



Meole Brace
C of E Primary School and Nursery

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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1. Introduction

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Meole Brace C of E Primary School and Nursery.

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching adults.

In the policy the term 'setting' refers to the Early Years educational provision at Meole Brace C of E Primary School and Nursery. This is available to children who enter Nursery the term following their third birthday and those who enter Reception from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old. These children are in the final year of the EYFS.

In the policy Foundation Stage 1 (FS1) refers to our Nursery and Foundation Stage 2 (FS2) refers to the Reception classes. The term 'practitioner' refers to the members of staff working with children within the setting.

2. Aims of our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

In our EYFS setting we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start to their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential.

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

- Recognising that all children are unique and special.
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates - physically cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued by the practitioners looking after them.
- Fostering and nurturing children's self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community.
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- Encouraging children's independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes.
- Developing children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions which differ to their own.
- Understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development.
- 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.

- Providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development.
- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.

3. The Early Years Foundation Stage framework

Teaching in the EYFS setting is delivered in accordance with the Department for Education document, 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (February 2018). This document sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five. It is a principled approach to Early Years education, bringing together children's welfare, learning and development requirements through four themes: 'A Unique Child', 'Positive Relationships', 'Enabling Environments' and 'Children Learn in Different Ways and at Different Rates.'

4. Curriculum – Knowledge and Memory

Our Early Years curriculum is centred on **3 Prime Areas** of learning:

1. Communication and Language.
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Providers must also support activities through **4 Specific Areas** which strengthen the prime areas. These are:

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding of the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

Educational programmes which practitioners deliver in the setting must involve activities and experiences from one or more of the above seven areas (the **3 Prime Areas** and the **4 Specific Areas**).

These seven Areas of Learning and Development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all Areas of Learning and Development closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum which allows children to make links between what they are learning. All Areas of Learning and Development are given equal weighting and value.

We develop knowledge of the 7 EYFS areas through high quality indoor and outdoor provision across FS1 and FS2. Our EYFS gives children secure foundations for later learning – building blocks and a love for learning that will continue throughout their school life and into adulthood. In addition, our EYFS curriculum encourages positive learning behaviours by supporting children's characteristics of effective learning. Key vocabulary across all areas of learning is developed and introduced through adult-led activities, then reinforced through repetition and our continuous provision, to allow children every opportunity to consolidate knowledge. Constant opportunities are provided for children to revisit, overlearn and extend their skills and embed their learning. This enables the children to see, do and learn a skill which they can build upon, become secure with and use and recall upon. Adults help children acquire these skills through the observation and development of the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

We have adopted a mastery-type approach to teaching Mathematics in Early Years and this provides opportunity to make skills secure in maths learning.

A shared outdoor learning environment between FS1 and FS2 allows our younger children to work alongside older children to support their development. Our older reception children provide role models and develop early reasoning skills through communicating and explaining to the younger children. Since the equipment and resources are shared, we can see the clear development of the children and witness their progression in all areas over the course of their time in EYFS.

Adult prompts and visuals are used to guide children – these messages are verbalised and reinforced for the children by the adults in the setting across early years, accompanied by Makaton signing to aid understanding of what they need to do to be successful. Adults model and show the children how to be successful at the start of an activity. We verbalise children's learning and development, providing immediate and regular feedback which includes praise and next steps.

Our Early Years curriculum has been developed through our whole school core values of Respect, Community and Perseverance.

In Nursery there are 3 termly intakes so knowledge is developed through frequent revisiting and grouping children carefully to ensure progress. Next steps are identified for individual children through a key worker system to ensure good progress is made and any gaps in development are addressed. When common gaps are identified, they are addressed through interventions.

5. Planning

Our curriculum is a carefully planned thematic approach to ensure progression of skills throughout the EYFS and consists of adult-led structured activities and purposeful play alongside inspiration from children's interests.

Our curriculum maps in FS1 and FS2 provide a long term plan to ensure all areas of learning and development are planned for and accessible within the indoor and outdoor environments.

Medium term thematic planning and continuous provision ensures steps toward the Early Learning Goals are covered and built upon throughout the year, allowing for skills progression.

Our weekly planning provides a range of learning and development opportunities indoors and within the outdoor environments. Educational visits, Forest School and visitors enrich and enhance the children's learning experiences. Practitioners meet regularly to discuss and evaluate learning opportunities. Observations of individual children's learning and the key EYFS knowledge and skills are used to drive planning.

6. Active Learning through Play

We recognise that young children learn best through when they are active. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning through play.

We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language.

Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.

Practitioners provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support children to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts. Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding.

7. Assessment and Record Keeping

On-going assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of our EYFS setting.

Regular, planned and focused assessments are made of children's learning and individual needs. A record of each child's progress in all areas of their learning is built up in a Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP). The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult-led activities and child-initiated play. Observations take place on a daily basis (both formally and informally). Practitioners make time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. They also make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning and development. Observations are recorded in different formats (e.g. narrative style, post-it notes, whole class grids, photographs). All practitioners are involved in observing children.

We use observations of children's learning to support our developing knowledge of individual children. It informs us of children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and characteristics of learning. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

In FS2, Assessment for Learning (AfL) takes place at the beginning of a session or topic to establish children's starting points and this allows for flexible groupings so activities can be tailored to the children's needs and help them make progress. This often consists of adult-led questioning and assessing the children's response.

Other methods of assessing children in the EYFS setting include engaging alongside children in their play, annotation of children's written work and talking with children about their task or play.

