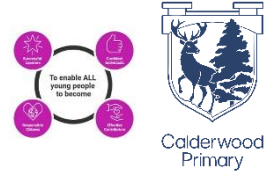




Play in Primary 1 at Calderwood



Our Rationale and Key Principles

“Play in all its rich variety is one of the highest achievements of the human species, alongside language, culture and technology. Indeed, without play, none of these other achievements would be possible. The value of play is increasingly recognised, by researchers and within the policy arena, for adults as well as children, as the evidence mounts of its relationship with intellectual achievement and emotional well-being” (Whitebread, 2019).

At Calderwood Play is valued by all champions. We recognise that:

“Play is central to every child’s physical, mental, social and emotional health and wellbeing. It is fundamentally important for developing 21st century skills, such as resilience, problem solving, collaboration and creative, critical thinking. Children are born with an instinctive drive to learn through play and exploration. Scotland’s National Practice Guidance for Early Years, Realising the Ambition, promotes the importance of children being given time to play each day, in order to follow their own line of enquiry or individual interests. It advocates the need to have a consistent pedagogical approach and play based curriculum, for the “playing, learning child” across the Early Level, into primary one and beyond.” (Education Scotland, 2020: 45)

Through reading and research around of a variety of play-based curricular approaches (e.g. Reggio Emilia, Steiner, Montessori, Te Whariki, Froebel), and combining Curriculum for Excellence, GIRFEC, Children’s rights, Nurture and Relationships our Champions formulated the following principles and values which underpin our play-based curriculum:

- Relationships based on mutual respect at all levels
- Empowerment which offers freedom with guidance
- Promoting Curiosity and Creativity with a flexible and responsive approach
- Creating Connectedness and Community
- Engaging with nature and bringing the outdoors in

According to Education Scotland’s Play Pedagogy Toolkit, play supports the four capacities of the curriculum for excellence as follows:

- **Successful learners** - through the use of imagination and creativity, tackling new experiences and learning from them, and developing important skills including literacy and numeracy through exploring and investigating while following their own interests.
- **Responsible Citizens** - through encountering different ways of seeing the world, learning to share and give and take, learning to respect themselves and others, and taking part in making decisions.
- **Confident Individuals** - through succeeding in their activities, having the sense of satisfaction of a task accomplished, learning about bouncing back from setbacks, dealing safely with risks.
- **Effective Contributors** - through playing together in leading or supporting roles, tackling problems, extending communication skills, taking part in sustained talking and thinking, and respecting the opinions of others.

How do we play at Calderwood?

Our Calderwood Champions bring a combination of experiences, knowledge, skills, and participate in professional dialogue, research and reading to ensure best practice is constantly being adapted and shared.

Structure of the Day

The day is structured including opportunities for:

Adult-lead learning: Champions focus children's thinking -

There are sessions throughout the day in which the champion has planned objectives/outcomes and stays with children whilst learning takes place.

Adult-initiated learning: Champions ignite children's thinking

- the champion sets up a starting point, invitation, provocation or stimulus with planned intentions and then stands back to wait, watch and wonder. Children engage independently until the adult joins to observe, interact or enhance learning.

Child led learning: Champions follow children's thinking -

Children have daily opportunities for free flow play. Resources, experiences and outcomes are freely chosen by the child and are under the control of the child. This may or may not involve direct interaction with the adult.

(Fisher, 2013)

A day in Primary 1

- Stag Start – activities which support children with the transition from home to school
- Whole class session (e.g. literacy)
- Targeted learning groups with a champion related to the whole class session
- Free Flow Play

BREAK

- Snack and story
- Whole class session (e.g. numeracy/maths)
- Targeted learning groups with a champion related to the whole class session
- Free Flow Play

LUNCH

- Whole class session (e.g. IDL, HWB)
- Outdoor/indoor play

*Whole class sessions are roughly 10-15 minutes long and are before or after a natural break in the day so play is uninterrupted as possible

The Champions Role

The main role of the champion during play is to observe the children and identify learning opportunities. Through observation we search for a 'teachable moment' and plan in the moment (Ephgrave, 2018). They assess what the child knows and what they need to know next using the Curriculum for Excellence benchmarks. This may result in the champion provoking the children with new vocabulary, questions and challenges or support as appropriate. Champions consider carefully when and how to intervene in play and may join in learning experiences to scaffold or model skills – extending play rather than interrupting it.

