Playful Pedagogy Audit Tool

The audit will help you identify a focus area for your own development, guiding you towards the most relevant and appropriate resources to begin your journey in developing play-based learning and teaching in your setting.

Once you have completed this audit, you should then look at the areas or themes which have been highlighted as a result. You should be able to match these to the titles of the self-led Sways on offer, bearing in mind that there will be relevant content in a number of different Sways.

Each section contains statements for you to reflect on your progress, identify actions/next steps and record evaluations and evidence. For recording progress, you can use a code (NS for Not Started, D for Developing or E for Embedded) or can colour code in traffic light fashion (Red for Not Started and so on). Using colours may help to identify areas of development at a quick glance and allow you to filter and sort the statements.

In terms of identifying actions or next steps, it may be useful to focus on a limited number of statements. Completing this column will help you to consider which aspects will prioritised.

It is advisable to treat this audit as a working document, and it should be used to record evaluations, evidence and comments on progress as a matter of course. This will encourage revisiting the audit tool, and also reflecting on the ‘Progress’ column. Some actions may have an impact in the short term, where others may remain a focus for the course of the whole session; however, it is important that priorities are re-assessed on a regular basis.

August 2021

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| **Balance of the Day –** **Child Initiated Learning** | Not started (NS)Developing (D)Embedded (E) | **Action/Next Steps** – what will be given priority, how will this be achieved?  | **Evaluation/Evidence** – record short notes of progress, barriers, successes, and sources of evidence. |
| **Key features of ‘child-initiated learning’: spontaneous, unpredictable, differentiated by output, open-ended, skills based, relates to child’s interests.** |
| There is a balance of child-initiated, teacher initiated, and teacher directed learning within the classroom setting.  |  |  |  |
| Free play is viewed as an integral part of the school day, not just something for children to do when ‘finished their work’.  |  |  |  |
| Children can choose to play in groups, pairs or alone. |  |  |  |
| The teacher supports play – using strategies such as open questioning, unspoken acknowledgement, while remembering to stand back to allow children to find out for themselves and have confidence in the children’s ability to self-direct their learning for some parts of the day.  |  |  |  |
| Children play with materials where and when and how they wish (within reason), self-selecting play resources. Resources are available for children to self-select, arranged and labelled so children can see them and make choices for themselves. |  |  |  |
| The teacher is aware that some children will require ‘scaffolding’ to access all areas/resources in the learning environment.  |  |  |  |
| There is evidence of a range of strategies in use to support learners and young people to take responsibility for their own learning and progress, have greater confidence and develop skills in leading their own learning and that of others.  |  |  |  |

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| **Balance of the Day –** **Teacher Initiated Learning** | Not started (NS)Developing (D)Embedded (E) | **Action/Next Steps** – what will be given priority, how will this be achieved?  | **Evaluation/Evidence** – record short notes of progress, barriers, successes, and sources of evidence. |
| **Key features of ‘Teacher initiated learning’: differentiated by output, provides challenge, accessible, intended potential learning, achievable with less adult support.** |
| The teacher introduces a starting point (eg invitation, theme, stimulus, resource) which captures interest to spark children’s play.  |  |  |  |
| The teacher builds on individual children’s current interests to provide props and spaces where children can explore these interests through play.  |  |  |  |
| Teacher-initiated learning can involve planned imaginary or exploratory play focusing on children and adults using their imaginations, being creative and exploring the environment. |  |  |  |

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| **Balance of the Day –** **Teacher Directed Learning** | Not started (NS)Developing (D)Embedded (E) | **Action/Next Steps** – what will be given priority, how will this be achieved?  | **Evaluation/Evidence** – record short notes of progress, barriers, successes, and sources of evidence. |
| **Key features of ‘Teacher directed learning’: planned and specific, differentiated by input, challenging, focused, introduces new learning and concepts.** |
| The teacher recognises certain new and specific concepts and skills require direct teaching (eg phonics, addition & subtraction). |  |  |  |
| The teacher gives children many opportunities to express their learning.  |  |  |  |
| Teacher directed learning time is flexible – challenging more able learners and providing additional teaching time for children who need it.  |  |  |  |
| Teacher directed learning often follows on and is responsive to observations of children’s play, allowing assessment of skills learned through a variety of approaches and resources. |  |  |  |

