

## Prudhoe West First School

### Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

#### **Mission Statement**

All children deserve the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Through our policy we aim to ensure that the children in Nursery and Reception classes receive high quality early learning that creates solid foundations on which they can build. This will help them to flourish throughout their school years and beyond.

#### **Rationale**

The Early Years Foundation Stage Policy provides a point of reference from which we can review and evaluate the learning experience we offer. It allows us to make a value judgement on the extent to which our policy and practice is successful; areas that need to be developed, our INSET needs, and also resource implications.

Pupils will be offered a well-planned, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum that is based on The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework.

#### **Aims of the Foundation Stage**

- To help young children achieve the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes of staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, and achieving economic well-being.
- To provide equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice to ensure every child is supported, included and not disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender or ability.
- To provide a secure foundation through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly.
- To develop happy, confident children who enjoy school and learn that they can achieve to their best potential. Through this they will develop a strong sense of worth and high self-esteem.
- To encourage in the children an eagerness to learn, think and act independently, and develop an enquiring mind. (Characteristic of Learning: Playing and Exploring)
- To prepare children to face challenges they encounter and approach all activities and learning with enthusiasm. (Characteristic of Learning: Active Learning)
- To encourage creativity and use of the imagination. (Characteristic of Learning: Creating and Thinking Critically)
- To teach the children tolerance, respect and understanding of their peers, staff and others, regardless of differences in religion, culture, gender and ability.
- To build a partnership between early years staff and parents and/or carers to ensure they are involved in their children's education.
- To support and encourage the professional development of all staff working within the foundation stage.

#### **Objectives**

- To plan and structure learning with an emphasis on fun, relevant and motivating activities.
- To plan and provide learning activities and support that will enable all children to play an equal part, based on an understanding of their individual abilities i.e. every child is a unique child.
- To consider children's needs, achievements and previous learning experiences and to take these into consideration when planning in order to provide for progress.
- To provide a caring and secure environment within which children are rewarded for positive behaviour and achievement and so learn to be strong and independent.
- To develop thinking skills and provide problem-solving activities which are rewarding, challenging and achievable.
- To encourage and support children's development as communicators and speakers.
- To allow children to express their ideas, feelings, and emotions through creative activities.
- To value and encourage independence and ability to make choices.

- To behave in a way that provides a positive role model for the children.
- To promote an understanding of others by showing tolerance and respect for their values and beliefs.
- To provide effective communication between parents/carers and the foundation stage staff, protecting confidentiality. Also, encouraging parental involvement in assessing and recording their child's progress.
- To hold regular staff meetings, for exchanging information and ideas, and taking part in INSET and other training programmes when available.

## **Teaching and Learning**

Our policy is to provide a welcoming and stimulating environment, within which each child is valued and respected, and encouraged to develop to their full potential. The Foundation Stage Unit provides a wide range of experiences, allowing children the time and space to develop at their own pace. Nursery children will benefit from learning alongside older and more experienced children, whilst Reception children will gain a sense of responsibility, increasing their confidence and self-esteem.

Teachers in the foundation stage will use a wide range of teaching styles and strategies to realise these intentions, based on the requirements of the curriculum, the needs of the children, and their own expertise.

Elements of good practice in the foundation stage within our school include:

- a partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement.
- teachers having a deep understanding of how children develop and learn, and how they can most appropriately be taught.
- a range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, and extend and develop play and talk.
- providing materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world.
- encouraging the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as this encourages independent learning.
- providing opportunities for children to engage in activities planned, led or guided by adults and also those that they plan or initiate themselves.
- a carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the early learning goals by the end of the foundation stage. There is a focus on the three Prime Areas: Personal, Social and Emotional Development / Communication and Language / Physical Development. There are also Specific Areas of Mathematics, Literacy, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design.
- provision for children to be involved in activities and experiences that build on and extend their interests and develop their social and emotional, physical, intellectual and creative abilities;
- opportunities for children to think, understand and talk;
- support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations and assessment.
- clear aims for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do;
- regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the foundation stage.
- ensuring the safe use of all ICT apparatus and making appropriate risk assessments for their use. Children will be supervised when using the Internet (see the e: safety guidelines).

## **Play in the Foundation Stage**

Each Area of Learning will be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult led and child initiated activities. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express feelings and thoughts in controlled and safe situations.

## **Inclusion in the Foundation Stage**

In our school 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 planning for their learning (see policy on school inclusion).

In the foundation stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception (*expected* level). Some children progress beyond this point (*exceeding* level). We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, considering their birthday in relation to their cohort, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social, cultural and religious backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those for whom English is not their first language. The EYFS Profile is an inclusive form of assessment. Where a child's learning and development does not yet meet the description of the level expected at the end of the EYFS for an individual early learning goal, the outcome will be recorded as *emerging*.

We meet the needs of all children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs and learning styles.
- 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, through warm, positive interactions, in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills.
- providing opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English language.
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary. This may involve provision for children with special educational needs (see special needs policy).

## **Nursery SEND Referrals**

We believe early identification of children with special educational needs and disability (SEND) is vital if the child concerned is to receive the support and resources required to access the curriculum. The nursery staff will carry out initial assessments and any concerns will be discussed with the SENCO. (See Nursery SEN Referral policy and EY Inclusion Toolkit.)

This policy has been revised in line with the priorities and recommendations stated within the school's Disability Equality Scheme.

## **The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

The curriculum for the foundation stage reflects seven areas of learning, as follows:

**Prime Areas-** Personal, Social and Emotional Development  
Communication and Language  
Physical development

**Specific Areas-** Literacy  
Mathematics  
Understanding the World  
Expressive Arts and Design

With the youngest children, there will be a strong focus on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively, and become ready for school. The balance

will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within in the prime areas.

The Early Learning Goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. The Primary Framework for Literacy and Mathematics provides more detailed steps in learning. Children in reception will have daily literacy and numeracy lessons.

The **Characteristics of Effective Learning** describe factors which play a central role in a child's learning and in becoming an effective learner. They run through and underline all seven areas of learning, representing processes rather than outcomes. Information regarding these characteristics will provide Year 1 teachers with vital background and context when considering the child's next stage of development and future learning needs. They are:

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

Planning is organised hierarchically as long term, medium-term, weekly and daily. In the summer term, long term plans for each class are discussed and exchanged to support continuity and progression. Medium term planning is completed half-termly and identifies the topic and the learning experiences and activities to be offered.

## Assessment

We make regular assessments of children's learning over the year, using a range of strategies including observation and planned tasks. **These observations and achievements are recorded electronically using 2simple software and in individual Learning Journeys.** We use this information to ensure that future planning reflects individual needs. Teachers hold their own assessment records and these feed into the EYFS Profile.

These principles underpin our EYFS assessments:

- Reliable and accurate assessment is based primarily on the teacher's knowledge of the child gained predominantly from observation and interaction in a range of daily activities and events.
- Early Years staff should both plan observations and be ready to capture the spontaneous but important moments.
- Embedded learning is identified by assessing what a child can do consistently and independently in a range of everyday situations.
- Teaching must enable each child to demonstrate their learning and development fully.
- Accurate assessments take account of contributions from a range of perspectives including the child, their parents and other relevant adults.
- Material can include written observations, samples of work and photographs.
- An effective assessment presents a holistic view of a child's learning and development.

Nursery children are assessed at the beginning of the foundation stage, both on entry to nursery and each term using the EYFS Framework and results are recorded on trackers, identifying which Developmental Age Band they are working in, using a best fit approach. Each age band is broken down into emerging, expected and exceeding. These records are passed through the foundation stage as they progress from one class to the next, and their new teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. Following teacher assessments, reception pupils **are set a target for each prime area each term** and these are reported to parents at parents meetings. In reception the children work towards achieving the 17 early learning goals. During the summer term, the class teacher summarises each child's development and records each child's attainment level, using the best fit approach, as emerging, expected or exceeding each early learning goal.

**Parents receive regular updates regarding their child's progress in the form of parents meetings, email reports of their child's 2simple Foundation Stage Report at the end of each term, and an annual report**

**in July.** The end of year report provides a summary of their child's attainment using the 17 ELGs and a narrative on how a child demonstrates the three characteristics of learning.

Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the EYFS Profile report together with the narrative on how the child demonstrates the three characteristics of learning. EYFS Profile data is reported to the local authority for each child. The narrative is not submitted.

### **Partnership with Parents**

Parents are made welcome in school from the very first introductory meetings. We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child, and take every opportunity to ensure that parents and teachers work effectively together for the benefit of the children.

We do this through:

- a weekly newsletter which informs parents about the current topic and its main aims, and any special events.
- home/school records of achievement (*Look what I can do!* booklets), reading records, diaries etc.
- offering parents the opportunity to meet the class teacher individually at the beginning of nursery and reception.
- providing opportunities for children to spend time with their teacher before starting school.
- inviting all parents to a '*New Starters*' meeting during the term before their child starts nursery and/or reception.
- allowing parents to stay with their child if they have problems settling in.
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress; there are two parents' evenings each year, held in the autumn and spring terms.
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents to become secure, and by allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
- welcoming the assistance of parents who are able to spend some time in class as helpers. This allows parents to offer their support and expertise.
- homework will be given in reception to reinforce learning. Children are encouraged to complete a 'Sounds Book', read and learn target words at home with parents, complete practical maths activities and mini missions for Big Reading. In nursery, home/school activities will encourage parents to be involved in their child's learning.
- share and stay afternoons in reception, when children have the opportunity to show parents and carers their achievements in school.
- email Reports of the observations and assessments taken in the 2 simple software at the end of each academic term.
- providing an annual report in July each year with a summary of their child's attainment using the 17 ELGs and a narrative on how a child demonstrates the three characteristics of learning.

### **Entry and transfer between classes**

On transfer day nursery children spend either a morning or afternoon in their prospective reception classes, getting to know their new teacher, and becoming familiar with the reception class environment. Reception children go to year 1 and so on. Prospective nursery children visit nursery with their parent(s) for a morning or afternoon session the week before they are due to start. Both nursery and reception classes use a staggered intake based on age and individual need.

Year 1 teachers will be given a copy of the EYFS Profile report together with the narrative on how the child demonstrates the three characteristics of learning.

### **Role and Responsibilities of Foundation Stage Manager**

The Foundation Stage Manager will:

- ensure all aspects of the Foundation Stage Policy are adhered to, implemented and communicated to all stakeholders.
- attend and disseminate CPD pertaining to the foundation stage.
- ensure effective liaison between the nursery and reception staff.

- ensure regular foundation stage meetings are convened, minuted and reported to the Curriculum Manager and other key staff.
- promote new teaching and learning initiatives targeted at the foundation stage.
- provide guidance and support to other members of staff in implementing the foundation stage.

Reviewed by Foundation Stage Staff: Nov 1997, April 2000, Nov 2000, Nov 2002, Nov 2003, Dec 2005, Jan 2008, Jan 2010, Feb 2012, Feb 2013, Jan 2014