




ASHMORE PARK
AND
PHOENIX NURSERY SCHOOLS
FEDERATION

LEARNING AND TEACHING
POLICY

Senior Leadership Team/Compliance Governor(s) Review Date	28.02.2024
Governing Board Approved/Adopted	07.03.2024
Signed on behalf of the Governing Board/Committee	
Policy to be Reviewed Date	31.03.2026

Background

Learning and teaching at both Ashmore Park Nursery and Phoenix Nursery is based on the premise that all children have an innate desire to learn and that it is our responsibility to nurture this drive to learn and discover.

As Educators, we have a responsibility to continually research into how children learn, so that we can improve the quality of learning and teaching across our schools.

This policy will describe the over arching principles and elements of the approach which informs our daily practice.

- **A place of citizenship - being part of the community**

Both schools are an integral part of the community. It is our responsibility to develop our children's understanding of, and responsibility to contribute to, their community.

- **A researching school**

Both Ashmore Park Nursery and Phoenix Nursery is a place where children, families and Educators work together to improve the quality of learning and teaching experiences, promoting high aspirations and achievement for all.

- **A belief in the competent child**

We believe that every child has an incredible capacity to learn and develop through engagement with others and with the world around them.

- **A learning partnership between children, families, and school**

We consider and actively promote a respectful and active partnership between children, their families and their school and believe this is central to successful learning.

Our Approach

Constructing learning together

Adults and children working in groups are a very important aspect of our work, listening and responding to each other, child to child, child to adult and adult-to-adult.

Collaborative group work deepens curiosity and questioning and stimulates new ways of thinking, which links to creativity.

Valuable reflection and new understanding occurs when groups engage together in discussion, critical assessment, comparison, and problem solving, planning next steps based on these emerging theories and documenting the process. This is an ongoing collaborative cycle of enquiry.

Groups are formed in various ways. Their size and composition are dependent on many factors including the children's interests, skills, characteristics, and competencies.

The role of the adult when working in groups with children is complex and is considered throughout the cycle of enquiry including planning, action, documentation, and reflection.

Creativity

Creativity is not an add-on. It is a fundamental approach to all aspects of learning and teaching.

Learning and creating encourages risk-taking and involves trying something and seeing what happens. This is a process that can often involve many mistakes; fear of making mistakes can stop us from expressing ourselves freely and thinking with originality. In order to feel free to experiment and make mistakes, we need to create a supportive environment.

A creative approach by children and adults supports the enquiry of the children.

We believe in learning and teaching which promotes creative dispositions and attitudes that enable creation, and innovation through many modes or expressive languages. Creativity is often linked with the creative arts, but it is not only the arts. It can be in all areas of learning, including science, maths, technology, and humanities.

By promoting creativity, we enhance the motivation for both staff and children.

It underpins our approach to school improvement and aspires to the highest standards of achievement.

Learning and teaching is a process

Learning and teaching is an ongoing process, a journey that builds on what children know and can do, using concepts or ideas of interest to children, celebrating the passage of time, the natural world, and the festival year, which in turn develops family and local culture.

There is time to revisit ideas, resources, and themes, by returning to themes, ideas are explored in new ways. This increases the complexity of understanding; ensuring learning is embedded and can be used flexibly in the future.

Our process involves:

- reflection on what we have observed and documented;
- developing theories about the deeper questions children are asking;
- planning to extend this deeper level learning;
- engaging children; and
- documentation and reflection.

This cycle of enquiry involves children, educators, and other professionals.

The role of the Educator

The role of the Educator is complex involving many qualities and skills.

It is the role of the Educator to know each child as an individual and to build a trusting relationship in which learning can happen.

An essential quality and skill for an Educator is to actively listen, respond to children, to their families and to each other.

They must be able to communicate with children and families and with each other.

It is not the role of the Educator, just to give out information or correct mistakes. The role of Educator is fluid, sometimes they are a tool for children to use, a co-investigator, an observer, a scribe, someone who poses a challenge or provides a provocation or question.

An Educator should have respect for children's own theories and hypotheses and allow children to make mistakes and encourage them to solve problems, knowing when to stand back and when to intervene. The Educator should build on the strengths, competencies, and curiosities of the children.

We believe that observation is partial and subjective, but it is the Educator's role to observe closely, to evaluate and theorise about what they have learned. By reflecting with others and participating in ongoing discussion that takes in many points of view, Educators try to understand deeper truths about learning and teaching through their observation. It is important to try to keep an open mind.

It is important that Educators make learning visible through learning documentation.

Educators are learning at the same time as the children are learning. They work together to engage in challenging dialogue that tries to uncover the truth about children's learning and how to improve teaching.

The Educator provides carefully planned, aesthetically pleasing spaces and well-organised, carefully chosen materials that support learning and teaching, enabling creative responses by children and deeper levels of enquiry and understanding.

Learning Documentation and the Environment

We believe pedagogical (learning and teaching) documentation is an essential part of the processes within both schools. There are several aspects to this that interlink to create a comprehensive account of learning, teaching, progress, interests, ideas, successes, and areas of professional growth within each Nursery.

Journals

These capture the thoughts and ideas of children and/or clarify the intention of the Educator for the day based on previous reflection and planning.

It is a place to collect traces of learning – notes of what is observed, what actions the Educator takes, descriptions of actions of individuals and interactions amongst groups of children. What children communicate using expressive languages is documented and photographs are used as an important reference of learning. Reflection meetings about learning allows Educators to discuss learning and make alterations, if necessary.

They support longer research on how inquiry learning progresses in environments.

They capture progress/achievement of groups and individual children.

They support the analysis of the quality of teaching on children's learning.

They provide training materials for disseminating effective practice in teaching and learning.

They provide the basis for the analysis of children's and Educators learning, in order that documentation can make visible the learning process on walls and for exchange with others.

Microsoft Teams App - Sharing Learning with Families

The use of this App enables:

- Educators to build a relationship with the child's parents and family by sharing photographs and comments about how and what their child is learning at school;
- Educators and families to engage in dialogue about the learning taking place, to ask questions of each other and share knowledge of the child; and
- An instant response for parents/carers and a two-way communication between Educators and families that will develop.

Summative Documentation

Sometimes it is important to create summative documentation (either on the walls, in a book format or on-line) of a project or piece of work, when creating this documentation consideration for Educators include:

- What is the nature of the work?
- What has arisen from your research and action?
- What motivated the children?
- What deeper questions were the children investigating?
- Where did you begin?
 - Where did you change direction?
 - What triggered change?
 - Was it planned or spontaneous in the process?
- What ideas have currency/significance?
- What vocabulary evolved?
- How do you make the richness and vitality of the learning and teaching visible?

Assessment at Ashmore Park Nursery and Phoenix Nursery School

There are several aspects to the assessment practice at both Nursery schools, each serve different purposes, but interlink to provide an overall picture of the impact of learning and teaching.

The schools' use of learning and teaching (pedagogical) documentation in the form of Educator journals, traces of the process of learning and teaching on display, and summative project documents which make learning and teaching visible and inform our regular reflective practice. This form of assessment illuminates learning and informs teaching; it primarily supports group learning and ensures that there is a stimulating, challenging, and creative environment with a wide range of opportunities, both planned and incidental for children to become deeply involved, curious, challenged, and creative in their learning responses. It involves dialogue between Educators, children, and families.

When children start nursery Educators observe and note children's competencies in order to understand each child's individual starting points. These observations focus on the child's communication, their physical development, and their personal and social skills. This information helps the Educator to plan effectively to enable the child to learn. As a Federation, we have created destination documents for the seven areas of learning. These documents describe the skills and knowledge we aspire to, for the majority of children to achieve depending on the length of time they have with us. From these overarching documents, we have half termly checkpoints for mathematics and literacy that guide the planning process and we use these as a basis for discussion as to decide if a child has gained the skills and knowledge identified for that half term period.

Communication at Ashmore Park Nursery School is assessed using Wellcomm and Educators use this information to support the language development of the children until they reach their age-related expectation. At Phoenix Nursery School, language competency is assessed using the Local Authority's 'Steps to Successful Language Acquisition for English in the EYFS' and once children have gained some competency in English, Wellcomm is used to assess, and this information is used to support the planning process. Both schools refer children to be assessed by SALT services once they have had a period of time to settle into nursery if further expertise is required. The other areas of learning i.e. Physical, Personal and Social, The World and Exploring and Using Media are assessed each term. Weekly planning is the responsibility of each Educator; it is discussed with the teacher who then documents the following weeks planning. It is also the responsibility of the Educator to meet the requirements of the group ensuring that they make progress in their learning.

Each half term Educators meet with the SLT to discuss children's progress with reference to the checkpoints. From these discussions, we decide if children are on track or not on track. As a result of these discussions, it is the responsibility of the Educator to support these children using both the environment and teaching to narrow any identified gaps in skills and knowledge.

Each term Educators meet with parents/carers to discuss their child's learning and progress, and what they could do to support learning at home.

Children who are identified as having additional needs, resulting in them being placed on the Special Educational Needs (SEND) register are monitored with additional record keeping and processes in line with the SEN code of practice.