

Curriculum Policy

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Intent – Aims and Objectives:

Every child is recognized as a unique individual, following their personal learning path to achieving their distinctive full potential.

We value that every child has their own interests, contributions, and gifts to share with the world, and these differences are not just accepted but are celebrated.

Through our curriculum we aim to develop:

- Children that know who they are, confident in their own abilities, and full of integrity to stand up for what is right.
- Children that know what they say is valuable and understand that communication is about listening to others too.
- Independent thinkers, curious about the world around them, and motivated to explore and discover it.
- Children that never give up, that will persevere and be innovative in how they find solutions to problems they may face.
- Respectful individuals, that understand that they deserve respect and that everyone else does too, irrespective of who they are, or what views they may have.
- Children that value everyone's contributions and understand these may all be different, but they are all valuable to the wider community. The Cosmic Education.
- Mastery of key knowledge, understanding, values and skills that the child will need for life, to become an active member of society.
- A feeling of belonging. The school and classroom is designed for the children to take ownership of the environment, and this responsibility gives them a sense of purpose, pride and sense of being valued. An opportunity too, to put into practice the skills and knowledge that they have developed, as a member of a community, putting into action their social skills.
- Children with aspirations to be their best, inventors; creators and expressive of their uniqueness.
- A connection with the outdoors, promoting our connection with the environment, our responsibility to look after nature and our need for nature to support our learning and wellbeing.

Implementation – Organisation and Planning

We follow the Early Years Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and use the Montessori Curriculum to reach these goals, with elements of Reggio Emilia practice to enhance our curriculum. Forest School is an integral part of our curriculum and Eco School helps to develop the connection with the wider community.

The learning environment is vital to the implementation of our goals and objectives. Our environments are designed using the Montessori principals; giving children accessibility and autonomy to select what they are interested in learning from shelves, where the full curriculum is accessible to them all the time. Self-selection is vital in achieving deeper engagement which promotes more profound learning and understanding. It is through manipulation, hands-on experience, play and repetition and the guidance of the teacher, that the children will learn new concepts. The teacher works with the children individually, presenting how to use the materials. She will observe the child's interactions and record and ascertain where the child is at in their learning. She will then plan how to support their learning by scaffolding and then how to extend and promote the child onto their next steps. She is also aware of the holistic development of the child and will guide the child to other areas in the curriculum that they might not be interested in through a presentation, to achieve a well-balanced curriculum.

The children's freedom within limits enables them to act upon the environment and they quickly learn that those actions have an impact on everything and everyone in it. This helps them make decision that are beneficial to the whole group, they take ownership of the environment and the part they play in it. Helping them to develop social skills, responsibility, respect, empathy, self-regulation, self-discipline, and communication skills to express themselves, listen to others, negotiate and being respectful of others' opinions.

Incorporation of the three Prime Areas:

- **Communication and Language**

The teacher in the environment is a vital part in this area. Her engagement with each individual child, listening attentively and responding appropriately, role models the importance that communication has to be an exchange of information and not only one sided. The teacher will listen carefully to the child and then ask leading questions to extend their learning, exchange ideas to continue the child's curiosity or repeat words if the child needs recasting to support their learning. The environment is rich with language opportunities with areas like the well-stocked book corner, where the children have a wide range of books to choose from and are able to 'read' them themselves or have a teacher read to them, to be able to handle them correctly, to foster a love of

reading and be aware of their uses both for reference and as a source of stories and pictures. Helicopter Stories, where they create stories that is added to the class book and then everyone has an opportunity to act their stories out; singing and nursery rhymes, many activities for mark making, and storytelling. Other activities like our Red Post Box, allows children to understand that the written symbol carries meaning by receiving post from family members locally or from all over the world as well as writing letters to friends in the class themselves. In addition, our language area in the classroom is stocked with the Montessori language materials starting from the Sandpaper Letters where children are introduced to the letters phonetically in a concrete way, proceeding to the Pink Series, focusing on CVC words, moving on to the Blue Series we introduce the children to blends, digraphs and trigraphs. We follow this on with early grammar, and then to the Green Series which introduces the other sounds (phonemes).

- **Physical Development**

Our garden is hugely beneficial in helping the children's physical development. We have a wide range of equipment giving them opportunities to develop confidence and enjoyment while developing their gross motor skills and awareness of their own body. The Montessori approach allows for much movement in the child's everyday activities, both in the inside and the outside classroom, achieved through the freedom of movement in their environment. They develop control of the physical bodies by carrying activities around the space, learning to navigate the space, and developing their spatial awareness and proprioception. The level of adult input allows children to safely create and meet physical challenges, developing increasing skill and control in moving, climbing, and balancing. At the same time children are encouraged in the development of fine motor skills through activities in the Practical Life area, where they manipulate specific tasks from pouring, to spooning, threading, and posting to name a few, which refines their pincer grip, develops hand-eye coordination, develops concentration, and increases precision of movement, enabling them to use tools including pens and pencils. This area also teaches children about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and self-care.

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

The Montessori principal of vertical grouping and freedom of movement and choice in the environment helps to establish a community feel in the classroom, where children learn that everything that they do or don't do has an impact on those around them and on the environment. This gives them a sense of purpose and belonging, knowing that what they do contributes to the wider community as well as giving them a sense of responsibility for their own actions to benefit themselves and their environment. The very simple ground rules that we all live by helps to keep everyone safe and happy in our environment. The ability of freedom within the boundaries helps children to develop, self-discipline, self-confidence, empathy, self-regulation and autonomy. The environment does not eliminate situations of conflict or challenges but equips the children

with tools on how to overcome, these challenges and conflicts, firstly with the support of the adult but later to know what to do independently. The use of the Peace Table is one very concrete way to help children to express their feelings, feel heard and understood, and resolve conflicts. It is also a place that children can find a space for quiet time if they wish, or ask a teacher to help them to breath with them, which they learn in our wellbeing yoga sessions.

Children are encouraged to be as independent as age appropriate, with self-care, and self-hygiene. The teacher supports this giving them autonomy when appropriate and with lots of information about the need for healthy eating, oral hygiene, and physical health and wellbeing.

The Specific Areas:

- **Literacy**

In addition, to all the preparation for literacy mentioned above, our language area in the classroom is well stocked with the Montessori language materials. These materials are inviting and help children to read and write, starting from the Sandpaper Letters where children are introduced to the letters phonetically in a concrete way. Once the children can recognise the letters phonetically, we proceed to the Pink Series, focusing on CVC words, then moving on to the Blue Series we introduce the children to blends, digraphs and trigraphs. We follow this on with early grammar games, where they are introduced to what are nouns, verbs and adjectives and then to the Green Series which introduces the other sounds (phonemes).

- **Mathematics**

The early mathematical concepts of sorting, matching, ordering, sequencing and counting are incorporated into all the areas in the classroom, in the activities that the children are introduced to. The children learn through their sensors and the materials available in the Montessori curriculum expose children to concepts of shape, size, positioning, volume and numbers. The children are given the mathematical language when presented to the materials as well as through songs and rhymes, books and everyday interactions. The Montessori maths curriculum introduces the children to Mathematical concepts by manipulation of the material, and once they have a very concrete understand of the concept, the child is then introduced to the abstract aspect like the symbol. Each material is a next step to the previous material so the child is constantly progressing in the learning as they move through the curriculum area, with

- **Understanding of the World**

The Montessori materials in the area of Understanding of the World, cover activities in History, Geography, Science, Botany and Zoology. The curriculum is ready available on the shelves for children to select from the activity that is of interest to them and for the teacher to present to the children. This area of the curriculum is very reflective of our families, staff, and children because we encourage everyone to contribute with their own knowledge and cultural

differences. Parents and staff are encouraged to share with the class what they are celebrating, by bringing to school food, dress, languages, and music. When someone travels, we invite them to come and share their experience with the class too and this way we get to travel the world without having to leave the classroom. This area of the classroom is often of great interest to the children, it contains so many topics that are of great interest to the children like: animals, the continents, or flags; space or the leaves in the changing seasons; volcanos and lots of experiments. It is an area where the children's interests are very evident and the teacher uses their interest to expand the topics with the children to scaffold their learning, widen their understanding and increase their awe and wonder about the world we live in. Our Eco School is a wonderful way for the children to gain understanding of the wider community, our impact in the world around us and how we can contribute to supporting our world. The forest school curriculum also enables the children to observe the natural world around them, how we are connected to it and how we can live in harmony with the natural world, for everyone's benefit.

- **Expressive Arts and Design**

Children are encouraged to use a wide range of resources and their imagination in order to express their own ideas and feelings and to construct their individual response to experience in two and three dimensions. Art equipment including paint, glue, crayons and pencils as well as natural and discarded resources provides for open ended exploration of colour, shape, texture and the development of skills in painting, drawing and collage. Children are introduced to different artists to be inspired and exposed to many different techniques to express themselves through the arts.

Music and dance is enjoyed in small groups or individually, with instruments accessible for the children to use when they want.

The children are encouraged to contribute in making up stories that they can make into books, tell their friends at circle time, or for the Helicopter Stories books which they enjoy acting out as a group after.

We have a lot of opportunities for children to work together or individually with our Loose Parts and Construction areas in the indoors or outdoors environment, encouraging a lot of teamwork, creativity in design and imaginative play.

There are numerous small world play areas, as well as spaces for role-play to take place.

The garden reflects the indoor opportunities where children can continue what they were doing inside or be inspired by nature and outdoors too.

- **Parents**

Parents are valued as the primary and first educators, and we understand the importance of working closely together in supporting the children's education. We encourage parents to work collaboratively with the school by becoming involved in special occasions, offering to share their interests and cultures with

the children, to volunteer to read to the class, to attend parent meetings and in feedbacks.

Parents are encouraged to share insight into the children's interests and achievements at home, and we share observations and snippets of the children's learning with them on our 'My Montessori Child' (MMC) app as well as weekly Newsletter.

We have Positive Parenting Sessions available where we share the Montessori philosophy and practice with parents so they have a better understanding of what they children are doing at school and how they can support their growing independence at home too.

We have a PTA for parents to join and once a term we meet at a coffee morning so we can exchange ideas on how best we can all support the children's development. Our open-door policy enables parents to communicate with teachers when necessary and keep the children's wellbeing at the forefront of all we do.

Impact – Monitoring the Programme

We are responsible for ensuring that each child is learning and developing holistically in all areas. It is then imperative that we assess whether this is being achieved and the impact on each child.

Through reflective practice we have many systems in place to evaluate the success of our implementation. These include daily observations that teachers will do; these are shared with parents on a weekly basis through MMC. The teacher tracks the child's progress through these observations and uses them to evaluate how best to support the child to achieve their full potential and plan for the child's next steps in their learning.

We use a two key person approach in each class to support the child and keep parents abreast of the child's progress.

The children are invited to contribute to evaluating whether the learning environment is meeting their interests and learning, by giving feedback.

The headteacher conducts observations too, these are fed back and discussed to assess if outcomes have been achieved or what could be done better, if required, new strategies are put in place.

We carry out weekly staff meetings and daily supervisions to support teachers, to deliver the best curriculum and learning environment for each individual child.

Internal and external staff training is provided to enrich our understanding and improve our delivery of our curriculum for the benefit of each child.