



# Dromintee Primary School

## Foundation Stage Policy



Policy Date: January 2016  
Review Date: January 2019

Mrs F. Fearon (P1 Teacher)  
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## **1. Introduction**

We in Dromintee Primary School understand and value the importance of play in the holistic development of young pupils. We believe that play provides pupils with the opportunity to develop socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually.

In the Foundation Stage, we aim to provide our pupils with an environment which is safe and secure, with teachers and classroom assistants who support and encourage their learning.

Opportunities are made for pupils to make choices for themselves, through the established High Scope approach to learning, adopted and embedded in Dromintee Primary pre-Revised Curriculum (2001). This occurs through planned play activities and also during spontaneous, unplanned and child initiated activities.

## **2. The Curriculum**

The Foundation Stage Curriculum consists of the following seven areas of learning, as outlined in the Big Picture:

- Language & Literacy
- Mathematics & Numeracy
- World Around Us (WAU-Geography, History, Science)
- The Arts (Music, Drama, Art)
- Personal Development & Mutual Understanding (PDMU)
- Physical Development & Movement (PDM)
- Religious Education (Grow in Love programme)

We promote thinking skills and personal capabilities across the curriculum in the Foundation Stage:

TSPC	Encouraging pupils to:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. By creating a positive learning ethos</li> <li>2. Developing an appropriate physical environment</li> <li>3. Promoting teaching and learning strategies</li> <li>4. Observing children's thinking skills</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manage information</li> <li>Be creative</li> <li>Work with others</li> <li>Self-manage</li> <li>Think, problem solve &amp; decision make</li> </ul>

Learning experiences and planning is clustered around a topic but allow flexibility to follow the interests of the children, thus creating a balance of learning opportunities.

### 3. The Daily Routine

Our routine at Dromintee P.S is planned to ensure a predictable sequence of events, smooth transitions from one activity to another and provide consistency in adult expectations and support. A sample planner:

8.55-9.05am	Collection from assembly hall/Early bird activities
9.05- 9.15am	Self-registration and Grow in Love/ prayer time
9.15- 10.30am	Plan-do-review
10.30-10.45am	Snack time
10.45-11am	Break and playground
11- 11.50am	Literacy
11.50-12	Movement break
12-12.30pm	Numeracy
12.30- 1.15pm	Lunchtime and playground
1.15- 1.45pm	WAU/ PDMU/PDM/The Arts
1.45-2.00pm	Story-time/Grow in Love
2.00pm	Home-time

Pupils become familiar with the daily routine through the use of the visual timetable which is shared with them each morning.

#### **4. Strategies for learning and teaching in the Foundation Stage**

“Well planned and well-resourced play activities which allow for progression in a child’s thinking and understanding can provide the context in which these principles become the reality for all our children.”

Learning Through Play in the Early Years

At Dromintee Primary School we plan a broad and balanced range of play activities which are carefully matched to the needs of the pupils. The High Scope approach to learning, which has been previously employed in Dromintee Primary School from 2001, embeds the purpose and ethos of the Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum. Since this time, Dromintee Primary School has been able to employ an artist/ teacher- Julia to led pupils in small group activities. She facilitates child-led creative activities, which develop oral language, thinking skills and self-esteem thus promoting the Revised Curriculum philosophy. As advocates of this, pupils are provided with opportunities to:

- Use their senses as a means of exploring the world
- Extend skills/abilities by testing them out in a range of situations
- Initiate, carry out and review their own projects
- Draw on a range of resources to achieve their intentions, developing a flexible and open ended approach to problems
- Take risks and learn from mistakes
- Progress by building on existing knowledge and understanding
- Express ideas and feelings
- Enjoy fun and laughter with others
- Recreate what they have felt and experienced

## 5. Play in the Foundation Stage

### *Aims and Objectives of Play in the Foundation Stage Classroom*

In Dromintee Primary School we aim to:

- Provide an environment, where pupils can explore, experiment, plan and make decisions for themselves
- Provide rich and stimulating experiences
- Provide opportunities for pupils to engage in activities planned by adults, as well as for them to initiate their own activities
- Observe, assess and support pupils through play and to value their play
- Promote play as a most important means of learning
- Encourage the involvement of parents, both at home and in school

Primary One and Two follow the same routine for play each morning.

