



Guidance

Completing commentaries for the characteristics of effective learning – example lines of enquiry

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Playing and exploring – engagement

1.

‘Finding out and exploring’ is concerned with children’s open-ended hands-on experiences. These result from innate curiosity and provide the raw sensory material from which the child builds concepts, tests ideas and finds things out.

Possible lines of enquiry:

- Does the child respond to first hand experiences in an exploratory way?
- How does the child demonstrate natural curiosity?
- Does the child notice patterns, changes, similarities and differences when exploring across the curriculum?

‘Using what they know in their play’ describes how children use play to bring together their current understandings, combining, refining and exploring their ideas in imaginative ways. Representing experiences through imaginative play supports the development of narrative thought, the ability to see from other perspectives, and symbolic thinking.

Possible lines of enquiry:

- In what ways does the child use what he or she discovers in play and link it to existing knowledge?
- Can the child combine, refine and explore ideas in imaginative ways?
- Can the child see things from other perspectives?

‘Being willing to have a go’ refers to the child finding an interest, initiating activities, seeking challenge, having a ‘can do’ orientation, being willing to take a risk in new experiences, and developing the view of failures as opportunities to learn.

Possible lines of enquiry:

- Does the child initiate activities around own interests?
- Does the child seek challenges and take risks in new experiences?
- Does the child learn from mistakes without becoming disheartened?

2.

Active learning - motivation

‘Being involved and concentrating’ describes the intensity of attention that arises from children concentrating on following a line of interest in their activities.

Possible lines of enquiry:

- To what extent does the child become completely focussed in activities and experiences and not easily distracted?
- To what extent does the child show intensity of attention for example by being concerned about details in activities, experiences and ideas?

‘Keeping on trying’ refers to the importance of persistence even in the face of challenge or difficulties, an element of purposeful control which supports resilience.

Possible lines of enquiry:

- Does the child pursue a particular line of interest in an activity?
- Does the child demonstrate persistence in the face of difficulty or a challenge?
- Can the child refocus and re-plan to overcome difficulties, setbacks and disappointments?
- Does the child know how to seek appropriate help in terms of materials, tools and other people?

‘Enjoying achieving what they set out to do’ refers to the reward of meeting one’s own goals, building on the intrinsic motivation which supports long-term success, rather than relying on the approval of others.

Possible lines of enquiry:

- Does the child become involved in activities and experiences which arise out of personal interest, curiosity and enquiry?
- Does the child demonstrate satisfaction when engaged in and completing personal endeavours?

3.

Creating and thinking critically

‘Having their own ideas’ covers the critical area of creativity – generating new ideas and approaches in all areas of endeavour. Being inventive allows children to find new problems as they seek challenge, and to explore ways of solving these.

Possible lines of enquiry:

- Does the child generate new ideas during activities?
- Does the child adapt, refine or make changes when previous ideas were unsuccessful or could be developed?
- Is the child inventive in solving problems, using and synthesising knowledge and skills across areas of learning?

‘Using what they know to learn new things’ refers to the way in which children develop and link concepts, find meaning in sequence, cause and effect and in the intentions of others through both narrative and scientific modes of thought.

Possible lines of enquiry:

- Does the child talk about or explore the idea of cause and effect through actions?
- Does the child use acquired knowledge and skills to explore new learning across and within areas of learning?
- Does the child offer ideas of why things happen and how things work or show this in exploratory play?

‘Choosing ways to do things and finding new ways’ involves approaching goal-directed activity in organised ways, making choices and decisions about how to approach tasks, planning and monitoring what to do and being able to change strategies.

Possible lines of enquiry:

- Does the child explore ways of solving new problems including trial and error?
- Is the child able to plan and monitor what has been done?
- Can the child change strategies when appropriate?

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