



Stockingford Nursery School

Teaching & Learning Policy

Passed and adopted by Governing Body:

Signed:

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Teaching and Learning Policy

Our Vision and Values for the Early Years Foundation Stage

At Stockingford Nursery School it is our vision: '*Nuture. Inspire. Grow*'.

Our core values are pivotal to our teaching and learning ethos at Stockingford Nursery School and influence how we teach and how children learn through:

- Celebrating, respecting and valuing everyone as unique individuals.
- Exploring and discovering through play.
- Creating a safe, stimulating learning environment that promotes curiosity, awe and wonder.
- Working together to encourage children and families to achieve their full potential.
- Developing independence and resilience through positive relationships.
- Laughing, loving and living in the moment, to create lasting memories and dispositions for lifelong learning.

Aims for the Early Years Foundation Stage

'Learning in the early years is fundamental to providing children with the tools they need to thrive throughout their education and beyond'
Sir Martyn Oliver (H.M.O.I)

Our curriculum focuses on a play based approach that is fostered from following children's own interests, which immerse them in the process and joys of real discovery. At Stockingford Nursery School we understand that young children develop rapidly during the early years – physically, emotionally, intellectually and socially. We aim to ensure that learning is a positive experience where children can explore, investigate, discover, create, practise, revise and consolidate their developing skills, understanding and knowledge. We recognise that learning needs to be first hand, experiential and active so that it promotes children's independence and autonomy to encourage them to lead their own learning. Our curriculum celebrates the great potential of young children, with the goal of nurturing self-motivated, life-long learners. This policy aims to make explicit the pedagogy and philosophy of Stockingford Maintained Nursery School. Teaching and learning is supported through high quality interventions and purposeful interactions and child centred experiences.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.
(DfE Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework 2025)

A well planned and resourced curriculum will take children's learning forward and encourage the development of skills attitudes and understanding. It will provide opportunities for children to succeed in an atmosphere of trust and feeling valued. The principles and commitments of the Early Years Foundation Stage (2024) and the Development Matters and Early Years Outcomes (2020, revised 2023) documents are the structure used for curriculum planning and to support the assessment process. The four principles that shape our practice are identified as:

- Unique child

- Positive relationships
- Enabling environment
- Learning and development

The framework specifies the areas of learning that must be taught. They are as follows;

The Prime areas:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

The Specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

The EYFS describes the Characteristics of Effective Learning. At Stockingford Nursery School we embrace these characteristics and consider how children learn and develop different learning styles when supporting teaching and learning opportunities. The way in which the child engages with other people and their environment underpins learning and development across all curriculum areas and supports the child to remain a motivated and effective learner.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning are;

- **Playing and Exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’
- **Active Learning** - children concentrate and keep on 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

Enabling Environment

We aim to provide a safe and stimulating learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, which encourages children to challenge and extend their thinking. Children are born with a natural desire to explore and learn and we support them to do this by creating an enabling environment. Children are given the opportunity to self-initiate activities and to fully engage in purposeful play of their own choice and interests. The open ended resources we provide support children to develop to their maximum potential, taking into account their individual learning styles. The learning environment is planned and organised to encourage children to become independent, creative, self-motivated and in control of their own learning.

To facilitate independence, resources are stored and organised to allow the children to make informed choices of materials e.g. atelier area, construction area and mark making areas. The continuous provision areas provide high quality, open ended resources which are all easily accessible for children to self-select. We regularly review and reflect on the effectiveness of the environment to see which areas are productive and which need modifying or enhancing to meet children’s individual learning needs.

The outdoor area is a central feature of our physical learning environment and is carefully planned and maintained. Children are given the opportunity to access the outdoors freely in all weathers and waterproofs or sunhats are provided as required. We also have our own Forest School area on site where we are able to develop outdoor learning within its natural habitat. Forest School is a child-centred inspirational learning process, that develops confidence and self-esteem through learner inspired, hands on experiences in a natural setting.

Systems and Routines

The routine of the sessions are organised, to give children the opportunity of learning within a variety of different environments and groupings.

This includes the opportunity to work alone, in pairs, both large & small group work activities as well as individual and small group work with an adult. There are opportunities for children to make choices e.g. indoor or outdoor play and also times where all children are required to take part in an activity e.g. key group time and transition times.

The daily routine allows for extended periods of child initiated play, which is carefully planned for and observed in order to maximise its potential for learning. This gives children the time and opportunity to develop their own ideas and see them through to a conclusion.

Whilst the daily routine is flexible in order to respond to need, certain elements e.g. key group time are maintained every day to provide security and familiarity (with occasional exceptions).

Role of the Practitioner

All children are assigned a 'key person' who takes responsibility for a group of children and are a point of contact for both children and parents/carers. This is particularly beneficial to help children to feel safe and secure when settling into their new environment. The key person will respond to a child's individual needs, support teaching and learning, share information and assessment knowledge and work together in partnership with the child's parents/carers. All staff support all children during sessions and provide high quality care and teaching and learning opportunities.

Staff understand the importance of modelling positive relationships to children and other adults in order to create a warm and trusting ethos for learning to flourish. Children's wellbeing is of high importance and practitioners act as enablers and facilitators of learning as they stimulate, sustain and extend learning opportunities.

Curriculum Approach

Play in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

'The EYFS is about what children learn, as well as how they learn. Effective practice is a mix of different approaches. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other and through adult guided learning.'
(EYFS 2025)

Children are admitted to Stockingford Nursery School either in the term after their second birthday (Little Nursery) or in the term following the child's third birthday (Big Nursery). They enter with a wide range of experience, skills and knowledge. The Nursery has developed a 'Middle Nursery' space in which some children may benefit from a higher staff ratio to support their developmental needs.

Play is the natural way by which young children explore the world, test out ideas and practice skills and activities. We believe that the provision of high quality play is the most effective way that young children learn. Children deepen their understanding by playing, talking, observing, planning, questioning, experimenting, testing, repeating, reflecting and responding to adults and to each other. Adults engage with children in their play to support, challenge, consolidate and extend their thinking. It is only when children are deeply engaged in an experience that higher level learning takes place.

Children are given time to become engrossed in activities and to complete activities.

The role of the adult is crucial in :

- Planning and resourcing a challenging and enabling environment.
- Teaching new skills to support learning.
- Supporting & scaffolding learning through play activities and play partnering.
- Extending and supporting spontaneous play.
- Extending and developing language and communication in play.
- Questioning, wondering and commenting to explore what a child knows.

Through the provision of high quality play provision, with effective adult support, children will have the opportunity to:

- Explore and make sense of the world by testing out ideas.
- Build up concepts, skills & knowledge.
- Take risks in an atmosphere of trust without fear of failure.
- Communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.
- Think creatively and imaginatively.
- Develop, consolidate and apply new skills and ideas in different situations.
- Work through and express fears and anxieties.
- Learn about making choices and decisions.
- Be in charge of their own learning.
- Develop personal qualities and attitudes.
- Develop social skills and form relationships.
- Be energetic which is an essential part of keeping healthy.
- Develop imagination and creative thinking.
- Investigate, experiment and solve problems.
- Take pride in their achievements.

Teaching and Learning

In the Moment Planning

High quality, successful teaching arises through valuing play and recognising its significance for children to be active learners who display increased levels of engagement. We teach and support learning through 'In the Moment Planning'. This involves allowing child initiated learning through play, that is based on capturing the interests of a child in the current time. Teaching staff offer stimulating learning environments and capture the moment of engagement for each child.

Observation helps staff to seize the moment when a child shows a level of interest and curiosity that can be enhanced and this is when 'teachable moments' happen. Through high quality adult interactions, teaching of the next steps happens for that child at that precise moment.

Effective learning involves :

- Children initiating activities that promote learning and enable them to learn from each other
- Children learning through movement and all their senses.
- Children having time to explore ideas and interests.
- Children feeling secure.
- Children learning in different ways and at different rates.
- Children making links in their learning.
- Creative and imaginative play activities that promote the development and use of language.

Effective teaching requires :

The role of the adult varies depending upon the needs of the child and may be determined during the planning of the opportunities to be offered. However, it may also be a perceptive response to what an individual child says or does. At Stockingford Nursery School we believe that teaching and learning within the Early Years Foundation Stage should support the unique child and aim to provide personalised learning based on the child's individual needs, learning style, previous knowledge, experiences and interests In order to be effective the adult needs to:

- Foster close relationships with children in own family groups to promote self-confidence and a positive attitude to learning.
- Promote children's learning through well planned experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable.
- Carry out direct teaching of skills and knowledge – on an individual and small/large group basis.
- Help children to learn from mistakes.
- Give children time to develop their own ideas.
- Use the local environment and parent's knowledge to enrich the learning experience.
- Work in partnership with parents.
- Use language that is rich and grammatically correct as the main way of teaching new vocabulary.
- Model positive behaviour and positive attitudes towards learning.
- Adults to clearly articulate what is being learnt and encourage children to identify what they enjoy and what their strengths are.
- The use of conversation and carefully framed questions to extend on childrens thinking.
- Direct teaching of skills, knowledge and concepts.
- Facilitating children teaching and supporting each other and valuing childrens ideas.
- Motivate children to persevere and try ways to make something work.
- Careful planning of the environment to provide a positive context for learning and teaching.
- Use of observations and assessments of children to identify and plan for progression.
- Evaluation of 'In the Moment Planning'.

