


Care, Aspire, Achieve

Alexandra Park Primary

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



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Policy Statement for the Early Years Foundation Stage at Alexandra Park Primary School

Introduction

'All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years 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 provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential'.

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage - Department for Education 2024)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The EYFS is about what children learn, as well as how they learn. Effective practice is a mix of different approaches. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other and through adult-guided learning.

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- Quality and consistency in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind.
- A secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly.
- Partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

Overarching Principles

Four guiding principles should shape practice in early years. These are:

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. (See "the characteristics of effective teaching and learning" at paragraph 1.18). The framework covers the education and care of all children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that applies from January 2024.

The EYFS applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Alexandra Park Primary School we offer Nursery provision for children the academic year before they start Reception.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Alexandra Park Primary School, we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that 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.

Our Vision:

We want our children to Care, Aspire and Achieve. We are committed to delivering a curriculum which enables all our children to become confident and ambitious, lifelong learners. We aim to develop our children's skills and knowledge as well as encouraging curiosity, aspiration and a love of learning that will continue into adulthood.

Our Core Values:

Our curriculum develops every child's ability to care, respect and understand themselves, others and the world in which they live. We also provide a curriculum that also ensures that every child feels valued and cared for.

Our curriculum provides a range of opportunities, designed to develop every child's sense of what is possible for them to achieve now and in their future lives.

Our curriculum ensures all children have the skills, knowledge and crucially, the attitude to achieve in all aspects of their lives.

Care – Pupils are encouraged to care about the world around them. Children are encouraged to respect and understand themselves, others and the world in which they live. Our curriculum ensures that every child feels valued and cared for.

Aspire- Our curriculum provides a range of opportunities, designed to develop every child's sense of what is possible for them to achieve now and in their future lives.

Achieve - Our curriculum ensures that all children have the skills, knowledge and crucially, the attitude to achieve in all aspects of their lives.

Teaching and Learning

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

The EYFS specifies requirements for:

- Learning and Development
- Assessment
- The Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

The Learning and Development requirements cover:

- The areas of Learning and Development which must shape activities and experiences (educational programmes) for children in all early years settings.
- The Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that providers must help children work towards (the knowledge, skills and understanding children should have at the end of the academic year in which they turn five).

The EYFS sets out the Assessment Requirements group and school-based providers must meet, as well as guidance on assessment, assessment arrangement for measuring progress and requirements for reporting to parents and/or carers/Year One teachers.

The Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements cover the steps that providers must take to keep children safe and promote their welfare.

The Areas of Learning and Development

There are Seven Areas of Learning and Development. All Areas of Learning and Development are important and inter-connected.

Three Prime Areas are particularly important for learning and forming relationships. They build a foundation for children to thrive and provide the basis for learning in all areas.

These are the Prime Areas:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The Four Specific Areas include essential skills and knowledge which help strengthen and develop the three prime areas, and ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm.

The Specific Areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Aims and Intentions:

At Alexandra Park Primary School, we want our children to Care, Aspire and Achieve. We are committed to delivering a curriculum which enables all our children to become confident and ambitious, lifelong learners.

We aim to develop our children's skills and knowledge as well as encouraging curiosity, aspiration and a love of learning that will continue into adulthood.

Children develop in the context of relationships and the environment around them. This is unique to each family, and reflects individual communities and cultures. Our practitioners are ambitious for all children. We consider the individual needs, interests and development of each child in our care and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development.

Intent:

Our curriculum is designed to recognise children's prior learning, both from previous settings and their experiences at home. We work in partnership with parents, carers and other settings to provide the best possible start, ensuring each individual reaches their full potential from their various starting points. Our curriculum has been designed to enable children to succeed through our whole school values of Care, Aspire, Achieve and our school Learning Behaviours of Pride, Curiosity, Determination, Creativity, Collaboration and Independence.

There is a strong emphasis on the Three Prime Areas of learning; Communications and Language, Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Physical Development. We recognise that these areas not only improve academic outcomes, but are a life skill to ensure success beyond school, in life and future employment. We aim to develop children's thinking and understanding, which in turn promotes self-confidence, resilience and empathy which support children's well-being.

The Four Specific Areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. The Specific Areas are: Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design.

Our enabling environments are warm and skilful adult interactions support the children as they begin to link learning to their play and exploration right from the start. We believe that high level engagement ensures high level attainment. We therefore provide an engaging curriculum that maximises opportunities for meaningful cross-curricular links and learning experiences, as well as promoting the unique child by offering extended periods of play and sustained thinking.

'Play is essential for children's development, building confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals, and solve problems'.

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage - Department for Education 2024)

We follow children's interests and ideas to foster a lifelong love of learning both in and outside of school. By the end of the Reception year, our intent is to ensure that all children make at least good progress from their starting points and are equipped with the skills and knowledge to have a smooth transition into Year 1.

Our EYFS provides all children with the opportunity to explore and learn securely and safely. Our learning environment ensures that the characteristics of effective learning are at the forefront of everything we do.

The Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning provides children with opportunities to:

- Play and explore
- To be active learners
- Create and think critically

The children's learning environment plays a vital role in supporting children's development and learning. Enabling environments encourage children to play and appeal to their interests, making them feel happy, safe and challenged. When children feel emotionally safe and secure they are able to explore, investigate, solve problems and work as a team.

Implementation:

Each half term, EYFS staff introduce a new theme to provide inspiration for learning, whilst providing the flexibility for children to follow their own interests and ideas. Children learn through a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities. The timetable is carefully structured so that children have directed teaching during the day. The timetable changes throughout the year to take into consideration the changing needs of the children. High quality interactions are prioritised and all staff are very skilled at providing opportunities for sustained shared thinking between adults and children and children and their peers. Children are provided with opportunities to engage in 'exploration' throughout the day which are carefully planned to engage and challenge all children. The curriculum is planned for the inside and outside classrooms and equal importance is given to learning in both areas.

Within our curriculum for Communication and Language and Literacy we expose children to a range of books that not only develop a love of reading, but have been chosen specifically to develop children's oracy, vocabulary and comprehension. These books are embedded in our provision through activities, story sessions and on display for children to access independently. Through this, children begin to internalise new vocabulary, language patterns and begin to retell stories. We develop key vocabulary through the Word Aware approach, introducing the children to new words throughout the week. This approach then extends throughout the school supporting language development. We ensure that the inclusion of high-quality texts are age and stage appropriate. Modelled reading and re-telling opportunities are planned for across the week.

We support the children's developing Personal, Social and Emotional Development through building positive relations with both children and our families. We share a variety of stories and texts with the children to help support their growing understanding of feelings and emotions, along with their self-regulation skills. We ensure that we share a wide range of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems that enhance children's understanding of our diverse world. We share the 'Zones of Regulation' approach and Jigsaw (PSHE Scheme) to help the children to recognise different feelings and emotions and help children to develop strategies to manage their feelings and emotions.

We support the children's growing Physical Development through a variety of approaches such as Squiggle Whilst You Wiggle, Dough Disco and fine motor activities e.g. cutting, sticking, playdough, threading and weaving. The children have daily access to the outdoor environment where they can be active and develop their own play. Nursery and Reception also are taught key skills during their P.E lessons to help support their growing physical development.

We follow the DfE approved Read Write Inc (RWI) programme to ensure consistency across the school. From the beginning of Nursery, phonics is taught daily following our scheme. Children are monitored closely for progress and given the support they need. Children are encouraged to read at home and are listened to regularly in school. They are given books that match their phonic knowledge in order for them to apply their learning with the aim of becoming successful, confident and fluent readers. We share a wide range of high-quality books and texts to support children's growing love of reading. Children are encouraged to develop their storytelling and imagination through role play opportunities. We support the children's mark making and early writing through our carefully planned and sequenced curriculum and celebrate the children's efforts within school and with families.

For Mathematics, in Nursery we follow Master the Curriculum and in Reception we follow the White Rose Maths Scheme of work. High quality learning environments and meaningful interactions with adults, support children in developing mathematical thinking and discussion. Pupils learn through games and tasks using concrete manipulatives and pictorial structures and representations which are then rehearsed, applied and recorded within their own child-led exploration. Children have opportunities outside to develop fluency, revisit key concepts and address misconceptions. There is a focus on the following counting principles; one to one correspondence, stable order and cardinal principle. In Nursery, children develop a love of maths through games, songs, rhymes, and play using concrete manipulatives. In addition, children in Reception are taught Mastery in Maths four times a week supporting children to develop fluency and a deep understanding of number.

Our wider curriculum is taught through the learning areas; 'Understanding of the World' and 'Expressive Arts and Design.' EYFS staff have a good understanding of how the Areas of Learning and ELG's feed into the National Curriculum through our robust planning and CPD opportunities. Subject Leads understand the Areas of Learning and ELG's that link to their

foundation subject and the progression of their subject. Exciting, purposeful and contextual activities are planned to build on children's natural curiosity. Building further on our oracy focus, children will be encouraged to employ subject specific language and terminology in foundation subjects, and such vocabulary will be modelled, both verbally and orally, by supporting practitioners.

All our approaches are firmly underpinned by high quality professional development opportunities for all staff. We ensure that all approaches are rooted in the best available educational research and evidence and as an Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Research School, have access to national training and opportunities for collaboration and professional development. In school, we use Lesson Study, Teacher Research Groups (TRGs) and other forms of professional development to ensure we are constantly improving and providing the best education for all children across the EYFS.

In an inclusive school, pupils with SEND are not just in the school, they are part of the school—they have the same opportunity as their peers to benefit from the highest quality teaching the school can provide.

EEF SEND in the Mainstream Guidance Report p12

Our inclusive approach means that all children learn together. We have a range of additional intervention, activities and support for children who may not be reaching their potential, or are showing a greater depth of understanding and need further challenge. This includes, for example, sessions for developing speech and language, social skills, fine motor skills, phonics, and mathematics. For children on EHCPs we have bespoke plans in place. We follow the NASEN SENCO guidance to support our adaptive teaching approach.

Regular monitoring of teaching and learning by SLT and the EYFS leader ensure staff develop excellent subject knowledge. The EYFS leader ensures staff receive CPD specific to Early Years to develop their practice. All early years teachers have benefited from NCETM (National Centre Excellence Teaching Mathematics) training. We provide regular and high-quality training and support for our own staff and support many other schools and professionals.

Impact:

The impact of our EYFS curriculum is reflected in the development of our happy and confident learners. Our curriculum ensures children are equipped with the skills and resilience needed to prepare them for their next stage of learning. During their time in our EYFS, children will develop their thinking and understanding, which in turn promotes self-confidence, resilience and empathy which support children's well-being.

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. We liaise with our feeder settings to discuss children's progress and achievements prior to them starting school in September. We also attend peer to peer moderation of EYFS profile assessments which is a collaborative process between teachers in schools and between local schools led by the local authority. Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. We use daily observations of the children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. In the final term of the year, we complete the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile for each child. Teachers judge whether the child has met each of the 17 Early learning Goals. Children will be assessed as either 'emerging' or 'expected.' The Profile provides parents, carers, 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.

Phonic assessments are carried out regularly to quickly identify pupils that are not making expected progress. Our aim is for children to 'keep up' rather than 'catch up' where possible. Progress is shared with parents regularly and parents are supported with home learning.

Baseline

Prior to children starting, staff spend time speaking to the child's parents, previous settings and read previous learning journeys to gain an understanding of the whole child and where they are at. During the first half term in Reception, all staff use ongoing assessments, observations and conversations with the child to develop a baseline assessment. This identifies each individual's starting points in all areas so we can plan experiences to ensure progress. The following baseline assessments are also carried out.

