



Play, Learn and Grow Together – Our Passion is Their Future

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Teaching and Learning Policy

Policy Statement

At St Helen's Pre-School we support young children's learning by providing a wide range of opportunities, experiences and activities linked to the principles underpinning high quality early years education as set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Our Pedagogy sets out how we educate and teach our children, and support their overall development. It includes the techniques and strategies that we embed into our practice to provide opportunities to lay the foundations for each child's individual development, to help them become the happy, confident, creative and successful adults of tomorrow.

Our Pedagogy

At St Helen's Pre-School, we feel that we incorporate various different theories and practices, this helps our children to learn using a holistic approach, as we understand all children learn differently.

One of the theorists that play a significant part of our pedagogy is Froebel and his suggestion that children learn through 'child-initiated play'. At St Helen's Pre-School we plan using the children's interests and set up the rooms with key resources so the children can initiate their own play, and extend their learning through different resources and support from their keyworkers, whom differentiate activities for all children's stage and abilities in learning.

Our Pre-School is a homely environment providing homely aspects such as having sofas and soft furnishings and mixed age groups that give a more homely feel, as we feel as practitioners alongside the theorists Bowlby and Montessori, including the principles of the curiosity approach and Elizabeth Jarman, Communication Friendly Spaces that re-enforce the importance for children to feel safe and secure. We ensure that all children are provided with a keyperson and a buddy, who are available to provide emotional support and form attachments and a secure base for all children to flourish, learn and grow. The key persons are responsible for meeting individual children's needs along with supporting them within group of children. Helping them to learn that they are part of a community, through eating, working and socialising together.

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Another key theorist which also plays a significant part in our pedagogy is Bandura who suggested that model behaviour was important for children. We aim to provide a secure environment for children to be able to problem solve being supported through the behaviours modelled by staff members and children. Through rules that both the staff and children have designed to work towards, and through positive praise and encouragement, considering the British values and cultural capital.

Another poignant theorist that has a significant impact on our pedagogy is Reggio and his suggestion that children build their own learning. At St Helen's Pre-School we will encourage children to build their own learning through the opportunities provided for them, these opportunities are planned after looking at children's learning and development through assessments and observations and interests. The resources available will benefit the children to build their own learning and play and take the planned activity in a different direction. Resources are made available through continuous provision to ensure children are encouraged to build their own learning. Staff interact and support the children to extend their learning through problem solving and open-ended questioning.

At St Helen's Pre-School we provide children with constant praise and encouragement to support them to join in with all activities. We encourage children to be proud and care for their environment through clean/tidy up time. We believe that by doing this, children are given trust and responsibility thus encouraging independence.

Our Learning Environment (see OAP procedure)

The Learning Environment involves both the people and the space in which our children develop and learn. An emotional environment is one where children feel safe, cared for and relaxed because they are in the continuous care of a small number of adults who are responsible for them. A physical environment, our continuous provision offers access to outdoors as well as an indoor space and provides a place where children have opportunities to explore, learn and develop with the support of sensitive Early Years Practitioners.

The emotional environment

Our Early Years Practitioners will observe and respond to the children's needs are an essential part of the Learning Environment.

Our Early Years Practitioners will:

- Offer a range of experiences and resources which are regularly monitored and refreshed to keep them safe and stimulating.
- Tune into the children's interests and interact with them to support and extend their learning and development, jointly engaging in problem solving and sustained shared thinking.
- Respond to observed interests and plan new materials and experiences within the environment that reflect these.
- Monitor materials, children's involvement and their own involvement with children to ensure they offer relevant experiences
- Provide materials that reflect diversity in order to avoid stereotypical images or approaches
- Evaluate their provision to ensure that everything that is provided is of the highest quality.

Our Outdoor and Indoor environment

- The outdoor and indoor environments should contain resources and materials that children can explore and investigate using their senses
- Some of the materials and resources should be familiar to the children from their home and community environments, and some should be new.
- The best materials have many uses, such as pipes, crates and blocks provide unlimited opportunities for the children to use their creativity and imaginations to support their learning and development.
- The learning environment offers challenges through which children can learn about risk taking and keeping themselves safe.
- As well as providing opportunities for moving around, our environments offer a variety of surfaces and levels, places to sit or lie, to climb or jump and to make big movements such as spinning, dancing, running and so on.
- We will always support children's confidence in themselves and their developing skills as they tackle new challenges.
- Our Early Years Practitioners will recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Every area of development is equally important
- The diversity of individuals and communities is valued and respected. No family or child is discriminated against. We are knowledgeable of the protective characteristics stated in the Equality Act 2010.
- Our Early Years Practitioners should value linguistic diversity and provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in their play and learning.
- Alongside support in the home language, Our Early Years Practitioners should provide a range of meaningful contexts in which children have opportunities to develop English.
- It is recognised within the Pre-School that young children are vulnerable. They develop resilience when their physical and psychological well-being is protected by adults.

Learning and Development **(please refer to our OAP Procedure)**

To support every child's learning and development at St Helen's Pre-School staff will ensure that:

- Children are valued for who they are, the knowledge, skills and experience they have and for what they can contribute to the life of the Pre-School
- The Statutory Framework for the EYFS is used to guide planning across all seven areas of learning, and there is a balance between adult-initiated and child led activities.
- Early Years Practitioners will provide opportunities for children to learn through purposeful, active play by planning experiences and activities that build on children's ideas and understanding
- Children are given time and space to become fully involved in ideas and activities that interest and engage them and also have opportunities to revisit experiences to consolidate their learning.
- All children are included and differentiation may take place to ensure that children with additional needs are able to access the opportunities on offer
- The outdoor environment of the Pre-School is utilised to its fullest extent and children have opportunities to be outdoors frequently during the day, in all weathers. There are well organised areas and resources, both natural and manufactured, which are accessible to the children.
- There are opportunities for a range of activities such as, paint mixing, growing plants, mark-making, looking at books, reading stories, or exploring the properties of materials such as sand or water

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- Children's learning and development is observed and recorded and this information is used to decide what opportunities or experiences to offer next to support their on-going development
- Information on children's progress and achievements is shared with parents using our online portal (see abacus and footsteps policy). Parents are encouraged to learn more about activities that take place in the Pre-School and to share their experiences of their child's learning at home via the parent online portal. In addition, we share regular blogs on our social media sites and Website.
- Staff access appropriate training inhouse and through NCC and read widely to extend their knowledge and understanding of how young children learn in order to provide the best possible opportunities and experiences from them.

