


Care, Aspire, Achieve

Alexandra Park Primary

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



September 2023

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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 2023)

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 into Reception in 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.

Our Vision:

The statutory framework (September 2023) for the Early Years Foundation Stage sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to 5 years. 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.

Care – Pupils are encouraged to care about the world around them. Children are encouraged to respect and understand themselves, others and the world in which they live. Our curriculum ensures that every child feels valued and cared for.

Aspire- 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.

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

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.

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 overarching principles:

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

Intent:

Our curriculum is designed to recognise children's prior learning, both from previous settings and their experiences at home. We work in partnership with parents, carers and other settings to provide the best possible start, ensuring each individual reaches their full potential from their various starting points. Our curriculum has been designed to enable children to succeed through our whole school values of Care, Aspire, Achieve and our school Learning Behaviours of Pride, Curiosity, Determination, Creativity, Collaboration and Independence.

There is a strong emphasis on the Prime Areas of learning; Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication and Language. We recognise that these areas not only improve academic outcomes, but are a life skill to ensure success beyond school, in life and future employment. We aim to develop children's thinking and understanding, which in turn promotes self-confidence, resilience and empathy which support children's well-being.

The four Specific Areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. The Specific Areas are: Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design.

Our enabling environments are warm and skilful adult interactions support the children as they begin to link learning to their play and exploration right from the start. We believe that high level engagement ensures high level attainment. We therefore provide an engaging curriculum that maximises opportunities for meaningful cross-curricular links and learning experiences, as well as promoting the unique child by offering extended periods of play and sustained thinking. We follow children's interests and ideas to foster a lifelong love of learning both in and outside of school. By the end of the Reception year, our intent is to ensure that all children make at least good progress from their starting points and are equipped with the skills and knowledge to have a smooth transition into Year 1.

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 Teaching and 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.

Implementation:

Each half term, EYFS staff introduce a new theme to provide inspiration for learning, whilst providing the flexibility for children to follow their own interests and ideas. Children learn through a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities. The timetable is carefully structured so that children have directed teaching during the day. The timetable changes throughout the year to take into consideration the changing needs of the children. High quality interactions are prioritised and all staff are very skilled at providing opportunities for sustained shared thinking between adults and children and children and their peers. Children are provided with opportunities to engage in 'exploration' throughout the day which are carefully planned to engage and challenge all children. The curriculum is planned for the inside and outside classrooms and equal importance is given to learning in both areas.

Within our curriculum for Communication and Language and Literacy we expose children to a range of books that not only develop a love of reading, but have been chosen specifically to develop children's oracy, vocabulary and comprehension. These books are embedded in our provision through activities, story sessions and on display for children to access independently. Through this, children begin to internalise new vocabulary, language patterns and begin to retell stories. We develop key vocabulary through the Word Aware approach, introducing the children to new words throughout the week. This approach then extends throughout the school supporting language development. We ensure that the inclusion of high-quality texts are age and stage appropriate. Modelled reading and re-telling opportunities are planned for across the week.

We follow the DfE approved RWI programme to ensure consistency across the school. From the beginning of Nursery, phonics is taught daily following our scheme. Children are monitored closely for progress and given the support they need. Children are encouraged to read at home and are listened to regularly in school. They are given books that match their phonic knowledge in order for them to apply their learning with the aim of becoming successful, confident and fluent readers.

In Nursery we follow Master the Curriculum and in Reception we follow the White Rose Maths Scheme of work. High quality learning environments and meaningful interactions with adults, support children in developing mathematical thinking and discussion. Pupils learn through games and tasks using concrete manipulatives and pictorial structures and representations which are then rehearsed applied and recorded within their own child-led exploration. Children have opportunities outside to develop fluency, revisit key concepts and address misconceptions. There is a focus on the following counting principles; one to one correspondence, stable order and cardinal principle. In Nursery, children develop a love of maths through games, songs, rhymes, and play using concrete manipulatives. In addition, children in Reception are taught Mastery in Maths four times a week supporting children to develop fluency and a deep understanding of number.

Our wider curriculum is taught through the learning areas; 'Understanding of the World' and 'Expressive Arts and Design.' EYFS staff have a good understanding of how EYFS/ELG's feed into the National Curriculum through our robust planning and CPD opportunities. In reverse, colleagues throughout the school are also aware of the EYFS/ ELG's that link to each foundation subject and the progression of the subject. Exciting, purposeful and contextual activities are planned to build on children's natural curiosity. Building further on our oracy focus, children will be encouraged to employ subject specific language and terminology in foundation subjects, and such vocabulary will be modelled, both verbally and orally, by supporting practitioners.

All our approaches are firmly underpinned by exceptional professional development opportunities for all staff. We ensure that all approaches are rooted in the best available educational research and evidence and as an EEF Research School, have access to national

training and opportunities for collaboration and professional development. In school we use lesson study, Teacher Research Groups and other forms of professional development to ensure we're constantly improving and providing the best educational for all children across the EYFS.

