



Curriculum Policy – September 2015

The principles informing the way we work with our
2,3 and 4 year olds

Introduction

At Lark Hill Nursery School our vision statement is to create
“A caring community of happy learners”

(We would like to thank Southway and Kate Greenaway Nursery schools for developing their “key experiences” and “core experiences” frameworks which along with the principles into practice cards from the EYFS provided the starting point for the staff drafting this policy.)

Aims

We believe children should be presented with a beautiful and fascinating environment to explore both indoors and outdoors. We feel that children should have the opportunity to return to experiences and deepen their learning throughout their time at Lark Hill Nursery School. Children should have genuine choice between experiences which are rich in potential.



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Our inspirations and what do we believe about how children learn ?

We take our inspirations from many Early Years thinkers and traditions. Our starting point is always each individual child and their families. We find the ideas from Reggio Emilia, Ferre Laevers, the McMillan sisters and an understanding of schemas and heuristic play very exciting (to name just a few) in helping us understand some of the areas children are fascinated by and how they learn. We value learning equally in the outdoors and indoors environments, so also find the Forest Schools and the Scandinavian Nurseries very inspiring. The findings of the EPPE Project and promotion of Sustained Shared Thinking have helped us to consider how to really listen to and help develop the thinking of our children.

We want our children to be lifelong learners and to be willing to challenge themselves, take risks, to be creative and confident to explore new experiences. We find the characteristics of effective learners as part of the revised Early Years Foundation Stage (2012) really useful to help us support our children's development as confident learners. We believe the children's views of themselves as competent learners starts from birth and we have an important role in working closely with families to nurture and support this further.

We believe an effective learning environment evolves as staff use their observations to further support the children's learning. Children need to feel emotionally secure at nursery if they are to have the confidence to explore and learn. At Lark Hill Nursery School relationships are the foundations of children's learning and development



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The relationship between home and nursery

The first and most important relationships are between children, their parents and the rest of their family. The key person relationship is additional and complimentary to this. The key person and another member of staff visits the child at home, works closely with the family to settle the child and is a special person to the child and family throughout their time at Lark Hill Nursery School. By providing a safe and reliable relationship, the key person first works with the child's need for dependency. This dependent relationship is the starting point for independence in the nursery: the confidence to explore, make choices, play with friends or alone, safe in the knowledge that the key person is available to help when needed. Group time provides a special point in the day when the child is in a close-knit group, and where there is time to share their learning and to speak and listen with others.



Where does our planning come from ?

We believe in a principled approach as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each routine and area of provision is carefully thought out and we are continually developing and reflecting on how to improve. Our continuous provision is offered every day as we believe children build their learning over time. The high quality of all of our continuous provision



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ensures that whichever choice a child makes they will access a learning experience which offers access to a broad, balanced curriculum.

Focus children not focus activities

We have been inspired by the work of Anna Ephgrave and Ruth Moore where planning arises from the needs and interests of focus children and not from focus activities. Our planning focuses on learning and not end products. This approach to planning observes children's interests, development and characteristics as a learner. It is contributed to by families to support the development of all of our children.



Celebrating and recording children's learning

We think carefully about how and where we record and celebrate children's learning and development. Each child is reflected in the learning environment through photographs. This is complemented by our scrapbook Record of Achievements and individual folders on our website to capture significant progress.



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For the Nursery to be able to analyse how effective we are snapshot assessment of how the children are achieving in relation to the age related expectations are taken and reflected upon. We always, however, start from our observations of the children and never with an assessment format.



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Everyone as a learner

At Lark Hill Nursery School we consider everyone to be a learner. Our staff and governors are always thinking about how they can improve what they offer our children. We aim to think about “progress” in the broadest possible sense and our eagerness to share our practice demonstrates our desire to keep discussing and reflecting on what we do.

Our Headteacher is currently starting her dissertation as part of her Masters In Educational Leadership and our Deputy Headteacher is starting her Phd on Ethics in Education. All of our staff are active in research and are currently building links with Early Excellence (on a cluster project about real progress) , MMU (research about our work with other professionals) , PLAYLINK (exploring the role of risk in play), Jan White (challenging our thinking about children's physical development and why physical development is a prime area of our new curriculum.

All of the above informs the way we work and our aspiration to create
“A caring community of happy learners”



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