Children's House Nursery School

Assessment and Curriculum Policy

Children's House Nursery School
Part of the Old Palace & Children's House Federation

Autumn 2024

We would like to start by thanking the team at Sheringham Nursery School in the London Borough of Newham for their work creating and developing their Curricular Goals. Much of this policy is based on this work.

Children's House Nursery School is a unique place to learn. We value the child's voice and foster a love for learning within a highly creative and exciting environment. Through positive relationships with children and families we promote a joy for life and learning. Our challenging environment ensures our adventurous children become resilient, reflective and respectful. Skillful staff support children to research their interests and deepen their knowledge, nurturing them to take their place in the wider world.

The Children's House child is an independent, communicative, confident, resilient, empathetic and joyful learner who is a co-collaborator in their unique learning journey.

- All children have the right to high quality teaching and learning.
- We want our children to make the most of every single day at Children's House and be ready for tomorrow.
- We recognise that children are unique, developing and learning at different rates and in different ways.
- We understand that well-being is at the heart of learning and thus, prioritise it above all else.
- We look at the characteristics of the *'Children's House child'* and ensure our provision and interactions support the development of these characteristics.
- We discuss the children's learning every day as a team, regularly with the children and share this discussion and develop it further with families.
- We want every child to leave here, equipped with the knowledge, skills and our Children's House Values so they can confidently manage their transition and continue their learning journey.

Overview of Curriculum

Children access a broad and balanced curriculum:

Learning at Children's House

- Learning is mostly play-based and takes place both indoors and outside.
- Children will access a balance of child-initiated and adult-led learning.
- We celebrate the knowledge, skills, interests and experiences the children arrive with and build upon these.
- Parental involvement is valued and we listen to and support families to help establish a high quality home learning environment.
- At Children's House we place great importance on the family and their involvement in their child's education: we involve families on school trips and visits, as well as workshops and celebration days in school.

We know our children, our families and our diverse community. We celebrate their uniqueness and the cultural capital children have.

We have adopted **8 Curricular Goals which were created and developed by the team at Sheringham Nursery School in the London Borough of Newham**. These are experiences which will challenge the children and support deeper learning. At Children's House Nursery School we work in a process led way: ensuring our children have access to these experiences over time, developing and deepening

their learning. We want to enable children to return to, rehearse, remodel and master their skills and knowledge.

Communication is key and across the nursery there is a focus on language and communication as well as vocabulary: on our learning boards, on displays and shared throughout sessions. This shared priority helps ensure children acquire language rapidly. We ensure our routines, experiences and environments support interactions.

Planning and Assessment

During a child's first term we focus on ensuring the Prime Areas are planned for. Key people and all staff prioritise getting to know their key children and families. Once we establish warm and loving relationships, we find children settle quickly and begin to thrive in nursery.

"I remember when Y started he was so shy but staff supported him and I cannot believe how much his confidence grew. Thank you for the time and care of the whole team."

Y's mum, Summer 2022

Our assessment starts with 1-2-1 Home Visits before children start school. Within **5 days we complete Baseline Assessment (on entry) in the Prime Areas for our 2 year olds and our 3-4 year olds.** We communicate with families how the setting process is going and may begin to notice whether a child needs extra help.

Once children are settled and accessing the nursery environment we begin to plan according to need and interests. For children who have settled quickly, we begin to look at the Curriculum Goals.

If children are learning in a different way, we carefully observe, watch and listen to them, communicating with the wider team about proactive ways we can support them. We utilise our strong and warm relationships with families to begin conversations and talk about how the child learns at home.

We are ambitious and inclusive for all children. We will always focus on what a child ***can*** do and build up from there, supporting them with a high quality environment, skilled and sensitive adults and perhaps additional interventions and resources.

Daily Evaluation Meetings happen each evening and focus on the learning across the nursery. The team discuss the adult led experiences and child initiated learning across all areas. We look at who was involved, what evidence we have and what the next steps are the following day. This ensures the whole team are able to target children, support and challenge each other and what provision and interactions we need the following day.

