**Maidenhill Nursery Class**

**Pedagogy of Play Position Statement June 2019**

**Curriculum Rationale**

The fundamental role of social constructivism in child development has been widely discussed and recognised for many years. Current research and thinking indicates that children are best equipped to learn when they are given opportunities to make sense of the world through exploration, investigation and interaction. This happens naturally for children through their play and it is a play-based approach that will underpin who children grow, explore, develop and make sense of their world in our nursery class at Maidenhill. It is hoped that this play based pedagogy will build on children’s experiences, interactions and interests from their lives beyond the nursery day.

Curiosity, creativity, social skills, resilience.

Staff will learn alongside children and families to ensure that each child achieves to their full potential.

**Our Approach**

Each session will involve a balance between adult-led, adult-initiated and child-led activity with particular emphasis placed on the latter. Our teacher and child development officers will use observation techniques to assess progress and will make skilful interactions and provide carefully though-out provocations to take learning forward in line with Curriculum for Excellence and children’s interests.

Children will be encouraged to make informed choices to lead their play-based learning in a way that best suits their learning style.

**Literacy Through Play**

The term ‘Literacy’ broadly refers to all aspects of language-based communication and for the purposes of our curriculum it describes skills development in and through ‘talking and listening’, ‘reading’ and ‘writing’.

It is important that the children in our nursery class continue to have opportunities to build on the foundations of language previously developed at home. The following approaches will form the basis of the experiences we foster:

* Developing expressive language through social interaction, communication, role-play, story-telling, use of imagination, recounting and games.
* Developing receptive language by following instructions, listening for information, reorganising and summarising key information and sequencing events.
* Developing phonological awareness (the ability to recognise patterns of sounds within language, including onset, rhyme and alliteration) through games, songs, poems, rhymes.
* Developing an appreciation of the conventions (and joy) of reading by encountering a range of shared texts and environmental print.
* Developing an understanding of the conventions of writing through mark-making and writing for a purpose.
* All of these will be encountered through a play-based approach.

**Numeracy and Mathematics Through Play**

Whilst the term Numeracy applies specifically to the use and manipulation of numbers to solve problems and to quantify and organize data, the term ‘Mathematics’ also includes the wider application of skills relating to shape, position and movement; measurement and time; and information handling.

As with skills in Literacy, it is essential that children in our nursery class continue to have opportunities to build on their early experiences of Numeracy and Mathematics in a way that is consistent with their learning at home.

The following approaches will form the basis of the experiences we foster:

* Building on children’s understanding of one to one correspondence within practical, everyday contexts. This fosters the ability of children to count objects accurately.
* Reinforcing number recognition by pointing out numbers within the environment, stories, games, construction tasks and role-play.
* Sequencing.
* Beginning to develop increasingly accurate number notation.
* Exploring the relationships between numbers within practical contexts for example the number after/ before/ between; one more than, one less than etc.
* Investigating the properties of 2D shapes.
* Using simple calendars, time lines, sand timers etc. to explore concepts of time.

Again, all of this will be encountered through a play based approach, with a particular focus on investigations, games, songs and rhymes. Children will always have the opportunity to explore concrete materials, before pictorial and abstract concepts are introduced.

**Outdoor Play**

The opportunity for children to explore and make sense of the world outdoors will play a fundamental role in children’s experiences at Maidenhill. Throughout the duration of each session, with only brief exceptions for short group activities, i.e welcome time, news, toothbrushing etc., children will have unrestricted access to our outdoor play zone and garden. Children will always have the opportunity to move freely between our outdoor and indoor environment and will be encouraged to make informed choices about the clothing they will need. Our adults will have the same responsibility for providing stimulating, engaging and open-ended provocations outdoors as they do indoors. Observation and assessment of children’s progress in the outdoor environment will inform our future planning for each child.

Our outdoor learning environment will be risk assessed on a daily basis and children will be encouraged to play a role in this risk assessment.

**Next Steps**

This position statement will be reviewed by staff, parents/ families and children within our nursery class during Session 2019/ 2020 and will form the basis of a Learning Through Play policy.

Position Statement author: A McDonald, June 2019