

Understanding the World Policy

Introduction

The curriculum of Understanding the World covers three aspects:

1. People and communities - children talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members. They know that other children do not always enjoy the same things, and are sensitive to this. They know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions.
2. The World - children know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things. They talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one another. They make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur, and talk about changes.
3. Technology - children recognise that a range of technology is used in places such as homes and schools. They select and use technology for particular purposes.

Cambridge Nursery Federation strives to build on children's natural curiosity by providing first-hand experiences, which give children the opportunity to use their senses, make observations, notice similarities and investigate differences. Both the indoor and outdoor environments are organised to support children in their exploratory play with adults responding positively to questions and taking part in discussions.

Aims

CNF aims to provide an environment in which children are able to meet challenges and new ideas and where children can explore, discover and find out about the world at a level and in a manner, which is appropriate to their age, understanding and experience.

To foster and extend this approach we aim to provide activities that will engage and excite children and enable them to develop the widest possible awareness and interest in the world around us.

Staff recognise and plan for the Early Learning Goals for the Foundation Stage and acknowledge, respect and build upon each child's previous experiences at home and in the community.

Planning

Planning starts with observations and assessments of the children's interests and needs. Staff plan developmentally appropriate experiences to further the children's knowledge and understanding of the world in the seven areas of learning and development of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Understanding the World is interwoven throughout the setting's provision. Staff plan together, discussing appropriate experiences based on children's conversations, observations of their play and seasonal changes. In addition, activities are planned to

stimulate interests, introduce new concepts, focused vocabulary and develop children's understanding, curiosity and imagination. Furthermore, we plan environments and experiences, which stimulate children's self-initiated exploration. Children acquire a range of skills, knowledge and attitudes by doing, observing and imitating.

Learning

Our aims in teaching and learning of 'Understanding the World' are that all children will begin to:

- Find out about and identify some features of themselves, and observe similarities and differences between themselves and others.
- Find out about and identify some features of living things, and observe similarities and differences.
- Investigate materials and objects to find out about their features using the senses, and observe similarities and differences.
- Ask questions to find out how things work and why things happen.
- Select the tools and equipment they need to shape, assemble and join the materials they are using.
- Find out about and identify uses of everyday technology, and use information and communication technology and programmable toys to support learning. (refer to ICT policy for further information)
- Find out about past and present events in their own lives and in those of their families and other people they know.
- Look closely at patterns and change.
- Observe, find out about, and identify features in the place they live.
- Observe, find out about, and identify features in the natural world.
- Talk about features they like and dislike.
- Gain an awareness of people's jobs and functions in the local community.
- Gain an awareness of other countries and cultures.
- Participate in practical activities including gardening, cooking and ways to construct and build.
- Interact with adults, who are modelling and sharing enthusiasm for finding out new information.
- Make extensive use of the outdoor area in all weathers, e.g. shadows, windsocks, stamping in puddles, collecting rain water and ice, salting the ice, planting vegetables and making dens.
- Learn new language during discussions or explorations.
- Try out and extend their ideas and learn from mistakes.
- Answer open-ended questions such as "What can you see?" "What does it do?" "How can we?" "What would happen if...?"
- Learn about the local area by going on local walks, visiting wildlife areas, the local shops, and a library.

We plan to implement this aim by

- Recognising the cross-curricular nature of this subject when planning for this area of the curriculum.
- Providing activities that are open-ended, fun and thought provoking.

- Recognising spontaneous teaching and learning opportunities that arise during nursery routines and activities.
- Offering children opportunities to observe, reflect, analyse, criticise, categorise, compare, predict, question, problem-solve, appreciate, hypothesise and interpret.
- Teaching specific skills and techniques where they are appropriate and relevant.
- Recognising that there is a specific and appropriate language, and accurate terminology for many curricular areas that we can help a child to absorb, learn and understand through play.
- Ensuring through careful monitoring that adults will observe, support, encourage and sensitively extend children's open-ended exploration.
- Carefully considering that both risk-taking and safety are essential factors to be born in mind and balanced when planning and implementing the curriculum.

Assessment and Monitoring

- Staff will monitor and record the progress of each child through informal observations.
- Through daily review and termly moderation meetings, assessments of individual children will inform our long term planning.
- Records of children's development and progress in Understanding the World are made following on-going observations and assessments. Written records are kept on individual children and recorded in the children's profiles and Learning Journeys. The assessments are used to plan appropriate differentiated experiences.
- We encourage parents to feel involved in their children's understanding the world learning by contributing to the learning journeys and on-going assessments and by sharing their child's experiences at home.

Working with Parents and Families

We encourage visitors and families to share a particular interest or experience with the children, for example fire fighters, the police and musicians. The knowledge of families and particular interests are valued and they are invited to share them when appropriate, e.g. cooking, celebrations and story telling.

The Cambridge Nursery Federation Governing Body is committed to promoting quality and diversity, providing an inclusive and supportive environment for all. We are committed to equal opportunities and the promotion of non-discriminatory practices in all aspects of work undertaken within the Federation.

The Governing Body is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. We expect and require all members of the school community to share this commitment.

Date: Spring 2017

Review: Summer 2020