Beauclerc and Chennestone Schools

The Early Years Foundation Stage

How children learn in the Early Years Foundation Stage?

At Beauclerc and Chennestone children learn through self-initiated play and adult led play-based activities. “Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others.” (Practice Guidance for Early Years Foundation Stage 2012)

Play can help children to develop positive attitudes towards learning such as:

- finding an interest,
- being willing to explore, experiment and try things out,
- Knowing how and where to seek help
- being inventive-creating problems and finding solutions,
- being engaged and preserving with a task,
- making choice and decisions,
- playing and working collaboratively with peers and adults.

At Beauclerc and Chennestone this is promoted through an effective use of an all weather canopy, children moving freely between the indoor and outdoor environment and engaging in variety of playful learning experiences.

How does the learning environment enhance learning at Beauclerc?

At Beauclerc and Chennestone the Early Years classrooms function as the ‘third teacher’ and are responsive to the children’s interests, thinking and ideas.

The Early Years classrooms contain ‘learning spaces’ rather than having strand specific areas linked to the early years outcomes, for example, a writing table – writing happens everywhere.

The learning spaces are alive with active, purposeful and challenging learning opportunities. The spaces are always linked to the children’s interests and are rich with

Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Responsible Citizens
cross curricular exploration. The rich learning spaces enable children to make clear connections between their ‘play’ and learning.

Through a play interactive learning approach all children’s learning styles are addressed as well as making learning relevant to each child’s interests and level of understanding.

*What does ‘learning through play’ actually mean? What is the adult role in this?*

**Child Initiated Play**

It has many characteristics in common play, as the child makes its own decisions based on their own motivation and interests. Therefore, it gives the child the control to take ownership of their learning however it is guided by certain expectations of the foundation stage curriculum. This is implemented through creating high quality learning environments and is developed further by careful questioning from adults.

“...child initiated activity is a powerful opportunity for learning.” (Learning, Playing and Interacting in the Foundation Stage 2009)

**Adult Led Learning**

Adult led learning is initiated by the adult through playful and imaginative starting points. These activities are as open ended as possible to promote motivation and interest from the children. At the start of every topic children are given the opportunity to share their interests which is then used to plan activities to support the children’s progress. Adult led examples can include story time, songs, counting games, guided reading and writing, letters and sounds and role play.

We provide a child-centered approach within our learning environments. This builds on the characteristics of effective learning to give children the learning skills and attributes needed to be successful in KS1.

It enables children to achieve higher overall attainment and develop greater maturity and ability to willingly engage in new learning; enabling them to learn at higher levels when moving into KS1 and beyond.

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