

10.1 Curriculum/Learning Policy

This policy aims to set out what we as a setting provide for the children in our care in terms of curriculum and learning. Our aims are:

- To enhance the development and education of children under statutory school age in a parent-involving, community based group.
- To provide a safe, secure and stimulating environment, whilst appreciating the need for children to be able to take calculated risks.
- To work within the framework that ensures equality of opportunity for all children and families.
- To offer a specially tailored curriculum to aid in the implementation of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- To provide child-initiated learning opportunities through the use of the 'In the Moment Planning' philosophy.
- To offer fun and friendship with children and adults.
- To provide the support of a personal key person.
- To provide opportunities for you and your family to be directly involved in the activities of the group and in your own child's progress.
- To celebrate the diversity of culture, religious and ethnic backgrounds of the children and families who attend our setting.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life. It is a single framework for children from 0-5 years and is continuous to the end of the Reception Class.

We believe that every child is unique, with their own special needs and interests. They are constantly learning and developing and it is our role, in partnership with parents, to help them be ready for the next stage in their learning journey. To this end, each child has a dedicated key person who will get to holistically know the child, what their likes and dislikes are, strengths and areas for development, and use this knowledge to help them develop through the three prime areas of the EYFS, (Personal, Social and Emotional, Physical and Communication and Language). Once secure in these three prime areas they will be ready to learn and develop in the other four specific areas (Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design). The broad-ranging scope of the EYFS allows us to develop interesting activities for children at their appropriate stage of development, so they are constantly "learning through play". Each keyperson uses observation of the child to record their stage of development and from this is able to plan for the individual child's needs and interests.

The adults in the setting are responsible (working in partnership with parents) for ensuring that the children's well being and involvement is high. There is a strong team of well-qualified and experienced staff, overseen by a strong leadership and management team,

who ensure that we are never complacent in our practice but that we constantly reflect on our practice and are always striving to improve the outcomes for the children in our care. When a parent expresses an interest in their child attending our setting, they are invited to have an informal look around and chat with staff. At this stage parents are sent a copy of our Parents' Information Handbook. If they feel they would like to send their child to the setting, a visit is arranged prior to this start date so that the parent and child can meet the child's designated keyperson and begin to build up a relationship before they even start. The keyperson finds out what the child is like when they start by communication with the child, the parent and from observation. At this point, they complete a starting point tracking document. Once the child has settled, approximately six weeks later (depending on how many sessions they attend), the keyperson will again meet with the child's parents to discuss their progress and how they are settling-in to the routine of the Pre-school (this is known as their Settling-in Review). At this stage the parent can share any concerns or new information that they would like the keyperson to be aware of and the keyperson can share how the child is progressing through the curriculum. If the child is aged two when they start, it is a statutory requirement that they have a Progress Check. This is again in consultation with parents and occurs sometime before the child's third birthday. Following on from these initial reviews, parents meet the keyperson formally once per term (around once every 8-10 weeks) to discuss their child's progress. To ensure both the child and parents' voices are heard, forms will be sent home prior to this review, asking for information about what is going on in the child's home life and what the parent would like to learn from their next meeting. Parents are requested to send in photos from home so that the keyperson can have chats about them with the key child. At every stage, the development of the child through the various areas of the curriculum is input into the Milestone Assessment Tracker. This monitoring ensures that any gaps in learning and development for each child can be addressed through a graduated approach.

The keyperson builds up a strong relationship with the child and parents and this ensures for consistency of care. The keyperson monitors the child's holistic progress and development and plans for the individual child's needs in the moment, keeping and monitoring records. We have a specific Keyperson Policy document which can be found in the policy document folder.

The setting recognises parents as the child's first educators and most important people in their life. To this end, we value parents' contributions to the child's learning and well-being. We involve parents in the running of the setting through a parent run committee. We hold Annual General Meetings to which all parents are invited. Parents are asked to share information about the child's home life at regular parent consultations and they are always encouraged to talk to staff if they have any concerns or would just like to share something that may affect the child whilst here. There are ways in which parents can be directly involved, for example through a parent helper rota, Christmas plays, gardening and coming into the setting to share their knowledge and skills (e.g. police officers, fire officers, doctors, paramedics, etc.).

We have a highly qualified team of staff who undertake Continuing Professional Development to ensure that they keep abreast of current legislation and thinking with regards to child development and the best ways to ensure that the children in our care are

supported and nurtured in their learning journey. Staff are responsive and caring and the individual child's well being and involvement is monitored to ensure that they feel stimulated, safe, secure and happy in the setting. Staff have particular interests and strengths in developing children's speech and language skills through the Early Talk Boost programme.

We welcome children and families from all backgrounds and value cultural, religious and lifestyle diversities. We ask parents to share these with us so that we can reflect these aspects of the child's life in our setting. We have specific policies to ensure we include all children and families, no matter what their background or needs, together with a dedicated Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator.

