



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Meadowbank the EYFS applies to children attending from the age of three (our school nursery age) to the end of the reception year. Entry into our primary school is at the beginning of the school year in which the children are five (although compulsory schooling does not begin until the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday).

The documents 'The Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage' and 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' provide guidance on how to implement the learning and development requirements, and the welfare and legal requirements for all children at Meadowbank Primary school and are used alongside each other.

The statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage states that 'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. The Early Years Foundation Stage 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.'

Children joining our school have already learned a great deal. Many have been learning in our nursery class (FS1) or in one of the various educational settings that exist in our community. The Early Years Foundation Stage education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do;
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and opportunities and experiences for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment.

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

- To provide a welcoming environment for children and their families;
- To ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued;
- To establish positive relationships with parents;
- To keep parents well informed about the curriculum and their child's progress;
- To build on what children already know and can do and to celebrate achievement;
- To help children make links in their learning;
- To stimulate positive attitudes and dispositions to learning to encourage independence;
- To value children's interests, providing a balance of direct teaching and child initiated activities;
- To help children build friendships and learn to co-operate with each other;
- To provide a solid foundation in the seven areas of learning through well planned, rich and stimulating experiences.

Early Years Foundation Stage Principles and Practice

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The Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage and the four themes underpin all learning by supporting, fostering and promoting children's development, learning and care.

The principles which guide the work of the Foundation Stage team are grouped into four themes:

A Unique Child – every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

All children and their families are valued within our school. We believe that children should be treated as individuals but they should have equal access to the EYFS curriculum. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We help them do this by planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all cultural backgrounds, children from different ethnic groups, and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We strongly believe that early identification of special needs is crucial in enabling staff to support the development of each child and fully meet their needs. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage in an open, honest and sensitive manner and we will always seek their support and involvement. The school's Special Education Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCo) is responsible for providing additional information and advice to the Foundation Stage Team and parents, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary. For further information see our Inclusion and Special Educational Needs Policies.

Positive Relationships – children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.

At Meadowbank Primary school we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. We recognise that parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. We feel a successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise and so we aim to provide a variety of opportunities to support this.

Enabling Environments – the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.

At Meadowbank we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. We aim to create a safe, meaningful and purposeful learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence. Opportunities and experiences are planned for both the inside and outside environment. Children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the school day. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning is informed by observations we have made of the children in order to understand and consider their current interests, experiences, development and learning needs.

At Meadowbank the Nursery (FS1) and Reception classes (FS2) organise and develop the curriculum through a thematic approach using the children's interests. The themes are planned in discussion with the children and cover areas that are familiar, of interest to young children and also enable us to deliver a creative and balanced curriculum.

Learning objectives, assessment opportunities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified. These reflect a balance of the seven areas of learning and development from the EYFS.

On-going observation of child initiated learning and planned adult guided opportunities in the indoor and outdoor environment allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests. Through this approach, next steps are identified and inform future teaching and learning

Children in Reception (Foundation Stage 2) experience a daily group time Letters and Sounds and Mathematics session. Children in Nursery (FS1) and Reception (FS2) are provided with high quality opportunities to explore and develop oracy, early reading, writing and maths in the indoor and outdoor learning environment

Plans are monitored by the Foundation Stage Leader and Curriculum Leaders.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning and the Prime and Specific Areas of Learning and Development.

The way in which children engage with other people and their environment- playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically- underpin learning and development across all areas and support children to remain effective and motivated learners.

Areas of Learning and Development

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning and development.

The Prime Areas begin to develop quickly in response to relationships and experiences, and run through and support learning in all other areas. The prime areas continue to be fundamental throughout the EYFS.

Prime Areas

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

The Specific Areas include essential skills and knowledge. They grow out of the prime areas, and provide important contexts for learning.

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

While these seven areas provide a framework for the early year's curriculum, young children's learning and development does not easily divide up into distinct areas. A particular experience may develop learning over several of the areas at any one time. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult guided and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations that children will reach by the end of the EYFS.

Assessment

On entry into the Foundation Stage, we carry out a baseline assessment so we can establish children's starting points. This enables the team to respond appropriately informed by the knowledge of how children learn and also build on what the children already know and can do.

