



Northbourne Park School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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Reviewers: SMT
Approved by: Governing Board

Introduction

This policy has been written with reference to the EYFS Statutory Framework and after discussions with the Early Years Staff at Northbourne Park School. It outlines the purposes, nature and management of Early Years education at our setting. Within this document, the term Early Years describes children in the Early Years Foundation Stage who are in the Nursery and Reception classes.

“All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.”

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2024.

At Northbourne Park School, we are aware that education in the Early Years is a unique stage in itself. It provides the foundations, which influence a child's attitudes towards lifelong learning. Through careful planning we incorporate opportunities for purposeful play, making provision for both child and adult initiated activities. We value individual pupil's interests and talents and encourage the children to make decisions and choices about their learning. We provide opportunities for them to develop their investigative and problem solving skills.

Our Aims and Principles

Aims

- To implement the EYFS Statutory Framework
- To follow the 'Development Matters' curriculum guidance 2021 to ensure we support all seven areas of children's learning and development in the Early Years.
- To settle the children into school life, making the transition from home to Nursery/Reception class as smooth as possible and to encourage them to develop a positive attitude to school and the learning environment
- To encourage the development of independence with regard to self-care and learning
- To establish good communications between parents and carers, children, Nursery and Reception classes and school staff
- To safeguard and promote the welfare of the children
- To ensure that all staff are suitable, well qualified and take part in regular training to keep up to date with current good practice
- To promote healthy eating in the EYFS working alongside our caterers to provide a nutritious and balanced diet.

The staff at Northbourne Park School work as a team to:

- Provide a happy, secure, organised, caring environment
- Value and develop the whole child: taking into account his/her strengths, weaknesses and individuality
- Promote active, play based and interactive learning
- Encourage curiosity and independence
- Develop self-confidence
- Develop thinking skills
- Provide a stimulating atmosphere in which every child can learn to be responsible for his/her own learning and in doing so develop positive attitudes towards lifelong learning

- Plan challenging learning experiences based on the individual child
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities, both adult led and child initiated

Principles

Effective practice in the EYFS is built on these four guiding principles:

- **A unique child** - Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- **Positive relationships** - Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- **Enabling Environments** – 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 or carers.
- **Learning and Development** - Children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2024)

Admissions

See Admissions Procedure

Organisation

Session times

8.00	Early Breakfast Service
8.30	Children arrive at School
9.10–9.30	Assembly for Reception class (Monday-Friday) and Nursery (Friday)
10.15–10.30	Snack time - children have milk or water, bread and a variety of fruit
10.30–11.00	Playtime
12.30–1.15	Lunch - all children have a hot meal in Pre-Prep Hall or nursery setting.
1.15–2.00	Playtime
4.00	End of the day care: only released into the care of a relative/carer or known adult.
4.00-6.00	Late Service available. Tea served at 5.00

Organisation of classes

Nursery

Staff working in the setting include a Teacher, Nursery Room Leader and Teaching Assistants. The Nursery consists of three downstairs rooms and a storage space. The 'Messy' room includes a sand tray, play dough table, role play area, mark making table, art and craft activities and a tuff spot used for tactile resources. The 'Puzzle' room has a carpeted area for group and class activities, a computer and interactive whiteboard, and includes a range of maths equipment and puzzles. The 'Construction' room has a range of small world and construction toys. The entrance hallway is where the children's coats and belongings are stored and toilets are accessed.

Reception

Within Reception class There is a full time Teacher and Teaching Assistant supporting the children in key learning areas. There are three rooms available to the Reception class. The main room has a carpet area, interactive whiteboard, language and maths resources, construction toys and small world resources. A second room has a role play area, painting easel, sand / water tray, making and creative table, construction toys, small world toys, the children's coats and boots and access to outdoors. The third area has a comfortable literacy with books, puzzles and a puppet area.

Outdoor Area

Our learning environment encompasses the indoors and the outdoors. The well-resourced outdoor area reflects and extends all areas of the curriculum. The outdoors area includes a patio with a raised bed for growing vegetables and digging, a wooded area and a large, grassed area. Equipment includes a large playhouse with role-play equipment, bikes, trikes and scooters, water tray, large and small sandpit, pirate ship and climbing equipment, alongside a range of outdoor toys.

The Curriculum

The curriculum for the Early Years forms the first stage of our whole school curriculum, linked to the seven areas of learning and experience:

Three Prime Areas

- **Communication and language development** – Children are given opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Personal, social and emotional development** - Children are encouraged and supported to develop a positive sense of themselves and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.
- **Physical development** - Children are encouraged to be active and interactive; to develop their co-ordination, control and movement. Children are helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

Four Specific Areas

- **Literacy** – Children are taught to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.
- **Mathematics** – Children are given opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.
- **Understanding the world** - involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment. Each class takes part in a weekly Forest School activity which takes place in the school grounds.
- **Expressive arts and design** - involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

Nursery and Reception classes also take part in weekly French and Music lessons taught by specialist teachers.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

In the Early Years, planning activities and opportunities reflecting how different children learn and develop is vital. We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

Playing and exploring – children have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’. Through play, the children in the Early Years explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build ideas, learn how to regulate 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.

