



Curriculum Planning, Observation & Assessment of Children. **Policy & Procedure**

Catkins Nursery aims to provide a happy, safe, and secure environment in which all children will be encouraged to learn and develop to reach their full potential through play. There is a wide range of safe and stimulating materials for the children's use. Caring, professional staff support the activities provided. The nursery is registered and inspected by OFSTED (The Office for Standards in Education). The group receives the 'Free Entitlement' for qualifying children.

Curriculum:-

Catkins Nursery curriculum is planned within the Early Years Foundation Stage, as set out by the DfE. We are working with the guidance document known as Development Matters the Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage (EYFS), first published September 2020 and revised in July 2021.

The EYFS is followed until children reach the end of reception year in school.

We also adhere to the document, 'Statutory Framework For The Early Years Foundation Stage'.

The Early Years Foundation Stage covers seven key features of effective practice:-

- 1. The Best For Every Child** – All children deserve to have an equal chance of success. Children who have experienced difficulties and those with SEND will need to be identified quickly and access the extra help they need.
- 2. High Quality Care** – The child's experience must always be central to the thinking of every practitioner. The child must have high quality care with effective relationships and bonds between children and staff/key persons.
- 3. The Curriculum – What we want the children to learn.**
This needs to be everything a setting wants a child to learn, with high expectations, sequencing over time, reflect children's interests in a flexible way with adequate depth and spontaneity. Children need to be independent and 'school/world ready' by the time they leave nursery.
- 4. Pedagogy – Helping children to learn** – A mix of different approaches as one size doesn't fit all children. Children learn by watching, modelling and observing. Good organisation and high quality play, time to invent their own and sensitive support and guidance are needed. Older children need more guided learning. Inside and outside should be well-planned.
- 5. Assessment – checking what children have learnt** – Noticing what they can and can't do, how to support and know what practitioners want the child to know. Assessment for identification of SEND support is vital, with meaningful assessments that are part of everyday play and don't take the practitioner away from the child.
- 6. Self-regulation and executive function** – The child's ability to retain information, focus and think, recognise and stop impulsive behaviour. The child begins to learn to self-regulate; to concentrate and think forwards, to monitor and adapt, control and be patient to talk and use language skills to regulate impulses and to try again when things get difficult.

7. **Partnership with parents** - The need to recognise and respect the parent as the primary educator, to join up in caring for the child and respect values and beliefs of the family. To communicate well and have a triangle of care with the child's thoughts and needs at the centre of their learning. Recognise extra support needed by some parents/children at home as not all children's home experiences are the same. To encourage learning and communication at home with books, reading, conversation and different experiences, providing support in extending children's development and learning and offering advice about aspects of learning and care sensitively.

The Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning are:-

Playing and Exploring – Children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'

Active Learning – concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements

Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things

There are seven areas of learning and development:-

**Prime Areas - Personal, Social & Emotional Development
 Communication & Language
 Physical Development**

**Specific Areas - Literacy
 Mathematics
 Understanding The World
 Expressive Arts and Design**

These seven areas of learning are incorporated into our planning throughout the year. We plan activities and provide resources appropriate to the children's age and stage of development and their interests that form their 'next steps' to extend their learning and encourage investigation and exploration to enable the children to extend and acquire new skills.

From observations that are made on the children, we are able to identify children's particular schemas or areas of interest and plan so that the resources are available for the child to follow that interest. If a child makes a request for a particular activity we will do our best to provide it at the time of asking, or if that is not possible we will write it on the planning as an evaluation in order for it to be available the next time the child attends.

As part of the requirements for the 'Free Entitlement' funding, an Early Years Setting is inspected for OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education), by an OFSTED inspector. This inspection is carried out to ensure that each group is providing an appropriate curriculum, incorporating the Early Years Foundation Stage and adhering to the Statutory Framework.

The children who may start school in the following academic year follow an extended programme during the nursery sessions and may be selected in small groups or individually for learning at a level appropriate to their stage of development. This group are called the 'Butterfly Group'.

Full details of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum content for all children may be viewed upon request.

Plan, Do, Make, Review - Learning Journals

We aim to supply evidence of a child's progress, within the group by observing the behaviour, play and conversations held by the child. We may take photographs, collect drawings or paintings, and watch them at play to see the progress that they are making. Records for individual children will be kept as a 'can do' system of the child's progress over a length of time. These records, called 'Learning Journals' will show how the child has progressed, and at what rate. They will also show if children need further support to their learning, or extension and their 'next steps' are identified. This will help with planning how any support or extension should be offered. The children also have a scrapbook where drawings & paintings completed by the child are saved for the child.

Observations will be carried out by all members of staff, however the child's 'Key Person' is responsible for entering them into the child's learning journal and inputting to the planning of activities offered for each individual child. Activity areas within the setting that are not fully accessed by the child may also be noted. These observations will be noted for each individual child and help to form the basis for future planning.

Parents are encouraged to add comments and photos in their child's Learning Journal about achievements or observations on incidents occurring at home as these documents provide a two-way picture of your child and their interests and achievements. These may be written on 'sticky notes' or labels or directly written into your child's coloured pages in their journal, we welcome you to ask for the journal at any time, to add things to it and share with your child and the wider family or friends at home.

The Learning Journal will be passed on to the child's parents on the child leaving nursery and the latest assessments and the IPR pages copied to pass on to their receiving schools.

Types Of Observation:-

Each staff member has a dictaphone in order that observations can be swiftly noted without taking the staff members' attention from the child. This also enables specific conversations to be transcribed, (this is especially useful with children with speech delay, to identify speech patterns).

Observations may be:-

- Unplanned; a 'snapshot' observation when something happens, eg a child does something, which may be a milestone in development for that child..... this is a 'wow' moment! Or you may observe a child having difficulty and needing support.
- Observing an activity that has been planned and specifically set up, and how the children explore it.
- Something exciting or interesting that is happening, (e.g. role play, a visitor), may be observed and recorded to share.
- A planned observation on a child that may be presenting with some difficulties or delay.
- A tracking observation to record the range of activities a child accesses.

Who will carry out observations and how:-

All staff members will carry out observations on all children, regardless of whether they are the key person for that particular child.

Activities on which to gain specific observations are highlighted on the planning.

The observation is written onto a sticky label and will be put in the key person's file so that they can enter it into the child's journal.

Any key person who requires an observation on a key child in a specific area, makes it known to the group by putting a 'post it' on the planning board. The 'post it' is removed when the observation is gained.

The responsibility lies with each child's key person to make sure that the child's records are complete and show sufficient observations and 'wow' moments to identify the 'next steps' achieved to enable the child to progress at their level and stage or to support them further.

We use the following procedure for recording, assessment and planning:-

1. The key person sends home a 'focus child form' each 6-8 weeks with the top section completed to show the child's details & the focus week date, some additional information may be filled in.
2. The parent completes their section of the form as indicated and returns it to nursery within the week. This is really useful in finding out the child's interests at home and what they are learning about, watching on TV, or playing with at that current time. It helps us support their learning by possibly mirroring or extending what they are doing at home or any changes in their lives.
3. The child's key person uses the focus week to observe the child more closely and make note of 'wow' moments and what the child is doing, ie the areas they like to play in at nursery.
4. The key person then collates the observations and the photographs (if applicable) and sticks them into the child's learning journal preferably with the child. Any drawings or paintings gathered for the child's scrapbook are also stuck in when the need arises, with the child. This is an opportunity to reflect on activities and record the child's comments and involve them with building up their journal.
5. The key person notes on the focus child form the activities they have seen the child access and their interests.
6. Using the information gathered, and information from the weekly summary sent to all staff, the key person then informally assesses the stage of the child's development in each area and then plans 'next steps' for the child where the child can be supported to move them forward in their development.
7. Once a term, the child will be formally assessed on the individual progress review sheet and next steps planned. This will then be shared in person with the parent at a parent chat where staff and parents can update each other about the child's learning and any gaps of areas for support or extension may be identified and any advice given about a child's development eg toileting, emotional difficulties, sleeping or eating.
8. The key person copies the focus form and adds the latest copy to the planning folder to inform the future planning for the child's interests.
9. Daily observations and additions to the planning are still made with regard to children's interests and all staff input is valued. Activities may be adjusted, added to or altered depending on the children's comments and staff evaluations.
10. All staff will be informed as to any concerns or any areas where extension activities may be offered to a child.
11. The 'focus week' is planned on average every 6-8 weeks and the 'next steps' are completed on a termly cycle, these should be achievable within that timescale for the child. The parent chat is planned, however it has to be flexible to allow for illness, annual leave, the needs of the family, absence and the dates or visits of other professionals working with the child as every child's need is different.
12. When the child has been reviewed and prior to arranging the parent chat, the key person will share the document with the Manager/Deputy to 'moderate' to ensure the information is accurate and complete and to add anything of note, also to inform the senior staff so they are aware of the child's progress.

Parent Chats

As previously mentioned, parent consultations or 'chats' will be held once a term or more frequently if a parent requests to meet more often.

The child's key person will liaise with the parent to arrange the chat date and time.

Ongoing brief, informal updates about what the child has enjoyed or played with are usually given to the parent on a daily basis. 'Zoom' or 'Teams' calls may be used if appropriate.

Two Year Checks

A statutory requirement is that all settings carry out a formal assessment in the prime areas of learning on all children attending the setting, at an appropriate time before the child's third birthday.

This assessment will be completed as soon as we have got to know your child and can be confident in plotting their progress and achievements. This may happen at any time, depending on what age the child commenced nursery and how well they have settled, it is usually around two and a half years.

A date is arranged where the parent meets with the key person to discuss the two-year check and the parent has an opportunity for discussion and will be given a copy of the two-year check with the original held in their child's Learning Journal.

Moderation and Evaluation

All staff meet regularly at staff meetings and will discuss children and moderate any journals where a request has been made by a staff member to discuss them and to assess any issues arising. Journals are also checked by the nursery manager and deputy manager.

Staff members at nursery may have a 'mentor' within the team, where staff members offer support and guidance to each other and discuss any issues or concerns, bringing them to the whole staff team if extra discussion is required. Any staff member may request a mentor, however all apprentices have a named, more experienced staff member with regular weekly sessions allocated for discussion between them.

Mentees and mentors may carry out parents chats together.

Intervention & Support

Nursery will liaise regularly with other professionals working with children attending the setting with full parental consent. This is applicable where a child has a dual placement or with a child with SEND. (Special Educational Needs and Disability).

For children with SEND, contact is made to ensure liaison is good regarding a child's development to ensure continuity of care and a consistent approach.

Visits to other settings may be arranged where a dual placement occurs with childminders, nurseries and specialist schools and services. E-mail and telephone contact is made to discuss children's progress and diaries or 'next steps' may 'travel' with the child between settings and home and shared with all parties. Home visits may also be made to observe the child at home in their own surroundings if appropriate.

Other professionals such as speech therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, social workers for example are welcomed into our setting.

In the event that nursery staff have a concern over a child's progress, the parent will be fully involved and permission sought before any contact or liaison is made with any other agency.

Nursery may contact the support team TSS or SALSS for language support or an appropriate agency available through W.S.C.C to support settings with children presenting with difficulties, in order that the setting can access suitable services and advice to meet a child's needs.

Training Needs

Catkins staff are able to access external training courses with regard to curriculum content and delivery as well as SENCO/INCO meetings and Network Meetings held by WSCC.

We identify training needs through discussion as a team in staff meetings, specific interests of individual staff members, and with regular evaluation through 1:1 meetings and appraisals. We may attend training courses with the needs of specific children in mind.

School Readiness

At Catkins we aim to provide a curriculum to support children to ensures their 'school readiness', defined in the revised EYFS as supporting children for the next stage in their learning and to prepare them to be 'willing to take on the world'.

We aim to ignite a child's enthusiasm for learning and follow their interests and their curiosity with a fun, and exciting curriculum delivered by enthusiastic and supportive staff, to enable all children, whatever their potential, to achieve.

Updated May 2023 To be reviewed on or before end May 2024.

C A Walden
