

Care, Aspire, Achieve

Alexandra Park Primary

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



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Policy Statement for the Early Years Foundation Stage at Alexandra Park Primary School

Introduction

‘Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five 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 together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.’

(Statutory Framework for the early years foundation stage - Department for Education 2021)

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Alexandra Park Primary School children are admitted to Nursery the term after their third birthday if we have a place and the September after their third birthday if we are full. They are admitted to into Reception in the September following their fourth birthday. Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Alexandra Park Primary School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

Aims and Intentions:

At Alexandra Park Primary School, we want our children to Care, Aspire and Achieve. We are committed to delivering a curriculum which enables all our children to become confident and ambitious, lifelong learners.

We aim to develop our children’s skills and knowledge as well as encouraging curiosity, aspiration and a love of learning that will continue into adulthood.

Our Core Values:

Our curriculum develops every child’s ability to care, respect and understand themselves, others and the world in which they live. We also provide a curriculum that also ensures that every child feels valued and cared for.

Our curriculum provides a range of opportunities, designed to develop every child’s sense of what is possible for them to achieve now and in their future lives.

Our curriculum ensures all children have the skills, knowledge and crucially, the attitude to achieve in all aspects of their lives.

Our Early Years Curriculum:

Children develop in the context of relationships and the environment around them. This is unique to each family, and reflects individual communities and cultures.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is based upon four principles:

- A unique child.

- Positive relationships.
- Enabling environments.
- Learning and developing in different ways.

The EYFS framework guidance (2017) states that, “there are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in the early years setting.”

All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected. Three areas that are particularly crucial for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning are called the Prime areas. The Prime areas are fundamental, work together, and support development in all other areas.

Prime Areas:

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

The four Specific Areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.

Specific Areas:

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

Our Learning environment:

Our Foundation Stage provides all children with the opportunity to explore and learn securely and safely. Our learning environment ensures that the characteristics of effective learning are at the forefront of everything we do.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning provides children with opportunities to:

- Play and explore
- To be active learners
- Create and think critically

The children’s learning environment plays a vital role in supporting children’s development and learning. Enabling environments encourage children to play and appeal to their interests, making them feel happy, safe and challenged. When children feel emotionally safe and secure they are able to explore, investigate, solve problems and work as a team.

Assessment:

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. We use daily observations of the children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. In the final term of the year, we complete the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile for each child. The Profile provides parents, carers, and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1.

Children with Additional Needs:

At Alexandra Park Primary School, we believe that recognising and supporting children's additional needs during their early years at school is vital, we have experienced staff that will support children and families by identifying needs and put effective support in place. We aim to continually review and improve the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which pupils with a disability, medical condition or other access needs can access education and associated services when needed. Our key objective is to reduce and eliminate barriers to access to the curriculum and to ensure full participation in the school community for pupils, and prospective pupils, with a disability, medical condition or other access needs. Provision may include: Liaison with specialists, CPD for staff, a differentiated curriculum, specialist resources to support learning and access to the curriculum, a range of support staff including trained teaching assistants and access arrangements in place for statutory testing.

Partnership with Parents and Carers:

Most children entering our Reception classes will have already experienced some form of pre-school education. In our Reception classes we aim to build on these experiences by providing a well-planned and well-resourced curriculum. Purposeful play is a very important part of this curriculum and is a key way in which children learn with enjoyment and challenge. By providing a variety of learning experiences, we aim to help all children develop a positive attitude towards their learning within a caring environment. We recognise that parents are children's first educators and we therefore seek to develop an effective partnership between home and school.

We will develop this working relationship between the school and parents and carers as follows:

- We operate an “open door” policy that will allow parents, carers and teachers to discuss children’s development in an informal manner.
- We hold a parent’s meeting in the autumn and spring term.
- We offer various stay and play sessions for both child and parent to attend.
- We use Seesaw to communicate on a daily basis with parents and share children’s learning achievements.
- We have strong links with feeder Nurseries and preschool settings, which enable a smooth transition to school.
- We have a strong induction process in place that includes home visits, stay and play sessions and parent settling in meetings.

Transition:

We understand that when your child first starts school, it’s a big change in your family life; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle in to their new class quickly and happily. We complete home visits for every child in nursery and reception alongside additional visits to any previous settings if required.

Parents are invited to attend an Induction Meeting, Stay and Play sessions and a settling in meeting. As a result of this comprehensive induction, children and their parents are better prepared for the transition to school, with relationships between staff, children and their parents established at an early stage. Parents have reported that they have felt more confident in knowing how to support their child’s learning as a result of information gained from home visits, our Induction packs and informal conversations with staff.

Throughout the early years, the children have many opportunities to join in whole school activities such as assemblies and theme days. Our Nursery, Reception and Year 1 team work closely together to support the children with a smooth transitions from Nursery to Reception and into Year 1. We aim to ensure that children feel confident and secure by providing the children with opportunities to meet their new class teacher during the summer term and become familiar with their new classrooms. We invite parents in to meet the new class teacher in the summer term where staff share key information. Year 1 continue to use Seesaw to communicate effectively with parents.