

**A Policy for  
Knowledge and Understanding  
of the World**

**Cowgate Under 5's Centre**

## **Rationale**

The importance of knowledge and understanding of the world in the early years cannot be underestimated and has an impact on all areas of children's development and learning.

This policy has been developed by all staff to ensure that high quality learning and teaching opportunities are offered consistently to all children. The policy provides helpful guidance to staff and information for parents in this key aspect of the curriculum.

This policy takes account of national guidelines *A Curriculum Framework for Children 3 - 5* and *The Child at the Centre*.

### **Centre Aims (relevant to policy)**

- The centre is committed to offering high quality learning experiences which take account of national and authority guidelines
- We aim to build partnership with parents and to value their contributions.
- We aim to create a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment.
- The centre is committed to equality and inclusion
- The centre is committed to providing a programme of staff development and review

## **Key aspect: Knowledge and understanding of the world**

**In knowledge and understanding of the world children should learn to:**

- develop their powers of observation using their senses
- recognise objects by sight, sound, touch and taste
- ask questions, experiment, design and make, and solve problems
- recognise patterns, shapes and colours in the world around them
- sort and categorise things into groups
- understand some properties of materials, for example soft/hard, smooth/rough
- understand the routines and jobs of familiar people
- become familiar with the early years setting and places in the local area
- become aware of everyday uses of technology and use these appropriately (scissors, waterproof clothing, fridge, bicycle)
- be aware of daily time sequences and words to describe/measure time, for example snack-time, morning, first, next, clock
- be aware of change and its effects on them, for example their own growth, changes in weather, trees, flowers
- care for living things, for example plants, pets and home
- be aware of feeling good and of the importance of hygiene, diet, exercise and personal safety
- develop an appreciation of natural beauty and a sense of wonder about the world
- understand and use mathematical processes such as matching, sorting, grouping, counting and measuring
- apply these processes in solving mathematical problems
- identify and use numbers up to ten during play experiences and counting games
- recognise familiar shapes during play activities

- use mathematical language appropriate to the learning situation

*Features of learning A Curriculum Framework for Children 3-5*

Children from their earliest days will try to make sense of their world using a multi sensory approach. Their natural curiosity leads them to explore the world around them. In play contexts children will learn by asking questions, solving problems, exploring and investigating.

This area of the curriculum embraces science, technology, health, mathematics and an awareness of people and places. These areas should not be seen in isolation but will be developed and supported through a range of learning opportunities embedded in play contexts.

The adult role will be to build on the varied range of prior experiences which children will bring. Learning will take place within the setting and extend to the wider community.

### *Curriculum Framework for Children 3 -5*

#### **Knowledge and understanding of the world is important for:**

- problem solving
- investigation
- exploration
- observation
- experimenting
- designing
- classifying
- asking questions
- mathematical processes and language
- awareness of diet and nutrition
- knowledge of people and places
- use of technology
- awareness of time sequence

## **Cross curricular links**

Knowledge and understanding of the world is linked closely to other aspects of children's learning. The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world may incorporate the following features of learning from the five key aspects of the curriculum.

### **Emotional, personal and social development**

- develop confidence, self esteem and a sense of security
- care for themselves and their personal safety
- develop independence, for example in dressing and personal hygiene
- persevere in tasks that at first present some difficulties
- make and express choices, plans and decisions
- become aware that the celebration of cultural and religious festivals is important in peoples lives
- care for the environment and other people's in the community

### **Communication and language**

- listen to other children and adults during social activities and play
- pay attention to information and instructions from an adult
- listen and respond to stories, songs, music, rhymes and other poetry

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

- ask questions, experiment, design and make, and solve problems
- pay attention to information and instructions from an adult
- talk to other children or with an adult about themselves and their experiences
- use languages for a variety of purpose, for example to describe, explain, predict, ask questions and develop ideas
- use books to find interesting information

### **Aesthetic and expressive development**

- investigate and use a variety of media and techniques
- listen and respond to sounds
- move rhythmically and expressively to music
- participate in simple dances and singing games

### **Physical development and movement**

- enjoy energetic activity both indoors and out and the feeling of well being that it brings
- develop an awareness of space
- be safe in movement and in using tools and equipment
- be aware of the importance of health and fitness

## **Learning and teaching**

### **The importance of play.**

Staff see play as the major vehicle to support children's development and learning. Through opportunities to investigate their environment, children will be observing shapes, colours patterns, asking questions, problem solving and developing their natural curiosity. ICT and technology should be introduced in play contexts.

