



# ROSEMARY NURSERY SCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S CENTRE

## Learning & Teaching Policy

### Rationale

High quality early education can make a life-long difference to children\* and so we know that the quality of learning and teaching in the Early Years really matters.

We believe high quality learning and teaching is the entitlement of all children.

As a setting, we continually review and develop our understanding of high quality learning and teaching so that children benefit from consistent approaches.

Our reflections are informed by recent research- for example, the findings of the Education Endowment Foundation- as well as by ongoing practice.

This policy sets out the principles and strategies that underpin teaching at Rosemary Nursery School and Children's Centre.

*\*(ref UK EPPSE Project and ref Gopnik)*

### What is high quality learning and teaching?

Quality of adult-child interactions

A key characteristic of effective early education is the quality of adult child interactions and how they support communication and language development.

We use Bristol Every Child a Talker and Hanen tools to monitor, evaluate and improve provision and to support continuing professional development.

#### 1. Well-being and Involvement

We know children learn best when they are happy, secure and actively involved in their own learning and we use Ferre Laevers' work on involvement and well - being to observe and assess **the processes** by which children are learning. The signals of involvement and well- being guide us in deciding when and how to intervene (*Please see Appendix C: Signals of Involvement and Well Being*)

#### 2. The Unique Child

Every child is unique and their individual stages of development must be recognised and

- To support and challenge each child in achieving his/her potential.
- To encourage each child to develop his/her unique pattern of interests and talents.
- To present learning experiences where learners are able to master and retain what they learn, relating it to previous experiences and future challenges.
- To present learning as a social and pleasurable experience.
- To use 'provocations' (adult- initiated experiences) to support and extend children's learning.
- To support children in developing the Characteristics of Effective Learning, laying firm foundations for life-long learning.

### **KEY PERSON APPROACH**

The role of the key person is central to our practice. It offers security and can help children develop appropriate attachments (reference John Bowlby and Peter Elfer).

Children will normally stay with the same key person for a year. We recognise that children sometimes find their own key person or persons and we look out for, nurture and support these relationships. (Reference Peter Elfer: Key Persons in the Nursery)

### **ROUTINE**

Routine helps children feel secure.

Our routines facilitate learning in small and large groups, alone and in a pair. They provide space for quiet as well as lively times and indoor and outdoor play.

### **DEVELOPING INDEPENDENCE**

- We support children's growing independence by:
  - o Planning the layout so that children can find, use and replace resources independently.
  - o Creating attractive and interactive displays of children's work and interests.
  - o Ensuring interactions between adults and children model and support problem solving.
  - o Structuring sessions to encourage communication skills, expression, choices and decision making.
  - o Making strategies that support independence explicit to students, parents and carers.

### **PARENT PARTNERSHIP**

- We actively involve parents and the wider community in our activities, recognising that parents are their child's first and most important teachers.

Our Induction Programme promotes partnership with parents.

Our aim is to help parents to feel comfortable enough with staff to share knowledge, understanding, hopes and concerns about their child/ren with us.

We communicate regularly with parents about children's learning - through newsletters, displays, notice boards and meetings/workshops focussed on the curriculum.

We offer daily informal feedback to parents and more formally during parent conversations three times per year. *Please see Assessment Policy for more information.*

## **IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

Our focus-on social and language skills includes:

- Screening all children in English language and communication and, where possible, in their home language.
- Providing additional targeted support for children identified through this process.
- Using Makaton, visual cues, photographs and visual timetables systematically throughout the school.
- Systematic use of Core Books and Core Songs programmes.
- Taking time to listen and model language and social skills.
- Planning structured sessions to provide opportunities for being together, questioning, listening, responding, remembering, reviewing and celebrating.
- Additional interventions that build on children's strengths, interests and preferred learning styles, such as Forest School and Music Enrichment groups.
- Providing support and individual education plans for children with additional needs. *Please also see our Inclusion Policy.*

## **QUALITIES OF ADULTS**

To support children's learning, it is important that practitioners are:

- Curious and playful learners themselves
- Well qualified and experienced
- Motivated
- Ready to take risks
- Flexible and adaptable
- Reflective and eager to learn from each other.

