

Portrush Primary School

Play Policy

Introduced 2009

Reviewed October 2019



Rationale for Play.

We, as the staff of Portrush Primary School, believe that Activity based learning is the best means of developing the 'whole' child, socially, emotionally, physically, aesthetically, intellectually, morally and culturally. This reinforces the aims of the revised Primary Curriculum.

Through play activities children can be encouraged to use their initiative, develop their confidence, explore, be imaginative, creative, socialise with peers, experience success and develop positive attitudes to learning.

Opportunities will be provided across the Foundation Stage and Key stage 1 for both child initiated and teacher directed play and activities will be planned to meet the demands of existing school - based topics and the requirements of the Revised Primary Curriculum.

Aims of Play Based Learning.

- To promote play as a fun, pleasurable and stimulating learning environment.
- To develop positive attitudes to learning.
- To improve concentration and develop problem solving skills and processes.
- To develop self - esteem, self-confidence, independence, perseverance and a positive attitude towards learning.
- To help children to relate to adults and other children, to encourage co-operation, taking turns, sharing and self - control.
- To help develop positive relationships with adults and peers.
- To encourage children to become independent and take responsibility for their own actions.
- To develop communication skills.
- To encourage the children to observe, appreciate and care for the world around them.
- To stimulate curiosity and foster skills of observation, investigation and problem solving in all areas of the curriculum.
- To enable children to develop and participate as speakers, listeners, readers and writers.
- To help develop physical development and co-ordination.
- To develop an awareness of the need for safety in all activities.

Planning.

In planning for purposeful play, staff will provide a structure or process, which will enable progression and quality and will implement this by frequent monitoring of play and changing of resources. We will provide a variety of learning experiences, which will link where possible, and as resources permit, with other curriculum areas.

Planning will provide opportunities for assessment and review of development, thus ensuring that the needs of individual children are met. Planning will provide opportunities for staff consultation and progression. Children's autonomy and independence will be encouraged at all stages.

Planning for play is consistent with the approach to whole school planning within the school. Long term planning (Topic overview) for play details cross - curricular topics/themes, which are used as starting points for play. Medium term planning (half termly notes) will detail learning intentions, activities, resources, action for specific children, assessment opportunities and indicate roles of the Teacher and classroom assistants. Short term planning will provide specific detail and will be individual to each class teacher.

Timetabling for Activity Based Learning.

Many practical/play-based activities will be provided for the children within the areas of the curriculum. However a dedicated session of play/Activity Based Learning will be planned for and provided in each as detailed below:

P1/2 One hour per day.

P3 Two one-hour sessions per week.

P4 One one-hour session per week.

As part of this children will be timetabled to use the outdoor play area in Foundation Stage:

P1 1-2 hours per week.

P2 1 hour per week.

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 K.S.1.

Language and Literacy.

Play will provide opportunities for children to work together and to co-operate in learning about Literacy and by the provision of relevant print within play settings, children will be

able to experience Literacy in meaningful and purposeful ways. Talking and Listening will be promoted through activities that enable the children to talk to peers, adults and small and large groups. They will engage in dramatised stories and develop language through role play. Children will listen to stories, songs and rhymes and follow instructions. Relevant print within the play setting 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 centre will be equipped with a wide range of tools and materials.

Mathematics.

Children will have opportunities to develop and apply much of their early mathematical skills and understanding during purposeful play. This will involve children in activities such as imaginative play e.g. house, hospital and shop play, exploring natural materials, e.g. sand and water, creative and construction. They will be encouraged to talk and listen, ask questions and use appropriate mathematical language during their play, e.g. language associated with shape, space, time and size.

P.D.M.U.

During play activities children will develop socially and emotionally, learning to appreciate other points of view, co-operating 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 and Hygiene issues will also be developed through establishing rules for role play and other activities.

The Arts.

Children will be encouraged and will have opportunities to explore and experiment with ideas, images and materials. They will have opportunities to explore their natural curiosity, to experience a sense of enjoyment and to communicate their ideas and feelings. Through creative activities children will develop a sense of achievement and self-confidence and also develop skills of observation, imagining, designing, recording, creating, communication and appreciating. Through musical experiences children will be encouraged to respond to music and explore ways of making sounds and creating tunes. Children will have opportunity to take on a variety of roles and express their feelings and opinions in role play and small world play.

