

Kesh Community Nursery



Language Development Policy

Ratified by Board of Governors in:
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Signed:

Chairman of Board of Governors

Next Review:
October 2025

Signed:

Principal

Kesh Community Nursery Language Development Policy

The 2018 Curricular Guidance for Pre-School document states:

Language development is crucial to living and learning: to communicate with others, to share and express feelings, to give and obtain information, and to understand ideas and develop thoughts. Being able to understand and use language allows children to:

- make their needs, thoughts, feelings, and ideas known
- interact socially as they play together
- manage their own behaviour and self-regulate their emotions; and
- learn independently and collaboratively

Aim:

To develop, extend and enrich the skills of communication which the child has, to enable him/her to function effectively as a member of society.

Language and literacy permeate all areas of nursery. The setting is organised in such a way as to promote and enhance development in language and to promote positive images and role models for the children.

Learning will be achieved through a mixture of adult-directed and play based activities, delivered through cross-curricular activities and topic-based themes.

Role of Nursery Staff:

We recognise the vital part adults must play in the development of a child's language. We endeavour to support each child develop specific language and communication skills as they interact and engage in play.

- To use the skills, we have acquired through our involvement in various programme over the years to enhance each child's opportunities in this area e.g.
 - Early Years Training

- Ongoing professional development through Nursery clusters and use of variety of agencies e.g., SEN Inclusion service, Language and Communication Service
- Makaton Training
- Working alongside SPLT in the setting over several years
- Continuing to implement the skills gained in Language and Communication Capacity Building Programme (2012-2014)

Objectives:

To provide a stimulating environment in which language and communication skills can be nurtured and developed. To provide visual, auditory, and tactile experiences which will provide stimuli for all children.

Through use of our meetings with the child and parents prior to entry to nursery and parental questionnaires we will build up a picture of each child's capabilities to that point i.e., find out if any outside agencies e.g., Speech and Language therapists/other agencies have been involved with the child and help us prepare the setting for that child's specific needs e.g., need of PECs/Makaton etc. Where there are already significant delays in the development of language when a child starts nursery (as noted by parents, health visitor, doctor etc) or where a child does not appear to be making progress (as noted by staff and parents) then the nursery will consult with outside agencies such as speech therapists/educational psychology/RISE in order to ensure that the child receives all possible support that he/she needs.

The Pre School-Guidance states:

'As Language develops, children need to be supported to:

- focus their attention and listen (attention and listening)
- understand language (receptive language)
- use language to convey their own messages (expressive language)
- become aware of sounds (phonological awareness)
- remember what they hear and see (auditory and visual memory)
- use language as they socialise (pragmatics)

Adults promote learning by:

- listening to children, providing simple descriptions of what the child is doing or experiencing and so enriching their vocabulary
- encouraging children to focus their attention
- modelling language, choosing comments and open-ended questions to encourage children to process information
- understanding how language typically develops
- valuing children's existing language skills
- identifying common difficulties
- recognising individual learning needs
- knowing and using some simple strategies to support the child
- ensuring that the learning environment contains exciting, attractive, and stimulating resources which provoke discussion and encourage children to use and share language
- appreciating the link between language and gross and fine motor skills
- creating scope for the development of language through learning experiences across the curriculum
- supporting children for whom English is an additional language
- working in partnership with parents and other agencies to multiply benefits for each child

Expressive and receptive language:

The children will be provided with experiences which will:

help them to use, explore and develop skills in verbal communication. They will be supported in forming relationships with both peers and adults developing their ability to interact with others and in the expression of their own thoughts and feelings. The children will experience the spoken word as a means of conveying information, sharing, and receiving of ideas and as a means of gaining insight into the world of imagination. They will use their 'voice' to be involved in rhymes, songs, retelling their own experiences and games as well as in general communication. They will also become more adept in the need to look at, listen to and respond to each other as they play/interact.

Listening:

The children will be provided with opportunities to develop skills in listening to be able to process information, interact with others and begin to share in others' feelings and thoughts.

Activities will help the children develop imagination and aesthetic awareness and the ability to respond to their own experiences and those of others.

Pre/Early Reading skills:

Children will be helped to foster a love and enjoyment of books. They will be given opportunities to share books with adults modelling the reading, sharing the stories with peers or on their own. Children will be encouraged to browse and make personal choices from a well-stocked and inviting book area with both fiction and non-fiction titles, including topic related books in various places around the setting. They will have opportunities to discuss the story, characters, actions, pictures, or details such as printed words or symbols, as their curiosity requires. This will be enhanced through the Getting Ready to Learn Initiative strand 'The Big Bedtime Read'. This programme will be promoted through parental meetings and/or workshops, parents encouraged to help with lending library, visits/talks from local librarian to promote use of library from a young age.

Through exposure to books throughout the setting, not just in the reading corner, the children will come to grasp that the written word conveys meaning and adults will transcribe children's words onto a picture etc and then, where possible, another adult will read it showing how the child's meaning can be shared with others.

