Featherstone Nursery School

Learning and Teaching Policy

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Aims

This learning and teaching policy aims to ensure that the children at Featherstone Nursery School are provided with high quality learning and teaching experiences that lead to a consistently high level of pupil achievement. It aims at describing the overarching principles and elements of the approach which informs our daily practice, uniting philosophy, beliefs and ethos; setting a benchmark for what we consider to be high quality education and care for children under five. Therefore all staff and governors have been involved in its formulation and development.

Principles

Our principles are guided by the principles of the EYFS:

- **A Unique Child: Every child is a unique learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.**

- **Positive Relationships: Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.**

- **Enabling Environments: 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 and carers.**

- **Learning and Developing: Children develop and learn in different ways. Practitioners teach children by ensuring challenging, playful opportunities across the prime and specific areas of learning and development. They foster the characteristics of effective early learning: playing and exploring; active learning; creating and thinking critically.**

RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL

This policy is in accordance with the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Article 1 - Everyone under the age of 18 has all the rights in the Convention.

Article 3 - The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect children.

Article 4 - Governments must do all they can to make sure every child can enjoy their rights.

Article 12 - Every child has the right to have a say in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.

Article 13 - Every child must be free to say what they think and to seek and receive all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law.

Article 15 - Every child has the right to meet with other children and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

Article 17 - Every child has the right to reliable information from the media. This should be information that children can understand.

Article 28 - Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity.

Article 29 - Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

Article 31 - Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

Our Mission Statement

"It takes a whole community to raise a child"

Our statement is inspired by Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1974) Ecological Systems Theory which puts the child at the centre of our practice surrounded by the support within our setting, their family and the community.

It is also based on the Igbo and Yoruba (Nigerian) proverb that exists in different forms in many African languages.

(Bronfenbrenner, 1974)

Expected Outcomes: A Strong Vision

We believe that from birth children are strong, competent, motivated and confident learners who explore and test their ideas, solve problems and try to make sense of their world. As a team we have discussed and decided on a set of expected outcomes, a vision for our children which underlies and informs all our practice at Featherstone;

Children will be:

Taking responsibility for their own learning and behaviour

Becoming autonomous learners

Applying their previous knowledge creatively

Challenging themselves

Curious explorers

Involved

Making choices and decisions
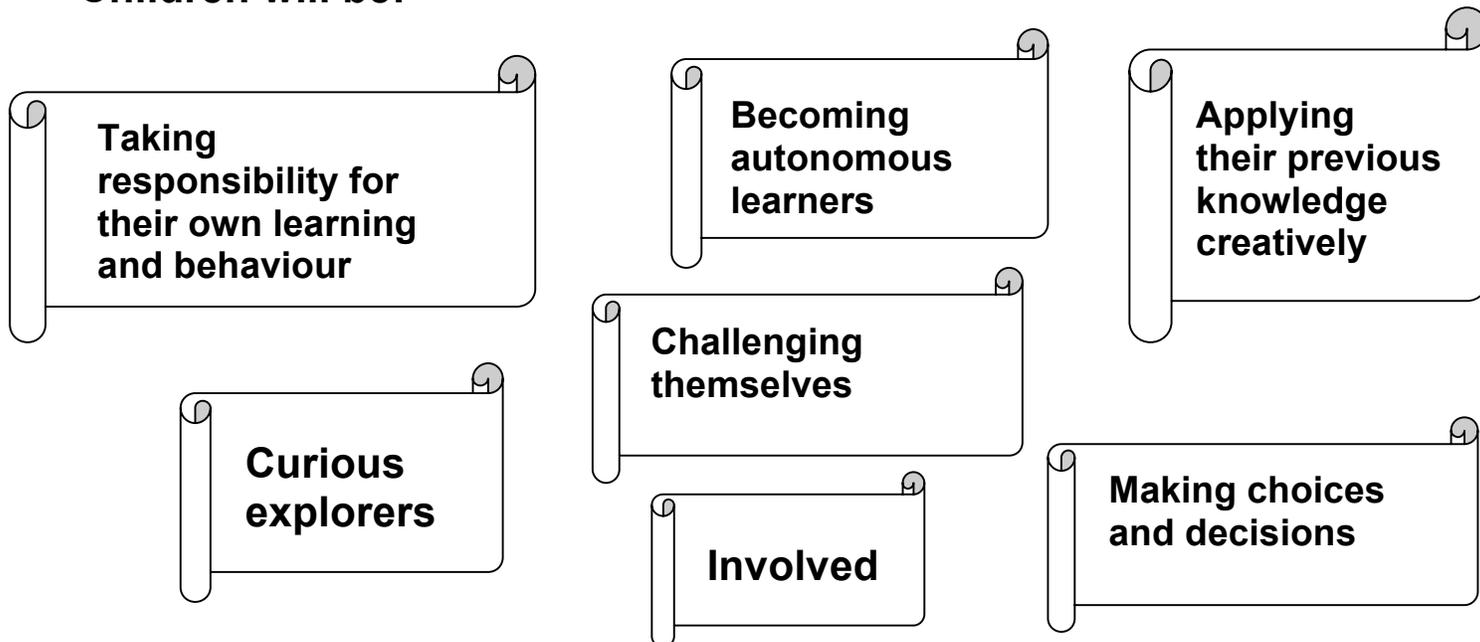
Our Beliefs about Effective Learning

