

Madeley Nursery School

Bridle Road, Telford, TF7 5ET, UK



LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT POLICY

May 2017

If you require a copy of this procedure in a particular format, for example in large print, please contact the School.

Background

The **aims of the school** are to create a vibrant, friendly school community for all that engenders delight and enthusiasm in learning and confident, committed members of society through outstanding early education and care within a culture that places well-being and safeguarding at its centre.

Our approach to teaching and learning is inspired by the preschools of Reggio Emilia and the ideas of Gregory Bateson; where children learn in groups and research the world through enquiry projects.

Learning and teaching at Madeley nursery School is based on deeply held principles.

These are explored, questioned, tested and our understanding developed on an on-going basis. Through these principles we develop the values of

- **Prosocial behaviours** of sharing (dividing up or bestowing), helping (acts of kindness, rescuing, removing distress), and cooperation (working together to reach a goal) showing sympathy, showing positive verbal and physical contact, showing concern, taking the perspective of another person, cooperating and social problem-solving that enable children to be in dynamic interactions with other children and adults.
- **Self-regulation** which is the ability to monitor and control our own behaviour, emotions, or thoughts, altering them in accordance with the demands of the situation.
- **Collaboration** that is crucial to successful, independent learning. Through effective collaboration we begin to understand the

importance of being reflective, of cooperation, of taking turns, of respecting difference and diversity, of friendship, of being fair, of sensitive listening, active discussion, and of unity.

- **Resilience and perseverance** to be determined to succeed, setting a goal and sticking to it. We aim to foster a willingness to take risks and an acceptance of failure. We take positives from all that we do and learn from our mistakes. We are responsible for our own learning and develop high self-esteem.
- **Equality** incorporating aspects of tolerance, inclusion and diversity. We expect children to have an awareness of the wider world, to celebrate difference and respect the rights of all individuals, both in the school community and beyond.
- **Compassion** encompassing kindness and concern, about friendship and love, about communicating effectively and understanding the needs of others. Through our focus on this value we expect to develop thoughtful, considerate children who are empathetic, respectful and kind.
- **Creativity and innovation** is the value through which we hope to inspire children to appreciate their uniqueness, to be imaginative and inquisitive. We aim to nurture originality and dynamism in meaning-making.
- **Critical thinking** using purposeful judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference and include qualities, concepts, and processes such as creativity, imagination, discovery, reflection, empathy, connecting knowing, subjectivity, ambiguity, and inconclusiveness.
- **Confidence** to explore as active learners and to be adventurous, curious and confident to take risks when experiencing new things. Exploring the world will help to develop curiosity and respect for nature and a love for the outdoors.

This policy will describe the overarching principles and elements of the approach which inform our daily practice.

A place of citizenship – being part of a strong community

Our school is an integral part of the community. It is a place where every child, family and educator has both a right and responsibility to contribute to and support their community. *We define community as being both immediately located around the school and stretching out to include the global community. We believe that citizenship encompasses people and cultures as well as environments and ecologies. That as citizens, children should be creators of culture not passive consumers.*

The researching School – working together to question and improve

Working together to question and improve, our school is a place where children, families and educators work together to improve the quality of learning and teaching experiences, therefore promoting high aspirations, levels of well-being, good dispositions and achievement for all. *We believe that a researching school relies on developing a 'listening pedagogy, where all protagonists collaborate and co-operate in reflective dialogue, respecting and encouraging different opinions and ideas, being open to change and innovation.*

A belief in the competent child – with an innate ability to learn from birth

All children have an innate ability to learn from birth. We believe that every child has an incredible capacity to learn and develop through engagement with others and with the world. *This principle has inclusion and diversity at its heart and is made visible through the pedagogical approaches of the school. Where learning is seen as crossing the borders that separately define disciplines, curriculum and concepts.*

Partnership between children, families and school – learning in partnership

We consider that a genuine, respectful and active partnership between children, their families and the school are central to successful learning. *This principle is interrelated and underpins the other school principles and reflects our relational and community ethos. Partnership involves parents, families and staff working together to benefit children in relationships where each recognises, respects and values what the other does and says. Partnership involves responsibility on both sides.*

Our Approach

Constructing learning together

The Process of Learning and Teaching.

