

Alexandra Primary School Early Years Ethos



<u>Ethos updated</u>	
<u>Ethos adopted by full governing body</u>	
<u>Ethos reviewed</u>	

Alexandra Primary Early Years Foundation Stage Ethos

At Alexandra we believe that the most meaningful and effective learning opportunities take place through a play-based approach. Our skilled practitioners carefully set up both the indoor and outdoor learning environments to act as a teaching resource which facilitates independent learning. Throughout the day practitioners will work with small groups of children; prompting children to foster the core skills found in the National Curriculum (See end of document) in addition to focused carpet time.

Reception Day Break-down

Our day in Reception is structured in the following way:

- Welcome / register / wake-up dance / speaking or storytelling games (20 minutes)
- Phonic session (30-40 minutes)
- Free-flow within the environment (45 minutes)
- Literacy session (25 minutes)
- Wash hands & pre-lunch games / songs / small group reading (20 minutes)
- Lunch (60 minutes)
- Register / welcome back (5minutes)
- Numeracy session (20 minutes)
- Free-flow within the environment (45 minutes)
- Topic / science session (20 minutes)
- Free-flow within the environment (45 minutes)
- Home time story (20 minutes)

Our children benefit from a free-flow environment where when not engaged on the carpet, they have free access to both Reception classrooms, the EYFS library, the EYFS outdoors learning environment, the shared bike track and at times the Nursery classroom.

Nursery Day Break-down

Our day in Nursery Starts by welcoming new children to the session as some may have attended breakfast club or attend all day if they have been granted a full time place. The children joining will be encouraged to put away coats, bags and any other items then self-register before choosing an activity. The adults spend time working with all children to support their learning within the environment, supported by the resources available for independent learning. The children have access to the outside area throughout the day and have the opportunity to play alongside the Reception children.

The Nursery come together for a carpet session where they explore a new sound, shape, number and story which relates to the learning focus of the day.

EYFS Provision

Year on year our priority in the Early Years is speaking and language development. At Alexandra we welcome children from a range of backgrounds who have a range of experiences. We work hard to build upon these experiences (initially focusing on ourselves and our families as the topic in Autumn 1) and give the children unifying experiences which are so exciting that they actively encourage every child to want to communicate about these and with those most important to them. This not only gives new 'real world' experiences to the children which can allow them to make links with other past experiences but can provide a whole new set of vocabulary which can be explored within a play context with friends.

Special Books

Children working in the Foundation Stage each have a 'special book' which will showcase a selection of their mark-making, art and writing. These books are shared with the children each Friday where the adults will record their voices on sticky labels to capture reflections or ambitions for the next piece of work.

Tapestry

Throughout the day adults will work alongside the children within the environment to support and challenge them, where children can be prompted to work on their individual next steps whilst looking at the curriculum focus of the week. These achievements are captured on Tapestry, where parents have access to the adult's observations of the children's work; utilising photos and videos captured on the iPads.

Class teachers regularly check Tapestry to see any observations uploaded by the children's families, which can then be shared with their friends. This not only keeps parents well informed in a timely way but also helps to strengthen the home-school link and further establish our newest families within the Alexandra community.

Forest School Mind-set

We adopt a Forest School mind-set approach where we use the natural resources around us to create teaching opportunities. These sessions include building shelters, making herbal teas, whittling wood and building campfires to cook with. These sessions not only fulfil our need for a broader curriculum offer, builds gross motor skills and promote rapid language development but also provides children with opportunities to develop their skills within the natural world. This is often cited as a key component

supporting mental wellbeing of young learners. Many of our children do not have access to a garden or green space throughout the year so we provide them with access to our outdoor area at all times of year in all weathers to capture the varied learning opportunities available for all.

Phonics

We follow the Read Write Inc. phonic programme starting in Nursery where the children have exposure to a new sound each week looking at letter formation, correct pronunciation and familiar words which contain the sound. The children also have opportunities to work in small groups playing sound discrimination games, listening games and sound representational games.

In Reception the children start the year by working as a class looking at set 1 sounds; blending and segmenting then by Autumn 2 work the children will be working in small groups across the two classes. These groups will move at the pace of the children through the programme as well as providing information for the EYFS adults to structure 1:1 support at other times in the day if needed.

Risk-taking

In the Early Years risk-taking is a core skill which must be developed. We want to foster the ability to access and take risks where necessary from a young age. These risks can come in many forms such as speaking a new language, exploring new vocabulary, stretching core muscle groups in new ways or even attempting a new skill which seems impossible.

Educational Visits

Each half-term we aim to have at least one educational visit for every child, these can range from Library sessions, visits to the shops, visits to a bakers, or visits to local green spaces. In addition to these we aim to have at least one bigger educational visit which will challenge the children's learning in a new environment which can be linked to a topic. Examples of these could include London Zoo, London Aquarium, Bekonscot model village, City Farm or Freightliners Farm. These trips can consolidate learning, provide an opportunity for pre-teaching and allow parents to share their children's learning in an environment where skilled staff can model ways of supporting learning.

Parent partnership

At Alexandra we want to work closely with our families and provide as many opportunities to share our learning with those most important to our children. We provide parents with an opportunity to come into our classroom for reading morning

every Thursday as well as encouraging parents to take as many books as they wish each Friday after school from our EYFS library. We also have an 'open door' policy where parents are encouraged to come and see their child's special book throughout the year. We hold special sessions to support parents with the skills they need to help their children such as Parent Skill's workshops and phonic workshops which are run when needs arise across the EYFS. We also encourage parents to work closely with the children and regularly invite parents to share their skills with us.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities-SEND

At Alexandra Primary School we welcome all children. We know that around 1 in 5 children will have a special educational need during their life and that early identification and support for this is important. The staff work closely with parents and children in order to help them overcome any barriers to learning. Sometimes after discussion and agreement with our families we may decide to refer to specialist services who will give advice and support. E.g. the speech and language therapy service, the Educational psychologist or the school nurse.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and one that is at the forefront of everything that we do in the EYFS. It covers many areas such as ensuring that the indoor and outdoor areas and equipment are safe and well maintained, that children are supervised at all times and the smaller but equally important things like ensuring children wear their coats on cold days! In addition, staff have a legal duty to report any concerns they may have about a child's welfare to the Designated Safeguarding Leads. Concerns may then need to be shared with Social Services in order to ensure that a child is not at risk of harm. Wherever possible we will inform parents and work closely with them.

National Early Years Framework

<https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Development-Matters-FINAL-PRINT-AMENDED.pdf>