

Mercenfeld Primary School



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Status: Statutory

Date adopted by the governing body:

November 2017

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November 2018

MERCENFELD PRIMARY SCHOOL
Foundation Stage Policy

Introduction

The Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Mercenfeld, all children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five, staying in the Foundation Stage for one year, in the Foundation Stage base. The children then transfer into Year 1, at the beginning of Key Stage 1. The Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and in preparing children for later schooling. The Early Learning Goals set out what is expected by most children by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal. Many have been to one or more settings that exist in our community or further a field. The early year's education we offer is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what children already know and can do;
- It ensures no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, including child-initiated, content that matches the needs of young children and activity that provides opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment.

At Mercenfeld Primary School, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs

Aims

The curriculum underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

- Personal social and emotional well-being
- Communication and language.
- Physical development.
- Literacy.
- Mathematics.
- Understanding of the world.
- Expressive arts and design
- Characteristics of effective learning

We do so by recognising and following the four themes of EYFS:

A unique child:

- Every child is a unique, competent learner.
- Children develop in individual ways and at varying rates.
- Children's attitudes are fluid and can be influenced by others.

Positive relationships:

- Children learn to be strong, independent individuals by developing secure relationships with teachers and peers alike.
- Relationships with parents and carers are also important and will be nurtured and developed.
- Any relationship will be respectful, caring and professional.

Enabling environments:

- The learning and play environments are vital for supporting and extending a child's development.
- In the classroom and outdoor environment, we observe and assess the children's development and interests.
- Based on these observations, suitably challenging activities and experiences are planned to extend their learning and achievement.

Learning and development:

- The base is organised in a way that encourages children to explore and learn safely.
- There are areas for activities and play, and others for quiet time.
- The setting is designed to enable children to learn and play independently.

Inclusion in the Foundation Stage

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that as many children as possible achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. Some children progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs and styles;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary, through extra small group support activities.
- following the school's SEN policy and liaising with the SENCo.

Teaching and learning

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. The more general features of good practise in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- The partnership between parents and staff, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement
- The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- The range of approaches used that provide first hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self management;
- The promotion of characteristics of effective learning: Playing and exploring, Active learning, Creative and critical thinking.
- The support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations which are regularly shared with parents;
- The good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;
- The clear aims for our work and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do;

- The identification of training needs of all the adults working within the Foundation Stage.

Play in the Foundation Stage

Play underpins all activities, including a balance between adult-led, child-initiated, planned and unplanned activities and supporting a range of different learning styles.

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

The role of parents

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Offering all children a home visit prior to their starting school and talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school. The children have the opportunity to spend time in the Foundation Stage with his/her parents/carers and unaccompanied before starting school;
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns and staff being available for these informal talks. There is a formal meeting for parents each term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- Arranging for children to start school part-time for the first two weeks of term so that there are fewer children in and staff can get to know the children better.
- Encouraging parents to stay if there are problems with the child's settling in
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;
- Offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents. There is regular communication with home through weekly newsletters. We invite parents to curriculum evenings/phonics meeting to discuss the kind of work that the children undertake in the reception class.
 - Sending home of 'homework activities' – keyword cards/letters and sounds packs and reading books
 - Enabling parents to view their child's online learning journey 'Tapestry' and add to it themselves.
 - Inviting parents into the classroom e.g. reading sessions

Resources

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. Risk assessments of resources and the learning environment are ongoing by all FS staff

Assessment

- We make regular assessments of each child's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects next steps and identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of careful observations and record keeping in a variety of formats e.g. photos, written observations of what children do and say, examples of children's 'work', from mainly child initiated activities but also adult led activities, during structured and unstructured times. Each child has an online Learning Journey 'Tapestry', where observations and evidence of progress is collated. Parents can add to the LJs and view them regularly to view and discuss achievements.
- All attainment is tracked on EYFS Profile grids, where statements are ticked as and when they are achieved i.e. embedded by each individual. A summary of each child's Development Age is recorded for each area of learning as a formal record of attainment at set points throughout the year – On Entry, end of the Autumn term and end of Spring term
- Progress of each child is tracked through the DM bands throughout the year. Children who may not be making satisfactory progress or are not on track to achieve ELGs are discussed and interventions planned. Where progress gives cause for concern, the school's SEN Policy is followed
- ELG scores are collated in mid June for submission to the LA. This data is subsequently analysed in school to highlight strengths and weaknesses and identify trends.

- Parents receive an annual report summarising each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's attainment in relation to each ELG –emerging/expected/exceeding, as well as a summary of each child's 'Characteristics of Effective Learning'. We complete these in June and send them to parents in early July each year.

(Refer to assessment procedures)

Transition from preschools

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children. 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 also recognise that this can also be a difficult time for parents and consider their needs also in this process.

Aims:

- to welcome all children and parents/carers into school and make the transition into school as smooth and stress free as possible for all.
- to liaise with all agencies involved in preschool care to learn as much as possible about each child as soon as possible and act accordingly where necessary

It is widely recognised that good relationships between home and school is of huge benefit to a child's education therefore as part of our transition process all families are offered a home visit. The visits are arranged with the parents during the induction sessions, a half hour slot being allocated by mutual agreement. Two members of staff (usually 1 teacher and 1 support staff) attend these meetings. We aim for the meetings to be informal and a balance of information gathering i.e. medical issues, friendships and likes/dislikes as well as a chance for the parents/carers to ask questions or discuss concerns.

See Transition Procedures Document.

Transition into Year 1

The Foundation Stage staff recognises that transition into Year 1 is a large step and aim to make it as smooth and stress free for all children. EYFS children will be rearranged into new class groupings by current EYFS staff, taking into account friendship groups, abilities and behaviour to ensure balanced Year 1 classes. From May onwards children are introduced to the idea that they will be moving on and will gradually become more familiar with Year 1 through informal discussion, more frequent interactions with Year 1 staff and through a question and answer session with current Year 1 children. They will also welcome the next EYFS cohort into school. In early July children will be made aware of their new class and class teacher and spend an afternoon in their new class. Parents are also invited to meet the new class teacher and see the new classroom at an open session after school. FS staff and Year 1 staff will meet to discuss all individual children and their EYFS profile, highlighting factors which may impact on progress and attainment.

Health and Safety

We follow the school's Health and Safety Policy which contains an appendix specifically for the Foundation Stage, referring to outdoor environments.

Safeguarding & Welfare

'Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.'

(Statutory Framework for EYFS 2014)

At Mercenfeld School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014.

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence;
- Promote good health;
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so;
- Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for;

- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Intimate Care

We follow the school's Intimate Care Policy.

E Safety

We will follow the school's E-Safety Policy

Safeguarding

We will follow the school's Safeguarding Policy

Monitoring and evaluation

The Foundation Stage is part of the whole school development plan and also whole school monitoring and evaluation procedures. The Foundation Stage Leader is part of the Senior Management Team.

Moderation is done on an ongoing basis between FS teachers and Nursery Nurse and by external moderation procedures in accordance with the LA. Moderation with other schools is also carried out on a regular basis.

The Foundation Stage follows whole school policies and is referred to individually in most school policies, where applicable

Jane Severn
FS Leader
November 2017

Refer to:

Behaviour policy
Mobile technology policy
Intimate care policy
Sen Policy
FS marking procedures
FS transition procedures
FS assessment procedures