

Portman Nursery School's Teaching and Learning Policy
Reviewed December 2023

"We must give enormous credit to the potential and the power that children possess. We must be convinced that children, like us, have stronger powers than those we have been told about, powers which we all possess – us and children, stronger potential than we give them credit for. We must understand how, without even realising it, we make so little use of the energy potential within each of us".

Loris Malaguzzi

Introduction:

This policy outlines the principles and practices governing teaching and learning at Portman Maintained Nursery School. Our commitment is to provide a supportive, inclusive, and stimulating environment that fosters the holistic development of each child. This policy is to make clear how we believe young children learn and how the adults support and extend that learning through teaching. We recognise that children have enormous potential. We aim to nurture every child's potential and develop strong, confident, independent learners connected to the world and the people around them. Adults and children learn new things every day throughout their lives; it is an active and participatory experience.

We believe that:

"A competent child is one who has an adult who views her as such, the level of expectation is the determining factor."

Carlina Rinaldi 2000

1. Aims and Objectives:

At Portman Nursery school we aim to create a nurturing environment that promotes the physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development of each child. Delivering a curriculum that is age-appropriate, inclusive, and aligned with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework. Rooted in our pedagogy are the principle of characteristics of effective learning....curiosity, engagement, and a sense of purpose. This embroils children being actively involved in the learning process, with a focus on exploration and inquiry. Flexibility and adaptability are key, allowing learners to respond to challenges, make connections, and apply knowledge in diverse contexts. We actively encourage reflective thinking playing a vital role, inspiring individuals to assess their progress, understand their strengths and areas for growth, and set meaningful goals.

Effective learners also demonstrate resilience, embracing setbacks as opportunities for learning and persisting in the face of challenges. Collaboration and communication skills are fostered, enabling learners to work effectively with others, share ideas, and contribute to a dynamic and supportive learning community. Ultimately, effective learning goes beyond the acquisition of facts; it empowers individuals to think critically, problem-solve, and apply their understanding to real-world situations.

2. Implementation:

We encourage a love for learning through play-based learning experiences, exploration, and inquiry. Practitioners at Portman take into account the uniqueness of each child's previous experiences and be a way of helping children to make connections in their learning. We acknowledge that young children can tackle some very complex, lifelong issues, when provided with the right physical and emotional environment (see appendix 1) and we believe that the questions children ask when supported by sensitive adults are as important as the answers given by adults and more experienced learners.

It is our belief that educators serve as crucial play partners, playing a pivotal role in children's holistic development. By actively engaging in play alongside children, educators create a supportive environment that fosters social, emotional, and cognitive growth offering guidance, encourage exploration, and modelling positive behaviours. This

teaching and learning ethos contributes to the development of crucial skills such as communication, problem-solving, and cooperation. Through these interactions, educators gain valuable insights into each child's unique strengths and needs, allowing for tailored and responsive instruction. Moreover, the bond formed between teachers and students during play enhances the overall learning experience, building trust and a sense of security that lays a solid foundation for a child's lifelong love of learning.

Principles of Early Year's Education at Portman Maintained Nursery School:

- **Children feel safe and secure**
 - Children, their parents and practitioners must develop positive relationships based on trust, and respect for one another.
- **Children are able to initiate their own learning**
 - Children need a stimulating environment in which resources are easily accessible and well organised, an environment where the learning experiences are open ended.
- **Children are able to use all their senses**
 - Adults recognise that young children are active learners who use movement and all their senses to learn.
- **Children have time to explore ideas and interests in depth**
 - Children need time to explore, to be involved in the process of learning. Children's own interests are known and reflected in the resources and experiences on offer.
- **Adults recognise that children learn in different ways and different rates.**
 - They use this knowledge to support each child in their individual learning styles.
- **Children make links in their learning**
 - Making links in learning is the basis of creativity and becoming an effective learner
- **Children have opportunities for creative and imaginative play activities that promote the development and use of language.**
 - These experiences also provides them with opportunities to explore their own and others' responses to the world of emotions.

3. Curriculum:

At Portman Nursery School our annual curriculum plan is designed to meet the individual needs, interests, and abilities of each child. It will encompasses a broad range of experiences, including both child-initiated and adult-led learning experiences. Through our curriculum

4. Inclusion and Diversity:

At Portman Nursery School we are committed to promoting equality, valuing diversity, and creating an inclusive learning environment.