Contexts for Learning.

- Young children's learning is of a holistic nature.
- Learning takes place across all aspects of the daily routine and this learning will be through predominately child initiated learning.

- Staff at Stockingford Nursery School value and respect child initiated learning which allows children to learn by doing, talking and experimenting and having 'hands on' involvement through first-hand experiences.
- Learning is understood to not just be based upon intellectual acquisition of knowledge. As a child learns across a range of contexts they will develop physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually.
- The curriculum is enhanced by considering children's previous experiences and interests as starting points for teaching.
- Planned activities for special events are developmentally appropriate by being carefully matched to the age and stage of the child. Adaptive teaching strategies are used to meet individual needs through variation in levels of questioning, input and expectation.
- The role of spoken language is a key skill for thinking and learning. Staff at Stockingford Nursery School will use every opportunity to develop and extend the spoken language. This is enhanced through the use of Makaton, Communicate in Print, objects of reference and gestures.
- Opportunities will be available to engage in open-ended activities to encourage curiosity, creativity and critical thinking.
- Practitioner intervention will support appropriate interaction through co-operation and co construction, rather than competition.
- Activities will focus on the importance of creativity – encouraging children to be imaginative and inventive, working in a process orientated manner and valuing the process rather than the end result of an activity.
- Children will be facilitated to do things for themselves and encouraged to be independent learners.

Parents in Partnership

We believe that parents and carers have a fundamental role in their child's development and learning. Practitioners are committed to form strong relationships with parents to actively work in partnership to learn from them and to share knowledge and information for all aspects of their child's learning. We are keen to involve parents in the ITMP process and seek their perspective of their child and the sharing of recent experiences to enable learning experiences at nursery that support the interests and strengths of their child.

Special Educational Needs

Children with Special Educational Needs/Disabilities will have full access to the curriculum through the provision of supplementary materials or support as appropriate. Staff will work with both parents/carers and personnel from outside agencies to provide a suitable environment and learning opportunities.

For more details please refer to the SEND policy and the SEND Information report.

Equal Opportunities

Staff will ensure that all children have relevant learning and development opportunities by:

- Acknowledging that children bring different experiences, interests, skills, abilities and knowledge that affect their ability to learn.
- An awareness and understanding of equal opportunities practices regarding race, gender and disability.
- Planning appropriate opportunities to reflect these factors.

For more details please refer to Equality Information and Objectives Policy

Assessment Recording and Reporting

- Assessment of children will take place through observations:
 - Target child 'In the Moment Planning'
 - Group 'In the Moment Planning'
 - Feedback from intervention groups including EYPP groups
 - Parents and child's voice
- At children's meetings information of children's progress will be used to inform ITM planning. Support through the environment and the role of the adult will be provided to enable all groups make progress.
- Baseline assessment will be completed during the first half term and repeated termly to track children's progress effectively.
- Leuven scale data & POMS (Process Orientated Monitoring System) are used to monitor and respond to children's wellbeing and involvement.
- In the Moment Planning acknowledges learning achievements and provides evidence for stages of development and characteristics of learning.
- Staff will use information from parents, previous settings, professionals and their own observations to support assessment judgements.
- Strategies will be put in place for any child who is not making appropriate progress. We are committed to narrowing the gap to ensure we reduce underachievement for all pupils'.
- Analysis of data will be used to inform planning which leads to good or outstanding progress for all groups of learners. Progress summaries will be shared with parents/carers and the next steps in learning detailed for each child.
- Moderation activities both internally and with local providers will ensure the accuracy of judgements.

Monitoring for quality

- Monitoring, involving all the staff takes place through observation, discussion and analysis of childrens work, curriculum planning and records of achievement. Qualified teachers (QTS) monitor the performance and quality of teaching and learning.
- **Observations** of teaching are used to inform us about the effectiveness of teaching in relation to the impact on children's learning and about the progress they are making.
- **Discussion & Reflection** with children and as a staff team informs us about what the children know and understand. Through monitoring ITMP over the year we will determine whether our teaching is meeting children's needs and what else we need to implement to ensure progress. Staff engage in professional discussions to identify children's achievements and next steps in learning.
- **Analysis** of children's work and scrutiny of records of achievement, together with observations of teaching and monitoring of the learning environment all contribute towards maintaining excellence in terms of provision for teaching and learning.
- **Data Reports** evidence the impact of teaching and help us to plan the next steps in childrens learning.

Evaluation

Information gathered from monitoring the curriculum will be used to :

- Confirm good practice.
- Inform change.
- Celebrate success.

Documents for Reference:

Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2025)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

Early Years Development Matters (2023)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64e6002a20ae890014f26cbc/DfE_Development_Matters_Report_Sep2023.pdf