



TOGETHER WE GROW AND LEARN

Foundation Stage Policy

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Governing Body Committee: - SDC

Foundation Stage Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1** The Foundation Stage applies to children from the term they turn three years of age to the end of the academic year they turn five. Children are invited to join our Foundation Unit on a part-time basis as Rising Threes the term of their 3rd birthday and are then given the opportunity to move into a full-time place at the beginning of the academic year in which they become five years old.
- 1.2** Compulsory schooling begins at the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday. Key Stage 1 begins for all of our children at the beginning of the academic year they turn six years of age and are in Year 1.
- 1.3** The Foundation Stage is the essential and crucial start of a child's education, and prepares them for their educational journey throughout their life.
- 1.4** The early years 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 activity that provides opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
 - it provides a rich and stimulating environment.

2 Aims of the Foundation Stage

- 2.1** The curriculum of the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:
- communication and language;
 - physical development;
 - personal, social and emotional development;
 - literacy;
 - mathematics;
 - understanding of the world;
 - expressive arts and design.

3 Teaching and Learning Style

- 3.1** Our whole school policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning throughout our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage, just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 1 and 2.
- 3.2** However, the following aspects of teaching and learning are particularly significant in the Foundation Stage:
- partnerships between practitioners and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
 - understanding of how children develop and learn, and how this affects teaching by having a clear understanding of next steps to take;
 - a range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, clear explanations, appropriate interventions and extended play opportunities;
 - a carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;
 - opportunities for children to take part in activities that build on, support and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
 - encouraging children to communicate and talk about their learning, develop independence, self-management and positive attitudes and disposition;
 - supporting learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
 - identifying progress and future learning needs of children through observations and assessments, which are regularly shared with parents;
 - regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do;
 - regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Foundation Stage.

4 Play in the Foundation Stage

4.1 Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as 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.

5 Inclusion in the Foundation Stage

5.1 In our school we believe that every child matters. We give all of our children every opportunity to achieve their potential. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

5.2 In the Foundation Stage we set realistic but challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most can achieve a Good Level of Development in the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. We achieve this by planning to meet the individual needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities and children from all social, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds.

5.3 We meet the needs of all our children by:

- 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 teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from 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 taking action to provide support as necessary;
- developing positive attitudes and values.

6 The Foundation Stage curriculum

6.1 The basis for planning in our Foundation Unit is from:

- the principles of the 'Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook';
- the Early Years Outcomes statements towards the Early Learning Goals;
- the team's knowledge of the needs of our children.

6.2 The Early Learning Goals set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage. All areas of learning are given appropriate emphasis and provision to reflect the cross-curricular nature of early learning. Our planning framework takes into account the many ways children learn, by giving them time to re-visit and extend their ideas further.

6.3 All children in the Foundation Unit take part in daily literacy and mathematic adult directed or adult initiated activities that are in line with the Early Years Outcomes statements and the Early Learning Goals. Once in full-time our children are then included in further adult directed activities which include 1:1 reading and guided writing and mathematics group activities.

6.4 There are three layers to the provision in our Foundation Stage Unit:

Continuous Provision.

Continuous Provision in our indoor and outdoor environment is part of our long term planning and aims to be challenging and supportive. The long term planning predicts the child-initiated play that will take place in each area and the Early Years Outcomes and Early Learning Goals that the children will be working towards whilst playing in this way. There are a broad range of opportunities and objectives that can be accessed by the children at this level at all times. This is done through providing continual access to a selection of high quality resources.

Enhanced Provision.

Enhanced Provision is for areas of learning that are covered less thoroughly through Continuous Provision, or for areas of learning that are identified within our assessment process to be unachieved by our children. Our topic based Enhanced Planning forms our medium-term planning and focuses on a narrower range of learning objectives. This allows the adult to enhance the environment through introducing new ideas using a resource stimulus, interactive display, visit or visitor linked to a topic. All topics are based around the children's own interests and every day life.

Directed Activities.

Directed Activities form the basis of our short-term planning and involve focused discussion and group activities that are used to directly teach new concepts, skills and knowledge in response to the needs of the children. These activities then ensure that the intentions of the long-term Continuous and medium-term Enhanced Provision planning are being implemented and accessed successfully by the children.