A Child Centred Approach –

We employ a child-centred approach that places the individual needs, interests, and development of each child at the forefront of the educational process. In this approach, educators recognise that children are active participants in their own learning journey. The curriculum and teaching strategies are tailored to accommodate various learning styles and paces, allowing children to explore, inquire, and engage in activities that resonate with their unique preferences. This approach values the importance of fostering independence, critical thinking, and decision-making skills. By prioritising the child's perspective, a child-centred approach creates a nurturing environment that not only addresses academic development but also cultivates social and emotional well-being, promoting a love for learning that extends beyond the classroom.

Special Educational Needs and Inclusion -

Cultural Differences -

Cultural differences significantly influence teaching and learning dynamics here at Portman, shaping the ways in which information is conveyed and absorbed. Recognising and respecting diverse cultural backgrounds is essential for effective education. Different cultural perspectives impact communication styles, expectations, and approaches to problem-solving. In a culturally responsive teaching environment, educators acknowledge and incorporate varied traditions, languages, and learning preferences. This not only enhances students' sense of identity and belonging but also promotes a more inclusive and equitable learning experience. Moreover, understanding cultural differences allows educators to adapt teaching strategies, fostering a more effective and supportive educational environment where students from diverse backgrounds can engage, learn, and thrive.

4. Partnership with Parents/Carers:

We recognise the importance of a strong partnership between educators and parents/carers

Home learning

Enrichment

We adopt an approach that encourages learning beyond the classroom learning, including trips and experiences like forest school. We recognise how enriching children's experiences and weaving cultural capital opportunities into our curriculum plays a vital role in the early years. Trips provide real-world contexts for learning, stimulating curiosity and expanding children's horizons beyond the classroom. Forest school, in particular, encourages hands-on exploration of nature, fostering a connection with the environment and promoting physical and emotional well-being. These experiential learning experience not only enhance academic knowledge through consolidating concepts but also develop crucial life skills, such as problem-solving, teamwork, and resilience. Enrichment learning creates memorable, multisensory experiences that ignite a passion for discovery, laying a foundation for lifelong learning and environmental stewardship in the formative years of a child's education.

5. Assessment and Monitoring:

5.1. Ongoing observations and assessments will be conducted to track each child's progress.

5.2. Regular review meetings will be held with parents to discuss their child's development and set future goals.

6. Staff Development:

6.1. Staff will be provided with continuous professional development opportunities to enhance teaching practices and stay informed about the latest educational research.

6.2. Regular staff meetings will facilitate collaboration and sharing of effective teaching strategies.

Role of the Adult

Children and families can expect high-quality first teaching as the cornerstone of effective education here at Portman Nursery School. emphasizing the importance of providing a strong foundation for all students. It involves skilled and knowledgeable educators who deliver engaging, differentiated lessons that cater to diverse learning styles. In a high-quality first teaching approach, instructional strategies are thoughtfully planned to accommodate various abilities, ensuring that each student has the opportunity to grasp key concepts. Clear communication, effective classroom management, and a positive learning environment are integral components, fostering a culture

of curiosity and respect. By prioritizing excellence in initial instruction, educators lay the groundwork for successful academic outcomes, creating an inclusive and supportive atmosphere where every learner can thrive.

- To support the child in developing positive dispositions and attitudes to learning.
 - To be flexible, creative and playful.
 - To know the child, their familial context and their place in the nursery, sufficiently well to plan experiences that promotes their individual learning and development.
 - To collaborate with parents as partners and engage in outreach support beyond the classroom that focuses on a child's learning.
 - To provide children with opportunities to make meaningful choices and time to explore their world through active involvement.
 - To engage with children and share in their explorations sensitively, intervening with resources or questions to extend their learning or to sustain their interest.
 - To offer children the choice of participating in large group activities, small groups or in solitary activity.
- **To make physical and human resources easily available to children changing them as appropriate to provide a range of stimulating experiences.**
 - **To make systematic observations of individual children's learning and recording these in a way that provides information for future planning.**
 - **To understand and view positively their influence on children's learning.**
 - **To be intellectually curious.**

10. To have high expectations of every child's ability to learn.

11. To achieve a reasonable match between the learner's current level of understanding and skill and the new learning presented. To provide each learner with the optimal level of challenge and interest.

