

CLOUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

PLAY POLICY



Date Approved by Board of Governors: October 2021

Policy Review Date: By October 2023

Signed Chairperson of the Board of Governors:_____

In Clough Primary School we recognise the importance of Activity and Play Based Learning as a fundamental part of the process of learning in Foundation Stage and Key Stage One.

One of the most important aims of education is to help each child to achieve their fullest potential in all areas of life, not solely academically. Play Based Learning is a useful tool in the fulfilment of this aim. The principles below underpin our Early Years Curriculum and guide our planning.

The Northern Ireland Curriculum states that: - “Children learn best when learning is interactive, practical and enjoyable”. “It is important that children have opportunities to be actively involved in practical, challenging Play Based Learning in a stimulating environment.” “Have opportunities to initiate play which capitalises on intrinsic motivates and natural curiosity.” “Are actively involved in planning, carrying out and reflecting their work.”

Therefore, our aims are as follows:

Foundation Stage

- To promote play as a pleasurable, worthwhile activity.
- To develop self-esteem, self-confidence, independence, and a positive attitude to learning.
- To encourage creativity, self-expression, and imaginative thinking.
- To develop motor skills.
- To enhance language development.
- To stimulate curiosity and foster skills of observation, investigation, problem solving and planning in all areas of the curriculum.
- To allow teachers to observe children and record differing needs and attitudes.
- To increase social awareness through role play and co-operative play.
- To give children the opportunity to investigate the differing properties of varying materials.
- To promote children’s thinking skills and personal capabilities.
- To enable children to develop physical confidence and competence.

Activity Based Learning at Key Stage One

Activity Based Learning at Key Stage One builds on the active, hands-on learning that has taken place in the Foundation Stage. It is linked to topics or themes and allows children to engage in a variety of focused play activities and independent child-initiated games and activities, e.g., role play, construction, tabletop, art, and design.

The aims for Foundation Stage remain together with the points below: -

- To enable children to develop their own ideas and interests.
- To develop thinking skills and personal capabilities.
- To provide opportunities for sharing and demonstrating learning.
- To facilitate teacher observations to inform future planning.

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

“At the heart of the NI Curriculum lies an explicit emphasis on the development of pupils’ skills and capabilities for lifelong learning and for operating effectively in society. By engaging pupils in active learning contexts across all areas of the Curriculum, your teachers can develop pupils’ personal and interpersonal skills, capabilities and dispositions, and their ability to think both creatively and critically.”

(Ref: Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities in Key Stages 1 and 2 – CCEA 2007)

Play provides a wide variety of experiences which will help to develop the children’s knowledge, skills and understanding.

Play encourages children to:

- Make informed and responsible decisions
- Self-evaluate
- Manage their learning
- Transfer learning to real-life situations

Links with areas of learning

Children learn best when learning is connected. Our children will experience all areas of learning during play – arts, language and literacy, mathematics, and numeracy, PDMU, PE, WAU and ICT. We plan play through a topic-based approach when this fits, because it provides opportunities to develop learning across the Curriculum. All topics will meet Curriculum requirements to ensure continuity and progression.

The Learning Environment

We believe a well organised, stimulating, and secure environment enables children to become confident, active learners. We strive to ensure that materials and equipment are readily available so that children can select what is needed for their activity. This enables adults to spend more time interacting during play. Clear labelling allows the children to select and return equipment, further promoting independent learning.

The children have access to the following areas:

Foundation Stage

- Role play
- Creative
- Construction
- Sand
- Water
- Writing
- Small world
- Tabletop
- Play dough

- Book corner
- ICT

Key Stage One

- ICT
- Library area
- Writing materials
- Joining materials
- Writing/drawing aids
- Recyclable materials
- Construction
- Tabletop games, e.g., Literacy/Numeracy activities
- Role play
- Water/sand if required
- Art and Design materials
- Small world

ROLE OF THE ADULT

The quality of adult intervention is a critical factor in the quality of learning which is experienced by the child.

