



Curriculum Policy

Introduction

The Curriculum Policy for Castlereagh Nursery School is intended as a document which is endorsed by the Board of Governors, used by all staff, both teaching and non-teaching and is available, on request, to parents and D.E. Inspectorate.

This policy was devised by the staff and will be reviewed during the academic year 2021-2022

Principles

To provide a curriculum based on the curricular guidance issued by CCEA in 2018, which outlines the range of opportunities children of Nursery age should have through play and other relevant experiences.

The Northern Ireland Curriculum Council has defined the curriculum as being:

" the creation of a flexible, developing learning environment in which, the child will actively pursue their interest with the guidance and support of adults ".

The curriculum for our nursery children includes the totality of their experiences within the school. This involves all play activities, experiences and all that children do, hear, see and feel, including the behaviour of adults.

Policy of Intent

To provide a curriculum which is inspiring, motivating, flexible, and challenging whilst meeting the ever-changing needs of the pre-school child through a child centred, play based environment. The children's learning experiences will be viewed as an extension of learning, which has begun at home. It is crucial that learning will not be compartmentalized into formal learning areas. Instead it will take place in an informal holistic manner.

"There is no place at this stage for the introduction of formal schooling in the sense of an established body of knowledge to be acquired or a set of skills to be mastered ". NICC' 1989

Procedures

- Provide a broad balanced relevant curriculum that reflects all six curricular areas:- (Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Early Mathematical Experiences, Language Development, Physical Development and Movement, the Arts, and the World Around Us).
- Meet the individual needs of each child
- Encourage progression

- Stimulate children's natural curiosity
- Encourage children to explore, investigate, experiment, solve problems and learn from trial and error, with emphasis upon concrete first hand experiences.
- Ensure equality of opportunity
- Provide a secure, happy, caring and supportive environment
- Provide well presented and attractive activities and environment.
- Respect parents and other agencies as active partners
- Ensure children are given suitable time and space
- Plan, observe and evaluate learning

Parent/Carers as Partners

It is the policy of Castlereagh Nursery School to encourage parents as partners in their child's education and to draw attention to the importance of their own role in helping them. Class teachers hold meetings with parents termly to review curriculum progress and highlight any areas for development. For each new topic school will share a newsletter with parents/ carers outlining the learning taking place and any rhymes/ songs which can be enjoyed at home and suggested related vocabulary to help complement the classroom learning.

Policy for Language Development

"Language development is crucial to living and learning and is concerned with more than the growth of vocabulary. Language is used to talk to people, to share and release feelings and to give and obtain information. Language is important in the development of understanding and in the refinement of ideas" CCEA (1997)

In Castlereagh Nursery School we organise and plan activities and experiences which foster the development of language in relation to talking, listening, early reading and early writing.

Talking and Listening Experiences

Talking and listening experiences are promoted in Castlereagh Nursery School by:

- Ensuring that children have access to a wide variety of play activities and experiences and are then encouraged to talk about their experiences, ideas, feelings and achievements to one another and to adults during the course of their play.
- Adults, who initiate conversations by the use of careful open-ended questioning strategies to help children to participate and extend their conversational skills.

- Encouraging parents to share information about their child's home experiences with adults in order that staff may use this as a starting point for conversations.
- The use of positive non-verbal communication to encourage children to communicate e.g. children's physical level, nodding, smiling and responding appropriately.
- Promoting language and listening skills, through the media of books, pictures, songs and rhymes.
- Using drama as a medium for expressing and developing language.
- Incorporating circle time into weekly events and experiences.
- Incorporating books and magazines throughout all play areas e.g. home corner, imaginative play areas, display tables etc.
- Providing an attractive reading areas with a range of story books and information books suited to children's needs, interests, race and culture.
- Ensuring that opportunities arise for children to communicate on a one to one basis, one to small group basis and one to large group basis in the Nursery.

