

# **Thornton Heath Nursery School**

## **Teaching and learning Policy**

## **THORNTON HEATH NURSERY SCHOOL**

### **1. Introduction**

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is holistic education that encompasses all learning and development. At Thornton Heath Nursery School (THNS) we believe that children learn best when they are happy, healthy and safe. Our aim is to work with parents and carers to ensure children are:

- a) interested;
- b) active;
- c) in control;
- d) stimulated;
- e) comfortable;
- f) receptive;
- g) well nourished;
- h) aware of what is expected;
- i) confident;
- j) well rested;
- k) able to manage their environment;
- l) challenged;
- m) fit and well;
- n) well liked;
- o) engaged;
- p) listened to;
- q) able to develop a positive self-image.

- 1.1 This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at THNS.
- 1.2 The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching adults.
- 1.3 We are committed to a policy of equality of opportunity and fully promote an ethos of inclusion.
- 1.4 In the policy the term 'practitioner' refers to the members of staff working with children within the setting.
- 1.5 The EYFS applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year.

### **2. The curriculum**

- 2.1 At Thornton Heath Nursery School we are committed to underpinning our provision with the four themes of the Statutory Framework for The Early Years Foundation Stage in our nursery classes. These are:

- a) 'Unique Child';
- b) 'Positive Relationships';
- c) 'Enabling Environments';
- d) 'Learning and Development';

- 2.2 **Unique child.** We recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates and this is reflected in our provision.
- 2.3 The characteristics of effective learning support the child to become a motivated and effective learner. Children will **play and explore** and 'have a go' at using all available resources; developing their experiences.
- 2.4 Children will develop resilience and enjoy achievements through **active learning** and will make links, explore their ideas and strategies for problem solving through **creating and thinking critically**. Practitioners support the children in developing all these characteristics through playing alongside children and, where necessary, scaffolding and supporting their thoughts.
- 2.5 It is important to us that all children at THNS are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them to develop these important life skills.
- 2.6 Children should be allowed to take risks but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards, both within school and in the wider environment.
- 2.7 We encourage a healthy lifestyle including taking exercise and eating healthy food.

### **3. Positive relationships**

- 3.1 We aim to promote positive relationships between staff, parents and children and work together for the children to achieve at the highest levels possible.
- 3.2 We value the strengths and knowledge each individual brings to THNS. We respect and support learning without prejudice, bias or judgement.
- 3.3 Children are taught how to deal with difficult situations and relationships through their daily interactions with adults and other children.
- 3.4 We recognise that parents and carers are the child's first educators and their importance for the child's welfare and education is paramount.
- 3.5 All children are greeted as they come into the nursery classes and have a familiar routine.
- 3.6 Staff will work with each child either on a one to one basis, in a small group or as part of a larger group.
- 3.7 Each child will have an identified keyworker who, along with the class teacher and other professionals, helps the child become familiar with the setting, build confidence,

and offers a settled relationship for the child and build relationships with their parents and carers. It is the responsibility of the key worker to:

- a) observe, monitor and assess each child's development;
- b) plan and set targets for each child's learning to ensure progress is made in all areas of the EYFS;
- c) share observations with the child and their parent/carer;
- d) share targets with the child and their parent/carer;
- e) celebrate and share success and achievement;
- f) support transitions between places of learning during the day and between settings;
- g) model correctly spoken English and appropriate behaviour;
- h) extend children's thinking with skilful questioning and dialogue;
- i) set clear and consistent boundaries for children's behaviour in line with our behaviour policy.

3.8 Each keyworker is paired with another to ensure continuity for children in times of absence. We expect parents and carers will work with keyworkers by:

- a) ensuring their children attend regularly and punctually;
- b) talking with them about their child's progress and working to support their learning at home;
- c) share their child's successes at home with their keyworker;
- d) helping their children come to school ready to learn.

#### **4 Enabling environments**

4.1 At THNS we recognise the importance of a rich learning environment which is well-resourced and maintained. The environment needs to be clean and accessible so that children can easily use the materials they need and be involved in looking after them.

4.2 The environment should celebrate children's work and achievements through displays that are current and attractive. It should be reflective of children's cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

4.3 The environment is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. There are also areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest.

4.4 There is an outdoor area which provides opportunities for learning in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.

4.5 As far as possible we offer the same opportunities and areas of learning in all of our environments and the children have free flow between different areas within the overall area dedicated to their age range.

4.6 We observe the children during child initiated learning and offer additional resources and support to enrich their learning.

- 4.7 To ensure that we meet the individual needs of all of our children we make regular observations of the children's interactions, interests, skills, and note the development of concepts. These observations are used to inform our planning for groups of children, for individuals and our provision for resources as appropriate.

## 5 Learning and development

- 5.1 There are seven areas of learning and development which address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development and are interconnected. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum which allows children to make lots of links between what they are learning. All areas for learning and development are important and interlinked.

- 5.2 Three areas (the prime areas) are crucial to develop lifelong learning and to help children form relationships:

- a) **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** - children develop confidence and self-esteem, learn how to manage feelings and respect others.
- b) **Communication and Language** – children have opportunities to speak and listen in a range of situations and experience a language rich environment. They increasingly build their levels of concentration and can give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately.
- c) **Physical Development** – children have opportunities to be active and develop co-ordination - both gross motor and fine motor. They also learn about healthy choices.

- 5.3 The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four further areas (called the 'specific areas'):

- a) **Literacy** – involves children learning how letters link to sounds and beginning to read and write;
- b) **Mathematics** – children have opportunities to develop counting and calculation skills, to use numbers in everyday activities and recognise and describe shapes and measures;
- c) **Understanding of the World** – children have opportunities to find out about people and communities, the environment and technology;
- d) **Expressive Arts and Design** – involves exploring feelings and ideas through music, dance, role play and design.

- 5.4 We have an overview of topics in the EYFS which is designed to provide a broad, balanced curriculum in order to cover all areas of development. However, we also try to follow the children's interests when planning for individuals and groups of children and involve them in choosing activities and resources. We value all areas of learning and development and understand that they are interconnected.

5.5 Children and parents and carers are encouraged to be involved in the next steps for learning through the children's **Learning Journey** folder, termly targets and parent consultations in keyworker week.

## **6. Active learning through play**

- 6.1 We recognise that young children learn best when they are actively engaged and involved in their learning. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that early years' education should be as practical as possible and our setting has an ethos of learning through play.
- 6.2 We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development.
- 6.3 Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.
- 6.4 At THNS practitioners provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities both inside and in the outside areas.
- 6.5 Activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support children to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts.
- 6.6 Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding.
- 6.7 In providing these active learning opportunities through play we understand the central position of play within the EYFS framework.
- 6.8 Child-initiated learning is an important part of our daily routine and whenever possible adult-directed activities are play based, active and related to the children's interests.
- 6.9 We aim to help children with their learning through observing, getting involved in their play, supporting their thinking and asking open ended questions.
- 6.10 At THNS we believe that early years' education is important in its own right and should not be viewed simply as preparation for the next stage of children's education.

## **7 Review**

This policy is reviewed as necessary at meetings of the Thornton Heath Nursery School Governing body.

**Policy Date:**

**Review date:**

**Signed:**

**Date:**

**Head of Nursery**

**Signed:**

**Date:**

**Chair of Governors**