

Policy for Early Years Foundation Stage

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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 2014.

Principles

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- **A unique child.**
We recognise that every child is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement as well as celebration and rewards.
- **Positive relationships.**
We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.
- **Enabling environments.**
We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. We have a strong partnership between our practitioners and our parents/carers and we encourage them to be part of our observation and assessment process. They provide us with all their knowledge about their child and how they learn. Through observations we discover the children’s interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging, meaningful and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.**
We use the framework to plan for the education and care of all the children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

At Tetherdown Primary School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development through school and life. We aim to provide teaching and learning that gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills which will enable each child to develop emotionally, socially, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential and at their own pace. Early Years children learn best through play based activities and first-hand experience.

We aim to lay a secure foundation for future learning through learning and development that is planned around what children can already do, their experiences, individual needs and their interests should be the starting point in their education. Parents, support staff and the Foundation Stage team work effectively together to support the learning and development of the children in their care.

Children become independent learners through the provision of a balance of child initiated and adult led experiences. As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance will shift towards more activities led by adults.

The Early Years Foundation Stage supports children from birth to five years of age. At Tetherdown this includes our two Reception classes for 4/5 year olds. We aim to deliver the EYFS to an excellent standard by continuously building on and improving what we are offering the children.

Expectations

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage will be working towards the statutory early learning goals which establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of Reception. By the end of

Reception some children will have exceeded the Early Learning Goals. Some children, depending on their individual needs, will be at the emerging stage of some or all of the goals - particularly some younger children, some children with learning difficulties and disabilities and some learning English as an additional language. The expectation is that at Tetherdown Primary School the staff will work to ensure that the majority of children will achieve the early learning goals (expected level) by the end of the Reception year. We believe that children need to be stretched and challenged, but not pushed beyond their capabilities, so that they can continue to enjoy learning.

At Tetherdown we aim:

- To provide a happy, caring, secure environment for learning, which meets the individual needs and interests of the children.
- To provide an atmosphere where children feel safe, valued, gain confidence and achieve greater independence.
- To develop warm and secure relationships between children and adults.
- To provide an environment where no child should be excluded or disadvantaged.
- To build upon what children already know and what they can do.
- To promote children's social, intellectual and physical development through play and structured activities.
- To provide through a stimulating environment opportunities for our children to develop a positive attitude to learning and an active interest in the world around them.
- To develop a working partnership between parents and school in order to establish an accurate understanding of each child's individual needs.
- To work within the guidelines of the 'Statutory framework for the early Years Foundation Stage' 2014.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

Here at Tetherdown, every child is valued and we give each child the opportunity to do their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

We aim to meet our children's diverse needs and help all children make the most possible progress by providing relevant learning and development opportunities and having challenging expectations. We plan to meet the needs of both girls and boys, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social, cultural and religious backgrounds and children of different ethnic groups.

We will ensure positive attitudes to diversity and difference so that every child is included and not disadvantaged and so that they can learn from the earliest age to value diversity in others and grow up making a positive contribution to society. We will make sure that all our children and adults feel included, safe, and valued; that all children and adults are treated as individuals and that all children are listened to and respected. We will actively avoid gender stereotyping and will challenge any expression of prejudice or discrimination, by children or adults.

We aim to meet the individual 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 and needs.
- 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 activities that take account of children's individual needs (including gifted and talented and SEN.)
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to adapt provision as necessary.

All staff are role models and are aware of the influence they have in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical attitudes.

The areas of learning and development

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape our educational programmes. All the areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the **Prime areas** are:

- communication and language;
- physical development; and
- personal, social and emotional development.

We also support our children in four **Specific areas**, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The **Specific areas** are:

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world; and
- expressive arts and design.

Planning

We recognise that good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. In the Early Years this means planning must be flexible and allow the practitioner to respond to the interests of the group. We use ongoing observational assessment to inform our planning for each child's continuing development. We believe that children must be fully involved in their own assessments and feel able to share their own judgements about what they are learning. This enables them to take ownership of their learning and development. Our planning incorporates all Seven Areas of Learning and Development and aims to offer a balance between child- initiated and adult-led activities. All the areas will be delivered through planned, purposeful play. In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in our practice. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning that we promote are:

- **playing and exploring**-children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
- **active learning** –children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; and
- **creating and thinking critically**-children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Long Term Planning

This is a yearly overview of the topics. It outlines the main objectives to be covered within the topic.

