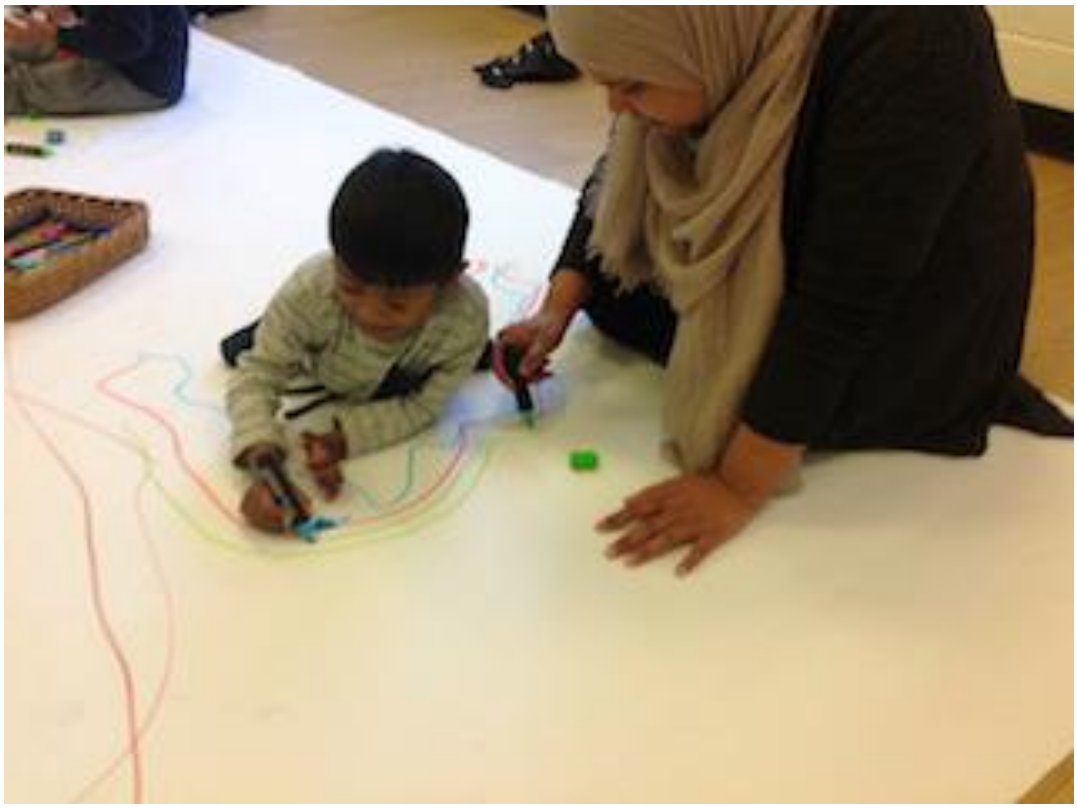
Reviewed June 2025

Strong Close Nursery School



Expressive Arts and Design Policy

Rationale

"There is no doubt that creativity is the most important human resource of all. Without creativity, there would be no progress, and we would be forever repeating the same patterns." — Edward de Bono

Children's responses to what they see, hear and experience through their senses are individual and the way they represent their experiences is unique and valuable. Expressive Arts and Design is about taking risks and making connections and it enables children to explore many processes, media and materials and to make new opportunities emerge as a result.

Expressive Arts and Design is not just about special people doing special things. We all have the potential to be creative and creativity is a skill that needs to be developed. We have a responsibility to ensure that children's individual creativity is nurtured. Play and creativity share many of the same characteristics including the existence of choice. Creativity involves children initiating their own learning and making choices and decisions

"The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe."

Statutory Framework for the EYFS Educational Programme.

To provide effectively for the learning, interests and needs of all our children we will use the 'Statutory Framework for The Early Years Foundation Stage' to inform our practice. The seven key features of effective practice from the non-statutory Development Matters will be at the heart of our day to day practice. We recognise the individuality of all children and the need to nurture their confidence, capabilities, and independence. Our curriculum will reflect the needs and interests of our children and we will develop more in depth learning through schemas, projects, real world experiences and repeated and motivating activities. To this end we will ensure that our practice reflects the characteristics of effective teaching and learning; Playing and Exploring, Active Learning and Creating and Thinking Critically. Our children that are on or being assessed for our resourced places are assessed using the Developmental Journal resources.