Early Reading and Writing Activities

Early reading and writing activities are promoted in Castlereagh Nursery School by:

- Focusing children's attention upon print in the environment in order to help children understand that print represents meaning e.g. labels on food packaging, name on school uniform, captions on displays etc.
- Reading a range of books whilst helping children understand that both the picture and the writing tells a story.
- Using a range of sequencing activities e.g. sequencing cards, sequencing jigsaws, helping children understand the appropriate sequencing of events.
- Encouraging children to recall personal events in an appropriate sequence.
- Provide a range of writing and mark making materials (pens, pencils, crayon, chalk, paint, felt-tips and paper) into a wide range of play areas e.g. creative area, imaginative role-play areas, outdoors etc.
- Encouraging children to represent their ideas and experiences through painting and pretend writing.
- Writing children's names on paintings, drawings, models etc.
- Recording children's ideas and thoughts within captions and reading.
- Indicating a left to right sweeping gesture on occasions when reading books, captions on posters etc.

Policy for Mathematical Development

In Castlereagh Nursery School we aim to provide all children with broad and varied experiences in which mathematical language, skills and concepts will be promoted, supported and nurtured. The nursery will ensure that children will become naturally confident and enthusiastic in the development of mathematical language and concepts.

In Castlereagh Nursery School we believe that every activity offers mathematical learning therefore the following mathematical areas will be promoted through our play based curriculum.

Early Numbers

In the Nursery we will develop early number experiences when sorting and matching for colour, shape, texture, size and item such as fruit, vegetables, animals etc.

Sequencing skills are developed through recalling stories and even participation in routines, events and through sequencing shapes, colours and patterns in play e.g. pattern cards, pegs, building blocks etc. One to one correspondence concepts are developed through play and routine. Ordinal counting through books, stories and rhymes.

Logical mathematical thinking and problem

Adults always endeavour to promote logical thinking and problem solving through asking appropriate questions e.g.

Spatial Awareness

- Where does this go?
- How can this fit?
- Why does this not fit?

Measurement

- Which one is the tallest?
- Is this too narrow?
- How can you make this one smaller?

Number

- How many do we need?
- Is there enough for everyone?
- How many scoopfuls will we need to fill this container?

Shape and Space

Children are taught to identify shapes through play and associated language

- Shapes
- Curves
- Corner
- Straight
- Flat
- 2D shapes - Square, Circle, Triangle, Diamond, Heart, Kite

- 3D shapes – Cube, Sphere, Cone, Pyramid
- Area
- Positions
- Prepositions - Above/below, In front /behind, Over/under

Activities

- Water/sand/art
- Construction toys
- Threading
- Books
- Jigsaws
- Shape sorters
- Physical play

Measurement

Measurement concepts are promoted as a result of making comparisons and using comparative language.

- Weight - heavy/light, heavier/lighter, heaviest/lightest
- Length - long/short, longer/shorter, longest/shortest
- Height - tall/short, taller than/shorter than, tallest/shortest
- Capacity and volume - empty/full/half full

Time

- Times of the day e.g. morning, afternoon, break time, dinner, home time, night/day
- Seasonal times and occasions e.g. birthday, Christmas, Easter
- Weekdays/weekends - through general discussion e.g. no school tomorrow because it is the weekend, on Friday we have music time etc.

Policy for Physical Development

Young children's physical development contributes to all other aspects of children's development. It takes account of fine and gross motor development, spatial awareness, balance and stamina. We appreciate that many factors contribute to physical development - most importantly healthy eating, exercise, hygiene habits, sleep, rest and the provision of opportunities that children receive in order to be physically active.

In Castlereagh Nursery School we feel strongly that children must experience fun, revel in freedom of movement and need space and equipment to play inventively, adventurously and vigorously in order that they may develop confidence, fun, enjoyment and bodily control. Physical development will be promoted across the whole curriculum and within all play areas both indoors and outdoors.

