



Play Policy

“Play is the universal language of childhood, it is an activity which exists for its own sake but also has a fundamental role. Children’s play is crucial to Scotland’s wellbeing; socially, economically and environmentally. Our people are our greatest resource and the early years of life set the pattern for children’s future development.” (Scotland’s Play Strategy, 2013)

Rationale

At Hillview Primary, we believe firmly in ensuring that all children achieve their full potential. We are committed to ensuring that all young children are provided with a nurturing environment which promotes creativity and curiosity, encouraging children to lead their own learning. Children will be provided with opportunities to become co-constructors of the curriculum, enabling practitioners to adopt inquiry based learning approaches, which are responsive to the children’s needs and interests.

What do we mean by ‘play’?

Play, more than anything else, defines childhood and is fundamental to children’s quality of life. It includes a wide range of non-prescribed activities and behaviours undertaken by children that are satisfying and creative. Though play may include formal games, sports and organised activities, it also moves beyond this, giving children an opportunity to express themselves, learn about the world and interact with others. Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and

intrinsically motivated. That is, children determine and control the content of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reason. At Hillview Primary, staff will use the 12 features of play outlined by Tina Bruce (2011). **See appendix 1**

The Value of Play

Play is the essence of childhood. It is a key part of children's enjoyment and development. Through play children create their own culture, develop their abilities, explore their creativity, challenge their limitations and assumptions and learn about the people and places around them.

At Hillview Primary School we recognise the value of play in the following ways:

- Play promotes children's development, learning, imagination, creativity and independence.
- Play contributes to keeping children healthy and active.
- Play allows children to experience and encounter boundaries, and learn to assess and manage risk.
- Play allows children to develop a sense of community and by learning about different people, places and environments.
- Play helps children learn about themselves; their abilities, interests and preferences and how that can contribute to a larger group.
- Play is therapeutic and can help children deal with stress, difficulties and emotional concerns.
- Play is an important way of initiating, building and maintaining important relationships.

Our Aims

To create a more coherent, flexible and child-focused curriculum which gives teachers more professional autonomy over how they teach and set higher standards for achievement for all children.

Be child-centred, acknowledge children's views and actively involve children in meaningful ways in everyday decisions within the classroom and school setting.

Provide appropriate spaces to play and learn with a range of possibilities for children to develop their present and full potential.

Encourage children to contribute their own ideas and be involved in decision making about their learning.

Provide a range of events and exciting experiences which encourage children to share their thinking, talk about their interest and help them imagine their theories.

Create a wealth of interesting situations, both inside and out of doors, questions for a child to ask and consider possibilities.

Implementation

Staff will commit to providing high quality play experiences throughout the curriculum and will ensure that children are provided with a variety of opportunities for both free flow and structured play, within a wide range of settings, including outdoor learning. Primary 1 staff will ensure that there is a smooth transition to primary school, which embraces good practice in Early Years.

Children will be involved in 3 different learning approaches: adult led, adult initiated and child led experiences. Adult led will be planned, differentiated teaching inputs working with small groups. Adult initiated will be open ended activities arriving from planning with the pupils to allow them to take their learning in the direction they wish. Child led experiences allows the children to take control of their learning and play, they choose the resources, time and outcome. They know what they want to achieve. Staff will set up provocations in response to children's interests and ideas. Provocations will provide hands-on exploration for children to practice, test, construct and deconstruct their ideas and theories.

Staff will review experiences provided for children within the classroom. The experiences provided will be carefully planned in regards to the resources provided and will promote creativity. Children should be provided with the opportunity to use a wide range of transformable resources. The classroom will be organised into the following possible areas:

- Home corner / role play
- Creative Area
- Loose Parts
- Construction

- Mark Making /writing area

Role of the teacher/adult

Teacher interventions can vary a great deal, depending on the nature of the activities or on the responses and initiatives of the children. Stimulating interventions are open impulses that stimulate a range of actions in the children and make the difference between low and high involvement. Such as:

- Engaging children's curiosity and questions
- Helping children reflect and extend their thinking
- Supporting children to solve their own problems
- Suggesting activities to children that are not engaged
- Offering materials that fit in an on-going activity
- Inviting children to communicate
- Confronting them with thought provoking questions

Assessment

As play is child led and responsive to the interests of the child, so must be approaches to assessment. Observations of children are vital because each child has a unique set of abilities and talents, observations in different situations capture these first hand. The starting point is always with the child. Observing what children choose to do, what their interests are and who and what resources they enjoy playing with, provides adults with reliable information about children as individuals.

Effective assessment requires both awareness of what children are doing and insights about meaning. Effective assessment goes beyond educators seeing and hearing to include deep thinking and making sense of what they observe, then using what they understand to enrich and extend children's learning.

The challenges are to ensure that observations and assessments:

- Are an effective use of time
- Increase understanding of each child's learning
- Inform future curriculum decisions
- Enable evidence of children's learning to be shared with families.

Assessment can include:

- Magic Moments wall – observations of pupils, ways in which they have led their learning.
- Collecting samples or copies of children’s work—writing, drawing, painting or photos of sculptures or constructions. These samples also need annotations about the context and the important factors in the experience, such as how the work was completed, challenges the children experienced, how they negotiated or solved problems and how the work demonstrates their interests and knowledge.

Throughout the week staff will make time to observe individuals and small groups. The information from these observations will be embedded within evaluations across all curricular areas and the information gathered will also be discussed at tracking meetings.

Appendix 1

Tina Bruce- the Twelve Features of Play

1. Children use first hand experiences from life;
2. Children make up rules as they play in order to keep control.
3. Children symbolically represent as they play, making and adapting play props.
4. Children choose to play - they cannot be made to play.
5. Children rehearse their future in their role play.
6. Children sometimes play alone.
7. Children pretend when they play.
8. Children play with adults and other children cooperatively in pairs or groups.
9. Children have a personal play agenda, which may or may not be shared.
10. Children are deeply involved and difficult to distract from their deep learning as they wallow in their play and learning.
11. Children try out their most recently acquired skills and competences, as if celebrating what they know.
12. Children coordinate ideas and feelings and make sense of relationships with their families, friends and cultures