The RBA (Statutory Reception Baseline Assessment)

In Reception the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment is carried out with each child within their first six weeks at school. This assessment focuses on 'Language, Communication and Literacy,' and 'Mathematics.'

WellComm

WellComm is a speech and language toolkit that is designed to assess children's speech and language skills. WellComm helps identify children who are experiencing barriers to speech and language development. We use WellComm to assess all children in Nursery. We use the screening tool and activities within our nursery and work closely with parents and carers to

address any concerns. We also employ a speech and language therapist for one day a week to work across EYFS, supporting children and staff.

NELI (Nuffield Early Language Intervention)

All children in Reception are assessed using the NELI screening in Autumn Term. NELI is an evidence-based oral language intervention for children who show weakness in their oral language skills and who are therefore at risk of experiencing difficulty with reading. The assessment informs us if children are at the expected level for their age or requires intervention from trained NELI practitioners.

Ongoing Observation

Ongoing observations are used to inform weekly planning and identify children's next steps. This formative assessment does not involve prolonged periods of time away from the children and excessive paperwork. Practitioners draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgements through discussions with other practitioners, photographs and physical examples such as a child's drawing and mark making. Some observations are shared with parents and carers via Seesaw and conversations and in the children's Creative Curriculum books, Learning Journey books and Floor books.

Children with Additional Needs:

At Alexandra Park Primary School, we believe that recognising and supporting children's additional needs during their early years at school is vital, we have experienced staff that will support children and families by identifying needs ensuring that effective support is in place. A graduated response to intervention is in place and the teacher will work with parents and any partner agencies to provide the best support for the individual child. We aim to continually review and improve the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which pupils with a disability, medical condition or other access needs can access education and associated services when needed. Our key objective is to reduce and eliminate barriers to access to the curriculum and to ensure full participation in the school community for pupils, and prospective pupils, with a disability, medical condition or other access needs. Provision may include: Liaison with specialists, CPD for staff, a differentiated curriculum, specialist resources to support learning and access to the curriculum, a range of support staff including trained teaching assistants and access arrangements in place for statutory testing. See our Special Educational Needs Policy for further information.

Transition:

We understand that when children first start school, it's a big change to family life; 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 into their new class quickly and happily. We complete home visits for every child in Nursery and Reception alongside additional visits to any previous settings if required.

Parents are invited to attend an Induction Meeting, Stay and Play sessions and a settling in meeting. As a result of this comprehensive induction, children and their parents are better prepared for the transition to school, with relationships between staff, children and their parents established at an early stage.

Throughout the early years, the children have many opportunities to join in whole school activities such as assemblies and theme days. Our Nursery, Reception and Year 1 team work closely together to support the children with smooth transitions from Nursery to Reception and into Year 1. Teachers meet to discuss transition and share the EYFS Profile data and end of year reports. We aim to ensure that children feel confident and secure by providing the children with opportunities to meet their new class teacher during the summer term and become familiar with their new classrooms. We invite parents in to meet the new class teacher in the summer term where staff share key information. Year 1 continue to use Seesaw to communicate effectively with parents. Children enter year one ready to access the national curriculum and with the small number of children where this is not the case, a robust system ensures that Year 1 staff are knowledgeable about each child's needs and the curriculum is adapted accordingly. Provision is provided for those children who are still working towards the ELG's. Developing the children's behaviour and Learning Behaviours across EYFS is a priority. This provides the foundations to ensure children make good progress, particularly in phonics, early reading and maths. Children leave the EYFS with the skills, knowledge and confidence to continue their journey as scientists, historians, artists and geographers.

Partnership with Parents and Carers:

Some children entering our Nursery and most children entering our Reception classes will have already experienced some form of pre-school education. We aim to build on these experiences by providing a well-planned and well-resourced curriculum. Purposeful play is a very important part of this curriculum and is a key way in which children learn with enjoyment and challenge. By providing a variety of learning experiences, we aim to help all children develop a positive attitude towards their learning within a caring environment. We recognise that parents/carers are children's first educators and we therefore seek to develop an effective partnership between home and school.

