

Netherton Park Nursery School



Netherton Park
Nursery School

Physical Development Policy

Reviewed: September 2026	Next review date: September 2029
--------------------------	----------------------------------

Related policies/documents:

- Birth To 5 Matters
- Curriculum overview
- Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment Policy
- Dough Disco
- Get Moving Programme 'Developmental Co-ordination Disorder Toolkit'
- Healthy Lifestyles Policy
- Learning Aspirations
- Literacy Policy
- Squiggle whilst you wiggle

Physical Development Curriculum Lead: Verony Elmer

Curriculum Assistant: Lena Allen

Intent

When children are confident with their physical skills they are able to thrive across all areas of development. It is crucial that children are provided with opportunities to develop their gross and fine motor skills as this will enable them to develop a positive sense of themselves and have confidence in their own abilities. This will lead to happy, healthy and active lives. From supporting children to be independent in their self-help skills, teaching them to use calming breaths when things become stressful, encouraging them to lead a healthy lifestyle and continuously challenging them to take managed risks, enabling them to understand their own physical capabilities and limitations.

‘Research has shown that an increase in physical activity has a significant positive effect on cognition, especially for early years and primary school students.’

(Sibley, 2002)

Implementation

Outdoor learning/Open door policy

At Netherton Park Nursery School we place a very high priority on providing high-quality learning opportunities for all children in our outdoor learning environments. Children have the opportunity to play and learn outside for a large portion of their session - whatever the weather!!! We provide the coats, waterproof trousers and wellies for the children to wear to enable them to learn outdoors without the stress and worry of dirtying their own clothing. Within all outdoor learning environments children have daily access to equipment that enables them to learn, develop, practice as well as challenge themselves physically.



Nature Play

At Netherton Park Nursery School we have a woodland area within our grounds where groups of children access 'nature play' sessions. During these sessions children are involved in hands-on learning, developing skills such as risk taking, perseverance and independence. These are the foundations that children need to learn successfully within the classroom.

Children experience a range of different learning opportunities and activities which will support them in their learning and development with both gross and fine physical development. These include using tools, making dens, following trails and scavenger hunts, climbing up and rolling down the bank, climbing a ladder, searching for small minibeasts, carrying large and heavier objects.

Part of the sessions is supporting children about risks and how to evaluate them. Activities are introduced when the staff feel the children in the group are ready. Staff support children to be actively responsible for themselves, their choices and their actions.

From our nature play sessions we want all children to become independent, reflective and inquisitive explorers, developing confidence, self-esteem and to be able to show respect for others and the natural world.

We have two members of staff trained to Level 3 Forest School and one trained to Level 2.



Interventions

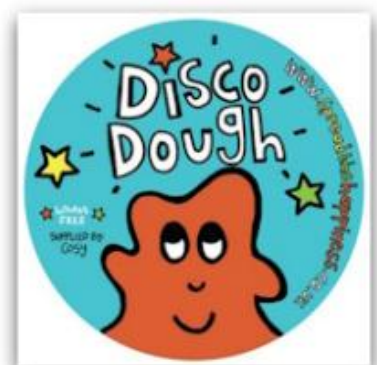
Staff use a range of interventions and approaches to meet the physical needs of children where it has been identified:

Dough Disco

Dough Disco is a fun activity which combines the use of play dough with a series of hand and finger exercises designed to improve fine muscle control. The movements develop children's fine and gross motor dexterity, hand eye coordination and self-esteem. Children take part in weekly sessions.

Children manipulate dough while following music rhythm and simple actions which include:

- Squeezing
- Rolling



- Pinching
- Poking
- Stretching
- Flattening

The activities help strengthen the small muscles in the hands that are needed for:

- Handwriting
- Using scissors
- Buttoning clothes
- Pencil control

Dough Disco sessions last around **10 minutes** and takes place to upbeat music to keep children engaged and motivated.

Funky Fingers /Finger Gym

<https://abcdoes.com/abc-does-a-blog/2013/09/26/dough-gym-week-funky-fingers/>

Funky Fingers/Finger Gym both encourage the development of fine motor skills and strength that are essential for handwriting. Any activity can be classed as a funky finger activity if it focuses on children using fine motor skills to strengthen muscles in the fingers, hands and wrists.

Development Movement Play (Jabadao)

“Development Movement Play is about making sure that children grow up with life in every limb - because it aids development and lays foundations for lifelong wellbeing.”

Get Moving

Get Moving is a Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy school based exercise programme on improving motor co-ordination including balance, spatial awareness and body perception.

Peer Relaxation

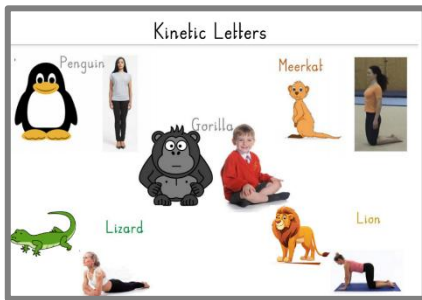
To support children's wellbeing we offer peer relaxation sessions as part of our small group times. Children work with a partner and learn a series of different movements (waterfall, eye glasses, bunny hop etc.). They carry these out on their partners, back, hands and head. This is all learnt in a beautifully calm environment with low lighting, relaxing scents and calming music. The expectations are for quite voices, kind hands and good listening. The sessions offer a sense of calm in what can be a very busy Nursery day.

Squiggle whilst you wiggle

<https://www.spreadthehappiness.co.uk/product/squiggle-whilst-you-wiggle-2nd-edition/>

Squiggle whilst you wiggle is a kinaesthetic approach to stimulate early writing. Children use movement with music to develop their motor skills in preparation for writing, whilst holding a flipper flapper in each hand.

Kinetic Letters



Children are modelled and supported to develop good posture using the Kinetic Letters body poses.

Bikeability

Two members of staff are trained in delivering the Bikeability programme. [Bikeability Level 1 - Maintain your cycle, Glide and Control your bike](#). This supports children to develop a range of physical skills that support learning to ride a balance bike. These include spatial awareness, balance, coordination, steering and avoiding others.

Physically ready to write

We place a huge priority on supporting children's physical skills - both gross and fine motor for children to be 'physically ready to write'. Our outdoor learning environments support the development through fixed equipment (climbing frames, slides and sand pits), wheeled toys, brooms, large digging equipment, balls, hoops etc.

Vestibular sense

This is the sense of the relationship between the body, gravity and the ground. It tells you which way is up, how your body is orientated in relation to up and how your body is moving in space – often described as sense of balance.

Proprioception

Proprioception refers to the body's ability to perceive its own position in space. Examples of proprioception include: Knowing whether feet are on soft grass or hard cement without looking (even while wearing shoes), balancing on one leg, throwing a ball without having to look at the throwing arm. Knowing where your hands and feet are in relation to your body, and how much pressure to apply for a task eg opening a jar, throwing a ball, hammering a nail.

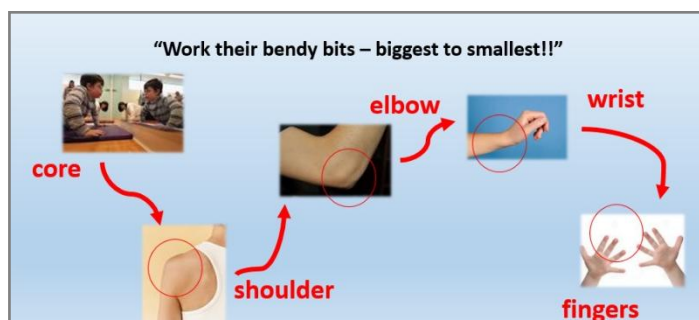
Muscle strengthening

We focus across the school on developing children's muscles from largest to smallest.



Muscle Strengthening

We focus on supporting all children with developing their muscles from largest to smallest appropriate to their age and also physical abilities whilst ensuring that there is always challenge.



Impact

Practitioners record children's interests and achievements on their Tapestry learning journal. They use their professional knowledge and evidence from observations to make assessments as to which Range in the Birth to 5 Matters that they are working in and if it is age appropriate. For those children who are not making expected progress, we have developed many interventions to support their progress. If staff continue to observe and identify that children are working below their expected age and stage of development, then specific steps are put into place.

The Headteacher carries out detailed analysis using the assessments. This includes looking at the progress of key vulnerable groups (EYPP, CLA, SEND, EAL, Boys etc). This information is shared with Governors and staff and is used to plan for specific interventions as well as feeding into the SDP and whole school targets. Twice a year parents are invited in to discuss their child's progress with their key person or at any point where staff may have concerns or additional support is required.

The impact of our Physical Development curriculum is monitored closely by the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher supported by the other members of SST, through observations of staff and children, learning walks, assessments and progress data. Areas of strength and potential development are highlighted. This then informs future planning, training for staff, and supports any changes needed within the learning environment and resources to ensure the curriculum continues to be effective. This is shared with all staff as part of a continuous collaborative process which includes regular Professional Development Meetings, INSET days and team meetings as well as individual feedback where appropriate.