



Play Based Learning at Beith Primary School



From August 2021 Primary 1, 2 and 3 will use an approach to learning called Play Based learning. We have been trialling this approach across the stages in the infant department this year with huge success.

What is Play Based learning?

“Play is our brain’s favourite way of learning.” Diane Ackerman

Research over time has shown that children learn best through play. Doing so allows teachers to use students’ interests to promote learning across all areas of the curriculum. 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 at their own pace.

What are the benefits of play?

“Play is the highest form of research.” Einstein

- Children from a Play-Based classroom excel in Literacy and Numeracy.
- Play creates a brain that has increased flexibility and improved potential for learning in later life.
- Play promotes children’s development, learning, curiosity, 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 helps children learn about themselves; their abilities, interests and preferences and how that can contribute to a larger group.
- Play promotes a positive attitude to learning and develops life-long skills.
- Play is a form of therapy and can help children deal with stress, difficulties and emotional concerns.
- Play is an important way of initiating, building and maintaining important relationships.



What will an average day look like in Primary 1 and 2?

- Each stage will open up the partitions between classrooms to create one large classroom. The room will be divided into 12 different areas which the teacher will carefully set up based on student interest and the areas they are teaching.
- Children will begin the day with a whole class lesson on Literacy (phonics, spelling, reading or writing).
- They will then move on to free-flow play where they independently choose which area they wish to visit. During this time one of the class teachers will work with small groups or individuals on focused direct teaching. As children are spending time engaged in play they will be more focused and ready to learn when they are working with the class teacher.
- After playtime children will have a whole class lesson on Numeracy. They will then begin free-flow play and the class teacher will again work with small groups to deliver focused numeracy lessons.
- In the afternoon children will participate in PE, outdoor learning opportunities and will also have topic time.

How will it differ in Primary 3?

- Both classrooms will still open up to make one large classroom. Children will not have their own individual desk but areas to promote play will be set up around the room.
- Children will have a whole class lesson then split into their ability groups for an activity or they will work with an adult for more focused teaching. This is very similar to how children were previously learning.
- The afternoon will be set aside for free-flow play so that there will still be a focus on play every day. This will also be time to teach other curricular areas such as Science, Health and Wellbeing and an Inter-Disciplinary topic.

If you would like to learn more about Play Based learning read here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/play-strategy-scotland-action-plan/>

<https://www.unicef.org/sites/default/files/2018-12/UNICEF-Lego-Foundation-Learning-through-Play.pdf>