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

- We promote a culture of openness and encourage carers and parents to discuss children's development in an informal manner. Examples of this are the use of seesaw and greeting children and parents on the playground in the mornings and after school.
- We hold a parent's meeting in the autumn and spring term and provide a written report to parents in the summer term.

- We offer various stay and play sessions for both child and parent to attend.
- We use Seesaw to communicate on a daily basis with parents and share children's learning achievements.
- We have strong links with feeder nurseries and preschool settings, which enable a smooth transition to school.
- We have a strong induction process in place that includes home visits, stay and play sessions and parent settling in meetings.

Key Person

Each child is assigned a key person. In reception it is the class teacher. In nursery, we operate a two person key worker model.

Staff:child ratios and food

Staffing arrangements meet the needs of all children and ensures their safety. We ensure that children are adequately supervised and whilst eating children are always within sight and hearing of a member of staff.

We ensure that meals, snacks and drinks are healthy, balanced and nutritious. We ensure that before a child is admitted to our school we obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies that a child has, and any special health requirements. Fresh drinking water is always available and accessible to children. We have an adequate area to provide healthy meals, snacks and drinks for children. All staff involved in preparing and handling food training in food hygiene.

Supervision and team support

School ensures all EYFS staff receive a 1 to 1 supervision session each term. Staff are provided with an opportunity to discuss any issues - particularly concerning children's development or wellbeing, including child protection concerns; identify solutions to address issues as they arise; and receive coaching to improve their personal performance

In addition to supervision there is a weekly team meeting as well as Feedforward / Feedback meetings.

Safeguarding:

The school is completely committed to ensuring the safeguarding of all the children. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all staff.

Security systems operate throughout the day to enable visitors to enter via one main door and report to the school office. A visitor can only gain access to the school via the school office and foyer, requiring a staff member to open security doors.

No child will be handed over to the care of any adult other than a parent/carer or person nominated by the parent and known to the EYFS staff. If an alternative adult is collecting a child, the parent is required to call the school office in advance.

The EYFS learning environment is checked frequently for health and safety and this is risk assessed. The class teacher is responsible for the pastoral care of each child, as well as the academic side of school life. Medication will be kept in the school office, well out of reach of pupils and administered in accordance with our First Aid Policy and Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy. Inhalers are safely stored in a designated place within the EYFS classrooms.

Our EYFS follow the whole school behaviour policy. All safeguarding and child protection concerns will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and procedures followed in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

The school complies with all the requirements. These include Health and Safety, Safer Recruitment, Risk Assessments on trips and visits, entrance and exit arrangements, supervision levels, Managing Medicines in Schools, Fire Safety and Child Protection.

All staff receive the appropriate training. All staff are trained in Child Protection and Prevent. The school has Designated Safeguarding Leads for Child Protection – Charlotte Millward is the lead, Phil Brooke, Hayley Wood and Luke Read are the deputy DSLs. See the school Safeguarding Policy for further information.

First Aid:

All staff in the Early Years are First Aid trained and some staff in the Early Years are Paediatric First Aid trained. A list of Paediatric First Aid trained staff is displayed throughout school with renewal dates evident. On entry into school parents/carers complete an emergency contact form. All accidents and first aid treatment on the school premises are recorded in the First Aid Book and parents/carers are informed either verbally or for minor cuts and bruises parents/carers receive a first aid note. Staff follow our First Aid in School Policy.

Intimate care of children:

During their time at Alexandra Park Primary School, children may need intimate care. This can be when cleaning up a child after they have had a toileting accident or helping them to change clothes when wet. Staff follow our Intimate Care Policy and recognise that there is a

need to treat all children with respect when intimate care is given, being sensitive to each child's individual needs and no child should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain.