

Hevingham and Marsham Primary Schools
Policy for the Early Years Foundation Stage

October 2018

Introduction

Hevingham and Marsham Primary Schools are guided by the following aims and principles in their provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The policy has been developed after consultation with staff and senior management; it will be reviewed every three years.

The Early Years Foundation Stage refers to all children from birth until the end of their Reception year. At school therefore it will include children from the age of 4.0 years up to the age of 5.11 years.

We believe that all children should be given the chance to experience the very best possible start to their education at school. In their first five years of life children have developed a range of skills, knowledge and understandings at a speed that will never again be repeated in their lives. This policy aims to describe the features of teaching and learning which will create an environment enabling children to thrive. The early years of education are the foundation upon which they will build the rest of their lives.

Principles

The following principles underlie our practice and are adapted from the **Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE 2012)** and **Statutory Framework for the Early years Foundation Stage (DfE 2012)**. Effective learning and development for young children requires high quality care and education by practitioners; this entails:

An appropriate curriculum, including:

- Well-planned, purposeful activity, relevant and appropriate in content to the children's needs and interests.
- Opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and also those that they plan or initiate themselves.
- Opportunities for children to become engrossed, work in depth and complete activities.
- A well-planned and organised learning environment which enables children to explore, experiment, plan and make decisions for themselves.
- Opportunities to play and learn indoors and outdoors as far as is practical.
- Rich and stimulating experiences.

Effective assessment, involving:

- Initial assessment using the Early Excellence Baseline Assessment (EExBa)
- Ongoing assessment of children's skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Clear understanding of possible next steps in their development and learning, based on this ongoing assessment.
- Provision for the different starting points from which children develop.

- Learning which builds on what a child already knows and can do, thus encouraging a positive attitude and disposition to learn and aiming to prevent early experience of failure.
- Provision that identifies any disadvantage and helps children to overcome the effects of such disadvantage.

Positive relationships, requiring:

- Practitioners to ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued.
- Staff to build positive relationships with parents and carers
- Respect and regard for all children, their families, backgrounds, culture and beliefs.
- An environment which is safe and secure
- Recognition of children's individual needs and the different rates at which they develop emotionally, socially, physically and intellectually.
- Opportunities for children and parents to talk and be listened to.

Teaching and Learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum is divided into three prime areas and four specific areas. The prime areas are fundamental throughout the EYFS, developing in response to relationships and experiences. The specific areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.

The prime areas are:

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

The specific areas are:

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

Children will encounter the National Curriculum where appropriate to their stage of development.

The prime and specific areas guide staff in planning the learning environment, activities and experiences, providing a framework for the Early Years Curriculum. The detailed skills, knowledge and attitudes covered by these areas can be found in Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE 2012). In addition, staff use 'Letters and Sounds' to plan for phonics.

In planning the curriculum in detail we offer a wide range of experiences, emphasising first-hand, real experiences that contextualise learning. There is an emphasis on active learning and play since it is through play that young children practise and refine what is newly learned. Of particular importance is the integration of social interaction and speaking and listening into planned activities: very young children deepen their understanding by 'playing, talking, observing, planning, questioning, experimenting, testing, repeating, reflecting and responding to adults and to each other' (QCA 2000).

In summary, many aspects of learning are brought together effectively through playing and talking. Therefore teaching and learning opportunities are presented in a range of ways:

- Adult led
- Adult initiated but independently carried out by children
- Child initiated

All of these activities could be individual, small group, large group or whole class based. All of them could involve practitioners in making formal or informal assessments of the children's learning; the latter two types of activity could include the intervention and support of practitioners at some point.

Organisation

The day is organised in a flexible way, dependent partly on the stage of the school year. In general, the day is organised to allow children to pursue activities for as long as they wish to or on the understanding that they can return to them after a break for whole school routines (morning break; lunchtime) or to work with an adult. Whole class teaching will take place at natural breaks in the day and for periods of time which gradually increase as the children mature.

Some provision is permanent and is always available, such as: a malleable area, the book corner, role play area, funky fingers and computers. There are also resources which the children can access as they wish, including jigsaws, construction toys, drawing materials, small world resources and boxed games.

Some provision is changed on a regular basis to relate to current themes and in response to the children's own interests. These might include resources for small world play and role play. There are routine times for P.E., dance and games to take place. The class takes part in whole school singing, and music making is a regular and integral part of many activities in the classroom.

On a daily basis there are opportunities for children to engage in activities relating to all the prime and specific areas of learning and opportunities for them to take part in teacher directed, teacher initiated and child initiated activities.

Both schools have access to a well-resourced fenced outdoor area and outdoor shelter. A full range of curriculum areas are planned for in the outdoor area, weather and staffing permitting.

Adult Support

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from the support of experienced teaching assistants. Parents and carers are actively encouraged to help in the classrooms on a regular basis. Teaching staff ensure that they explain the learning intentions of activities in which helpers are engaged. The schools also welcome students from local high schools, sixth form colleges, further education institutions and the University of East Anglia on placements related to child care and teaching courses. Students on placements are briefed on health and safety, confidentiality, child protection protocols and dress code, as well as other issues relating to their interactions with children as they arise.

