Learning Through Play at Little Swans

Curriculum Statement
June 2017

Policy Reviewed by Samantha Tranter and Jennifer Owen setting Planning Coordinators

Setting the standards for learning, Development and Care for children from Birth to Five.

Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage
In accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum Framework September 2014.

Little Swans Day Nursery believes every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. We provide a secure, safe and happy environment for all our children to grow and develop in.

Planning

We set out to assist all children attending the nursery to attain their maximum potential within their perceived capabilities. An online individual learning journal for each child is maintained showing their abilities, progress and identifying next steps of learning. We acknowledge that children learn in different ways and at different rates and plan for this accordingly through both child and adult led activities. Planning of the learning experience by the staff is further designed to ensure, as far as practical, equality of opportunity between all children and celebrates diversity.
This is achieved through:

- Online Learning Journals, uploading photographic and observational evidence
- Daily, weekly, termly and long term planning
- Getting to know each child individually, including likes and dislikes
- Formal assessments: All completed by the child's key person of whom they have formed a positive relationship with.
- Tracking development across the seven areas of learning as outline in the EYFS Development Matters publication September 2014.

We view all aspects of learning and development as equally important and ensure a flexible approach is maintained which responds quickly to children's learning and development needs. Staffs develop activities based on their key children's development, interests and individual needs. These are taken from observations, which informs future planning and next steps for individual children, groups of children and the nursery as a whole. This is achieved through a balance of adult led and child initiated opportunities both indoors and outdoors as well as within the local community.

Support for children

Staff use their observations, assessments and partnerships with parents to identify areas where a child may require additional support for their learning. Jennifer Owen is the named Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) for the nursery and works closely with staff and families to support them through the processes. The following strategies are used to support staff in early identification of children needing additional support:

- Formative and summative assessments
- Monthly drop in SENCO sessions for staff and parents to share concerns and information
- Identifying next steps in learning
- Tracking development
- Observations and interactions with children
- Multi- agency working
- Sign posting parents to other services who may be able to offer guidance and additional support

Progress Check at age two

EYFS requirements state that practitioners must review a child's progress between the ages of two and three, providing parents/carers with a short, written summary of their child's development in the prime areas (Personal, Social and Emotional development, Physical development and Communication and Language). The check is individually completed for each child, following a standard format and identifies the following:

- Child's strengths
- Written summary of each of the Prime Areas- how the child is currently doing in each area, what they can do, what they need support with.
- A baseline of their development to date
- Areas where progress in less than expected
- Key person written summary
- Identified next steps and activities that can be done to help achieve these.
- Parental comments
- Any information given by the child's health visitor.

If a child's key person has significant emerging concerns, or identifies a special educational need or disability then they are responsible with support from the setting SENCO, other professionals and in partnership with parents to develop a targeted plan to support the child's future learning and development. (See Little Swans Special Educational Needs Policy and Procedures).

The written summary devised by the key person must highlight:

- Areas in which a child is progressing well
- Areas in which some additional support might be needed
- Focus on areas where there is a concern that a child might have developed a delay
- Staff must describe the activities and strategies they attend to adopt to address any issues or concerns.
- Provide a summary which can be used at home to support home learning

Parents are encouraged to share the check with other professionals who may be involved with the child, to support their child's learning and development e.g. health visitors. Nursery promotes forming links with local health visitors to support completion of 2 year old checks at the setting and we are happy for Health Visitors to come to the setting to carry out assessments.

The seven areas of the learning: (Development Matters EYFS)

All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Prime Areas:

These three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

Communication and Language (CL):

This involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves and speak and listen in a range of situations.

This can be supported by:

- Reading books
- Talking, sharing news etc…
- Circle times, letter and sounds activities
- Singing
- Daily interactions between adults and children
- Outdoor play
- Talking openly about processes and completed products and listening to each other
- Modelling good listening skills
- Letters and Sounds Activities

Physical Development (PD):

Providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive and to develop their coordination, control and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity and make healthy choices in relation to food.

This can be supported by:

- Outdoor play, bikes, cars, tyres, climbing frames and slides etc…
- Dance and movement (Tumble Tots) sessions and Yoga sessions
- PE Sessions and equipment
- Creative Flare sessions (Dance)
- Forest school visits
- Trips and outings
- Making mark activities

- Activities to promote hand eye coordination like, threading, playing with small world objects and cutting.
- Cooking activities

Personal, social and emotional development (PSED):

Involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect and understanding for others, celebrating diversity; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups (see behaviour policy); and to have confidence in their own abilities.

This can be supported by:

- Spending time together with children and adults
- Allowing feelings to be expressed and acknowledging those feelings
- Talking openly about feelings
- Puppet play
- Role play
- Discussing actions of ourselves and others
- Play experiences
- Circle time, talking about families etc…
- Learning about different celebrations and religious festivals
- Talking about similarities and differences

Specific Areas: There are four specific areas through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Literacy development:

This involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

This is supported by:

- Mark making activities
- Jolly Phonics (preschool)
- Looking and talking about books
- Library visits
- Looking at signs when out and about and in different environments
- ICT resources
- Song and story times

Mathematics:

This involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; to describe shapes, spaces and measures; to develop an awareness of time through understanding routines and to begin to categorise objects based on matching features.

This can be supported by:

- Incorporating colour recognition into daily routines
- Counting rhymes
- Counting objects
- Using routine to problem solve
- Use resources to support understanding of shape, space and measure

- Referring to time based events through the use of routines
- Grouping and sorting objects by size, shape, colour or other distinguishing features.

Understanding the World:

This involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

This can be supported by:

- Learning about yourself and your family and valuing your uniqueness
- Spending time with different people and learning about them and what makes them special.
- Being out and about in the environment/community
- Learning about the life cycles, habitats, eating habits etc. of plants and animals
- Learning about weathers, season and Space
- Making links with others
- Talking about different professions and the people who help us
- The use of ICT to support learning
- Activities and circle times which incorporate daily experiences of children
- Role play activities

Expressive arts and design

This involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role play and design and technology.

This can be supported by:

- Expressing selves through dance, yoga and movement sessions
- Creative activities
- Role Play
- Messy play
- Singing
- Creating music with instruments
- Sensory play

The characteristics of effective learning:

A unique child reaches out to relate to people and things through characteristics of effective learning, which move through all areas of learning

Playing and Exploring *Engagement*

Children learn through finding out and exploring, playing with what they know and being willing to ‘have a go’. Activities, relationships and the environment at the nursery encourage children to explore, using a variety of resources, carefully providing support when it is needed. Staff use the children’s experiences in and outside of nursery to enhance development providing suitable resources to support role play and engagement through children’s interests.

Active Learning *Motivation*
The activities planned at the nursery provide stimulation to the children who choose to investigate them through support from staff. Children become motivated by being involved and concentrating, keep trying and enjoying and achieving what they set out to do. Through praise, recognition and interaction staff help children become aware of their own goals, learning together and from each other. The environment is regularly reappraised, reflecting on resources, their purpose and the children's choices. Staff regularly rearrange the environment and resources to arouse children's curiosity, making space and time for all children to contribute.

Creating and thinking critically *Thinking*
Thinking is a natural process all individuals experience and supports decision making. Children are encouraged to have their own ideas and express them openly within the nursery. Staff encourage children through interaction and discussions to make links with their environment, use different forms of communication and explore all available resources. Activities provide opportunity to plan, consider ideas and for feedback to be given by both adults and children.

Extended learning opportunities

At Little Swans we understand that learning can take place in many different styles and environments. Children are provided with opportunities to explore and extend their learning, development and knowledge through planned extended learning opportunities.

Parent Partnerships:
Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.
At Little Swans we support this by:

- Home Visits
- Sharing information with parents regarding their child's learning and development through:
    - Parent's evening (6 monthly)
    - Parent consultation forms
    - Copies of summative assessments are provided
    - Staff are available for consultations (informal and formal)
    - We provide feedback written and verbal daily
    - Parents experiences of their child's learning is incorporated in learning journals
    - Gathering feedback and knowledge to inform assessments and next steps of learning, which are shared with parents
- Inviting parents into nursery to participate in activates as well as joining us on outings in the local community and trips
- Holding regular social events e.g. Christmas Party

What the EYFS says about building partnerships:
Parents are the children's first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together in early year's settings, the results have a positive impact on children's learning and development. It is known that what parent's do at home with young children has the greatest impact on a child's social, emotional and intellectual development.

Monitoring and reviewing the Curriculum at Little Swans:

Little Swans values the importance of reflective practice and the benefits this can have on the children's learning and development as well as enhancing the provision at the nursery. The following practices support this:

- Monthly staff meetings
- Feedback from staff, parents and children
- Identified planning coordinators (Samantha Tranter and Jennifer Owen)
- Regular planning meetings with Samantha Tranter, Elaine Boulton and Jennifer Owen
- Sharing information freely with the whole staff team
- Weekly supervisor meetings
- Supervisions
- Reviewing regularly both local and central changes in policies regarding the Early Years sector.
- Working with other professionals e.g. teachers support and development workers
- Sharing practices with local nurseries, children centres and primary schools.