



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

1 Introduction

1.1 The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The Early Years Foundation Stage staff work as part of a team in an EYFS Unit. Children from the Nursery and Reception have opportunities to work together during free flow times, accessing shared continuous provision. EYFS staff plan and work together to ensure continuity and progression, providing age and stage related activities to suit all our children. Children are also taught within their own keyworker groups, they are taught in a variety of ways; whole class groups, small group work, pairs and individually. We are dedicated to providing excellent pastoral care and education to those children in our care.

Staff are fully qualified, have a wide range of experience and expertise in working with and educating children. The Staff are committed to professional development and attend up to date training courses and have excellent knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and child development.

The Foundation Stage effects a smooth transition from home to school and offers stability for pupils. Children are provided with an environment in which they are given opportunities to express themselves using a variety of mediums and suitable materials to stimulate and extend imagination and understanding. Through planned play and talk, children learn about themselves and the world around them, they are given opportunities to socialise and make friends, developing their personal, social and emotional skills and develop confidence.

In the Foundation Stage we acknowledge the potential for learning in every activity and situation that arises. Our aim is to provide a secure and stimulating environment in which children flourish and learn to make sense of the real world. We make the children feel valued and give them the confidence to become active learners. Our activities provide first hand experiences through play and discussion, children are encouraged to interact with others, to move about and explore a wide variety of learning situations. There are well-planned areas of provision offering a wide range of activities, resources and available materials. Opportunities are provided for sustained activity and continuous provision, as well as spontaneous, self-chosen activities. It is important to us that children experience success, have fun and enjoy themselves whilst learning.

2 Aims of the Foundation Stage

2.1 How my child will be learning

The EYFS Framework explains how and what your child will be learning to support their healthy development.

Your child will be learning skills, acquiring new knowledge and demonstrating their understanding through *7 areas of learning and development*.

Children should generally develop the *3 prime areas* first. These are:

Communication and language- This covers all aspects of language development and provides the foundation for literacy skills. Children's developing competence in speaking and listening is focused on. We aim to extend and enrich the children's vocabulary through story time, rhymes, role-play and group discussions. Children are encouraged to share their own experiences through speaking and acting out events in imaginative play and talking about their own ideas. They are encouraged to take part in class activities such as working with puppets, participating in music sessions and saying rhymes and singing songs together.

Physical development - Children are given opportunities to move to music, use equipment, develop and practice their fine and gross motor skills. They develop an increasing understanding of how their body works and what is needed to be healthy. This is done both indoors and outdoors and by working with a wide range of resources.

Personal, social and emotional development - The school fosters and develops relationships between home, school, children's centers and places of worship in order to make links stronger for the good of the community as a whole. Children are encouraged to learn to work, share, take turns and co-operate with others. They are encouraged to be independent and make choices for themselves. They are also encouraged to be sensitive to the needs of others and to respect other cultures and beliefs. Children are enabled to become confident and develop a positive self-image.

These prime areas are those most essential for the child's healthy development and future learning.

As children grow, the prime areas will help them to develop skills in 4 *specific areas*. These are:

Literacy - We have a variety of resources for the children to use to help them develop early literacy skills. Children are encouraged to use the mark-making areas indoors and outdoors independently but they also take part in teacher-led activities. These activities include whole class shared reading, phonics sessions and small group guided reading and writing. The pre-writing work encourages correct pencil control, left/right orientation and cursive letter formation. Children have the opportunity to develop their writing skills in accordance with their age, ability and competence.

Mathematics - We aim for children to achieve mathematical understanding and a firm foundation for numeracy through practical activities and using and understanding language in the development of simple mathematical ideas. Pre-number work is covered through nursery rhymes and number activities. Children are given the opportunity to learn about number, shape, space, position, pattern and measurement. Towards the end of the Foundation stage children start learning to tell the time and are given opportunities to learn about money and simple calculations.

Understanding the World - All children are given opportunities to solve problems, investigate, make decisions and experiment. They will learn about living things, their environment, the world around them and the people who are important in their lives. Children are also given opportunities to develop computing skills and to work with and use modern technology.

Expressive Arts and Design - We provide opportunities for all children to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, design, technology, music, drama, movement, dance and imaginative play activities. Children are given opportunities to make paintings, drawings, collages, models and use basic musical instruments. Children also learn new songs and rhymes and enjoy singing them with each other. Colour recognition is taught, naming colours, mixing paints, sorting and matching. At various times during the year children are given the opportunity to participate in school productions and assemblies.

These 7 areas are used to plan the child's learning and activities. The professionals teaching and supporting the children will make sure that the activities are suited to each child's unique needs. Children in the EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active, and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside.

3 Teaching and learning style

3.1 Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 1 and 2.

3.2 The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so ensuring children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are regularly shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;
- the clear aims for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do;
- the regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Foundation Stage

4 Play in the Foundation Stage

4.1 Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

5 Inclusion in the Foundation Stage

5.1 In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning (see our policy on school inclusion).

5.2 In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. Some children progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

5.3 We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;

- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary. This involves speech therapy for some of our children.

6 Assessment

As each child enters the Early Years Foundation Stage we use our professional judgement to assess each child's attainment against the 17 areas of learning taken from The Early Years Outcomes. Within 6 weeks of the child starting they will be given a 'baseline' assessment. This consists of each child being assessed against the age related expectations and whether they are emerging, expected or exceeding those statements.

We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher, parents and other adults as appropriate. The children are actively involved in setting their own personal targets which are recorded in their journals.

Each teacher / keyworker keeps a learning journey and uses these to record examples of each child's work. These learning journeys contain a wide range of evidence that we share with parents at each parental consultation meeting. The assessments are collated and are recorded and monitored on a regular basis using Scholarpack and other systems.

Parents receive an annual report that offers comments on each child's progress in each Area of Learning and The Characteristic of Learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress. At the end of the year we will assess the Reception Class children against the Early Learning Goals, taken from Early Years Outcomes. This will contain a report stating whether they are EMERGING, EXPECTED or EXCEEDING against the Early Learning Goal.

7 Parents/Careers as Partners

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before they start school;
- the teacher/keyworker visits all children in their home setting prior to starting school;
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our reception class;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher/keyworker if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents each term at which the teacher/keyworker and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents to become secure, and by allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;
- offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents e.g morning activities from 8.45-9.00, home/school book so we can find out more about your child interests and family life, Wow Moments, reading journals, phonics pots, handwriting books and informal chats with the staff before and after school.

8 Resources

8.1 We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning.