

Skelton Primary School Policy on Play

Introduction

Play provides an opportunity for children to come to terms with themselves, their culture and language, other people and the world, and make sense of real life situations. Play provides opportunities for exploration, investigation and problem solving and for children to practice their developing skills. It also provides opportunities for them to represent their experiences and use what they have learned in different ways - through music, language, imaginative and creative activities. The role of the adult is crucial in supporting and extending children's play.

Janet Moyles states that:-

Anyone who has observed play for any length of time will recognise that, for young children, play is a tool for learning and practitioners who acknowledge and appreciate this can, through provision, interaction and intervention in children's play ensure progression, differentiation and relevance in the curriculum. The sense of children actively seeking to construct their own view of the world and the contribution of quality interactions with others, both adults and children, is now widely accepted as a suitable approach to early years' curriculum.

The Excellence of Play edited by J.Moyles 1994 (page 6).

Rationale

Children learn and develop through play.

Play is a motivating factor for learning.

Adult help and participation are necessary for learning to progress.

Aims

At Skelton Primary School we aim :-

- To provide quality play in a stimulating environment, which allows the children to develop and learn.
- To provide adequate planning, time and space for play.
- To allow play to be sustained over a period of time.
- To allow play to be carried through to a conclusion which children find satisfying and gives rise to perseverance and concentration.
- To provide materials to start play, maintain it and develop its potential.
- To ensure play is enjoyed and shared by all children, albeit to differing degrees.
- To accept that the teacher can take an active role in furthering the learning situation and promoting physical, social and emotional development.
- To provide first hand experiences.
- To provide open ended tasks.
- To interact when relevant.
- To set new challenges.
- To remove materials when they have been ignored or served their purpose.

- To make rules to safeguard children, protect equipment and enable play to occur.
- To allow time for careful observation of children's play to facilitate assessment and planning for progression and continuity.
- To recognise and value the play situations encountered at home.

At Skelton Primary School, through play, we aim to provide opportunities for

- Language development through experiences.
- Early reading and writing skills.
- Social skills
- Mathematical experiences e.g. Counting, matching, conversation.
- One to one correspondence.
- Emotional development.
- Promotion of self esteem.
- Self motivation.
- Co-operation.
- Dealing with feelings e.g. fear, apprehension, anger, curiosity, happiness.
- Sharing and caring.
- Imitative and imaginative play.
- Learning to listen to others and follow direction.
- Equal opportunities.
- Cultural influences.
- Innovation in using equipment.
- Involvement in group play or observation.

Why Play is Important

Play

- Is the natural and enjoyable way for young children to learn.
- Is an essential and rich part of the learning process.
- Develops imagination and creative thinking.
- Allows children to investigate, experiment and solve problems.
- Allows children to develop, consolidate and apply new skills and ideas in different situations.
- Allows children to explore and make sense of the world around them.
- Allows children to work through fears and anxieties.
- Allows children to learn about making choices and decisions.
- Puts children in charge of their own learning.
- Enables children to develop their personal qualities and attitudes.
- Enables children to develop social skills and form relationships.
- Allows children to take risks without fear of failure.
- Which is physical and energetic is an essential part of keeping healthy.

PLAY TAKES PLACE BOTH INDOORS AND OUTDOORS.

Outdoor Play

- Is both a teaching and learning environment.
- Outdoor design and layout needs careful consideration.
- Outdoor play is central to young children's learning, possibly more to some children than others.
- The outdoor classroom offers children the opportunity to utilize effective modes of learning – play, movement and sensory experience.
- Children need versatile equipment and environments.

The Learning Environment

Well planned play is promoted within the Foundation Stage at Skelton Primary School by providing children with time, space, materials and equality of access in a secure environment with effective adult support. Through well planned play children can:-

- Explore, develop and represent learning experiences that will help them make sense of the world.
- Practice and build up ideas, concepts and skills
- Learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules.
- Be alone, be alongside others or co-operate as they talk or rehearse their feelings.
- Take risks and make mistakes.

- Think creatively and imaginatively.
- Express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations..

What are we providing?

- Space - sufficient area to support play.
- Time - enough time to pursue/complete activities.
- Materials and stimulus - quality equipment, well labeled and accessible.
- Adult interest and encouragement - all adults deployed effectively.
- Equal opportunities.
- Breadth and balance - in activities and experiences provided.

Why are we providing?

- To give children the space to develop and extend play.
- Opportunities to explore materials.
- Develop role play.
- Develop concentration.
- Observe.
- Motivate.
- Enhance social skills.

How are we providing?