Aims

Our aims set out how we intend to deliver a high quality curriculum

- To provide an environment that will stimulate curiosity and the desire to explore a wide range of media and materials in order to learn about pattern, colour, tone and texture.

- To provide the opportunity for children to be involved in experiences across the arts and design field, where they will be encouraged to express their ideas and feelings in a range of ways to reflect their needs and interests.

- To have a particular focus on the aspects of expressive arts and design in our planning and assessment for
  - **Creating with materials**
  - **Being imaginative and expressive**

- To ensure that all adults working with children understand the nature of creativity and that it requires children have freedom of thought and action.

- To ensure that all children are supported in making the best possible progress.

Objectives

Our objectives set out how we implement our aims

- We will ensure that adults working with children value their ideas and what individual children can do, rather than expecting them to reproduce someone else's work or idea.

- We will ensure that adults teach children the skills and techniques of using equipment and materials so that they can use them independently and effectively

- We will provide a vibrant and engaging environment in which, originality, sensory experiences, expressiveness and being adventurous are stimulated and valued

- We will ensure we are flexible enough to allow sufficient time for children to become deeply involved, develop ideas and see them through to a successful conclusion

- We will use the indoor and outdoor environment, visitors, trips and outings as sources of creativity and imagination, extending experiences and learning

- We will include resources from a variety of cultures to both reflect our community and stimulate new ideas and different ways of thinking

- We will sing, sign, use and make instruments to develop children's communication, confidence and musical expression and understanding

The following support the **implementation** of this policy and ensure we monitor **impact**

a. Guidelines on Curriculum Planning

b. Communication Strategies with Children

c. Expressive Arts and Design Guidelines

d. Development Matters

e. Developmental Journal documents

f. Assessment Policy and Guidelines

g. Display Policy and Guidelines

Expressive Arts and Design Policy Guidelines

- Ensure experiences and activities offered to children are as 'hands on' and open ended as possible.
- Support children's self- initiated ideas and extend children's particular interests
- Adults should provide a rich and varied range of media, textures, materials and experiences
- Adults should respond to children's' use and interpretation of media and materials, building on their ideas but not overly influencing
- Adults should encourage children to share their ideas with others and be encouraged to talk about what they are doing, express feelings etc.
- Adults should model self-talk as a way of modelling thinking through ideas. They will also encourage thinking skills by their use of questioning… i.e. what else etc.
- Adults join in with activities and model creative thinking and behaviour and show curiosity
- Adults recognise the possibility of children's involvement in expressive arts and design in all areas of the room
- Ensure that assessment procedures reflect and recognise creativity, enterprise and innovation.
- Ensure that observation and assessment procedures inform long term, medium term and short-term planning. This should be done by identifying individual needs in the short term, and areas of learning that require focus in the medium term and in the longer-term organisation, resources and training needs
- Adults support children in making connections with what they already know, have experienced and observed
- Adults encourage children to improvise, experiment – promote a 'Have a go' culture
- Children's sensory skills are developed to enhance their communication and expression through visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities
- Actively encourage and support children to question
- Introduce a variety of equipment and techniques **over time** ensuring that children are given time and are supported in using them correctly
- Ensure that children are immersed in a variety of experiences such as art, drama, music, songs, movement, role play, story making, design and technology, bearing in mind that many of these experiences can and should occur across all areas of provision.

- Provide the opportunities for children to experience a wide variety of media and materials both made and from the natural world

- Provide opportunities for children to combine materials in new and different ways

- Over time provide opportunities for children to engage with works of art and artefacts from across times and cultures

- Give thinking and reflection time and provide the opportunity for children to return to work later.

- Make and use instruments and learn about loud/quiet, fast/slow, high/low and patterns in sounds

- Provide safe areas where children can work on ideas undisturbed by others

- Provide opportunities for children to work as part of a group and individually

- Provide opportunities for children to work with and/or see artists, musicians and theatre

- Provide opportunities to work on both a large and small scale

- Use displays to celebrate children's work, enhance and enrich the environment and as a teaching and learning tool.