Assessments (refer to OAP procedure)

EYFS 2020 states: 'Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understanding their needs, and to plan activities and support.'

Ongoing assessments (also known as formative assessments) are an integral part of a child's learning and development process. It involves practitioners knowing children's level of achievement and interests, and then to shape teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge. In their interactions with children, practitioners should respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share.

Formative assessments are:

- Practitioners' day-to-day judgements about what the child can do.
- Regular informal observations about whether the child has learned something new or grasped a new concept
- Assessments of children's ongoing, developing skills and knowledge

Summative assessment

The Early Years Foundation Stage requires that all parents and carers must be supplied with a short written summary of their child's development in the three prime learning and development areas of the EYFS: Communication and Language; Physical Development; Personal Social and Emotional Development; when the child is aged between 24-36 months. Which is called a 2 year progress check.

The progress check is an opportunity for the Early Years Practitioner and parents to come together to discuss a child's learning and development. It is an opportunity to ensure that the child is making progress and to make a plan to ensure the child is meeting their potential. If a child is below in area/s of development we work in strong partnerships with Health Professionals and additional specialist assessments will take place (see SEND policy).

St Helen's Pre-School provides all parents /carers with a progress check when a child is aged between 2-3 years. The progress check is designed to identify the child's strengths, and any areas where the child's progress is less than expected. If there are significant concerns, or an identified special educational need or disability, practitioners should develop a targeted plan to support the child's future learning and development. This may mean involving other professionals as appropriate, along with parents/carers.

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The aims of the progress check are to:

- Review a child's development in the three prime areas of the EYFS
Ensure that parents have a clear picture of their child's development
- Enable practitioners to understand the child's needs and plan activities to meet them in the setting.
- Enable parents to understand the child's needs and, with support from practitioners, enhance development at home
- Note areas where a child is progressing well and identify any areas where progress is less than expected, and
- Describe the activities and strategies the provider intends to adopt to address any issues or concerns

Practitioners are responsible for completing observation for parents, which identifies the learning opportunities their child has experienced, any achievements they have made, along with how the parents can continue supporting their child's learning within their home environment.

All observations and assessments that are carried out on children at St Helen's Pre-School are recorded onto Footsteps, and shared with parents via parent portal. Parents are also encouraged to input into these on a regular basis.

Early Years Practitioners use a variety number of different tools to support them with their observations and assessments. This comes from a variety of sources, including:

- Parent starting points – What is the child doing/saying at home? Information gathered at the child's initial visit either at home or their Welcome Meeting (their first visit to Pre-School) These need to be in place at the start so keypersons can start planning for the child's individual learning from day 1
- WellComm – is a complete speech and language toolkit. All children will be screened and the assessment will contribute to their starting points, it identifies children requiring extra support and intervention involving their families or possibility specialist support.
- Every Child a Talker (ECAT) – this is a monitoring tool that enable the Early Years Practitioner to assess the development level of the child's speech, language and communication.
- Children's current interests – What drives the child's thinking? Where do they prefer to play? What are their favourite toys and games? What do they do when practitioners are not interacting with them? What books and songs do they enjoy?
- Watching and listening to the child – Practitioners should be watching and listening as children play, and interacts appropriate with them, and their peers constantly. Assessing their stage of play and implementing how to support/ develop them.
- Talking to the children – Having conversations with children, asking them, questions and challenging their thinking through interactions will give practitioners a window into what the child is thinking.
- Children's schemas and learning styles – When practitioners are observing children, assessments are made to support their learning.
- Practitioners' knowledge of typical child development – Practitioners should be able to recognise what children should be achieving at their age, and if there are any concerns with a child's development, they will work alongside our SENCo. Our practitioners using their judgement and assess the child's development against the Development Matters, 2021 (Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the EYFS), using online systems (see abacus and footsteps policy)
- Ongoing communication with parents – This will help keyperson to have up-to-date knowledge of the child's home learning, and how this can be supported within the setting.

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- On the spot observations – Set up invitations to play and learn for the children to use, chat to them and engage with their play. From this practitioner’s will be able to observe, assess and plan ‘on the spot’. This is a powerful way of observing children’s play as you are deeply involved in learning with children, and you can immediately scaffold the children’s knowledge by introducing new skills, information, or vocabulary.
- Close working partnerships with other settings and professionals – Sharing information, and learning opportunities to work collaboratively for children’s individual needs.
- Discussions with staff and group observations– This can help to assess how well each child is progressing from their starting points. For example, one practitioner may have observed a child doing or saying something that the key person has not yet observed.

All of these tools should enable a practitioner to support each child’s individual development, and identify any areas where children need additional help.

This policy has been adopted by St Helen’s Pre-School

Signed on behalf of the setting by:

..... Chairperson

..... Manager

Date: October 2022

This policy runs in conjunction with the following policies:

- OAP Procedure
- SEND
- Abacus & Footsteps

Relevant Guidance and Legislation

Appendices – Please note appendices are held at the Pre-School, please ask to view