



Physical Development



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1. Physical Development

Physical development is divided into two aspects:

1. Moving and Handling
2. Health and self care

As the children attending the nursery present with a very wide range of physical abilities they will access learning experiences and activities in different ways - planning and assessment will therefore need to take account of individual learning needs. Some children will be working on developing head control, while others may be able to walk but have difficulty in carrying out other gross motor activities such as jumping or navigating around the environment. Some children will need facilitation to grasp and release, while others will be learning to use writing tools. It is therefore important that activities are carefully differentiated and facilitation for tasks is appropriate.

Greenhall Nursery uses the principles and practice of Conductive Education throughout the nursery as appropriate to the needs of the children (See Conductive Education policy).

The nursery environment (both indoor and outdoor) should offer a variety of physical experiences that both challenge the children and also enable them to encounter physical obstacles (such as stairs and uneven surfaces) that they would encounter in daily life outside the nursery.

Physical Development has links across all areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage and is a Prime area of learning. Through movement, children explore the world, gain a sense of their own positions in space, develop an awareness of their own body map and learn to co-ordinate eyes and body together. A child's body is also their first vehicle of expression; posture and gesture tell a story of their own, long before fluent speech develops.

At Greenhall, we recognise that our children need specialist, carefully planned interventions and activities in order for them to make progress with their physical development.

2. Moving and Handling

This aspect of the physical curriculum can be further dissected into six distinct areas: hand function, head control, travelling, co-ordination, sitting and mark making. Practitioners must provide opportunities and resources appropriate to the children for them to be able to demonstrate these skills.

Head control

In early stages of physical development head control is the most important primary function, having an impact on the way and rate at which children can develop other physical skills.

We use Conductive Education as a means of teaching head control and children should be provided with appropriately stimulating and motivating activities and resources. It is appropriate that for some activities children be sat in supportive seating or when head control is not the primary aim of the activity, in order to enable the children to concentrate on other areas of development.

Sitting

At Greenhall we recognise that for some children it takes a great deal of skill, concentration and effort to maintain their sitting balance. It is therefore appropriate that for some activities children be sat in supportive seating or facilitated to sit by a practitioner, when sitting is not the primary aim of the activity.

A variety of sitting positions are taught to children dependent on their individual physical abilities and development (see Conductive Education policy).

Hand function:

In the early stages of physical development children should be given numerous opportunities to develop hand control. Children first need to learn that the hands are part of themselves. This can be through body awareness activities, desensitisation activities, and providing stimulating toys that engage and motivate the children to touch them, which are in reach of the children. Children may need facilitation to open and close their hands, promoting grasp and release of objects. This can be both passive and active and should be facilitated carefully.

As children become able to hold objects, toys provided should be appropriately sized and manageable for the children, with due care and attention being paid to choking hazards. Activities should be provided at midline, and children encouraged and facilitated to carry out activities bi-laterally, particularly those whose difficulty / disability impacts this.

Some children may be tactile defensive and for these children a structured desensitisation programme will be provided.

Appropriate mark making tools and resources are provided for children. When children have developed a consistent palmer grasp they should be provided with activities that develop their pincer grasp.

As children develop they begin to understand that there is a correlation between their movements and the marks that they make. Structured hand-eye co-ordination activities will help them to gain increasing control over these movements in preparation for writing activities.

Children should not be forced to use a particular hand when using tools but should be given time and opportunity to develop their own hand preference. Practitioners should model appropriate pencil grip when writing and should facilitate children to use a tripod grip when appropriate, using skills and strategies in how to pick up the pencil appropriately from the table in order to promote independence in this area. Activities to promote tripod grip should be available in fine motor sessions and continuous provision.

Also provided should be a variety of one handed tools for the children to use and explore. The tools should be appropriate for the children and may be specialised for individual children e.g. looped scissors, table top scissors. This ensures that children of different physical abilities are supported at different levels and children are given opportunities to experience success. There should also be opportunities during continuous provision to handle a variety of tools, objects, construction materials and malleable materials. These activities promote hand-eye co-ordination, finger strength and fine motor skills.

