



## Play in Primary 1 and 2 at Newton Primary School



## **Our Play Rationale at Newton Primary School**

*“There is considerable evidence that playing helps support children’s cognitive development. This includes the development of language skills, problem solving, gaining perspective, representational skills, memory and creativity. Although to many adults, children’s activities whilst they are playing may look meaningless, they are important to and for the child.” – Play Scotland*

At Newton Primary School, our team recognise the importance of all children having sufficient time and space to play freely as part of their day. To children, playing is one of the most important aspects of their lives. Play has been described by Froebel as ‘the work of childhood.’ Our staff fully uphold these values, understanding the cross curricular nature of play; to play is to learn.

### **Learning through play:**

- Has a positive impact on children’s sense of wellbeing and helps all aspects of children’s development
- Allows children to ‘learn through doing’ while engaged in activities of choice
- Gives children the opportunity to apply learning in real life situations
- Supports the foundations of literacy and numeracy and helps foster skills for life, such as effective communication, relationship building, social skills, critical thinking, motor skills and confidence.

### **Our Aims:**

- For children will develop a sense of self-worth, and be confident communicators, problem-solvers, critical thinkers and motivated learners.
- For children will be able to follow their own interests, make choices and learn at their own pace while making deeper sense and connections with the wider world around them.
- For children to be supported to reach their full potential, while being appropriately challenged for their age and stage, in fun, active and engaging ways.

## **Autonomy – What does this look like at Newton?**

Learning across the day has play at its focus. During literacy and numeracy time, children are free to select from a range of play based Literacy and Numeracy activities, and apply these in ‘real life’ contexts.

During ‘Learning through Play’ time, children have free access to a wide range of resources and they can choose freely where/how they will play and who with. Children are supported to develop skills such as sharing, building relationships, respecting others opinions, taking responsibility and perseverance.



We evidence children's autonomous learning through their play through adult scribed notes, snapshots of learning and photographs which are initially shared on their learning square before going in to their learning journal.

Through observing children's play, staff follow their interests to plan future play provocations, learning contexts etc.

### **Learning Environment – What does this look like at Newton?**

*“The learning environment in the early stages of primary school should not look or feel starkly different from a motivating ELC environment. The level of provocation might be greater, the interaction might be more challenging, and the experiences on offer might be different, but the school environment should be conducive to learning through play.” – Building the Ambition*

Our Learning Environment is carefully thought out and planned in consultation with the children and their interests. Both our classrooms and shared open area environments are responsive to the children's interests and extend these through purposeful fun learning play experiences.

Our Environment;

- Is inviting, curious, safe and nurturing
- Is suitable to the age of the children
- Provides opportunities for all types of play
- Has open ended resources to promote problem solving and creativity
- Supports children to risk assess situations, make informed choices and develop resilience
- Celebrates achievement and promotes success

Our learning environment is designed to incorporate the outdoors as much as possible. Children are given opportunities throughout the day to take their learning outdoors- both for direct teaching input or activities, or through self-directed free play opportunities.

### **Adult Role – What does this look like at Newton?**

**During play**, it is the role of the adult to supervise and model, observe and take note, interact sensitively and to spot 'teachable moments' where learning can be extended;

#### **Supervise and Model**

- Model safe behaviour
- Model appropriate volume
- Ensure activities are safe
- Facilitate restorative conversations
- Model turn-taking

## Observe and Take Note

- Observe what the children are interested in – use these observations to plan for future learning around the children’s interests.
- Take note of Literacy and Numeracy skills being applied - consider opportunities to extend these
- Take note of any skills being developed/demonstrated (e.g. creativity, problem solving, fine motor skills, confidence, social skills, movement and co-ordination ) Take note of how well/how much learning, not simply about the activity



## Interact Sensitive

By observing, consider if interacting will add to the play

- Interact at the child’s level
- Follow the children’s lead
- Wait for the child to invite you in to their play
- Try to avoid asking lots of questions, instead describe their play and make comments
  - I see you are building a...
  - I hear you are playing families...
  - You are adding blue to the paint...
  - I wonder... Extend Learning through ‘I wonder what would happen if’, ‘Tell me how’, ‘How did you’ and ‘tell me about’ questions.
  - Following observation, learning can be extended by; Adding a new material (e.g. add post-it’s to encourage children to label their model), through sensitive interaction (I wonder how long your model is....how could we measure it?), demonstrating a skill (e.g. how to mix paint), encouraging children to reflect on their play and what they were learning.

## **Literacy, Numeracy & Maths, Health and Well-being – How does play support these areas?**

Within all curricular areas, short, direct and differentiated class/group teaching sessions are followed up by play based activities within which the children have the opportunity to practice, expand and reinforce the skills they have been taught.

### **Literacy:**

Our main Literacy resource in P1 & 2 is Read Write Inc, which supports and develops phonic awareness, reading and spelling. Writing is linked to current learning contexts, and opportunities to extend this are evident across the continuous play provision. This could include, for example, postcards beside the post-box, clipboards as menus next to the home corner, or post it's for children to label their construction models.

### **Numeracy:**

Our approach to teaching Numeracy at Newton in Primary 1 and 2 is underpinned by the Concrete-Pictorial-Abstract (CPA) Framework. This approach builds on children's existing knowledge by introducing concepts in a concrete and tangible way to ensure a deep conceptual understanding of numeracy. This is supported by numeracy rich environment and opportunities to develop numerical awareness and understanding through play e.g. measuring in the construction area, counting money in the shop role-play area.

### **Health and Wellbeing:**

Health and Wellbeing is at the heart of everything we do for our learners at Newton. Our flexible and inviting learning environments play a key role in supporting our children's Health and Wellbeing.

The Leuven Scales support teachers to identify where they are needed to support play; where are the teachable moments? Who is settled and engaged and thus learning through play? The scales are used to identify children who are highly engaged and ready to have their learning extended. They also allow teacher to identify those children who need further support to engage, and allow teachers to reflect on their environment and how this can be adjusted to further engage learners.

### **Further Links:**

<https://www.playscotland.org/>

<https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/learning-at-home/learning-through-play/>

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

<https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/Documents/nih058-Parentzone-Booklet.pdf>

<https://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/early-years-development/learning-and-play/why-play-matters/#:~:text=Learning%20through%20play,in%20what%20they%20are%20doing.>