The learning environment is spread across two rooms, together with two gardens. Both rooms have areas for reading, role play, craft and block play, as well as quiet areas and provocation shelves. Whilst there are some designated areas, many resources offer opportunities to develop in many areas of learning, for example, there are books and mark making available in all areas, whilst mathematical concepts are all around us, for example in the construction and self-selection snack area. The seven areas of learning are catered for across the two rooms, but many activities will incorporate more than one area. Children have independent access to either the outside Robin Room or Wren Room environments, with children being able to access the outdoors for the majority of the day. The seven areas of learning are also replicated in the outdoor space. The Wren Room garden has more emphasis on recycled and natural resources, including a bug hotel, bird feeding, nesting and bathing, a mud kitchen, crates, planks of wood, tyres and pipes, for loose parts play, as well as a digging area (please note that, due to issues with drainage, Wren Room is currently inaccessible during the wetter months – we are hopeful for remedial works in the not too distant future). Whilst the Robin Room garden has a mud kitchen, climbing frame, large wooden construction blocks and space for ball play, trikes, musical instruments and loose parts role play. The outdoor environment is equally as important as the indoor environment and equal emphasis is placed on the resourcing of activities here. Children also have access to the school hall for physical activities when appropriate.

We not only use the outside gardens but have access to an enclosed wooded area where we take the children to carry out activities such as making shelters, looking at the natural world and noticing changes in the environment, together with stories such as "Going on a Bear Hunt". We also have use of the school field in summer with access to additional equipment. We have carried out local trips to the park and castle grounds. We have formed positive links with the community and local primary school.

Our ongoing plan is to continue to develop the large raised bed at the front of the building into an allotment-type garden. The children plant, nurture and eat, a range of vegetables, herbs and fruit. Taking care of plants is a great way of helping children understand that not everything is instant and some things are worth waiting for. We are supported in this endeavour by a local voluntary group – Eynsford in Bloom.

Children are encouraged to explore the whole environment. Having independent access to the whole setting supports children in their learning and development. Parents are

requested to dress children appropriately so that they are not restricted from any activity because of what they are wearing. We pride ourselves on the fact that children will have access to the outside no matter what the weather. If, however, children do not have suitable outerwear of their own, we do have a supply of wellies, raincoats and waterproof trousers.

We are a Kent County Council and The Education People accredited Education for Sustainable Development setting and this forms the basis of our ethos of supporting children to understand and embrace the United Nations Global Goals.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Children are born ready, able and eager to learn. They actively reach out to interact with other people and the world around them. Development is not an automatic process, however. It depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments. Here at Anthony Roper Preschool we aim to support and enhance this development on the following basis:

A unique child, plus positive relationships and enabling environments equals learning and development.

The ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner. The characteristics of effective learning, playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically, run through all areas of learning. Positive relationships and enabling environments enable the unique child to learn in this way by encouraging playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically. Children who are given opportunities to learn in this way quickly develop through the three prime areas of Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language Development and Physical Development. The specific areas of Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design, will grow from these prime areas.

A well-designed, equipped and inviting environment, together with caring, responsive and knowledgeable staff, allows children lots of opportunities to learn and develop through the characteristics of effective learning. Set out below is an example of how a small pile of bricks can allow a child to learn and develop using the characteristics of effective learning:

Playing and Exploring <i>Engagement</i> For example: the child notices the bricks, they pick them up and begin to build a tower. It	Finding out and exploring • Showing curiosity about objects • Using senses to explore the world around them • Engaging in open-ended activity • Showing particular interests
	Playing with what they know • Pretending objects are things from their experience • Representing their experiences in play
	Being willing to 'have a go'

gets too high and falls down. They try again, this time it stays up. They talk about what it is, maybe a castle, a rocket, a house. They use their creation in a story about a dragon.	• Initiating activities • Seeking challenge • Showing a 'can do' attitude • Learning by trial and error
Active Learning Motivation For example: the child doesn't give up when the tower falls down. They think of other ways to make it stronger. They are resilient to disappointment and try again until they have achieved their aim. They enjoy the process of creating something as much as the end result.	Being involved and concentrating • Maintaining focus on their activity for a period of time • Showing high levels of energy, fascination • Not easily distracted • Paying attention to details
	Keeping on trying • Persisting with activity when challenges occur • Showing a belief that more effort or a different approach will pay off • Bouncing back after difficulties
	Enjoying achieving what they set out to do • Showing satisfaction in meeting their own goals • Being proud of how they accomplished something – not just the end result • Enjoying meeting challenges for their own sake rather than external rewards or praise
Creating and Thinking Critically Thinking For example: the child considers the best way to make the tower using what they already know, such as one brick will stack on top of the other. They can check to see if this works. This may be enough but then they may decide to extend it by using two bricks as a base. They can check how well this works through trial and error and plan for their next step.	Having their own ideas • Thinking of ideas • Finding ways to solve problems • Finding new ways to do things
	Making links • Making links and noticing patterns in their experience • Making predictions • Testing their ideas • Developing ideas of grouping, sequences, cause and effect
	Choosing ways to do things • Planning, making decisions about how to approach a task, solve a problem and reach a goal • Checking how well their activities are going • Changing strategy as needed • Reviewing how well the approach worked

Supporting Parents in Helping their Child to Learn

Parents are invited to attend regular consultations with the child's keyperson. At these meetings, staff will discuss areas of learning and inform parents of the strategies used to promote learning through play. We offer guidance on how children will be taught once they attend primary school, such as using cursive writing and offer advice on a range of subjects such as how to encourage self-care, the importance of large physical movements, the vitally important role that parents play in helping their child's speech and language development, etc.

We have parent helper days when parents are invited to come into the setting to share in either an activity or for the whole day, such as our parent helper gardening week and cooking/baking week. We also have an ongoing parent helper rota.

We can signpost various organisations, as well as useful sites for information for parents. We are always striving to help parents as we acknowledge that they are the most important educators of their child and are always open to suggestions from parents.

This policy was adopted on 10/09/2012

Signed on behalf of the

Preschool (for Chair)

To be reviewed