



Early Years and Foundation Stage Policy

Signed _____
Chair of Governors

Date Reviewed: 21st May 2018

Next Review: _____

Introduction

This policy represents our approach to teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and encompasses the overall philosophy of our school approach.

A child's first experiences of school are crucial. The Early Years lay down a foundation that is built on throughout the rest of their learning careers. It is organised to ease the transition from home to school and in such a way that learning takes place through meaningful activity and play. The children's learning and experiences are based upon the areas and guidance found in 'The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework', which sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five years old.

This is achieved through three prime areas:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

The skills gained in the prime areas are then built upon in the four specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Within these areas we also look to develop social skills and positive attitudes towards learning, linking this learning to our school co-operative values. The development of social skills is of primary importance to us. Without the ability to interact positively with others or work independently, a child's ability to learn effectively in school is reduced.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning which highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are;

Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'

Active Learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements

Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is underpinned by four key themes; Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments, which add up to Learning and Development. These provide the basis for all future learning by supporting and developing children's experiences in the seven areas.

This is achieved through the following objectives:

- To provide an environment where children can develop as learners and feel safe, happy and confident to express themselves.
- To provide an environment, both indoors and outside, that is stimulating and encourages the children to pursue their curiosity and become independent learners.
- To provide a curriculum that is broad and balanced.
- To provide experiences that reflect the needs and interests of individual children.
- To work closely with parents and carers to ensure that the introduction to school life is smooth and happy.
- To continuously develop strong links with the child's home and encourage parents'/carers' support throughout their child's learning.

Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Each term the EYFS team produce Medium Term Plans which feed into weekly learning units, stating short term goals and a range of activities. Activities are planned to meet children's abilities and are based on previous learning experiences and outcomes. The topics that are taught are designed to meet children's interests as well as their academic needs, encouraging their enthusiasms and promoting each child's uniqueness.

The class teachers are responsible for the weekly planning. These plans highlight the main tasks and differentiated activities that the children will undertake, which are offered through a range of adult led and child led activities. These plans are shared with all staff in class each week. The Early Years Foundation Stage classes each have a teacher and a teaching assistant. They work very closely together to plan for, assess and teach the children.

Organisation and Play

Learning through play is integral to the Early Years Foundation Stage. Through daily play based activities, our children explore and develop learning experiences that will help them to make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas on how to control themselves, leading them to understand the need for rules. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems, as well as having opportunities to express fears or review anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

The Reception classes have their own timetables. Each day, children will take part in a range of adult led focussed activities and offered a range of child led activities. There are opportunities for learning to take place both indoors and outdoors.

Assessment and Record Keeping

Within the first half term that children enter Reception classes, on-entry Assessments are carried out, covering the seven learning areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Our children are regularly observed with regard to the learning aims in the weekly planning and we use the information gathered to ensure that future planning reflects the identified needs of all children. We gather evidence through a range of observations which may be recorded

in the form of written notes, photographs and videos or by work samples. This evidence is then placed in a special book called 'A Learning Journey'. The learning journeys are updated regularly to allow the teachers to respond to the children's learning needs.

Parents/carers are also invited into the school to view the children's learning journey along with their child. Parents/Carers are invited in the Autumn term and the Spring term to meet with their child's class teacher to discuss the progress and celebrate the achievements their child has made, as well as discussing any concerns or questions there may be.

Parents/Carers also receive a report at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage that offers an outline of their child's progress in each of the seven learning areas. The report highlights the child's strengths and developmental needs and gives comments on the child's general progress.

Special Educational Needs

When teaching staff have concerns about a child's progress, we will have an informal chat with parents/carers to discuss their child and how their needs can be best met. If the concerns continue, the steps stated in the SEND policy will be followed.

Parents/Carers are also encouraged to seek advice from school if they have any concerns about their children.