Excellent practice is supported by:

- Regular staff meetings where issues may be raised and discussed
- Planning, preparation and assessment time
- Non contact time for curriculum and personal projects
- Continuing professional development for all staff, tailored to the needs of both the individual and the setting.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning and individual and group feedback (see also Monitoring and Evaluation of Achievement and Standards)

<b>APPENDIX A - INDICATORS OF HIGH AND LOW QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING DEVELOPED BY STAFF TEAMS</b>	
<b>HIGH QUALITY INDICATORS</b>	<b>LOW QUALITY INDICATORS</b>
<b>LEARNING</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children are deeply involved; concentrated and engaged</li> <li>• Positive communication between children and between adults and children (including non-verbal)</li> <li>• Children make choices and access resources independently</li> <li>• Parents are visibly involved; e.g., through contributing to learning journals or by supporting library and forest school.</li> <li>• Children experience solitary &gt; parallel&gt;co-operative play</li> <li>• Happy environment (shown in facial expression, body language, relationships between staff – putting children’s needs first)</li> <li>• Positive relationships between adults/children and parents</li> <li>• Adults and children feel free to take risks and see errors/failures as learning; a ‘strength mind-set’</li> <li>• Children know where their own capabilities lie</li> <li>• Children know the routine</li> <li>• Children have time to repeat, practise and return to chosen learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repetitive or passive behaviour; low involvement</li> <li>• Distressed, disruptive behaviour</li> <li>• Low well-being, including difficulties with settling</li> <li>• Lack of communication/interaction developing between peers</li> <li>• Closed opportunities, eg lack of opportunities for imaginative play, creative thinking</li> <li>• No evidence of parents’ involvement; parents are kept at the door or don’t settle children</li> <li>• No evidence of children negotiating and co-operating</li> <li>• Children don’t understand expectations; can’t find things; don’t know where to go; feel disempowered</li> <li>• Children are rushed</li> </ul>
<b>HIGH QUALITY INDICATORS</b>	<b>LOW QUALITY INDICATORS</b>
<b>TEACHING</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adults modelling the skills and behaviour they want to promote in children</li> <li>• Clear routines – eg songs/visual cues indicate transition</li> <li>• Adults respond to and extend children’s interests (adult initiated activities link to child’s observed interests)</li> <li>• Evidence of communication between staff; e.g., everyone knows what they are doing!</li> <li>• Consistent approach to behaviour</li> <li>• Good communication with parents</li> <li>• Interactive displays – photographs of children learning are used to reinforce learning</li> <li>• Children are known as individuals</li> <li>• Children have autonomy; e.g., within adult initiated activities</li> <li>• Adult makes learning intentions clear (where these apply)</li> <li>• Adults allow children time to become engaged and explore</li> <li>• Children should be allowed to “get stuck” and so should adults</li> <li>• Assessment for learning is evident</li> <li>• Use of open-ended questions and materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adults raised voices</li> <li>• Making assumptions about children</li> <li>• Inappropriate or misjudged interactions</li> <li>• Adults imposing own agenda</li> <li>• Too many ‘supervisory’ or routine interactions; adults telling children what to do all the time</li> <li>• Saying there’s a right way and a wrong way</li> <li>• Saying “Don’t do that” – imposing inappropriate limits</li> <li>• Adults have closed body language</li> <li>• There are no cues/clues in environment; e.g. adult does not use visual aids in teaching, no visual timetables</li> <li>• Adult does not match language or teaching strategy to child or group</li> </ul>

**APPENDIX B - OBSERVATION PRO FORMA**  
**Rosemary Nursery School and Children's Centre**  
**Observations of Teaching and Learning**

Teacher:	Date:
Observer:	Focus of Observation:

**AREAS TO CELEBRATE**

**POINTS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

Date and focus for next planned observation:

Signed:

Signed:

## **APPENDIX C - SIGNALS OF INVOLVEMENT AND WELL-BEING SIGNS OF INVOLVEMENT**

When assessing involvement you can allow yourself to be led by a number of characteristics or signals in the child's behaviour. Obviously, not all signals have to be present at the same time in order to indicate involvement. Added to this, you should also consider the child's age and level of development when assessing the level of involvement.

### **Concentration**

The child's attention is focused on one small area: that of his own activity. Only intense stimuli from the environment can reach – and possibly distract – him or her.

### **Energy**

The child puts a lot of effort and enthusiasm into his/her activity. This can be physically, eg by talking in a loud voice, by pressing firmly onto the paper, or by building enthusiastically. Yet it can also be psychologically: by being mentally very active.

