

## EARLY YEARS POLICY

### 1) Definition of the Foundation Stage.

Across the Irthlingborough and Finedon Learning Trust, we cater for children between the ages of 3 to 11 years, covering three Key stages – Foundation Stage, KS1 and KS2. The Foundation stage is respected as a Key Stage in its own right but we ensure continuity and progression across the schools. The Foundation Stage consists of the Nursery, which children enter at the beginning of the school year in which they turn 4, and the Reception class which children enter at the beginning of the school year in which they turn 5. Irthlingborough Nursery and Infant School has a 78 place Nursery and 4 form entry Reception and Finedon Infant school has a two form entry Reception but does not have a Nursery setting. *NB All references to Nursery are for the Nursery setting at Irthlingborough Nursery and Infant School.* (Compulsory schooling begins at the start of the term after a child's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.)

### Our Aims

We aim to give children secure foundations on which future learning can be built, by providing high quality learning and teaching experiences. Learning experiences consider both the children's needs and achievements and the range of learning experiences to help them make progress. We aim to deepen all children's understanding by playing, talking, observing, planning, questioning, experimenting, testing, repeating, reflecting and responding to adults and each other. The curriculum enables children to make good progress towards and where appropriate beyond the early learning goals.

At Irthlingborough and Finedon Learning Trust we believe that effective early years practice requires:-

- A relevant carefully structured curriculum and practitioners who understand and can implement its requirements.
- Practitioners who recognise that children develop rapidly during the early years - physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially - and who provide an environment which supports this.
- Practitioners who ensure all children feel included, secure and valued.
- Practitioners who develop positive relationships with parents.
- Experience that builds upon what individual children already know and can do.
- A setting that ensures no child is disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability.
- Opportunities for children to engage in well-planned, purposeful activities with adults who provide appropriate intervention.
- Opportunities for the children to plan and initiate their own activities which support their learning and development and ensure progression.
- The provision of rich and stimulating experiences within a well-planned, well organised learning environment, offering opportunities for children to explore, experiment, plan and make decisions for themselves.
- Learning opportunities to fully prepare children for the start of the National Curriculum.

## **2) Rationale**

Across the Irthlingborough and Finedon Learning Trust, we believe that children should be excited about their learning. We want them to experience the joys of being creative, solving problems and making discoveries in a happy, secure and stimulating environment. We believe that positive attitudes, established at a young age, will help equip pupils in taking an active role in creating their futures. Developing children's confidence and self-belief will lead to success and achievement in their school career.

## **3) Partnership with Parents and Community.**

Across the Irthlingborough and Finedon Learning Trust, we believe that parents have a crucial role to play in their children's development, as their primary educators. Therefore, we feel that it is important to demonstrate a commitment to inclusion by encouraging and valuing partnerships between parents, staff, directors, governors, the local authority and the local community. We invite parents to help out in Nursery and Reception, both in the classroom and when we go out on trips. Parents are also welcome to support their child if necessary to fully settle into the setting. We also expect parents to attend information sessions and consultation times to discuss their child's progress. Parents' opinions are valued and we ask them to complete evaluation forms throughout the year, such as after information workshops and at the end of the school year. Parents' opinions are also sought on a range of school issues. Findings can then be part of our action plan, if necessary.

We observe children in the setting and also invite parents to observe their own child at home. Parents are able to record a child's achievements at home and add them to the child's learning journey. Through a range of different opportunities – new parent meetings, curriculum information sessions, consultation evenings, family play days and informal discussions, parents are encouraged to feel welcome and an integral part of their child's education.

In addition, displays, newsletters, brochures and photographs are used to provide further information about the curriculum.

Parents are also invited to become members of the Parent Teacher Association or to participate in events they have organised.

## **5a) Admissions**

In Irthlingborough Nursery and Infant School, parents are able to fill in an application form for a Nursery place in the September, after the child's 1<sup>st</sup> birthday. The admission forms are numbered and kept in a file in the school office. When applying for a nursery place, the parent must bring in the child's birth certificate, which the office staff will photo-copy. Special consideration will be given to Looked after children or those with known special needs. Places are allocated on the date of registration basis. Parents can choose from the available morning and afternoon sessions and we offer lunchtime sessions at a small cost. The first on the list will take preference. Parents can also pay for additional sessions above the government funded hours. For more information see the admissions policy.

In Reception, the application for places is controlled by the local authority and forms have to be returned by January 15th. The Irthlingborough and Finedon Learning Trust adhere to the Local Authority admissions procedures for places in Reception.

## **5b) Transition Arrangements and Induction**

It is important that transition from setting to setting and between key stages provides as much continuity as possible to ensure that children feel confident, safe and secure.

At Irthlingborough Nursery, the induction process begins with play sessions, which the children attend with their parent or carer. For children starting Nursery in September there will also be a play session on 'transfer day', when the children of all the schools in the Irthlingborough and Finedon Learning Trust move up to their new classes.

The children also have planned play sessions in their new Reception classes. All children, due to attend Reception in September, will be invited to these sessions. Reception parents are invited to attend an induction evening, where they receive information about the curriculum and setting and can look at the facilities and resources we have to offer.

Nursery parents will be offered home visits during the first two weeks of term. During this time we complete any paperwork and share information about the children and our setting. The parents are also asked about their child's interests and this information feeds into the planning to further help children to settle well.

The Reception managers in the Irthlingborough and Finedon Learning Trust visit the other main local pre-school settings to meet the children in an environment that is familiar to them before starting school.

Staff track children's progress throughout the F.S. If a child moves to another setting, information is passed on to the new setting.

Continuity and smooth transition continues when the Reception children move into KS1, with children having time in their new classes, with their new teachers. Information is passed on to new teachers at all stages.

## **6a) Routines**

There is a uniform available for children in both Nursery and Reception, which includes sweatshirts, T-shirts and cardigans with the school logo. We believe uniform unites the children giving a positive sense of belonging. No jewellery should be worn at school, but if ears are pierced small studs are acceptable but need to be removed for P.E sessions. Aprons are provided for messy/wet activities.

**6b)** At Irthlingborough and Finedon Learning Trust we encourage a healthy school, in which children learn to care for themselves and their environment. Fruit is available daily to all children for snacks, as well as other healthy food. Drink is also freely available throughout the sessions. Irthlingborough Nursery children receive free milk and can choose milk or water to drink at snack time

**6c)** In the Foundation Stage, regular visits are made into the local environment, during each half term e.g. to the shops, church, library, recreation ground. (Nursery children do not go on visits until the second half of the Autumn term, when they are more settled and confident.) Parents are encouraged to join us on these visits,

where possible. We also encourage visitors such as the school nurse, police, vets nurse and parents to school to talk about a range of topics over the year. We may organise coach trips to the farm, the zoo, train station etc to enhance the children's learning.

### **7a) Curriculum**

At Irthlingborough and Finedon Learning Trust, Nursery and Reception classes follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available to download at

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/299391/DFE00337-2014.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299391/DFE00337-2014.pdf)

The phonics programme known as Letters and Sounds is followed across the whole F.S.

The EYFS curriculum is organised into 7 areas of learning as follows:

The 3 prime areas consist of:-

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and language
- Physical Development

The Specific areas consist of:-

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

The curriculum guidance for the F.S. provides Early Learning Goals (ELG) for children and the expectation is that most children will reach these at the end of the F.S. By the end of Nursery, it is expected that most children will achieve the early years outcomes 30-50 month age band or above. Information about the children's stages of development is passed from Nursery to the school setting. In Reception, the staff move the children on from whatever stage they are at.

The early years outcomes age bands are stages in the children's progress towards the early learning goals. By the end of the F.S. some children will have exceeded these ELGs and some will need to continue to work on these in KS1.

At the end of Reception, we will report on the characteristics of effective learning, which include:-

- Playing and exploring (engagement)
- Active learning (motivation)
- Creating and thinking critically (thinking)

**7b)** Practitioners across our Trust in the Foundation Stage are well informed about the children's learning in each area and the implications for their teaching, including planning and assessment. Regular meetings with all F.S. staff give opportunities for discussion about individual children's needs.

### **8) Tracking and Assessment**

Data is collected regularly and analysed to ensure the children are making progress.

The Foundation stage curriculum provides well-planned and purposeful activities that provide opportunities for teaching and learning both indoors and outdoors.

Across the Irthlingborough and Finedon Learning Trust, we use our observations of the children to plan a variety of activities, both indoors and out, to cater for the different learning styles and interests of the children and also develop the skills needed for future learning.

Across the Irthlingborough and Finedon Learning Trust we establish a baseline in both the Nursery and Reception classes during the first six weeks of the children starting. This provides data that describes the child's level of development on entry to Nursery and Reception. This gives a broad baseline of a child from which to develop their learning. It is linked directly to the EYFS and can be used within our existing systems to track development to the end of EYFS using the ELGS and then to outcomes at KS1.

Children remain in the classroom/nursery setting as part of their usual routines. The assessment judgements are made through observations and interactions of everyday activities. The focus is on settling children in, getting to know them through observations and interactions of self-initiated play, small group activities and adult directed tasks.

In Reception the children are introduced gradually to whole school assemblies.

#### **8a) Learning and Teaching.**

At Irthlingborough and Finedon Learning Trust, practitioners plan work as a team. In the medium term planning the learning intentions are planned for the term. Practitioners then meet weekly to plan activities that are adult-led, adult initiated and child initiated to support the learning intentions.

#### **8b) Play**

Well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge. In playing, they behave in different ways; sometimes they will describe and discuss what they are doing, sometimes they will be quiet and reflective.

The role of the practitioner is crucial in:

- Planning and resourcing a challenging environment.
- Supporting children's learning through planned play activities.
- Extending and supporting children's spontaneous play.
- Extending and developing children's language and communication in their play.

Through play, in a secure environment with effective adult support, children can:

- Explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world they live in.
- Practice and build up ideas, concepts and skills.
- Learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules.

- Be alone, be alongside others or cooperate as they talk or rehearse their feelings.
- Take risks and make mistakes.
- Think creatively and imaginatively.
- Communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems.
- Express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

**9)** At the Irthlingborough and Finedon Learning Trust, we aim to promote the concept of diversity and offer a flexible learning environment to meet a range of learning styles and needs. Our schools are committed to planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, children with disabilities, children from all social, cultural and religious backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and children from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We believe that an awareness and understanding of the requirements of equal opportunities that cover race, gender and disability and of the code of practice on the identification and assessment of special educational needs is essential.

**10) It is the responsibility of the Foundation Stage Leaders to:**

- Lead a team of practitioners, provide guidance, advice and support, exemplify the highest standards of teaching and learning across the early years team, ensuring readiness for KS1.
- Keep abreast of new and updated Early Years practice and research and inform the team of this.
- Provide a supportive, secure, caring, stimulating and respectful environment.
- Provide a well-planned balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS that meets all individual needs and offers opportunities for autonomous learning.
- To prepare, implement and review a F.S. improvement plan and integrate this within the overall school development plan.
- Monitor planning, assessment, organisation and resources.
- Provide support to families and children during transitional periods and develop and nurture a strong relationship between families and the setting.
- Develop links and liaise with the Community, local cluster settings, the Foundation Stage governor and other relevant outside agencies.

The Foundation stage Governor at each school will endeavour to develop an understanding of the early years, ensure that the F.S. maintains an appropriate profile in the strategic planning of the school and ensures that provision for the F.S. is of a high quality. All of these will be in relation to guidelines laid out in the role description for the Foundation Stage Governor.

**11) Health and safety Considerations**

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2014)

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/299391/DFE00337-2014.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299391/DFE00337-2014.pdf)

The Foundation stage team will adhere to the schools behaviour policy, home school agreement and Health and Safety policy, including E safety.

Appropriate risk assessments are carried out for the daily provision and prior to any visits out of the setting. Any health and safety issues are reported immediately to the site supervisors or the head teacher. Appropriate supervision is maintained in all areas with relevant staffing levels to ensure best practice for teaching and learning.

- Medical and medication needs are discussed with medical professionals to ensure relevant protocols are in place and staff are sufficiently trained if necessary before the children start in school or Nursery. (See Medicines and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy)
- The Site Supervisors, Directors, Governors and Head Teachers regularly carry out health and safety inspections which are reported to the Directors. There is support and advice available from our Health and Safety provider Plumsun.

**Signed.....**  
**Chair, Board of Directors**

**Dated .....**