



## **STANDARD 12 – Learning and Development**

### **Standard 12.1–Learning and Development Policy**

#### **Statement of Intent**

At Horsted Keynes Preschool we take into account that all children are individuals with their own characteristics and temperament. All children develop and mature at different rates making their progress unique to them. Every area of development – physical, cognitive, linguistic, spiritual, social and emotional, is equally important. Warm, trusting relationships with knowledgeable adult’s support children’s learning more effectively than any amount of resources.

#### **Unique Child**

We understand the processes involved in children’s growth, development and learning, acknowledging that this is a process which cannot be rushed. Children are supported by practitioners to develop a positive sense of their own identity and culture; this enables them to develop a positive self-image entitling them to enjoy a full life which helps them to take part in society. Practitioners recognise and praise effort as well as achievement so that all children develop positive attitudes to themselves as learners.

When children receive warm, responsive care they are more likely to feel secure and valued and to want to contribute to making the rules which make things ‘fair’ for everybody.

#### **Positive Relationships**

Parents are children’s first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together at Horsted Keynes Preschool, the results have a positive impact on children’s development and learning. Parents are invited to add to planning by informing practitioners of their child’s current interests, visits or events verbally, by adding to Tapestry or by email.

Children feel a sense of belonging when their parents are also involved within the Preschool.

We strongly believe that a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise between parents and practitioners means effective communication. To enable this process to take place we create a warm welcoming environment with approachable practitioners.

#### **How you can help**

At the end of each week we will email you an interest sheet.

All we ask is that you fill in the sheet, with as much detail as possible, and over the weekend add some photos of your child and family to your child’s Tapestry account. You can even fill out the interest form, take a photo and add it to Tapestry instead of handing it back the following week.



## **Effective Teaching**

Teaching means systematically helping children to learn so that they make connections in their learning, are actively led forward, and can reflect on their learning. The more practitioners know about each child, the better they are able to support and extend each child's learning. Children need and will respond positively to challenges if they have a good relationship with the practitioner and feel confident to try things out. They shouldn't fear failure or ridicule. Practitioners who really know the children are able to judge when they are ready to be taught new skills.

Practitioners make time to really listen to children's views and act on them even when they do not match their own, identifying the right moment to intervene and move children's learning on, by perhaps joining in or asking a question.

In the model of 'in the moment planning' the role of the teacher looks a little different. The children will have free-flow access to the provision, which means that the children can choose where their learning takes place. The adult will stand back; observe what the children are doing,

- assess what they need to do/know/learn next
- plan their teaching, which will be delivered there and then.

This means that next steps for individual children are not something that are to be delivered at a point in the future, but right there 'in the moment'.

You may notice an adult standing back and watching. This is important part of our planning as adults need to be clear what the children are doing, to ensure that they can engage appropriately and enhance, not interrupt their play.

We have 2/3 focus children each week, which means that these are the children our observations will be focused upon. Each term every child will be a focus child. This does not mean that the other children are not learning, or getting adult interaction but rather that they are continuing with their own learning journeys independently, whilst we ensure that each child has equal opportunity for quality teaching and learning.

We will continue to lead sessions for phonics with children.

## **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

Children are individuals first, each with a unique profile of abilities. Schedules and routines flow with the child's needs. All planning starts with observing children in order to understand and consider their current interest, development and learning.

At Horsted Keynes Preschool we use 'In the moment planning'. We believe children are at the centre of what we do and we believe that children learn best when they are interested, inquisitive and engaged, which at this age and stage of development, is best achieved through play. Play gives children the opportunity to explore their own interests, enquire, plan and take risks. Additionally, play also allows children to use their creativity, develop their imagination, build on their dexterity and physical skills, not to mention supporting the development of cognitive and emotional strength. Play is important to healthy brain development. It is through play that children engage and interact in the world around them.



Delivery of the 'Early Years Foundation Stage' curriculum (EYFS) involves a continuous cycle of three parts:

**Observing children** – What can they do and what do they know?

**Assessing based on those observations** - What is their next step?

**Planning** – How I am going to teach them the next step?

We respect children as individuals and understand that they all develop differently. Therefore, on reflection, we felt that our previous method of planning, with a specific learning intention in mind, and then teaching to a small group was not necessarily the most effective method.

Firstly, it often interrupted what they were doing (something they had chosen to do, that they were deeply involved in) and therefore, understandably, we were met with reluctance and little engagement in what we were trying to do. Secondly, we weren't necessarily meeting the needs of individual children, due to planning for the entire cohort.

By following 'in the moment planning', a model developed by Anna Ephgrave, rather than adults deciding what children will be learning ahead of time and working with children in small groups, we engage with the children at activities they have chosen and teach the children 'in the moment'. Through play, children have access to all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, all the time, without limits or adult agenda. This means that we can meet the needs of individuals more effectively.

Each child's learning and development is recorded in a 'Learning Journey' on our online system called Tapestry (Please see our Tapestry Policy) which parents and children are welcome to contribute to as well as other practitioners from other settings. Every child's learning takes a personal path based on their own individual interests, experiences and the educational programme on offer.

We assess how young children are learning and developing by observing them frequently. We use information that we gain from observations, as well as from photographs or videos of the children, to document their progress and where this may be leading them. We believe that parents know their children best and we ask them to contribute to assessment by sharing information about what their children like to do at home and how they as parents are supporting development.