### **Complexity and creativity**

In involved activity, children are at their best. They work to their full capacity. As a result, their behaviour is more than just routine activity. Complexity usually includes creativity: the child responds to the offer in his/her own personal way.

### **Facial expression and composure**

The non verbal signs of involvement are a great help in the assessment. Thus, we can make a distinction between children who are staring into space or who are yawning a lot, and those who are very interested and are looking at things intently. The overall body language can betray exceptional concentration or – alternatively – boredom.

### **Persistence**

Children who are actively involved in their activity, do not easily give it up. They want to dwell on the feeling of satisfaction which intense activity gives them, and they are willing to work at keeping it. They are not easily tempted by other activities, however attractive they may be. Involved activity usually lasts a long time (dependent on the children's age and level of development).

### **Precision**

Children who are involved show a remarkable care for their work: they give attention to details, they work meticulously. Children who are not involved often act carelessly as their work does not really matter to them.

### **Reaction time**

The children are alert and readily respond to inviting stimuli. They jump to work immediately after the presentation of the different activities, thus showing their motivation to proceed to action. They also respond alertly to new stimuli which occur in the course of the game or task which are relevant to the activity.

### **Verbal expression**

Sometimes the passing comments which children make indicate whether they are or were involved ("That was nice, miss!" or "One more time!"). And by describing enthusiastically what they are doing and have done they express more implicitly that the activity appeals to them: they can't help putting into words what they are experiencing, what they have discovered . . .

### **Satisfaction**

Involved activity usually involved pleasure. This pleasure is often implicitly present, but sometimes a child can be seen looking at his work with great satisfaction, touching it lightly . . .

**ROSEMARY NURSERY SCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S CENTRE SIGNS OF WELL-BEING  
(FERRE LAEVERS)**

To be used and shared with children, parents and staff.

When assessing the level of well-being, you can allow yourself to be guided by a number of characteristics in the person's behaviour and presentation. Not all of these signals need to be present at the same time and in their complete form to speak of well-being.

**Openness and receptivity**

The person is receptive to his environment. This can often be seen in his expression: alert, open, direct. The person is aware of those around him. He does not try to avoid them. He or she can accept both verbal and non-verbal attention from others at an appropriate developmental level; for a child, it may be a cuddle, a compliment, an offer of help. The person is receptive to stimuli or suggestions given by others; he listens, and often responds, to them. He or she shows a willingness to explore new situations. (cf PSED especially Dispositions & Attitudes; Self Confidence and Self Esteem).

**Flexibility**

People who are in a state of well-being readily adapt to their environment. They are not, or only very briefly, confused or upset by new or different situations. (cf PSED, especially Making Relationships). Flexibility shows in the way people react to problems or frustrations: Do they get 'stuck' in them or can they make compromises and move on?

**Self-confidence and self-esteem**

The person radiates a good deal of self-confidence. He is able to express himself and to let himself be seen or heard. He will risk the possibility of failure and manages to get over it quickly when he does fail at something. He does not associate failures with his entire being ('I am useless'). See EYFS: The Characteristics of Effective Learning; these can be applied equally to adults as to children. Indeed, we see them as the cornerstone of life-long learning. The person will predominantly look for challenges which are at his level. He will not want to do things that are either too easy or too difficult for him. He is willing to admit there are things he cannot do yet, without feeling inadequate. (cf PSED especially Self- Care. ) See also Maslow and The Four Stages of Competence.

**Being able to defend one's-self, assertiveness**

The person will stand up for herself. She will ask for the things she needs, such as help, comfort or care, as well as the things she wants. She will not merely respond to the orders or suggestions of others if they interfere with her own needs. (cf PSED, especially Behaviour and self control).

**Vitality**

The person is full of life and energy. She radiates vitality and zest for life. This often expresses itself in the person's facial expressions and composure. Her eyes are often glistening. She rarely sits hunched up and her shoulders rarely droop.

**Relaxation and inner peace**

People who are in a state of well-being seem relaxed. Their facial expressions are 'natural' and they do not twitch. (NB Be aware of disorders.) Most movements are flexible or smooth, not tense, tight or jerky. Their speech tempo and volume are 'normal' for their age; not unusually loud, quiet or fast. If strain shows, it is temporary and embedded in a particular activity, eg when a child is



taking great care not to spill water whilst pouring a drink. When you touch people who are relaxed, you feel their 'inner peace'. (NB Be aware of cultural expectations and do not touch adults or children when they do not wish it.) They do not bottle up tensions. Relaxation should be looked at in close connection with the signal of 'vitality'.

