



Foundation Stage Policy

For St. James' School

Date: July 2011
Annual Review
Next Review: July 2012

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (EYFS) is for children from birth to five. This policy relates to children in the Foundation Stage Classes.

Introduction

This school believes that the key formative years of childhood are short and the quality of learning is therefore of major importance. The education of these children is vital for their all round development, potential and happiness.

The significance of Early Year's education

Children at this stage are constructing a framework for learning and life. They are acquiring key attitudes to learning and exploring learning processes, as well as acquiring a core of knowledge and a grasp of language.

The Foundation Stage curriculum is child centred, focused upon the development of the individual child, socially, emotionally, physically, aesthetically, morally and cognitively. It is recognised that the needs of very young children are such that it is not possible to separate their need for learning experiences from their need for care and emotional support.

Philosophy

Each child is valued unconditionally. Every child is unique with specific needs and interests. Children learn through their senses and through powerful interaction with their environment. Children learn most effectively through a combination of structured play, first hand experience, and a more formal directed teaching programme.

Children need to work at their own pace in relation to their stage of development, but need realistic challenges. The development of the whole child is crucial.

Objectives

- To treat every child as an individual and ensure that we meet their needs.
- To ensure that all children have equal access to the broad and balanced curriculum we offer.
- To encourage every child to achieve their maximum potential in a happy, stress free environment; this, their first introduction to school must be positive and enjoyable.

Aims

- To provide a welcoming environment with happy, caring and friendly practitioners.
- To promote independence and confidence in all children by ensuring that they feel secure in the school setting.
- To build on the skills and knowledge that children bring with them and working in partnership with parents to ensure the children's effective development.
- To promote self-esteem and a strong self-image by valuing the children's experiences and opinions, and celebrating the qualities which make them individuals.
- To encourage co-operation and mutual respect.

- To develop the social skills necessary to work successfully with other children and with practitioners.
- To develop the concentration and listening skills of the children.
- To instil a love of books in the children to encourage richness of language.
- To ensure that children go home excited each day by what they have seen and experienced; with a sense of achievement at new skills mastered, knowing that the adults share their achievements.
- To liaise with external agencies in support of staff, pupils and parents to ensure that all pupils regardless of race, sex, disability or background have the maximum opportunity to develop.
- To develop an enthusiasm for learning by creating an atmosphere where teaching and learning is purposeful and enjoyable.

As a result of these aims we believe that on entering Prep 1 you will observe;

- Children who show evidence of feeling included, secure and valued.
- Children who interact with other children and adults in positive ways.
- Children who are engaged in and show high levels of motivation in activities planned by adults and also those that they plan or initiate themselves.
- Children who are taking part in well-planned, purposeful activities that build on what children already know, match the different levels of the children's needs to take place both in and outdoors.

Organisation

The Learning Environment

Young children need active exploration and opportunities and opportunities for investigation and discovery in both the indoor and outdoor environment. A wide range of quality resources is provided to stimulate interest and nurture curiosity. Both fine and gross motor skills are refined through the use of wheeled toys, P.E.equipment, large and small construction play, tools etc. All settings are safe and secure. Autonomy is encouraged. Space has been imaginatively used in order for young children to have planned opportunities for active enquiry and physical development. Adults play a key role in enriching and extending learning potential. The children have access to both outdoor and indoor learning environments.

Entitlement

The school follows the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Curriculum issued by the DfCFS (Department for Children, Families and Schools). This framework (statutory from September 2008) is intended for children from birth to five (the end of the Reception Year in schools).

'The overarching aim of the EYFS is 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' (p.7 EYFS Statutory Framework).

The EYFS principles are grouped into four distinct themes: A Unique Child

Positive Relationships Enabling Environments Learning and Development

The themes are broken down into four commitments describing how the principles can be put into practice:

- A Unique Child recognises that every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. The commitments are focused around development; inclusion, safety and health and well-being.
- Positive Relationships describes how children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person. The commitments are focused around respects; partnership with parents; supporting learning; and the role of the key person.
- Enabling Environments explains that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. The commitments are focuses around observation, assessment and planning; support for every child; the learning environment; and the wider context – transitions, continuity and multi-agency working.
- Learning and Development recognises that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates, and that all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and encompasses the prescribed six areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication, Language and Literacy
- Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World
- Physical Development
- Creative Development

Implementation

In order to achieve the school's stated aims the children are given opportunities to work in the six areas of learning. One activity can develop skills and competencies across several areas of learning.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

This area of learning is about emotional well being, knowing who you are and where you fit in

and feeling good about yourself. It is also about developing respect for others, social competence and a positive disposition to learn. A positive self-image is encouraged.

Communication, Language and Literacy

This area of learning includes communication and speaking and listening in different situations and for different purposes. 'Jolly Phonics' combined with 'Letters and Sounds' is taught to begin sound and letter recognition, word building and reading skills. Correct letter formation is taught and 'have a go' writing is encouraged.

Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy

This area of learning includes counting, sorting, matching, seeking patterns, making connections, recognising relationships and working with numbers, shapes, space and measures...

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

In this area of learning children are developing the crucial knowledge, skills and understanding that help make sense of the world. This forms the foundation for work in science, design and technology, history, geography, and ICT.

Physical Development

This area of learning is about improving skills of coordination, control, manipulation and movement.

Creative Development

Being creative enables children to make connections between one area of learning and another and so extend their understanding. This area of learning includes art, music, dance, role play and imaginative play.

Assessment

The EYFS Profile is the national requirement for the assessment of children. This is a way of summing up each child's development and learning achievements at the end of the EYFS. Evidence for this assessment is based on observations made by practitioners of the child in both directed tasks and child-initiated activities and covers all areas of the curriculum. These observations are used to monitor progress and to inform planning.

- Individual learning plans are used in Fledgling, Nursery and Reception classes, detailing areas or targets for the next half term. Practitioners use their knowledge of the child to plan the next areas of focus.
- Curriculum plans are used for Reception and Nursery classes only. These plans link the principals of the EYFS, the 'Development matters' to possible focus experiences and activities for the coming half term.

- Tracker sheets are used to identify areas where children need extra support and to identify the rate of progress of individual children. Practitioners record children's stage of development on entry and then update as children reach key points of development.
- Each child has an electronic record and their key worker is responsible to keep it up to date.

Record keeping

Children 2-4 years.

The electronic record is an electronic version of the North East Lincolnshire Council's Children's Services Directorate 'In Depth Child Development to support Assessment and Planning' tool. It is used in all the Foundation Stage Classes.

Reception children

A written report is sent to parents around the middle of the autumn term and again at end of the summer term. The summer term report contains a summary of the achievements in the six areas of learning. Evidence is entered using an electronic format of the Foundation stage profile statements. The FSP record of evidence is passed on to the Y1 teacher.

Links with outside agencies provide additional support and expertise.

Admission arrangements

The Fledglings unit will take children from 2 years of age.
The Nursery class will take children age 3 who will move into the Reception class age 4.

Role of Parents/ Carers

The Foundation Stage classes must be safe, secure and happy places where children and their parents feel valued and welcome as individuals. Parents and Carers are encouraged to become involved in their children's education. A two-way process of communication is fostered. Parents are kept informed of their child's progress through informal chats, individual learning plans, reports and parents' evening appointments.

Role of the Foundation Stage Coordinator

- To evaluate the needs of Early Years children and promote continuity and progression from Fledglings, Nursery through Reception and the transition to Key Stage 1.
- To attend termly cluster meetings to moderate assessments with colleagues;

- To keep up to date with current thinking and documentation
- To organise the environment so that activities may safely take place;
- To provide guidance in all aspects of the curriculum and support to all practitioners in the Foundation stage classes.
- To ensure that all staff attend relevant courses and keep up to date with Foundation Stage developments.
- To organise Foundation stage meetings and feedback sessions for the entire departments practitioners.

Role of Governors

The Governing body plays a key role in supporting developments and monitoring resource provision. A Governor is assigned to the Foundation Stage Classes and frequent visits are welcomed.

This policy should be seen in conjunction with all School Curriculum Policies.

All staff have read, understood and will carry out the policy.

Mrs. C. Fillingham
Head of Foundation Stage Department