

Rationale:

The outdoors can provide a scale and freedom for a type of play that is difficult to replicate indoors

Curriculum Framework for Children 3 to 5

Outdoor learning makes a major contribution to children's development. Young children will be missing out on important learning opportunities if quality outdoor provision is not available to them regularly.

The Great Outdoors by Margaret Edgington

Aim

To create an outdoor area which is stimulating, exciting and used throughout the year as a learning environment.

Objectives

We aim to:

- use the outdoor environment as a context and a natural resource for learning
- include the outdoor area when planning for learning
- enable children to access the outdoor area on a daily basis
- ensure that the outdoor area offers children the opportunity to investigate and explore, problem solve, use their imagination and creativity
- ensure the outdoors offers children opportunities to develop their gross motor skills
- ensure that children enjoy energetic activity outdoors and the feeling of well being that it brings
- observe and assess and record the learning that happens in the outdoor area
- help children to care for the outside environment
- enable children to work on their own and with others
- enable children to develop an appreciation of natural beauty and a sense of wonder about the world
- respect the outdoor environment and to care for living things
- enable children to manage and use the space and freedom afforded by the outdoor area
- give children the opportunity to relax, enjoy and have fun outdoors
- to use tools safely and effectively

Specific Role of Adults

Many people associate the Role of the Adult Outside in the external play area as being one of a supervisory nature only. Whilst obviously it is crucial that both the environment and the activities going on within it are safe, if this is the only focus for adults outside, many opportunities for learning and development will be missed.

EYFS staff here at Toll Bar Primary School believe that the following are important if Outdoor Play is to be exciting, stimulating and rewarding for all concerned:

- All EYFS staff need to be constantly aware not just of what is going on Outside, but what they are contributing to Outside Play.
- EYFS staff need to be actively involved in playing with the children. While staff need to be sensitive to the children and know when it is or isn't appropriate to become part of the play, it is not enough to always take on a "looking on role". For the play to be successful staff need to interact and collaborate with the children, and where appropriate to support, stimulate and feed ideas to children.
- EYFS staff need to talk with children, to listen to them, and to challenge them.
- EYFS staff need to act as role models, to support children in developing skills, and, in some situations, to teach them new skills.
- EYFS staff need to encourage children to use a variety of natural resources
- EYFS staff also need to act as role models to challenge stereotypes, and to challenge gender confirming attitudes. Sometimes their simple presence and participation at an activity will help raise the status of the activity. This is particularly important if boys are to be supported in their development.
- EYFS staff need to be able to observe, to monitor and to evaluate individual children's progress, and the way that groups of children play together. Most importantly they need to be able to respond to what they see and find out in as productive a way as possible where changes might be needed, and act on these needs.
- EYFS staff need to be aware of situations which might be dangerous, and if not able to prevent accidents, to be able to respond to them.

EYFS staff have agreed that if children are to benefit fully from this green area that is part of the school, and if the status of the Outdoor Area is to be raised, then all staff need to be fully involved in running the Outside Area.

We require a minimum of 2 members of staff to be Outside and:

- facilitate access to the outdoor area on a daily basis through discussion and staff meetings, planning and mutual agreement
- organise and provide necessary resources as appropriate, e.g. footwear, tools, etc.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This will include:

- staff observations, discussions and feedback from children and parents
- discuss and review the validity of the policy to ensure it is meeting the needs of the children