

Activity-Based Learning in Key Stage 1



March 2024

Background

Carrick Primary School is situated in the village of Burren, approximately two miles from Warrenpoint.

The Role of Play in Carrick Primary School

In Carrick we aim to provide a safe, secure and inviting learning environment where children feel valued and adults will take time to listen to their views and opinions and support their learning. We recognise the importance of play as a fundamentally important part of the process of learning in the early years at school. We recognise that children learn best when they feel happy and secure, in a stimulating environment.

The Northern Ireland Curriculum.

Play/Activity Based Learning is central to learning and teaching in the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

The following quotations refer to the Foundation Stage, KS1 and KS2

"Children learn best when learning is interactive, practical and enjoyable."

"It is important that children have opportunities to be actively involved in practical, challenging play-based learning in a stimulating environment."

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities.

At the heart of the Northern Ireland Curriculum lies an explicit emphasis on the development of pupils' skills and capabilities for lifelong learning and for operating effectively in society. By engaging pupils in active learning contexts across all areas of the curriculum, pupils' personal and interpersonal skills and capabilities and their ability to think both creatively and critically are developed.

Links with Areas of Learning

The experiences provided for our children during Play/Activity Based Learning encompass the six areas of learning. The learning is integrated through a topic based approach and enables children to make appropriate connections. Emphasis is placed on the development of skills and capabilities for lifelong learning and for operating effectively in society.

The Learning Environment

“Children need to have access to a stimulating environment which will encourage them to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience”.

A Place to Learn: Lewisham Early Years Advice and Research Network

Key Stage 1:

We try to ensure that the classroom environment promotes independence and that the skills fostered in the Foundation Stage continue to be developed in Key Stage 1. In order to promote independence and support active learning, the following resources are easily accessible to pupils:

- Creative Materials ;
- Drawing/Writing Table ;
- Construction Materials;
- Book Corner ;
- Computer/Bee Bot/IWB/ICT;
- Table Top Activities e.g. games, jigsaws.

The Development of Skills, Attitudes and Dispositions.

As children engage in Activity/Play Based Learning, they are developing skills and capabilities for lifelong learning and for operating effectively in society. During Activity/Play Based Learning, children have opportunities to develop skills in Thinking, Problem-Solving and Decision Making, Self Management, Working with Others, Managing Information and Being Creative. We believe that the learning environment and learning opportunities we provide, facilitates the development of childrens' Thinking Skills and Personal

Capabilities (TS&PC), as well as positive attitudes and dispositions to learning.

It is hoped that as children engage in Play/Activity Based Learning, positive attitudes and dispositions will be fostered. Play will provide children with opportunities to:

- Improve concentration and listening skills;
- Increase self esteem and confidence;
- Show and develop leadership skills;
- Develop emotionally;
- Develop creativity and imagination;
- Experience success and realize that they can learn from their mistakes;
- Enjoy their experiences;
- Feel in control/take ownership of their learning;
- Working collaboratively with others;
- Socialise with their peers;
- Feel that their opinions and contributions are valued.

As they develop children should become:

- More independent;
- More willing to share;
- More cooperative;
- More willing to "have a go";
- Better problem solvers;
- Better communicators;
- Better at making decisions;
- Enthusiastic about learning because play should motivate and stimulate.

Our aim is that our activity-based learning will provide opportunities to develop the above skills and attitude, which are fundamental to future learning.

Role of the Adult

The role of the adult is crucial to the success of the activities.

The teacher/classroom assistant will:

- Ensure that the learning environment is safe ,happy and secure;
- Actively promote quality learning;
- Ensure that all children have equal access to all opportunities;
- Plan and provide a wide range of appropriate learning activities;
- Make optimum use of space and time;
- Ensure that there is progression in play;
- Monitor resources;
- Participate and extend activities;
- Have a positive approach to behaviour management;
- Be sensitive to the uniqueness of each child.

In Carrick Primary School we recognise the contribution made by other staff such as classroom assistants and students and encourage their full support.

Classroom Management

Teachers integrate as much discovery learning as possible into their lessons, ensuring that Active Learning is taking place. Active Learning occurs in lessons when children have opportunities to discover answers for themselves through open-ended tasks. Pupils are given opportunities especially in Maths and Science to do tasks experimentally. A lot of active learning/creative work/I.C.T is integrated throughout W.A.U. topics. Outcomes may be recorded in a variety of ways, but this takes second place to the "doing and recording".

Planning

Planning underpins effective learning and teaching and takes account of the developmental stage of the children, as well as their previous experiences. Planning documents are regarded as flexible and are amended as the

children's responses and the outcomes of activities are observed. As with all learning and teaching, planners are evaluated - good planning and effective assessment are closely related.

In Carrick Primary School, we try to help pupils to make appropriate connections between the areas of learning, using a topic based approach. Through our Play/Activity Based Learning, we aim to ensure that:

Key Stage 1

At present, planning for activity based learning is included on existing half termly planners. It occurs in many lessons when pupils are given opportunities to work collaboratively in groups on a given topic. They are encouraged to discover answers for themselves through open-ended tasks. They are provided with opportunities to investigate, research and experiment which facilitate the development of thinking skills and problem-solving skills.

The teachers will ensure progression play by:

- Addressing the needs of the children and altering their provision;
- Linking the activity through planning to other areas of the curriculum;
- Providing suitable materials;
- Appropriate and careful questioning to extend learning;
- Sensitive involvement following observation of children's learning;
- Liaising with colleagues.

Skills to be developed

- Observing
- Describing
- Questioning
- Comparing
- Investigating
- Predicting
- Problem solving
- Predicting

- Estimating
- Listening
- Communicating
- Discovering
- Identifying
- Concentrating

Key Stage 1 Assessment

The teacher uses a variety of methods for assessment. These methods are used to guide planning. We take account of Assessment for Learning Strategies as detailed within the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

Equal Opportunities

We try to ensure that all children have equal access to all play activities, to allow them to explore situations and roles from the point of view of either sex and to challenge stereotypes. Boys and girls are not confined to traditional roles and both are equally encouraged to take on leadership roles in all areas of play.

We aim to provide appropriate learning experiences for boys as research has shown that many boys are underachieving in school. Boys need more opportunities for kinesthetic learning and additional time spent on the development of their oral language.

Conclusion

The policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if required, in consultation with staff, pupils, parents and Governors.

This review process will ensure that the information contained is appropriate and amendments will be made as and when required.

Signed: Dr Anne Cassidy (Principal)

Signed: Mr Gerard Murdock (Chairperson of Board of Governors)

Date: March 2024

Review Date: March 2027