We make periodic assessment summaries of children's achievement based on our ongoing development records. These form part of children's records of achievement. We undertake these assessment summaries at regular intervals as well as times of transition, such as when a child moves into a different group or when they go on to school.

### **Documenting Planning**

As already mentioned, our planning is 'in the moment' and therefore documented retrospectively. We have a weekly sheet on which we make notes about what the children have been interested in, and learning, in each area. We use this to reflect on what is going well, what could be further developed or improved and respond to this as soon as possible. Additionally, for the focus each week, we record the observations, interactions and achievements throughout the week which are then collated onto Tapestry to show the children's learning journey for that week.



Phonics inputs are recorded on a separate observation on Tapestry. We plan sessions which are practical, engaging and active, giving the children the skills they can use when accessing the environment independently.

### **Enabling Environments**

The environment supports every child's learning style through experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable. Children benefit from direct personal participation of activities including those which are predictable, comforting and challenging. Learning is a continuous journey through which children build on all the things they have already experienced and come across new and interesting challenges. Horsted Keynes Preschool offers a rich and varied environment which supports children's learning and development. It gives them the confidence to explore and learn in secure and safe, yet challenging indoor and outdoor spaces. Being outdoors has a positive impact on children's sense of well-being and helps all aspects of children's development.

### **Learning and Development**

Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. Play with peers is important for children's development for both their social and emotional well-being. In their play children learn at their highest level.

Children need time to process their thinking, reflect and modify their learning whether indoors or outdoors to enable them to begin problem solving and making their experiences meaningful. When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Learning and development will be facilitated through the use of flexible resources, and sensitive intervention of a knowledgeable practitioner, who will scaffold the child's learning building on what they already know, enhancing their ability to think critically and ask questions.

At Horsted Keynes Preschool play is valued and is seen as an opportunity for children to rehearse, reorder, and develop ideas and experiences, enabling them to gain the necessary skills required for their future economic well-being. We recognise that children learn through active participation by being engaged with other people, objects, ideas and events for sustained periods of time. As active learner's children need to have some independence and control over their learning to keep their interest and to develop their creativity. As children become absorbed in finding out about the world around them through their explorations, investigation and questions they feel a sense of achievement and their self-esteem and confidence grows. As children grow in confidence they learn to make decisions.

### **Areas of Learning and Development**

There are 7 areas of learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage that forms the educational programme at Horsted Keynes preschool.

All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly critical for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the prime areas, are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development



Horsted Keynes preschool also supports children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

### **Our planning involves activities and experiences for children as follows:**

- **Personal, social and emotional development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others, to form positive relationships and develop respect for others, to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings, to understand appropriate behaviour in groups and to have confidence in their own abilities.
- **Communication and language development** involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment, to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children are helped to understand the importance of physical activity and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
- **Literacy development** involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.
- **Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.
- **Understanding the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- **Expressive arts and design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

### **Characteristics of effective learning**

We understand that all children engage with other people and their environment through the characteristics of effective learning that are described in the Development Matters the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance as:

- Playing and exploring-engagement
- Active learning-motivation; and creating and thinking critically-thinking

We aim to provide for the characteristics of effective learning by observing how a child is learning and being clear about what we can do and provide in order to support each child to remain an effective and motivated learner.



## Environment

Our learning environment consists of three areas, the main hall, the small hall and outdoors.

Each area is equally important, with a range of resources and equipment, which enable children to learn, working towards both the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' and the 'EYFS' outcomes.

For more details please see our continuous provision plans which show the possible learning outcomes for each area.

Within the classroom itself, children have access to:

- Maths/investigation station
- Reading/music area
- Construction area
- Snack Area
- Mark making station
- Home corner
- Malleable/sensory area
- Climbing frame
- Junk modelling area
- Small world area
- Dark den

Outdoors children can expect to find:

- Music area
- Sand experiences
- Mud Kitchen
- Slide
- Large construction
- Water experiences
- Investigation area
- See-saw
- Creative resources
- Growing area
- Balls/balancing
- Bikes/cars

Within the small hall, children have access to:

- Books
- Phonics
- Parachute
- Story/song time

Although we have designated 'stations' for reading, writing and maths, there are opportunities for these in all areas of our environment. Most areas have books in that are relevant to that area, for example, in our creative area you will find books about colour mixing or books with ideas of things to make. We also have boxes and baskets, filled with resources, that can be transported wherever the children desire.

This policy was adopted by	Horsted Keynes Preschool
On	1 <sup>st</sup> March 2017
Reviewed 1 <sup>st</sup> Mar 2018	<i>C. Humphreys</i> <i>Alice Speakman</i>
Reviewed 1 <sup>st</sup> Mar 2019	<i>C. Humphreys</i> <i>Alice Speakman</i>
Reviewed 1 <sup>st</sup> Mar 2020	
Reviewed 1 <sup>st</sup> Mar 2021	



Signed on behalf of the provider	<i>C. Humphreys</i>
Name of signatory & Role of signatory	Clare Humphreys Manager
Countersigned by Chair of committee	<i>Claire Speakman</i>
Name of Counter signatory	Claire Speakman