



Play Policy

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Name of person responsible for this policy	Mrs Jayne Orr
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1. Curriculum aims

Our curriculum aims/intends to:

- provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all children
- strive to give every child the opportunity to experience success in learning
- allow every child to achieve as high a standard as possible
- encourage our pupils to develop lively, enquiring minds, to think creatively and to use their own initiative to work with increasing independence.
- Promote the learning and development of our youngest children and ensure they are ready for Foundation Stage

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the requirements of the [Northern Ireland National Curriculum](#), which all controlled schools in Northern Ireland must teach.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing body

The governing board will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the Principal to account for its implementation.

The governing board will also ensure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets
- Enough teaching time is provided for pupils to cover the National Curriculum and other statutory requirements
- Proper provision is made for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs (SEN)
- The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements
- It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- It fulfils its role in processes to disapply pupils from all or part of the National Curriculum, where appropriate, and in any subsequent appeals

3.2 Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the governing body
- Where appropriate, the individual needs of some pupils are met by permanent or temporary disapplication from all or part of the National Curriculum
- They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements
- The governing body is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- The governing body is advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions
- Proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with SEN

3.3 Other staff

Other staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.

The Vice Principal, with responsibility for whole school curriculum, will work alongside the Principal and subject leaders to ensure the implementation of this policy.

4. Organisation and planning

Rationale for Play

“Children learn best when learning is interactive, practical and enjoyable. Self-initiated play helps children to understand and learn about themselves and their surroundings. Motivation can be increased when children have opportunities to make choices and decisions about their learning, particularly when their own ideas and interests are used, either as starting points for learning activities or for pursuing a topic in more depth.”

NI Curriculum Primary 2007

We as a staff believe that Activity Based Learning will help to “empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives.”

The ‘Big Picture’ of the Primary Curriculum.

We believe that play provides opportunities for children to experience learning in a meaningful and purposeful way. It is a means by which children can develop the skills and capabilities to be effective learners. Play provides a context to access the content of the curriculum.

Opportunities are given to the children to build on previous experiences and make connections in their learning in an enjoyable way. We as a staff provide opportunities for the children to engage in effective learning within a safe and secure environment.

Opportunities will be provided in foundation and key stage 1 for both child-initiated and teacher led play. Learning will be planned for primarily through existing topics. Teachers and children will record children's planning ideas on a planning board; this is a working document and is owned by teacher and children. Information can be added as the topic progresses and learning develops.

Aims of Play/Activity Based Learning in Victoria Primary School

- To provide opportunities for adults and children to plan learning together.
- To enable children to develop their own ideas and interests.
- To develop natural curiosity and to stimulate imagination.
- To provide practical, interactive and enjoyable play experiences
- To create opportunities for children to make choices and decisions.
- To develop Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities, managing information, thinking and solving problems, being creative, working with others and self-management.
- To develop the fundamental skills of literacy, numeracy and oral communication.
- To share and demonstrate learning – allowing children to review and evaluate their own and others work
- To provide opportunities for developing movement and manipulative skills.

Learning Environment

- When planning play/activity-based learning we aim to take account of each child's individual needs, interests and abilities by providing stimulating, challenging and appropriate learning environments, both in the classrooms and in our Play rooms.
- We believe that children should feel safe and secure in the knowledge that they will be given encouragement and support. They will be given appropriate responsibility and allowed to make errors. All of their efforts will be acknowledged and success praised in a variety of ways e.g., oral feedback, having their work displayed, and the opportunity to share their learning with others. The focus will be on the process rather than the end product.
- The children will have the opportunity to share their learning in a variety of ways e.g., spotlight corner, microphone, and group focus, play area focus and stage backgrounds.
- A range of practical activities will be provided for the children throughout the curriculum.

Dedicated play sessions are planned for as follows in each year group.

Primary 1 –	4 x 1 hour sessions
Primary 2 –	3 x 1 hour sessions
Primary 3 –	2 x 1 hour sessions
Primary 4 -	1 x 1 hour session

Role of the adult

“Learning is supported by adults when:

Staff are committed, sensitive, enthusiastic and interact effectively to challenge children's thinking and learning.”

NI Curriculum Primary 2007

Primary 1 and 2 have full time classroom assistants who will support the teacher.

The adults will use a wide range of teaching strategies and effective questioning. They will encourage children to think, do and review for themselves.

Planning – teachers will plan relevant experiences to support, extend and challenge learning appropriate to the child's abilities and experiences. Planning will be linked to the six areas of learning set out in the curriculum. Children will also be given an opportunity to be involved in the planning process.

Interaction – adults will participate in play, modelling skills and language, engaging and questioning to extend learning.

Observation and Assessment – Where appropriate learning will be shared with the children. Adults will observe individuals and groups during sessions so as to identify needs, assess skills and knowledge, to monitor progress and to evaluate the play sessions. These observations are both planned and spontaneous and will inform future planning. Through observation and assessment, we will understand more about the ability and attainment of the children and ensure that individual needs are met. Children's responses and teachers' evaluations will inform future planning. Children will be observed working individually and as part of a group. A variety of methods of recording will be used. Relevant information will be discussed with other adults as appropriate. These observations will be used to inform our target setting for individual children.

Links with the curriculum

Play is the primary means of learning in all areas of the Early Years Curriculum and is a fundamental teaching methodology within the Revised Primary Curriculum at Foundation Stage and Key stage 1. Suggested benefits of play within the six curricular areas include:

Language and Literacy

Play will provide opportunities for the children to work together and cooperate in learning about literacy. Talking and listening will be promoted through activities which enable children to talk to peers, staff and in small and large groups. They will engage in dramatized stories, songs, and rhymes and follow instructions. Relevant print within the play settings will encourage children to develop reading skills. Books will be displayed in play contexts and children will be encouraged to make choices for themselves by browsing in the book area. Opportunities to write will emerge from play activities including role play. The writing area will be equipped with a wide range of tools and materials.

Mathematics and Numeracy

Children will have opportunities to develop and apply their early mathematical skills and understanding during purposeful play. This will be provided through role play opportunities, exploration of natural materials, creativity, construction and table top play such as peg boards and threading. They will be encouraged to use appropriate mathematical language during their play.

Personal Development

During play activities children will develop socially and emotionally. They will learn to appreciate other points of view, co-operating, collaborating and sharing. Staff will seek to develop children's Self-esteem, self-confidence, concentration, independence and a positive attitude towards learning. Children will be encouraged to become independent and to take responsibility for their own actions. Awareness of health, safety and hygiene issues will also be developed through rules for play, role play and other activities.

Physical Development

Physical skills including balance, co-ordination, fine, gross and loco motor skills can be enhanced and developed through play. Opportunities will be provided for the children to work with a range of equipment indoors and outdoors.

The World Around Us

Children start Primary School with different experiences of their immediate environment and of their wider world. Through varied play activities children's awareness, knowledge and understanding of their environment will be extended e.g., awareness of classroom and school environment, people who help us, positional language and direction. Exploring places – own and other lands, weather and natural environment. Children will also have opportunities to develop awareness of the past and of the ways in which it differs from the present. Children will be given opportunities through play to explore, make observations and use materials to build and construct. They will develop scientific concepts and technological skills by direct exploration using all the senses and hands-on experience.

The Arts

Children will have opportunities to experience a sense of enjoyment and to communicate/express their ideas and feelings through a range of tools/media and develop skills of observing, imagining, designing, recording, creating, communicating and appreciating. Through musical experiences children will be encouraged to explore ways of making sounds and create tunes using a variety of tuned and untuned instruments and to engage in exploration of pitch, rhythm and rhyme. Children will have the opportunity to take on a variety of roles and express their feelings and opinions in role play and small world play.

ICT

ICT will be used appropriately throughout all areas of the curriculum during play. Children will have access to computers with appropriate software as well as interactive whiteboards, printers, bee-bots, digital cameras, camcorder and listening centres.

Areas of Play

The programme of learning in any one year group and across the key stages is broad and balanced. We understand that there must be a progression in the provision of activities to meet the development needs of children.

Foundation

- Dramatic play
- Sand, water and natural materials
- Construction
- Creative play – including art, design and malleable materials
- Small world
- Table top activities such as games and jigsaws
- ICT – computer, beebot, digital camera
- Construction
- Writing area
- Other activities relating to topic

Key stage 1

Children will have access to a range of tasks and materials determined by their topics.

Our Activity Based Learning policy and practice will be evaluated on an on-going basis.

Outdoor Learning

Rationale:

Rifkin 1997: 'The younger the child the more child learns through sensory and physical activities; thus the more varied and rich the natural outdoor setting, the greater its contribution to physical, cognitive and emotional development.' As children increasingly spend leisure time indoors it is important that schools are able to provide outdoor learning, with opportunities for creativity and child initiated activity.

"Play creates a brain that has increased flexibility and improved potential for learning later in life."

– Lester & Russell, Play for a Change

Principles of Outdoor Play

At Victoria Primary School we value outdoor play as an intrinsic part of the curriculum. The Curriculum Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage actively promotes the provision of outdoor play. By ensuring outdoor play is an integral part of the school routine we consciously seek to transmit a positive attitude to the outdoors and enrich the child's understanding of the world around him/her. Active learning experiences outdoors are essential for young children. They give children opportunities to practise their developing skills, to explore their world and make them feel good. It is also important for children's physical, mental and emotional development. We believe that children should begin to take risks and face challenges outdoors. Victoria Primary School will make provision for young children to be active and interactive, and to improve their skills of coordination, control, manipulation and movement. Staff will support their development by helping children to use all their senses to learn about the world in which they live, and to make connections between new information and what they already know. Children will be supported in developing an understanding of the importance of physical activity and making healthy choices about their bodies. Children will grow in confidence and be able to manage risks in their play. Staff will provide time to support children's understanding of how the effects of exercise, affect our bodies and what we do in response to it. Staff will interact with children to help develop all areas of Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

Health and Safety

We are aware that Health and Safety outside is crucial, and that good organisation in setting up and tidying the outdoor area is essential. The outdoor play equipment that is not permanent should be set up by staff before the children start the school day. Children should wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Playground gates and Foundation area gate should be closed during the play session. At the end of the session children should be asked to stop what they are doing and listen for instructions on how to help tidy up. After tidying up outside, staff should ensure that all children have returned indoors. The member of staff should be the last one to return indoors. Staff should be aware of situations which may be dangerous, and if unable to prevent accidents, can appropriately respond to them. A first aid kit should be taken outdoors with the class. Outdoor resources should be well maintained, safe and help to provide a stimulating learning environment for the children.

5. Inclusion

Teachers set high expectations for all pupils. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

- More able pupils
- Pupils with low prior attainment
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Pupils with SEN
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)

Teachers will plan lessons so that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities can study every National Curriculum subject, wherever possible, and ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.

Teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, and to support pupils to take part in all subjects.

6. Monitoring arrangements

Governors monitor coverage of National Curriculum subjects and compliance with other statutory requirements through:

- Link governor visits
- Lead Teacher reports to Governing Body
- Curriculum Lead report to Governing Body
- Governor Post Boxes (examples of work presented at full board meetings)
- Principal's Report to Governing Body

Lead teachers monitor the way their subject is taught throughout the school by:

Pupil Voice. Monitoring year group planning. Monitoring teachers recorded observations.

Lead teachers also have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the lead teacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the full governing board.

7. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Assessment policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Homework Policy
- Marking and Feedback Policy
- Monitoring and Evaluating Policy
- Equality and Inclusion Policy