Active learning – children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements. Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creating and thinking critically – we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things. Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

Meeting Individual Needs

Observation, monitoring, careful planning and differentiation for individual children’s needs enables each child to progress to their full potential. The strategies used to achieve this include

- Providing a range of different activities, both teacher directed and opportunities for self-initiated
- Removing or helping to overcome barriers for children where these already exist
- Being alert to the early signs of needs that could lead to later difficulties and responding quickly and appropriately, involving other agencies as necessary
- Stretching and challenging all children, both intellectually and physically
- Having various groupings within the class
- Offering tasks which will allow a range of different outcomes
- Having a wide range of resources available for children to access independently
- Providing varying levels of support

See also the school’s SEND policy and Equal Opportunities policy

Planning

Our curriculum is planned through a series of themes and topics, each of which offer experiences in all areas, through planned purposeful play. The children are involved in the planning of topics through brainstorming activities, and all planning is flexible to allow for children’s interests and unforeseen circumstances. We plan a mixture of adult directed and child-initiated activities and children’s choices are carefully monitored to ensure a balanced programme. Planning is based on observations of the children’s abilities and interests.

Our planning is structured by having a Long-term Plan (an overview of curriculum areas for the year, made annually) and, within this, Short-term plans:

- Weekly plan

- Daily plans
- Lessons plans (Reception class)

Implementation

Children learn in a variety of ways and at different rates. They learn through movement and through using all their senses. They deepen their understanding by playing, talking, observing, planning, questioning, experimenting, testing, repeating, reflecting, and responding to adults and to other children. The strategies used to deliver the curriculum vary and are adapted to suit the needs of each child. Well planned play is a key way in which children learn within the Foundation Stage. While playing the children are having fun but are also being challenged to extend their learning. Adult intervention during play ensures that children can

- Explore, develop, and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world
- Practise 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

There are opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and also that they plan or initiate themselves. This is to ensure that children can explore their own interests and that they are given time to become engrossed.

Early Language, Reading and Mathematics

Our Early Years classrooms provide a language-rich environment, where high quality talk is valued. All staff model good communication skills in their interactions with pupils and each other. For early phonics teaching, the school follows Letters and Sounds phonic scheme to ensure that we are effective in teaching children to be successful early readers.

In the Nursery, books are sent home to be shared with parents and in Reception class home reading books reflect the children's phonic knowledge.

Staff also strive to promote a love of reading through daily story time and carefully chosen books within the learning environment. Teachers closely monitor children's progress and ensure that interventions are implemented to address gaps in learning promptly. Advice is sought from the inclusion team where these do not prove successful.

We promote the use of learning maths skills through play-based opportunities, alongside class and group work. Again, children finding the curriculum or concepts challenging are identified early and support measures are put into place. We adopt the White Rose Maths approach to our teaching in Reception Class, which ensures progression and coverage throughout the year.

Observation and Assessment

As part of our daily practice, we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways. Everyone is encouraged to contribute and discussions take place. Observations of children's achievements are shared on 'Tapestry', an online learning journey, accessible online by parents.

Within the final term of Reception, parents receive a report based on their child's development against each of the Early Learning Goals and the characteristics of their learning. The parents are provided the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the Reception teacher in preparation for Year 1. A report following the same format is also written for the children in the nursery who are school starters.

See Assessment Policy

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at Northbourne Park, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan an Early Years curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the support needed and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies.

See the school's policy on Additional Educational Needs.

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned and appropriate time 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. Children attend taster sessions to Nursery/Reception to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners.

In the final term in Reception, the Year One teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year One. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

Safety

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

We promote good health of our children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Please see separate policies and procedures for Health and Safety, Child Protection, Food and Drink, Illness and Injury.

Staff Development, Appraisal and Supervision

Staff Training and professional development

All staff are involved in whole school training days every year. The dates and focus for these are agreed in advance. The staff are made aware of and encouraged to attend courses to develop both their knowledge and expertise. Staff "cascade" the knowledge gained from such courses in Staff or Key Stage meetings. All Early Years staff are up to date with first aid and child protection training and receive Safeguarding training every year. Early Years Staff also have Paediatric First Aid and Adminstrating Medicine training.

An induction programme is provided for all newly qualified and newly appointed staff. This includes support and monitoring by a named member of the senior staff, plus training and opportunities to shadow more experienced members of staff.

Appraisal

See our appraisal policy.

Supervision

See supervision policy

Meetings

Whole staff meetings are held once a week. There is also a weekly curriculum meeting held for teachers. There are regular Early Years meetings to discuss planning, events and areas raised in Supervision meetings. All staff meet termly for Pupil Progress Meetings.

Equal Opportunities

The school's Equal Opportunities Policy is used throughout the curriculum. We promote a positive attitude to diversity and difference so that children learn from the earliest age to value diversity in others and grow up making a positive contribution to society. In addition to this, when planning and teaching, the teacher aims to give every pupil the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible. This includes boys and girls, pupils with SEN, pupils with disabilities, pupils from all cultural and social backgrounds, pupils of different ethnic groups, and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. It is appreciated that every child brings different experiences and strengths. The teacher will ensure that the knowledge, skills and understanding will be taught in a way that best suits the abilities of each child.

Parents as Partners and the Wider Context

We strive to create and maintain partnership 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 confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways, including collaboration through Tapestry posts, 'Stay and Play' sessions, Open House opportunities, parents evenings and events.

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

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