Inclusion in the Early Years Foundation Stage

In our school we believe that every child matters and we aim to give each child every opportunity to achieve their best potential. We do this in the Early Years Foundation Stage by taking into account our children's life experiences and setting realistic goals and challenging expectations that meet each child's needs and interests. We plan 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 and children from different ethnic groups, promoting every child's uniqueness.

By planning our activities to meet all our children's needs, we aim for the majority of our children to achieve Expected levels in all seventeen Early Learning Goals as set out in the Development Matters document by the end of the Reception year.

The Role of Parents/Carers

We believe that all parents/carers have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the vital role that parents/carers have already played in their child's life and actively encourage parents/carers to work in partnership with us in educating the children. We promote this partnership in the following ways:

- Providing multiple ways for parents/carers to contribute to their child's learning journey, for example, "WOW" moments and learning stories.
- Inviting parents/carers to a meeting with school staff in the Summer before the children start Reception in the September.
- Providing details of our termly topics

- Providing opportunities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between school, child and parents/carers.
- Regularly communicating with parents/carers via the school Reading Record and newsletters.
- Offering an 'Open Door' policy if parents/carers feel they need to discuss any matters or express any concerns about their child.
- Inviting parents/carers to our 'Open Evening to view their child's work and discuss their progress. This takes place in the Summer term.
- Inviting parents/carers to parent/carer consultations to discuss progress and celebrations in the Autumn and Spring terms.
- Providing parents/carers with an end of year report, outlining their child's achievements and highlighting areas for future progress.
- A weekly Reception newsletter that informs parents/carers of the current learning focus, next week's learning focus and ideas to support at home.
- Holding workshops to aid parents/carers supporting their child's learning
- Events for parents/carers to come into school to see how their child learns in school.

Transition from Nursery to Reception

When the children first start school in the Reception class they will complete a carefully planned induction period. This consists of a variety of activities aimed to ensure a smooth transition for your child into school. Children are invited into school for a morning session in July to meet the class teacher and their class peers. Before each new pupil begins school in September, a member of staff will visit each Nursery setting to meet the children in their current setting and discuss with the child's key worker. Home visits will also occur before the children begin in September.

The first week of Reception will consist of two mornings in school then on the third and fourth a session involving staying in school up to and including lunch, children will be attending full days from then on. This arrangement suits the majority of children, although a longer transition period is arranged for children who need a little more time.

Transition from Reception to Key Stage 1

In the half term before the children move up to Key Stage 1, they visit a Year One for a class swap session similar to the Nursery to Reception transition. In the last half term of Reception, the children also start a break time transition, where they mix with Year One and Two children for a fifteen minute break. This provides opportunities for the children to familiarise themselves with their new teacher, other children, their new classroom and different routines, ensuring a smoother transition in the following term.

The week children leave the Reception class, all relevant assessments and records are passed on to the Key Stage 1 teacher before the children begin in Year One. This includes the completed Early Years Foundation Stage Profiles, Phonics assessments, Reading Records and any work books that have been started. This enables the Year One teacher to start planning for when the children begin the following term.

The Year One and Reception Team work very closely during these weeks to ensure planning meets the needs of the individual children. The structure of a Year One day is

transitioned throughout the year to ensure children's individual needs are met during their time in Year One, whilst also making sure children continue to make good progress and are ready to transition to Year Two.

In the case of a child having special needs, such as having medical requirements, a meeting would take place between the Reception and Year One teacher in the week the child leaves the Reception class. This would enable the Reception teacher to fully inform the Year One teacher of all background information and necessary requirements.

Health & safety

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance and we adhere to the school's safeguarding policy.

Our children under 5 receive free milk and all children have access to fresh water and free fruit from a Government scheme. Reception children who stay for lunch are eligible for free school meals or can choose to bring in a healthy packed lunch.

Each foundation stage classroom has access to their own toileting facilities and we teach the children the importance of hygiene, hand washing techniques and throughout the year we plan activities to give children experiences of a range of healthy food.