

Scientific Enquiry in the Early Years

Research – children independently access a range of resources which naturally lend themselves to exploration and curiosity. Children do lots of ‘finding out’ and exploring within their play. This is supported by adults through effective questioning and working as a play partner. Free play allows enquiry to happen all areas of learning. Planning time allows children to research ideas to set up their own ideas within their independent play.

Fair testing- children frequently come across situations which require them to solve problems within their play. Adults within the classroom support this through modelling, suggestion making and appropriate questioning.

Identifying and classifying – the enabling environment supports sorting and organising. Tidy-up time is a good place to see this in practise and children sort resources with real purpose. Children order resources in a logical and mathematical way. Natural resources within the classroom lend themselves to identifying and classifying independently within play. Children know which group they are in within the class.

Observation over time – living resources (flowers in snack bar, plants on windowsills) support observation within the classroom (both indoors and outside). Planting activities take place throughout the year and children are able to observe growth and decay. Children help to make play dough and baking opportunities also crop up throughout the year. Children are able to observe and comment on more immediate changes through these provocations. Children notice changes within themselves – ‘when I was a baby...’. Children explore and play with ice, bubbles, wet and dry sand.

Pattern seeking – children always have access to measuring equipment. Small group times support correct use of these resources. Children notice patterns within many of the classroom areas and use language to explore this further. This is particularly evident in the big and small blocks. Our visual timetables allow children to notice patterns within their daily routines.