



The Limes Nursery School and Children's Centre

Learning and Teaching Policy

Date Adopted: September 2013

Reviewed: June 2017

Review Date: June 2020

Purpose and Aims of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to make a statement of the principles and key values that underpin our approach to Learning and Teaching across the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage). In doing so we intend to enable children, families and staff to create and maintain a consistent, high quality learning community that models an aspirational and vibrant approach to learning for young children in the Early Years.

Practical Information and Guidelines

Ethos

At The Limes we believe that what children learn is important, but just as essential is how they learn. By placing child-initiated learning and exploration at the heart of our philosophy of learning and responding to children's interests, explorations and pace of development, we aim to:

- Encourage and guide children's natural curiosity for learning and ability to focus on what fascinates them.
- Enable experimentation, hypothesizing, fantasy and imagination.
- Stimulate creative and critical thinking skills in young children
- Facilitate an environment where persistence, effort, making mistakes and trying out own ideas is encouraged and noticed.
- Allow children to make choices and decisions for themselves; to reflect and review these, make connections and to feel proud of how they accomplish something as well as the result.
- Enrich, develop and build upon valuable play experiences to bring learning for each individual to the fore.
- Reflect, observe, analyse and respond to children's learning needs and the outcomes of the EYFS
- Model, celebrate and enable a passion for learning that will enable children and families to engage and thrive in their educational experiences in the future.

Environment and Daily Experiences

At The Limes, children and families experience a consistent daily routine and environment that provides security and structure to learning. The daily routine is designed to enable a variety of

approaches to play and learning (see Responsive Planning below) throughout each session. The environment reflects and celebrates the learning, interests, needs and current projects of the children, through the equipment, furnishing and layout of rooms, presentation of displays, learning stories and resources.

Teaching: Attuned, reflective, playful adults

The prime importance of all adults, in stimulating, enabling and enriching learning and play is fully acknowledged at The Limes. All adults, from a range of professional backgrounds, are enabled to develop their reflective skills and understanding of how children learn, and also to contribute the appropriate aspects of their training, professional heritage and responsibilities. Key factors that underpin all teaching at The Limes are:

- **Attunement:** A willingness to feel and see play and learning from a child's point of view and to facilitate learning that is initiated by the child.
- **Reflectivity:** an ability to step back, observe, record, think deeply, see and feel beyond the immediate situation, consider, discuss with colleagues, try out and refer to research and experience.
- **Playfulness:** an approach to interactions with children that reflects a child's natural propensity to play and for exploration.
- **Responsiveness:** to the 'hundred languages of children'.
- **Enabling** independence, creativity and persistence and willingness to try out their ideas.
- **Consistency and rigour** in observations, record-keeping, assessment and the use of these to enable and enhance children's learning.

Responsive Planning for Learning

We believe that children learn in a variety of ways and that planning for this learning has a fundamental effect on its quality, depth, duration and connectedness of the children's experience. While it is clearly neither possible nor desirable to plan the content and specific outcomes of all play, it is important to plan for rich play and to structure the opportunities that enable this play. We do this by planning responsively to what children are telling us in their interests and play by planning in different ways:

- **Responsive planning indoors and outside:** This is based on the adults' observation of children's play each session. Following reflection as a team on the themes, learning and potential development of the play, this planning enables actions (or 'provocations') to which respond, enrich, resource, remind and stimulate children's interests and to follow their lead in what next.
- **Group planning:** This is more specific planning with clear learning objectives that is used to structure the short group times and circle times for the 3 and 4 year old children. It is often responsive to children's current interests, is always playful and enjoyable and may also include key learning experiences introduced to enable and scaffold children's next learning experiences in the Early Years Foundation Stage. For children who attend for 30 hours the additional group times are focussed on 'hands on' creative and skills development learning experiences.
- **Differentiated Groups:** These may be used as the academic year progresses in order to plan for specific learning groups that meet the needs of individual children, particularly around communication, language and literacy (see below).

Planning structures are also important in enabling us to track children's experiences and ensure children have access to the full range of learning experiences outlined in the EYFS.

Focus on Language, Communication and Social Skills: *Learning Language and Loving It*

At The Limes, we recognise the key importance of language, communication and social skills in enabling children to access the full range of learning experiences available to them. Accordingly, we prioritise these aspects of learning in our approach. To ensure that all staff are given the opportunity to review and develop their skills in this area, we actively use the *Learning Language and Loving It* programme that emphasises the adult awareness, sensitivity and responsiveness that most enables children to build upon their confidence and learning.

Language Groups

After the analysis of Entry Data and through observations, children who require additional support to develop their communication and language skills are identified. These children are then supported to make rapid progress through participation in weekly, high impact intervention group work which is planned for and taught by the SENCO and SEN support worker.

Phonics

At The Limes we use the Letters and Sounds document to plan specific phonic based learning activities. Mid-point Data is used to inform us of the learning requirements of the cohort. At this point teachers then identify the appropriate time for the daily planned phonics teaching to begin. For those children whom are exceeding age related expectations (ARE) in the curriculum area of Literacy a series of more complex Letters and Sounds activities are planned and delivered via small group work.

Centre Improvement Plan and Data Collection

The Centre Improvement Plan is informed by qualitative and quantitative information and data on children's progress that we gather during each academic year. The Plan sets specific targets each year which underpin and focus teaching and learning and enable us to develop, build upon and hone the service that we offer to children and families in our community.

Staff Development

To ensure a strong, consistent learning community, we build upon staff skills and understanding of how children learn and the principles that underpin learning and teaching at The Limes. We do this through both individual opportunities for training, (including external courses, performance management, supervision, peer mentoring and lesson studies etc) and also through whole team training at Inset Days and through programmes such as *Learning Language and Loving it* above.

Ratified by Governing Body on:

Date for Review: June 2020

Linked Policies:

- Assessment Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy