

Beith Primary School



Play Policy



“School would be a boring lump of work if we didn’t get to play.”

Sunniva Milne BPS (7 years old)

What is play?

‘Children need the freedom and time to play. Play is not a luxury. Play is a necessity.’

Kay Jamison

Play, above all else, defines childhood and is fundamental to children’s quality of life. 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. 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 Beith Primary, staff will use the 12 features of play outlined by Tina Bruce (2011) to ensure that as adults, we provide the best environment and play opportunities for our students.

What are the benefits of play?

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

Play is the essence of childhood and is a key part of children’s enjoyment and development. At Beith Primary School we recognise the value of play in the following ways:

- 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.



How will it look in practise?

“Play is often talked about as if it were a break from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning.” Fred Rodgers

At Beith Primary School we are committed to providing the best possible environment to facilitate authentic, high quality play experiences. In order to do this, we will:

- Put the child at the centre of all that we do. Through observations, we will gather information on children’s views and interests and use these in our planning to take learning forward and to set up meaningful provocations.
- Create a more coherent, flexible and child-focused curriculum which gives teachers more professional autonomy over how they teach. Teachers can join up both classes to make one classroom. Doing so could provide opportunities to team teach, differentiate learning, maximise use of resources, create more space for learning and reduce overall workload.
- Provide a variety of learning experiences throughout the day. Children should participate in whole class lessons, free-flow play and small group learning. Use of outdoor space should be maximised and children should have plenty of opportunities to engage in play outdoors using natural materials and loose parts.
- Ensure that our learning environment is calm and has plenty of opportunities for open-ended play. There will be a variety of provocations set up based on children’s interests and the more formal whole class lessons. These should include: construction, roleplay, home corner, expressive arts, a comfy reading area, phonics, writing/mark making, numeracy, fine motor, sand and water, loose parts (both indoors and outdoors), a tinkering station and a discovery area.
- Provocations will be set up for a minimum of a week. This gives children the opportunity to fully explore the area and helps teachers to plan how to progress learning.
- Ensure that free-flow play is happening as opposed to children participating in tasks/games set up by the teacher.
- Develop observation skills and use the knowledge and experience of our early years practitioners to create a format which works for each individual teacher and their learners. We will focus on observing one child at a time and do this X times a day/week. By having planning and observations in a visible place, it will mean that observations can be recorded easily and can be accessed by all adults in the room. Assessment will be on-going, and a wide variety of assessments will be used.
- Involve ourselves in play regularly. This gives us an opportunity to develop our relationship with learners, gain an insight into their interests, develop their vocabulary, deepen learning and aids planning in the moment.
- Regularly engage with research and literature to deepen our understanding of play pedagogy.

How will this differ between stages?

“The most effective kind of education is that a child should play amongst lovely things.” Plato

Primary 1	Primary 2	Primary 3
<p>Free flow play throughout the entire day.</p> <p>Whole class teaching as well as focused group/individual teaching during free-flow play.</p>	<p>Free flow play throughout the entire day.</p> <p>Whole class teaching as well as focused group/individual teaching during free-flow play.</p>	<p>Structured play/ active learning approaches to literacy and numeracy until lunchtime.</p> <p>Free-flow play in the afternoon.</p>
<p>Opportunities for outdoor learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned experiences Spontaneous experiences 	<p>Opportunities for outdoor learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned experiences Spontaneous experiences 	<p>Opportunities for outdoor learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned experiences Spontaneous experiences

What could an average day look like?

“Play is the highest expression of human development in childhood, for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child’s soul.” Friedrich Froebel

Play Based Learning example weekly plan

	9am-9.30am	9.30-breaktime	11am-11.20am	11.20am- lunch	1pm-1.20pm	1.20pm-hometime
Monday	Check in & phonics/Word Works	free flow play TT- 5 pupils per group for reading	Maths Works	free flow play TT- 5 pupils per groups for N&M	Story or singing or topic	free flow play *time for observation
Tuesday	Check in & phonics/Word Works	free flow play TT- 5 pupils per group writing	Maths Works	free flow play TT- 5 pupils per groups for N&M	Story or singing or topic	GYM
Wednesday	Check in & phonics/Word Works	free flow play TT- 5 pupils per group for reading	Maths Works	free flow play TT- 5 pupils per groups for N&M	Story or singing or topic	Outdoor learning- Loose parts play
Thursday	Check in & phonics/Word Works	free flow play TT- 5 pupils per group writing	Maths Works	free flow play TT- 5 pupils per groups for N&M	Story or singing or topic NCCT	NCCT + 30 mins tbc
Friday	Check in & phonics/Word Works	free flow play TT- 5 pupils per group for reading	Maths Works	free flow play TT- 5 pupils per groups for N&M	Story or singing or topic	Outdoor learning- Larger loose parts (tires, tractor, boat etc.)

Key = whole class activity = teacher led in small groups = free flow play = outdoor learning

What is the role of the adult?

“Play is the highest form of research.” Einstein

Teacher interventions can vary a great deal, depending on the nature of the activities. The role of the adult is a delicate balance of supporting, enriching and proposing on the one hand, and keeping back to give the children space and time to build their own ideas on the other (Realising the Ambition: Being Me). An adult should:

- Facilitate play and provide stimulating provocations that are open-ended and stimulate a range of actions in children.
- Engage with children’s curiosity and questions.
- Help children reflect and extend their thinking.
- Support children to solve their own problems.
- Suggest activities to children that are not engaged.
- Offer materials that fit in an on-going activity.
- Invite children to communicate.
- Confront them with thought provoking questions.
- Observe children during their play.



“It is nice for teachers to see us playing and having fun.” Sean Smith BPS (7 years old)

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