- Inside and outside play.
- Ordered framework.
- Varying lengths of time for play to develop.
- Storage of equipment.
- Review of rules.

- Adult intervention / or invited to participate.
- Directing play (modeling).
- Responding to children's stimuli.

Planning For Play

Well planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge. In playing, they behave in different ways: sometimes their play will be boisterous, sometimes they will describe and discuss what they are doing, sometimes they will be quiet and reflective as they play. On occasions, the play will be initiated by the child and for an adult to intervene would be intrusive, whereas, at other times play will be planned and directed by an adult. When an adult joins the children she/he can extend each learning situation and promote physical, social and emotional development. There are three kinds of adult involvement:-

- participation
- initiation
- intervention

Play underlies a great deal of young children's learning. For its potential value to be realised adult involvement and intervention must be sensitive and knowledgeable. Careful planning and organization will provide for and extend learning.

The Role of the Adult

Practitioners have a crucial role:-

- To plan and resource a challenging environment to facilitate high quality play.
- To ensure that play provision and practice reflect the differing needs, interests and cultural backgrounds of individuals.
- To provide equality of access to play.
- To support children's learning through planned play activities.
- To extend and support children's spontaneous play.
- To extend and develop children's language and communication in their play.
- To raise parents/carers awareness of the importance of play within a well planned curriculum.

Teaching Strategies

Staff intervene when:-

- Children have a problem they cannot solve.
- She/he can lead them to reach a logical conclusion.
- Children are disrupting the play.
- Children are at risk because equipment or materials are being abused.
- The play is interfering with the activities of other children.
- The play has reached stalemate.

Staff do not intervene:-

- Until children have been given time to work out the solution to their problem or resolve their disagreement.
- Unless she/he knows they are capable of comprehending the logical conclusion.
- Where the repetitive play is serving a purpose.

The Role of Parents/Other Adults

At Skelton Primary School we encourage parents and members of the community to become involved in school activities and to participate in the classroom. Visitors to the school can join in play activities when invited to do so by the children themselves. They can also take an active role in planned play, model play, help to extend the children's language and experiences, provide role models e.g. visits from nurses, firemen, lollipop lady etc. support spontaneous play and intervene when necessary. The adult can assume roles and play alongside the children to give the area value. Open ended questions posed by adults at the right time can extend play and learning. We aim to foster a quality partnership where individual contributions become valuable resources.

Monitoring, Assessing and Record Keeping.

When do we record?

We are continually assessing the quality of teaching and learning in order to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. Through observation, assessment and evaluation we can plan for the children's needs and provide opportunities for differentiation by task, support, outcome, pace, structuring and equipment.

- The staff plan together and evaluate at the end of each week and topic.
- At the end of each session we discuss and record in individual records, as appropriate.
- Observations are made continually to ensure that each child is given equal opportunities to participate in an activity.
- Observations and comments are recorded on skill sheets during the session and transferred to individual records regularly.
- Outdoor activities are recorded daily as they are undertaken, so that a diverse range of opportunities/experiences are offered (see Outdoor Play in appendices.)

How Do We Record?

- By taking photographs to illustrate play.
- By continuous assessment.
- By spot checks e.g. during a set period of time while continuing with other classroom activities, the staff observe what is happening in the play and record observations later in individual records.
- By planning for a specific time to assess children's language / involvement / leadership etc. in play.
- By concentrating on each category of play in turn and, if possible, covering all of these during the course of a term.

Buildings and Resources

The Nursery is self contained, with its own entrance and outdoor play areas. (Grassed and tarmac). A shed in the playground is used to store equipment and a rota (see attached) ensures a broad and balanced range of activities are on offer. Weather permitting, the grassed area at the side of the building is used for quiet activities e.g. reading, gardening and appreciating the environment. Reception aged children are in classes adjoining the Nursery. They use the playground, a field and the outdoor area adjoining the classrooms. Facilities for structured outdoor play are limited, but staff are aware of this and are currently reviewing the situation.

Health and Safety

The health and safety of each child is very important. There is a trained first aider within Nursery and in school and any accident is dealt with immediately. If it is a minor incident parents/carers are informed at the end

of the session, and the incident recorded in an accident book. When staff are concerned the parents/carers are contacted. If life threatening, the emergency services would be contacted.

There is a security system within the school, which ensures the safety of the children and staff at all times.

Fire drills are practiced regularly.

Equipment is examined at regular intervals for wear and tear. Worn out or damaged equipment is discarded or replaced

A consistent, high standard of behaviour is expected in order to safeguard children, protect equipment and enable play to occur.