The following gives examples of how this will happen:

- We promote fine manipulative skills and hand to eye coordination through the use of sand and water activities, large and small constructions toys, jigsaws, threading, pegs, writing/mark making tools, painting and other craft activities.
- Through the use of large physical equipment such as community blocks set, slide, climbing frame, large blocks, outdoor sand pit, bicycles etc. children will develop gross motor skills and develop bodily control and skills when climbing, walking, balancing, running, hopping, jumping, crawling, leaping and sliding.
- By introducing ball games to promote throwing, kicking, rolling, aiming, bouncing and catching skills.
- Introduce ring games, drama and movement to music and song to promote gross motor development.
- Provide opportunities for children to build an awareness of space, distance, speed and direction when manoeuvring e.g. obstacle courses, bicycles, classroom layout etc.
- Through discussions, stories, posters, pictures and themes, children will identify and understand the purpose of body parts and some internal organs whilst also recognising the benefits of exercise and healthy eating.
- Provide activities to promote the senses e.g. tasting activities, feely boxes, texture displays, sound/audio tapes, games to promote visual perception e.g. pictorial topic cards etc.

Policy for Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Castlereagh Nursery School recognises that children bring with them from home and their immediate environment a variety of experiences, social skills, attitudes and values. We embrace the children's individuality and foster their unique qualities and personalities. The children are given opportunities to develop personal and social skills, values, attitudes and acquire positive self-esteem. In Castlereagh Nursery School we believe that all activities contribute to the children's emotional wellbeing and through the layout and structure of these activities we promote personal and social development.

The following information outlines the specific strategies used.

In Castlereagh Nursery School we promote positive self-esteem amongst the children by:

- Warmly welcoming children by name and by focusing on children's interests/personality.
- Consistently praising and encouraging children.
- Valuing and respecting each child's individuality; ability, gender, religion, culture and background.

- Celebrating birthdays.
- Displaying photographs of children and family events.
- Displaying children's work.
- Rewarding with stickers and treats e.g. 'special jobs to do'.
- Ensuring children experience success.
- Using circle time as a platform for promotion of identity and esteem.
- Planning opportunities for the children to perform to an audience e.g. adult and children in the story room, Christmas concert, singing to parents.

Procedures used to ensure that children experience a sense of security and trust:

- Our settling in procedure ensures a smooth transition from home to school - establishing a sense of security and trust in their new environment.
- A sense of belonging is established e.g. personal peg with their photograph.
- Children receive one to one attention and care particularly if feeling insecure.
- Apply rules and establish boundaries consistently.
- Prepare children for any changes that may occur.
- Children have the opportunity to choose equipment and materials and undertake responsibility e.g. wipe up spillage, tidy up time.
- Snack time - serve drinks, select food, butter own bread and toast, tidy away dishes.

Procedures to encourage children to treat living things with care and respect:

- Story time and discussions - plants, animals, new life, life cycles - the importance of caring and respecting.
- School visits and visitors - Streamvale Farm, Debbie Dolittle, Jungle Animals
- Posters
- Interest tables - watering plants, ensuring they get sunlight.

Activities to promote personal hygiene:

- Washing hands before break, before lunch and after using toilet.
- Discussion and songs about washing body parts e.g. 'this is the way we wash our face, brush our teeth' etc.
- Interactive displays e.g. toothpaste/brush, cloth, soap, mirrors, refresh station, etc. to reinforce theme 'about me'.

Policy for The Arts

Children's creative and aesthetic development is: "Fundamental to successful learning. Being creative enables children to make connections between one area of learning and another, and so to extend their understanding" Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (2000)

In Castlereagh Nursery School we believe that children should have wide opportunities to express their ideas and feelings through the use of their senses and imagination. They will do this whilst participating in activities which allow them to explore a wide range of media such as art, music, song, dance, movement, drama, storytelling, role play, dough, clay and construction.