Equal opportunities

The schools operate an Equal Opportunities Policy in line with Norfolk Local Authority guidance. All children have equal access to the curriculum. Practitioners plan to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social, cultural and religious backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups including Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers and children from linguistic backgrounds other than English. Children are encouraged to develop an understanding that people have different needs, views, cultures and beliefs, that need to be treated with respect; they are also encouraged to develop an understanding and respect for their own needs, beliefs and culture. Staff are alert to the possibility of stereotyping and take steps to challenge it when it occurs.

Special Needs

Practitioners plan for the individual learning needs of every child. Every effort is made to identify particular needs which require intervention beyond routine classroom differentiation. In consultation with the school's SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) and outside agencies where appropriate, the class teacher will write an Individual Education Plan (IEP) detailing the steps being taken to address the needs identified. Further information can be found in the school's SEN Policy.

Assessment

Parents are encouraged to pass on records of achievement from any pre-school setting that the child has attended.

Within the first few weeks of starting school, each child is assessed using the Early Excellence Baseline Assessment (EExBa). This is completed through observations of the child and no formal 'testing' is carried out. Children are assessed according to the objectives set out in EExBa and given a baseline score. The baseline is used as a starting point of children's learning and all observations and learning that follows this will build on the knowledge and understanding shown during the baseline assessment.

Each child is observed informally on a day-to-day basis. These informal observations are compiled in two different ways across both schools. At Marsham the children each have an individual 'learning journey'; a book that is unique to each child and follows their learning throughout their time in Reception and into Year One. At Hevingham the observations are put onto an online platform called 'Tapestry' which is also unique to each child and follows their learning throughout their time in Reception and into Year One if necessary. These observations, as well as photographs and drawings and work completed by the child, support the teachers assessment on each child.

Based on the observations recorded by teaching staff and with reference to the guidance, regular checks are made that all children are making adequate progress or better in each area of learning.

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE 2012) states that in the final term of the Reception year, a formal assessment, the EYFS profile, must be completed for each child and reported to the Local Authority. By considering all of the evidence, the class teacher must assess each child's level of development against the Early Learning Goals for each of the prime and specific areas of learning. A judgment must be made as to whether each child is meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

Admissions Policy

The schools follow the Norfolk admissions policy. Children enter school in the Reception class on a full-time basis the year in which their 5th birthday lies between 1st September and the 31st August. When starting school, there is some flexibility to attend some half days until the child's parents/carers and the teacher feel that the child is ready to attend full-time.

Communication with parents and the induction process

Parents are children's first and most enduring educators. Therefore we seek to develop an effective partnership with parents to promote a two-way flow of knowledge, information and expertise.

At both Hevingham and Marsham, we initially carry out Home Visits which creates an opportunity for parents to meet both staff members that will be working with their child in the upcoming school year. It demonstrates to the child that the school staff are trusted adults as they have been welcomed them into their home. It also enables the staff to see the child in their familiar surroundings, playing with their favourite toys and get to know them in an environment where they feel more confident.

Before the child starts school. A "Welcome to School" pack is provided for the parents/carers and child to read together. We also invite the children in to three transition mornings across both schools. The first is a 'stay and play' where the parents are invited to stay with their child and the remaining two the children come in independently to explore their new classroom. These sessions give children the opportunity to become familiar with the school setting, the staff and the other children before starting school formally.

Following this, where necessary, we do carry out Nursery/ pre-school visits to have a chat with the child's current practitioners to enable an even better transition process. The information passed on, allows us to get a holistic view of the child from all aspects of their life. We also get to see them in their current settings, observing how they engage with other children and adults.

Once a child has started school, parents and carers are welcomed into the classroom every morning and staff are available for informal discussion. The class teacher is also available most days after school. Where appropriate, a member of staff will always offer to go somewhere private to discuss a concern. Appointments can also be offered if a longer discussion is required.

Parents are kept informed about the teaching and learning activities undertaken in Reception through a termly Curriculum overview, as well as opportunities to share their child's learning journey. Reading record books are sent home daily for exchange of notes about children's progress in reading. Learning conversations are held in October and February, with timed appointments to discuss progress and concerns.

Parents and carers are invited to offer help in the classroom on a regular basis and to assist in accompanying trips out of school.

Health and Safety

As part of the curriculum children are encouraged to be aware of their own personal safety, health and hygiene and to have regard for the health and safety of others.

In particular, the following steps are taken to promote the health and safety of the children:

- Doors out of the classroom are fitted with finger guards.
- At Hevingham, there are toilets situated adjacent to the classroom for the exclusive use of children in Reception/year 1 class.
- Children are regularly reminded about the importance of hand-washing and taught how to do it thoroughly.
- At both schools, the Reception playground areas are fenced and the gates are shut when the children are outside. The children know that they must not leave this area without permission.
- Fresh fruit is available every morning break and at other times of day on request.
- Drinking water is available throughout the day: children use named water bottles at Hevingham and a water fountain at Marsham.
- Safe use of equipment is encouraged at all times.
- School guidelines are followed concerning suitable dress for P.E. and safe practice in the teaching of P.E.
- The classroom has a First Aid box and the staff have up to date basic first aid training. Each Reception classroom has a member of staff trained in Paediatric first aid.
- Equipment which is unsafe through wear or damage is discarded as soon as staff become aware of deficiencies.
- Injuries to children are recorded on the Accident Book kept in the office and reported to parents at the end of school. All head injuries are reported to parents immediately.
- All staff are aware of local authority and school child protection procedures and what to do if they have concerns about a child's well-being.

DfE (2012) Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.
DfE (2012) Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
QCA 2000 Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage

