothes are carefully chosen to give a wide variety of experience in manipulating buttons, zips, laces and buckles, which help the children to develop independence in dressing.

Physical play in school is well resourced, with many opportunities available for supervised, free and structured activity. We have large grounds which give scope for running games, team games and imaginative free play. The playground has a variety of markings which give scope for the invention of games and collaborative play and there is a bank of traditional swings. Our Adventure playground is supervised for periods during the day and the children have a rota to ensure equal opportunities for all to enjoy it. There are covered sand pits available for each class to use throughout the year. The school is equipped with various wheeled toys which are used to support learning as well as for free play. (see also Policies for Physical Education, Break time, Lunchtime and Safe Play in addition to the Policy and scheme of work for Games

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teaching). Physical play gives opportunities for exploring movement, sharing equipment, manoeuvring, steering, turning and experiencing speed. Whilst playing together, the children learn about acceptance of rules, co-operation and the need to be aware of others, developing skills in self-control, negotiation and problem-solving.

Aesthetic and creative play are encompassed within the Art, Craft, music and technology curriculum. The children have access to a variety of materials with which to explore and experiment in making patterns, mixing colour and investigating texture and shape. Aesthetic play develops awareness and sensitivity in communicating ideas in visual form and deepens understanding of individual response to Art and the emotional release it can generate. Physical development is facilitated by the development of hand/eye co-ordination and the strengthening of fine muscle control. Through creative activities children learn about listening and interpreting instructions, observing, assessing and copying. They are encouraged to use problem-solving skills and to be aware of the need to look after resources.

Investigative play is encouraged by the provision of activities such as sand, water, construction apparatus and toys which require building skills. Through these activities children are able to develop skills in questioning and reasoning which lead towards scientific and mathematical discovery. Skills such as sorting, classifying, matching, counting and estimating are all critical in developing good mathematical and scientific thinking. In constructional situations, children learn about the joys of achieving success and how to accept failure as a tool for achieving success. They are able to develop skills in manipulating and responding to the demands and constraints of different materials. All activities which encourage investigative play require the children to select and sort appropriate tools and materials which will enable them to accomplish the task. They are encouraged to predict, discuss ideas and give indications of what they think might happen in any given situation. As in many other types of play, investigative play develops concentration skills, fine muscle control and tactile awareness.

Social play is the core skill which all children need to develop to succeed throughout life. We encourage the children to sustain their play for a reasonable period, sharing toys, working space and resources. They are required to co-operate, interact with other children and adults, wait for turns, communicate ideas and be sensitive to the needs of others. Acceptance of failure is a fundamental skill. We encourage the children to persevere with tasks, asking for adult help when necessary and learning to adapt and incorporate the ideas of others into their own alternative strategies. Skills developed in play situations become central and integral to the child as a social individual, accepting of rules and confident in the deployment of their skills.

Many of the skills learned during play are common to the child's developing skills. We seek to provide opportunities for structured and unstructured play which extends across all curriculum areas, harnessing the child's natural curiosity and desire to learn and come to an understanding of the world.