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| **Assessment & Observation** | Not started (NS)Developing (D)Embedded (E) | **Action/Next Steps** – what will be given priority, how will this be achieved?  | **Evaluation/Evidence** – record short notes of progress, barriers, successes, and sources of evidence. |
| The teacher observes and records the children’s play as evidence of attainment and achievement within literacy, numeracy, wellbeing and involvement. The teacher notices that the children use skills previously learned in their play.  |  |  |  |
| The teacher uses a range of different assessments to measure learners’ progress across the curriculum. Eg Leuven Scale.  |  |  |  |
| Effective approaches to observation are integral to making informed decisions about teaching and learning.  |  |  |  |
| Teacher initiated learning allows the adult to observe and make notes on what the children can manage independently within planned situation eg resources supporting concepts taught.  |  |  |  |
| Teachers are aware of what children are doing to encourage deeper levels of engagement, higher order thinking skills, and support the development of cooperative and problem-solving skills through open-ended questioning and prompts.  |  |  |  |
| Teacher observation of children’s play is a major part of assessment and planning for teacher devised and teacher initiated learning tasks. |  |  |  |
| Child initiated learning is accounted for in tracking of children’s attainment and achievement through qualitative comments recorded during observations.  |  |  |  |
| Children are given daily opportunities to reflect on their experiences (eg uploading pictures, discussions on what they were doing and what they’ve learned (both self- and peer-assessment)). |  |  |  |
| The teacher identifies opportunities to record achievement and progress through context-appropriate platforms, such as PLJs, Learning Logs, and Seesaw. |  |  |  |

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| **Learning Environment**  | Not started (NS)Developing (D)Embedded (E) | **Action/Next Steps** – what will be given priority, how will this be achieved?  | **Evaluation/Evidence** – record short notes of progress, barriers, successes, and sources of evidence. |
| Language and communication-friendly environment (eg resources labelled, interactive displays). |  |  |  |
| The teacher gives children many opportunities to express their learning verbally, in pictures, using digital resources and in texts.  |  |  |  |
| Role-play areas are available, having been developed in response to children’s current interests (ideally in addition to the house corner). |  |  |  |
| In considering the environment, attention have been given to the need (or not) for table and chairs, access to quiet areas, use of displays and natural materials, and colour schemes. |  |  |  |
| There are a range of play contexts/zones central to the classroom, and these are clearly defined (eg music, art, water areas or social, creative and discovering zones). |  |  |  |
| The children can move freely between zones and areas during free play.  |  |  |  |
| Responsibility is given to the children to take care of their resources eg clean, tidy, store. They are actively involved in setting up, replenishing, tidying and adding to the learning contexts/zones. |  |  |  |
| Technology is used to support teacher directed learning – interactive whiteboard, camera, etc. |  |  |  |
| Some play resources are open-ended – they don’t determine or direct the experience or outcome of play eg loose parts, art & craft materials, building blocks, junk  |  |  |  |

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| **Outdoor Learning** | Not started (NS)Developing (D)Embedded (E) | **Action/Next Steps** – what will be given priority, how will this be achieved?  | **Evaluation/Evidence** – record short notes of progress, barriers, successes, and sources of evidence. |
| Children have regular access to an outdoor area (other than at playtime). |  |  |  |
| Children can structure their own outdoor play, playing with open-ended materials where and when and how they wish (within reason). |  |  |  |
| The outdoor play space is varied and flexible, providing a range of experiences and play opportunities. |  |  |  |
| The outdoor space creates safe, nurturing and inspiring outdoor learning experiences.  |  |  |  |
| The outdoor play environment offers children the opportunity to develop and extend learning from within the classroom.  |  |  |  |

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| **Transition** | Not started (NS)Developing (D)Embedded (E) | **Action/Next Steps** – what will be given priority, how will this be achieved?  | **Evaluation/Evidence** – record short notes of progress, barriers, successes, and sources of evidence. |
| At points of transition, staff have access to information in the form of PLJs, eLIPS records, and tracking. |  |  |  |
| Continuity is ensured through effective communication between nursery staff and teachers. |  |  |  |
| Learners are supported to settle well into school and to become familiar with the routines. |  |  |  |
| Links are evident with previous settings (be it nursery or primary class), while providing learners with opportunities to experience new environments/settings – “reassuringly familiar but excitingly different”. |  |  |  |