Learning and teaching is a cyclic process; a journey that builds on what children know and can do, using their interests, celebrating their experience of the passage of time, the natural world and the festival year. This process, in turn, enriches and acknowledges the rich cultural heritage of the children's families and community.

It is important for us to ensure that we give time to revisit ideas resources and themes; with each return these can be explored in new and fresh ways increasing the complexity of the children's understanding. This rich complexity enables learning to be more embedded and thus can be used by children more intuitively and flexibly. This process of revisiting familiar threads and ideas creates a spiral notion of learning in the context of the children's experience of the curriculum.

All of our thinking about teaching and learning sits on a co-constructionist pedagogy; a sense that all learning and teaching is concerned with experiences shared and contextualised with others and in that rich engagement our developing knowledge is shaped, reconsidered, restructured and expressed. As a consequence we take great care to listen, observe, record and document the children's engagement with experiences, ideas and one another. This process of the educator's learning about the children's learning is fundamental to our approach; it is where the educator joins the children in their many journeys time and again.

Such careful observations by educators prompt a responsibility to reflect and share our emergent ideas and developing judgements with colleagues. This shared, collegiate context offers a parallel to the children's experience of working in groups. The process is reciprocal and shares the same core values and philosophy. The opportunities to share staff reflection are considered so important that it is planned for in the daily and weekly processes of the school.

The complex process of recording fragments of the children's learning, bringing them together and considering the implications for future learning and the curriculum is the essence of what is often described as pedagogical documentation. Through this 'documentation' the educators seek to ensure that learning can extend to deeper levels, through the cyclic process of revisiting familiar threads or through experiences that offer the opportunity to explore shared

characteristics/ideas in a fresh context. The 'documentation' emerges and takes shape over time and is offered back to the children and their families as a celebration of the journey of the children's learning. It is partial and subjective and acknowledged as such and yet it conveys the importance and value that educators place in the children's learning and particularly specific 'moments' in that learning continuum moments where there is the time to reflect and reconsider. In these times of pausing, the educators' awarenesses are aggregated and may be more keenly attuned to opportunities to consider the deeper questions children may be asking.

The group context of the learning and teaching enables children to process ideas through the prism of other children's and also other adults' perceptions. The interaction within groups supports a rich interplay of possible connections. It also supports a rich and lively dynamic where the focus of the group can change quickly and dramatically or more slowly and carefully. These characteristics will find favour with different individuals within groups and enable children to experience both comfortable and sometimes less comfortable contexts. Experiencing the new or novel can be exciting or may be unsettling. All children can participate in ways that reflect their dispositions, interests, maturity and 'feeling of the moment'. Ensuring a range of contexts that favour different dispositions, skills and learning is thus very significant.

Creativity

Creativity is not an add-on. It is a fundamental approach to all aspects of learning and teaching.

Learning and creating encourages risk-taking and involves trying something and seeing what happens. This is a process which can often involve many mistakes; fear of making mistakes can stop us from expressing ourselves freely and thinking with originality. In order to feel free to experiment and make mistakes a supportive environment is created.

A creative approach by children and adults supports the enquiry of the children.

We believe in learning and teaching that promotes creative dispositions and attitudes that enables creation and innovation through many modes or expressive languages. Creativity is often linked with the creative arts, but it is not only the arts. It can be in all areas of learning, including science, maths, technology and humanities.

By promoting creativity we enhance the motivation for staff and children.

It underpins our approach to school improvement and aspires to the highest standards of achievement.

Direct teaching of skills and knowledge

Children are seeking to make sense of the world and their experiences in it. They need to develop shared *tools* so they can communicate, test, expand and reveal their ideas. We teach some essential skills and knowledge directly to children and others emerge as necessary during the course of children's enquiry and researches.

Some skills and knowledge are embedded in daily routines and practical activities others are developed systematically (see policies for literacy and mathematical development).

Direct teaching is matched to children's learning styles and developmental level. The strategies used must be engaging and within children's zone of proximal development.

The role of the educator

The role of the educator is complex involving many qualities and skills.

It is the role of the educator to know each child as an individual and to build a trusting relationship in which learning can happen.

An essential quality and skill for an educator is to actively listen and respond to children and families and to each other.