We analyse and review our on-going observations of what we know about each child's development and learning, and then make informed decisions about supporting the child's progress. This enables us to plan the next steps for individuals and groups of children by providing challenging but achievable opportunities and experiences to extend the children's learning. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process and engage in half termly standard review meetings with the EYFS Leader. There are also half termly standard review meetings with the Head Teacher and Assistant Head Teacher who monitor progress and identify strategies that address learning and teaching priorities and next steps.

Formative assessment informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal and focused observations, other targeted assessments, annotated examples of work, photographs, children's voice and information from parents.

'Developmental Grids' for the Prime and Specific areas of learning are used as a guide to making best-fit judgements about whether a child is showing typical development for their age, may be at risk of delay or is ahead for their age. Personalised learning journeys are used to record evidence from formative assessments.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile' is the Nationally employed assessment tool that enables the Foundation Stage team to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage and summarises children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals. This is informed by the formative assessments undertaken and makes statement about the child's achievements against the seventeen aspects.

This information is submitted to the LEA for analysis and is used as part of the transition process to plan next steps for children. At the end of the summer term, the Year 1 team and KS1 leader discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals and the Characteristics of Effective Learning in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion enables the Year 1 team to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

Parents/Carers receive an annual report with comments on each child's progress in each of the seventeen aspects. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs, and gives details of the child's progress and achievements. Parents and children also contribute to these by reflecting on the progress that their child has made and discuss a goal that we can all work towards achieving. Parents/Carers are presented with their child's Learning Journey as a keepsake of their learning during the year.

Teaching and Learning Style

The features of effective teaching and learning in our school are defined in our policy on teaching and learning. They apply to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 or 2.

The features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- The partnership between teachers and parents that helps our children to feel secure at school and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn through the characteristics of effective learning, and how this must be reflected in their teaching;
- The range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication;
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests, and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- The support for learning, with appropriate and accessible space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors;
- The identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents;
- The good relationships between our school and the other educational settings in which the children have been learning before joining our school;
- The clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it;
- The regular identification of training needs for all adults working in the Foundation Stage.

Play at the Foundation Stage

At Meadowbank Primary School we do not make a distinction between work and play. We support children's learning through planned play, through observations of child-initiated or adult guided opportunities and then provide the most effective learning experiences. 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. Through play our children explore and develop the learning experiences that help them make sense of the world. They practise

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and build up their ideas, learn how to control themselves, and begin to understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively both alongside other children and on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears, or re-live anxious experiences, in controlled and safe situations.

Inclusion at the Foundation Stage

We believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning (see our policy on Inclusion).

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build on and extend the children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a variety of teaching strategies that are based on children's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children, and to help them to learn effectively;
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment, in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Employing resources that reflect diversity, and that avoid discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children's progress, and providing support (such as speech therapy) as necessary.

The Role of Parents/Carers

We believe that all parents/carers have an important role to play in the education of their child. We therefore recognise the role that parents/carers have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents/carers about their child before their child starts in our school;
- Opportunities given to the children to spend time with the Foundation Stage team before starting school;
- Inviting all parents/carers to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts in our Foundation Stage department;
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Nursery (FS1) and Reception classes (FS2);
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns;
- Having flexible admission arrangements, and allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
- Arranging for children to start school in smaller groups so that the Foundation Stage team can welcome each child individually into our school;
- Offering a range of opportunities, throughout the year, that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents/carers;
- Sharing next steps with parents during consultation meetings so they are aware of children's progress alongside coming into the Foundation Stage to share and celebrate children's learning;
- Providing various activities that involve parents, i.e. regular communication with home through the child's 'SMILE' book, half termly curriculum letters and inviting parents/carers to workshops, so they can hear and see the teaching and learning that the children are experiencing.

There is a formal meeting for parents/carers each term at which the parents/carers discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents/carers receive an annual report on their child's attainment and progress during the academic year.

Resources

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage all children to make choices about their learning as we believe that this encourages independence and develops thinking skills.

Continuous Professional Development

Maximising adult potential to increase capacity, authority and responsibility is the key to maximising pupil progress. Therefore, at Meadowbank Primary School CPD is an investment in our valued staff as leaders of learning, in the enrichment of our children and in the very fabric of our school. This investment will no doubt reap rewards and bring about raised standards in all that we do. CPD is supported in a variety of ways in school via internal and external training, mentoring and coaching and through joint practice development opportunities that are underpinned by research.

The governing board reviews this policy annually. The governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this if the government introduces new regulations, or if the governing board receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.

Policy History			
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