



Curriculum Design

Nursery

The goal of early childhood education should be to activate the child's own natural desire to learn.

Maria Montessori

Our Vision:

To create an enabling environment which sparks curiosity, allowing our youngest children to become independent, adaptable and resilient learners, for life.

Why?



In recent years children were entering school with less social skills and on entry data was low in LLC and MD. Many children were not ready to learn and were displaying extremely challenging behaviours. The range of ability between children was growing.

Questions for research:

- How can we create a calm nursery?
- How can we ensure children are settled in their environment and ready to learn?
- How can we ensure we meet the needs of all children?

"No other period in human history can match the present one in sheer scale, speed and global complexity of the changes and challenges we face...."

"We are preparing children for jobs that don't exist yet, using technologies that haven't yet been invented, in order to solve problems that we don't even know about"

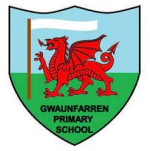
Following a course in 2020 with Pete Moorhouse (making learning irresistible) I began to think about how we can prepare the children for a world where they can:

- adapt to a rapidly changing world
- Process the volume of accessible information
- Find new solutions to problems and challenges

The introduction of the new curriculum gave a perfect place to start designing a new approach to nursery, ensuring children had the best start to school life.

Enabling pathways guidance (2021) provided the key principles to begin to develop an appropriate curriculum for children who are in the period of learning leading to progression step 1.

How?



Key Features of Gwaunfarren Nursery Curriculum:

Based on principles of the non-maintained curriculum

Curriculum for 3-4 year olds

***Enabling adults**

Skillful, observant and interested adults

***Engaging experiences**

Authentic & purposeful learning experiences

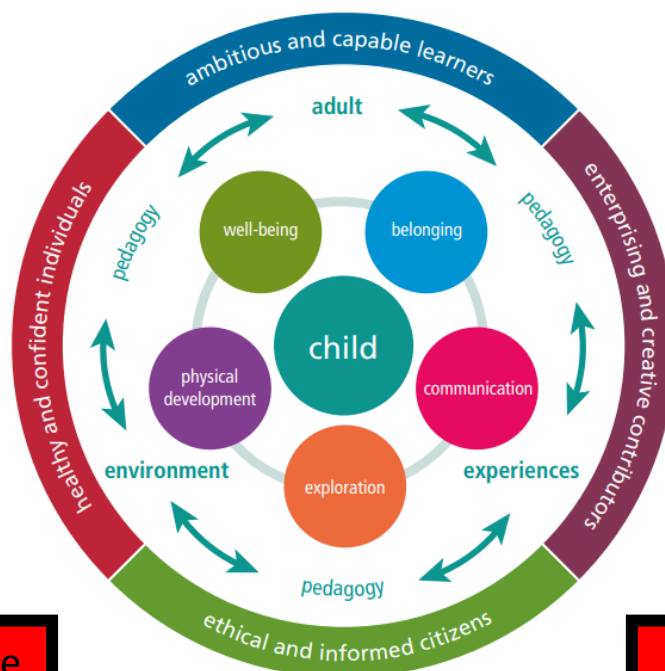
***Effective environments**

Indoor and out

The five developmental pathways:

- ~Belonging
- ~Communication
- ~Exploration
- ~Physical development
- ~Well-being

Based on principles of child development



Every Child is Unique

Voice of the child

Pedagogy-

- Play and play based learning
- Being outdoors
- Authentic and purposeful learning
- Physical literacy

Effective Environments



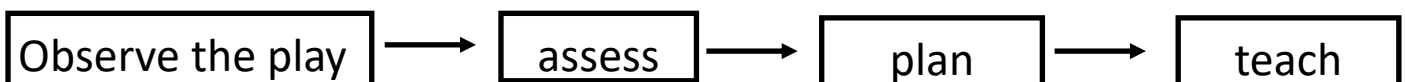
- Environment adapted to provide a more natural environment to avoid over stimulating children.
- Areas have resources available for children to access independently
- Wide range of activities available to access– with real resources eg. Ceramic cups instead of plastic (in order to teach risks and consequences)
- Areas of the classroom matched to progression steps

Engaging Experiences

- Group times are kept to a minimum and are truly engaging
- Staff take time to “teach” children how to play and socialize
- Children to lead their own learning by exploring fascinations
- Children will also be introduced to “invitations to play” that will allow them to recognise special days and events.

Enabling Adults

- All adults to ensure the well-being of the children
- Adults to support child-initiated play
- Adults to ensure clear boundaries and expectations (that are developmentally appropriate)
- Wait, Watch, Wonder
- Adult goes to the child and allows the child to lead the interaction



Impact



- Calm and purposeful behaviour
- Children have formed trusting relationships
- Children are settled and feel secure in the environment
- Children are independent in their play
- Children are keen to take part in activities
- Environment ensures all progression steps can be met independently

Child led learning = Engagement

When children are engaged they learn. The best learning is when involvement is high

The Leuven Scale for Involvement

1) Low Activity

Activity at this level can be simple, stereotypic, repetitive and passive. The child is absent and displays no energy. There is an absence of cognitive demand. The child characteristically may stare into space. N.B. This may be a sign of inner concentration.

2) A Frequently Interrupted Activity

The child is engaged in an activity but half of the observed period includes moments of non-activity, in which the child is not concentrating and is staring into space. There may be frequent interruptions in the child's concentration, but his/her Involvement is not enough to return to the activity.

3) Mainly Continuous Activity

The child is busy at an activity but it is at a routine level and the real signals for Involvement are missing. There is some progress but energy is lacking and concentration is at a routine level. The child can be easily distracted.

4) Continuous Activity with Intense Moments

The child's activity has intense moments during which activities at Level 3 can come to have special meaning. Level 4 is reserved for the kind of activity seen in those intense moments, and can be deduced from the 'Involvement signals'. This level of activity is resumed after interruptions. Stimuli, from the surrounding environment, however attractive cannot seduce the child away from the activity.

5) Sustained Intense Activity

The child shows continuous and intense activity revealing the greatest Involvement. In the observed period not all the signals for Involvement need be there, but the essential ones must be present: concentration, creativity, energy and persistence. This intensity must be present for almost all the observation period.

Assessment

It was agreed as an authority that children would complete the FP compact profile as normal in September. Children were not to be given a score for baseline but it was to be used as a guide for their targets.

At the end of the Autumn Term I trialled using the pathways to assess. This allowed me to form a narrative for each child based on the developmental pathways. This will be adapted in line with the draft assessment document, to include literacy skills development, numeracy skills development, physical skills development and social and emotional development.