The adult's role is that of a: -

- Provider
- Facilitator
- Participant
- Observer

Foundation and Key Stage One teachers and classroom assistants therefore strive to: -

- Plan for and provide appropriate activities/experiences
- Organise and provide a stimulating environment and be aware of the potential learning
- Be a participant who initiates, encourages, questions, models, joins in, stimulates and extends the learning
- Observe children carefully, assess their progress, evaluate the learning taking place and use information to inform future planning.

- Be aware of children's safety at all times. With Covid-19 regulations still in place, the children will sanitise and wash their hands regularly

PLANNING

Planning underpins effective learning and teaching and takes account of the developmental stage of the children as well as their previous experiences. Our planners are flexible and can be changed or added to as the children's responses and outcomes of activities are observed. Planners are evaluated to ensure effective assessment. As children progress through Foundation Stage and Key Stage One they are involved in the planning process. We have adopted the Plan-Do-Review process which fosters good thinking habits and develops more independent learners. Children's planning ideas are recorded. These ideas inform the teachers half-termly play or topic planner.

MANAGEMENT OF ACTIVITY/PLAY BASED LEARNING

Foundation Stage

- Whole class introduction and planning time with adults.
- Freedom of choice: children choose where they want to play.
- There may be one or two focus activities the teacher will want every child to experience.
- Before or after tidying up, children are brought together to review their play.
- Records are kept of play activities, e.g., photographs, wall displays etc.
- Children tidy up the play areas with assistance when needed.
- Involve children with the setting up of activities when appropriate.
- Children tidy up materials with assistance when required.
- Children demonstrate/discuss the learning plenary.

MANAGING SPACE AND RESOURCES

The organisation will encourage independence. By giving children this responsibility, adults can spend longer periods of time interacting with children during their play session. The following points are considered.

1. Clearly defined areas are created using a variety of moveable storage units and furniture.
2. Clear labelling enables children to select and return their own equipment.
4. Continual audit of resources and the involvement of children and parents contributing to our resources.
5. The resources reflect the needs of the learners and change to accommodate progression.

OBSERVATION, ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION AND RECORDING

Foundation Stage Observations will be a regular feature of classroom practice. They provide much information about the children and the quality of play provision. Careful observations help teachers to: -

- Assess the development of the child's physical, social and cognitive skills

- Monitor the child's progress
- Plan to meet the needs, interests and ability of the child
- Assess the appropriateness of the activities provided and the learning that is taking place
- Ensure that the child is experiencing a wide variety of experiences and not confining their play to a limited number of areas
- Know when extra materials are required to supplement or extend the play
- Assess the suitability of the equipment and materials being used
- Provide information for parents and other agencies involved in meeting a child's needs.
- A flexible approach will be adopted which allows for both planned and spontaneous observations. Observations are used to inform planning.

Observations should include information about the child's: -

- Physical, social, emotional and cognitive development
- Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities
- Use of language in a range of situations
- Level of involvement and concentration

Learning is assessed during play in a variety of ways: -

- The teacher and classroom assistant
- Peers
- Self-assessment
- Observation
- Discussion and reflection

Assessment is an integral part of the learning process. It enables teachers to: -

- Monitor progress
- Plan future work
- Set tasks to use certain skills
- Assess the appropriateness of the activities provided and the learning that is taking place
- Know when extra materials are required to supplement or extend the play
- Assess the suitability of the equipment and materials being used
- Self-assessment

- Self-evaluation

Observations should take account of the child's background and experience: -

We are aware that pupils have different experiences, interests, and strengths, which will influence the way in which they learn. In planning 'Play Learning,' we are aware of the requirements of the Equal Opportunities legislation and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order.

We endeavour to have high expectations for all pupils and will aim to provide suitably challenging opportunities for them to participate in activities fully and effectively.