The children will become familiar with their own names and be able to label their work with appropriate name labels, hang up their jumper/coat at their named hook, register and de-register using their velcroed name labels. Some may, by the end of the year be attempting to write their own name on their work, this is not taught but is not discouraged for those who are 'ready' to do so.

Mark making/prewriting skills:

Nursery will provide opportunities for children to explore and develop skills in using a wide range of mark making tools to scribble and mark make. Children create pictures to convey thoughts or ideas. They experiment using symbols and patterns and engage in early attempts at writing using a variety of drawing, painting, and writing materials.

Some will, as aforementioned in reading section, may attempt to write their own names. No formal teaching of letter formation is taught but 'writing' is encouraged e.g., in birthday cards, 'writing' a list for the shop etc

The children will become aware that writing is a means of communication and conveying information, expressing one's thoughts, ideas and feeling and as a means of recording and ordering facts and information.

Operating Policy:

The nursery will be organised to facilitate the development of language development in spoken word, gesture, mark making and pre reading skills.

A programme of activities based upon activity and play-based learning, as well as directed work will be implemented. There will be opportunities for the children to communicate with peers, nursery staff, other adults, and visitors to nursery. The children may also experience the use of gesture and expression as a means of conveying communication to enhance their communication skills or in place of the spoken word for those with more severe communication difficulties/delays. All children will be exposed to simple non-verbal signs as part of day-to-day life in nursery e.g., Makaton for eating, sitting etc.

For those children for whom English is not their first language, the nursery will offer support and show respect for the home language and culture of the child using labels, books, pictures, and other equipment.

Where possible parents will be encouraged to come into the nursery to share their knowledge with the other children and staff - perhaps helping us to learn a few words in their language.

Programme of work:

The nursery will provide a wide range of opportunities and experiences through which language skills can be developed and promoted. These will be achieved through a programme of activities based upon general and topic work. There will be a mixture of individual, group and adult-directed activities which will be based upon play.

The programme will include some/all of the following types of activity:

Receptive/Expressive Language:

- Expressing their own thoughts and feelings including making their own needs known
- One-to-one discussions
- Describing what they have made/created/observed
- Respond to simple instructions/questions/directions
- Use a growing vocabulary appropriately including topic specific language
- Group discussions e.g., circle time
- Children will engage in role play with increasing confidence and using appropriate language
- Reciting poems as a group/individual if confident enough
- Singing nursery rhymes
- Encouraging children to make up and tell stories based on pictures/their own creations
- Story telling followed by discussion about the story
- Sharing own experiences/stories from outside nursery setting/family life

Listening:

- Listening to a wide variety of stories from a range of people
- Sound lotto games

- Sound walks focusing on what can be heard on a street or in a park etc
- Giving the children simple instructions to follow including in games
- Asking the children to listen for a particular character or event in a story.
- Fun games with rhyming words/words beginning with a specific sound/clapping out syllables
- Opportunities to respond a wide variety of music.

Reading:

- Children will be taught how to handle books with care whilst not limiting their curiosity and excitement
- Sorting and matching toys and games
- Sequencing activities
- Labelling of coat hooks and other personal items with child's names leading from symbols to word recognition
- Story telling individuals/groups, following the story through the pages of the book - pointing to the word as they are read if appropriate
- Labelling displays and other items around the nursery
- Reading area for free play with books, daily carpet time with books to share as a group

Writing:

- Free play with paper and a wide variety of mark making implements
- Modelling with playdough and clay, shaving foam etc
- Exploring shapes and lines in sand trays/foam/rice etc
- Games involving left to right orientation drawing/movement to help develop this skill in readiness for Year 1 writing

Planning, recording and assessment:

Topic planning takes place monthly. Activity planning occurs on a weekly or daily basis depending on where our child-led/child-centred approach leads us. It is ensured that Language Development is considered in all our planning. Staff select a specific activity for the children to use during free play - items are rotated so that all resources are used providing a broad experience for all the children - all planning has language development opportunities and outcomes highlighted for all staff.

Staff can observe the children informally and records of such observations are made in our Seesaw Learning Journal or on 'post-its' (which are photographed and uploaded onto Seesaw at a later point in the day) and shared in the daily evaluation meetings. Any issues/concerns are added to our fortnightly/three weekly 'Actions for Specific Children' sheet for our daily attention.

This means that assessment of each child is ongoing through mixture of informal observation, interactions with the child, the use of our observation app and discussion during regular staff meetings. The information gathered is then used for our future planning of activities for each child.

Information gained through recording and assessment will be shared with parents, other school staff and outside agencies as appropriate.

Through our continuing good relationship with our local Speech and Language Team we now have good support mechanisms set up whereby they help us with ideas to support those who are presently receiving help from them/just been released. We use the HSC Public Health Information and referral guidance - 'Healthy Child, Healthy Future' as a guide to age-appropriate sounds/speech/receptive/expressive language prior to referral, in discussions with parents and in supporting those children whose needs have been highlighted. We continue to make use of the WellComm Language Screening toolkit to assess children's level of skill and to give them follow up support on specific areas.