

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

1. Introduction

At New Ash Green Primary School, we recognise the importance of the Early Years curriculum within a child's development and view the foundation year as an essential period in a child's life. It is here where firm foundations are built to create life-long learners. We aim to provide a curriculum appropriate to the individual needs of every child and an environment in which they can develop skills, creativity and a love for learning.

2. Principles

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

A Unique Child

At New Ash Green Primary School, we recognise that every child is a competent learner who 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 to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive Relationships

At New Ash Green Primary School, we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful, supportive, and professional relationships with the children and their families.

Enabling Environments

At New Ash Green Primary School, we value all learning opportunities and experiences and recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

Learning and Development

At New Ash Green Primary School, we aim to provide an environment that celebrates the different ways in which children learn including children with special educational needs and disabilities. Our environment is safe and secure and is set up for children to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

3. Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

At New Ash Green Primary School, we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order for them to develop their full potential.

We aim to support each child's welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- providing a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring, and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child including children with additional needs
- understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates – physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally
- providing 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
- using and valuing what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress
- enabling choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence
- embedding the school's core values
- developing children's understanding of social skills, our core values, British Values and support them in respecting others including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions different to their own
- providing learning experiences in play which reflect children's personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn
- creating a partnership with parents and carers to support and enhance the development of the children.

As a measure of our aims we believe that on entering a Foundation Stage class at New Ash Green Primary School you will see children who...

- feel included, secure and valued
- interact with other children and adults in positive ways
- are engaged in and show high levels of motivation in activities planned by adults and also those that they plan or initiate themselves
- are taking part in well planned, purposeful activities that build on what children already know, match the different levels of the children's needs and take place both in and outdoors
- are developing skills and talents in chosen curriculum areas
- show a growing awareness of and use our core values.

You will see practitioners who:

- manage carefully the transition between home and school and support everyone involved
- establish feelings of trust and respect with parents and children
- treat children as individuals to ensure that each has equality of opportunity
- promote self confidence and a positive attitude to learning in all children whatever their gender, ethnicity, special educational needs, disability or ability
- recognise that being successful and feeling confident and secure are major factors in protecting children against early failure
- understand that children develop rapidly during the early years - physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially
- through their delivery of a broad and relevant curriculum display their understanding of curriculum requirements
- ensure the learning environment is well planned and well organised and follows the agreed procedures
- ensure children are making good progress and reaching their full potential
- intervene appropriately to engage children in the learning process
- observe and respond appropriately to children
- plan their time well, so most of it is spent working directly with children
- establish an ethos in which individual achievements are valued
- ensure the safety of children at all times, evaluate their practice, recognising the importance of identifying their own training needs.

4. The Foundation Stage Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of seven areas of learning and development. These areas are all important and are inter-connecting. These seven areas are further split into three Prime areas and four Specific areas.

The prime areas are:

- **Communication and Language (CL)** – listening and attention, understanding and speaking
- **Physical Development (PD)** – moving and handling and self-care
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSE)** – making relationships, managing feelings and behaviour and self-confidence and self-awareness

The three prime areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

They are essential for fostering early learning skills and are promoted heavily through our planning and provision. Successful mastery of these skills supports children to achieve well in the specific areas of learning.

The specific areas of learning are:

- **Literacy (L)** – reading and writing

- **Mathematics (N)** – numbers and space, shape and measures
- **Understanding the World (UW)** – people and communities, the world and technology
- **Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)** – exploring and using media and materials and being imaginative

The three prime areas are strengthened and applied through the specific areas.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning and we ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates them. They are also underpinned by our core values.

Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experience things and “have a go.”

Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development.

EYFS, 2007

Through play children explore and develop learning experiences which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have opportunities to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

Active Learning - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.

Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.

EYFS, 2007

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creative and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.

EYFS, 2007

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

5. Play

We believe that play, both indoors and outdoors, is the fundamental way in which young children learn. Through play, children will be developing skills across all the Prime and Specific Areas of Learning, working towards the early learning goals.

We believe that children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world.

They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe that it is vital that adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending the children's play.

6. 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.

At New Ash Green Primary School planning is divided into long term, medium term, and short term.

- Long term plans state the topics to be covered each year with ideas to plan throughout each strand of the curriculum.
- Medium term plans illustrate objectives being taught each term.
- Short term plans show specific activities and planned for objectives for the cohort of children. These will include a variety of adult-led activities and provision to inspire and support child-led learning. Staff ensure that all children are encouraged to experience all areas of activity throughout the week.

Planning our environments

Our classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn safely and securely. Each classroom has defined learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. These areas can be active, quiet, creative, imaginative etc.

The outside area has equal importance within the Foundation Stage and children can free flow between the indoor and outdoor spaces. Being outdoors offers the children opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when inside. It

also offers opportunities for physical activity, freedom and movement and promoting a sense of well-being. They can explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources for both indoor and outdoor environments, enabling children to develop all areas of their learning within both environments.

7. Tapestry

Tapestry is used to create, and share observations made of the children's learning and as a communication tool with parents.

We appreciate that children are constantly learning and that this is not specific to the hours within a school day. We value observations shared from home of children's life experiences and hobbies and activities, which ultimately contribute to their overall learning.

Permission is obtained from parents upon starting Reception in line with meeting GDPR guidance and expectations.

8. Assessment

The Early Years Foundation Stage requires practitioners to track children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals. (ELG)

During the first term in Reception, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using a baseline assessment. These assessments allow teachers to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children.

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage and to summarise the progress made by individuals towards the early learning goals.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence, and planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves all staff within the EYFS setting.

The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage is a statutory requirement. Tracking grids are updated at the end of terms 2, 4 and 6 and are moderated carefully by Early Years staff. Data is entered into SIMs at the end of terms 2, 4 and 6 and the data is analysed and used to inform planning and to help identify individuals and groups in need of additional provision. The data collected is shared with the Senior Leadership Team. This data is also shared with parents during parent consultation meetings, the child's next teacher and in the child's end of year report.

Parents receive a written report in term six which comments on the child's characteristics of effective learning and the progress made within each area of the curriculum.

Each child has a 'Wow' folder. These, along with the writing and maths books, record children's progress over the academic year in all areas of learning and development of the

EYFS framework. Each child also has a Learning Together book in which parents, together with their child, are encouraged to record significant achievements and special events.

9. Parents and Carers as Partners

At New Ash Green Primary School we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents and carers, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development.

We value the role of parents as children's primary educators and encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes). This is done through the home visit in September, informal chats at the beginning and end of the day, contributions to Tapestry, Learning Together books and Parent Consultation Meetings.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the Foundation Stage through termly class newsletters, the home/school reading contact book and termly parent workshops. The workshops also give suggestions of how parents can support their children's learning at home; consolidating and building on what has been covered at school.

Parents are invited to attend Parent Consultation Meetings during the course of the academic year. The first of these takes place during the autumn term to allow teachers and parents to discuss how children have settled at school. Another meeting takes place during the spring term where teacher will share children's learning. Parents are invited to discuss their child's report in July.

Parents are also invited to get involved with school life. There are opportunities for them to help with activities such as outdoor learning in the orchard, visiting the library and reading with children, as well as offering their particular skills (e.g. cooking, art, music) to support children's learning. Parents may be invited into the school on other occasions such as open afternoons where children show them their work. The school has an open-doors ethos and parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns they might have. The Home/School contact book is another way for them to contact their child's teacher and there is also an email address that they can use at any time.

10. Transition

Transition into Reception

During the summer term prior to the children starting school the following September, the transition process will include the following:

- The class teacher will visit each child at their nursery or pre-school setting to meet them and their key workers to discuss the child as a learner. If a meeting cannot take place in person a phone call will be made as an alternative communication.
- Parents and carers will be invited to a New Entrants Meeting during which they will meet their child's new teacher and other key staff. The school information pack will be shared with parents at this meeting, detailing school routines and expectations. There is also time for informal chat and parents' questions whilst visiting the classrooms.

- Each child will spend a morning in their new classroom with their new teacher and peers. They will receive their toy mouse at the end of this session for Mouse Club.
- Mouse Club - Along with their mouse and parent or carer, each child will attend several fun workshops. These workshops support a smooth transition for children and their parents. They also allow the teachers to start to get to know the children.
- Visits will be made to meet the children and families in the home environment.
- Each child will receive photographs of their teacher, teaching assistant, classroom etc.
- Children will have staggered start entry in order to ensure they become familiar with staff, routines, and environments. During week 1, they will stay for either the morning or afternoon session. During week 2 they will stay for lunch as well as either the morning or afternoon session. From week 3, the children will be attending full time.

Transition into Year One

During the summer terms we begin to prepare children for transition into year one and the key stage one curriculum. We have put provision and opportunities in place to support this transition period. These include:

- Story sessions held by their new class teacher and a question and answer opportunity to get to know them better.
- A letter to their new teacher which the new teacher will reply to.
- A picture of their new teacher and teaching assistant.
- A morning in their new classroom with their new teacher and teaching assistant.
- A thorough hand-over between teachers ahead of the summer holiday.

11. Safeguarding and well being

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.

EYFS 2014

The school takes its child protection responsibilities very seriously. Any concerns, which the school has, will be recorded, reported and, if deemed necessary, will be reported to the relevant agency. The safety of the child is always of paramount importance. The full Safeguarding Policy is available in school and our website for parents to read if they wish.

Keeping Safe

In the Early Years we recognise the importance that all children are 'safe'. Our curriculum and learning environments help children to learn boundaries, rules and limits and aim to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards.

Well being

The well being of every child is very important. Leuven scales for well being and involvement are reviewed termly for each child. Activities focusing on well being take place regularly. The six ways to well being are also embedded into teaching and learning.

At New Ash Green Primary School we have a Family Liaison Officer who is available to support parents and a Learning Mentor to support the children.

Good Health

All children are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as being given the choice of milk. They always have access to water.

12. Equal Opportunities

All staff at New Ash Green Primary School have a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring that inclusive practice is delivered in the EYFS. All children, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture or religion, and social circumstances, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development within the EYFS at New Ash Green Primary School.

13. Equalities and Disabilities

All pupils in this school are entitled to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum regardless of ability, gender, race and social circumstances. Both gifted, talented and able children and those with Special Educational Needs are considered and the curriculum adapted to suit all levels of ability. We have a full Equality and Diversity and Equal Opportunities policy available at school.

14. Special Educational Needs

Care is taken to assess the needs of every child. Should a child have any special need, the parent will be informed at an early stage. Group and individual help is provided within the school where possible. We have links with various agencies and when necessary, their involvement may be required to support certain children. Parents/Carers will always be informed if an outside agency is assisting us to support their child. We have a full Special Educational Needs (S.E.N) and Gifted and Talented policy available at school and on our website.

15. Health and Safety

We have a Health and Safety policy which all practitioners are familiar with and we have designated people responsible for first aid in school. Children are taught the safe and appropriate use of equipment and materials. Children are taught to be mindful when moving around the school and are aware of safety issues. A risk assessment is undertaken daily in the outside area to ensure the safety of all children.