We carry out the **7 Week Assessment** for Prime and Specific Areas for our 3-4 year olds. For our 2 year olds we carry out the **Progress Check at 2** with families at this point. We discuss with the family how well their child is settling and begin to notice whether children may need extra help. Next steps such as routines, boundaries,

toilet training and communication may be prioritised. Families receive a written report.

Across the week this then feeds into our **Weekly Planning Meeting** and **Talking About Children Meeting** (where children are a focus for the whole team twice in the year). When a child is the focus child, key workers meet families to review progress and set new targets. Staff summarise the learning and the impact of it on children. As staff work in two week cycles in a space this ensures learning can be carried over, sustained and learning developed (and in some cases, mastered) over time. This joined-up planning ensures a broad and balanced curriculum is accessible to children constantly. The learning is displayed on a board in each space for families and visitors to see. **Deeper Learning** and **Vocabulary** is explicitly detailed to ensure it is in the forefront of our planning and provision.

Children have at least **two targets** which are personal to them and reviewed each term. Key workers meet with the head teacher each term to discuss these and demonstrate evidence of progress. We also meet with families each term to discuss these targets and develop them, supporting families with strategies to help at home. Children with additional needs follow the same system with their learning broken down into targets and shared with the wider team.

Increasingly the learning priorities will be on the continuum of the 8 Curricular Goals.

Teachers complete **termly data** for each child and this then is used with practitioners and the leadership team to check the attainment and progress of individual children as well as groups of children. This means we can take prompt action if children or groups are not making expected progress.

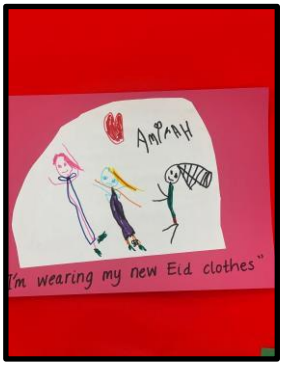
Well-being and involvement is assessed termly and discussed weekly as part of our planning and assessment process. We use the **Leuven Scales** to measure this.

Children's learning is collated in their **Special Books**: these contain significant learning moments, both child initiated and adult led. Children have access to their Special Book and regular opportunities are created for key workers and children to sit and share them, reflecting on learning and capturing talk and mark making. Special Books provide a rich and powerful resource to share at home, where children and their families can add to them. Each child is unique and their Special Books are too, detailing their individual learning journey during their time at Children's House Nursery School.

As well as a **broad and balanced curriculum** which is accessed through both **child initiated** and **adult led** experiences, children also have small group carpet sessions which are designed to meet the needs and **challenge** children according to their stage of development. These range from small language group sessions, which are very hands-on and visual to storytelling through music and Tales Toolkit or sharing more complex stories. We also have skilled practitioners who use Bucket Time and Intensive Interaction with groups as well as the Phonics Group in the spring and summer terms.

We ensure practitioners are able to assess and respond to children in the 'here and now' by being available, highly skilled and sensitive. Observing, watching and listening may be developed by the practitioner getting involved, joining the child, conversing with them and helping develop a skill or accomplish a task.

Although we have an 'open door' policy, we ensure families have opportunities to discuss settling, progress and support at home across the year. This ensures that dialogue with families is valued and communication about learning is prioritised. A **Leaver's Report** is then shared with parents and passed onto the Reception Class to aid a seamless transition through the EYFS.



Our **8 Curricular Goals** follow.

These cover the core experiences which we think are important for young children. We want to ensure children have many opportunities to access these experiences in a range of contexts, explore, play, revisit and for some children to master them.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">1. Settle in, thrive and become a confident learner</th></tr>
<tr><td>First milestone: children make a strong relationship with their key person. Increasingly, they separate confidently from their parent at the start of the session and become involved in their play. They use their key person as a ‘secure base’ throughout the session, ‘touching base’ as/when needed.
 </td><td>Where children need individualised and additional help, this will be offered sensitively and swiftly. Help includes: individual meetings with parents to map a way forward and discussions around home routines and any possible Early Help needed.

