

## Ballymena Nursery School

### Children are Active in their own Learning

Every child has the right to an education that develops their talents. This education must nurture a child's respect for themselves, others and their environment.

**(UNCRC Article 29)**

Children are encouraged to be active participants in their own learning and they are aware of expectations and targets which are set for them personally and also in small/large group sessions. We employ strategies to empower the children in our school and give them a voice which is heard.

- Children have opportunities to influence the direction of our planning through discussion at small group activities.
- Children independently choose the resources they wish to use, in all areas of nursery.
- Children are aware that there is structure to their day and learning opportunities and intentions by following the visual time lines and daily visual schedule.
- When a child of appropriate ability approaches an activity, staff encourage them to think and verbally communicate their plans/intentions, thus empowering the child to set a personal target.
- Children who are not at the stage of being able to think ahead and plan their actions are given a commentary on what they have done or experienced. They are given praise and support at the end of an activity.
- Through setting up situations where rewards are given for positive behaviour and achievement, children become aware of the desirable consequences of such behaviour often challenge themselves to achieve highly in order to achieve positive recognition.
- The concepts and language of 'respect', 'rights' and 'responsibilities' enables the children to reflect on, modify and respond to their own and others behaviour. Children are aware that they have the right to be looked after and that they in turn have responsibilities. To be actively aware and involved in meeting their own and others needs empowers the children to make conscious decisions with carefully considered consequences.

- When staff are making observations of the children's work, e.g. photographs are taken on the ipad for Tapestry, children are told why and shown the photographs on the ipad to involve the children and respect their efforts and celebrate their achievements.
- Through regular Tapestry notifications informing parents of their child/childrens' progress, experiences and targets, the children have a greater chance of being encouraged to extend and also discuss their learning at home.
- Children are encouraged to verbally evaluate their work and are provided with opportunities to modify processes and outcomes if appropriate.
- By working with children on their self esteem and confidence, children learn to believe in their right to take ownership of their own learning and express their views.
- Through free play the children have their independence fostered and are empowered to make personal choices.
- Story, song and rhyme times and other focused activities often begin by making children aware of the session's expectations:- Give me 5/ story room rules/ Jenny Mosley's Golden Rules. Children are encouraged to take active roles within the sessions, thus allowing the development of knowledge and skills within an open and engaging environment.

All staff believe in the fundamental right of children to participate in and access their learning independently and with confidence.

- Children are allowed to make independent choices about where they work and when they access different learning experiences. This independence encourages decision-making skills and provides freedom of choice for children to control their learning. Clearly this is monitored and staff react strategically in order to encourage a broad use of the curriculum, without removing this free choice.
- Personalised learning is fundamental and embedded into the provision and practices within the nursery.
- Our strong home school links support the individual learning of the children through our weekly lending library and regular loan of resources and equipment such as scissors/jigsaws/ or turn taking games for parents to use at home.
- Children become positive role models for each other which also enables all children to be aware of what they may be striving to achieve.

- As the focus of interest and the play resources change regularly the stimuli, motivation; curiosity and challenges offered to the children ensure a freshness and a broad balanced curriculum.
- Children with SEN or additional needs including EAL are treated with equality and are encouraged to take an independent and confident role in their learning, irrespective of age/stage/ or ability.

As a school which places the rights of children at the centre of everything it does, we spend a great deal of time respecting the needs of every individual child in school - personal, social, emotional, physically, linguistically and morally. Each curriculum area is taught with the needs of every child at its core and all staff in school acknowledge the responsibility they have to provide a curriculum that is creative and stimulating. This curriculum nurtures all children and allows them to be successful and proud of all their achievements.