

# Mountfields Lodge Primary School



## Foundation Stage Policy

**Aim High, Reach for the Sky**

# Foundation Stage Policy

## 1. Introduction

1.1 The 'Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage', sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five. It was updated in July 2014 and has been effective since Sept 2014.

In our school, all children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. Compulsory schooling begins after a child's fifth birthday.

Key Stage One begins for our children at the beginning of Year One.

The Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and in preparing children for later schooling. The Early Learning Goals set out the expected standard of achievement for children by the end of Foundation Stage.

1.2 Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal. Many have been to one of a large range of settings that exist in our community. 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 out.
- 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:

- Personal, social and emotional well-being;
- Positive attitudes towards their learning;
- Social skills;
- Attention skills, persistence and pride in achievement;
- Language and communication;
- Reading and writing;
- Mathematics;
- Understanding of the world;
- Physical development;
- Creative development;
- Independence;

## 3. Teaching and Learning Style

3.1 Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is carefully planned and structured to meet individual needs. We plan as a team, adapting the plans to cater for the needs and interests of the individual classes. We organise a range of experiences and opportunities which give our children chance to make decisions and choices, work individually or in groups, and explore the learning environment. Having spoken at length with the children and with their parents at the beginning of

the year, we plan activities around topic areas that are of particular interest to our children. We plan activities that enable us to make links across each area of learning.

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

- The partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- The range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and 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 of children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- The support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- The behavioural expectation of all children, supported by the school 'Behaviour Policy' which has been slightly amended to meet the needs of the children in the Foundation Stage.
- The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents and used to inform future planning;
- The good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school.
- The regular identification of training needs of all adults working in the Department, with CPD provided through in-set training, scheduled staff-meetings and peer support.
- The supportive reciprocal 'net-working' opportunities afforded to our staff by being part of a group of local Academies (LPAP).

3.3 Department organisation:

- Our Foundation Stage base comprises 3 Reception classrooms. There is a kitchen which is shared by all 3 classes. There are 2 smaller rooms, ideal for group work. Each class has an interactive whiteboard. There is a cloakroom area for each class. The Foundation Stage has its own separate toilets (boys and girls). It also has its own playground which is used exclusively by children in the Foundation Stage. Children are however able to join siblings and older peers at playtime should they so wish, later during their Foundation Stage Year.
- Children are allocated to a Registration group class base staffed by a Teacher and an additional supporting adult. In each area children can engage in a wide range of practical tasks and activities. We provide a balance between child initiated play based activities (self-directed) and adult directed learning. Activities are practical and incorporate a range of learning styles based on the children's previous experiences and their interests.
- Resources are stored centrally in a large 'walk-in' cupboard. There are additional smaller cupboards mainly used for storing personal equipment and belongings. There are a range of large plastic storage boxes arranged within storage units within each classroom. These contain a variety of construction equipment, jigsaws and literacy / numeracy equipment. The boxes are transparent and are labelled with both words and pictures, enabling the children to access them independently.

### 3.4 Budget:

- The Foundation Stage has its own Budget. This is used for both stock and equipment.
- The Head Teacher allocates the Budget to Departments annually.
- The Foundation Stage Co-ordinator manages the budget and orders general stock. Equipment is usually ordered after consultation within the Department, subject to curriculum priorities.
- Subject co-ordinators ask for annual 'Budget Bids' from departments. These are submitted to the Head Teacher prior to allocation of new Annual Budget. Although some equipment within Foundation Stage is ordered through subject co-ordinators, most is funded through the Foundation Stage budget.
- Bids are sometimes made to the PSA (Parent Staff Association) for specific items of equipment. These may or may not be granted subject to priorities within school.
- We do not charge parents / carers to attend events, however we make a collection during our Christmas production. This may be used to support a chosen charity or a specific project in school (e.g. new staging or improvements to our playground.). We inform our audience beforehand that we are going to do this.
- We ask for a small donation from each child during the year as a voluntary contribution towards cookery ingredients. (Of course the children all have the opportunity to access the activity and to eat the food regardless of whether they bring the money in or not.) This money is sent to the Business Manager, and staff re-claim expenses on production of a V.A.T. receipt.
- We ask for a voluntary contribution for a trip or visit when a cost is incurred for admission and / or transport. No child is disadvantaged however if they do not bring in their contribution, all children are able to participate. A fund is available for children in receipt of Pupil Premium. This generally means they pay half of the expected cost of a trip or event.

## 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 and begin to understand the need for rules. They have opportunities to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others and investigate and solve problems. Through these experiences they develop their Personal, Social and Emotional skills and begin to understand the need for rules.

4.2 Play based learning is enhanced by the use of a 'floating adult' within each class. The adult is not designated to a group or activity so is available to oversee the children accessing 'child initiated' activities. The adult can then interact with the children to develop their learning, further their understanding or expand concepts or ideas.

## 5. Inclusion in the Foundation Stage

5.1 We aim to give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's interests and experiences when planning for their learning. (See 'Inclusion' Policy.)

5.2 In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, enabling many of them to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the academic year. Some children progress beyond this point and exceed the goal. We achieve this by planning 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 and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and diverse linguistic backgrounds.

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5.3 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;
- Using a range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and 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;
- Monitoring children's progress and providing intervention as necessary. Additional provision is collated by class teachers in conjunction with our SENCO. Details are itemised on a 'Provision Map' which is specific to each child receiving intervention. An additional record may be kept by class teachers/support staff detailing daily activities and outcomes for a child or group of children (e.g. 'Probes' or Phonics Support Group.)
- Using 'Raised Profile' to ensure children who have a condition staff need to be aware of (despite there being no need for intervention) ensures that relevant information is shared.

## **6. The Foundation Stage Curriculum**

6.1 The Foundation Stage is important in its own right. It is also an important first step on the ladder of our children's school career. It is based on 4 overarching principles which shape our practice. These are 'Unique Child', 'Positive Relationships', 'Enabling Environments' and 'Learning and Development'. The children in our Foundation Stage receive a rich multi-sensory curriculum which is play based but carefully planned. First hand experiences are paramount in the learning process and the children have lots of opportunities to access fun activities in a structured learning environment. Some activities are child initiated and some adult led. All however have a focus and give lots of opportunity for talk, repetition and developing learning independently in a stimulating environment both indoors and out.

The curriculum comprises 7 areas of learning. These are divided into 3 'Prime' areas and 4 'Specific' areas. The 3 'Prime' areas form the basis of successful learning, however it is expected that as the children develop there will be a shift to a more equal focus across the 7 areas.

The Prime areas comprise:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The Specific areas comprise:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

6.2 The 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' sets out the skills, knowledge and understanding we hope our children will reach or exceed by the end of the Foundation Stage. 'Early Years Outcomes' (which was published in September 2013, and supersedes 'Development Matters') details the sequential progression (using 'age bands') expected of child typical of each of the age bands. The statements in each band are listed within each of the seven 'Areas of Learning'

that comprise the Foundation Stage curriculum, the final statement in each area being the 'Early Learning Goal'.

The expectation is that most children will achieve most of the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage, and the sequence of activities offered in Foundation Stage builds towards the expectations of the curriculum for Key Stage One.

We complete Medium Term planning termly, carefully ensuring all the learning statements within the '30-50' and the '40-60' age bands from 'Early Years Outcomes' have been covered during the year. Planning is progressive, with more 'Early Learning Goals' being included during the year. Short Term planning is completed on a weekly basis, giving more detailed coverage of activities and of specific learning objectives addressed. Foundation Stage planning is objective led (rather than subject led) however, and is very much dependent upon the children's interests. It is subject to change, particularly if a topic has really captured the children's imagination (or, likewise, has not been especially popular). Children are actively encouraged to contribute by bringing in related books and artefacts which may add an additional dimension to the topic.

6.3 The curriculum is delivered through a range of topics incorporating all areas of learning. The experiences our children meet on a daily basis often enable them to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning and give lots of opportunity for us to assess their learning on an informal basis.

## **7. Assessment**

7.1 Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of observation. Throughout the Foundation Stage we assess the children to ascertain progress in relation to 'Early Years Outcomes'. Assessments are made on the basis of regular observations and knowledge of the whole child. In our school we make initial baseline assessments in all areas of learning during the first 2 weeks of our children starting school. In September 2015 (in line with the other eight schools in our Academy group) we used an approved commercial baseline package for Literacy, Maths and PSED in addition to our own baseline assessment. This generated a statistical report enabling us to compare our results with other schools both nationally and locally. In June we intend to pilot repeating the assessment, as an additional measure of progress throughout the year.

