

# 8.0 Learning and Development

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### 8.1 The Nest, The Little Ark, The Ark

#### 1. Statement of intent

At Jack and Jill our holistic curriculum is designed to give all children the best possible start that enables them to become **independent, inquisitive** and **happy** learners. In collaboration with parents as their primary educator, we intend to consistently provide high quality learning experiences for all children and ensure children have the skills needed for their future learning. Our intent is to provide a safe, stimulating, inclusive environment with positive well qualified adult role models who provide high quality interactions. Our curriculum covers all seven areas of learning and recognises the unique needs of each individual. We recognise the crucial role of developing early language and a love of reading in children's development. We also recognise the impact of the pandemic children's development, in particular our youngest children. We aim to help redress the delays in speech and language and the regression in independence that some children may be experiencing. By recognising the unique interests of each individual and our inclusive approach to learning we nurture a sense of belonging and community.

The implementation of our curriculum is varied and multi-faceted. The characteristics of effective learning are embedded in a mixture of child and adult led play using the children's individual interests as a starting point. Through high quality interactions we encourage in-depth learning and the development of executive function. This has taken on even more importance since the pandemic. Our curriculum supports the skills required for self regulation and by embedding the understanding of consent into our practice, children learn to respect themselves and others. Opportunities to follow creativity and imagination are provided through indoor and outdoor exploration. Using *Development Matters* we continue to monitor children's development and ensure all necessary support is in place in order for them to become independent, inquisitive and happy learners.

Through the impact of our curriculum our children will be well equipped for their next transition. They will have the foundations of a growth mindset and cultural capital which will enable them to become lifelong learners. We recognise that some of the consequences of the pandemic may take time to surface and as a result we will need to adapt in order to best meet the needs of our children. In order for this to happen we acknowledge that our curriculum is an evolving entity.

## 2. Overarching principles

Jack and Jill Pre-school's practice is shaped by four guiding principles; these are:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/carers; and
- Children **develop and learn** in different ways and at different rates.

## 3. Procedures

### *Unique child*

- We recognise that each child is unique. Parents/carers complete an induction form before their child/children start to provide us with important information about each individual child.
- The key carer ensures that the individual child's learning, development and care is tailored to meet the child's individual needs. This is achieved through observations and monitoring children's development and learning experiences whilst supporting the family with the child's development at home.
- The key carer is responsible for maintaining the child's individual WOW books.
- We value the importance of the Characteristics of Effective Learning and how children engage with other people and the environment. This underpins learning and development and supports children to remain effective and motivated learners.
- We value and encourage child-initiated play.
- We promote children's sense of ownership and belonging by displaying their photographs in the Birthday Book and the Family Book and by providing children with individual coat peg and drawers.
- We encourage children to make choices and develop their own independence whilst their play is supported by adults.
- We encourage children to gain independence through separating from parents/carers, making their own choices and when appropriate allow children to independently use the bathroom.

### *Positive relationships*

- We recognise parents/carers as a child's first educator and we work in partnership with them to support children during their time at Pre-school.
- We hold a Curriculum Information Evening for Ark and Little Ark parents/carers, and an end of year Parent evening for children transitioning to school. We regularly update parents on their children's next steps, progress and development through verbal handovers and via Family.
- We regularly contact parents to update children's current interests at home to inform our planning.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to take an active part in their child's Pre-school experience through 'stay and play' sessions.
- We ensure children feel safe and secure and, by building positive relationships, enable them to separate from parents/carers confidently.
- We promote strong relationships between children, practitioners and parents/carers, which enable children to feel secure and comfortable with practitioners, to share their feelings and ask for help and support when needed.
- Each child is allocated a key carer to promote positive relationships.

- We promote sharing, turn taking and being kind to one another through role modelling.
- Internal transition meetings are held with staff and Wow books and transfer documents are passed to the child's new key carer.
- Children have the opportunity to explore The Little Ark or The Ark as part of the transition process from room to room.
- Towards the end of the academic year our small group work in The Ark is adapted so that children learn with their proposed school peer group.
- We arrange visits to local schools and invite teachers to visit us in The Ark.
- Enhanced Transition meetings are arranged for SEND children.
- Key carer's complete a Bristol City Council transfer document, which is passed to each child's new setting/school.

### *Enabling environments*

- The Nest is a designated room for babies up to 2 years old, The Little Ark is a designated room for 2 and 3 year olds, The Ark is a designated room for 3-5 year olds.
- We adhere to staff ratios set out in the EYFS as a minimum.
- We provide the children with a variety of adult led small group work.
- We provide enabling environments, both indoor and outdoor, with stimulating resources, rich learning opportunities through play and playful teaching with staff that support children to take risks and to explore.
- Children have opportunities to learn and develop through clearly defined activity areas suitable for their age and stage of development (e.g. additional floor-based activities).
- Resources are suitable for age and stage of development and are freely accessible to all children. To encourage child-initiated play children are able to independently choose the activities and resources they wish to play with.

### *Learning and development*

- The seven areas of Learning and Development are implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of child and adult led activities.
- Each activity is differentiated to allow for the varying stages of development of individual children.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to take an active part in their child's learning and development, setting next steps together, and contributing to the WOW book.
- Individual learning intentions (next steps) are set and monitored by the Key Carers through observation and assessments.

## **8.2 Observation and Assessments**

### **1. Statement of intent**

Jack and Jill Pre-school believe assessments are an important part in helping parents/carers and practitioners recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners knowing children's level of achievement and interests, and then shaping our teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge. Assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork.

## 2. Procedures

### *General*

We use observations and assessments to enable practitioners to celebrate each child's achievements and share information with parents/carers. They enable practitioners to understand individual children's level of development, interests and Characteristics of Effective Learning and plan their next steps. We use a variety of observational methods such as child's voice, observations from home, photographs, long observations, sticky label observations, child involvement observations, tracking observations and schema observations. They are used to reflect, plan next steps, experiences and opportunities. Assessments are based on observations across the seven areas of learning and development of the EYFS and across the whole Pre-school environment and are informed by the child's voice and the parents/carers voice. Children's starting points are gathered from parents/carers on entry to the Pre-school. Key carers in partnership with parents are responsible for setting children's next steps. Key carers are responsible for completing all assessment checkpoints as detailed below.

Assessment Checkpoints (summative assessments), using our professional judgements and using Development Matters as guidance, will be completed according to the schedule below:

Before the child starts:	Starting Points / All About Me
Transition Form 1:	When the child moves to The Little Ark from Nest
2 Year Old Progress Check (statutory) :	When the child is approximately 30 months
Transition Form 2:	When the child moves from The Little Ark to Ark
BCC Transition Form:	When the child moves settings or starts school

These will form a written record of the child's progress as they move through the setting and beyond.

### *Two year old progress check*

- When a child is aged between two and three, practitioners must review their progress and provide parents/carers with a written summary of their child's development in the three prime areas.
- Parents/carers meet with their child's key carer to write the progress check together, to enable to take into account the parents/carers own perspective of their child's learning and development, next steps and any concerns they may have.
- The written summary includes areas in which a child is progressing well, set next steps, identify areas in which some additional support might be needed and any areas where there is a concern that a child may have a developmental delay.
- If there are any emerging concerns, or an identified Special Educational Needs or disability, we develop a targeted plan to support the child's future learning and development involving a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and/or other professionals, if appropriate.
- We encourage parents and or carers to share information from the progress check with other professionals, including their health visitor and the staff of any new provision the child may transfer to.

## 8.3 Superhero and Weapon Play

## 1. Statement of intent

Jack and Jill Pre-school recognises that children enjoy engaging in imaginative play that relates to and makes sense of the world that they live. For many children, especially boys, this imaginative play can involve strong elements of weapon and superhero re-enactment. We recognise that when involved in this type of play, children are engaged, focused and learning.

We also recognise that many adults find this type of play challenging and the natural instinct is to stop it. However, if well managed it can be an excellent opportunity for children to understand and respect the rights of other children as well as explore important themes in a safe and controlled arena such as good and evil, life and death, strength and power, gender and identity. It also enhances the opportunities for some children, particularly boys, to engage in creative and imaginative play which they traditionally find difficult to access. This in turn will boost their self-esteem, independence and increase engagement in Pre-school.

## 2. Procedures

- Although we will allow superhero and weapons play, children are not permitted to bring toy weapons into the Pre-school from home.
- The Pre-school will not provide any toy weapons for children to use
- When superhero or weapon play is taking place, a practitioner will be nearby to observe and extend this play. When necessary the practitioner will redirect the play to introduce a more positive focus to the play.
- Practitioners will acknowledge the positive aspects of the character of a superhero and highlight the negative aspects of weapons use and physical violence at a level that is appropriate to the age and needs of the children. This can be done through discussion, stories or even during small group activities.
- Practitioners will ensure that children engaging in weapon play will not point weapons directly at anyone's face. Equally children engaging in weapon play must understand that other children may not want to participate in this type of play and this MUST be respected.
- Practitioners will never engage in pretending to hold or fire a weapon.
- Conflict between children engaging in this type of play may occur. Practitioners will deal with conflict as they would at any other time, listening, discussing and compromising to resolve the problem.
- If a practitioner does not feel comfortable and confident in supervising such play, they should ask another practitioner who is to take responsibility.
- If, like any play activities, practitioners feel the play is becoming too boisterous or other children are being negatively impacted or intimidated, the play should be stopped.
- Superhero costumes may be brought in from home and this may facilitate practitioners in their planning for individual children.
- The room lead will regularly evaluate and review the impact that actively fostering this element of role play has on the environment, groups and individuals.
- As with all policies, parents will have regular opportunity to view and share opinions on the policy.

## Legal framework

Childcare Act 2006

Early Years Foundation Stage

## Please also see policies relating to:

The role of the Key Carer

Settling in and transitions

Parent and/or carer involvement

Assessments

Valuing Diversity and Promoting equality of Opportunity

Achieving positive behaviour

The Nest, The Little Ark, The Ark

**This policy was adopted at a Board of  
Directors meeting held on:**

**6<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

**Signed on behalf of the Pre-school by:**

***C. Hollingdale***

**Mrs Claire Hollingdale (Managing Director)**

**Date: 6<sup>th</sup> June 2023**