### **Enjoyment without restraint**

People who are in their element are characterised by enjoyment. They are happy and take pleasure in what they are doing. This enjoyment is authentic, real. Children do not take pleasure in hurting others, destroying things, belittling others, or in being rebellious or submissive and this can be applied appropriately to adults too. A child- and sometimes an adult- may start to sing spontaneously, smile a lot, and be very visible/audible in their enjoyment or they may enjoy themselves in silence. (cf PSED Dispositions and attitudes).

### **Being in touch with one's self**

People with high well-being are in close contact with their inner selves. They seem to know for themselves what they feel, wish, need, think . . . When they have unpleasant, negative feelings, they can admit them and process them.

## **ADDENDUM TO TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY**

Our approach to adult-child interaction is influenced by the principles of Play Therapy. We recognise that children use play symbolically to work through experiences and emotions and that they may need to grapple with 'big issues'. We acknowledge that our children may be exposed to the images and reality of weapons in a variety of ways.

We do not encourage children to make representations of weapons. We carefully observe all children's responses to materials on offer. We notice if they make a representation of a weapon and intervene thoughtfully to develop appropriate and non threatening lines of play. Our interventions can be followed by discussion with parents. Safeguarding and Child Protection is paramount throughout our practice.

Every child is unique. We respond reflectively to each child's individual learning and development needs.

Staff teach children how to say 'no' in all sorts of situations including those involving any games which they do not like.

For further reading and information please see [www.playtherapy.org.uk](http://www.playtherapy.org.uk).

References: Bruno Bettelheim 'The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales' (Penguin Psychology). Penny Holland 'We do not play with guns here: War, Weapon and Superhero Play in the Early Years (Debating Play)' (Open University Press 2003)

## EARLY YEARS 1: DAILY ROUTINE

Approximate Time Mornings / Afternoons	Learning Experience
8.30am - 9am 12.30pm – 1pm	<b>Staggered Welcome Time</b> Children arrive and are welcomed by key person. Children choose where they want to play.
8.30am - 11am 12.30pm - 3pm  10am - 10.30am 2pm - 2.30pm (special helper signals when the café is open)	<b>Exploring Time</b> With responsive learning experiences planned by adults each day.  <b>Snack Café available</b> Children have the opportunity to prepare and eat fruit/ carbohydrate snack with a choice of drink.
11am - 11.15am O/S 3pm-3.15pm O/S 11.15-11.30am I/S 3.15-3.30pm I/S	<b>Sorting Time</b> Children sort the areas they have been playing before they are collected.
11am - 11.30am 3pm – 3.30pm  11.15am small group time 3.15pm small group time	<b>Staggered Goodbye Time</b> Children join together for a planned group learning experience. (e.g. core books, songs or language and mathematical development through action songs and rhymes).
11.30am	<b>Children staying prepare for lunch.</b>

## EARLY YEARS 2: DAILY ROUTINE

Approximate Time Mornings / Afternoons	Learning Experience
8.30am – 9.00am 12.30pm – 3.30pm	<b>Staggered Welcome Time</b> Key groups in home bases following COVID 19 guidelines
8.40am/9.10am – 11.00/11.20am 12.40pm/1.00pm – 3.00pm/3.20pm  9.30am – 10.30am 1.15pm – 2.15pm (special helper signals when the café is open by using an information/ reminder board)	<b>Exploring Time</b> With responsive learning experiences planned by adults each day.  <b>Snack Time Café available</b> Children have the opportunity to prepare and eat fruit/ carbohydrate snack with a choice of drink.
10.45am/ 11.10am 2.50pm/ 3.10pm	<b>Sorting Time</b> Children sort the areas they have been playing before they move to the Mezzanine.
11.00am – 11.30am 3.00pm – 3.20pm	<b>Staggered Goodbye Time</b> Children go to the Mezzanine area to review learning and share planned group learning. (e.g. core books, songs or language and mathematical development through action songs and rhymes).
11.25am	<b>Some children prepare for lunch</b>