



EARLY YEARS POLICY

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the academic year in which a child has their fifth birthday.

The EYFS is statutory and is detailed under the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* and the *Practical Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage*.

INTENT

We follow the statutory framework and guidance detailed in the EYFS using our extensive experience we observe, plan and teach children in early years.

We provide a broad and balanced Early Years curriculum: -

- based on first hand experiences and purposeful interactions;
 - through 'in the moment planning' opportunities and carefully planned adult or child-initiated activities;
 - whilst having a regard for the skills and attitudes the Key Stage One curriculum will demand.
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- We aim to make the child's first experience of school happy, positive and fun;
 - We aim to foster a love of learning and develop enquiring minds through promoting;
 - We aim to instil the Characteristics of Effective Learning such as independence, resilience and confidence;
 - We aim to promote emotional well-being;
 - We aim to build positive relationships and work in partnership with families (recognising that parents are their child's first and foremost educator), carers and professionals to support every child to develop and learn.

IMPLEMENT

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning throughout our school. These features equally apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS.

Within the EYFS the development of a holistic learner is recognised based on the premise that each person finds identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections to the community, to the natural world, and to humanitarian values such as compassion.

Teaching in the EYFS:

- Has a carefully planned curriculum which aims for all children to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the EYFS;
- Involves creating adult and child-initiated opportunities that will encourage children to explore, create, investigate, rehearse, practice, repeat and discover;
- Involves developing Characteristics of Effective Learning;
- Uses a multi-sensory, fun play-based approach;
- Shows awareness of the different ways and rates by which children develop and learn; that there are many factors affecting achievement including ability, emotional state, age and maturity, and how this informs teaching strategies;
- Has a high expectation of children's behaviour and attainment;
- Recognises the importance of emotional well-being;
- Is outside as much as possible ensuring children take ownership of their learning.

Learning in the EYFS

- Through a comprehensive induction programme from home to Nursery and/or from a child's Nursery setting to Reception we ensure prior learning and development is valued and the transition into school is supported;
- We encourage cross-curricular links to ensure a seamless transition into Key Stage One by building on previous experiences and planning those for the future.

In the EYFS children are learning when they:

- Collaborate and learn from one another through shared experiences;
- Are supported to set their own challenges in their physical environment and in their learning;
- Access resources independently;
- Use their senses to explore and investigate;
- Develop persistence and positive attitudes to learning as detailed in the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

Play in the EYFS

We highly value play and the learning it brings in itself. Anyone who has observed play for any length of time will recognise that, for young children, play is a tool for learning.

Through play, children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules thereby developing emotional resilience and self-regulation.

Children have the opportunity to think creatively and problem solve alongside others. They express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations as well as re-enact positive experiences building self-awareness and self-esteem.

Inclusion in the EYFS

In consultation and working collaboratively with parents/guardians the school's Inclusion Manager (SENDCo) will lead on provision for children who may experience barriers to their learning, which may relate to sensory or physical impairment, learning difficulties or emotional or social development in line with the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice and the school's SEN/Inclusion Policy.

We aim to meet the needs of all our children by: -

- Setting realistic and challenging expectations. We aim for all children to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the EYFS. We achieve this by planning for different learning styles, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities or medical needs, children from all social and cultural backgrounds as well as children with diverse linguistic backgrounds;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contributions of all children are valued;
- Using resources, which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping to which all children have equal access;
- Monitoring children's progress and providing support where necessary, within the resources available to the school. This may include a phased transition programme dependant on a child's specific SEN needs;
- Providing specific targets detailed in individual support plans and following external therapy or support programmes of work such as Speech and Language;
- Working collaboratively with families or carers, the SENCo and other professionals such as Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Psychologists and Pupil and Family Support Officer;
- Ensuring a balance across classes, within each cohort, of gender, ability, children with additional learning or medical needs and summer born children.

The EYFS Curriculum

The EYFS is statutory and is important in its own right as a basis for developing essential skills such as listening, speaking, persistence and collaborating with each other. The three prime areas cover the knowledge and skills which are the foundations for future progress, and which are applied and reinforced by the specific areas. All areas of learning are equally important and are interlinked.

The Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals guide our long term planning together with the termly/half termly topics. In Nursery, activities are planned around the children's current needs, schemas and interests to ensure all areas of the EYFS curriculum are embraced.

Medium term planning is completed half-termly, identifies the intended learning outcomes, and takes into account children working at the exceeding level.

Weekly Planning focuses on day-to-day organisation of activities. It takes into account that children's learning is not necessarily sequential and that they may need time to consolidate, repeat and extend their learning in their own way. All planning is evaluated on an on-going basis and adapted in response to the children's needs and interests.

Assessment in the EYFS

During the children's first half term in the Nursery and Reception classes, the teacher assesses each child's development and learning attainment against the criteria set out in Development Matters and the EY Framework. Baseline assessments are completed for Reception children within the first six weeks of them starting school. It is also a time for the teacher to discover the unique personality and interests of each child.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and use this information to ensure future planning reflects individual or group needs. Once a term, summative assessments are entered on to our school tracking system.

Formative assessment in the Foundation Stage is continuous and takes the form of observations, examples of child-initiated work and samples of dated work from books and photographs. The teachers and teaching assistants keep observational records and use these to record examples of each child's work. These are kept in a portfolio on Class Dojo for each child and are available to parents and carers at all times. These records are passed onto year one teachers to ensure a smooth transition.

We have regular termly parents' meetings take place to ensure parents/carers are informed of their child's progress and next steps in learning. In addition to parents' meetings in the autumn and spring terms, parents receive an annual report that offers detailed comments on each child's progress linked to the Characteristics of Effective Learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs.

Working with Parents/ carers and other significant adults i.e. childminders

We recognise the importance of working alongside parents and other significant adults during a child's education. We do this through: -

- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school (except when COVID restrictions enforced);
- To arrange home visits for those children new to our setting;
- Giving the children the opportunity to spend time with their teacher in their new classroom before starting school;
- Inviting new parents into the classroom in their child's first term to take part in Foundation activities;
- Providing formal meetings for parents during the school year to discuss children's progress;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;
- Posting daily on Class Dojo to keep parents and carers involved in their child's learning and progress;
- Welcoming parents to discuss any concerns with staff;
- Working to build good relationships with families to promote a regular two-way flow of information.

The Environment and Resources in the EYFS

A rich and varied 'enabling' environment is actively planned for and continuously developed with varied, inclusive resources to encourage exploratory play-based learning and challenge. The learning environment encompasses both indoor and outdoor provision (including Forest School), which are of equal importance. Children are encouraged to experience all areas of the learning environment in all weathers. We encourage children to plan their own selection of activities balanced with adult initiated activities.

IMPACT

- The majority of children in Reception reach the ELG by the end of summer;
- Children develop the characteristics of effective learning which helps them through the rest of school;
- Children develop the ability to manage risks;
- Children enjoy being independent in managing themselves and their learning;
- 100% of parents are happy with their child's progress;
- Parents feel part of the school community;
- Practice is improved year on year;
- Everyone is included;
- Children have high levels of wellbeing and involvement.

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Reviewed by: G.Rutter (EY Lead)