Date Ratified: Date to be Reviewed: Signed: ……..
Chair of Governors

Love to Learn and Learn to Love in God's World

Hawkesley Church Primary School

PLAY POLICY

"Children through play are unravelling the world at their own pace, savouring new experiences as they unfold, reconstructing and revising them. Essentially the child is in control. This active exploration, this involvement and the sense of ownership of the activity and experience enables the child to feel sustained and satisfied."
Heaslip(1994)

Rationale

Play is a vital component of children's lives, without which their potential for healthy, mental and physical development is undermined. It provides the mechanism for the children to gain mastery over their world and is an important medium through which skills are developed and practised. Play is essential for physical, emotional and spiritual growth, intellectual and educational development and acquisition of social and behavioural skills.

Play is children working alone, with other children or working with adults engaged in a wide range of activities from all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Play is about learning through being active.

The purpose of play is:

- It's fun, rewarding and complete in itself.
- It meets the needs of individual children – their stage of development, religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background.
- It offers choices and involves freedom of movement and expression.
- It is about doing and experiencing something not necessarily about achieving a specific result.
- It enables children to take the lead and to organise and control their own development in their own way.
- Children can express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Aims and Objectives

We believe:

- Learning is holistic and for the young child is not compartmentalised under subject headings.
- The environment should be stimulating and enabling where all children and their play experience is valued.
- Children learn best through first-hand experiences.
- Play draws on what the children already know and can do and enables them to master what is new.
- Play enables children to apply existing knowledge and to practise their skills.
- There should be opportunities for adult-led as well as child-initiated play.
- For children there are no distinctions between work and play.
- Play offers children opportunities to explore feelings and relationships, ideas and materials, connections and consequences.
- Play extends children's attention skills and persistence, especially the capacity to concentrate on their own play or on group tasks.
- Play promotes positive attitudes and dispositions towards learning.
- Play has many possible but no prescriptive outcomes.
- Play challenges children and offers them the chance to learn in breadth and depth.
- Play empowers children to make choices, to solve problems and to be independent in their learning.
- Play encourages children to struggle to take risks and to become resilient as learners.
- Play presents no barriers to children because of their culture, language, abilities or gender.

Management

The Head Teacher ensures that the Senior Management and Governing Body are aware and support the need for a play curriculum.

Play at Hawkesley is built into the learning Goals. Both Nursery and Reception are arranged into several areas that are organised for the children to initiate play. There are also play activities planned on a weekly basis that are related to an adult-led stimulus.

Each day children experience adult-led activities as well as child-led activities. The timetable supports opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors. Both the Nursery and the Reception classes have their own outdoor area which is used to develop gross motor skills and other areas of the curriculum, e.g. Numeracy, Literacy and Knowledge and Understanding of the World.

Organisation and Resources

All practitioners are involved in planning and adult-led activities are inter-changeable. All practitioners are timetable throughout the week to observe play and this is recorded for assessment and planning purposes. Adults are involved in play activities and informal observations are recorded as and when necessary.

Resources are organised to enable children to make informed choices and to take responsibility for tidying away.
Resources are labelled and stored in categories, where space permits. The role play areas are resourced to provide opportunities for children to be creative and also to develop their literacy and numeracy skills.
Resources for outside play are stored in the shed.

The Foundation Stage has its own budget which is the responsibility of the Foundation Stage Co-ordinator.

Learning and Teaching

Practitioners aim to nurture and build upon children's natural energy, enthusiasm and curiosity in order to help pupils learn and achieve. Play is the natural medium through which children learn and therefore play is the medium through which the curriculum is experienced. (Please refer to Foundation Stage Policy).

Equal Opportunities

Within the Nursery and Reception classes there are resources in use that reflect the different cultures of children. These include books, dressing up clothes/role play utensils, etc. Many adult-led activities also reflect the different cultures. Throughout the year various festivals are discussed and celebrated with the children. We ensure that the role play areas reflect interests for both boys and girls and practitioners ensure that there is equal access to all areas of the curriculum for both genders through observation, monitoring and review of play activities.

Special Educational Needs

Play is organised so that every child has equal access regardless of their ability level. Furniture is arranged so that children can move easily from one activity to another and children are encouraged to look for and use clear routes. Provisions in the Nursery have recently been upgraded to include a Special Needs room which includes a changing bed, shower and toilet. The Reception toilets are currently being reviewed and upgraded to include a Special Needs room.

Assessment and Recording

Observation of children at play is critical in order to have evidence to inform future planning by challenging, extending and supporting the child's development. These observations are recorded as part of ongoing evidence of the children's development. Photographic evidence is kept in the children's individual 'Portfolio' which the children annotate and these books are shared with the children and their parents.
In Reception, assessments are used to group the children for various activities including reading, writing and numeracy.

Monitoring, Evaluating and Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly. An evaluation of play and its effect on children's learning is an on going process reviewed by all Foundation Stage practitioners.

Draft Policy written April 09 by Paula Bellamy

Approved by Governors:_____

Review date September 2010