On-going assessment is used to inform our planning and teaching, ensuring we tailor the curriculum to meet each child's needs.

7.2 At the end of the academic year we assess the children's progress against the 'Early Learning Goals' (ELGs) using information from our assessments to award the goals to each child. The goals complete the 'Early Learning Profile', giving a summative numerical total for each child. This data also enables us to see the progress each child has made over the academic year. Collection of the data is currently a statutory requirement and is sent to the LEA in June every year, although from September 2016 this will no longer be the case. At present, scores also comprise part of national picture on attainment in the Foundation Stage. At the moment it is unclear how national data will be shared from September 2016 onwards.

7.3 In school we use the information to ensure future planning matches the children's needs and to help us with provision mapping in the Department. We share information on progress with parents at Parents' Evenings. End of year scores help inform our Annual Reports to parents by enabling us to see if a child is working at, below or above the level we would expect. This information is also shared with Key Stage One staff at the end of the Summer Term, ensuring that provision matches the needs of the children when they move to Year One.

7.4 We moderate regularly across our 3 classes within the Department to ensure consistency in our judgements. 'Cross phase' moderation with KS1 also takes place at least once a year.

Judgements are externally moderated throughout the year across the EYFS collaborative group to ensure consistency between schools.

The LEA currently has a remit to ensure a thorough and robust system of end of year moderation is in place, and the process takes one of two forms: either a visit to school by an external moderator, or participation in a 'moderation meeting' by a member of our staff. There is an expectation that we send a representative to the meeting, should we not receive a moderator visit. Work samples are discussed at the meeting and agreement on levels is reached. 'On entry' assessment and tracking systems in place in our school are also discussed with colleagues and/or the moderator. Summer 2016 is the final year that this will take place however, therefore we anticipate that at the end of the academic year 2016-17 (summer 2017) external moderation will take place within our Academy group.

7.5 'Target Tracker' is used throughout school, ensuring the progress of all children is tracked and monitored and that intervention is put in place, should there be cause for concern. Assessments are recorded electronically (on a termly basis) against the developmental age bands. We use the codes prescribed by 'Target Tracker' B (beginning), W (within) and S (secure) in order to show progress within an age band.

This information gives a clear picture of strengths and areas for development, both on an individual basis and across specified groups, enabling intervention to be put in place where necessary.

7.6 We have a Specialist 'Senco' at our school. She is available to advise, assess and provide links with other agencies outside school.

7.7 Parents are involved with assessment and we actively encourage them to contribute to the 'Learning Journeys' by letting us know what their child can do. Journeys are sent home regularly with updates of the learning the children have been involved in at school. We encourage parents to add comments and memorabilia, and to encourage their children to contribute to the Journeys at home. In addition, forms are available in all classes for parents to record 'proud' moments, 'fun times', anecdotes and observations from home. These are added to the Learning Journey to ensure it provides a picture of the 'whole child'.

7.8 We encourage the children to be involved in their own 'Assessment for Learning' by discussing 'Next Steps' with them in order to further their learning on completion of an activity. These 'steps' are recorded in the Learning Journey, so are available for parents to share too. Activities are annotated using our departmental 'Marking Code'. This ensures all stakeholders are aware of each child's achievements and 'next steps'.

## **8.1 Induction / Parental Involvement / Transition**

We want to ensure a smooth transition from home to school and allow parents to ask any questions they may have about starting school. Likewise we want to ensure an equally smooth transition from Foundation Stage into Key Stage One within our school.

We have the following systems in place:

- Parents receive a letter shortly after the allocation of school places asking them to let us know which Pre-School setting their child attends. We also ask them to inform us of any particular friendship groups their child has. We use this information to help us compile our class lists.
- Parents / carers are invited to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school. During the meeting they receive a 'Welcome' pack. There is a presentation, a tour of the Department and a chance to meet the staff and ask questions.

- During the summer term prior to admission to school in the Autumn Term, Staff from our Foundation Stage visit Nurseries and Pre-schools to meet the children and the staff who have cared for them. We receive children from an unusually large number of different settings (generally around 18,) which makes it crucial that we meet the children and that we maintain links with the Pre School staff. Visiting gives us a chance to see the children in a familiar environment, and possible 'issues' can also be discussed with Pre-School staff.
- Transition information (a 'Progress Summary') is sent to us from Nurseries and Playgroups. This is used to help us to plan for children's interests and needs, and to further their learning.
- Some children visit us with either their parents or Pre-School staff during the working day on an informal basis during the summer term. This gives them a chance to see the classroom environment and the range of activities we offer at school. Children join in with activities with their parent or pre-school professional.
- Children are invited to attend school for an induction morning during the summer term before starting in the Autumn. They attend with the rest of their cohort and are in class groupings. This takes place on the same day as Transition Day throughout school and enables the children to spend time with their peers. Parents do not generally stay although some may stay for part of the session if the children need extra reassurance.
- In line with Statutory Guidance on implementation of the 'Early Years Foundation Stage', children are allocated a 'Key Person' when they start school. 'Key Person' being "The named member of staff assigned to an individual child to support their development and act as the key point of contact with that child's parents." This is the child's class teacher.
- Children attend part-time for the first few weeks when they start school (mornings only.) During the afternoon we meet parents on a 1:1 basis in order to plan for their child's needs and discuss the transition process. Parents are offered either an appointment in school or a home visit (their choice). Children do not stay for lunch while they are part time, and the shorter session helps to build their confidence and prepare them for full-time school.
- Parents / carers are invited to stay for lunch on the first day the children stay. This gives parents an overview of lunchtime procedures, and helps to ensure a smooth transition from part-time to full-time school.
- Parents / carers are invited to an Open Afternoon at the end of the part time sessions. This is an opportunity to see their child accessing the activities on offer and socialising with their peers. It is also a chance to ask questions and meet other parents. Open afternoons and other events (Christmas Production, Sports Day, etc.) are held periodically during the year. We also invite parents / carers to accompany us on trips and visits (subject to space on the coach etc.)
- Parents / carers are welcome to help in class and some choose to do so. This enriches the children's experiences by providing additional opportunities for baking, craft activities and general extra classroom support. Parent volunteers are required to undergo an induction with our Head and a full CRB check.
- Parents / carers are invited to make an appointment for 'Parents Evening' during the Autumn Term and again in the Spring. This is an opportunity for us to discuss the children's progress with parents, and for us to show them how they can support their child in their learning. It also gives us an opportunity to share the children's targets with their parents / carers.
- Parents receive an annual report at the end of the academic year. In line with statutory requirements, we report on each child's achievement against the Early Learning Goal for each of the seventeen goals. Parents / carers are invited to discuss their child's annual report with the class teacher should they wish to do so.

- The SENCO and a member of staff from the Foundation Stage Department attend a 'Hand over' meeting for the Development Group, held early in the summer term. This is an opportunity for Nursery and Pre-School staff to pass on information on Special Educational Needs, thereby aiding transition to school.
- Class lists for Year One are drawn up as a Department giving scope to accommodate children's personal, social and emotional needs as well as their academic requirements.
- Liaison meetings with Year One staff are held during the summer term prior to transition. These are a means of facilitating discussion about individual children.
- 'Story and Assembly swaps' enable our children to meet the Year One staff.
- Year One staff visit us on an informal basis throughout the year, which gives them an opportunity to meet our children in their classroom environment.
- Potential issues can be raised at Senior Leadership meetings, supporting a smooth transition across departments.
- The school Website ensures everyone can access information and be fully informed about activities at our school
- A departmental 'Provision Map' (detailing children who will require additional support in Year One) ensures provision can be made to meet the needs of the children when they join Keystage One.

## **9. Links with the Community**

We make links with other agencies, support services and the local community by:

- Liaising with other Early Years settings and Pre-Schools as stated.
- Inviting external agencies (e.g. Health Service personnel) to attend school to talk to the children (for example on 'Hand washing').
- Making visits to local amenities, to enhance the children's learning (e.g. the local Library or Museum.)
- Widening the children's learning through experiences such as Life Education Bus, visiting theatre groups etc.