



## EDUCATION AND ASSESSMENT

Our Aim:

- To promote and encourage the optimum intellectual, social, physical, spiritual and economic development of children through a contemporary Montessori approach to education for children from 3 months to 5 years.
- To provide and maintain a well-equipped, safe and purposeful learning environment, staffed with trained and caring personnel for all families in Newmarket, Haverhill, Barrow, Red Lodge and surrounding communities.
- To educate the community as to the value of the Montessori philosophy of education and act as a resource within the broader professional educational network.
- To offer an education that complies with the: Statutory Guidance EYFS (2021), British Values, The Prevent Duty and has due regard for the 7 areas of learning: Communication and Language; Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Physical Development; Literacy; Mathematics; Understanding the World; Expressive Arts and Design.
- To connect children with nature and the environment to help improve knowledge, skills, health, self-care and wellbeing.
- To observe and assess children in line with the revised EYFS, to inform children about their child's development and enable them to contribute to their child's learning and development.

### Communication and Language

Communication and Language is a prime area of the Early Years Foundation Stage and at Colourbox we strive to support the development of all children by adapting our communication methods to meet the needs of all who attend. We achieve this by training our staff to engage with children using a range of skills and techniques including Makaton, PECS,

Picture Time-Tables, Dual Language resources and spoken language appropriate to a child's stage of development.

Where children have English as an additional language we will work closely with the parents and guardians to support their particular needs. The nursery has developed new and innovative resources, such as picture curriculum folders and dual language books, recorded with parents, so that children with EAL can play and thrive in the environment and are enabled to communicate their needs and feelings. The dual language talking books enable children to listen to singing and stories in their home language.

We feel that it is vitally important to foster pride and to show recognition of the child's first language. Our teachers speak many languages and we encourage staff to communicate with children in their home language and English. We provide story books and fact books in a range of languages. We also invite children, staff, parents and carers to share their cultural traditions with the class. The whole nursery benefits from this rich experience.

Children with EAL and/or Communication Development needs will be supported individually and in groups. The effectiveness of our provision will be analysed through the Cohort tracking of 'Children with EAL' and 'Children with Communication and Language Support Needs'.

### Cultural and Religious Education

Here at Colourbox we focus on teaching children about cultures, religions and lifestyles from around the world. The following aspects of this policy must be observed by all staff:

- Activities will be age-appropriate.
- Work may expose children to religious views but will not impose any particular view.
- Content must be academic but not devotional.
- Children may study cultural/ religious beliefs, but we will not teach a child what to believe.

Within the parameters of the academic study of culture, religion and lifestyles, teachers may display objects, artefacts and symbols that give form to a variety of religious customs, beliefs, and expressions. Any classroom and school displays, presented as a part of religious study or holiday activities, will meet the following criteria:

- The display will be exhibited on a temporary basis.
- The display will be constructed in a manner that presents no endorsement, favouritism, or promotion of a single religion or belief.
- The display will include non-secular as well as secular symbols.
- The display will include appropriate and descriptive labels attached to the symbols.

## Outdoor learning

We recognise that children are active learners and that brain and body develop together. Outdoor play offers unique opportunities that cannot be provided indoors. Outdoor play enables us to build on children's natural motivation to be outside as well as promoting active healthy lifestyles. If we are to support children's holistic development, outdoor play must be an integral part of our practice. We advise parents/carers to send children in clothing appropriate for outdoor activities that are labelled and suitable for the season.

Children will be given the opportunity to access the outdoor areas each session, wherever possible moving freely between indoors and outdoors. Resources provided will support learning using Montessori philosophy, Forest School philosophy and the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Educational visitors and outings

Visitors to our nurseries can provide the opportunity for children to learn about the wider community in which they live and help them develop a respect for, and understanding of differences. Our aim is to provide a structured method for welcoming visitors while ensuring the safety of children and staff.

Visiting sites outside the nursery can provide an opportunity for children to learn about the local community in which they live and help them develop a respect for, and understanding of the wider world. Our aim is to provide a structured method for planning visits while ensuring the safety of children and staff.

## Assessment of children's learning

The Montessori curriculum is organised in a developmental sequence from one phase of learning to the next. Individual children are able to work successfully through the curriculum in their own unique way. For this reason, comparisons between children may not be meaningful, particularly as children are grouped in a multi-age classroom and there are small numbers of children at the same age and stage. Assessment in our classrooms, therefore, is based on each child's mastery of skills and knowledge.

Children display their progress and achievement through a variety of modes, including play, spoken and written language, interaction with other children and with adults, creative arts such as model-making, music, drama and through applying what they have learned in practical ways. Feedback from parents also provides valuable information about children's development and it is important that parents are considered our partners in their child's learning.

What does the Early Years Foundation Stage ('EYFS') say about Assessment?

"Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support"

"Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process."

Formative Assessment:

Our teachers keep careful records to ensure that children are provided with appropriate activities and challenges. Our records, using Blossom, show when a child is introduced to materials or concepts, what extensions they have completed for that concept and when they have achieved the relevant skill. Observations are also registered against the revised EYFS areas of learning. Together, these records are called 'Learning Journeys'. Children enjoy contributing photographs, drawings and other samples of work which are uploaded to their work portfolio. These records are informed by 'spontaneous observations' where adults make immediate notes having observed a child at work and play, or 'longer planned observations' where adults have decided in advance which area of development they would like to observe and recorded their findings.

Here at Colourbox, we operate a 'Key person' system and each staff member has a 'key' group of children for whose records they are primarily responsible. However, all staff record observations of children using Blossom because we feel it is appropriate for all the adults in contact with the child to be involved in observation and assessment. The management team will be responsible for cohort analysis, of various groups of children, such as those with Special Education Needs or those receiving Early Years Pupil Premium. The information gained from this analysis will be used to inform 'Cohort Plans' to improve the quality of education offered to all children where appropriate.

Observations include details of one-to-one lessons ('presentations') given; the follow-up work chosen by the child; progress and achievement as well as difficulties encountered by the child and how those difficulties were resolved. Because so many of our materials are 'self-correcting' the child will know when something is not right and we can gain important knowledge about the developmental stage of the child by watching if/how he/she corrects this. In a Montessori classroom, children come to see 'mistakes' as a positive way of gaining deeper knowledge rather than something to be embarrassed about.

Summative Assessment:

Summative Assessments will be produced using Blossom which links Montessori activities to the EYFS. Prime area checks will be completed for children under 2 years within the first 3 months. The 2-year-old checks will be completed for children between the ages of two and three. Prime and Specific Area check will be completed annually. Should developmental delay

become apparent for any child then the Initial Concerns Form should be completed and passed to the SENCO so that 'Early Help' strategies can be implemented and support can be put in place. Parental permission must be sought before information is shared directly with other relative professionals; however, parents will also be encouraged to share information from the progress check with other relevant professionals.

At the end of a child's time at Colourbox Montessori School, the child's 'key person' will prepare a summary of the child's learning to date in all areas of learning using the EYFS profile on Blossom. This summary should be passed to the child's next school as it will provide important information to help the next provider plan for future learning.

For children at the end of the EYFS, an EYFS Profile ('EYFSP') must be completed. This is based on the practitioner's ongoing observation and assessments in all areas of learning as defined in the EYFS. Each child's developmental level will be assessed against the early learning goals and recorded as either 'meeting expected levels' or 'emerging'. Suffolk County Council will support staff with this process.

Observation and Assessment are the essential tools of watching and learning with which we, as practitioners, can explore the learning that has taken place and support the future learning.

Information regarding a variety of Early Communication Methods, themed activity plans and educational information can be found on Blossom.

This policy will be reviewed in April 2022