

MOTTRAM ST. ANDREW PRIMARY ACADEMY

Early Years Policy



Rationale:

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Mottram St Andrew Primary Academy, we have responsibility for children from 3 years old to 5 years old.

Our Nursery and Reception children work and play together in our Foundation Stage Unit, a building separated from the rest of the school. Whilst the Nursery children are based in one end of the building and the Reception the other, they share the environment, both inside and out. The staff work closely to ensure that the children are well supported and nurtured through the Foundation Stage and have the appropriate skills and knowledge ready for their next stage of learning.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- **A Unique Child**

Every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. Children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Their attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by their interactions with others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

- **Positive Relationships**

Children learn to be strong, independent and form secure relationships. We develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

- **Enabling Environments**

The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning. The children have free access to both the inside and outside environments.

- **Learning and Development**

Children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected.

Play

'Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.' EYFS Statutory Framework (Early Adopters) 2021.

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

The Early Years Curriculum

There are seven Areas of Learning and Development in the Early Years curriculum. They are all of equal importance and interconnected. All Areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Each aspect within each Area has its own Early Learning Goal (ELG) that defines the expectations for all pupils at the end of the Foundation Stage.

The Three **Prime Areas** in the EYFS are

- Communication & Language;
- Physical Development;
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

These areas are fundamental in a child's life and if they are not achieved then the further four Specific Areas cannot be developed efficiently.

The four **Specific Areas** are

- Literacy;
- Mathematics;
- Understanding the World;
- Expressive Arts and Design

Specific skills are taught within these Areas of Learning.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

All children learn in different ways which are divided into the following categories:

- Playing and Exploring – where children investigate and ‘have a go’
- Active Learning – where children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, achieving what they set out to do
- Creating and Thinking Critically – where children develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop problem solving strategies

The Learning Environment

The EYFS environment allows the children to learn confidently and is set up for the children to organise their own learning as they are encouraged to find and replace the resources they need in their play.

Learning opportunities are carefully planned in three tiers and the role of the adult changes accordingly:

- Continuous Provision – certain resources are always available to the children, indoors and out, in the same designated areas allowing the children to continue their own lines of enquiry from one session / day to the next. Here the adult observes the children, supports them in their play and joins in, helping to develop their ideas
- Enhanced Provision – some activities are changed on a weekly basis, others daily, always in the same designated space, in order to provide an element of challenge within each area. Here the role of the adult is to support the children in completing the challenge or finding a new way to approach it
- Directed Activities – this is where the adult works with small groups of children to teach specific skills, particularly in Literacy or Mathematics

The Foundation Stage Day

Our day begins with a welcome and an introduction to the day ahead. In Nursery this is the time for the children to enjoy number rhymes and songs. In Reception we practise our letter formation and enjoy a whole class maths game. The children have free access to the environment where they can follow their own ideas or may be called to work with an adult. Each day is timetabled for a 20 minute phonics session and our afternoons are set aside for our ‘Book Club’. We begin the session with a story all together before working with Reception children in guided reading groups. Each child participates in two guided reads per week, unless they are in need of a third. Books are changed daily if they have been read at home the previous day.

In the EYFS we set high expectations that meet the needs of our children. We consider the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, the more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural

backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- Providing a supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.
- Providing a safe environment in which the children become aware of and understand the need for rules and boundaries

Parents as Partners

Parents are a child's first and most enduring educators and we work closely with our parents in supporting their children during their time in school with us. We do this by:

- Inviting parents to our settling in sessions with their child in Nursery/Reception where they are introduced to their Key Person/Teacher
 - Inviting both Nursery and Reception parents to an induction meeting in the term before their child starts Nursery/Reception
 - Inviting the children on transition visits with their Nursery Key Worker/Reception class teacher in the term before they start Nursery/school
 - Inviting Reception parents to our Class Meeting in September where we share our routines and expectations
 - Offering an open door policy for parents to share any worries or concerns
 - Using 'Tapestry', an online Learning Journey where the children's learning is shared with the parents
 - Having formal meetings for parents to discuss the child's progress with the teacher
 - Providing a written report at the end of the Reception year which informs parents of their child's progress, their achievements of the Early Learning Goals and their Characteristics of Learning
 - Planning a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: class assemblies, Christmas productions, Sports Day etc
 - Strong links of communication are established early in the year via school newsletters, reading records and email.
- All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children and their parents/carers.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Planning within the EYFS is based around short topics or themes. Children are encouraged to initiate their own learning and the teachers draw upon their interests and achievements to develop their learning. We continually assess the children's learning to inform our planning for their next steps. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observations, photographs and videos which are recorded on the 'Tapestry' Learning Journey. As part of the statutory requirements, we provide Cheshire East with data indicating each child's attainment by the end of the Foundation Stage and if they have achieved the 'Good Level of Development'. Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELGs and the Characteristics of Learning. We offer the opportunity for the parents to discuss these judgements with the EYFS teacher.

Transition from Reception to Year 1

The children become familiar with the Year One teachers informally throughout the year. In the summer term the children have a moving up morning. Our Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the each child's end of year report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. This informs the Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.

Monitoring and Reviewing

It is the responsibility of the EYFS Lead to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher and EYFS Lead monitor the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.