



*Rebecca Cheetham Nursery
and Children's Centre*

EYFS / LEARNING POLICY

Compiled by: RC SLT using LA guidance

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EYFS / Learning Policy

1. PURPOSE

We at Rebecca Cheetham support the view of scientific evidence, child development work and brain studies, that young children learn best through play. Play is the best means of learning for young children, as they are naturally drawn to it and want to get involved. They often seem most at ease when in a play situation. Lally (1991) talks in terms of play being the “perfect vehicle” because children are naturally motivated through it. She suggests that play can offer children opportunities to “explore and discover, construct, repeat and consolidate, represent, create, imagine and socialise.” This approach to the Early Years Foundation Stage forms the basis of our practice and is at the heart of all we do at Rebecca Cheetham.

2. SCOPE

Rebecca Cheetham is an inclusive school and children’s centre where we offer a rich and stimulating learning environment in which children can reach their full potential. We encourage all our children to be creative and develop leadership skills through a mixture of independent and adult focus activities.

Through our partnership working with our parents and through our Children’s Centre we also aim to support parents and carers in understanding the importance of play.

The principles that underpin our practice

In order to create an environment which allows the children to develop as curious, explorative and creative learners, we believe that young children need:-

- ✓ Opportunities to play
- ✓ A flexible approach to learning opportunities
- ✓ Opportunities to develop strategies to support their mindfulness to encourage better mental health and develop a calm atmosphere in the provision.
- ✓ Time to play with few interruptions; if children know they have time to pursue activities they will be more motivated to concentrate, persevere and be successful.
- ✓ Space, as movement, is central to young children’s development and learning.
- ✓ Opportunities and support to communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems.
- ✓ Opportunities and support to work independently or in groups.
- ✓ Opportunities and support to enable them to think creatively and imaginatively.
- ✓ To express fears or relive anxious experiences in a safe environment.
- ✓ Opportunities to take risks and make mistakes.
- ✓ A wide range of activities and resources to choose both indoors and outdoors
- ✓ To be taught skills and knowledge and provided with opportunities to learn independently.
- ✓ An environment which is well organised, planned and resourced.

- ✓ Parents and practitioners working together.
- ✓ A setting where all children's experiences are valued and reflected in the environment.

3. CURRICULUM

3.1. Environment

Learning environments at Rebecca Cheetham are organised so that children have access to all of the seven areas of learning across a range of areas of provision:

Prime Areas

1. Communication and Language
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social, Emotional Development

Specific Areas

4. Literacy
5. Numeracy
6. Understanding the World
7. Expressive Arts and Design

Children move freely between indoors and outdoors making choices from child initiated activities and adult focused activities. Our adult focus activities encompass all aspects of the framework and are meant to be exciting introductions to activities planned in the provision. All resources are accessible, well-organised and labelled to enable children to be independent and replace after use. We have specific areas where children can make a mess, be quiet and reflective, concentrate, or be active and vigorous. We ensure that we use resources and equipment which reflect the diversity of traditions, cultures, beliefs and family. Interactive displays are used throughout the setting to simulate children's natural enquiry or to promote their knowledge; KWL boards what they know (K) about a particular topic, what they want to know (W), and at the end of the topic, what they have learnt (L) and floor books.

Adult Focus Activities

At Rebecca Cheetham, we strive to expose your children to all seven areas of the curriculum in a variety of ways. This is done through the activities and focus tasks we carefully plan, based around the children's interests and their next steps. All children are encouraged to engage in small group focus activities with their key person, where the real emphasis is on trying to make the sessions as enjoyable as possible so that learning becomes a joy. Whilst the topics and themes will change every half term, the onus is on the development of skills. We use the Development Matters framework and our school developed Learning Aspirations, in order to assist in this aim so we are clear on where children have started, where they are currently and where we want to take them next.

Outdoor play:

Young children are active physically, they need space to move freely and spontaneously, and they are not yet at the stage of sitting quietly to do their learning for long periods of time, but at the moving about and finding out stage. Their motor development is at a crucial stage and the outdoors seems the most natural place to ensure children have plenty of space. We operate an open system – where the children are free to explore inside and outside throughout their session. We plan for the outside space, in the same way we do inside areas, to harness the richness of the whole setting and covering all areas of learning.

We believe the outdoor area is crucial; many children have limited opportunity to play outdoors in a safe and secure environment. We maintain a high standard of outdoor provision through these key points:

- Where possible, outdoor resources are organised and labelled in a similar way to indoor resources so that children can make choices and tidy away easily.
- The outdoor area is divided into areas for different activities/learning bays
- The children have the opportunity to choose whether to play indoors or outdoors for a major part of the session
- There is always at least one adult focus planned for outdoors in the main nursery.
- Adults outside are expected to interact with the children responding to opportunities as they arise whilst keeping an overview of safety considerations.
- Adults value and are enthusiastic about learning outdoors in order to be strong role models and promote outdoor learning as a positive experience.
- Wellington Boots, rain coats, cover-alls and umbrellas are available to experience different weather conditions and environments.
- Staff reassure parents who are anxious about safety, and encourage appropriate clothing to keep warm and safe. As long as the children are dressed appropriately they play outdoors in all weathers.
- All children are encouraged to take part in the full range of outdoor experiences.

3.2 Assessment and Curriculum:

We follow the Early Years Development Matters Framework and our own school devised Learning Aspirations. We use our detailed knowledge of the children's achievements and best ways of learning to inform our planning. We also plan around core books. Every child has their own assessment portfolio which includes observations of learning (through evidence me iPad observations), work samples and an assessment tracker.

We complete regular assessments activities such as:-

- ✓ Planning time for staff to observe children, find out their interests and areas where they like to work
- ✓ Planning time for staff to support individual children based on their unique needs. Grouping children together for planning the next steps.
- ✓ Making sure that all adults work with all children in order to gain a complete picture of the children's achievements.
- ✓ Using a systematic routine to review the records each term.
- ✓ Share assessment findings with parents during parent conferences.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

Adults:

We believe that in order for children to develop their thinking and their play, effective adult interaction is vital. At Rebecca Cheetham, adults play alongside children, offering carefully thought out comments and questions in order to move the child's thinking on. All adult focussed activities are mostly play based experiences with adults facilitating a variety of different experiences for the children to explore; these focus tasks are based on the children's interests within the environment.

Adults are encouraged to :-

- ✓ Enjoy playing and learning with the children in their care
- ✓ make warm, sensitive relationships with children by taking time to tune into the children.
- ✓ show an interest in what children do and say in order to understand, appreciate and value them as individuals.
- ✓ understand individual children's interests and ways of learning
- ✓ spend time listening to children and responding to their needs.
- ✓ carefully model language that is developmentally appropriate for the child
- ✓ demonstrate sensitivity about when to join in play and when to retreat.
- ✓ support children by providing strategies to deal with difficulties such as sharing and making friends.
- ✓ follow our agreed practices for developing sustained, shared thinking.
- ✓ ensure that all activities are given the same status e.g. indoors/outdoors.
- ✓ sensitively intervene in children's play by offering skills and knowledge.
- ✓ sensitively intervene in children's play by asking challenging questions to extend and develop children's play.
- ✓ plan experiences to meet the children's needs based on ongoing recorded observations and assessments.
- ✓ observe and makes notes on all children and use the information gained from these observations to plan the next stages for individual and groups of children.
- ✓ discuss and share this information with colleagues on a regular basis.
- ✓ know and plan for their different responsibility each day.
- ✓ encourage the children to reflect on their learning.

5. WORKING WITH PARENTS AS PARTNERS

"Parents are children's first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development and learning" QCA.

How do we do this at Rebecca Cheetham?

- Staff show respect and understanding for the role of the parent in their child's education, working with parents of babies and upwards.
- Staff listen to parents' accounts of their child's development and any concerns they have.
- Arrangements for settling in are clear and flexible to give children time to become secure.

- **All** parents are made to feel welcome, valued and necessary through a range of opportunities.
- Knowledge and expertise of parents and other family adults are used to support the learning opportunities provided in the setting.
- Staff use a variety of ways to keep parents fully informed about the curriculum.
- Parents and staff talk about and record information about the child's progress.
- We encourage relevant learning and play activities continuing at home, and that parents share this information with key workers , via the 'Evidence Me' app to influence planning and provision.