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| **Curriculum** | Not started (NS)Developing (D)Embedded (E) | **Action/Next Steps** – what will be given priority, how will this be achieved?  | **Evaluation/Evidence** – record short notes of progress, barriers, successes, and sources of evidence. |
| The teacher is clear about children’s learning and targets in literacy and numeracy. |  |  |  |
| The need for balance, breadth, pace and challenge is understood, and addressed through the variety of play opportunities and experiences. |  |  |  |
| Planning sits behind the organisation of the play environment, and reflects the relevant Es & Os, and Benchmarks across the different curricular areas. |  |  |  |
| Literacy and numeracy are embedded and woven throughout all play opportunities and provide the learners with real life experiences.  |  |  |  |
| Fife documentation relating to Workshop for Literacy and Conceptual Understanding in Numeracy is used to support learning, teaching and assessment in the play context (including the use of Records of Understanding to track learner progress). |  |  |  |
| Play opportunities allow children to explore a range of interdisciplinary learning experiences and make connections across learning. |  |  |  |

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| **Parental Engagement** | Not started (NS)Developing (D)Embedded (E) | **Action/Next Steps** – what will be given priority, how will this be achieved?  | **Evaluation/Evidence** – record short notes of progress, barriers, successes, and sources of evidence. |
| Parents have been provided with the basic information around the theory of ‘play-based learning’.  |  |  |  |
| The views of parents and children are sought at various points in the year. |  |  |  |
| Communication with parents takes place on a regular and structured basis, sharing the activities their children have been participating in, as well as the opportunities and themes for play-based learning which have been taking place in the classroom and outdoors.  |  |  |  |
| Homework tasks can be a follow-up to an adult-led learning eg Workshop for Literacy approaches, number tasks, shared family activities, using digital resources. |  |  |  |
| Parental involvement in their child’s learning journey allows them to engage and make connections between their learning in home and school.  |  |  |  |

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| **Additional Support Needs** | Not started (NS)Developing (D)Embedded (E) | **Action/Next Steps** – what will be given priority, how will this be achieved?  | **Evaluation/Evidence** – record short notes of progress, barriers, successes, and sources of evidence. |
| There is an enhanced transition for the pupil and family for children with ASN – Information is shared between the ELC and Primary about the needs of the child, including strengths, likes and areas of interest (e.g. through a pupil passport) as well as Information about partner services. |  |  |  |
| Planning and preparation by CT and other involved adults allows for play experiences to be differentiated, including adult responses. |  |  |  |
| The environment is welcoming and has clear visuals in each area (eg Boardmaker symbols), and teacher-directed tasks have clear visuals or photos to guide the learner.  |  |  |  |
| Sensory needs are accommodated, including provision of calm and quiet areas. |  |  |  |
| Pupils are provided with opportunities to develop peer relationships (eg through peer buddies, group activities) |  |  |  |
| Parents are viewed as active partners. Ways to take account of successful strategies at home are considered, and regular home-school communication systems are in place (eg Seesaw) |  |  |  |
| Consideration and planning is given to where the child may be developmentally with play.Structure and modelling is given, where possible through eg mirroring positive behaviours; modelling initiation of play; repetitive activities with predictable outcomes. |  |  |  |
| Class routines are obvious and explicitly shared with children. Individual timetables are accessible and used where appropriate. Pupils are also prepared for change using visuals |  |  |  |
| There are clear processes for assessment and planning, with smart targets and outcomes specifically for children with ASN. Key staff members who support individual pupils are involved in planning and reviewing outcomes and are aware of pupil targets |  |  |  |
| Behaviours are understood as a form of communication and adults identify when to de-escalate behaviours which may be communicating child is stressed or overwhelmed**.**  |  |  |  |

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| **Health & Wellbeing**  | Not started (NS)Developing (D)Embedded (E) | **Action/Next Steps** – what will be given priority, how will this be achieved?  | **Evaluation/Evidence** – record short notes of progress, barriers, successes, and sources of evidence. |
| All learners benefit from an environment which supports communication and language, is inclusive and provides equality and equity. |  |  |  |
| Learners’ needs are understood and identified, and appropriate plans are in place which evidence progress, attainment and next steps.  |  |  |  |
| Learners play in groups, pairs and alone and can be observed learning from each other. |  |  |  |
| Open-ended play resources allow learners to be creative, imaginative, to problem solve and develop their interests and lines of enquiry.  |  |  |  |
| All individual learners’ needs are met through positive relationships and wellbeing which impacts on optimum learning outcomes.  |  |  |  |