12. To match the teaching style to the child and the task.

7. Learning Environment:

At Portman Nursery School, we view the learning environment as a powerful determinant of teaching and learning outcomes, shaping the overall educational experience. A well-designed and positive environment fosters a sense of safety, belonging, and engagement, providing a foundation for effective teaching and learning. Varied and stimulating materials contribute to a rich sensory experience, supporting cognitive development and creativity. We adopt an approach that encompasses flexible spaces accommodating diverse learning styles and foster collaboration, while organised and clutter-free settings promote focus and productivity. Additionally, a positive atmosphere encourages open communication and positive relationships between teachers and students. The learning environment is not merely a backdrop but an active participant in the educational process, influencing motivation, behaviour, and the overall quality of the teaching and learning journey.

8.1. Adequate resources and age-appropriate facilities will be provided to support effective teaching and learning.

8.2. Regular maintenance and upgrades will be undertaken to ensure a stimulating and safe learning environment.

School readiness:

School readiness, to Portman, extends beyond academic preparedness; it encompasses the development of character and resilience in young learners. We aim to nurture values in children such as perseverance, kindness, and responsibility, laying a strong foundation for positive social interactions within the school community. Resilience, is an essential trait for navigating challenges, equips children with the emotional and cognitive tools to cope with new environments and diverse learning experiences. Fostering resilience involves encouraging a growth mind set, teaching problem-solving skills, and nurturing self-confidence. By emphasising resilience in early education, we not only prepare children for academic success but also empower them with the enduring qualities needed to adapt, collaborate, and thrive throughout their educational journey and beyond.

Review:

This Teaching and Learning Policy will be reviewed annually, involving staff, parents, and relevant stakeholders to ensure its ongoing relevance and effectiveness. Regular assessments and observations will inform curriculum planning, ensuring continuous development.

The Role of the Adult

- **To support the child in developing positive dispositions and attitudes to learning.**

- **To be flexible, creative and playful.**
- **To know the child, their familial context and their place in the nursery, sufficiently well to plan experiences that promotes their individual learning and development.**
- **To treat parents as partners and engage in outreach.**
- **To provide children with opportunities to make meaningful choices and time to explore their world through active involvement.**
- **To engage with children and share in their explorations sensitively, intervening with resources or questions to extend their learning or to sustain their interest.**
- **To offer children the choice of participating in large group activities, small groups or in solitary activity.**
- **To make physical and human resources easily available to children changing them as appropriate to provide a range of stimulating experiences.**
- **To make systematic observations of individual children's learning and recording these in a way that provides information for future planning.**
- **To understand and view positively their influence on children's learning.**
- **To be intellectually curious.**

10.To have high expectations of every child's ability to learn.

11.To achieve a reasonable match between the learner's current level of understanding and skill and the new learning presented. To provide each learner with the optimal level of challenge and interest.

12.To match the teaching style to the child and the task.

13.To support the child in making connections between ideas and to help the child to reflect on his/her learning.

APPENDIX 1

The Essential Questions that Adults and Children will Ask of Themselves and Each Other Throughout their Lives.
(from Howard Gardner 1994)

Identity and History

Who am I? Where do I come from? Who is my family? What is the group to which I belong? What is the story of that group? Of other groups? Who are the other people around me, and in other parts of the world? How are they similar to and different from me? How do they look? What do they do? What is their story?

Relations to others

How should you treat other people? How should they treat you? What is fair? What is moral? How do you cooperate? How do you handle conflicts? Who is the boss and why?

My place in the world

Where do I live? How did I get there? How do I fit into the universe? What will happen when I die?

The psychological world

What is my mind? Do others have minds? Are they like mine? What are thoughts dreams and feelings? Where do my emotions come from? How can I handle them? How do I remember things? How do I communicate?

The biological world

What about other creatures? What does it mean to be alive? Dead? Do animals think? What about plants? How are animals related to one another, to the world of plants, to humans? Is there a substance of life? How is it created? Is it immortal?

The physical world

What is the world made up of? Why do things move? What do we know about the sun, the stars the waters, the rocks-their origins, their fates?

Forms, patterns, sizes

Why do things look and feel the way that they do? What regularities are there in the world? How do they come about? What is big, biggest? How can you tell?