They must be able to communicate with children and families, with each other and with the wider community.

It is not the role of the educator, just to give out information or correct mistakes. The role of educator is fluid, sometimes they are a tool for children to use or co-investigator, an observer, a scribe, someone who poses a challenge or provides a provocation or question.

An educator should have respect for children's own theories and hypotheses and allow children to make mistakes and encourage them to solve problems, knowing when to stand back and when to intervene. The

educator should build on the strengths, competencies and curiosities of children.

We believe that observation is partial and subjective but it is the educator's role to observe closely, to evaluate and theorise about what they've learned. By reflecting with others and participating in ongoing discussion that takes in many points of view educators try to understand deeper truths about learning and teaching through their observation. It is important to try to keep an open mind.

It is important that educators make learning visible through learning documentation.

Educators are learning at the same time as the children are learning. They work together to engage in challenging dialogue which tries to uncover the truth about children's learning and how to improve teaching.

The educator provides carefully planned aesthetically pleasing spaces and well-organised, carefully chosen materials that support learning and teaching, enabling creative responses by children and deeper levels of enquiry and understanding.

Learning Documentation

We believe that pedagogical (learning and teaching) documentation is an essential part of the processes within our school. There are several aspects to this that interlink to create a comprehensive account of learning, teaching, progress, interests, ideas, successes and areas for improvement within nursery.

Area journals –

These clarify the intention of the educator for the day based on previous reflection and planning.

It is a place to collect traces of learning – notes of what is observed, what actions are done by the educator – descriptions of actions of individuals and interactions amongst groups of children, what is said using many expressive languages thumb-nail (small) photographs.

Here reflections are noted on the learning of the day that informs the next days' intention. Reflection over longer time frames enables us to see patterns in learning and identify what are deeper more persistent inquiries by children.

They support longer research of how enquiry learning progresses in environments.

They evidence of progress / achievement of groups and individual children.

They provide evidence of the impact of teaching on advancing children's achievement.

They provide training materials for disseminating good practice in teaching & learning.

They provide the basis of information for learning documentation made visible on walls and for exchange with home either shared directly or through celebration books.

Pedagogical documentation on walls

This is a place to share the development of learning and by sharing, get multiple perspectives on the learning. Creating a richer learning experience and the possibility of maximising children's learning potential.

This requires energy and action by educators to assemble the documentation, to bring it to the attention of children and families and to notice and contribute to documentation put up by colleagues.

It creates vibrancy within the school environment – celebrating the processes of children and educators and the contributions of families.

Visible documentation is essential to communicate learning to visitors to the school – (school is a public place) and it becomes part of the training materials for other educators.

Digital file storage (photographs and video)

These are stored in 'All digital images' on the T-drive file store.

Photographs maybe downloaded into several places based on the purposes they serve.

1. Group file – children's individual evidence record
2. All temporary staff – individual staff storage

3. Shared current enquiry / project file – contributions by many staff
4. Long term enquiry / project files - contributions by many staff

When staff are saving into children's files or enquiry / project files they always leave an identifying code even when renaming –then files can be tracked for documentation at future times by tracking number from thumb-nails in area journals.

Celebration books

These are a book about an individual child.

This book will celebrate the things that are special and unique about the child and their family.

It is a place to hold memories of the child's experiences and interests in nursery and from home.

It contains photographs, pictures and words that show how the child spends time at nursery

It can also contain pictures, photographs, souvenirs and words about the child's life outside the nursery. It can be anything that is personal to the child.

It supports learning in many ways.

Each child is very proud of their book and we encourage them to take them to and from home and nursery regularly to share with their friends and family.

When in nursery the Celebration book will be kept in the child's group area. They are monitored by the child's key worker but may have contributions from many people. There will be regular entries into the Celebration books.

Summative documentation

Sometimes it is important to create summative documentation (either on the walls, in a book format or on-line) of a project or piece of work; when creating this documentation consideration for educators include

- What is the nature of the work?
- What has arisen from your research and action?
- What motivated the children?
- What deeper questions were the children investigating?
- Where did you begin?

- Where did you change direction?
- What triggered change?
- Was it planned or spontaneous in the process?
- What ideas have currency / significance?
- What vocabulary evolved?
- How do you make the richness and vitality of the learning and teaching visible?