*Refer to appendix*

### **The learning environment**

The learning environment is stimulating and challenging and reflects children's interests and experiences. It takes account of different stages of development and allows for choice, offering a good balance between free play and directed activity. High quality resources support learning.

**Staff facilitate knowledge and understanding of the world by:**

- planning for a wide range of experiences
- providing stimulating equipment and materials
- ensuring daily access to appropriate play contexts to widen their appreciation of their world
- sharing and promoting simple safety rules
- providing a range of opportunities including:
  - planting and growing experiences
  - outings within the local environment
  - visits and visitors supporting on-going interests
  - the use of mathematical process and language
  - sensory experiences
  - observation of seasonal change
  - the use of varied reference materials
  - exploration and investigation of materials
  - solving problems and recording data
  - the use of every day technology
  - observational skills
  - sorting and categorising
  - promoting a healthy life style

### **Staff child interaction**

Staff have a sound knowledge about the processes of children's development. Staff interact effectively to support and extend children's confidence and skills.

### **Meeting children's needs**

Staff take account of the different stages of development of children when providing for physical development and movement. The pace of learning, appropriate resources and experiences are well matched to the needs of individual children. Staff take particular account of the needs of the younger child when planning play experiences.

## **The assessment process**

The assessment process consists of three revolving aspects: planning, recording and reporting.

### **Planning**

- Staff plan effectively to promote children's learning
- Planning establishes clear goals for learning, matching the needs and achievements of individual children
- Planning ensures that staff are clear, confident and well prepared for what they are trying to achieve in children's learning
- Planning is flexible to respond to learning experiences and to allow learning to develop spontaneously
- Planning information is shared with children and parents to assist the learning partnership
- Staff use observations to plan next steps in learning

### **Assessment keeping records and reporting**

- An effective system for assessing individual children is used by all staff
- Staff use observations of the child at play for assessment purposes
- Focused observation and assessment identifies particular goals for learning
- Contributions from parents are included in the assessment profile
- An effective system ensures relevant information is passed on at transition points and this promotes continuity of learning

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

Managers and staff monitor and evaluate provision using *The Child at the Centre, A Curriculum Framework for Children 3-5* and the *Guidelines Towards Good Practice*.

Staff are committed to further developing their skills through relevant training.

## **Resources**

The centre provides a wide range of high quality resources, well matched to the needs and interests of children.

Resources are well organised, easily accessible and well maintained. Staff parents and children are consulted when purchasing new resources. Effective use is made of the setting and good use is made of the local environment to support knowledge and understanding of the world.

*Refer to appendix*

## **Health and safety**

Staff adhere to current health and safety and child protection guidelines provided by the City of Edinburgh Council (these are available on the egfl website: <http://www.egfl.net>).

Effective procedures are implemented to ensure that staff child ratios are maintained at all times

The centre is committed to promoting health and fitness.

## **Appendices**

The ten bedrock principles  
Tina Bruce 1996

The 12 features of play  
Tina Bruce 1996

Resources

Reference books

Relevant Performance Indicators from *The Child at the Centre*

Relevant National Care Standards

## The ten bedrock principles Tina Bruce 1996

1. The best way to prepare children for their adult life is to give them what they need as children.
2. Children are whole people who have feelings, ideas and relationships with others, and who need to be physically, mentally, morally and spiritually healthy.
3. Subjects such as mathematics and art cannot be separated; young children learn in an integrated way and not in neat, tidy compartments.
4. Children learn best when they are given appropriate responsibility, allowed to make errors, decisions and choices, and respected as autonomous learners.
5. Self-discipline is emphasised. Indeed, this is the only kind of discipline worth having. Reward systems are very short-term and do not work in the long-term. Children need their efforts to be valued.
6. There are times when children are especially able to learn particular things.
7. What children can do (rather than what they cannot do) is the starting point of a child's education.
8. Imagination, creativity and all kinds of symbolic behaviour (reading, writing, drawing, dancing, music, mathematical numbers, algebra, role-play and talking) develop and emerge when conditions are favourable.
9. Relationships with other people (both adult and children) are of central importance in a child's life.
10. Quality education is about three things: the child, the context in which learning takes place, and the knowledge and understanding which the child develops and learns.

