

# ***Learning and Development Policy***

## **Statement of Intent**

At Blakeney Pre-school, we structure our activities and organise our systems to ensure that all children who attend receive an enjoyable and challenging learning experience. We consider the children as individuals and we work towards meeting their own unique needs and expectations.

## **Aims**

- To provide a freely structured environment for learning through play.
- To encourage independence and self-confidence.
- To work towards fulfilling the seven areas of learning and development as laid down in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework, with particular emphasis on the prime areas of Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development and the specific areas of Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding of the World and Expressive Arts and Design.
- To provide children with the opportunity to gain self-awareness, to relate to other children and adults, and to function as an individual within a group.
- To introduce children to a wide range of stimulating activities.
- To send children to primary school with an enthusiasm for learning and the ability to cope in a school environment.

## **In order to fulfil these aims**

Play is an essential part of every child's life - "essential for physical, emotional and spiritual growth, intellectual and educational development, and acquiring social and behavioural skills". (The Charter for Children's Play)

We recognise the four guiding principles, as laid down by the EYFS Statutory Framework, which should shape our practice:

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- 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/or carers; and
- **children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

## **Activities**

- We provide a wide range of age appropriate activities.
- The majority of our session is given over to 'free play' in which children are able to choose their own activity.
- Staff allow children to take the initiative in their own learning process.

- Staff make observations through their interactions with the children which allows them to direct play toward areas that might interest or challenge a child's individual needs.
- Staff understand the wide differences in normal learning for pre-school children and provide support accordingly.

## Outdoor Learning

- We value outdoor play as an intrinsic part of the curriculum.
- By ensuring outdoor play is an integral part of the daily school routine we consciously seek to transmit a positive attitude to the outdoors and enrich the child's understanding of the world around him/her.
- Active learning experiences outdoors are essential for young children. They give children opportunities to practice their developing skills, make them feel good and to explore their world. It is also important for children's physical, mental and emotional development.
- We believe that children should begin to take risks and face challenges outdoors. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) fully supports playing outdoors.
- We believe that children should be able to use the outdoor area as a context for learning throughout the year.
- We aim to provide a safe, stimulating outdoor environment where space is used effectively to enable children to explore a broad and balanced curriculum using a range of interesting resources suitable to their individual needs.
- The outdoor area will be resourced and available for the children to access on a daily basis. Children will be able to choose to use the outdoor area freely during free-play, and focused activities may be planned for outdoors at a fixed time of the day.
- We believe that access to the outdoor area is beneficial to the health and wellbeing of young children. As a consequence we do not want to restrict a child's choice to play and learn outdoors. If your child is not well enough to go out, we would ask that they are kept home from the setting
- Whenever children are using the outdoor area we consider it to be part of the free flowing play space and, as part of the building as a whole, it is appropriately staffed using at least the statutory ratios of adults to children. Staff will make observations to inform future planning when working with children in the outdoor area.

## Equal Opportunities

- We value and respect different racial origins, religions, cultures, languages and abilities and believe that each child should be respected as an individual without stereotyping.
- We positively encourage children of both sexes to participate in all activities and games and to develop a positive self-identity.
- We encourage children to value and respect all cultures and racial groups.
- We adhere to the principles laid out in our [Equal Opportunities Policy](#)

## Record Keeping

- All new parents fill in a registration form and an 'all about me' which lists information about a child's particular needs.
- It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that any changes to the child's needs are updated on the registration Form.
- Staff make daily observations about the children in their care. These observations are recorded at the time they occur and then later filed into the child's learning journey and on Tapestry

- Staff are also continually assessing the children in their care to ensure that individual needs are being met and to help them work towards fulfilling their early learning goals.
- Staff communicate their observations and assessments regularly with parents.
- Observations and assessments are discussed at planning meetings and form the basis for session structure.
- Each child has his/her own learning journey which is the responsibility of his/her key person and will be given to the child's parents at the end of their pre-school year.
- The learning journey includes photographs and observations.
- The learning journeys are kept in the main playroom parents are invited to view them at any time.
- Observations are used to complete transition records that are passed to each child's school at the end of their time at preschool.

## **Key Person**

- The key person system provides a solid base for the care and commitment we are able to give to the children in our care by developing a good understanding of their needs and the specific attention that they require.
- Key persons are chosen to ensure that they get to see a particular child as often as possible.
- The key person is able to build a strong relationship with a particular child and to communicate with the child's parents details of how the child plays, learns and relates to others in the setting.
- By turn, we encourage parents to pass information to key persons about their child including particular interests, achievements or concerns that they might have.
- We encourage parents to raise any concerns that they may have about the partnership in confidence with the Pre-School Leader.
- We assure parents that if your child's key person is not in, ALL staff are still involved with all the children and information is passed between staff on a very regular basis.
- We communicate relevant information about a child's key person during their initial visit. Any changes to key persons will be passed on to parents in writing.
- Learning journeys are freely available to parents all the time. We operate a system whereby parents have an opportunity to discuss their child's progress at length with their key person at least termly. Staff are always available to discuss a child's progress if required.