

Middlethorpe Primary Academy



Early Years and Foundation Stage Policy

Written by: Natalie Message
Approved by: Rachel Simpson
Implemented: September 2021
Review: September 2023

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Early Years Vision- *'Together we learn to shine'*

Our aim in the Early Years is to provide the opportunity for every child to reach their full potential. We aim to inspire curious learners with a thirst for knowledge, independent learners who also have the skills to collaborate, happy and secure learners who can talk with confidence and interact well. We believe that reading is at the heart of the Early Years curriculum and we aim to ensure that every child leaves the Early Years able to read, write and with a good understanding of number. We aim to ensure our children are resilient, reflective, collaborative, curious and independent. We aim to introduce the children to the cornerstones of teaching and learning which are listening and responding, talk, learning to learn and knowledge acquisition from nursery so that when they finish the Early Years they are ready for the rest of their Middlethorpe journey.

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year and is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments with teaching and support from adults
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

At Middlethorpe Primary Academy we recognise that every child is 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.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at Middlethorpe Primary Academy are treated fairly regardless of their protected characteristics or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

In our school 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 planning for their learning.

In the Early Years we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, those with disabilities, from all social and cultural backgrounds, of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We encourage risk taking and purposeful learning.

We meet the needs of all our children through planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence. We do this using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs. We provide a range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them

to learn effectively. We offer a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued and we use resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping. Our planning provides challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills. We are constantly monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill.

Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

Positive Relationships

At Middlethorpe Primary Academy relationships are central to all we do. We recognise that children learn to be strong independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children.

We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school
- inviting children to a playdate/s (depending on individual need) with parents to get to know the school and the staff
- enabling children to spend one morning a week in the Foundation Stage classroom. In Nursery this happens the term before they start FS1 and in Reception during the summer term before starting school in September.
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school and a further information evening a few weeks after starting Nursery and Reception
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns
- having an open door policy and all parents are welcomed into school every morning
- having parent consultation meetings in the Autumn and Spring terms at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress and parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the Foundation Stage, including progress on the EYFS Profile.
- inviting parents in through the year to share learning for example 'Culture week' 'Celebrations' 'Forest School'...
- using parent share on Evidence Me alongside a half termly email so parents can see what their child has been learning
- using a home-school diary so we can see what elements of learning the children are displaying at home

- inviting parents to come in and have lunch with their child
- updating Class Dojo and/or Twitter at least once a week to share our learning
- holding a parent involvement day every term

Enabling Environments

At Middlethorpe Primary Academy we recognise that an immersive environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. It is crucial that children have an environment that is language-rich and engaging. 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. Throughout our continuous provision, we encourage our children to become historians, geographers, scientists, artists, designers, etc in line with the whole school's topic focus at a pace and level that is suitable for the EYFS.

Learning and Development

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The planning within the EYFS is based around half termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning, however the teacher may alter these in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning. Our ambition is to deliver a curriculum that supports all children to fulfil their potential. The Early Years curriculum is mapped out to ensure progression of knowledge and concepts and to start building schema and concepts that children will meet later in school life.

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 observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. A gap analysis is conducted to see where the gaps are in the children's learning and planning is responsive to this.

These observations are recorded in a variety of ways and used to inform the EYFS Profile. Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the Early Learning Goals and assessment scales.

Characteristics of learning

- 1) **Playing and exploring:** "Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development."

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They have the opportunity to practise skills, develop ideas and think creatively alongside other children as well as individually. The children communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They have the opportunity to express fears and deal with anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

- 2) **Active learning:** “Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.”

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

- 3) **Creating and thinking critically:** “When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.”

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS statutory framework is made up of seven areas of learning and development. Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving. These are referred to as the prime areas:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development

Children must also be supported in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. These specific areas are:

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities.

In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Assessment

Progress Check at age two

When a child is aged between two and three, we must review their progress, and provide parents and/or carers with a short written summary of their child's development in the prime areas. This progress check must identify the child's strengths, and any areas where the child's progress is less than expected. If there are significant emerging concerns, or an identified special educational need or disability, we will develop a targeted plan to support the child's future learning and development involving parents and/or carers and other professionals where appropriate.

Reception Baseline Assessment

The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a short assessment, taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts reception. The RBA assesses a child in early mathematics, literacy, communication and language. The purpose of the RBA is to form the starting point for cohort-level school progress measures.

Assessment at the End of the EYFS – The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than 30 June in that term, the EYFS Profile must be completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels, and their readiness for year 1. Each child's level of development must be assessed against the early learning goals. We must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

Two-Year old provision

At Middlethorpe we provide mixed aged provision for 2-4 year olds as we believe mixed age provision brings benefits for both older and younger children. There is plenty of research that illustrates the range of benefits, from social interaction to symbolic play.

We recognise that two year olds are at a unique stage of development. We understand that at this age children are developing their independence and believe that a two-year old should not be treated as a mini pre-schooler nor behave in the same way as an older child. Two year olds are curious and keen to explore and discover more about their world. They are creative thinkers who have a 'can do' attitude towards life. They have a strong drive to do things for themselves whilst at the same time needing consistency of routines and caring adults who understand them. We recognise that this is the first significant relationship that the children have had outside the home. We also recognise the value of repeated experiences for two year olds.



It is vitally important that adults remember the three prime areas are interconnected and that they are the foundations on which the other four specific areas are built. Therefore a lot of work is done around the prime areas.

Communication and Language

What does a 2 year old need?	How do we provide this at Middlethorpe?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A calm, quiet space with little background noise. • Someone to tell me what words mean • To listen to stories, sing familiar nursery rhymes, actions songs and made up songs. • To have language modelled without speech being corrected • Resources to encourage language development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a safe quiet base for the 2 year olds for language development. • Use pictures and signs to support language development. • Daily stories and singing time (in small groups and one-to-one). Repetitive books and CDs available. • Adults who are tuned into the children’s interests and make use of an effective speech and language monitoring tool. • Access to messy play with sensory exploration, puppets, imaginative tools and sequencing tools.

Physical Development

What does a 2 year old need?	How does Middlethorpe provide this?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space to be active, plenty of opportunities to move in order to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas both inside and outside to be active and daily physical activities planned to practise running, jumping,

<p>understand the messages from my body.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for me to be healthy and to care for myself. • Daily opportunities for outdoor play • Activities to help develop my fine motor skills. • Activities to help develop gross motor skills. 	<p>spinning, rolling, swinging etc. Time to dig, sweep, push etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An adult to model how to wash hands, go to the toilet independently and how to dress and undress myself. • Planned outdoor learning every day in a stimulating and well-resourced outdoor environment. • Funky fingers area used daily such as playdough and other malleable materials. Washing lines and pegs, chinks, paints, gloop, tweezers, peg boards, threading, water squirters etc. • Opportunities to support large motor play e.g. guttering, logs, planks, tyres, parachute, scarves and streamers.
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Personal, social and emotional development

What does a 2 year old need?	How do we provide this at Middlethorpe?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An adult knows all about me before I start and time to get to know my new environment. • A safe base, somewhere to put their things and a place to see photos of their families, pets and toys. • A patient, calm and affectionate adult to build a strong bond with. • Somebody to model how to take turns and share • An adult who understands the need for 'I see, I want and I take'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective transition with key worker • A quiet two year old space with place for their personal belongings, photos of their family and a place they visit daily which is homely and uncluttered. • An effective key person who is always there and gives one-to-one attention. • An effective key person who is always there and gives one-to-one attention. • An adult who provides an unhurried and flexible day-day routine (in the moment planning).

Two year olds also have an all-consuming drive to engage in and explore the world around them. We believe young children learn best when they are encouraged to follow their natural curiosity and are supported to appropriately devise their own learning and discoveries. Therefore we use 'in the moment planning' for our two year olds. We also believe that sensory play is vital for brain development. Everything a toddler hears, sees, tastes, touches and smells influences the way the brain makes its connections. We ensure we provide sensory play every day and that adults ask enquiring questions.

Schema

We believe that schemas (patterns of repeated behaviour which children use to explore and express their developing ideas and thoughts through play) are an important part of children's growth particularly for our 2 year olds. Understanding the theory behind schemas is the responsibility of the Early Years team and we ensure we provide opportunities for their development. It is the role of the adult to identify different schemas and plan for their next stage of development.

