

Alloway Primary School and Early Years Centre



Play Pedagogy Policy



What is Play?

The Playwork Principles state that: "Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way, for their own reasons."

German educationalist Friedrich Froebel suggests that: "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."

Opportunities for play must be provided throughout the school.

Why Play and What are the Benefits of Play?

It is every child's right to play with Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) stating: "the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the children and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts." As a Gold Rights Respecting School, it is vital that these opportunities are provided.

Additionally Play Strategy for Scotland: Our Vision, states "To a child, play is about having fun, but to society it is much more. Play is essential to healthy development from birth to adulthood, contributing to capacity for learning, resilience, and the development of physical, cognitive, social and emotional skills." In school, staff can use these benefits of play to develop young learners' skills - emotionally, socially and academically. This will develop children as problem solvers, equipping them with life skills that will enable them to tackle challenges throughout life. Bergen, 2002, states "There is a body of evidence which demonstrates the effectiveness of play in promoting problem-solving abilities".

Play Scotland explains that within a school setting, Playful Pedagogy is a way of integrating children's play experiences with curricular learning, giving learners the flexibility to find their own solutions to both new and existing problems. It engages children in personally meaningful activities, learning about themselves and others, and encourages autonomy and their independent motivation-to-learn.

Approaches to Play in Alloway

In Alloway Primary School, a combination of adult-led play, adult-initiated play and child-initiated play are used to enhance learning.

- **Adult-led Play** is where adults have the biggest role. This style of play is overseen by an adult, who will choose the game or activity as well as lead the class in it. Although they may not partake in the activity themselves, they will still be actively guiding and supporting the children throughout.
- **Adult-initiated Play** differs from adult-led play, in that the adult may choose the game or activity, but their involvement does not extend beyond explaining the rules and possibly monitoring the session at a distance.



- **Child-initiated Play** occurs entirely independent of adults. Play is totally open-ended. Children use their imagination and creativity to lead their own learning. Although adults do not have to be directly involved, they can still be supporting their children's play by providing adequate time, space, and resources for them to do it.



Teachers provide opportunities for these types of play across the curriculum.

Play Provocations

Play provocations provoke thoughts, discussions, questions, interests, creativity and ideas. They can also expand on a taught concept, thought, project, idea or interest. Provocations promote child-initiated play, thinking outside the box and should be genuinely open-ended.

Ideas for provocations:

- A thought-provoking question e.g. Why do you think the sea is blue? This could be written or recording on a talking tin.

- A selection of resources to promote enquiry e.g. a selection of different sized boxes, a variety of natural materials, art materials, artefacts, dress-up materials, different foods/smells, a range of photographs.



Outdoor Learning

There is a wealth of research that highlights the importance of playing and learning in the outdoors. It is essential that outdoor spaces in school are used to engage learners in a creative way. Education Scotland guidance, *Outdoor Learning: Practical Guidance, Ideas and Support*, promotes the benefits of learning outdoors, not just academically but emotionally, stating that "Learning outdoors is about engaging children and young people in many different ways. Practitioners frequently act as facilitators, using multi-sensory and experiential approaches."

Play Scotland also highlights that "There is a growing body of research that shows that young children's access to nature and outdoor play is positively associated with improved self-esteem, physical health, development of language skills and disposition to learning."

In Alloway Primary School staff take the opportunity to use outdoor areas and local community to provide children with engaging play experiences. Having direct access to the outdoors from classrooms, allows learners to access the outdoors often and easily. Areas within the playground are being developed to engage children and to foster creativity. Loose parts, eco garden, outdoor classroom and class garden areas can all be used as play opportunities. Outdoor water and sand areas as well as gardening tools can also be used to engage learners in play.

Pupil Consultation

As with any learning experience, pupil voice is vital in ensuring engagement and raising attainment. Consulting pupils on play areas is key - this may be approached in a variety of ways e.g. through discussion and recording pupil voice on medium planners or a KWL overview, through MTV routines etc. This is key to develop meaningful, engaging play experiences.