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 children to work with a range of appropriate equipment/apparatus both indoors and outdoors.

The World Around Us.

Children will start Primary school with different experiences of their immediate and wider world. Through varied play activities children's awareness, knowledge and understanding of their environment will be extended. Children will also have opportunities to develop an awareness of the past and of the ways in which it differs from the present. Children will be given opportunities to explore, make observations and use a range of materials to build and construct. They will develop scientific concepts and technological skills by direct exploration using all the senses and hands on experience.

U.I.C.T.

U.I.C.T will be used appropriately throughout all areas of the curriculum during play.

Learning Environment.

When planning purposeful play we aim to take account of each child's individual needs, interests and abilities by providing a pleasant, secure and stimulating environment. We will endeavour to initiate new play situations and extend existing situations in order to increase the interests and motivation of the children. The children will be encouraged to work in a variety of group situations and will be encouraged to tidy up independently. We will provide a wide range of resources and materials taking into account children with any special needs. Staff recognise the importance of praise, encouragement and guidance in the development of learning. Children's work will thus be celebrated throughout the play sessions and will often be displayed in the classroom. They will also be encouraged to share their learning during review sessions at the end/during play.

These activities will take place in the classroom, play corridor, our outdoor play area and in the school grounds.

Role of the Adult.

Teachers and classroom assistants co-operate and work together in the classroom/play area to perform a range of crucial roles in relation to play -based learning. These include: -

- Planning of relevant experiences to support, extend and challenge their learning, appropriate to the range of the children's abilities, interests and their age. Planning will link play to the other areas of the curriculum and will integrate skills and capabilities.
- Providing- Adults will provide appropriate, safe, secure and stimulating space with a range of equipment and materials which will allow opportunities for purposeful play.
- Participating- adults will participate in children's play experiences in order to extend learning, thinking and language and will encourage the children to share experiences, to interact with each other and to extend their experiences to the other learning areas.

- Observing- adults will take the opportunities afforded by play to observe, evaluate and record progress. They will identify specific needs, interests and understanding and use this information to plan relevant experiences to support, extend and challenge their learning.

Observation, Assessment and Record Keeping.

Through our observation and record keeping we will aim to build an all round picture of each child's progress in play. Staff will use their observation and record keeping to evaluate, review and shape future planning taking into consideration resources available.

Different approaches to observation, assessment and record keeping is used as appropriate to each year group.

Foundation Stage will use the 2Simple app to record progression in NI Learning Through Play and where appropriate, the NI Foundation Stage Curriculum.

Review and Evaluation.

We as a School believe in the importance of staff development and discussion with regards to all aspects of effective teaching and learning. We will work together to ensure all staff are provided with adequate opportunities to establish a common understanding of all aspects of play based learning. We will evaluate play provision within the context of half termly planning and the policy will be reviewed on a regular basis and in line with the overall school development plan.

Equal Opportunities.

In provision of play opportunities staff will be aware of addressing the specific needs of all children regardless of physical or intellectual ability, gender, social- economic background, race, culture and religion. The staff will seek to encourage a culture where difference will be respected and all children included

Procedures / Rules for play.

For play sessions to run smoothly some ground rules are necessary. These will be agreed by the staff and children within individual classes. All children will need to be aware of the importance of these rules which will be in regard to issues such as: -

- The need to show care and consideration for others and for the play environment.
- The benefits of sharing, taking turns and co-operating during play.
- Specific rules for each activity e.g. regarding water spills, number of people at activity etc.
- Health and safety issues.

Areas of Play.

The staff of Portrush Primary School aim to provide children with a broad and balanced range of play resources and activities. Regular opportunities will be provided in Foundation stage for participation in play with: -

- Sand
- Water
- Natural materials
- Role play
- Small world
- Construction
- Art and design
- Creative materials
- U.I.C.T.
- Writing centre
- Book corner/listening station
- Tabletop including maths games and jigsaws
- Other topic related activities.

In key stage one, children will have access to a range of tasks and materials determined by the topic/theme undertaken in class.