## The 12 features of play Tina Bruce 1996

1. In their play, children use the first- hand experiences that they have in life.
2. Children make up rules as they play, and so keep control of their play.
3. Children make play props.
4. Children choose to play. They cannot be made to play.
5. Children rehearse the future in their role-play.
6. Children pretend when playing.
7. Children play alone sometimes.
8. Children and/or adults play together, in parallel, associatively, or co-operatively in pairs or groups.
9. Each player has a personal play agenda, although they may not be aware of this.
10. Children playing will be deeply involved, and difficult to distract from their deep learning. Children at play wallow in their learning.
11. Children try out their most recent learning, skills and competencies when they play. They seem to celebrate what they know.
12. Children at play co-ordinate their ideas, feelings and make sense of relationships with their family, friends and culture. When play is co-ordinated it flows along in a sustained way. It is called free-flow play.

## Resources

Process/skills	Opportunities and experiences
Problem solving	Use of construction material, junk modelling Sorting and categorising, water/sand play, malleable material, woodwork, table top games
Investigating	Magnifying glass, bug catchers, microscope, binoculars, Seasonal/interest displays, bird watching, visits, use of outdoor area, planting and growing, properties of materials, use of simple tools
Exploration	Outdoor area, visits, art and craft techniques, properties of materials
Observation	Indoors and outdoors, seasonal/interest displays, reference materials, artefacts
Experimenting	Baking, construction, wood work, junk modelling, technology, art and craft techniques, magnets, batteries, scales
Design	Art and craft, construction, computer, wood work, junk modelling, malleable material, drawing, scissors, sellotape
Classifying	Properties of materials, artefacts and objects, natural objects for example birds, trees, animals, mini beasts
Mathematical processes and language	Counting objects, singing games and rhymes, matching colour, shape, size, sand and water play, construction, outdoors, computer, role play, books and stories, snack, nursery routines, number sacks, magnetic/foam/wooden numbers
Health	Snack/healthy eating, outdoor play, toilet routines, energetic activity, hygiene, toothbrushing, safety rules
People and places	Visits, use of the local environment, visitors and specialists, "People who help us," "All about me,"
Use of technology	Computers, digital camera, CD player, microwave, dance mats, remote control toys, telephones
Awareness of time	Sand timers, clocks, seasonal displays, nursery routines, days of the week, months of the year, birthday chart, festivals, life cycles

**Reference books**  
**Knowledge and understanding of the world**

1. Mathematics in Nursery Education Department  
Ann Montague-Smith
2. More than computers  
BAECE
3. The wee green school pack  
CEC
4. More than numbers  
BAECE
5. Number in the nursery and reception  
BEAM
6. Learning mathematics in the nursery  
BEAM
7. Nursery mathematics  
Heinemann
8. Nursery Handbook  
Longman

## **Key Area: Curriculum**

### **Performance Indicator 1.1 Structure of the curriculum**

#### **Theme:**

- breadth and balance of the learning opportunities offered to the children

#### **Level 4 Illustration**

- The curriculum has breadth and balance across the key aspects. It provides individual children with a variety of high quality experiences balanced according to their needs.
- It is fully in keeping with local and national guidance.

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 award.

## **Key Area: Curriculum**

### **Performance Indicator 1.2 Quality of the programmes**

#### **Themes:**

- links to national and local curriculum guidelines
- balance and relevance of learning experiences
- design and evaluation of programmes
- support and guidance for staff

#### **Level 4 Illustration**

- Programmes take full account of national and local curriculum guidelines.
- Programmes ensure balanced and relevant learning experiences.
- Programmes are well designed, flexible, responsive to children's needs and interests and ensure progression in their learning development.
- Staff receive clear guidance on programmes, learning and teaching, support for children and assessment and recording.
- Programmes are designed to enable learning activities to be continued in extended day care provision.

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 award.

## Key Area: Curriculum

### Performance Indicator 1.3 Quality of planning

#### Themes:

- planning of programmes and day-to-day activities
- effective use of assessment information
- responsiveness of planning procedures

#### Level 4 Illustration

- Plans are carefully linked to the key aspects of the curriculum and provide clear statements about what is to be done and what children are expected to learn.
- Staff make effective use of assessment information to identify needs and plan next steps in learning. Plans are evaluated regularly and adjusted as necessary to meet changing needs.
- Plans take appropriate account of the varied attendance patterns of children. Parents are kept fully informed of the programmes and daily activities. Opportunities for planning with colleagues are effectively used.
- Planning for the curriculum, play and leisure activities, and care routines are well coordinated to take full account of the needs of all children.

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 award.

*Note: This indicator refers to planning of programmes and day-to-day activities and covers the links between assessment, planning and evaluating in the centre.*

*Account should be taken of:*

- *weekly, monthly and annual plans*
- *planning undertaken in collaboration with all staff*
- *planning undertaken in collaboration with other agencies*
- *individualised programmes for those with special educational needs*