Medium term planning

The Reception Team plan termly topics. These are topics that the children are interested in and also ensure a broad and balanced curriculum over the year. We ensure that there is flexibility within the

planning of the topics to meet different children's needs and interests. The medium term planning outlines in more detail, each of the Topics to be covered and contains clear learning objectives, taking into account the age and development of the children.

Short term planning

Weekly plans show learning objectives, activities and observation and assessment opportunities. We plan a balance of directed and free choice activities for the children to engage in.

Ruth Miskin's Phonics Scheme and The National Strategies Letters and Sounds teaching programme are also used when planning phonics work. The Abacus scheme and the National Numeracy Strategy activities pack for the Foundation Stage are also used when planning mathematical activities. We will also use the National Curriculum 2014 to understand what our children will be expected to achieve in Key Stage 1 and to extend those children who are ready.

Planning meetings take place weekly with the Reception teachers and the Nursery Nurses. The meeting's aim is to review the week and plan for the following week. The weekly plan is informed by referring to the half termly plan and by making use of ongoing observations and assessment of the children.

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 (formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations.

Assessments are built up throughout the year from ongoing learning and teaching. There is a link between observation and planning as we use the observations and assessments to identify learning priorities and plan relevant and motivating experiences for the children. Spontaneous observations of all children are written on post-it notes, which are then transferred to their Haringey Early Years Profile Booklets (HEYP). The Booklets have a section for each area of learning. Samples of learning (both from home and school) and photographs are put into the Children's Learning Journey Books, which are shared with parents/carers. We also use Target tracker to monitor our pupils progress.

We ask the parents/carers to fill in a questionnaire about their child on entry into Reception and the child's parents/carers contribute to our assessment process throughout the year. The children have a home learning folder and we encourage parents/carers to share any observations about their child's progress with the practitioners. As well as the ongoing dialogue we have with parents/carers, the Reception team meet with them in autumn and spring terms to discuss individual children's progress. We also have an open afternoon once a term when the parents/carers are invited to see the learning environment, and to celebrate their child's achievements.

We also have discussions with the children about the things they enjoy about school, their learning, who they play with, what makes them happy, sad, etc.

Other planned observations will also take place each term, e.g. letter recognition, independent writing, counting skills etc. Planned observations are also carried out to ensure that we assess each child's development in relation to the development matters. Judgements against the Early Learning Goals are made from observation of consistent and independent behaviour. They are predominantly based on observations of children's self-initiated activities.

The EYFS Profile is a way of summing up each child's development and learning achievements at the end of the EYFS against the early learning goals. It provides parents and carers, practitioners 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.

The Reception staff also complete an annual End of Year Report which includes the results of the Profile for each child and this is shared with parents and passed on to the next teacher.

Learning Through Play

Play underpins all development and learning for young children. Well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge. "It is an important medium through which skills are developed and practised. Play is essential for physical, emotional and spiritual growth, intellectual and educational development and the acquisition of social and behavioural skills" (taken from model play policy in Practical Pre-School Journal 1998 and QCA Guidance 2000.)

Through play children explore and investigate learning experiences, which help them make sense of their world. They learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively and imaginatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They take risks, make mistakes and express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. They learn through practical, meaningful experiences and can experiment without fear of failure.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. We believe that the role of the practitioner is crucial in observing and reflecting on children's spontaneous play and building on this by planning and resourcing a challenging environment which supports and extends specific areas of learning. The practitioner also supports children's play by extending children's language and communication in their play.

Whilst we recognise the crucial part that play has as a tool for extremely effective learning for young children, we also understand that there are children at Tetherdown who are ready for a more structured way of learning, particularly towards the end of the Reception Year. We aim to challenge all the children and provide them with a range of opportunities and teaching strategies which will meet their needs and extend their learning.

Learning Outdoors

We recognise the benefits of the outdoor environment and provide daily opportunities for outdoor learning. We believe children should have access to a well-planned environment both inside and outside. The outdoor area is an extension to inside the classroom and planning for the outdoor area runs alongside themes planned for inside the classroom.

The outside area will provide opportunities for:

- Large scale construction – wooden bricks, boxes, blankets, pipes etc.
- Small construction apparatus- duplo, lego, polydron etc.
- Water Play
- Sand Play
- Large scale painting
- Building dens
- Chalk on boards, playground etc.
- Role Play – pirate ship, flying car, fire engine etc.
- Music and movement
- Balancing / coordination
- Wheeled toys- bikes, scooters, prams etc.

