

Characteristics of Effective Learning

From the Autumn Term in 2021 we introduced the characters below to promote the characteristics and support the children to recognise those they have use in their learning.

ENGAGEMENT



Playful Penguin



Have-a-go-Horse

MOTIVATION



Concentrating Crocodile



Keep on trying Kangaroo

THINKING



Creative Cat



Connecting Caterpillar



“Nurturing curiosity and inspiring imagination”

This document contains some of the ways staff at Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School nurture and develop the **Characteristics of Effective Learning** with children. As parents and carers you can also use these suggestions at home to help your child to learn these behaviours which will support their learning and progress.



Playing and Exploring - children investigate and experience things and ‘have a go’

- provide children with ‘open ended resources’ things like cardboard tubes and boxes, buttons, sticks and stones that can be used to make lots of different things
- encourage children to think and talk about what they are going to do or make before they begin. This could be through conversation or drawing a plan
- provide a commentary on the child’s play saying things like ‘I’ve noticed that you’re using all the blue blocks’ or ‘I can see you’re finding all the long tubes first’. Children may copy your commentary by describing what they are doing out loud but over time this will develop into their ‘inner voice’
- support children’s thinking by making a visual plan of the sequence of an activity. At home this could be drawings or photographs of the sequence of getting ready for bed
- provide a range of resources and the time and space for children to explore something that interests them over a period of time. At home this could be finding space for an incomplete model to be set aside on a shelf and returned to the next day
- join in children’s play and investigations showing a real interest. At home this could be sharing an activity together and talking with your child about what they are doing and what they notice
- involve children in making decisions about simple experiments, for example ‘What should we feed the plants to help them to grow?’ How will we know if one plant is growing faster than the other?’
- use non-fiction books and on-line research to help children follow their interests. We have a wide range of books which you are welcome to borrow and staff can also support you to find child appropriate websites.



Active Learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements

- supportive routines and positive nurturing relationships with adults gives children the security to explore their ideas and play with confidence. Using language like 'Could you try?', 'I wonder if..?' and specific praise 'I like the way you..?' rather than 'No that's not right' gives children confidence to test their ideas and try new things.



- give children lots of opportunities to revisit learning and make connections by repeating activities.
- support children to keep on trying when things are difficult. Help your child to think about what else they could try without giving the answer to quickly. You could do this by trying it yourself and explaining what you're doing. Asking them if they need help and showing them you need to ask for help at times too

Creative and Critical Thinking – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

- making suggestions and offering ideas without taking over the play or activity. Asking questions like 'I wonder if...?', 'Shall we try...?', 'Do you think...?'
- providing opportunities at review time for children to reflect on their learning with questions like 'I wonder what you were thinking when you...', 'How would you do that now?' and sharing children's pride in their achievements. At home you can do this by sharing photos posted on Tapestry or any you have taken from home learning activities
- support children to make links to previous learning with questions such as 'Do you remember when..?'
- pose real problems like the best material to help things stick together or how to share 2 apples between 5 people. Help children to develop and extend their ideas through conversations including 'how', 'why', things happen and 'what might happen next'
- encourage children to think of their own ideas and explanations by sharing an experience together. This could be looking at snails in the garden or the park, asking what is the same and what is different about those you find. You could then compare the snails to worms, again asking what is the same and what is different. You could use a tablet or your phone to find out information about each mini beast and introduce some technical language.