Adults in our Foundation Unit will be involved in:

- playing alongside the children, interacting sensitively and intervening using conversation, questioning and making links to previous experiences, to ensure Continuous and Enhanced Provision are used effectively;
- observing children in groups and areas of provision to inform future planning;
- directed activities that develop the needs of children that have been identified through observation and medium term planning.

6.5 When planning we take into account the different starting points from which the children develop their learning, and we aim to build on what they can already do. We take notice of both formal and informal assessments that have been made, as well as evaluations of previous weeks' activities and learning. We provide activities and opportunities for children that are both planned by adults and planned or initiated by themselves.

7 Organisation of the learning environment

7.1 Part-time children in the Foundation Stage are members of a Family Group led by one of the adults. These groups contain no more than 13 children and are mixed age and ability. This benefits the younger children who learn from the older ones, while the older children gain from being role models for the younger children. The children begin and end each session in their Family Groups, where they are registered, welcomed and can talk about the day's events.

7.2 For full-time Foundation Stage children who reach their 5th birthday in the academic year, the ratio of 1 qualified Teacher to a maximum of 30 children is applied in order to meet the infant class size rule. These children are assigned at least one qualified teacher and one level 3 teaching assistant, and particular consideration is given to the youngest children in the cohort.

7.3 We adopt a flexible approach to the full-time cohort's organization at all times, so that we can adapt their working groups as appropriate for their individual learning needs and maturity, or for the needs of an activity.

7.4 During their day full-time children are involved in a range of independent, small group and whole class work. They are based mainly in the Foundation Unit but also become familiar with areas within school including classrooms, the school office, the large halls and other outdoor areas; to prepare them for their move into KS1. The full-time children also attend whole-school assemblies three times each week.

7.5 Following a Family Group or class activity at the start of the day, all the Foundation Stage children move to a small-group Literacy Skills activity. Children are grouped by their ability to cater for their specific needs.

7.6 During Active Learning time the Foundation Unit is split into four main spaces, with a member of staff monitoring each space. The first space is the Special Area which includes the reading corner, the ICT area, the small-world area and the construction area. The second space is the Creative Area which includes the dough table, easels, the creative table, the exploration table and the home corner. The third space is the Outside Area which continually provides a sheltered area, a book area, a sand pit, a water exploration area, a soil area, easels, climbing apparatus with a tunnel and slide, and bikes. The fourth space is the Classroom Area which contains the sand and water areas, the music area, the mark making area, the role-play area, a numeracy area and a workshop.

7.7 Outdoor play is a part of everyday choice and provision during Active Learning in the Foundation Stage as in free-flow. The full-time children also have opportunities throughout the week to use the Key Stage 1 playground during playtimes. This provides them with the opportunity to develop friendships with other children in school, become used to the routines of Key Stage 1 and become familiar with other environments in school.

7.8 Our Forest Learning area is accessed by all part-time and full-time children at least once a week and is an adult-initiated activity where children are encouraged to safely explore and investigate a more natural outdoor learning environment.

8 Assessment

PLEASE NOTE WE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING OUR ASSESSMENT SYSTEM TO MOVE TOWARDS COMPLETELY ELECTRONIC OBSERVATION RECORDING IN ORDER TO ALLOW MORE FREQUENT COLLECTION OF EVIDENCE FOR ALL CHILDREN, WHILST REDUCING STAFF WORKLOAD AND AT THE SAME TIME INCREASING INFORMATION SHARING WITH PARENTS.

