

Policy on the Foundation Stage

Learning to love God, one another and ourselves

1 Introduction

The Foundation Stage extends from the age of three to the end of the reception year. Entry into our primary school is at the beginning of the school year in which the children are five. The Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and also in preparing children for later schooling. It is the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum that sets out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal. Many have been learning in one of the various educational 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 activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- it provides a rich and stimulating environment.

2 Aims

To provide each child with an opportunity to achieve his or her potential academically, socially, emotionally, physically and spiritually, within a safe, healthy and enjoyable environment.

3 Objectives

The curriculum of the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by promoting and developing:

- personal, social and emotional well-being;
- positive attitudes and dispositions towards learning;
- social skills;
- attention skills and persistence;
- language and communication;
- reading and writing;
- mathematics;
- knowledge and understanding of the world;
- physical development;
- creative development.

3 Teaching and learning style

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

- the partnership between teachers and parents that helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching;
- the range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, 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 for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning, with appropriate and accessible space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors;
- the identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents;
- the clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it;
- the regular identification of training needs for all adults working at the Foundation Stage.

4 Play at the Foundation Stage

Through play, our children explore and develop the learning experiences that help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up their ideas, learn how to control themselves, and begin to understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively both alongside other children and 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 at the Foundation Stage

We believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning.

At the Foundation Stage, we set realistic and challenging expectations keyed to the needs of our children. We help them to meet these expectations by planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build on and extend the children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a variety of teaching strategies that are based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children, and to help them to learn effectively;
- offering a safe and supportive learning environment, in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- employing resources that reflect diversity, and that avoid 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 providing support as necessary.

6 The Foundation Stage curriculum

Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the EYFS curriculum. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas.

7 Assessment

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. We make regular assessments of children's learning and their learning style, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of observation, and this involves both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement.

8 Resources

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

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