As children grow in confidence, they explore the nursery environment making choices. Children explore a wider range of experiences freely and sustain play for longer periods of time. They play alongside friends, sometimes collaboratively, taking turns. They will begin to cope with transition time. Use of All About Me books and Special Books is integral to this.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Second milestone: children take part in imaginative play, communicating and negotiating with their friends, taking turns and sharing.</td><td>As children’s engagement and perseverance grows, they select and organise their own resources for their self-directed learning. They begin to problem solve and are motivated to engage in challenging learning experiences. Children understand transition and begin to accept changes to routine occasionally.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Third milestone: children persevere with difficulties. They make comments about their learning in their Special Books and show pleasure/pride in what they have done.</td><td>As children play and learn more collaboratively, over longer time periods, they take part in more challenging experiences. They also talk about and reflect on their learning. They form bonds with peers and adults and share their interests and learning. Children join small story groups and Key Group Time.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Final milestone: children reflect on their learning through their Special Books. They think deeply about their learning, talking through their ideas and plans. Children talk about their development, recognising their progress and celebrating it. They talk about a range of emotions and are able to express their feelings.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"><u>Key Vocabulary:</u> happy, settled, joy, share, respect, independent, confident, choose, take turns, idea, think, kind, emotion, feeling, Children’s House Values, friend, special, key worker, Special Book, learning, have a go, keep going, persevere, remember: Can you tell me about your learning? What do you think? Show me.</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">2. To follow a recipe and make playdough.</td></tr>
<tr><td>First milestone: with adult support, children mix different ingredients, including: sand and water, flour and water to make simple playdough. They use the following tools: wooden spoons, sieves, scoops, rolling pins, cookie cutters and knives. They follow simple recipes in areas such as the mud kitchen.
 </td><td>As children take part in these experiences they become more skilled in using scoops (filling the scoop carefully to the top); they count the scoops as they tip them out; they use a wide range of different-sized buckets, tins and other containers. Children become confident in using tools at the snack table to prepare snacks. e.g. spreading butter on toast.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Second milestone: in a small group, children follow the steps of the playdough recipe with an adult. The adult draws children’s attention to the recipe card. With adult help, children use measures (teaspoon, tablespoon, cup etc) and tip in the ingredients. With adult help, they mix the ingredients and reflect on the process.</td><td>As children become more used to our cooking routines, the adult reduces their support for the group.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Third milestone: in small groups/pairs, children make playdough together - pairing more experienced and less experienced children together. The adult takes more of an observational role.</td><td>As children become more independent, there is minimal adult support as they follow recipe cards.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Final milestone: children follow the steps of the playdough recipe independently. They measure ingredients, mix them and create their batch of playdough. They may make decisions about colour and scent and they may begin to support their peers in making batches of playdough.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"><u>Key Vocabulary:</u> recipe, ingredients, measure, share, tools, taste, scoop, measure, spoon, cup, level, bake, independent, share, taste, smell, scent, blend, reaction, dissolve, heat, consistency, texture, mix, pour, bowl, knead, whisk, fold, stir, dye, flour, salt, oil, cream of tartar, pinch, oven, roll, yeast, rise, baker.</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">3. To communicate my needs, thoughts and feelings.</td></tr>
<tr><td>First milestone: Children use sounds in their play (brrrrrrrm for a toy car, animal sounds). Some may begin to use single words and signs to label or make requests. Children may play with sounds, imitating sounds and words. Children may point, lead and use their gaze to make requests or share interests. Children may use familiar phrases (more, bye bye, teddy, no).
 </td><td>With sensitive adult support: adults tuning into children, looking out for patterns of communication. Sharing joy when children say or sign words, echo back to them. Modelling high quality language and signing alongside key words. Valuing all family languages and ensuring at home visit we find out the rich variety of languages spoken. Introduce use of Now and Next Board, visual cards, visual timetable and objects, Sign Along signs as part of Total Communication.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Second milestone: Children will use short sentences, acquiring new words rapidly. Children are beginning to use words and phrases to communicate their needs: (all gone, water, go outside). Children may begin to talk about things that are not present.</td><td>Adults to ensure high quality language is modelled to children: giving choices, joining children in parallel play, narrating their play, echoing and extending language. Continuing use of Now and Next Board, visual cards and objects, Sign Along signs as part of Total Communication.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Third milestone: Children recall past events and learning and use sentences to talk about them. Children are beginning to use questions and speak using a range of tenses (played, playing, will play, play).
Children’s vocabulary reflects the breadth of their experience.</td><td>Adults available to converse with children but leaving space and time for children to start conversations. Having fun with words, asking open ended questions, narrating play, thinking aloud at story time, modelling problem solving.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Final milestone: Children use extensive vocabulary and explore new words. Children are beginning to use talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking, ideas, feelings and events. Children are confident in initiating conversations with peers and significant adults.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"><u>Key Vocabulary:</u> plan, design, construct, model, adapt, reflect, safety, research, fabric, tools, hammer, scissors, stapler, hacksaw, glue gun, hand drill, vice, clamp, idea, problem solve, join, attach, describe, embellish, materials, pipe cleaner, recycled, wood, plastic, card, paper, cardboard, shape, box.</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">4. To ride a bicycle.</td></tr>
<tr><td>First milestone:
Children are able to move around the garden by negotiating the space in a range of different ways including walking, running and climbing.
 </td><td>As children become more familiar with moving around a familiar setting they are able to identify obstacles and potential hazards.