Play in P1-P3

Throughout P1-3, learners explore play opportunities to aid learning across the curriculum. These are a mixture of child and adult initiated play as well as teacher led opportunities. The classroom environment promotes play with zones where children can

explore areas of the curriculum through child-led provocations and activities as well as teacher-initiated and teacher-led experiences. The space is used to ensure learners have access to experiences including construction, role play, arts and crafts, sensory exploration, numeracy and mathematics games, writing exploration, reading opportunities, listening and talking experiences, exploration of cultures, technology challenges, motor skills activities etc. Digital technologies are used to enhance learning. Children may freely choose which zone to access or may rotate round stations or be directed by their teacher. Teachers establish clear play rules and routines to ensure quality play experiences and learner engagement e.g. the number of children allowed at a play zone is clearly displayed and resources are tidied away (where appropriate) after use. Children may add to creations that others have started in the construction or art area, therefore children may not always tidy these daily.

In all P1-3 classes, intrinsic motivation is promoted in learners through "Must Do" tasks. Daily, all learners have a literacy and numeracy "Must Do" activity to complete - this is usually teacher led or initiated. Learners put their photograph up to show they have completed the task and evidence it by taking a picture with the class iPad. They will also complete a task after their explicit teaching input. Staff continue to develop the use of weekly "Must Do" tasks across the curriculum, such as completing a STEM challenge in the construction areas or investigating artefacts.

There are areas in the P1 classroom where learners can sit however there are no allocated seats/chairs or desks for each child. Learners spend time at the teaching input desk where they have a table and chair to sit at to complete work. Learners all have an allocated peg for belongings and a carpet spot where they sit for registration and direct teacher inputs, stories etc. Within P2 and P3, alongside play zones, children all have a seat and table as well as a carpet space and peg for belongings.

Play in P4-7

Play pedagogy continues to be developed within P4-7. Learning, within these stages, traditionally involves more teacher-led or teacher-initiated experiences and staff continue to explore and appropriately introduce more opportunities for child-initiated play. Currently within each P4-7 class, there should be a zone where children can explore play provocations and child-initiated play opportunities. Each lesson must incorporate an opportunity for individual, paired or group experiences such as games (teacher-initiated play). Teacher-led play activities may be part of differentiated, explicit teaching input. Learners should be challenged through project-based enquiry pedagogy.

Tracking and Monitoring

Pupil voice and teacher observation are vital in ensuring play experiences and appropriate, meaningful and developing appropriate skills. Within P1-3, staff will monitor and observe children's engagement in play using the Leuven scale of engagement (see below and observation sheet appendix 1). This will allow play experiences to be improved, adapted and, in turn, improve engagement and the development of skills - social, emotional and cognitive.

Level	Engagement	
1	Extremely low	Activity is simple, repetitive, and passive. The child seems absent and displays no energy. They may stare into space or look around to see what others are doing. The child appears bored, absent minded, lacking energy, or aimless when trying to engage in tasks
2	Low	Frequently interrupted activity. The child will be engaged in the activity for some of the time they are observed, but there will be moments of non-activity when they will stare into space or be distracted by what is going on around. The child appears restless, bored, or easily distracted
3	Moderate	Mainly continuous activity. The child is busy with the activity but at a <u>fairly routine</u> level and there are few signs of real involvement. They make some progress with what they are doing but don't show much energy and concentration and can be easily distracted. The child is completing tasks and engaging superficially, but not enthralled or engrossed by these tasks.
4	High	Continuous activity with intense moments. They child's activity <u>has intense moments and at all times</u> they seem involved. They are <u>engrossed and not easily distracted</u> . Some children can become irritable at this stage if they are <u>interrupted, and</u> separating them from a task or event that they are finding highly involving and engaging can cause dissonance in their emotional well-being.
5	Extremely high	The child shows continuous and intense activity revealing the greatest involvement. They are concentrated, creative, energetic and persistent throughout nearly all the observed period. They are lively and persistent, and often their enthusiasm for the subject or task at hand can become almost contagious, as others are drawn in by their passion.

P1 will evaluate play zones using zone monitoring tool [Zone Monitoring PlayInverclyde \(1\).pdf](#). This will allow staff to evaluate play zones in order to make improvements for learners.



Alloway Primary School - Observation of Play

Name: Date: Activity/area:

Leuven scale of involvement

1	2	3	4	5
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Stage of play

Playing alone	Playing alongside others	Playing with others
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Meta Skills

Focusing	Communicating	Curiosity
Adapting	Collaborating	Creativity
Integrity	Feeling	Sense-Making
Initiative	Leading	Critical Thinking

Curricular Areas

Literacy	Science	Social Studies
Numeracy	Technologies	RME
HWB	Expressive Arts	Languages

Observations (What are they doing?)Pupil Voice (What are they saying about their play?)Next Steps for Learner/Teacher(What do they need?)

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