Learning and teaching at Featherstone is based on the premise that every child is **entitled** to high quality learning experiences and opportunities. (Quality first teaching) We believe that all children have an innate desire to learn and that it is our responsibility to nurture this drive to learn and discover. We acknowledge that as practitioners it is also our responsibility to continually research into how children learn and practitioners effectively teach, so that we can continually improve the quality of learning and teaching at our setting through the cycle of self-evaluation, staff development and performance management. It is our aim to establish a **Learning Community** where lifelong learning is celebrated and promoted for all children and adults. Below are listed our beliefs as a team on effective learning.

We believe that:

- Learning cannot take place unless children's emotional needs are met and they feel safe and secure and aware of boundaries in order to grow in confidence and take risks **(Maslow and Bowlby).**
- Learning in the early years is celebrated as a profoundly important stage of a child's life in its own right when vital emotional, social, physical and intellectual development takes place.
- Learning is holistic and cannot be compartmentalized.
- Learning needs to take place in the social context with an emphasis on the establishment of successful trusting relationships with adults and peers.
- Learning and teaching is an ongoing process; a journey that builds upon an on going assessment of what children know and can do.
- Young children have the right to communicate and explore their learning in many different and unique ways and that these needs are listened to, valued, respected and planned for.
- Learning is 'learnable' and we strive to support children to develop specific learning capacities which will enable them to be effective lifelong, active learners and creative and critical thinkers. We support children to feel good about themselves as learners and encourage them to reflect on the skills they have to be great learners.
- Young children need time and space to explore ideas and interests at length and to become resilient lifelong learners.
- Learners should be challenged and stimulated through tasks which match their abilities.
- Learning needs to be fun, first hand, meaningful, play based, experiential and active, taking into account a range of learning styles **(VAK),** all available senses and acknowledging a range of intelligences **(Gardner)**.
- Learning should promote children's independence and autonomy, encouraging them to take responsibility for their learning – initiating and making their own decisions and making and noticing links in their learning.
- Children should have the opportunity to learn through high-quality, well-organised, differentiated and stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environments.
- Children should have a learning experience which fully involves their parent/carer and provides opportunities for them to learn and develop together;
- All children should have equality of learning opportunities where cultural and physical diversity is respected and valued and a positive anti-bias approach is adopted and stereotypes actively challenged.
- Learners should be provided with creative and imaginative play activities that promote the development and use of language
- Learners should be able to extend setting experiences into home and home experiences into our setting.

Effective Teaching

Everyone has an important role to play in contributing to learning, therefore the term 'educator' can equally apply to parents, teachers, practitioners and other children. Effective educators use a range of skills to support learning by being alongside the child and family – modeling, scaffolding, validating and extending learning. Teaching should be relevant, meaningful, inspirational and enthusiastic within an atmosphere of trust and respect. The Teacher is responsible for leading the learning across the school as appropriate to their role and Job Description. The Professional Standards for Teachers form the basis of our Performance Management for our teacher in conjunction with this policy. The 2012 guidance and policy for Teacher Performance Management is in place to support the development of the teachers within the setting to consistently achieve Outstanding teaching.

Within the NS the Deputy Head Teacher is responsible for leading the teaching and learning and for collecting and collating data/evidence to report to the Head teacher at regular intervals. The class teacher within the nursery school leads the teaching and learning across the school and takes responsibility for this collecting data/evidence and sharing this regularly with the Deputy Head teacher.

The Role of the Staff within our Setting – What does 'Outstanding Teaching' look like in our day-to-day Practice?

The role of the staff within the setting is key to the achievement of our aims for our children with regard to providing the elements of outstanding effective learning and teaching; the role of the practitioner is complex involving many qualities and skills.

It is the role of the practitioner to know each child as an individual, to build a trusting relationship in which learning can happen and to have high expectations of each child.

The role of the practitioner is fluid, sometimes they are a tool for children to use or co-investigator, an observer, a scribe, someone who poses a challenge or provides a provocation or question. Therefore we have sought to outline the role and the practice which we expect to see in our setting here.