Our Learning Environment as The Curriculum

Our learning environment in terms of interactions, spaces and experiences enhances the adult-led, adult-initiated and child-led learning opportunities. The champions design and adapt the learning environment for children to learn through play. We audit the environment to ensure it is rich in literacy, digital and numeracy experiences as well as developing creativity, curiosity and skills for life and work. The level of provocation, the interactions and the experiences on offer change based on the children's interests and use of spaces to extend thinking and learning.

Children have choice of:

- Multiple clans (classrooms) and spaces
- Social interactions across the year group
- A wide range of resources and open-ended materials

Interactions

Our social environment provides children opportunities to develop positive relationships with others, while also supporting and developing and understanding the notion of boundaries; self-regulation, negotiation and choice. As the complexity of our children's play develops, we facilitate it through responsive and intentional planning. Champions observe, interpret and document learning, and facilitate in order to extend children's thinking.

Experiences

To support cognitive development, our learning environment is rich in opportunities for children to engage with concepts and foster skills for learning, such as reasoning, creativity and problem solving. We offer open-ended possibilities in which children can feel intrinsically motivated to explore and investigate through play - including taking calculated risks and learning from mistakes.

Spaces

Our learning environments consider the interactions, experiences and spaces on offer. Physical spaces, both outside and indoors, are constantly reviewed to incorporate a wide range of responsive, familiar, and exciting new play opportunities. We notice how the children interact with their environment and respond to their interests and use of their spaces.

We asked our children to capture pictures of the interactions, spaces and experiences meant most to them in school and at home (Appendix 1). We used this to determine how we created our learning environment.

What we found was our children wanted was in line with Greg Bottril's 'Can I go Play Now' (2018), which suggests the 3 M's: Mark Making, Mathematics and Making Conversation.

Mark Making

- Early Level emergent and extended writing skills
- Gross motor control – core strength
- Fine Motor control – pencil grip and letter formation

Making Conversation

- Introducing and modelling new vocabulary
- Asking open ended questions to extend thinking and promote enquiry and wonder
- Encouraging children to talk to one another by modelling conversation

Mathematics

- Opportunities for counting and exploring mathematical concepts
- Exposure to number formation, ordering and sorting
- Problem solving through children's inventions, designs and games
- Use of money, weight, measure, capacity, speed, distance, time, data-handling
- Shape, symmetry, pattern often occur naturally through the provision of interesting loose parts

You can see the progress of our learning environment in Appendix 2.

How do we know our children are learning through play?

Champions use the methods below to track and monitor the progress of all children through play-based learning:

- Our champions use a tracking and monitoring system to monitor individual children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing using the CfE benchmarks
- Each child has a SeeSaw account in which champions capture key observations of learning and progress through photos/videos and descriptions of learning. This is also shared with our families.
- Champions complete assessments of learning with all children and use this to plan learning interventions.
- Floor books are used to follow the whole process of an IDL project. It shows consultative plans, children's voice and examples of their learning.

Our champions continually adapt approaches to meet the needs of all learners in their clan.

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Appendix 1

CREATING MY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

THE CHILDREN WERE ASKED TO TAKE PHOTOS OF:

<p>My favourite spaces</p> <p>Places to play, read, learn, for quiet time, noisy time</p> 	<p>My favourite experiences</p> <p>Things to play with and things to do</p> 	<p>My favourite interactions</p> <p>People to play and learn with</p> 
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<p>FAVOURITE SPACES AT SCHOOL</p>  <p>Cosy spaces Mark Making</p> <p>Digital Connecting outdoors Role Play Block Play</p>	<p>FAVOURITE SPACES AT HOME</p>  <p>Outdoors Cosy Spaces The Forest</p> <p>Playroom Water Kitchen Creative Spaces</p> <p>I like travelling to race tracks all over Scotland to practice riding my motorbike in.</p>
<p>FAVOURITE EXPERIENCES AT SCHOOL</p>  <p>Digital Experiences</p> <p>Using our Imagination Building and constructing Messy</p>	<p>FAVOURITE EXPERIENCES AT HOME</p>  <p>Outdoor happenings Lego Kayaking Colouring Building</p> <p>Biking Scooting Role Play Cooking</p> <p>I like travelling to race tracks all over Scotland to practice riding my motorbike in.</p> <p>Mark Making/Creativity</p>
<p>FAVOURITE INTERACTIONS AT SCHOOL</p>  <p>Friends Across Clans Working together</p>	<p>FAVOURITE INTERACTIONS AT HOME</p>  <p>Family Adults Friends</p> <p>Sister Brother</p>

Appendix 2