

A POLICY FOR THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Rational

As of September 2021 the revised Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum from birth to five became mandatory for all schools and early years' providers and it is now securely embedded in the Foundation Stage setting of our school. This school prefers to admit children into our reception class in the September of the school year that they are five years old. No child should be excluded or disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability.

Purpose

Foundation Stage Practitioners [adults who work with children in the reception class setting] should provide learning and teaching experiences of the highest quality. Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. The aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes of staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being by:

- Setting the standards
- Providing for equality of opportunity
- Creating the framework for partnership working
- Improving quality and consistency
- Laying a secure foundation for future learning

A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

The EYFS principles which guide the work of the practitioners are grouped into four distinct but complementary principles that should shape effective practise in early year's settings. These principles are based on the ideas that:

- **Every child is a unique child** and practitioners must aid them in their individual development, inclusion, safety, health and well being
- **Positive Relationships** between practitioners, children and parents encourage children to learn to be strong and independent.
- **Enabling Environments** with teaching and support from adults should encourage children to learn and develop well. They work best when they reflect the child's own needs and preferences and encourage them to be independent and active in their own learning.
- **Children develop and learn in different ways** and at different rates and this will be recognised so that all children are supported in each stage of their development, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Teachers will use the statutory EYFS Curriculum document to create a curriculum fit for purpose for pupils at our school and use the Development Matters, Birth to 5 matters and White Rose maths guidance to plan and teach the seven curriculum areas to enable effective teaching and learning. These seven areas of learning are important and interconnected.

Three prime areas are specifically important in the early stages of development and for igniting a curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. These prime areas are:

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

Teachers will also support children in the four specific areas of learning, through which the three prime areas are further applied and strengthened. These specific areas are:

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

Through the teaching of these areas of learning at school we will endeavour to:

- Provide a safe and secure environment which enables each child's individual needs to be recognised and effective learning to take place
- Encourage children to be aware of each other's needs and feelings through the development of spiritual and social skills
- Develop clear values of friendship, to understand the needs for fairness and empathy
- Encourage children to move towards greater independence of action, thought and expression in a confident manner in order to prepare them for entering KS1
- Introduce and extend children's knowledge, understanding and skills which will provide a sound basis for later education

Conclusion

We believe that each child's individual needs must be recognised and it is in the Foundation Stage that we can motivate and nurture respect for self and others, respect for different cultures, confidence and learning which will enable each child to take new and more independent steps towards greater skill, understanding and knowledge of their world.

See Guidelines below

Appendix 1

GUIDELINES FOR THE FOUNDATION STAGE

What we expect the children to learn

Effective education requires both a relevant curriculum and practitioners who understand and are able to implement the curriculum requirements.

Effective education requires practitioners who understand that children develop rapidly during the early years – physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. Children are entitled to provision that supports, extends knowledge, skills, understanding and confidence, and helps them to overcome any disadvantage.

To be effective, an Early Years curriculum should be carefully structured. In that structure, there should be three strands:

- Provision for the different starting points from which children develop their learning, building on what they can already do
- Relevant and appropriate content that matches the different levels of young children’s needs
- Planned and purposeful activity that provides opportunities for teaching and learning, both indoors and outdoors

There should be opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and also those that they plan or initiate themselves. Children need time to become engrossed, work in depth and complete activities. Well-planned, purposeful activity and appropriate intervention by all practitioners will engage children in the learning process and help them make progress in their learning.

For children to have rich and stimulating experiences, the learning environment should be well planned and well organised. It provides the structure for teaching within which children explore experiment, plan and make decisions for themselves, thus enabling them to learn, develop and make good progress. Above all, effective learning and development for young children requires high-quality care and education by all practitioners.

Practitioners must be able to observe and respond appropriately to children, informed by the knowledge of how children develop and learn and a clear understanding of possible next steps in their development and learning. This should be communicated with parents at regular times throughout the year via book viewings and the class TEAMS page as well as face to face meetings.

Play

Play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge. During play children behave in different ways: their play will be active, reflective, intuitive allowing for discussion and development.

The role of the practitioner is crucial in

- Planning and resourcing a challenging environment
- Supporting children's learning through structured play activity
- Extending and supporting children's spontaneous play
- Extending and developing children's language and communication in their play

Through play, in a secure environment with effective adult support, children can

- Explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world
- Practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills
- Learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules
- Be alone, be alongside others or co-operate as they talk or rehearse their feelings
- Take risks and make mistakes
- Think creatively and imaginatively
- Communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems
- Express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations

Early Learning Goals

The 17 Early Learning Goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They are organised into the seven areas of the curriculum and provide an end point for planning to work towards throughout the Foundation Stage, so laying secure foundations for future learning. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children are expected to be working within the Early Learning Goal for each area of learning. Some children will meet these goals and will be assessed as "expected" whilst other children will be working below these goals and assessed as "emerging" and may need to consolidate their learning in Year 1. These children should still work towards reaching the Early Learning Goals in the Autumn term of Year 1.

Curriculum guidance sets out the early learning goals for each area of learning. It shows what practitioners need to know about children's learning in each area and what this means for their teaching, including planning and assessment, throughout the foundation stage.

Links to the National Curriculum

The Early Learning Goals lead into the objectives in the National Curriculum for teaching literacy and mathematics, which should be taught throughout the reception year. Reception teachers may choose to cover the elements of daily English and daily mathematics lessons across the day rather than in a single unit of time, with smaller groups or whole class teaching in order to ensure a smooth transition to the way in which English and mathematics lessons are taught in year 1. This approach will be subject to the needs and development of each individual cohort.

Planning

Our core drivers underpin our curriculum and are our intent that will enable us to shape the curriculum around the needs and wants of our school and the children.

- ✓ **Academic Excellence** – our curriculum strives for excellence. We know that only our best is good enough and we work hard to maximise progress in learning for all children regardless of their starting points— academic, social and emotional, so that they can be the best they can be and make a positive difference to themselves and others in their community.
- ✓ **Life Long Learning** – our curriculum allows children to develop learning skills: readiness to learn, resilience, reflectiveness and resourcefulness to be the best learners they can be so that they are prepared for the challenges we will face.
- ✓ **Possibilities and Risks** – our curriculum allows children to explore what is possible to be achieved when they identify goals based on consideration of people as unique individuals, with their own passions and ideas. We challenge children to extend their boundaries and develop independence.
- ✓ **Social Intelligence** – our children learn how to appreciate and respect differences and celebrate the richness of the diversity in our community and beyond, recognising all the benefits that this brings.

LONG TERM PLANNING - The 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage', Birth to 5 Matters, White Rose and the 'Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Cheshire East' and any other whole school approaches or initiatives are tools that may be employed to develop for our long term planning.

MEDIUM TERM PLANNING - These provide the basis for short term planning over each half term. Half termly planners are shared on the school website so that parents can see what their child is learning. There should be evidence of coverage of the seven areas of learning and should link to the creative curriculum topic where ever possible.

SHORT TERM PLANNING - Each reception class teacher should plan to teach the seven areas of learning. Planning should cover both adult led activities and child-initiated time through the use of both weekly adult led and environment plans. Both sets of plans should be evaluated in order to use children's strengths, weaknesses, ideas and interests in the following weeks planning.

All plans should be evaluated and modified by the class teacher. Adult led evidence will be collected in curriculum folders and child led evidence will be collected to form a class floor book by which progress and coverage is documented and reflected on. Both will be used to ensure Individual profiles are continually updated and annotated to show children's progress across the FS2 year.

Differentiated Tasks

Children will initially work in mixed ability groups in the first half of the year. Teachers will differentiate within these small mixed ability groups as appropriate. In the second Autumn term

children will be grouped according to ability for phonics sessions. Foundation Stage teachers will group the children according to ability if and where applicable in the Summer term and will differentiate tasks accordingly.

