

# **EARLY YEARS POLICY**

## **How the document was compiled**

This Early Years Policy has been developed by Reception teachers and has involved the school governors.

## **Date of publication**

September 2021

## **Date of Review**

This policy will be reviewed as identified by the School Development Plan.

## **Aim**

Following the values of the school is crucial within Early Years as it is the start of their learning journey. In Early Years, we believe that traditional values of manners and kindness are key to establishing well rounded children who are ready to learn.

## **Our Principles for Early Years Education**

The EYFS is based upon four principles; a unique child, positive relationships, enabling environments and learning and development. This is achieved in the following ways;

- We ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued.
- We build on what our children already know and can do.
- We observe and respond appropriately to our children.
- The children's interests are the basis for planning to allow the best possible learning outcomes.
- We promote independence from the first day so that they can access the environment and become confident learners.
- The children follow instructions and learn how the school rules look in practice.
- We work in partnership with parents and carers.
- We share well planned and purposeful activities indoors and outdoors with appropriate intervention.
- Our learning environments are open, accessible and offer a broad, balanced curriculum.

## **Contacts before School**

1. An application form will be sent to parents on request. This will be accompanied by a current prospectus.
2. Parents are given the opportunity to view the school and ask questions.
3. Parents will be notified in writing whether or not a place is available for their child.
4. All children have the opportunity to visit for an afternoon prior to their start date. At this time the children will meet their teachers and experience some activities.
5. Parents will be asked to complete a form which shares information about their child with school before they start (Parent/Carer Information sheet)

## **Starting School**

It is our aim to make the child's start to school life effective and purposeful, giving the children time and opportunity to adjust to their new environment.

With this in mind we plan for the following;

1. Nursery children are allocated a start date during the first week of term. They then continue with their part-time provision.
2. During the first week parents may accompany children to the classroom on arrival. On the second and third morning parents are encouraged to come into the classroom so that their child can show them their new environment.

During the second week when the children have settled into school, children will be encouraged to enter school on their own without the assistance of parents. Children are collected from the playground by a known adult from the list provided by parents. No one under the age of 16 is allowed to collect a child in EYFS.

## **Home/School contacts**

We value parents and recognise the positive impact that a successful partnership can have on a child's development and learning. The contact between teachers and parents during the Early years is vital to ensure that any concerns can be dealt with immediately and to allow the sharing of information, knowledge and expertise.

We aim to achieve this by: -

- Being open to parent teacher discussions over concerns. If parents have further concerns then an appointment can be arranged with either the class teacher or the Head Teacher.

- Providing school newsletters providing information about forthcoming events and activities.
- Providing information leaflets about the school's reading programme, phonics and other aspects of the curriculum.
- Weekly 'News Blasts' showing Reception specific information and weekly learning intentions
- Comments in the child's reading record book.
- Completing a Parent/Carer information sheet prior to a child's admission to school.
- Contact at parent/teacher consultations and open sessions.
- A written report in the Summer term

## **Curriculum planning and organisation**

Our aim is to provide an engaging and stimulating learning environment. Within this environment, children are encouraged to participate in a wide range of activities which enable them to develop their physical, intellectual, emotional and social skills. Each child is encouraged to do the very best they can.

Within the EYFS Curriculum there are seven Areas of Learning with Early Learning Goals identified for each area. The Areas of Learning are as follows: -

- Communication and Language
- Physical development
- Personal, Social and Emotional development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

## **Communication and Language**

Communication and Language is key to learning as it underpins the learning within all other areas. It is broken down into three aspects. Listening and attention, understanding and speaking. Children will learn how to express themselves and give their attention to different activities and a range of different people. They need to show, through their actions, that they understand what is said to them and be able to respond. Children are encouraged to use a wide range of language during conversations with adults and their peers.

## **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

Personal, social and emotional development is inextricably linked to all areas of learning. Within the early year's environment, children will have access to experiences and support, which will enable them to develop a positive sense of themselves. They will learn how to work and play, co-operate and function in a group, develop personal and moral values, understand themselves and others. They will be encouraged to show respect for others, resources and their environment. They will have opportunities to develop effective relationships with other children and adults, expressing their feelings and managing their own behaviour in appropriate ways. They will also have many opportunities to develop independence and decision making skills.

## **Physical Development**

Children will have opportunities to develop their physical skills and abilities in indoor and outdoor environments. They will be involved in gross and fine motor activities, which will include climbing, yoga and sports coaching as well as using a range of tools such as pencils and scissors. Children will learn control in large and small movements and gain an understanding of how to be safe and healthy.

## **Literacy**

Within the literacy area of learning, children learn early reading skills through the teaching of phonics and a widely resourced class reading area. Literacy skills are taught through weekly books in order to engage within the given theme. Children read scheme books within their ability level and are sometimes given words to help their learning process. Every child takes home a library book, self-chosen, from our extensive school library. Children have the opportunity to read at any point during free flow and at set reading times. They are taught to correctly form the letters of the alphabet, following a school wide handwriting policy, in order to write their own name, words and eventually meaningful sentences.