- 8.1 Children are continually assessed during their time in the Foundation Stage using mostly observations of child-initiated and adult-initiated learning experiences, and all these observations are recorded on to stickers. The achievements recorded on each sticker are marked off on An Early Years Outcomes Assessment Grid before the stickers are placed on individual children's Learning Journeys.
- 8.2 The Early Years Outcomes Assessment Grids are used to inform which areas of provision the children need enhancing in future topics, and then they are also used every term to help support judgements of progress.
- 8.3 All staff individually perform ongoing assessments of all children in all areas of provision, and they share particular strengths and areas of need with other staff members at planning meetings and assessment meetings. This allows us to plan directed activities to support individual or group needs at that time.
- 8.4 On entry to our unit children are first assessed against the Early Years Outcomes statements following their first two full weeks in the unit. This allows us to very quickly match our learning experiences to the exact needs of our children, and gives us a more accurate picture of ability of those children who may not yet be working within National Expectation for their age.
- 8.5 We then continue to track every child at least once a term against the Early Years Outcomes and Early Learning Goals. We currently use the EAZ MAG assessment program to enter our data for all seventeen areas of learning. This software then allows us to monitor each child's progress compared to the previous term, and analyse the performance of the different groups within our unit including boys, girls, SEN and Pupil Premium.
- 8.6 At key points in their child's development parents are invited into the Foundation Stage Unit to share their children's progress and be aware of the next step in their child's learning. This usually takes places termly, but additional meetings can be requested at any time by either parents or staff whenever it is felt necessary.
- 8.7 At the end of the Foundation Stage an annual written report is given to parents, which includes individualised statements about their child's characteristics of learning alongside details of whether their child is emerging, expected or exceeding in respect of each of the Early Learning Goals. Along with a written report, we offer parents of pupils in full-time Foundation Stage the opportunity to discuss the results of the Foundation Stage Profile with their child's teacher.
- 8.8 The Foundation Stage Leader summarises the attainment of each group at key points as they move through the Foundation Stage. These summaries highlight progress for cohorts and groups of children, areas of curriculum strength and areas that need development. These cohort summaries are shared with the Senior Leadership Team.
- 8.9 The head teacher makes reference to developments in the Foundation Stage and cohort summaries when reporting back to the governing body.

9 Health & Safety

- 9.1 A secure, safe Foundation environment is continually monitored and provided. Risk assessments, audits and checks are carried out regularly to ensure it is maintained.
- 9.2 At least one person is on site at all times who is trained in Paediatric First Aid.
- 9.3 Our whole school Safeguarding Policy is adhered to at all times throughout the Foundation Stage Unit.

10 The role of parents

10.1 We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We particularly recognise the role that parents have already played, and their future role in educating their children. We do this by:

- talking to parents about their child before they start in our Foundation Unit at a New Parents Meeting;
- inviting parents and children to attend an Amazing Acorns group the term before their child enters the Foundation Stage (this group supports parents and carers to be their child's first educator. It offers ideas and activities to support learning in everyday situations and is offered in partnership with our adjoined Children's Centre);
- visiting all children in their home setting prior to them starting our unit;
- inviting all parents to a transition meeting the term before their child starts full-time Foundation Stage;
- offering parents at least termly opportunities to talk in detail about their child's progress;
- encouraging parents to talk to their child's Key Person as soon as possible whenever they have any concerns;
- providing full-time parents with an end of Foundation Stage report;
- having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents to become secure and happy with the Foundation environment;
- sending home regular newsletters that describe the learning experiences currently taking place in our unit;
- holding regular Seeing is Believing sessions for parents of our full-time children in order for them to see what learning is being encouraged in our unit so they can talk about it or replicate it at home.

11 Discipline and behaviour

11.1 Throughout the Foundation Stage a positive approach is consistently used and encouraged through the use of adults as positive role models, and good behaviour is frequently rewarded with the use of stickers and reward stamps.

11.2 In the Foundation Stage the children are reminded of expectations of behaviour through our seven whole school Values that are explained to the children in an age appropriate way:

- Aspiration (having a goal or target);
- Inspiration (doing something wonderful);
- Integrity (making the right choice);
- Inclusion (being kind to everyone)
- Responsibility (following our values);
- Respect (being kind with hands and feet and words)
- Resilience (keep trying)

11.3 In cases of inappropriate behaviour children are reminded of the expectations of their actions and, where appropriate, a warning is given. If the behaviour continues, the child has 'Thinking Time' which removes them from the inappropriate situation. If the inappropriate behaviour continues, then the child has 'Thinking Time' in another area. 'Thinking Time' is usually delivered in 3 minute blocks for part-time children, and 5 minute blocks for full-time children. Following 'Thinking Time' the adult who challenged the inappropriate behaviour talks to the child explicitly about which of our Values were not being shown and the child is then supported to take responsibility for their actions, for example, by apologising to someone. A senior member of staff may be involved to support where behaviour is persistence or severe.

12 Resources

12.1 We plan a learning environment and learning experiences, both indoors and outdoors, that encourage a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. During Active Learning we encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning.

12.2 Any resources that are continually available to the children are kept in clearly labelled, organised storage to encourage independence when choosing and tidying during Active Learning.

This policy has been written by Jodi Ince, Deputy Head & Early Years Leader.

Please see the Early Years Unit Handbook for further information.