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Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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Description

The Foundation Stage comprises one Nursery class and two Reception classes. The Nursery class (maximum 35 full time equivalent), is made up of both full-time (30 hour funded) places, and part time (15 hour) places. Some full time places go to families who have the option to pay to top up their 15 hour place up to a full time place). The Nursery have their own outdoor space, 'the nursery garden' and the two Reception classes share an outdoor space, the Sheep Lane playground. Nursery and Reception follow the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage Framework learning and development requirements and a broad and balanced curriculum which reflects this, written by London Fields Primary School.

Aim

Our school is a place where everyone is treated equally, encouraged and respected. We believe that all children should be able to achieve their full potential academically, socially and emotionally. We are committed to our school being a safe and inclusive place where learning and development is fostered in a positive and calm environment. We value the individual child and work in partnership with parents/carers and professional colleagues to meet the needs of every child so they can reach their full potential.

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**

Principles into practice

The Foundation Stage staff work as part of a team. They plan and collaborate to ensure continuity and progression, providing age and stage related learning to suit all our pupils. Staff have a wide range of experience and expertise in working with and educating children. The staff are committed to their roles and participate in continuous professional development opportunities. They have excellent knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and child development.

The Foundation Stage affects a smooth transition from home to school which offers stability for the younger child. We run a successful 'stay and play' process to ensure that the incoming children and the parents/carers have a positive experience when starting with us. In all classes, children are immersed in an environment in which they are given the opportunity to express themselves using a variety of mediums and suitable material to stimulate and extend imagination and understanding. Through carefully planned play and talk, young children learn about themselves and the world around them, they are given opportunities to socialise, make friends and therefore develop personal, social and emotional skills and develop confidence.

Our continuous and enhanced provision learning opportunities provide first hand experiences through play and talk, and children are supported to interact with peers and adults and explore a wide variety of learning. There are enhanced areas of provision and a range of activities, resources and materials available. Opportunities are provided for sustained activity and continuous provision, as well as spontaneous, child led activities. It is central to our practice that children feel success, find joy and are stimulated in what they are learning.

We recognise that all children learn at different rates and in different ways. We ensure that our planned provision and our environment reflect the differing needs of all our pupils. Where and when needed, we introduce interventions which are run alongside our usual provision. These interventions help children's individual learning through targeted teaching of key curriculum areas, communication and language or support with personal, social and emotional development.

Foundation Stage Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage is a curriculum from birth to five years old. We provide exposure and learning experiences that fall under each of the seventeen aspects as mandated by this curriculum. All of the seven Areas of Learning (Prime and Specific) are important and inter-connected. None of these Areas of Learning can be delivered in isolation. They are essential learning and depend on each other.

The Prime Areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and for building their disposition for learning, ability to form relationships and to thrive.

These **Prime Areas** are:

Communication and Language

This covers all aspects of language development and provides the foundation for literacy skills. Children's developing competence in speaking and listening is focused on. We aim to extend and enrich the children's vocabulary through daily storytelling, rhymes, role-play and group discussions. Children are encouraged to share their own experiences through speaking, acting out events in imaginative play and talking about their own ideas. Our daily whole class storytelling sessions encompasses the development of all Communication and Language aspects and Literacy too. We also integrate a speech and language programme as part of our universal offer to build children's speaking, listening, attention and understanding skills, as it is these skills which underpin children's broader development.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

The school fosters and develops relationships between home, school and local community. Children are encouraged to learn to work, share, take turns and cooperate with peers. This increases their ability to be independent and make choices for themselves. They are also encouraged to be sensitive to the needs of others and to respect other cultures and beliefs. Children are enabled to grow in confidence and develop a positive self-image, seeing themselves as a valuable individual.

Physical Development

Physical development activities are taught both indoors and outdoors and by working with a wide range of resources. Children are given repeated and varied opportunities to move to music, use equipment, develop and refine their gross motor skills. Daily physical development focuses ensure children build core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, coordination and agility. Daily fine motor skill practise allows children to build fluency, precision and control to manipulate resources. The use of puzzles, small world objects, tools and mark making supports this.

Children are also supported in their learning and development through four **specific** areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The **Specific Areas** are:

Literacy

We have a variety of resources for the children to use to help them develop early literacy skills. Children are encouraged to use the mark-making areas and reading areas independently but they also take part in teacher led activities. In Nursery the children are encouraged to develop their pre-writing skills such as correct pencil control, left/right orientation and giving meaning to their marks. When the children are ready in Nursery we build readiness to learn the first set of phonic sounds from the *Read Write Inc.* scheme to prepare them for Reception. In Reception the children begin *Read Write Inc.* and learn Set 1 sounds. This initial stage of phonics takes children through to acquiring early reading and writing skills. If you would like to find out more about *Read Write Inc.* then please visit www.ruthmiskintraining.com.

Mathematics

We aim for children to achieve mathematical understanding and a firm foundation in number through clear modelling, practical activities and consistent use of concrete apparatus. We use a range of resources and teaching strategies such as songs, number stories and exploration of mathematical resources. We use a variety of manipulatives to achieve this. Children are also given the opportunity to explore shape, position, pattern and measurement through focus activities in the enhanced provision. All children take part in a whole class daily mathematics session and Reception follows the NCETM Mastering Number programme. There is a strong focus on preparing children for the Oak National Academy scheme, which follows a mastery approach that they will begin in Year One.

Understanding the World

All children are given opportunities to solve problems, investigate, make decisions and experiment. They will learn about living things, their environment, the world around them and the people who are important in their lives. Our Forest School programme is key to this learning, as are local trips, visitors and events planned to enhance our curriculum offer.

Expressive Arts and Design

We provide opportunities for all children to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, music, movement, drama and imaginative play activities. Children are given opportunities to create paintings, drawings, collages, models and use musical instruments. Children take part in singing assemblies, learn songs, rhymes and poems.

Outside

We have two outside learning spaces, the nursery garden and the Sheep Lane playground which children have access to throughout the day. Reception children also have timetabled slots to use the climbing frame in the Westgate Street playground. The outside areas are an extension of the classroom and there are a variety of resources to facilitate learning. The Early Years staff plan provision for each of the zoned areas. These areas consist of adult led activities which have a particular learning focus and independent, child led activities which offer the children opportunities to make their own choices across the Early Years curriculum. We have an outside water play area in both the nursery and Reception and this is made available year round for the children. Waterproof aprons are provided for children to wear. The nursery garden also has access to a sand pit and climbing wall.

Forest School

All children in Reception attend Forest school for one afternoon a week, from October. This is held in a local setting that the cohort and adults walk to. Forest School forms an important part of our curriculum and encourages children to independently explore and respect nature, increasing their ability to take risks as well as follow their own interests. Forest School feeds into many of the seven Areas of Learning including Personal Social and Emotional Development and Understanding of the World, and increases children's knowledge and understanding of the natural world. Additionally, it ensures a strong development of their physical control, both fine and gross motor. Parents and carer volunteers are relied upon to ensure we have the correct child to adult ratios so sessions can take place. Allocated days and hours are subject to change and dependent on the LA and site availability.

Observation and Assessment

All Reception children complete the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) in the first six weeks of Reception or in their first six weeks of joining the school if not previously administered. At the end of the academic year, teachers in Reception complete the EYFS Profile (EYFSP) for all children, assessing them against the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). In line with KS1-2, there are two further assessment checkpoints in the academic year. As part of our daily practice we informally observe and assess children's development and learning to inform future plannings and to ensure they have exposure to a curriculum that enables them to meet the Early Learning Goals. These observations are made across all the Areas of Learning. We record assessment in a variety of ways such as tracking of focus activities and photographic observations of children working independently at self chosen activities. Children's achievements are collated in the school's assessment tool, Sonar. Each child in Reception also has a phonics book in which they write sounds and words daily and practise their letter formation. This progresses to writing sentences and eventually simple pieces of writing. Children's sound knowledge and ability to blend sounds to read words is formally assessed half termly, whilst at risk readers are assessed informally every two weeks. All children in the Early Years have a Learning Book which documents their steps of progress and celebrates their learning journey, achievements and successes. Parents and carers are invited to attend a parents' evening twice in the academic year where they are given feedback and targets for their child. Parents and carers in the EYFS also receive an end of year report for their child.