- Small apparatus / balls, hoops, bats, skipping ropes etc.
- Digging
- Environmental discovery; observing mini- beasts, gardening, planting, caring for seeds, rubbings of textured surfaces, making kites and windmills.
- Malleable materials

Two adults are responsible for the outdoor area, one of which will be responsible for the focus activity and the other will be supervising and interacting with the remaining children.

Admissions and Settling In

During the Summer Term prior to starting school the following September the EYFS Coordinator visits the main pre-school settings from which September's intake will be taken. The pre-school settings are also contacted by phone/email and are asked to pass on any information they have about the children. Once the places have been agreed the Head Teacher and Reception staff hold a parents evening to give out information and advice about the school in general and in particular, how to help settle in the children happily. Parents can ask any questions. Parents/ carers are told about the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and the Profile. They are also given the opportunity to sign up for a home or a school visit. The children often feel more secure in their own homes and are more open to establishing a relationship with their new teachers.

Parents/carers are given an introductory pack which includes an admission form, a welfare form, a booklet about the Early Years Foundation Stage for Parents, a booklet to familiarise the children with their new setting, information about home reading, the Charles Cripps alphabet, a questionnaire about their child and the Home-School Agreement.

We also have an open afternoon during which parents, carers and children have a "taster session" in the class environment and meet the Reception staff.

The children are admitted in three groups. We consider it in the best interests of all the children to have a balance of complete newcomers to Tetherdown, the youngest children and the eldest children in each group. Thus we would aim to settle the potentially least confident children alongside those who are more confident. The children can stay all day if the parents/carers and teachers feel happy that the child is coping well and is happily settled.

Role of Parents and Carers

At Tetherdown we believe that parents / carers are the Children's first and most enduring educators and that in order to have a positive impact on a child's development and learning it is essential to develop a close working relationship with them.

We will develop this working relationship between the school and parents and carers as follows:

- ✓ We will outline the school's expectations in a Learning Contract.
- ✓ We ask parents/carers to share any information/knowledge they have about their child's interests and experiences and we build on what their child already knows and is interested in.
- ✓ We understand that it is vital that we have a close working relationship with parents/ carers for the identification of children's learning needs and to ensure a quick response to any area of particular difficulty.
- ✓ Each term a class letter is sent home informing parents/carers about the curriculum, resources that are needed, any important dates etc. Parents and carers also receive a fortnightly Newsletter.

- ✓ We operate an “open door” policy that will allow parents and carers to discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner. Conversely, if Foundation staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- ✓ Parents and carers are invited to come in and read stories, play games with small groups of children, help with cooking or art activities, talk to the children about their job or interests etc.
- ✓ Relevant learning activities such as reading and sharing books, counting and phonics games are continued at home. Also, experiences at home are used to develop learning at school, for example visits and celebrations.
- ✓ Parents and carers are also invited to meetings/workshops to give them advice on our approach to reading and mathematics and suggestions on how they can support their child at home.

Transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1

We aim to enable the children to move from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as confidently and securely as possible. From September 2014 the EYFS and Year 1 will be the Early Years Family and will have regular meetings throughout the year. To promote effective transition the Year 1 teachers meet with the Reception teachers to discuss individual children and to plan to meet their needs. We pass on the EYFS Profile scores for each area of learning and each child’s report both orally and in writing. The Year 1 teachers can plan for the children’s learning, starting with what the children already know.

The Year 1 teachers exchange classes so that the children get to meet their new teachers. Year 1 teachers join the Reception teachers, SENCO and parents in IEP meetings in the Summer Term. The Reception parents and carers are given details of their child’s new class and staff in July. The Year 1 classes have access to an outdoor area and we are in the process of buying more resources so that the children in Year 1 can experience more play-based activities that build on the experiences of the Foundation Stage, and give access to opportunities such as sand and water, role play, construction etc. Our aim is to increase the opportunities in Year 1 for active, independent learning and learning through play- especially at the beginning of Year 1. The Year 1 Teachers will plan the curriculum with plenty of opportunities for speaking and listening, practical activities as well as recorded work.

The Foundation Stage Team will be available to suggest ways in which the Year 1 teachers can continue elements of the EYFS curriculum and to help and guide the planning of practical literacy and numeracy activities.

Links to other school policies

Intimate care policy
 Mobile Phone and Camera Use Policy
 Child Protection Policy
 Learning and Teaching Policy
 English Policy
 Maths Policy
 Feedback and Marking Policy
 Behaviour Policy