



## Portman Nursery School Language Development Policy Reviewed December 2023

### **Objective**

Portman nursery is committed to fostering a supportive environment that enhances language development in children aged 2 to 5 years old. This policy aims to outline the strategies and principles we employ to promote effective communication skills, vocabulary expansion, and linguistic confidence among our young learners.

### **Key Principles:**

#### **1 Language-Rich Environment**

Our nursery is designed to be a language-rich space, filled with books, educational materials, and verbal stimuli to encourage children to engage with language in various contexts. A language-rich environment plays a pivotal role in the development of 2-5 year olds, serving as a crucial foundation for their cognitive and linguistic skills. During this formative period, children are rapidly acquiring language abilities, and exposure to a variety of words, expressions, and interactions stimulates their vocabulary growth. A language-rich setting fosters communication skills, enhances cognitive functions, and lays the groundwork for literacy. Moreover, it promotes social development by encouraging meaningful exchanges, boosting confidence, and facilitating a deeper understanding of the world. This immersive linguistic environment not only cultivates linguistic proficiency but also cultivates a love for language, setting the stage for lifelong learning and academic success.

#### **2 Play-Based Learning**

In tandem with a language-rich environment, play-based learning is instrumental for the holistic language development of 2-5 year olds. Play is a natural and engaging mode through which children explore, experiment, and express themselves. Whether engaging in imaginative role-playing, building with blocks, or participating in interactive games, children are actively using language to negotiate, describe, and create narratives. This dynamic process not only reinforces vocabulary but also hones essential communication skills. Play fosters an environment where language becomes a tool for collaboration and problem-solving, encouraging children to express their thoughts and emotions effectively. Integrating play into early education not only makes language acquisition enjoyable but also supports the development of cognitive, social, and emotional facets crucial for well-rounded linguistic competence. We prioritise play as a fundamental tool for language development, providing a rich context for communication, vocabulary acquisition, and social interaction.

#### **3 Individualised Approaches**

Recognising that each child is unique, we tailor language development strategies to meet individual needs, taking into account different learning styles and paces. An individualised approach to language development in the early years recognises and caters to the unique strengths, interests, and learning styles of each child. Children vary widely in their pace of language acquisition and comprehension abilities. Tailoring instruction to the individual needs of a child ensures that they receive targeted support and challenges that align with their developmental stage. This personalised approach fosters a positive learning experience, preventing frustration and promoting a sense of accomplishment. Moreover, it

allows educators and caregivers to identify specific areas that may require extra attention, facilitating early intervention for any potential language delays or difficulties. Ultimately, an individualised approach acknowledges the diversity in children's linguistic journeys, maximizing their potential for successful and confident language development.

#### **4 Parental Involvement**

We actively involve parents in the language development process, providing resources and suggestions for extending language learning beyond the nursery setting. Parental involvement in language development during the early years is pivotal as parents serve as the primary influencers in a child's linguistic environment. Regular interaction and communication with parents expose children to a rich and diverse vocabulary, enhancing their language acquisition. Additionally, shared activities like reading, storytelling, and conversations create meaningful opportunities for language exploration. Parental involvement not only reinforces the importance of language but also nurtures a positive attitude towards communication. Furthermore, it establishes a strong foundation for literacy skills by instilling a love for reading and learning. The supportive role of parents in language development ensures a seamless integration of language learning into a child's daily life, fostering a robust linguistic foundation that significantly influences their cognitive and social development.

#### **5 Multilingual Awareness**

Embracing diversity, we acknowledge and respect various languages spoken by children in our nursery. We encourage multilingual experiences and aim to incorporate cultural diversity into language activities. Multilingual experiences in the early years offer numerous cognitive, linguistic, and socio-cultural benefits for language learning. Exposure to multiple languages from an early age enhances a child's cognitive flexibility and problem-solving skills. It has been shown to positively influence executive functions, such as task-switching and working memory. Moreover, multilingualism promotes a deeper understanding of language structure and grammar, as children naturally compare and contrast different linguistic systems.

#### **6 Storytelling and Reading:**

Regular storytelling and reading sessions are integral to our curriculum, fostering a love for literature, expanding vocabulary, and enhancing comprehension skills. Storytelling is crucial for language development as it engages multiple aspects of language, such as vocabulary, syntax and comprehension. It exposes individuals to a variety of words, sentence structures, and ideas, fostering language acquisition and cognitive skills. Additionally, storytelling enhances listening skills, encourages conversation, and promotes a deeper understanding of narrative structures, all of which contribute to overall language proficiency.

#### **7 Role of the Adult**

In our nursery school, practitioners play a vital role in developing language skills in children. They serve as language models, providing rich and varied vocabulary through conversation, reading, and storytelling. Adults also facilitate language development by encouraging communication, asking open-ended questions, and actively listening to children's responses. Creating a language-rich environment, promoting social interactions, and using supportive gestures and Makaton contribute to a positive language-teaming atmosphere. Ultimately, the adult's guidance and interactions significantly influence a child's language acquisition and communication abilities in the nursery.

## **8 Curriculum and Planning**

At Portman Nursery School we use our annual curriculum plan and weekly planning for language development. This supports practitioners to provide a comprehensive learning experience that scaffolds linguistic progression. Our curriculum incorporates age-appropriate activities that stimulate language acquisition, encompassing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. It aligns with developmental milestones, recognising the varying pace at which children acquire language.

Our planning integrates diverse and engaging materials, including books, interactive games, and real-world experiences to cater to different learning styles. Furthermore, Portman's curriculum encourages a language-rich environment, promoting social interaction, and incorporates play-based learning ensuring a holistic approach to linguistic development. Regular assessments and adjustments in planning are made based on individual progress. This is a crucial element of our work; addressing specific needs and fostering a supportive environment that empowers children to thrive in their language journey.

### **Implementation:**

#### **1 Observation and Assessment:**

Regular observation and assessment of each child's language development milestones will inform our teaching strategies, allowing us to address specific needs and celebrate achievements. This is observed in line with the nursery's annual curriculum plan that addresses typical language development progression.

#### **2 Professional Development:**

Our staff engages in continuous professional development to stay informed about the latest research and best practices in early childhood language development, ensuring a high standard of care and education.

#### **3 Speech and Language Support:**

Children identified with speech or language delays will receive targeted support through collaboration with speech therapists or specialist, ensuring early intervention for optimal development.

#### **4 Communication with Parents:**

Transparent communication with parents regarding their child's language development progress, milestones, and areas for improvement is a priority. Regular parent-teacher conferences and open communication channels are established.

#### **5 Inclusive Practices:**

We embrace inclusivity by adapting our language development strategies to accommodate children with diverse abilities, ensuring that all children have equitable opportunities for linguistic growth.

### **Review and Revision:**

This language development policy will be regularly reviewed and revised to align with the evolving needs of our nursery community and current best practices in early childhood education.