

Foundation Stage Policy

What is the aim of the Foundation Stage?

The Foundation Stage covers the ages of 3 to 5 years and includes both the year in Nursery and the year in Reception. The children who attend the setting will already have a range of experiences and they will also have a range of skills and interests, therefore a well-planned and resourced curriculum is essential if their learning is to be moved forward.

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that will provide this assurance."

(taken from EYFS Statutory framework)

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS which has four guiding principles that guide and shape our practice. These are

1. A Unique Child - every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
2. Positive Relationships - children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
3. Enabling Environments - children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences responds to their individual needs. There is also a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
4. Learning and Developing - all children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

Together these principles provide a context for the requirements and describe how best to support the development, learning and care for young children.

The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children to achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes of staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well being.

Our beliefs:

In our new Early Years Foundation Stage children are encouraged to develop their own theories about the world and how it works and to explore these collaboratively in depth.

Great value is placed upon the different experiences, ideas and opinions that the children bring to discussions.

Children`s ideas are respected and taken seriously by adults and by fellow children, thereby creating an environment in which children are unafraid of making mistakes or reconstructing their own ideas.

Self confidence and self image are fostered through discussion and debate, and creativity emerges from multiple experiences within a sense of freedom to venture beyond the known.

We want our children to:

- express themselves
- explore and investigate
- think and reflect
- be involved in projects
- reinforce their identities

We want our parents to:

- engage with their children`s learning
- hear and be heard
- meet with others
- participate in the life of the school

The Foundation Stage Curriculum

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing the children's:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning
- Social skills
- Attention skills and persistence
- Language and communication
- Reading and Writing
- Numeracy and the understanding of Shape, Space and Measures
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World around them
- Physical development
- Creative Development

In order to ensure that we provide our children with the best start we have developed a new Early Years Foundation Stage Unit. This means that FS1 and FS2 children are mixed together and play and learn together. The children are placed in nine family groups that are made up of FS1 and FS2 children. During the day the family group meets for specific sessions together but also FS1 and FS2 have the opportunity to work with their own age group for Maths, English and Phonics. The curriculum is completely led by the children. Staff take their ideas and interests and develop them by providing resources and experiences that help the children to take control of their own learning.

The role of play

Play underpins the delivery of all the EYFS. Children need to have the opportunity to play indoors and outdoors. The children should have access to an outdoor play area which can benefit all children.

Through play the children learn to explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world. Play helps them to practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills. Play enables them to see a need for rules. Play enables them to take risks and make mistakes. It allows them to think creatively and imaginatively and it also helps them to communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage

The monitoring of each child's progress is essential throughout the Foundation Stage to ensure that they are making progress and that any difficulties in any of the areas of learning can be identified and addressed.

The curriculum is organised in such a way so that assessment runs alongside what the children are doing. The children have the opportunity to work independently during free choice activity sessions, they have the opportunity to work in ability groups and they also work in mixed ability groups. The assessment that is used during these learning opportunities then informs future planning.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage

The process begins when the children enter the Foundation Stage. Practitioners meet with parents and discuss their child's general development. When the children start the Foundation Stage they are observed over their Induction period and the observations/judgements are recorded. This then provides a baseline for planning activities that will meet the needs, interests and development of all of the children.

On a daily basis teachers and teaching assistants record observations of Nursery children on coloured post-it notes. Different coloured post-it notes are used for each of the three terms - yellow-Autumn term, pink-Spring term, green-Summer term. The observations are only recorded if the child is seen doing/saying something independently and without prompting.

All of the assessments carried out on a daily basis are reviewed by the staff at the end of each day. Particular areas of strength and weakness are identified and are then included in future planning.

During the year the children are also regularly photographed completing activities. These are placed in a document and annotated as a source of evidence towards the profile. This then informs their end of year report. All of the evidence gathered during each half term is reviewed and helps the class teacher complete the individual profiles. Data in these profiles is regularly moderated.

Moderation

Staff in Foundation Stage meet regularly to moderate their judgements after evidence is collected. The meetings occur formally at the end of every half term. Staff also meet with Early Years practitioners from other local schools to ensure accurate judgements are made.

Differentiation

The data gathered from day to day observations, the formal observations, marking childrens work (see marking policy) and the profiles supports the class teacher with identifying ability groups, planning work and setting the children individual targets.

Links with Parents

Before the children start Foundation Stage the parents are invited to an Induction meeting. The meeting gives the parents

- general information about what to expect when their children start
- their childrens start date
- information about the curriculum
- information about their children is checked

This meeting also gives the parents the opportunity to share what they know about their child.

They are also given a copy of the Home/School Agreement which lists the responsibilities of the school, parents and the children themselves.

They are also given a termly newsletter that informs them about what their child will be doing in their family group times.

They have the opportunity of daily contact with the class teacher at the beginning and end of school to discuss concerns and ask questions.

Three times a year they are invited into school for an individual meeting with the class teacher about their children.

In the Summer term the parents receive a written report about their child's development during the year.

The parents are also invited into school regularly during the year to work in the unit during and to also attend workshops.

Meeting the needs of all

Meeting the individual needs of all children lies at the heart of the EYFS. At Parkfield we ensure that we deliver personalised learning opportunities that provide development, and gives each child the best possible start. We also make sure that we limit underachievement so children can succeed at every possible level.

One way we ensure this is by having clear procedures for transition between year groups (Foundation Stage to KS1). The curriculum is designed in such a way that all of the children's needs are met. This means that if children are still working towards the Early Learning Goals their activities and learning reflect this. This is also the case for children who are ready for the National Curriculum and the Primary Strategies for English and Maths.

We also ensure that we promote positive attitudes towards the diversity and differences between our children and by doing this we help them to understand and value aspects of others peoples lives.
(see Equal Opportunities Policy)

Reviewed: March 2015 by L Lloyd