

All policies interrelate so please check other policies for pertinent information.

**Policies are intended to support our philosophy which is summarised in these qualities; Dynamic, Inquisitive, Responsible, Grit, Playful, Contented**



### Children's Learning

We are proud to be a Montessori Kindergarten staffed by trained teachers. More information about Montessori philosophy and pedagogy can be found on our website. We have a strong philosophy underpinning our organisation and more information about this can also be found on our website.

As far as possible all activities are structured to maximise their learning potential. For example, a cookery activity will be used to teach: mathematical skills in counting and measuring; language skills through description, instructions, and listening; PSE through turn taking, making a product as a group, discussion of likes and dislikes; knowledge and understanding through changes in texture when ingredients are combined, researching where ingredients come from; physical development through mixing, stirring, rolling etc; creative development in using their senses, the process of making and in follow up activities.

This is achieved through the dialogue with and direction of staff, as well as by following the natural curiosity and questions of the children. Staff use open questions to extend learning as far as possible.

We give the children a highly structured space in which they have complete freedom of choice. This allows them to follow their own interests and ensures they spend as long as is appropriate to their developmental stage on any activity. Allowing the children to follow their curiosity means they achieve things they are proud of faster. This builds their confidence quickly making them increasingly willing to tackle new challenges. The freedom the children have also removes the frictions that are often created by requiring children to be involved in tasks they are not interested in or to work with others they are not comfortable with. We are therefore able to create a remarkably calm and gentle environment.

### The Montessori Method

Maria Montessori lived from 1870 to 1952. She pioneered new ways to teach handicapped and socially deprived children in Italy. Further study, observation and experimentation proved the value of these methods in the education of all children.

Many of the ideas she developed are now part of the common approach to child care and education worldwide.

The Montessori philosophy believes that a child, given carefully organized exposure to experiences and possibilities, will develop not only a knowledge of the world but a way of responding to it and moving with it.

The main precepts of Montessori education are

- Children are to be respected as different from adults and as individuals who differ from each other.
- The child possesses an unusual sensitivity and intellectual ability to absorb and learn from their environment that is unlike that of an adult in both quality and capacity.
- The most important years of a child's growth are the first six years during which learning gradually becomes a conscious process.

"The child has a deep love and need for purposeful work. He works, however, not as an adult for the completion of a job, but for the sake of an activity itself. It is this activity which enables him to accomplish his most important goal: the development of himself - his mental, physical and psychological powers."

The Montessori curriculum covers the following areas: practical life; sensorial; mathematics; language; culture; art; physical and outdoor play including gardening, ball skills, wheeled toys, botany and more.

### Planning

All planning is overseen by the Senior staff who hold mainstream and Montessori qualifications. Plans are made for individual children on a weekly and daily basis by key workers. We also have half termly topics, such as; colours, feelings, journeys, continents of the world, senses, flowers, vehicles, which are used to inspire new

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activities every half term. Discussions are held between children and teachers about what topics they would like to explore, what they know already and what they would like to find out.

Planning is done in accordance to the areas of the Foundation Curriculum: PSE, Communication and Language, Physical, Literacy, Maths, Understanding the World, Expressive Arts and Design or Montessori areas . In addition to this we plan specifically for our outdoor area, our role play area, our weekly cooking activity, messy play activities, ICT and other teacher led activities. We also plan activities specifically to support transition to the Reception year.

The individual daily planning and the project based planning ensure all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage are covered. In this way we ensure all children are given opportunities in all areas. There is also essential and unlimited repetition within this of the broader learning objectives as needed by each child.

### **Assessments and Recording**

All staff note the success of activities children are involved in and note significant features of the children's learning and general development when working with them or observing their free play. Each member of staff has specific responsibility for ensuring the children in their key worker group have adequate records of their development across all curriculum areas. These are reviewed by the nursery manager regularly for every child and discussed with teachers.

Assessment notes are fed back into planning via the individual records of the children on a day by day basis.

This is done primarily using digital observation forms that are then used to inform planning documents or individual children's records, or recorded directly into the children's digital record folders. Digital photos are also a primary source of recording.

Children's profiles contain sections for each Foundation Stage Area. They also contain samples of the children's work and much photographic evidence. We gather an information sheet on entry with basic details such as dob, left or right handed etc. We complete statutory 2 year checks for each child at a point between 24 and 36 months. For children born prematurely this can be extended.

Parents, or those with legal parental responsibility, are entitled to see their child's records and given online access from home through secure links. It is part of the ethos and values of Artisans that respect is shown to all so the style of the records is always suitable for all those entitled to see it, as far as this is possible with a working and organic document. Every parent has an option to decline references to their child, or photographs being made on another child's digital record, this permission is part of the application process. Parents are able to add comments to the digital records themselves.

Parents are given written reports about their child in two out of the three terms in a school year and are provided with an opportunity to meet with teachers, without children, in the third term. When a key worker is allocated, based on a child's relationships, parents are invited to a meeting to discuss how their child has settled and future development. Teachers have informal chats every day and are available for arranged meetings within operational hours by request. Teachers will also request meetings if they feel longer conversations and partnership will benefit a child's development or to ask for information about home experiences to support development at Artisans.

### **Organization of resources**

All the furniture is at an appropriate height for the children. Resources for all areas of learning are available to children at all times. Outside play is supervised at all times and we aim to create an environment where the

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outdoor classroom is as freely available as the indoor space. The amount of space allows the children a freedom of movement between different activities and plenty of room to accommodate quieter and busier occupations. It is set out in the Montessori learning areas, with all equipment available to all children. There is also space for a cosy area for quiet moments. Another area is used for role play and other imagination based activities and small world activities also have their own space. We have a book area too. The amount of room available also allows for space to be created for dance, music and drama activities where the children need large spaces to express themselves. We do not offer sleeping facilities but have a space where a child can lie quietly if needed.

### **Relationships**

The relationship between the staff and children is recognized as a central pivot to the children's learning. Staff treat the children with respect at all times. Their views will always be sought and listened to. Staff, as far as possible, always aim to work at the level of the children. Praise, encouragement and reassurance is given as frequently as possible. Unacceptable behavior is explained in respectful terms ensuring the children understand it is the behaviour that is objected to and the child will be given other positive strategies for reaching their intended goal when this is apparent.

The relationships between staff members are also recognized as a central model to the children's learning. Staff show respect to each other at all times, modeling listening behaviour, co-operative working and the giving and accepting of praise and help. At no time should staff undermine each other. If an area of disagreement arises it should be dealt with in private and taken to Ruth Martin.

The relationship of the children to their surroundings is also recognized as important. The classroom lay out stays consistent for this reason providing the children with a sense of security and control over their surroundings. It is always ready for the children. Keeping the environment tidy is a shared responsibility between staff and children, with staff assisting the children to look after and be responsible for their surroundings.

The relationships the children build amongst themselves are supported and children are taught how to give and receive praise between themselves. Politeness and respect are valued and children are shown how to enact these within their relationships. They are expected to and supported in helping, respecting and encouraging one another.

Relationships with parents are explained in our parental partnership policy.

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