



EYFS POLICY

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Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. We greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education. The EYFS is for children from birth to five years of age. The final year of the EYFS is referred to as the reception year. All children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. It is the privilege of the practitioners working in Foundation Stage to take on the task of building upon that prior learning and experience. Foundation Stage team work effectively together to support children's learning and development. This document outlines the philosophy, aims and principles of early years teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage in our school. The document underpins practice in all areas of provision.

Early Years Foundation Stage

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all Early Years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.” (DFE, 2012)

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

A unique child

Positive Relationships

Enabling Environments

Learning and Development

The goal for each child is to become a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

We recognise that children learn to be independent confident learners from secure relationships with their peers and adults. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Enabling Environments. We believe that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. Through observation we assess the children’s interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children’s learning. We also plan and consider the Learning Environment. The Foundation Stage Classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The Reception and Nursery classes are set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Learning and Development. The early learning goals and the educational programmes are set out in the “Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage” document (DFE, 20012). The seven areas of learning and development are:

Prime:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

Communication and Language (CL)

Physical Development (PD)

Specific:

Mathematics (M)

Literacy (L)

Understanding of the World (UW)

Express Arts and Design (EAD)

We believe that once the children are secure in the Prime areas of learning they will be prepared to access the specific areas. However, all areas are important to ensure the development of the ‘whole child’. We aim to deliver all the areas through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child initiated activities.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Good planning is the key to making children’s learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs. All practitioners who work in the Foundation Stage are involved in making observations of the children’s new learning. The planning within the EYFS is based around the children’s interests and development needs. These plans are used by the EYFS team as a guide for weekly planning, however they may alter these in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. 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 recorded observations (written or photographed) as well as teacher’s professional judgements. We have recently been using “EARWIG”, an online recording tool to add to the children’s profiles. These observations are used to inform the end of Foundation Stage assessment against the Early Learning Goals and the Characteristics of effective learning (DfE, 2014) Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written report against the Early Learning Goals to parents. The parents are given the opportunity to meet the Foundation Stage team at various points throughout the year for shared learning events. There are also two opportunities for parents to meet their child’s class teachers on more formal occasions.

Staffing and Organisation

We have three Reception classes that admit up to 30 children each. Each class has a teacher and a TA. The classrooms all share the same outside area and internal 'guided choosing' zone.

Nursery has two rooms, one delivering 30 hour (full time) provision and the other offering mornings only and afternoons only.

Learning through play

"Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults." ("Early Years Foundation Stage", DFE, 2012)

We support children's learning through planned activities, and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves and modelling by example. We have recently started a carousel of activities for English in the morning and Maths in the afternoon in the Reception class and then in the continuous provision sessions the work is extended.

Planning is targeted to the needs of the individual child and targeted for Reading, Writing and Maths. Observation of the children's progress and attainment is recorded daily during focused sessions in English and Maths.

Induction to Nursery

Online applications for places are made through the Tameside website. You can put your child's name down at the school office and we will write to you to invite you to apply in plenty of time. Nursery staff may carry out home visits prior to their start date. The children will also attend morning or afternoon visit to the setting where they can familiarise themselves with staff and the environment. A meeting for all new parents is held at school so that Parents/Guardians are familiar with the setting and staff.

Induction to Reception

During the summer term, Nursery children who will be starting school in September make more frequent visits to the Reception class as part of the induction process. Parents/guardians have the opportunity to meet the class teacher and to visit the Reception classroom at a 'New Parent' meeting. The foundation stage leader and Reception class teacher introduce parents/guardians to the school and Reception procedures. Through this meeting the school's expectations and routines are communicated as well as ways in which staff can help their child. Members from outside agencies such as the School Nurse, Educational Psychologist and Speech Therapist are also invited to talk to the parents/guardians to identify any issues before the start in September.

Reception to Year 1 Transition

Reception and year 1 teachers have worked together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible.

- Children are encouraged to develop independence when dressing and undressing and when organising their personal belongings throughout the reception year.
- Reception practitioners plan longer more structured activities to be undertaken during the summer term; encouraging less dependence on adult support.

- End of Year assessments against the Early Learning Goals and the characteristics of effective learning are shared and discussed.
- Reception and year 1 teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children in July.
- Reception children visit their new, year 1 class and teacher for a day during the summer.

Home/School Links

We recognise that parents/guardians are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/guardians and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

- Out-lining the school's expectations to parents/guardians during the parents' workshops.
- Holding parent/guardian class visits for different topics and celebrations
- Operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents/guardians can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner.
- Encouraging parents/guardians to listen to their child read each night and to comment on reading progress in reading record books. Children are rewarded for reading 4 or more times at home in a week.
- Discussing children's individual targets with parents/guardians parents' evenings twice a year.
- Targets are sent home to parents each half term and can be discussed with the parents at any time.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

In our setting we believe that play based learning is one of the best opportunities for children to develop all the characteristics of effective learning – to be actively involved and motivated in their activities, as well as to think creatively and critically.

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning 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.

It is important, particularly in child initiated play that practitioners effectively promote the characteristics described above.

The learning environment is well organised both indoors and outdoors and Practitioners provide a balance of structured/focussed and child initiated play activities.

Practitioners work alongside the children, using their knowledge of each individual child, to intervene when necessary, to support or move learning on to the next step, therefore, extending the child's knowledge.

Practitioners are also the role-model for demonstrating play and developing positive relationships between the children, where sharing and turn taking is encouraged and vocabulary is extended.

Forest Schools

All children in Nursery and Reception will take part in Forest School activities. We believe that these activities are an inspirational process that offers children opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through play and hands on learning experiences, in a woodland environment. Woodland activities builds on a child's innate motivation and positive attitude to learning, offering them the opportunities to increase their self-reliance, independence, take risks in a well-managed, safe environment, make their own choices and initiate learning for themselves. It helps children to form positive relationships with others, to develop a growing awareness of their emotional needs and the needs of others, to learn to cooperate and work with their peers and adults and to develop strategies in order to take risks within the boundaries of safety. Using the woods is about exploring and experiencing the natural world and has a significant impact on children's creative and spiritual development. We believe it is a very powerful way of helping children to appreciate the spiritual dimension of their locality and allows them to learn how to become creative within it. This is achieved through practical activities using natural objects that they find and opportunities to stop and wonder at the world around them. The children will go out in all weathers, all year round, exploring and learning from the seasons and environmental changes. The children's interests along with the varied natural resources in our school grounds and woodland are used to stimulate creative thinking, problem solving and skill development, all in the guise of play.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of all individuals within the EYFS and do not discriminate against children because of differences. All children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or level of ability and are listened to and respected. We promote positive attitudes to diversity and difference and all children and their families are included and valued.

In our school we believe that all children matter. We ensure our children have every opportunity to achieve and do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences and plan for their learning requirements. We set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all children within our setting. 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 or socially excluded families.

We aim to-

- respond to children's early needs for additional support and call in specialist help from outside agencies when needed
- overcome barriers for children where they may already exist
- counter underachievement

We meet these needs 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 opportunities to motivate and support children
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- support children to develop positive relationships with adults and children in the setting
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from stereotyping and discrimination
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advanced
- monitoring children's progress and preparing individual education plans for those children who need support

Additional Welfare notes

- All adults who will be working with children unsupervised will need to be DBS checked
- If an adult is concerned about a child's welfare they can refer to the schools Safeguarding Children policy and follow the appropriate guidelines.
- At least one member of staff in the EYFS setting will have received training on Paediatric First Aid. The first aid box is regularly checked and kept full. All accidents and actions taken are recorded in a first aid book and parents/carers are notified of this.
- A parent/carer log is kept recording any incidents or concerns about a child's welfare. This information is passed on to the Head Teacher and any other agencies that need to be involved.