When ready, children should be provided with structured graphomotor activities that encourage and support good pencil control, leading to the writing of recognisable letters.

Mark making

Mark making is a separate skill to writing (see Literacy policy).

Children should be provided with a wide range of sensory materials in which they can leave marks. At the early stages of development they may not understand the mark making process and may just enjoy the feel of different textures and sensory materials.

Early mark making can involve any part of the child's body and any sort of material- imagination is the only limit!

Ideas for sensory mark making materials include:

- Foam
- Sand
- Gloop - Cornflour
- Custard
- Silly putty
- Playdough
- Lentils
- Rice

Sawdust
Soil
Wet mud
Glue spread on a surface & sprinkled glitter
moon sand
Paint
Glitter

NB- due care and attention must be paid in regards to health and safety

However, as children develop they begin to make connections between their movements and the marks that they make. Practitioners can encourage this through activities such as

- write dance
- sticky kids
- sensory / exploratory play
- messy play
- footprints / welly prints
- art activities (see Expressive Arts and Design policy).

Children need to be exposed to practitioner's mark making, giving them opportunities to observe and apply what they see adults doing and begin to copy and apply it themselves. This then becomes more formalised mark making. As children develop control over writing tools they should be given activities such as tracking, mazes, dot to dot, which give opportunities to develop the skills needed for writing (see Literacy policy).

Travelling

Children are taught early movement skills relevant to their stage of development through the principles of Conductive Education (see Conductive Education policy). Children are first taught to change place and position as this is a pre-requisite for transferring.

Practitioners should provide adequate space and motivation to encourage and develop relevant skills e.g. rolling from back to front and vice versa. Children's additional needs should always be taken into account when providing motivation and incentives for movement e.g. if a children has a visual an impairment practitioners will use an auditory toy to encourage tracking and movement.

The learning environment should be relevant to the stages of development e.g. providing opportunities for cruising, accessible resources for children that are crawling. They should be clutter free and safe for independent movement.

A variety of surfaces should be provided for children, giving them opportunities to develop their skills in a safe and supervised environment before they encounter them in the wider world e.g. mats for children to learn to fall safely on, steps, sensory walk with a variety of surfaces such as grass, grids and cobbles.

Provision should be made for children to practice moving in a range of ways such as slithering, shuffling, rolling, crawling, walking, walking, running, jumping, skipping, sliding and hopping. Children may need focused individual teaching based on the breakdown of tasks in order to achieve some of the above activities such as jumping, hopping and maneuvering across and over obstacles. Outdoor provision should include opportunities for running (wide, obstacle free space), climbing (with appropriate supervision and risk assessments in place). Children are also provided with opportunities to use play equipment such as toy cars, specialised tricycles, wheelstands and birillos.

Co-ordination

Children should be given activities and opportunities to develop

- proprioception
- hand eye co-ordination
- visual perception

enabling them to develop the ability to

- use tools appropriately
- complete ball skills tasks (hand and foot)
- negotiate space and obstacles
- draw shapes, make marks and develop letter formation

3. Health and self care

This aspect of the physical curriculum is concerned with meeting the basic needs of the child and keeping them safe and healthy. It is concerned with

1. eating and drinking
2. toileting
3. dressing and undressing
4. staying healthy

Eating and drinking

Children's basic needs must be met by practitioners, with advice taken into account where appropriate from the Speech and Language Therapists when children are learning to eat and drink. Children will develop at their own pace but the priority must be that children are receiving adequate nutrition rather than the emphasis being on them doing it independently.

For children to be able to give themselves food and drink there are physical skills that are pre-requisites to this such as being able to grasp and release cutlery or finger food, and being able to flex and extend their arms (see Moving and Handling).

At Greenhall we have a regular lunchtime routine which prepares children for the eating process. This includes sitting correction and oro-motor activities. Lunchtimes are a key learning time and classroom practitioners are supported by lunchtime supervisors, giving a higher staff : pupil ratio enabling children to be appropriately facilitated in order to achieve independence. Children at Greenhall receive a hot dinner prepared on the premises. Special diets (gluten / dairy free) are catered for, as well as the appropriate consistency of food (e.g. puree) being provided to meet the individual children's needs. Children are also provided with appropriate equipment such as angled cutlery, sloping dishes, doidy cups. Where appropriate there are opportunities to practice going up to the dinner trolley to choose what they would like. Sectioned trays and non-lipped plates are provided. These opportunities support transition and prepare children for inclusion by enabling them to practice with the equipment that they will use when they move schools.

Toileting

Most children at the beginning of their nursery education will be wearing nappies. When appropriate children will begin a toilet training routine, in consultation with parents. Children are given the opportunity to sit on the toilet / potty regularly throughout the day. At Greenhall we have a variety of potties, Smirthwaite supportive potty chairs and inserts for the toilets. We have low profile toilets with appropriate aids to encourage independence such as support handles and grab rails.

Practitioners should pay attention to the children's individual communication means and look for signs of recognition that they are wet / soiled or are showing signs of recognising bladder / bowel urges. For non-verbal children this

may be through facial expressions or gestures. Children may also use AAC to communicate their need to visit the bathroom.

Dressing and undressing

Children are given regular opportunities throughout the daily routine to practice dressing and undressing skills. This may include getting their coat on ready to go outside, taking shoes and socks off for Task Series or getting changed ready for the hydrotherapy session.

There are skills that are a pre-requisite to dressing and undressing. These may include head control, grasp and release, pincer grasp (for buttons / zips) and body awareness. These skills are taught through a variety of structured activities as detailed in the section Moving and Handling.

Practitioners should ensure that children are given time to achieve success when dressing and undressing by giving time and appropriate verbal instruction and manual facilitation. Again positioning is a factor in a child achieving success. It may be appropriate for a child to be in a supportive seat or to be facilitated to sit when practicing dressing and undressing skills dependent on their individual abilities and level of physical development.

Staying healthy

As they develop children may become more aware of the effects of activity on their body. They may notice that they are warmer when they have been exercising or that they feel 'out of puff'. Children are offered a range of activities in order to promote their physical development but also to stay healthy. Practitioners should highlight the aspect of staying healthy by exercising when carrying out these activities.

Children are also offered a range of healthy foodstuffs during the day and encouraged to drink plenty, particularly in the hot weather. We are part of the free school milk scheme and children are offered milk at snack times. For some children it is appropriate to discuss the importance of eating healthily and which foodstuffs promote this. Children will also take part in regular activities where they prepare their own foodstuffs e.g. during cooking / topic activities.

Children are taught the importance of hand-washing after visiting the bathroom or before eating through the regular routines at nursery and are facilitated appropriately.

When using tools such as scissors / cutlery children are supervised and shown the correct way to use equipment with due care to safety procedures in a way which is relevant to their level of development. Practitioners model the correct use of tools and equipment at all times within the daily routine. At the appropriate times children will be encouraged to practice safety measures independently whilst practitioners ensure that safety is maintained. Risk assessments are in place.

Physical Development has links to all other areas of learning in the EYFS. A child's physical development will affect her ability to access all other areas of the curriculum.

4. Assessment, recording & reporting

Children's progress is recorded on session evaluations and used to inform future planning. Annotated photographs and observations are kept in the children's individual learning journeys. Reference is made to the aspect of Literacy as well as the child's age and stage.

Children's physical skills are assessed using the EYFS and B-Squared EYFS assessment tool on entry to provide a baseline and then each term. This is reported to the Headteacher and data is analysed with regards to progress made at the end of each academic year although information is gathered on trends at the end of each term.

At the end of their reception year, children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals in line with National Regulations.

5. Monitoring Effectiveness

The coordinator for Physical Development at Greenhall is Eleri Holmes. She will monitor the effectiveness of the policy together with the link Governor, Sharon Briscoe. They will then report back to the Headteacher and Curriculum Committee.

6. Equal Opportunities

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Equal Opportunities Policy.

Policy reviewed and approved: March 2017

Review due: March 2019

Signed.....(Headteacher) Date:

Signed.....(Chair of Governors) Date: