

# Biggar Primary School

# PLAY

## Policy



Playful Pedagogy is a way of integrating children's play experiences with curricular learning, giving pupils 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. *(Play Scotland)*

"We know **how** babies and children learn best. They learn best in an environment of quality **interactions**, interesting **spaces** and when the **experiences** on offer are set in meaningful contexts. They learn best in environments that inspire them to be curious and creative." *(Realising the Ambition: Being Me, Education Scotland)*

# Why play pedagogy?

Research throughout the decades provides evidence that play is the most valuable and successful way in which children engage in learning. The play pedagogy approach can build necessary skills and knowledge in children. Neuroscience has also identified the important link between learning through play, physical movement and the successful development of key functioning skills that are essential for the holistic development of a child.

## Key curriculum documents and legislation



### Rights of the Child:

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 31) recognises the right to play for all children under the age of 18.

### Curriculum for Excellence:



Children in early primary school and beyond should have "*high quality learning experiences based on active learning approaches...which engages and challenges children's thinking using real-life and imaginary situations.*" (Building the Curriculum 2)

# The value of play

Through play and active learning children can:

- Communicate in different ways and for different purposes in a range of settings
- Engage with others by participating, negotiating and collaborating
- Participate in decision making
- Make connections across learning
- Extend their problem solving and thinking skills
- Build on their own interests and ideas, and make choices about their learning
- Develop creativity and use their imagination
- Develop initiative, independence and resilience
- Discover their capabilities and limitations in a non- threatening environment
- Foster a range of social skills - sharing, turn taking and cooperating
- Develop self-confidence and self-control
- Learn about risks and safe practices
- Increase attention span and the ability to concentrate and persevere
- Become healthy and active and develop physical skills and coordination
- Learn from first hand experiences
- Utilise all of their senses

# Our Aims for Early to First Level

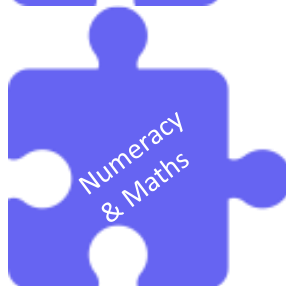
- To create a more coherent, flexible and child-focused curriculum which gives teachers more professional autonomy over how they teach and sets higher standards for achievement for all children.
- Provide quality play experiences
- Provide appropriate spaces to play and learn with a range of possibilities for children to develop their present and future potential.
- Be child-centred, acknowledge children's views and actively involve children in meaningful ways in everyday decisions within the classroom and school setting.
- Encourage children to contribute their own ideas and be involved in decision making about their learning
- Provide a range of events and exciting experiences which encourage children to share their thinking, talk about their interests and help them imagine their theories.
- Create a wealth of interesting situations, both inside and out of doors, questions for a child to ask and consider possibilities.

## Implementation

Play pedagogy is an approach to learning, teaching and assessment. Teachers plan high quality provocations and active learning experiences that support the implementation of the Early level Experiences and Outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).



In Biggar Primary, children develop their Literacy skills when they have the opportunities to *"communicate, collaborate and build relationships,"* for example in a Doctor's surgery, children can allocate appointments, deal with patients, explain waiting times, comfort crying babies or give simple information.



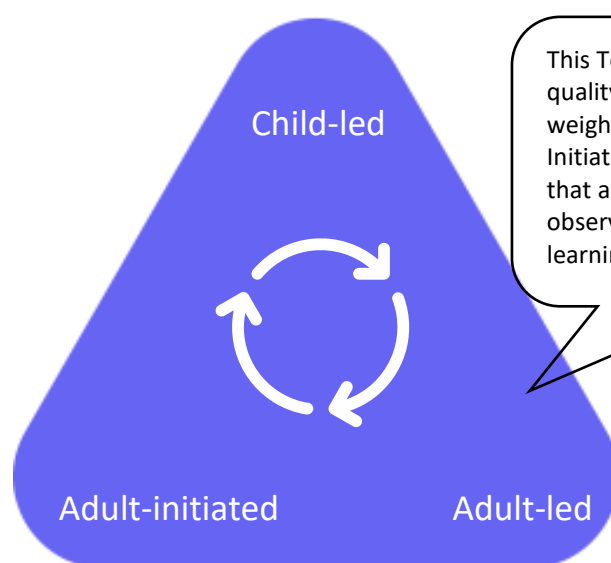
In Biggar Primary, children need to *"apply skills and understanding creatively and logically to solve within a variety of contexts,"* for example in the construction area, learners can develop mathematical language as they build towers of different heights and use the correct terminology - tall, taller, tallest or measure an area using different concrete materials.



In Biggar Primary, children should *"experience challenge and enjoyment and make informed decisions to improve their mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing"*. For example, in outdoor play learners develop social and team building skills when they play ball games together. They improve their physical wellbeing by running energetically or balancing or climbing.

# What does learning look like in a play-based environment?

Child-led learning takes place when a child has full choice and ownership over how they play, how their play develops and what they play with. This is a driving force for children discovering themselves, and provides pupils with the opportunity to explore, experiment and create in an uninhibited way. Pupils engage in free-flow, child-led play throughout the day. Adults observe play, measure engagement and plan next steps.



This Teach, Target, Play model for high quality Play Pedagogy ensures equal weight is given to Adult Led, Adult Initiated and Child Led provision and that all three are underpinned by observations which inform teaching and learning.

Adult-initiated learning experiences are when the adult gives the pupil a task to do or an object to play with, often with a planned outcome. Pupils are given personalised and differentiated “target tasks” daily to complete. These could be a game, a jotter task or a worksheet. Learners can choose when they do the task and aim to complete this task independently.

Adult-led learning experiences are directed by a teacher. This is our focused teaching time taking the form of whole class, group or individual inputs. Learners engage with daily literacy and numeracy core learning suitable to their individual needs. For example, phonics, number recognition and writing concepts. In addition, other curricular areas are planned, delivered and assessed as appropriate.

# Role of the teacher/adult

Teacher interventions can vary a great deal, depending on the nature of the activities or on the responses and initiatives of the children. Stimulating interventions are open impulses that stimulate a range of actions in the children and make the difference between low and high involvement. Such as:

- Engaging children's curiosity and questions
- Helping children reflect and extend their thinking
- Supporting children to solve their own problems
- Suggesting activities to children that are not engaged
- Offering materials that fit in an on-going activity
- Inviting children to communicate
- Confronting them with thought provoking questions

## Promoting Creativity

**When students are being creative, they are likely to:**

- Question and challenge. Creative pupils are curious, question and challenge, and don't necessarily follow the rules.
- Make connections and see relationships. Creative pupils think laterally and make associations between things that are not usually connected.
- Envision what might be. They imagine, see possibilities, ask 'what if?', picture alternatives, and look at things from different viewpoints.
- Explore ideas and options. Creative pupils play with ideas, try alternatives and fresh approaches, keep open minds and modify their ideas to achieve creative results
- Reflect critically on ideas, actions and outcomes. They review progress, invite and use feedback, criticise constructively and make perceptive observations.

# Assessment

As play is child led and responsive to the interests of the child, so must be approaches to assessment. Observations of children are vital because each child has a unique set of abilities and talents, observations in different situations capture these firsthand. The starting point is always with the child. Observing what children choose to do, what their interests are and who and what resources they enjoy playing with, provides adults with reliable information about children as individuals.

Effective assessment requires both awareness of what children are doing and insights about meaning. Effective assessment goes beyond educators seeing and hearing to include deep thinking and making sense of what they observe, then using what they understand to enrich and extend children's learning.

The challenges are to ensure that observations and assessments:

- Are an effective use of time
- Increase understanding of each child's learning
- Inform future curriculum decisions
- Enable evidence of children's learning to be shared with families.

*Assessment can include :*

- ***Using jottings and notes of incidental events*** – observation notes do not always have to be formatted.
- ***Collecting samples or copies of children's work—writing, drawing, painting or photos of sculptures or constructions.*** These samples also need annotations about the context and the important factors in the experience, such as how the work was completed, challenges the children experienced, how they negotiated or solved problems and how the work demonstrates their interests and knowledge.
- ***Observing children's social play and keeping notes on friendships, roles and challenges.*** These might be more formal observations, such as anecdotes, running records or learning stories. In-depth records help to focus on particular aspects of a child's experience. They can also be useful if there are concerns about a child's development and learning or when they are experiencing challenges.

Across the term, staff will make time to observe each child through a focus week. The information from these observations will be embedded within evaluations across all curricular areas and next steps identified. Staff will use observations to drive learning forward, by following the interests and setting up provocations. Evidence of whole class themes will be evidenced through Floorbooks.