Plan	<p>Julia has a small group of pupils who participate in art activities in the resource area.</p> <p>Remaining pupils plan in their designated planning group with an adult present. (hearts/ butterflies)</p> <p>New areas of interest and resources are introduced, if necessary.</p> <p>Pupils individually devise, articulate their own plan and suggest equipment they may need to accomplish their idea.</p>
Do	<p>Pupils are actively involved in their play. As they progress through the Foundation Stage they are encouraged to remain at their chosen area for a sustained period of time.</p> <p>Adult observation/ intervention as and when required.</p> <p>Pupils are given a five minute warning before tidy-up time commences, ie. 'Wiggle your five fingers'/ 'Give me five.'</p> <p>Incomplete creations may be placed in the 'Finishing off' box for completion the following day.</p> <p>Tidy-up time during our class 'tidy-up' song.</p>

Review	<p>Julia records oral comments made during her session.</p> <p>In class pupils gather for the plenary session using a variety of different strategies, eg. random reporters are selected using 'Ippitty, Bippity Bop' ~pass the talking object around the circle/ musical object/ pupil popsicle sticks/ symbol boxes. Once a week a class reporter photograph is displayed on the interactive white board and that pupil evaluates their play. Other pupils are encouraged to ask probing questions and thank the reporter for sharing their play experience. Finally the reporter thanks her/ his peers for listening.</p>
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## **6. The learning environment and resources**

The learning environment and resources are a vital part of planning for the Foundation Stage. We aim to provide a safe and stimulating environment in which pupils feel safe, happy and secure. In our classroom and school environment they learn to respect and care for themselves, for one another and to value individual differences, therefore aspiring to fulfil the school motto 'to learn, to love, to enjoy.' The Foundation Stage classrooms, the shared resource area, designated early years playground and nature trail are utilized to stimulate learning. All resources have photographs and/or silhouette outlines with written labels, to enable pupils to access and return independently. Many resources for outdoor play are stored in our designated shed.

In addition to this we value the opportunity to enhance our learning experiences through organized class trips, visitors to our classes and parental participation.

### ***Areas of play provision and resources***

Within each classroom and shared resource area pupils have access to the following areas of learning and resources:

- Sand- wet/dry sand, buckets, spades, rakes, moulds, funnels, topical resources

- Water- jugs, bottles, funnels, water wheel, topical resources
- Creative – play dough/ clay, paint, cutting and sticking resources, drawing resources, collage resources, junk materials
- Construction – lego, mobilo, big blocks, Poly-m, duplo
- Role Play – home corner, shop, café, doctors, hairdressers, travel agents
- Small world/toys – car mat, small vehicles, zoo, farm sets, jungle, airport
- Table top- jigsaws, puzzles and games
- Reading and Writing- big books, library books, paper, writing resources, stamps, envelopes, clipboards
- Listening area- CD player, radio, headphones, microphones
- Numeracy- number cards, dice, number games, shapes, pattern cards, counting objects, Number Puppy resources, measuring resources
- Music- musical trolley with instruments
- Computers / Interactive Whiteboard (access to i-Pads)

In Dromintee Primary School we aim to ensure that our resources are:

- ✓ clean and safe
- ✓ accessible
- ✓ varied
- ✓ durable and in good condition
- ✓ properly labelled
- ✓ used appropriately
- ✓ provide opportunities for progression

### **7. Role of the adult**

The Foundation Stage teachers and classroom assistants in Dromintee Primary School aim to:

- Provide a safe, happy and secure learning environment
- Plan and resource a stimulating environment, making optimum use of space, time and resources
- Support pupil learning through planned play
- Extend and support spontaneous play

- Extend and develop individual oral language and communication skills
- Ensure progression in play/ learning experiences

**Rules.** To ensure that a safe learning environment is created pupils in Dromintee P.S are encouraged to:

show consideration to others at all time

take care of play equipment

share and take turns

adhere to the rules for specific activities

When presented with a problem the 6 steps for conflict-resolution are followed to help resolve the matter. (*appendix 1*)

### ***Equal Opportunities***

In Dromintee Primary school, we aim to provide equal opportunities during play activities, to ensure that no pupil feels excluded or disadvantaged due to:

Ethnicity/ home language	Religion	Culture	Family background
Disability	Ability	Special Educational needs	Gender

In doing so we aim to:

- ensure that all the pupils feel secure, included and valued
- establish feelings of respect and trust with pupils and their parents/ carers
- treat each child as an individual and provide equality of opportunity
- encourage self-confidence and a positive approach to learning in all pupils.
- ensure that role-play provides for the interests of both boys and girls and that resources reflect their interests e.g. Providing resources that reflect home cultures and boys dressing up costumes.
- ensure that all pupils have equal access to popular resources e.g. Interactive Whiteboard/computers by use of class timers

### *Additional Learning Needs*

Furniture is arranged so that pupils can move as easily as possible from one activity to another.

Visual timetables and aids are displayed to assist visual learners.

Resources supplied from health and educational professional are used, as and when required, eg. OT slant boards, sensory equipment.

Record of concerns, Individual Educational Plans (IEP) and reviews are shared with the classroom assistant and SENCO.

### *Gifted and Talented*

We provide opportunities and encouragement for each pupil, to pursue their interests and develop their talents through child-led activities and differentiated tasks to develop the next steps in their learning.

### **8. ICT in the Foundation Stage**

In the Foundation Stage pupils have the opportunity to utilize the class computers, Beebots, interactive white board, iPads, laptop buddy and the ICT resource area. They are encouraged to use the class camera and microphones to record their learning through play.

A range of websites and educational apps enhance the teaching and learning process and are often shared with parents.

### **9. Observation and Assessment**

Staff use a range of strategies to observe and assess pupils. Focused observations are included in individual pupil profiles. (Appendix 2) These observations inform short feedback sessions and help in planning future work. They are also used as a basis for reporting to parents orally in Term 1 and in written form at the end of Term 3. Occasionally staff will discuss concerns with parents arising from play based observations as required e.g. difficulties sharing, joining in with peers, recalling what they did at play time etc. Information gained through play-based observations will

also be shared with other school staff (eg. SENCO) and outside agencies, as deemed appropriate by Foundation Stage staff.

## **10. Staff Development**

Foundation Stage Teachers:

- attend RTU courses annually in August, selecting courses of interest to enhance learning in the Foundation Stage classroom. Information and resources gained are shared and good practice disseminated with Foundation Stage classroom Assistants, during August INSET days.
- participate in all available training days issued by the Southern Education and Library Board.
- work closely with the school SENCO and avail of training given by outside organisations/agencies e.g. RISE NI team, Speech and Language Therapists, Language and Communication team, Occupational Therapy, Behaviour Support.
- plan Foundation Stage targets in conjunction with school PRSD areas, selecting age appropriate targets for their classes.
- participate fully in all in school training delivered by other members of stage and outside agencies.
- work closely together to plan, monitor, assess and evaluate teaching and learning.

### **Next Steps**

- a) *Develop on-going opportunities for outdoor play experiences*
- b) *Review WAU experiences and links to local enterprises/ organizations.*

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed on a 3 yearly basis.

Agreed changes to this policy will then be incorporated as necessary.

January 2019

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (P1 Teacher)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (P2 Teacher)