Behaviour

In the Foundation Stage the management of behaviour is in line with the school behaviour policy. Staff teach children their right to feel safe in school and their responsibility to report incidents. Children who consistently follow the behaviour policy will be rewarded through verbal praise and informing parents and carers of their child's outstanding behaviour. For any child who needs additional support to follow the school rules, a restorative justice approach is used whereby harm is explored and the feelings of all involved are considered. An age appropriate 'repair script' informs a shared language for talking about behaviour incidents. This is in line with the school's positive relationships focus. A re-set is also offered to pupils and this might take the form of using a quiet space to think and then talk about the behaviour through a repair conversation with an adult. In some instances, a behaviour report will be written on the CPOMS platform and may lead to a re-set with a member of the senior leadership team and a meeting with parents or carers.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace, so that most of our pupils achieve the Early Learning Goals at the end of their Reception year. We strongly believe that early intervention to support children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they are entitled to and in doing so, we work in partnership with parents and external agencies.

Parents and Carers as partners and the wider context

We strive to build and maintain positive partnerships with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate actively in their child's education in numerous ways. We hold regular meetings with parents, these consist of parent teacher meetings and information meetings about how we teach at school and how parents can help at home. Parents are needed to support on trips, and at weekly Forest School sessions and are often welcomed into school to share their own skills, expertise or experiences.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our pupils. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to ensure the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting.

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and time is given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings.

Alongside the current Nursery cohort, new children to our school community (external intake) attend 'stay and play' sessions at our Nursery and Reception in the Summer Term to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners.

Children who are moving up a year within the school (internal intake) also visit their new classroom and playground throughout the Summer Term. The prospective teachers also visit the children in their current classroom. This helps to familiarise the children with the changes

and makes their transition as smooth as possible. At the end of the academic year, teachers meet and discuss each child's development that year and plan together for an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all pupils. The EYFSP is shared with the children's Year One teachers.

In September, we run a staggered start for all EYFS pupils. Pupils in Nursery build up their hours in school across a fortnight from their start date and children in Reception attend a full day, beginning within a week of the academic year resuming.

Safeguarding

The school takes its safeguarding and child protection responsibilities very seriously. Any concerns which the school has, will be noted and, if deemed necessary, will be reported to Hackney MASH or other relevant agency in line with the school's child protection and safeguarding policy. The same process applies for any disclosures made by children in school. The safety and welfare of the child is always of paramount importance. Please see our safeguarding policy for further information.

Equality and Disabilities

All pupils in this school are entitled to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum regardless of ability, gender, race and social circumstances.

Special Educational Needs

We take pride in our inclusive approach as a school and adaptive approach to delivering curriculum. Care is taken to assess the needs of each child from nursery age onwards. Should a child have any special needs, the parent/carer will be informed at an early stage. Group and individual help is provided within the school where possible. We have strong links with various external agencies and when necessary, their involvement may be required to support children and their learning. Parents/carers will always be informed if an outside agency is assisting us to support their child. For further information please see our SEND policy.

Health and Safety

Foundation Stage staff have had first aid training, as well as our school office staff. A number also hold paediatric first aid. Children are taught the safe and appropriate use of equipment and materials as part of their development. Children are taught to be mindful when moving around the school and are aware of safety risks. The Foundation Stage holds its own EYFS risk assessment which is renewed annually or as required. Risk assessments are undertaken before we embark on school trips.

Dietary Needs

Parents/carers are asked to inform the school of any foods their children are allergic to or any foods they do not wish their child to eat. A record of this is kept in the kitchen area, dining hall spaces and staff room. Children wear a lanyard during lunch time stating their allergy or dietary requirement. All adults working directly with children are informed of allergies or dietary requirements verbally. Our school menu is always available on our school website, alongside a list of allergens.

Medical Needs

We document all medical needs and allergies carefully. Any personal medical items are stored securely in classrooms, along with care plans. Children cannot be admitted unless care plans and medicines are handed directly to the office staff on their first day of school. For children attending clubs, a second copy of care plans and medications must be provided. Our school nurse is also involved in supporting both school staff and parents/carers to manage any health conditions or concerns.