

## **Independent Learning Policy**

### **Introduction**

This is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for developing independent learning at Cambridge Nursery Federation, following the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. We respect children as independent learners and expect them to take responsibility for their own learning. Independent Learning is important because in order to become confident and effective learners who are able to make the most of educational opportunities, children need to become self regulating, and able to take responsibility for and ownership of their own learning. Research concerned with meta-cognition (i.e. awareness and knowledge about our own thinking) also shows this aspect of learning to be very important in a child's intellectual and emotional development. The emphasis on Independent Learning is to develop positive attitudes within the children towards themselves as learners and their capabilities as independent thinkers and problem solvers.

### **Aims**

At Cambridge Nursery Federation, we follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. Our aim is that children will start to:

- Follow their own interests (with adult support when necessary)
- Plan their own tasks and goals, find resources independently and develop own ways of carrying out tasks
- Reflect on their own learning and capabilities
- Have the confidence to try new tasks and seek help appropriately
- Use language modelled in the classroom for their own purposes and adopt ways of working that have been modelled for their own purposes
- Ask questions, suggest answers and make reasoned choices and decisions
- Be aware of the feelings of others, help and comfort their peers and speak about their own behaviour in order to resolve problems with peers
- Work co-operatively with their peers, share and take turns without adult support
- Be prepared for school and for future education

### **Planning for Independent Learning**

- Half term whole staff planning meetings are held at which I.L. is discussed to ensure consistency of approach and expectations
- Plans that include specific learning intentions are drawn up and shared
- Staff meetings are regularly used to revisit and discuss individual questions and ideas and appropriate whole staff approaches are shared.

### **Learning**

The predominant modes of working in I.L. are co-operative class group teaching, circle times, small group activities, discussion with individuals and through informal, spontaneous teaching and learning. Small group activities may be used to support targeted children, for

example to develop conflict resolution or confidence to make choices and decisions. Staff plan for and resource both the indoor and outdoor areas to facilitate the above modes. A range of practices and activities within the classroom include:

- Giving children roles and responsibilities
  - carrying attendance folder to the office
  - select and help prepare fruit for snack
- Establishing routines and procedures which facilitate children's independent activity
  - wear an apron when appropriate and replace it
  - put their finished pictures and models away in the correct place
  - find their name cards on arrival and place them on the name boards
  - Put on/take off their outdoor clothes and replace them on their coat peg
  - Put waterproof boots on when it's raining outside, and replace them afterwards
  - Change into dry clothes from a selection in the washroom area
- Giving children opportunities to make choices and decisions
  - range of structured and unstructured play opportunities
  - group discussions about developing new activities
  - ways of carrying out activities and overall organisation of the classroom
- Involving children in discussions about classroom rules and procedures
- Giving children the time to develop and complete activities to their own satisfaction
  - free flow activities between classroom and garden
- Providing opportunities and support for children to initiate and develop their own tasks and activities
- Providing opportunities for children to work collaboratively in small groups; to teach one another; to talk about their learning
  - discussions of plans of activities
  - reviews of activities undertaken
  - selection of work for special books
- Providing imaginative play opportunities which give real purposes for language, literacy and numeracy activities
  - office
  - use of puppets
  - role-play areas

### **Assessment & Monitoring**

Formative assessment is used to monitor the progress of individual pupils in I.L. and is carried out informally by staff through daily observation in order to identify each child's progress. Records for individual children may contain dated notes on notable incidents or achievements both inside and outside the classroom environment, in addition to information in their Early Years Foundation Stage Assessment Folder. Daily observations ensure that we constantly re-evaluate the learning environment, listen to the children's voice and are reflective about the opportunities that we are planning for the children.

### **Working with Parents and Families**

Reporting to parents is carried out through informal discussion on a day-to-day basis, negotiated interviews and through information shared in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Copies of these are sent to each child's Primary School.

Reporting in I.L. will focus on each child's:

- Confidence in themselves as a learner
- Ability to initiate and carry out tasks independently
- Social and emotional self-management

The Cambridge Nursery Federation Governing Body is committed to promoting quality and diversity, providing an inclusive and supportive environment for all. We are committed to equal opportunities and the promotion of non-discriminatory practices in all aspects of work undertaken within the Federation.

The Governing Body is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. We expect and require all members of the school community to share this commitment.

Date: Spring 2017

Review: Spring 2019