Learning Environment
Staff will:

- Establish a safe, purposeful and calm learning environment which complies with current legal requirements, national policies and guidance on safeguarding and well-being of children so that they feel secure and sufficiently confident to make an active contribution.
- Know and implement all policy and procedures concerning the safeguarding of children.
- Actively promote positive behaviours, boundaries and the key British values of respect; democracy; liberty; tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs and the Rule of Law which create an environment where learning can take place.
- Manage children's behaviour constructively by establishing and maintaining a clear and positive framework for discipline, in line with the settings Behaviour Management Policy.
- Use a range of behaviour management techniques and strategies, adapting them as necessary to promote the self-control and independence of children.
- Provide learning environments both indoors and outside that are stocked with developmentally appropriate and differentiated resources which encourage and support open-ended exploration and

collaborative working. These areas will be regularly updated to reflect children's interests and to keep them safe, stimulating, attractive, tidy and accessible.

Learning Areas are monitored through session and individual observation by the HT and DHT/learning environment walks. This information is then used to ensure that the areas are stimulating, exciting, challenging and accessible to the children The importance we attach to an exciting, stimulating learning environment, both indoors and outdoors is reflective of the ethos of the setting, and its aims and shared beliefs and values. A stimulating environment sets the climate for learning and will include:

- Creative exploration and expression
- Investigation, experimentation and finding out
- Small focused groups, individual and whole class learning
- Independent, child-led, co-operative and adult supported learning
- Using actions and words to ask and answer questions
- Well organised areas, with interactive displays and easily accessible resources to
- encourage independence

Positive Relationships

Staff will:

- Develop supportive relationships with all stakeholders in order to facilitate well being, trust and a secure environment for taking responsibility, making informed choices and taking appropriate risks.
- Know, value, listen and respond to children as individuals and as members of a family and community.
- Develop trusting relationships with children so that they are confident to approach adults for a variety of reasons including support, affection, reassurance, challenge, company, praise and encouragement.
- Acknowledge parents/carers as the most important educator in a learner's life valuing the knowledge and information they bring and share, in order to build up a picture of the learners' needs, fascinations and interests.
- Work closely and cooperatively with each other, parents and other professionals as part of a multi-professional team.
- Contribute and foster teamwork, both within smaller teams and across the Children's Centre as a whole.
- Seek to foster links and partnerships with national and international organisations.

High Expectations of children

Staff will:

- Have clear and high expectations of what learners are expected to achieve.
- Personalize learning ensuring its appropriateness for all individuals.
- Value what children bring to the setting, their experiences, effort and their achievements.

- Actively seek value and incorporate children's own ideas and views, involving them in all aspects of the setting.
- Set realistic challenge through activities, the environment and their interactions with children.
- Encourage, Involve, support and value children's own self-reflection and evaluation of their own and each others learning using a range of tools such as the Tapestry on line learning journal.

Positive Professional Practices and Provision

Staff will:

- Actively seek to raise levels of attainment and outcomes for learners.
- Have a good knowledge and understanding of child development and the curriculum requirements of the EYFS, ensure learners are 'school ready' and be confident to share this knowledge with all stakeholders.
- Keep up to date with current research and policy advice and are open-minded, and proactive towards their own continuing professional development, responding positively to innovation.
- Initiate and contribute towards staff meetings and discussions and are willing to share their knowledge, expertise and experience with their colleagues being active members or our learning community.
- Use and take part in a recognised process of self-evaluation for continuous improvement. This includes reviewing their own effectiveness and impact upon children's learning.
- Analyse setting data to identify areas of improvement/next steps and to compare these with local and national findings.
- Use observations, reflections, assessment (formative and summative) and evaluations of children's learning, interests, preferences and needs to scaffold children's learning and inform next steps and planning.
- Use a range of strategies and tools flexibly to support all learning needs.
- Adapt their pedagogy skillfully to notice, respond to and take advantage of seizing every learning moment throughout the day or session.
- Be highly skilled at observing learners, tuning into significant lines of enquiry, emotional need, fascinations and schemas and extending this using a range of strategies and resources.
- Be able to relate learning intentions to the child's own life experiences.
- Develop the learner's ability to independently think, problem solve and support children to use conflict resolution strategies.
- Allow sufficient time for both child-initiated play and also for adult led activities.
- Use a range of questioning strategies/higher order thinking skills (**Bloom's Taxonomy**) and quality interactions tailored to the needs and language levels of the individual, such as open-ended questioning, recapping, modeling thinking etc allowing time for children to think and respond.
- Plan consistent timetables and routines in order to allow time for adults and children to engage in purposeful activity for extended periods of time facilitating sustained shared thinking and deep level learning.
- Challenge stereotypes and promote a positive appreciation of difference.
- Share a sense of enjoyment and excitement with the children.
- Self reflect and evaluate on the impact of their practice on learners progress as part of the setting monitoring process.
- Use documentation to make children's learning visible.
- Encourage children to communicate in a variety of ways and value 1st language and cultural heritage.
- Provide children, colleagues, parents/carers with timely, accurate and constructive feedback on children's attainment, progress and areas for development.

