



Alexandra Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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Early Years Policy

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This document outlines the philosophy, aims and principles of early years teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage Unit at Alexandra Primary School. The document underpins practice in all areas of provision.

Early Years Foundation Stage

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the Early Years and a child’s experiences between birth and the age of 5 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 DfE 2014)

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Alexandra Primary School we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development, however we also believe 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.

The EYFS is for children from birth to five years of age. The final year of the EYFS is referred to as the reception year.

All children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. It is the privilege for the practitioners to take on the task of building upon that prior learning and experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that parents/carers and practitioners work effectively together to support children’s learning and development.

We operate with reference to the new Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE 2012, revised 2017) and in accordance with good practice identified within ‘Development Matters’.

Aims

It is every child’s right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well-being. At Alexandra Primary the overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve these five outcomes.

We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his/her full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

At Alexandra Primary School we aim to:

- provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs
- provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond
- provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development
- use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress
- enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self confidence through explicit teaching of and provision for the characteristics of effective learning

- work in partnership with parents/carers and value their contributions ensuring that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability
- provide opportunities whereby children experience a challenging, enjoyable and purposeful programme of learning and development
- provide experiences for all children

Learning and Development

The early learning goals and the educational programmes are set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage document (DFE 2014).

The seven areas of learning and development are:

Prime Areas;

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)
- Physical Development (PD)
- Communication and Language (C&L)

Specific Areas:

- Literacy (L)
- Mathematics (M)
- Understanding the World (UTW)
- Expressive Arts and Design (EA&D)

At Alexandra Primary School we believe these seven areas are equally important in order to promote the development of the 'whole child'. We aim to deliver all the areas through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Planning

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs. All practitioners are involved in this effective process.

There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

1. Long Term Planning

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Good planning enables the practitioner to build up knowledge about how individual children learn and make progress. It also provides opportunities for practitioners to think and talk about how to sustain a successful learning environment. This process works best when all the practitioners working in the setting plan together for indoor and outdoor play.

We have created a framework, which gives structure and coherence to the curriculum. The curriculum map consists of 6 half termly topics in the nursery and reception on a two year cycle which provides the vehicle for delivering Developmental Matters and the Early Learning Goals. These topics are relevant to the needs of our children and also enable us to

deliver a creative and balanced curriculum. The Long Term Plans are designed with whole groups of children in mind.

Our effective long-term plans for the foundation stage include:

- An indication of when practitioners teach aspects/areas of learning
 - An indication of how regularly and frequently practitioners plan to teach aspects/areas of learning
 - An indication of how practitioners link aspects/areas of learning in a relevant and interesting way for children
 - There is a balance between and within the seven areas of learning
- There are sufficient opportunities for children to revisit all aspects of learning regularly and frequently.

2. Medium Term Planning

We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each half term. We include links between areas of learning and development and opportunities for ICT. Learning objectives, assessment opportunities, and activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified. The medium term plans bridge the gap between the broad outline of the long term plans and the day to day detail of the short term plans.

3. Short Term Planning

We identify specific learning objectives, success criteria, differentiated activities and deployment of adults and resources, to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly and day-to-day basis. It allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests, informed by on-going observational assessments. This planning format is consistent with the principles of Assessment for learning. Weekly meetings are held with the practitioners to plan specific outdoor activities for both nursery and reception children.

When planning for Communication and language as well as literacy at Alexandra Primary School we follow the early learning goals, supplemented in nursery by phase 1 of letters and sounds. The Read Write Inc phonics programme is introduced in the autumn term of reception.

Our effective short term plans in the foundation stage include:

- Clear learning intentions for individual children informed by observations and based on developmental matters and early learning goals
- Opportunities for observations of individual children
- Opportunities for informal assessment of individual or groups of children
- A brief description of the range of experiences and activities
 - adult-directed and child initiated
 - indoors and outdoors

Staffing and Organisation

The nursery class has a maximum of fifty two children. Between two and five attend full time and the rest (up to 26 per session) attend part time in the morning or in the afternoon. There is a ratio of one adult to every 13 children. There is one teacher supported by a full time

Nursery Nurse. There are two reception class with thirty children with one teacher and one full time nursery nurse each. Additional support staff work with identified groups and individuals as needs arise.

A key person system has been implemented to establish positive relationships with the children and their families. The staff work as a team and meet once a week in order to plan effective provision, prepare resources and review assessments. All Foundation Stage practitioners meet once a week with the Foundation Stage Co-ordinator to discuss various matters arising.

At Alexandra Primary School we engage in ongoing professional development to improve our teaching skills, knowledge and understanding. All practitioners are encouraged to participate in local authority courses; in-service and local cluster group training.

Practitioners also conduct and attend in house training and disseminate new initiatives, ideas and teaching methods to colleagues, including an on-going programme of peer to peer lesson study.

Assessment, recording and monitoring

At Alexandra Primary School we adhere to the principles of assessment for learning. We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning, and then make informed decisions about the child's progress. This enables us to plan the next steps to meet their development and learning needs. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process. The children are also encouraged to assess their own learning through discussions.

Formative assessment

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes place through observation. Each term a narrative observation is carried out for each child in the Nursery and Reception classes. The names of children to be observed are recorded on the weekly planning sheet and time allocated for staff to carry out the observations during the week. Next steps (development matters or early learning goals) and areas of interest are then recorded on the proforma. These observation sheets are then kept in planning file.

Next steps for these children then form part of the objectives for the following week's planning. Children who have been observed the week before then become the focus children for the current week with activities and experiences planned specifically for them. This is clearly outlined in the planning. Other spontaneous observations are captured through Tapestry. Development matters/ early learning goals are highlighted through Tapestry as and when the child has demonstrated that they can consistently and independently achieve them. Samples of work and photographs are stored in the child's 'special book' as evidence of the assessments made. Samples of writing are also collated.

Summative assessment

Nursery children are assessed on entry and at the end of nursery using the EYFS Development Matters document . There are termly progress pupil meetings discussing children's development and learning and identifying children who are below age related expectations.

The children are assessed on-entry and at the end of the reception year. During the year the children are also assessed against the EYFS Profile. This summarises all of the formative assessment undertaken and makes statements about the child's achievements. The

children's progress is tracked termly using the age expectation statements from Development matters and the early learning goals.

O-track is used to track progress across the year. A baseline assessment is input at the end of the first half term for all 12 aspects of the first 5 areas (PSED, CL, PD, L and M). These 5 areas are tracked again at the end of the Autumn term, Spring Term and Summer term). Summer term tracking is used for end of year Borough submissions. For further information see the Assessment Policy.

The quality of the taught curriculum is monitored by the Literacy Lead / Foundation Stage Co-ordinator and Headteacher. There are regular lesson observations and pupil interviews. There is also planning and book scrutiny.

Learning through play

"Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others." (Statutory framework for the EYFS DFE 2017).

We do not make a distinction between work and play. We support children's learning through planned play activities, and decide when child-initiated or play guided by adults would provide the most effective learning opportunities.

We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves and modelling by example.

The Learning Environment

"Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs" (Statutory framework for the EYFS DFE 2017).

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence. Activities are planned for both the inside and outside; children have the freedom in the nursery and reception to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the school day. These areas are carefully arranged to encourage quiet areas and more active areas within the learning environment. The environment reflects the current topic and children's interests. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation.

For more information for classroom displays see the staff handbook.

Liaison with pre-school settings and induction

A parents meeting is held by the Head teacher and Foundation Stage Leader in the summer term to introduce parents/guardians to the school and Foundation stage procedures. Through this meeting the school's expectations and routines are communicated. Parents/guardians have the opportunity to meet the class teachers and to visit the classrooms. Parents/guardians are given a school brochure which outlines the school routines along with other necessary documentation.

The foundation stage teachers and the nursery nurses offer home visits or meetings to all parents, to enable them to meet the new pupils. This gives parents a chance to voice any concerns they may have about their child. Transfer records from pre-school settings inform reception practitioners about the new intake. If it is required, visits to other local pre-school settings are made in order to aid the induction process further.

During the induction period in September, children are split into groups of 6 to assist them in settling into their new environment. The practitioners get to know the children individually and establish good relationships; the reception teacher carries out narrative assessments to inform planning.

Reception to Year 1 Transition

Reception and year 1 teachers have worked together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible. Children are encouraged to develop independence when dressing and undressing and when organising their personal belongings throughout the reception year.

Reception practitioners plan for more structured activities to be undertaken during the summer term, encouraging less dependence on adult support. Guided reading sessions, involving a group rotation, are introduced during the autumn term in reception in preparation for year 1. Reception children meet year 1 teachers during the summer term

EYFS Profiles are passed on to year 1 teachers and discussed. Reception and year 1 teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children in July. Reception children visit their new year 1 class and teacher in July. Year 1 classrooms include learning areas similar to the reception classrooms: eg role play, writing table, reading corner.

Home/School Links

We recognise that parents/guardians are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/guardians and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

- outlining the Early Years Curriculum to parents/guardians during our promotion day in the summer term.
- encouraging parents to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home
- sending home a half termly topic letter informing parents/guardians of the learning that will be taking place at school, with suggestions of the types of activities that could be carried out at home to support that learning.
- holding parent/guardian workshops to outline the phonics Programme and we also run 5 parent sessions to support parents in assisting their children's learning
- inviting parents/guardians to help in the Foundation Unit and to accompany children on school visits.
- encouraging parents/guardians to listen to their child read every night and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading diary.
- encourage relevant learning activities to be continued at home and ensuring that experiences at home are used to develop learning in school.
- discussing children's individual targets with parents/guardians at meetings, providing termly written targets to parents/guardians summarising the child's progress.

Equal Opportunities

We aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual.

Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas. For further information see Equal Opportunities Policy.

Inclusion

Children with special educational needs will be given support as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes children that are more able, and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities.

Individual Education Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support, in line with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy. Practitioners discuss these targets with the child and his/her parents/ guardians. Progress is monitored and reviewed formally every term.

The school's SEN co-ordinator is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary. For further information see Special Educational Needs Policy and Able, Gifted and Talented Policy.

This policy will be reviewed as and when needed but at least every two years.

Reviewed May 2015 at Curriculum Committee

Signed _____ (CC)

Full Governors: May 2015