Assessment at Madeley nursery School

There are several aspects to the assessment practice at Madeley nursery school, each serve different purposes, but interlink to provide an overall picture of the impact of learning and teaching.

The schools use of learning and teaching (pedagogical) documentation in the form of educator journals, traces of the process of learning and teaching on displays and summative project documents which make learning and teaching visible and inform our regular reflective practice. This form of assessment illuminates learning and informs teaching; it primarily supports group learning and ensures that there is a stimulating, challenging and creative environment with a wide range of opportunities, both planned and incidental for children to become deeply involved, curious, challenged and creative in their learning responses. It involves dialogue between educators, children and families.

Each week, there is a group reflection on the achievements and next steps for individual children called a unique child review. Every child will be considered by the whole staff team in a regular cycle. Urgent matters arising, which indicate individual children require specific strategies to address their needs will be addressed at any time.

Once a term there is a focus on summative assessment by the Key worker for individual children, at this point it is the responsibility of the Key worker to consider each child's progress against the school record that is divided into the seven areas of the curriculum within the early years foundation stage against the statements that summarise the learning and development matters. It is at this time, that next steps are recorded in the Key worker folder and discussions occur between educators children and families.

Children who are identified as having additional needs, resulting in them being placed on the special needs register are monitored with additional record-keeping and processes in line with the SEND code of practice.

It is the responsibility of every Key worker to maintain the records of children who they key-work. This includes consideration of children who may be in vulnerable groups, and at greater risk of not fulfilling their learning potential. There is a key group time planned each week during which targeted learning and teaching is planned by the Key worker to meet the requirements of key group ensuring that they make progress in their learning.

It is the responsibility of the teachers working at Madeley nursery school to support the assessment processes of the whole staff team, ensuring judgements are moderated for individual children and challenging expectations are maintained for individual children's achievement.

The head or deputy head teacher have a meeting with key workers after the summative assessment data is assembled. This is to monitor progress, ensuring each child is making best progress and that any emerging additional needs are met and necessary referrals made.

Parent / carer information exchange relating to child's learning, interests and home experiences:
 Notes kept in key-worker file
 Notes from home visits, added to by key worker
 Parent meetings to share progress and digital records.

<p>Regular key-group activities targeted to meet children's needs. Notes kept by key worker.</p>	<p>Unique child How we assess each child at Madeley Nursery.</p> <p>How do we learn about each child? What can they do? What motivates and interests them? What do they need to experience next?</p>	<p>Home / school Celebration books; these are owned by the child and go between home and school, a place to share what children have done.</p>
<p>Digital photos contributions made by all staff into each child's digital file. Kept in the 7 areas of learning from EYFS. Shared with parents, sent home as child leaves.</p>		<p>Team reflection, after each session staff review what has happened and notes are made on a daily basis. Key worker notes any significant learning, difficulties that emerge from these discussions in key worker file</p>
<p>Learning documentation of the process of learning that is put up in the environment. The contribution of individual children can be identified in these learning stories.</p>		<p>Unique child replaces team reflection on a Tuesday. Small groups of children are a focus for all staff, noting where they are at with their well-being, learning and interests' feedback at this meeting by all staff.</p>
<p>Baseline on each child within first month of starting nursery by key worker. Termly summative data update by key worker against the learning and development statements in the EYFS</p>		<p>Staff journals kept by all teachers and nursery nurses; daily learning and teaching notes and photos are kept. These show the progress and impact of learning in each area of nursery and provide valuable evidence to be shared with key workers; results have been that deeper levels of learning and teaching have occurred.</p>
<p>Pedagogy meeting observations shared and staff team reflect on children's learning, looking for ways to improve teaching to meet their needs. Key workers attend and contribute notes made by key workers of individual children.</p>		<p>General observation and discussion with children no evidence may be available for this but the action will inform staff about children's well-being, learning and interests.</p>
<p>Information and engagement with other services and agencies for learning, medical and social needs.</p>		<p>SEND meetings and IEP reviews for children on the school register to monitor progress and identify next steps and resources needed, constructed with parents and external agencies.</p>

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Responsible person:	Louise Lowings
Signature:	Wet signature copy held in school.
Role in school:	