



MAYFIELD SCHOOL

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy (3 – 5 years)

APPROVED BY: Curriculum, Data & Safeguarding Sub Committee of the Mayfield
School Governing Body

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"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to their full potential. 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. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance."

1. Introduction

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. It is not just a preparation for the next stage but is vitally important in itself. For young children there is no distinction between work and play.

Learning for young children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the foundation stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through modelling, teaching, playing and talking.

2. Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

In EYFS we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential.

We aim to support each child's welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special.
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates - physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued.
- Fostering and nurturing children's self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community.
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- Encouraging children's independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes.
- Developing children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions different to their own.
- Understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development.
- Providing learning experiences in play which reflect children's personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn.
- Providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development.
- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.

- Collaborative teamwork with a range of professionals is crucial to the overall development of pupils and will be actively promoted.

3. The Early Years Foundation Stage framework

Teaching in the EYFS is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory document 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (September 2016). This document is a principled approach to Early Years education, bringing together children's welfare, learning and development requirements through four themes:

- Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Children learn in Different Ways and at Different Rates.

The curriculum is centered on 3 prime areas of learning:

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

Providers must also support activities through four specific areas which strengthen the prime areas. These are:

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

These Areas of Learning and Development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all Areas of Learning and Development are all closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centered curriculum which allows children to make lots of links between what they are learning. All Areas of Learning and Development are given equal weighting and value.

4. Active Learning through Play

We organise the day to provide a balance between the following: -

- Child initiated Activities - children make choices from within the learning environment to meet his/her outcome for learning.
- Adult Initiated Activities- practitioners provide the resources to stimulate and consolidate learning.
- Adult Directed Activities - Children engage in planned activities to meet specific learning outcomes.

At Mayfield School we recognise that young children learn best when they are active.

We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning through play.

We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development.

Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.

In providing these active learning opportunities through play we understand the central position of play within the EYFS framework. This is essentially a play based curriculum and pedagogy as the provision of play opportunities underpins its delivery.

Achievements and progress will be recognised and celebrated for all pupils, encouraging confidence in their own abilities, self-esteem and promotion of a self-image.

5. Assessment and Record Keeping

The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child initiated play. Observations take place on a daily basis (both formally and informally).

Practitioners make time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. They also make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning. All practitioners are involved in observing children. Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

Learning Journeys record children's progress over the academic year in all Areas of Learning and Development of the EYFS framework. Samples of children's work are gathered, along with photographic evidence and observations.

There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child's development using "2Simple's Evidence Me". The starting point is the development of the child building on this to develop skills in all areas of learning. At the end of the year it provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements. Judgments made on children's development are based on practitioners' evidence of children's behaviour observed independently and consistently in their self-initiated activities across all Areas of Learning and Development.

6. Planning

The EYFS framework provides a long term plan to follow by ensuring that all Early Learning Goals are covered throughout the academic year.

Medium term planning is created and takes into account the individual children's learning and developmental needs.

All Areas of Learning and Development are planned for and available to access within the setting. The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult focused and child initiated activities indoors. The setting also makes use of the outdoor environment whenever possible.

7. Parents as Partners

At Mayfield School we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development. So, practitioners endeavor to encourage the regular sharing of information about the children with parents.

We value the role of parents as children's primary educators. We encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes). This supports practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through daily updates on class Dojo and when required phone calls home. All accidents will be reported to parents in line with school's health and safety policy.

Parents are invited to attend parents' evenings during the course of the academic year. The first of these takes place during the Autumn term to allow practitioners and parents to discuss how children have settled into the setting. Within this first meeting, suggestions of how parents can support their children's learning at home; consolidating and building on what has been covered in the setting. Termly reports are sent home so parents are fully aware of their child's progress against the early learning goals. Another parent's evening takes place during the Spring term where practitioners will feedback on children's learning and development progress and then a final meeting if offered if parents wish to discuss the Learning Journal in detail in the Summer Term. A report explaining progress and any Early Learning goals met will be sent home in the Summer Term too.

Other opportunities for practitioners to share children's learning, development and well-being with parents include half termly activity sessions and end of year reports where children's achievements are recognised. There are opportunities for parents to help with activities such as drumming workshops and music sessions. Parents may be invited into the setting on other occasions such as departmental assemblies at Christmas and Easter or for Parent workshops.

The setting has a friendly, open-doors ethos and practitioners are available to talk to parents when required. Parents are always welcomed into school and encouraged to discuss and concerns they might have.

8. Admissions and Induction

Mayfield School provides part time and full-time Early Years education for children from the age of 3.

Before they start in the setting, all children are offered a series of come and join in sessions during the term prior to entry. The purpose of these initial visits is for the children and parents to meet their new practitioners and start to become familiar with the setting environment. Practitioners will also go to visit the children in their current pre-school settings, if appropriate. The aim of these visits is to support practitioners develop their knowledge and understanding of each child in order to make the transition period to Mayfield School as smooth as possible.

In the term prior to entry parents are invited into school to meet the setting practitioners. At this meeting information regarding the induction process and what goes on in the setting is shared. There is also time for informal chat and parents' questions. Information packs will be distributed to parents at this meeting, detailing school routines and expectations. Induction packs for children to complete with parents will also be given out as another way to support practitioners' knowledge and understanding of each individual child. At the end of this meeting there is an opportunity to schedule a home visit from your child's practitioners.

Every effort is made to make children feel safe, secure and happy. There is a relaxed and open ethos in the setting. Established routines, a calm atmosphere and encouraging talk are some of the strategies practitioners use to maintain children's positive feelings about school.

9. Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teacher/s to follow the principles stated in this policy. There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The Senior Leadership Team will carry out termly monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years, or earlier if changes in legislation apply.