They further strengthen their gross motor skills and also develop problem solving skills around negotiating space.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Second milestone: Children sit on a balance bike with both feet on the ground. They begin to move forward with the balance bike.

Children carry out maintenance checks on the bikes.</td><td>As children become better at co-ordinating and steering, they will be able to navigate challenges e.g. riding in and out of cones and over large wooden blocks.

Children will become familiar and use the correct names to identify the different features of a bike. They will learn to carry out safety checks on their bikes.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Third milestone: Children are able to balance and glide around the nursery safely avoiding any obstacles.

Children glide on a 2 wheeler pedal bike. They begin to use one foot to turn the pedal and manoeuvre the pedal bike safely around the garden.</td><td>Once children become confident at balancing, they scoot slowly along keeping one or both feet on the floor. They begin to use the handlebars to avoid obstacles and other children. Adults will further challenge children who master the balance bike by moving them onto the 2 wheeler pedal bikes. Children will begin to balance and glide along with their 2 wheeler pedal bikes.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Final milestone: children ride a balance bike. They are balancing with both feet off the ground and maintaining control by steering and being able to slow down or speed up. They can ride a balance bike safely around the garden. Some children will ride a 2 wheeler pedal bike. They will be able to balance and use the pedals to move the bike safely around the garden.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"><u>Key Vocabulary:</u> pedal, tyre, wheel, saddle, bike stand, handlebars, helmet, brake, chain, inflate, deflate, innertube, speed, space, pathway. maintenance, safe, environment, check list, perseverance, glide, pedal, mastered, pedestrian, spanner, oil, pump, allen key, spanner.</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">5. To create my own rhythmic patterns and respond to music.</th></tr>
<tr><td>First milestone: children respond to music by moving their whole bodies to sounds they enjoy, such as music or a regular beat. They join in with repeated actions, rhymes and songs. Children also explore sounds made with their voice, bodies, untuned and tuned percussion instruments and create sounds by banging, shaking or tapping.
 </td><td>Children develop an awareness of movement and body positions. They enjoy moving to music, joining in with rhymes/songs and exploring musical instruments.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Second milestone: children enjoy joining in with dancing and explore rhythmic sounds to make with their own hands, feet, bodies and voices; including silent rhythmic movements such as nodding and shaking heads, tapping shoulders, bending knees, kicking feet and waving hands. Children will accompany tunes using instruments and play the rhythm of songs.</td><td>Children begin to move rhythmically in response to the music they hear. They can use props to create different actions. Children will use percussion instruments to play the rhythm of songs and follow a beat.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Third milestone: children explore a wide range of music from different cultural backgrounds and can describe the sudden changes in rhythm and tempo. They also move around using a rhythm that fits the sound and beat they hear. Children follow/copy repeating rhythms with their movements or by using percussion instruments. Introduce rhythms involving beats and pauses, quicker and slower beats.