

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experience things and ‘have a go’

Our adults will:

- provide children with ‘open ended resources’ things like cardboard tubes and boxes, buttons, sticks and stones which the children can use to make and design pictures, patterns and models.
- encourage children to think and talk about what they are going to do or make using the materials and resources provided.
- provide a commentary on the child’s play saying things like ‘I’ve noticed that you’re using all the blue blocks’ or ‘I can see you’re finding all the long tubes first’. This encourages children to develop their thinking and communicating skills.
- support children’s thinking by using a visual plan of the sequence of the day.
- provide a range of resources and the time and space for children to explore something that interests them over a period of time.
- join in children’s play and investigations showing a real interest.
- involve children in making decisions about simple experiments, for example ‘What should we feed the plants to help them to grow?’ ‘How will we know if one plant is growing faster than the other?’
- use non-fiction books and on-line research to help children follow their interests.

Active Learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements

- supportive routines and positive nurturing relationships with adults gives children the security to explore their ideas and play with confidence. Using language like ‘Could you try?’, ‘I wonder if..?’ and specific praise ‘I like the way you..?’
- give children lots of opportunities to revisit learning and make connections by repeating activities.
- support children to keep on trying when things are difficult.

Creative and Critical Thinking – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

- making suggestions and offering ideas without taking over the play or activity. Asking questions like ‘I wonder if...?’, ‘Shall we try...?’, ‘Do you think...?’
- providing opportunities at review time for children to reflect on their learning with questions like ‘I wonder what you were thinking when you...’, ‘How would you do that now?’ and sharing children’s pride in their achievements.
- support children to make links to previous learning with questions such as ‘Do you remember when..?’

- pose real problems like finding the best material to help things stick together, or how to share 2 oranges between 5 people. Help children to develop and extend their ideas through conversations including 'how', 'why', things happen and 'what might happen next '

- encourage children to think of their own ideas and explanations by sharing an experience together. This could be looking at snails in the garden or the park, asking what is the same and what is different about those found. Use IT or non-fiction to find out more information about their interests.