Therefore, in Castlereagh Nursery School we will ensure that:

- Activities are planned across all play areas to promote creative and aesthetic development.
- Adults encourage and support children in their creativity by giving the children the freedom to express their own ideas and imagination.
- We encourage and stimulate children's creativity in such a way that originality of thought is developed whilst also facilitating children's enjoyment.
- A wide range of materials exist and are readily available for children to use within and across each play area in order that each child may express their original ideas e.g. adjacent storage with materials and props.
- Adult emphasis is on the processes associated with each activity rather than the finished product.
- The children have the opportunity to express their ideas and celebrate their achievements with their peers and staff whilst also displaying their work in their own individual art gallery, leading to a sense of identity whilst also motivating and rewarding all children

Policy for The World Around Us

Children are naturally interested, enthusiastic and curious about the world around them. Children enter Nursery with a knowledge of their immediate home environment coupled with some experiences of the wider environment. Hence it is essential that we seize upon children's natural curiosity in order to further develop and extend their knowledge and appreciation of the world around them. We at Castlereagh Nursery School recognise the importance of ensuring that children become familiar with their new Nursery environment by providing a range of topics and themes such as 'all about me', 'people who help us' etc. It is our belief that as a result of establishing relationships within this environment and knowing their physical environment that they will then be comfortable and have the confidence to acquire more knowledge of the wider world around them.

To support learning we will:

- Help children to become familiar with the names and roles of all adults within the setting e.g. teachers, assistants, cleaner, secretary, dining attendant and principal.
- Seize upon unplanned, spontaneous learning opportunities such as dinners being delivered, gardeners cutting grass etc.
- Invite visitors/parents into the setting to discuss roles and occupations e.g. nurse, dentist, fire fighter etc.
- Plan for road safety discussions using calendars, posters, jigsaws and by inviting road safety officers and the local lollipop person into the setting.
- Set up role-play areas to promote learning in relation to services within the community e.g. hairdressers, shops, hospital, post office, dentist etc.
- Provide stories, posters, pictures and visitors from Artsekta to lead discussions relating to life in other parts of the country and in other parts of the world (cultural awareness).
- Use discussion time to learn about different types of homes and different types of transport.
- Provide a variety of construction toys to make models, extend ideas and concepts.
- Use small-scale imaginative equipment e.g. garage construction site, playhouse, igloo, playground, hospital, zoo, farm as a means to develop children's understanding of the world around them.
- Develop concepts about past and present; when I was a baby, when mummy, granny was a little girl etc.
- Celebrating birthdays, special events and festivals e.g. Christmas, Easter and Chinese New Year.
- Identify and observe animals (Streamvale Farm, Debbie Dolittle, Amazon Animals).
- Discuss, observe, identify and explore weather conditions e.g. dew on the grass, frost on the ground, play with snow, melt snow in classroom etc.
- Encourage children to care and be responsible for plants and vegetables in the garden. Observe and investigate natural aspects of the environment e.g. stones, shells, seaweed, pebbles, driftwood, twig, branches, plants, flowers etc.
- Encourage children to experiment with a wide variety of play materials. Adults interact to assist the children in learning the names of these materials and equipment whilst also developing an understanding of the purpose of the materials and equipment.
- Encourage children to talk about their own experiences within their home and community in order to further develop an understanding and

appreciation of services and roles within the community e.g. trip to the post office, bus/train station etc.

Assessment

It is the policy of Castlereagh Nursery School that assessment will be carried out through a mixture of informal observations and interaction with the child, the use of the information on observation sheets and discussion during regular staff meetings. The information gathered during the assessment process will then inform curriculum planning for individual needs. This will also aid planning for future resource purchases. Initial discussions with parents and carers during the home visit in August, will provide a useful starting point and parents will be kept informed of their child's progress and any concerns which staff may have regarding the child as the year progresses, through regular meetings with the Class Teacher.

Responsibilities

The school's Principal, Mrs A Morrow, has direct responsibility for maintaining this policy and providing advice and guidance on its implementation. All staff are responsible for policy implementation and for ensuring that staff they manage also adhere to the standards.

Implementation

This policy will be made available to all pupils, parents, guardians, staff (whether permanent or temporary) and governors.

Review

The school's Principal will review this policy every two years and any changes necessary as a result of this review will be implemented without delay.