In FS1 and FS2, Learning Journeys record children's progress in all Areas of Learning and Development of the EYFS framework. Samples of children's work are gathered, along with photographic evidence and observations. In FS2, children's progress is also recorded in a Literacy and Maths book.

There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child's development using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. This is updated regularly to track individual progress. At the end of the year it provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements. In FS 1, Baseline assessment is carried out using the DfE Reception Baseline and the EYFS Profile during the children's first six weeks upon entering the setting. Judgements made on children's development in the Profile are based on practitioners' evidence of children's behaviour observed independently and consistently in their self-initiated activities across all Areas of Learning and Development.

In addition, Writing and Maths are assessed in FS2 through regular 'Chance to Shine' opportunities. This gives the children an opportunity to show what they have been learning.

These involve the children applying the recent phonics taught in their writing and applying recently taught maths skills in practical contexts.

8. Parents/Carers as Partners

We recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents/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. Practitioners endeavour to encourage the regular sharing of information about the children with parents. We value the role of parents and carers as children's primary educators. Through questionnaires and informal chats at the beginning and end of the day, practitioners 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 supports us in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests. We invite parents and carers to contribute to Learning Journeys which are accessible in the setting for comments and photographs to be added. More formally, we invite parents/carers in to school regularly to comment on their child's learning and development and we add this to the children's learning Journeys. Parents and carers can also send in Wow Stars to celebrate their children's achievements at home.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through our school website, texts, letters, reading records in FS2 and informal chatting at the beginning and end of the day. This also gives suggestions of how parents can support their children's learning at home; consolidating and building on what has been covered in the setting.

Parents/carers are invited to attend consultation meetings during the course of the academic year. In FS1 and 2, the first of these takes place in the Autumn term to allow practitioners and parents to discuss how children have settled. A further meeting takes place during the Spring term where practitioners will feedback on children's learning and development progress. In the summer term parents /carers are invited to an open evening. The child's Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) is shared and celebrated at each meeting.

Parents/carers are provided with a written report at the end of FS1 and at the end of FS2. These indicate children's characteristics of learning and in FS2, their levels of achievement, as measured against the Early Learning Goals for each of the seven Areas of Learning and Development. Parents are also invited to get involved with school life. There are opportunities for them to help with activities such as educational visits and reading.

The setting has a friendly, open-doors ethos. Parents/carers are always welcomed into school and encouraged to discuss their child's achievements and any concerns they might have.

9. Admissions and Induction

9.1. Nursery (FS1)

Our nursery admits children the term following their third birthday. Children are entitled to 15 hours universal free provision per week. Children of working parents may be entitled to an Extended Entitlement of a further 15 free hours. Entitlement is dependent on individual circumstances and can be accessed through the Childcare Choices website. Parents/ carers can pay for extra sessions on top of their free entitlement.

We offer Breakfast Club, Lunch Club and Sandcastles (after 3pm) sessions which can be accessed as part of a child's free entitlement or can be paid for as extra provision.

See Admissions Policy for more information.

We believe it is important to forge a partnership between home and school right from the start. Children and their families are visited in their homes prior to starting nursery in a Home Visit.

This develops home school links in the following ways: It opens lines of communication between home and the setting; It allows parents to discuss anxieties in private including health issues or dietary needs; It allows staff to meet children in their own secure environment and begin to establish relationships; It allows staff to observe children in a relaxed atmosphere

See home visits policy for more information.

We invite families to join us for Family Sessions which are held during the term prior to the children starting nursery. Family Sessions are held on afternoons and are designated for families to visit the nursery with their child. These sessions run over the course of three weeks and enable the child and their family to become familiar with practitioners, the setting and routines.

9.2 Reception (FS2)

Meole Brace CE Primary School and Nursery provides full-time Early Years education for children in the Reception Year. This is for children who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old.

Before they start in the setting, all children are offered a series of induction visits during the summer term. The purpose of these initial visits is for the children to meet their new practitioners and start to become familiar with the setting environment. Practitioners, with parental permission, will also go to visit the children in their current pre-school settings.

In the summer term parents are invited into school for an induction meeting. At this meeting information regarding the induction process and what goes on in the setting is shared. There is also time for informal chat and parents' questions. School information packs are distributed to parents at this meeting, detailing school routines and expectations.

From September children attend the setting full-time, though parents can opt for their child to attend part time should they see fit. Every effort is made to make children feel safe, secure and happy. Established routines, a calm atmosphere and encouraging talk are some of the strategies practitioners use to maintain children's positive feelings about school. Parents/carers are invited to a further curriculum meeting and a Letters and Sounds information meeting in the Autumn term. *See Admissions Policy for more information.*

10. Transition to Key Stage 1

During the final term of Reception transition meetings are held between Foundation Stage practitioners and Year one teachers. The child's EYFSP, FS2 Report and teacher transition notes form the basis of the discussion so that the receiving teacher has a good understanding of the child's learning and development and characteristics of learning. The first term in year one allows the children to continue to work in a practical way following the EYFS curriculum if progression towards early learning goals has not been assessed as expected. Children who have exceeded the early learning goal move onto the National Curriculum.

11. Equal Opportunities

All staff in school maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring that inclusive practice is delivered throughout the school. 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 setting.

See Equality Policy for more information.

12. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

The early identification of special needs is vital and procedures listed within the SEND Code of Practice are followed.

Early Years staff liaise with parents/ carers, SENCO, Health visitors, Speech therapists, Occupational therapists, the Educational Psychology service and outside agencies to meet the needs of individual children through a Plan, Do, Review programme.

See Special Educational Needs Policy.

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