Display

Display in the Reception classroom underpins the Early Years ethos of “The Unique Child”. Each child will have their own ‘box’ in the classroom that they are able to fill with the work and projects that are important to them. This work can be art, writing, models or photographs of a particular project. Each child’s ‘box’ is updated as and when a child creates something that they feel proud of or showcases a new skill. Practitioners may help and support children in recognising when they may have achieved this.

IT

The use of IT is included in the English and numeracy curriculum, and is woven into other areas of the Early Years Curriculum. The other curriculum areas [PSHE Development, Physical development, Creative development] will also benefit by a wide and varied use of IT. It is expected children will have use of a desktop computer, I pads, Beebots and remote control toys.

Marking

Marking in the reception class will be done to assess a child’s understanding of the task, and in line with the school’s marking policy. Teachers will mark next to the learning objective whether a child has met that objective independently or if support was needed. Feedback in the Early Years works best when given verbally during small group work. As per the schools, marking policy teachers will mark ‘VF’ if verbal feedback or direction for improvement has been given. In the summer term and only when appropriate, some children may be encouraged to respond to feedback and correct in a purple pen.

Homework

After grasping the initial letter sounds children will expect to take home a set of high frequency words on cards. They will then progress onto reading books from school. These books will be changed weekly and will be selected by the class teacher. Parents/carers help is expected to help the children learn how to sight read the words on cards, as well as helping them to decode new words, discuss the content of scheme reading books and the conventions of books, such as title, front cover, sentence, word, page etc. Additional activities are posted on the class TEAMS page to support the skills being developed in class. Children are encouraged to access TEAMS at home as often as possible. Parent workshops for reading, writing and maths will be delivered in the Autumn term to inform parents on how best to support their child for the year ahead. Formal homework is not set at this stage, however should a child be showing signs of particular difficulty in an area, additional resources may be sent home to help support. These activities should be age appropriate and will usually involve games or a practical element.

Visits

For the first few months of school children will not be expected to go on coach trips out of school although visiting speakers/shows/theatre productions may visit the school or we may take the children to explore the local environment as part of the curriculum studied. Children may visit the local shops or library. In the Spring and Summer terms coach trips will be organised linked to the topics being studied.

Health & Safety Issues

While we accept that both indoor and outdoor play is an essential part of the curriculum, we will ensure that the correct ratio of adult-child supervision is adhered to at all times. Whilst in the outside environment children will be supervised by an adult. In the event that no adult is available to supervise the outside environment will not be available.

Transition to Year 1

During the final summer term, children will be supported and prepared for the transition to year 1 in the following ways:

- Regular discussion about the change in routine via lesson activities and circle time
- Regular visits to the main building
- Visits to the Year 1 classroom when possible and when not in use by Year 1
- Visits from the Year 1 teacher
- An increase in whole class tasks if appropriate for the cohort

EYFS staff and year 1 staff also work closely at the end of the year to map over objectives from the EYFS curriculum onto the national curriculum to ensure work is pitched correctly for the class. Year 1 will continue to ensure that children have time to “choose” and learn through play via the class role play area.

Communication with parents

There are several ways for parents to stay in touch with at school and find out what your child has been doing. The school web site and school app provides regular whole school updates and include timetables, activities, trips and other information, which can be easily found.

We actively encourage two way communications between home and school. Each child will be given a home/school reading record to discuss reading progress from both the staff and parents when they hear their child read at home. Records are only looked at once during the week and so if the matter is urgent we ask parents to speak directly to the class teacher.

Each class has a TEAMS page for both children and parents. The parents page will be used to communicate on Parents Evening and for any workshops, and the children's page is used to share homework, activities and notices and is used in the event of any home learning that may need to take place.

Each term school holds a Parents' Evening which gives staff the chance to discuss each child's progress with parents, answer any queries and celebrate achievements.

- In the first term it is a verbal update to discuss each child's progress and next steps.
- In the second term again it is a verbal update with the opportunity to see the child's curriculum folder.
- In the third term parents will receive a comprehensive report outlining their child's end of year achievements. Parent's evening in the summer is optional if parents have any questions after reading your child's report.

However, if parents require an additional meeting at any other time during the school year then this can be easily be arranged.

Reviewed – every 3 years

Next review – January 2025