

Teaching and Learning at Sheringham Nursery School and Children's Centre

Introduction

Early Education matters. We know from the UK EPPE Project and many other research sources that high quality early years education makes a life-long, positive difference to children.

Characteristics of high quality early education include:

- Learning is play-based and takes place indoors and outside
- A balance between adult-initiated experiences (guided learning) and child-initiated experiences
- Adults take children's interests and strengths as a starting point, seeing each child as a competent learner
- Parent involvement is crucial: parent support and a high quality home learning environment make a huge difference to children
- Practitioners track each child's learning and development to pick up where children are at risk of making poor progress, and adapt the programme and their teaching as appropriate
- Early intervention is offered swiftly, so that children get the additional, specialist help that they need

We believe that high quality learning and teaching is the entitlement of all children. This must equip them with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices.

We acknowledge that children learn at different rates and each is at an individual stage of development. We believe that children learn best when they are happy, secure and actively involved in their own learning.

Effective teaching and learning in the EYFS meets children's identified needs and interests and helps children to learn and develop in all seven areas of learning and development.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this policy is to support a rich, interesting and stimulating learning and teaching environment, an environment that allows children to fully develop their skills and abilities.

The objective of this policy is to establish a consistent approach to high quality learning and teaching which inspires all children and enables them to become confident and engaged learners.

We want this policy to:

Foster a harmonious atmosphere which supports and promotes self esteem.

Build confident communicators

Support children's development in all areas of the EYFS

We support every child as an individual.

Help every child to grow up feeling confident about their own identity, in a spirit of friendship, understanding fairness and the rights of others, valuing diversity, and ready to be a British citizen.

Effective Teaching and Learning

Teaching at Sheringham Nursery School includes working face-to-face with a child or small group of children during the session, and structuring the learning environment to support children in making progress through child-initiated play. Sometimes these two approaches overlap, for example when a child or small group initiate play which is then supported and extended by the practitioner. When practitioners teach children:

- They make opportunities for the child to make a contribution and to make choices in their learning;
- They scaffold the child's development, to support increasing independence and control;
- They ask questions to check or develop children's understanding;
- They work collaboratively to solve problems and find answers;
- They provide formative feedback to help children to consolidate their learning and extend their exploration and thinking further.

Each nursery sessions ends with a structured group time which focuses on one or more of the following:

- Reading stories from our Core Book collection, using dialogic book talk strategies, and extended by opportunities for Core Book-related play in nursery and at home every week#
- Singing and rhymes
- Stage One Letters and Sounds activities

- Opportunities to talk, listen, take turns and talk about the day

Environment/classrooms

Activities and experiences are arranged to promote independence. Opportunity is given by adults to play co-operatively, alone, or time is given for children to stand and observe.

There must be time and space allowed to develop play both inside and outside, safely and securely.

The environment is aesthetically appealing with lots of examples of children's current work included in child centred displays. Displays are limited to identified notice boards to reduce visual clutter. Displays include examples of children's speech where possible and appropriate and give children opportunities to talk about, review and think about their previous experiences and learning (metacognition).

Clear guidelines and boundaries promote positive behaviour. Challenging social situations are seen as opportunities for growth and development, explaining and working with children to help them feel strong and safe, and to learn how to manage difficult issues and conflicts in appropriate ways.

Learning will be supported by appropriate resources including the use of ICT. These resources will be monitored regularly and maintained according to Health and Safety requirements.

Learning outdoors and out of the nursery school

At Sheringham Nursery School and Children's Centre we believe that pupils benefit enormously from taking part in educational visits and off-site learning with the school.

- Visits complement the curriculum we provide in school by enabling them to have first-hand experience of places and activities not available in school. They may introduce children to aspects of the world around them that they have not yet experienced.
- They contribute to the development of their confidence and independence.
- They contribute to their social development through sharing an experience with peers.
- They can be of great benefit to their language development through discussion during and after the visit.
- They enrich children's enjoyment of school.
- When parents take part in visits it may develop their knowledge of facilities in the area and allow them to participate more fully in aspects of their child's education.

We are committed to providing a Forest School experience for all children throughout the year.

In a natural environment, where children, are given time to thoroughly explore their thoughts, feelings and relationships, they develop understanding of the world and the environment through the use of emotions, imagination and senses.

Staff teams

The core responsibility for teaching and learning rests with the classteacher or lead practitioner. Although many tasks may be delegated to the key person, the classteacher/lead practitioner must support staff to achieve best practice, coach, encourage and model, and monitor the quality of work by each team member. Where necessary we will not hesitate to take action to ensure that all children experience an appropriate early education and care.

Staff roles and the routines of the sessions will be used to effectively support the aims and objectives of this policy. Sometimes staff work with individual children or groups of children, in guided learning activities or observing children at play both inside and outside.

All key people are involved in planning and assessing children's work.

Key people maintain the records of a group of children assigned to them by their team leader.

Students, volunteers and adult helpers are deployed as effectively as possible with clear guidelines as to what is expected of them.

Curriculum responsibilities

As a small school, we do not allocate curriculum responsibilities to teachers. Instead, using ITERS-R, ECERS-R and ECERS-E, as well as other review/observation approaches, we work towards every child accessing excellent provision in all the areas of learning in the EYFS. Each year in our School Improvement Plan, we have a curriculum-area focus, and we will also have a strand about embedding and securing the focus of the previous year.

Assessment for learning

We begin our assessment processes through getting to know each child, using close observation in structured and incidental ways. Observations are written down if necessary, and all written observations are assessed to indicate the child's level of development. All these written assessments lead to action for the child, identifying next steps of development. This is a process of formative assessment. Children are involved in this process through their Special Books, and through their Learning Stories, where they can reflect on their learning and voice their opinions. Each child has one Learning Story during their time in nursery, which is designed to celebrate a particularly important episode and to showcase the way the child goes about learning.

We also use assessment to track children, and to identify children at risk of making poor progress – always remembering that in the early years, progress can be uneven. Class teams identify the 20% of children in their class at risk of making poor progress and they specifically focus planning to meet their needs. Staff also identify the more able children

(assessed as being ahead of the expected levels of development in EYFS Development Matters) to ensure that we plan rich and stimulating experiences to extend their learning.

Progress data is entered into our spreadsheet on entry, at the end of the first term, end of the second term, and when the child leaves. We moderate our assessments through internal processes, and through moderation meetings with the receiving primary schools.

Special Educational Needs

Staff will always appropriately modify learning and teaching for children with SEN and/or disabilities.

We value each child as a unique individual and are familiar with and meet all the requirements of relevant equal opportunities legislation regarding race, gender and disability.

We work closely and in partnership with parents and any other involved agencies to meet the needs of our children through provision that is inclusive to all.

Children with identified Special Educational needs and /or disabilities at Early Years Action + will have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), developed with the support of parents and any involved agencies. Much of the IEP will be included on the Provision Map, which enables us to engage with a range of children's needs through regular, planned provision which is additional to the core curriculum.

Children at the Early Years Action stage will benefit from additional levels of differentiation and in-class support.

The SENCO monitors the progress of all children with SEN to ensure that they are benefitting from an appropriate curriculum which enables them to feel safe and secure, and to learn effectively. Where children with SEN are making poor progress, further assessment is undertaken or support sought.

Parental partnership

The Children's Centre and Nursery School work together in an integrated way to promote parent involvement and support families.

Parents are welcomed each session and encouraged to stay to settle their child and they are made to feel welcome to come and have informal discussions each day. Parents are encouraged to take Special Books home. They are involved as partners in assessing children's progress and identifying needs, during the home visit, at the 5-day on-entry assessment meeting, and at termly reviews. Each child has a specific target which is the joint responsibility of the parent and nursery, where the contribution of each party is clearly set out. We support the development of a supportive home learning environment (HLE) for each child through these discussions, and where needed through targeted home visiting (e.g. BookStart Homecorner).

We offer a range of EYFS workshops for parents and a wide range of support through our Children's Centre programme. Our *Information for Parents* booklet and website explain our approach to learning and how parents can work with us in the best interests of each child.

Leading and monitoring teaching and learning

The school's improvement plan sets out the specific actions aimed to improve outcomes for children in the nursery school and to narrow the gap between the lowest 20% and the rest.

These actions are linked to teachers' appraisal targets. Teachers are observed regularly to judge progress towards their targets, and their general impact on children's progress and wellbeing. The senior leadership team also carry out termly "class reviews", looking at the quality of provision and the progress of children in each class. Teaching and learning is informally monitored throughout the year and a brief log of judgements is kept.

Monitoring itself cannot lead to better teaching. We strongly promote professional dialogue about children and their learning, and staff are encouraged to innovate, to use ideas from other schools and to take action based on research. We believe that it is important that all practitioners are given support, encouragement and targeted coaching through supervision to improve.