### **Mathematical Development**

Children will be involved in a wide range of mathematical activities in both every day and abstract contexts. They will have opportunities to build upon their early experiences of shape, pattern and number. Children will develop a wide range of mathematical language that will help them to talk about mathematical concepts. Children experience number throughout the class bases and often explore concepts within other areas of learning. Children are introduced to the idea of problem solving in order to broaden and deepen their understanding.

### **Understanding of the World**

Within this area of learning, children will be given opportunities to talk about their families, homes and environment. They will explore the similarities and differences between themselves, each other and the world around them. They will observe people, animals, plants and the wider world to gain further understanding. Technology is incorporated into learning through a range of electronic resources including computers and the interactive whiteboard.

### **Expressive Arts and Design**

Children will be able to confidently communicate feelings, express ideas and respond to their experiences through art, music, dance, stories and imaginative role play. In the craft and paint area children have access to a wide range of materials, tools and resources allowing them to create freely. They will also have opportunities to plan, design and experiment using a wide range of blocks and design technology resources. Children develop their imagination and creativity within small world and role play by creating their own story lines and narratives often linked to a theme.

### **Free flow**

Children will have opportunities to engage in learning supported by play in indoor and outdoor environments. Teachers will interact and observe as appropriate in line with their professional judgement.

## **Daily Organisation**

### **Nursery**

During the morning session, children experience carpet time, shared learning opportunities as well as free flow and snack. Occasionally children will attend whole school assemblies for events such as Children in Need. On Wednesdays they go on a 'Welly Walk' around the school grounds providing fabulous opportunities for personal development and discussions about their environment.

### **Reception**

During the day, reception children will experience learning time on the carpet where key literacy or mathematical skills are taught. They engage in free flow and group snack where independence is encouraged. Reception children enjoy a wider experience of school on 'Trudging Tuesday' which also aims to promote their independence. Children learn both indoors and outdoors throughout the school day. Weekly yoga, wellness Wednesday and Austin's Art sessions are also part of reception's timetable. Visitors into school are also planned in line with themes as appropriate. From October onwards, children engage in a weekly challenge, planned across all areas of learning, designed to allow children to display their abilities and what they are learning. This work shows the high expectations we encourage and promote from the children and provides good quality evidence for children's learning logs.

### **The role of adults**

Teachers within EYFS plan quality learning opportunities to positively enhance the children's development and attitudes to learning. Areas of learning are set up to include both planned experiences and child initiated. In early years, support staff extend and promote the learning and language of children during independent activities. They encourage children's independence and decision making skills as well as co-operation and relationships between children. Support staff record all interactions and observations directed by the teacher. They deal sensitively and appropriately with any issues which may arise e.g. toileting.

### **Learning Logs**

Learning logs are folders containing work for each child across all areas of learning. Within these folders, 'wow' moment observational comments are recorded against the milestones or ELGs. In addition, photographic evidence and children's work are compiled within the relevant areas. This log also contains information from parents and carers and other parental involvement.

### **Assessment and Record Keeping**

Children's progress is assessed and recorded through interactions and 'wow moment' observational comments. Baseline assessments and 'settling in' observations are carried out during the first month of a child's entry to school. Photo evidence is collated for

significant events and weekly notes taken in line with literacy and mathematics teaching. End of year judgements are made in line with local moderation expectations. All evidence of a child's learning journey can be found in the learning log.

### **Special Educational Needs**

Any pupils with special educational needs will be supported according to the school's Special Educational Needs Policy.

### **Resources**

In Early Years, resources are visually accessible across all areas of learning. Shelving and key areas are photographed so children can see where resources are available and these photos also support during tidy up time. Wherever possible, resources are natural, often wooden, and are appropriate to the needs of the children.

### **Outdoor:**

The outdoor environment is designed to focus primarily on the physical development of children. All other areas of learning are built within this and indoor equipment is not taken outside. There are key areas of learning outside to promote creativity, exploration and freedom of movement.

### **Equal Opportunities**

All children have unlimited potential for development. Pupils will have equal access to the curriculum irrespective of race, gender, faith or ability.

### **Staff Development**

The leadership team are available to support and guide colleagues where specific information or knowledge is required. INSET and staff meetings address the needs of individuals as well as the collective staff team. These are identified, collated and met within the School Development Plan.

### **Health and Safety**

All members of staff will ensure that risks and potential hazards are minimised within the setting in line with the Risk Assessment document. Where appropriate, staff should seek advice from the Head Teacher. Injuries are assessed by a pediatric trained member of staff and first aid is administered as required and recorded in the class first aid book. Significant injuries and head injuries are assessed by the Head Teacher and parents receive a green medical slip at the end of the day, if the child has remained in school. If it is necessary, parents are contacted to collect a child.

### **Evaluation**

The leadership team will evaluate progress in Early Years by monitoring, collecting responses, auditing, reviewing and promoting its on-going development.