In an inclusive school, pupils with SEND are not just in the school, they are part of the school—they have the same opportunity as their peers to benefit from the highest quality teaching the school can provide.

EEF SEND in the Mainstream guidance report p12

Our inclusive approach means that all children learn together, but we have a range of additional intervention and support for children who may not be reaching their potential, or are showing a greater depth of understanding and need further challenge. This includes, for example, sessions for developing speech and language, social skills, fine motor skills, phonics, and mathematics. For children on EHCPs we have bespoke plans in place. We follow the NASEN SENCO guidance to support our adaptive teaching approach.

Regular monitoring of teaching and learning by SLT and the EYFS leader ensure staff develop excellent subject knowledge. The EYFS leader ensures staff receive CPD specific to Early Years to develop their practice. All early years teachers have benefited from NCETM (National Centre Excellence Teaching Mathematics) training. We provide regular and high quality training and support for our own staff and support many other schools and professionals.

Impact:

Baseline

Prior to children starting, staff spend time speaking to the child's parents, previous settings and read previous learning journeys to gain an understanding of the whole child and where they are at. During the first half term in Reception, all staff use ongoing assessments, observations and conversations with the child to develop a baseline assessment. This identifies each individual's starting points in all areas so we can plan experiences to ensure progress. The following baseline assessments are also carried out.

The RBA (Statutory Reception Baseline Assessment)

This assessment focuses on 'Language, Communication and Literacy,' and 'Mathematics.' The purpose of this is to show the progress children make from Reception until the end of KS2.

Wellcomm

Wellcomm is a speech and language toolkit that is designed to assess children's speech and language skills. Not how they talk but the language they use and the language and grammar they understand.

We use the screening tool and activities within our nursery and work closely with parents and carers to address any concerns. We also employ a speech and language therapist for one day a week to work across EYFS, supporting children and staff.

NELI (Nuffield Early Language Intervention)

NELI is an evidence-based oral language intervention for children who show weakness in their oral language skills and who are therefore at risk of experiencing difficulty with reading. The assessment informs us if the child is at expected for their age or requires intervention from trained NELI practitioners.

Ongoing Observation

Ongoing observations are used to inform weekly planning and identify children's next steps. This formative assessment does not involve prolonged periods of time away from the children and excessive paper work. Practitioners draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgements through discussions with other practitioners, photographs and physical examples such as a child's drawing and mark making. Some observations are shared with parents and carers via Seesaw and conversations and in the children's Creative Curriculum books, Learning Journey books and Floor books.

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. Teachers judge whether the child has met each of the 17 Early learning Goal's. Children will be assessed as either 'emerging' or 'expected.' 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.

Phonic assessments are carried out regularly to quickly identify pupils that are not making expected progress. Our aim is for children to 'keep up' rather than 'catch up' where possible. Progress is shared with parents regularly and parents are supported with home learning.

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.

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 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. Children make very good progress during Reception. They enter year one ready to access the national curriculum and with the small

number of children where this is not the case, a robust system ensures that Year 1 staff are knowledgeable about each child's needs and the curriculum is adapted accordingly. Provision is provided for those children who are still working towards the ELGs and by the end of the autumn term in Year 1 the vast majority of children are accessing the Year 1 curriculum and making very good progress. Behaviour across EYFS is very good and learning behaviours are strong and enable children to make good progress, particularly in phonics, early reading and maths. Children leave the EYFS with the skills, knowledge and confidence to continue their journey as scientists, historians, artists and geographers.

Partnership with Parents and Carers:

Some children entering our Nursery and most children entering our Reception classes will have already experienced some form of pre-school education. 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.

Safeguarding:

The school is completely committed to ensuring the safeguarding of all the children. The school complies with all the requirements. These include Health and Safety, Safer

Recruitment, Risk Assessments on trips and visits, entrance and exit arrangements, supervision levels, Managing Medicines in Schools, Fire Safety and Child Protection.

All staff receive the appropriate training. All staff are trained in Child Protection and prevent. The school has Designated Safeguarding Leads for Child Protection – Charlotte Millward is the lead, Phil Brooke, Hayley Wood and Luke Read are the deputy DSLs.

First Aid:

All staff in the Early Years are First Aid trained and some staff in the Early Years are Paediatric First Aid trained.

A record is kept of accidents and first aid treatment.

It is vital that we are kept informed of where you can be contacted in an emergency, especially if you go out to work during the day.

Intimate care of children:

During their time at Alexandra Park Primary School your child may need intimate care. This can be when cleaning up a child after they have had a toileting accident or helping them to change clothes when wet. Staff follow our Intimate Care Policy and recognise that there is a need to treat all children with respect when intimate care is given and no child should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain.

Attendance and Punctuality:

The school must be informed as soon as possible of any absence, usually by telephone, the reason for a child's absence. The Local Authority, Head Teacher and Inclusion Team regularly monitor attendance and will contact parents/carers if necessary. Whenever possible, dental or medical appointments should be made outside school hours.

If a child arrives at school late, she/he must report to the school office before going to the classroom. This is important so that the attendance registers can be kept accurately.