Key Elements of Personalised Learning within the setting

Organising the setting

The Nursery School admits children aged 2,3 and 4 years.

The patterns of attendance are as follows: -

- 30-hour children attend 8.30am to 2.30pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday
- Part-time children attending at the beginning of the week attend Monday and Tuesday 8.30am-2.30pm and Wednesday 8.30am to 11.30am or end of the week - Wednesday 12.00 to 3.00pm; Thursday and Friday 8.30am - 2.30pm
- Part time children attending morning only attend Monday to Friday 8.30am to 11.30am or afternoon only attend Monday to Friday 12.00 midday to 3.00pm.
- We also offer a breakfast and after school available from 7.30am until 5.00pm

Assessment for Learning.

- **Reflective cycle** Observation, assessment, evaluation and planning (linked to the EYFS to ensure that the children receive a broad and balanced curriculum) are seen as an on-going reflective cycle by all practitioners in order to inform next steps in learning. This cycle is regularly monitored by the DHT.
- **Time** is taken to ensure that children and their families are considered as individuals. Staff are then able to develop learning through appropriate support and challenge.
- **Personal profiles** are collated building up an individual's learning journey using the Tapestry electronic online learning journal and this is shared with children, parents and families. The information is also shared with staff at planning meetings. Formal and informal observations, photographic evidence and examples of "work" are included in these learning journeys. All formats are consistent and profiles are subject to monitoring and moderation.
- **Leuven Scales of Involvement and Well Being** are used via Tapestry as an assessment tool to aid support and provision.
- **Reflective Observational Assessment** of the learning areas using Floor Books to directly feed into planning, both within the week and for the following week. Planning involves children - building on their emerging interests and developing these.
- **Development Matters/EYFS Tracker** will be used in NS for base lining children and for summative assessment at the mid-point of the year and again at the end of the school year in order to identify levels of progress and areas to target when planning provision.
- **EEL and BEEL techniques** are used to add depth to the observation process and to inform monitoring and evaluation of provision.
- **Speech and Language** The Wellcomm screening tool is used to assess and plan for children's speech and language needs.
- **Triangulation** The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and teacher are responsible for ensuring that data from formative and summative assessment tools are monitored and triangulated to ensure consistency and reliability.
- **ECERS and SSTEW are** used yearly as a self-evaluation tool to identify areas of strength and areas of development.

- **Peer to Peer Review** led by reviewers from other settings and schools and involving all staff is used to highlight setting strengths, areas of development and actions.
- **SEND support** is put in place to meet children's individual needs following a graduated response (The Assess, Plan, Do, Review Cycle) to provide interventions that are additional to or different from that made generally for other children of the same age.
- **Target Tracker** is used to produce data for groups and cohorts of children in order to analyse and compare data and check the impact and appropriateness of our provision.
- **Reflection and evaluations** shared with all staff ensures that there is continual improvement, staff feel involved and take ownership of development. Time is protected for documenting and reflecting on learning in order to plan appropriate next steps.
- **School Improvement Visits** are undertaken by an SIA as part of the ESC (Erdington Schools Collaboration) to provide an objective "check and challenge" process that both validates our self-evaluation findings and an important external point of challenge.
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Beyond the Setting

- **Multi-agency working** is a key feature of the Early Help process as a whole and all services and facilities provided meet the Core Purpose and are in place to support families appropriately to improve the outcomes for the children and their families.
- **The Curriculum** is enriched by visits off site and through a planned programme of learning enrichment experiences.
- **Parents are encouraged to become fully involved** through:

  - Representation on the school's Governing Body and its Committees
  - Working on a volunteer basis within the school.
  - Workshops within the school based on areas of learning.
  - Book and toy library/challenge cards; Topstart/Startwell Bags;
  - Regular weekly newsletter.
  - Information and ideas based on "interests" in nursery to enable parents to support learning at home.
  - Parent consultation days and daily informal contact with staff and particularly with key workers.
  - Feedback is also sought from parents/carers through questionnaires at various times during the year.
  - Responding to blogs on the Nursery school Website.
  - Responding to observations on our Tapestry system and adding their own observations form the child's experiences outside school