Schema	How we support this
Trajectory (an interest in throwing and dropping things from a height)	Providing balls and equipment that can be thrown at target, blowing things such as feathers, tissue paper and ping pong balls, spraying water and paint from squeeze bottles, using pipes and funnels in the water tray, running with kites, streamers and rolling cards down guttering.
Rotation (a fascination with spinning)	Providing equipment that can be turned or spun around e.g. hula hoops, windmills, waterwheels, using paint rollers and kaleidoscopes.
Connecting and disconnecting (joining things together and taking them apart)	Providing equipment that can be joined and then disconnected such as train tracks, construction sets, weaving, magnets, connecting pipes and funnels together, building with junk materials, threading and making chalk lines to follow.
Orientation (putting objects/their bodies in different places and positions)	Using magnifying glasses, providing chance to swing and climb, using mirrors and binoculars
Enclosing	Opportunities to build dens and hidey holes, use of tents, blankets and tunnels, using boxes and cartons to make houses and homes.
Enveloping (a fascination in covering themselves, objects and drawings).	Providing baskets, bags and containers to put things in, envelopes, wrapping paper, sand and soil to bury things in and providing a variety of different papers in the creative area.
Positioning (an interest in lining things up)	Using mosaics, peg boards, small objects e.g. shells and buttons, train tracks and providing sorting activities.
Transporting (moving themselves or objects from one place to another)	Providing a variety of containers to help children transport items e.g. bags, jugs, cars, buckets. Using different sized stacking boxes, carts, trolleys and pushchairs, building waterways with guttering.

Group time and behaviour management

We also understand the need to provide group time for 2 year olds but that this should be shorter and in a small group. We also recognise that 2 year olds need a different approach to managing their behaviour and emotions as they are moving from being a dependent baby to being a toddler with a strong desire for independence. This drive for autonomy can result in the child's emotions coming out in the form of a 'temper tantrum'. When this happens their key worker deals with it by:

- Talking calmly and acknowledging that the child is feeling cross or upset
- Trying to reduce a young child's frustration by giving them words to express emotions and modelling language through small world play.

We understand that time out is inappropriate as the child cannot automatically change their behaviour in these situations.

Transition

It is vital that a close working relationship between Nursery (FS1) and Reception (FS2), and Reception and Year 1 is developed so that the transition between FS1 and FS2 and between Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is as smooth as possible, as well as for those children who join us in Reception from outside settings. At Middlethorpe Primary Academy it is vital that we allow our children to build successfully and coherently on their past experiences, as they move between their early school years and continue on their learning journey.

Nursery Transition

The Early Years team work closely all year through regular phase meetings. The same topics are covered ensuring progression through the curriculum. This also allows the children from FS1 and FS2 to interact and spend time in the Reception classroom. This helps to ensure a smooth transition. During the Summer term, the children moving into Reception, transition early by taking part in both small group and whole class Reception sessions. During term 6 meetings are held between Nursery and Reception staff. The Reception team also visit other feeder nurseries to meet the children.

Reception Transition

During Term 6 meetings are held between the Reception teachers, and Year 1 teachers to discuss the transition between the stages. These meetings allow for data, expertise and experiences of the cohort to be shared and discussed. This allows a smooth transition and gives the children the academic/emotional support they may need.

It is an expectation of the Early Years Foundation Stage Leader to ensure teachers have all data ready and collated ready for the meeting, these include:

- reception progress grids outlining each point that has been achieved by individual children and showing gaps that need to be addressed
- individual assessment portfolios and evidence to support these
- any SEN information
- phonics assessment grid
- reading book information
- gifted and talented curriculum assessment

Welfare

“Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.”

At Middlethorpe Primary Academy we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Early Years Statutory Framework 2021.

We understand that we are required to:

- safeguard children
- ensure the suitability of adults who have contact with children
- promote good health
- manage behavior
- maintain records, policies and procedures.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to follow the principles stated in this policy. The EYFS Leader alongside the Principal and Senior Leadership Team carry out monitoring of the EY through observation and discussion as part of the whole school monitoring timetable. All quotations included in this document are taken from the Early Years Foundation Stage.