



September 2018

### The Pedagogic Toolkit

Here follows a comprehensive guide to the range of pedagogic concepts and strategies used at Surbiton Children's Centre Nursery that underpin our everyday practice. Methods used within the setting across the age ranges and in all parts of the school. These have been refined and developed by staff over many years and have been adapted through training and by adopting both older principles as well as the most up to date research and findings. At all times the staff have a reflective attitude and continue to learn themselves and this enables them to create a rich and varied curriculum and a stimulating environment. One that inspires, allows children to explore, be curious and be challenged. Our approaches ensure that every child can reach their full potential, have authentic experiences, be outside and be happy. This in turn allows us to support the whole family; advising, creating positive relationships and empowering them to understand their child's learning journey. We aim to enthuse children to have a love of lifelong learning. Every child, every chance, every day!

#### 1. Learning through play-a child centred approach

At Surbiton we have always valued a child centred approach to all we offer in our classrooms. We have developed a practise where the child is at the heart of what we do and yet the adults continue to scaffold their interests through skilled questioning

and teaching, rather than having an adult led agenda for children to follow. The classrooms are laid out with easy to access and easy to reach resources to encourage self-selection. There are core resources and skills that will be explored through the environment by the children such as manipulative skills through dough, sand, water, construction, cooking, sensory play and mark making. We believe that books should not be limited to one area of the classroom and provide baskets of books in different parts of the room for children to use and make links to their thinking and play. We have a huge outdoor area which has some resources to add and enhance but ultimately as we follow a forest school approach we prefer for the children to explore the natural resources that are already there. (sticks, stones, mud, trees, bugs, weather) The child centred approach also means that there are less interruptions to the high quality play happening for the child. The adult goes to the child and the interactions are therefore at the child's level rather than children being pulled away from their own explorations and play to do something that may not either interest them or make any sense. The learning and teaching should be seamless and skilfully fed into their play by the adult. The adult can then extend the learning and further their curiosity through this approach. Each child is unique and their interests will differ which is why we have moved away from a specific topic approach. We use the seasons and the common interests to plan and create the next steps for learning for each child and are looking at the expectations within the EYFS to make assessments and observations of the children's development.

*"As adults, we want to introduce children to concepts, ideas and experiences that they have never had before. We want to give them the thrill of finding a dinosaur egg on the carpet or realising that fairies have moved into the outdoor area. But, these are prompts and enhancements for learning within play. They should not dominate the provision.*

*When it comes to 'topic' or 'theme' I like to keep it to adult input and enhancements. A good adult can really engage children with any subject. The children's interest comes from the skill of the adult. Once the children have left the adult then their interest in the 'topic' can often wain, not to mention their lack of experience which will inhibit their ability to play and explore." Alistair Bryce Clegg*

## 2. Home visits

Home visits are a very important part of our transition and settling process and are an opportunity for families and staff to form the first partnership prior to their child starting Nursery. It is also a chance for the child to make an initial attachment with new people whilst in a safe environment surrounded by their own things. We will always endeavour to see every child either in their own home or somewhere else if not appropriate to go to the family home, before they start Nursery. Home visits enable staff to ask questions and get to know the family in a more comfortable and private setting.

## 3. Intensive interaction

Intensive interaction is a technique used mainly within our resource provision for children with social communication difficulties and ASD. Intensive Interaction teaches and develops interaction and communication by doing and taking part in interaction and communication. It helps to develop eye contact and early communication skills between the child and adult. The approach focuses on teaching the Fundamentals of Communication - the communication concepts and performances that precede speech development, though it may include many people who have some speech and language development. Learning how to enjoy being with another person, developing the ability to attend to that person. Improving concentration and attention span, learning to do

sequences of activity with the other person, taking turns in exchanges of behaviour, sharing personal space, using and understanding eye contacts, using and understanding facial expressions, using and understanding physical contacts, using and understanding non-verbal communication, using vocalisations with meaning (for some, speech development), learning to regulate and control arousal levels.

#### 4. Mindfulness and Yoga

At Surbiton we have designed a simple weekly programme following the positions and breathing exercises promoted by yoga practice for children and basic mindfulness techniques of sitting quietly and learning to keep our bodies still and calm. Staff use props and stories to introduce the basic positions for children to try and become more flexible and to increase core strength linked proprioceptive needs in young children. The positions are developed weekly to improve strength and increase in complexity and difficulty as the children become more adept. Mindfulness techniques are based on those promoted by Headspace and relax kids as well as guidance from CAHMS and the NHS as being excellent for encouraging calm and more ability to regulate emotions. There is an emerging body of research that indicates that mindfulness can help our children improve their abilities to pay attention, to calm down when they are upset, and to make better decisions. In short, it helps with emotional regulation and cognitive focus. We use the following resources: sitting still like a frog (book by E. Snel), candle for focus for mindful seeing, Music for mindful hearing and props for yoga.

## 5. TEACCH

The TEACCH approach tries to respond to the needs of autistic children using the best available approaches and methods known so far, for educating and teaching autonomy. It is not a single method and can be used alongside other approaches, such as attention autism. Priorities are: focusing on the person, their skills, interests and needs, understanding the 'culture of autism' and identifying differences based on individualised assessments, using visual structures to organise the environment and tasks when teaching skills, being flexible and teaching flexibility.

**\_Teaching** - sharing autism knowledge and increasing the skill level of professionals and practitioners.

**Expanding** - increasing own knowledge to provide high-quality services to people on the autism spectrum and their families.

**Appreciating** - appreciating the strengths and uniqueness of autistic culture.

**Collaborating and Cooperating** with colleagues, other professionals, people on the autism spectrum and their families.

**Holistic** - adopting a holistic approach, looking at the person, their family and community.

We use these techniques both within Green class and the mainstream classes for children with SCI and ASD.

## 6. Makaton

Makaton is a language programme using signs and symbols to help people to communicate. It is designed to support spoken language and the signs and symbols are used with speech, in spoken word

order. With Makaton, children and adults can communicate straight away using signs and symbols. Many people then drop the signs or symbols naturally at their own pace, as they develop speech. At Surbiton we use Makaton for all children and use it alongside all group times and singing and story time activities. We believe all children benefit from learning to sign and it is also of benefit for children who are learning English. All our school performances include signing and we teach the children signs related to their learning, new vocabulary linked to stories and songs, names of peers and the adults as well as helping to get any immediate needs met or ask for help.

## 7. PECS (Picture exchange system) and Visuals

At Surbiton we know how important communication is and how frustrating and frightening it can be for children when their communication is in need of support. We use visuals and timetables in all our classrooms and especially for transitions and changes. PECS are generally used within Green class and occasionally when recommended for children with an EHCP or SALT referral. They are a picture exchange to aid communication and are particularly useful for getting needs met and making choices. The primary goal of PECS is to teach functional communication. Research has shown that some learners using PECS also develop speech. Others may transition to a speech generating device. PECS consists of six phases and begins by teaching an individual to give a single picture of a desired item or action to a "communicative partner" who immediately honours the exchange as a request. The system goes on to teach discrimination

of pictures and how to put them together in sentences. We use them for our snack time daily as well as during free flow play time.

## 8. Occupational Therapy

As a part of our Green class offer we have regular input from a trained Occupational therapist. With their support and guidance we have created a sensory circuit and sensory rich environment to help develop the children's physical needs and link that to the EYFS PD requirement. This will include movement such as swinging, climbing, balance, core strength exercises, weighted items, chewelry and other chewy items for mouthing. We use soft play resources and a trampoline daily and the outside area to encourage different movement and exploratory development. Within our mainstream classes we offer a similar approach to individual children's sensory diet needs. We follow advice from our OT and guidance from AFC our local offer and OT services for Kingston. Our weekly yoga sessions enhance this offer.

## 9. Dance and movement

At Surbiton we recognise the importance of movement and music and use dance as one of the ways to engage children in an activity to promote coordination, musicality and creativity. We start our sessions with a daily exercise time to upbeat popular music, with simple choreography which the children follow. We also include dance within our daily provision where the children can select music and dance freely using props, scarves and other items. We also learn different dances from around the world linked to festivals, cultures and special occasions within our community. These include Indian dancing, dragon dancing, maypole dancing, to name just a few. We know that dance is a fantastic medium for children and is

particularly beneficial for children who find communication difficult as the freedom of movement and expression is not dependant on speaking.

#### 10. SALT-Speech and language therapy

As a part of our offer within Green class we have weekly access to a Speech and language therapist. Their role is to support and provide some therapy for the children within the SRP. The role of the therapist is also to upskill staff to deliver the package of support for each child. This may include colourful semantics for the children receiving an Outreach supported place within mainstream, and developing PECs for families to use at home. They will also support parents and meet with them regularly to inform progress and suggest strategies to help with their individual needs.

#### 11. Forest Schools

At Surbiton we have always followed the approach for Forest schools and now have a qualified member of staff who leads on this area within the school. It is based on a Scandinavian approach where learning happens outside in a natural environment such as a woodland or forest. Essentially it is an outdoor education delivery model in which students visit natural spaces to learn personal, social and technical skills. It has been defined as "an inspirational process that offers children opportunities to achieve and develop confidence through hands-on learning in a woodland environment". We take small groups of children off site to our local park (Fishponds) for 5 weekly visits. They have opportunities to climb trees, use sticks and mud to create outdoor art, experience the seasons, weather and challenge themselves physically as well as have opportunities to develop

confidence and self-esteem. Within the nursery playground we also adopt the approach by regularly having a camp fire for the children to enjoy and learn about, and by cooking outside, making dens and using the mud kitchen to explore wildlife and other sensory experiences.

## 12. Outdoor Learning

We have a free flow approach to our learning through play and that means the children can access the outside area throughout their 3 hours session. They have a wide range of free choice and self-selected activities within the garden as well as the space to run, dance, ride and scoot. We have different levels, and different surfaces to help with sensory needs and OT needs. A large outdoor sandpit, water play, den making, mud kitchen, gardening, climbing areas, little shelters, role play and natural resources. We are currently planning to redesign and enhance the garden further and make improvements to parts of the garden that need updating.

We believe that most young children prefer to be outside and many of our children do not always have access to an outside space especially if they live in apartments or flats. Also with the concern nationally around obesity and the need for children to be physical and move for 3 hours per day, we believe our offer compliments this need and ensures children have plenty of opportunity to develop physically as well as emotionally.

13. Attachment and interactions- see information from training on behaviour

14. Positive behaviour management - see inset training guide for this area in more depth

## New Ideas for our year of action research 2018-2019

We plan to trial and implement the following methods alongside our core pedagogy to further develop our child centred and holistic approach

### 1. Planning in the moment

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzGINaSOGokaBsdEnQDimEA>

### 2. Continuous provision

<https://abcdoes.com/abc-does-a-blog/2016/05/21/planning-for-continuous-provision/>

### 3. Helicopter stories

<https://www.makebelievearts.co.uk/helicopterstorieslettingimaginationfly>

### 4. The curiosity approach

<https://www.thecuriosityapproach.com/>

### 5. Stay and Play session

### 6. Highscope approach for 2's

<https://highscope.or>

### 7. Looseparts play

<https://family.co/blog/management/loose-parts-play/>