Reviewed March 2025

Strong Close Nursery School

Physical Development Policy

Rationale

"Children want space at all ages but from the age of one to seven, space that is ample is almost as much wanted as food and air. To move, to run, to find things out by new movement, to feel one's life in every limb, that is the life of early childhood".

Margaret McMillan The Nursery School 1919

Children have an innate need to move, to challenge and to control their bodies. It is also an important way that they begin to find out about the world. As they develop co-ordination, control and spatial awareness they are supported in taking their learning forward as physical and cognitive development are closely linked, especially during the early years. These skills can also contribute to a child's personal and social development by enhancing confidence and self-esteem. There is an important link between having a healthy lifestyle and the ability to learn effectively. Children who are physically well are more likely to be enthusiastic about learning and able to make the most of what is on offer. Therefore, meeting children's physical needs is fundamental to their well-being.

"Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence."

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 a cross-curricular and whole school approach to physical development, which is grounded in knowledge and understanding of the subject matter and the most effective ways of teaching and learning

- To support children in developing confidence, good control and co-ordination in large and small movements

- To handle tools and equipment safely and effectively

- To understand the importance of developing a healthy life style including the importance of oral health and encouraging the independence of using knives and forks

- To become confident and independent in managing their personal needs and basic hygiene including using the bathroom and tooth brushing

- To ensure that we equip and use both the indoor and outdoor environment to promote physical development and understand how adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility through a good range of equipment and tools.

- To have a particular focus on the aspects of physical development in our planning and assessment
  - Gross motor skills
  - Fine motor skills

- To ensure that all children are supported in making the best possible progress regardless of their age, cultural background or disability.

- We work in partnership with professionals to ensure that all children's physical development is catered for including the use of specialist chairs and personalised physio sessions.

- Adults are knowledgeable and able to offer Intensive interaction for children with limited communication and language or children who are settling into the Nursery

Objectives
Our objectives set out how we implement our aims

- We will nurture children's confidence and engagement through settled and trusting relationships with adults and by developing children's independence towards self-scaffolding

- We will ensure that children are encouraged to be independent but also providing support when required to ensure that children gain in confidence and skill when using large and small equipment

- We will provide an environment both indoor and outdoor which offers rich opportunities for children to engage in experiences that both help to consolidate and to challenge their physical skills. We are fortunate to have on offer a mixture of different terrains and surfaces within the school to ensure that children are able to build up their strength and to challenge themselves.

- We will ensure that adults teach children the skills and techniques of using tools equipment safely and allow practice of these so that they can use them independently and effectively

- We will use the daily routines to support children's understanding of hygiene and encourage their independence in personal care.

- We will establish good sleep routines in consultation with parents/carers to support children's health and wellbeing

- We will use a variety of experiences and daily routines to encourage understanding of the importance of healthy diets and life styles

- We will offer children a variety of experiences which will help with their learning and development including access to activities from our Artist in residence

- We will offer a range of activities which support children's physical development and well-being including music and movement sessions and access to the sensory room and sensory circuit. All of these can be adapted to the children's individual needs

- We will ensure that we provide targeted support to children with special educational needs, through Next Steps or Individual Support Plans with parents and carers.

- We will increase staff knowledge about physical development through relevant in-service training.

- We will involve and support parent / carer in our work by sharing individualised, specific and relevant strategies from our schema toolkit, 50 Things to do Before you're 5 app and Tiny Happy People website in relation to physical development

- We will discuss children and their interests weekly to inform planning, and share at home with parents and carers through our What's Happening to help support and deepen children's learning through play. Half termly planning newsletters are also developed by staff and shared with parents/carers.

- To ensure that children are making the best progress, over time, we will assess their progress and interests termly using Development Matters and the key observational checkpoints including the Developmental Journal materials for those children on specialist places, supported to make smaller steps of progress. The results of these, will inform future planning both at an individual level and also at a curriculum level.

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

a. Guidelines on Curriculum Planning

b. Communication Strategies with Children

c. Physical Guidelines

d. Development Matters

e. Developmental Journal documents

f. Assessment Policy and Guidelines

Physical Development Guidelines

Physical development is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults.

- Adults working with children need to know that the ages at which children accomplish particular physical skills can vary considerably e.g. fine motor skills. Children cannot learn a new skill until the muscles are sufficiently developed and the activities and resources provided, should be suitable for their developmental needs

- Use individual interests and ideas and schematic play where appropriate as a starting point to support/ teach physical skills

- Take opportunities as they arise to model/teach effective use of equipment in all areas of the nursery, ensuring that children's safety is paramount whilst allowing them to take some risks.

- Over time, introduce a range of equipment which will require modelling to the children, so that they have the opportunity to practice using these regularly e.g. don't introduce hole punch, treasury tags, paper clips etc. all at once

- Adults working with children should have a common approach and understanding of safety rules both indoor and outside. Children need to know boundaries and limits in using both large and small equipment

- The outdoor environment should be an integrated part of the day where children have time for in-depth play and investigation. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being.

- Adults ensure they take every opportunity for quality interaction outside as inside – it is just as important. Remember your body language signals whether you are interested and enthusiastic about being outdoors. Move around with the children and get actively involved with their play Intensive interaction may be used for children with limited communication or children who are settling.

- Ensure consistent support outdoors – organise clear rotas. This should also cover setting up each day. Resources offered should be presented attractively and capture children's eagerness to involve themselves in play. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

- By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility.

- Plan activities that offer physical challenge and plenty of opportunities for practicing skills

- Introduce appropriate vocabulary to children, alongside their actions including language such as backwards and forwards for communication and later writing development.

- Introduce plenty of fine-motor control and precision as this helps with hand-eye coordination which is later linked to early literacy.

- Plan experiences for children to respond imaginatively to music and sounds

- Ensure storage of outdoor equipment is organised for easy access and is kept looking tidy and is regularly replenished as appropriate. Encourage children to help with setting up and putting away where appropriate

- Ensure equal opportunity for girls and boys to use large equipment and more boisterous play outdoors. Encourage girls to be adventurous

- Provide open-ended resources which can be used and accessed in a variety of ways so children are able to challenge themselves

- Plan for those children with physical disabilities, to develop specific physical skills, to work with adult support or other children where they can receive support (supported by outside agencies where applicable)

- Use snack and lunch times as a vehicle to talk about healthy diets. Introduce a variety of healthy foods and allow children to help prepare and taste them. Model use of cutlery and encourage children to develop the skill of using knives and forks. Allow them to serve themselves at the snack/ lunch table

- Provide opportunities for children to set the table for lunch/snack. Use snack as a focus for fine motor development. Let them help to prepare snack, cutting up, spreading etc. as appropriate.

- Support children to manage their clothing independently. This may include showing how to put on and take off various items easily.

- Encourage independent use of the toilet. Teach children basic rules for using the toilet e.g. always flushing the toilet etc.

- Ensure children are taught hygiene rules such as a routine for washing hands. Ensure they understand why this is important. Teach children when it is important to wash their hands. All the adults should use the same routine with children. Support children with this physically, until they are able to do it effectively.

- Take the opportunity to talk about children's overall health and well-being at every opportunity including the importance of regular physical activity, healthy eating, tooth brushing and being a safe pedestrian.

- Use displays to celebrate children's work, enhance and enrich the environment and as a teaching tool and learning tool. Please see the school display policy and guidelines

- 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, areas of learning that require focus in the medium term and in the longer-term organisation, resources and training needs