</td><td>As children become more confident in themselves and the space they can follow simple repeating rhythms through dance or playing percussion instruments.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Final milestone: Children will create their own rhythmic patterns through dance or instrumental sounds. Children will move rhythmically to express ideas, feelings and characters, physically responding to changes in the music.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"><u>Key Vocabulary:</u> percussion, sound, instrument, tune, beat, rhythm, pitch, listen, feeling, respond, sing, tempo, musicality, movement, repeat, follow, action, song, pattern, high, low, fast, slow, timing.</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">6. To become a confident artist.</td></tr>
<tr><td>First milestone: Children explore printing using primary colours with ready mixed paint in trays.
 </td><td>Children explore printing with their hands and a range of tools; sponges, printing blocks, rollers and natural materials using a combination of primary colours in trays. Children begin to use keywords to label and describe the colours they have used and created.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Second milestone: Children begin to mix powder paint for printing. They select one primary colour. They add water to powder paint in a pot and explore creating the consistency to enable them to print or paint.

Children begin to mix single powder paint colours with water into a palette using a paint brush to mix their paint.</td><td>Children begin to explore creating various consistencies. They explore watery paint by adding more water, thick paint by adding more paint. They identify the appropriate consistency to enable them to print and paint.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Third milestone: Children follow instructions using a step-by-step visual card to mix powder paint. Children select two primary colours and use a paint brush to mix their powder paint and water in a paint palette. They learn to dab their paint brush into the powder paint, then to dab their paint brush into the water pot and mix into the paint palette. Children are introduced to colour wheels to explore the colour spectrum. They explore adding white powder paint to create different shades of colour. Children are provided with paint sample strips, postcards, artist images and books to explore colour and to inspire creating a range of shades.</td><td>Children talk about the colours they select to mix. They follow the visual steps to explore mixing single primary colours. They become more confident to mix two primary colours in a paint palette to create secondary colours. They add white powder paint to create lighter shades of colours and explore creating darker shades of the same colour. Children begin to describe the shades of colour they have created ‘purple; ‘light blue’, ‘lilac’.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Final milestone: Children organise their own resources to paint, selecting the thickness of their paint brush, paint palette, filling their water pot, choosing their paper size for their painting. Children confidently use powder paint using primary colours and white to create secondary colours and different shades of colour. Children are able to describe the colours they have created.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"><u>Key Vocabulary:</u> paint, powder, mix, palette, paint brush, water pot, create, easel, brush strokes, colour wheel, process, shade, primary colours, secondary colours, artist, blend, bristles, pattern, wet, dry. consistency, drying rack, wash up, prepare.</td></tr>
</table>

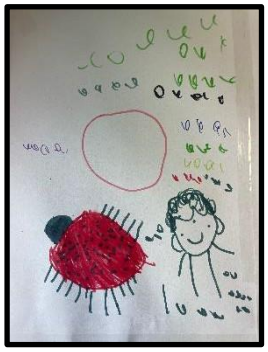
<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">7. To use my imagination to be a storyteller.</th></tr>
<tr><td>First milestone: children take part in pretend play, making up or developing a story.
 </td><td>Children may begin by pretend-playing on their own with small world toys like farm animals, wild animals, dinosaurs or play people. They begin to add sound effects, voices and act out everyday scenarios or past events from their family with the toys. They may put on a costume to become a superhero or another character. Over time, their play becomes more complex. They are able to play with other children, developing the play together. Use of open ended materials (boxes, tubes and fabric) to support this.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Second milestone: children take part in story time: developing listening and attention. They respond to the story and its features. Children engage in number rhymes with props and join in with the actions.</td><td>As children become more used to interactive reading, they ask questions and make links between what happens in the story and their own experiences. They may begin to guess what a character might feel, do or say next and make suggestions about the next part of the story.

Children join in with rhymes and songs e.g. repeating words or following actions. They may begin to notice words that rhyme and suggest their own rhyming words.

Children play with props to retell/make up their own stories. They may begin to use tone of voice, body language and expression in their role play.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Third milestone: children take part in telling a story using the Tales Toolkit approach with adult help or can create their own story of their day using a visual timetable. They begin to become familiar with the way stories are structured.</td><td>As children become more used to using the Tales Toolkit approach, they can increasingly take over and use the symbols and the props. They can make up their own story or ‘tell the story of their day in nursery’ with little prompting from the adult. They may begin to record their stories in marks and drawings or with simple story maps; either collaboratively with others or independently.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Final milestone: children use the Tales Toolkit materials to develop the character, setting, problem and solution for their story. They tell their story to one or more people. Children begin to act out their own story or other children’s stories using the Helicopter story approach. https://helicopterstories.co.uk/ https://talestoolkit.com/</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"><u>Key Vocabulary:</u> books, story, pictures, rhymes, songs, audience, act out, title, first, after, next, then, before, finally, Tales Toolkit, character, setting, problem, solution, illustrator, story teller, author, middle, end, plot, Helicopter Stories.</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">8. To become a mark maker and writer.</td></tr>
<tr><td>First milestone: children can use the muscles in their hands and arms to make big movements and bring together hand and eye movements to fix on and make contact with objects.

Children will increasingly become confident in engaging in activities such as: throwing and catching balls, pushing the wagon, exploring a musical instrument, playdough and paint.

  </td><td>As children build up their large and fine motor skills they engage in activities for a longer period of time. They can grasp objects and can focus on what they are doing e.g. hold arms out and wait to catch a ball, thread beads onto a piece of string or build a stable tower of up to 10 blocks etc.

Where children need individualised and additional help, this will be offered promptly. Help includes: individualised support from key person; small group work; individual meetings with parents to map a way forward.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Second milestone: Children can make random marks with their fingers and some tools. Children will engage in a variety of ways to make marks e.g. making marks in dough/clay/sand, holding a paint brush to make marks or using chalk on the ground in the garden etc.</td><td>As children become more confident in making marks they begin to talk about their marks with others and give meaning to these e.g. “That’s mummy” or “It’s a dinosaur.”</td></tr>
<tr><td>Third milestone: as children’s mark making develops they make more small controlled movements and can draw lines and circles. They can distinguish between these marks e.g. ‘line, circle, zig zag’ etc. They begin to use anticlockwise movements and retrace vertical lines. Children are familiar with language of directionality such as ‘up, down, round and round.’ (forwards and backwards). Children can find their name card and are able to look at it when attempting to write their name.</td><td>As children use their name cards repeatedly and become familiar with the THEP adapted L&S formation sheet they become more confident in attempting to form letters. Some children will begin to form recognisable letters.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Final milestone: children hold their pen or pencil with a comfortable grip. They may write initial sounds or sounds they hear in words. Some may write their first two letters of their name clearly.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"><u>Key Vocabulary:</u> mark making, write, name, grip, read, pen, pencil, forming, first letter, surname, family name, second, letters, sounds, name card, text, print, alphabet, formation, left, right.</td></tr>
</table>