

# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2021

Kindness



Innovation



Passion



Imagination



Collaboration



thomas  
fairchild  
community  
school

# Introduction and Overview

All children should be given the opportunity to experience the very best possible start to their education. At Thomas Fairchild Community School, we are committed to providing a high quality early years' education which gives children a secure and confident start to their school life and nurtures a life-long love of learning.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In our school, the EYFS applies to children from two to the end of Reception. We are fully committed to the purpose and aims of the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation (2021)* which clearly states:

*'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.'*

## **Aims**

Our Early Years Foundation Stage aims to:

- Create a happy, caring, secure and stimulating environment for all children;
- Encourage confidence, independence and a desire to learn;
- Focus on the development of every child as an individual, valuing and building on their previous experiences and responding to their individual needs;
- Work in partnership with parents and carers;
- Develop in children an enquiring mind, an interest in learning and an enthusiasm for the next stage of school life;
- Provide good foundations for later learning;
- Encourage good social relationships, developing self-esteem and respect for others.

## **The Four EYFS Principles**

The statutory framework is based on four guiding principles which shape practice early years settings. These are:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

# A Unique Child

At Thomas Fairchild Community 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, 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/sharing circle times and rewards to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

## *Inclusion*

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of differences. All children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion, gender, nationality or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences, interests, needs and stages of development when planning for their learning.

We set realistic and challenging expectations which meet the needs of all of our children. We do this by:

- Planning opportunities which 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 needs;
- Differentiating for all children's needs to ensure progression in their learning and development;
- 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;
- Ensuring all learning opportunities, experiences and resources are challenging for all, inclusive and enable children to learn together;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary;
- Working closely with parents/carers, other professional adults such as speech therapists and specialist teachers as part of the learning process.

It is important to us that all children in the school are safe. We teach our children to respect boundaries, rules and limits. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

# Positive Relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent through secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. We have a key person system where each child is assigned one of our teachers or early years' practitioners. A key person approach provides the child with a special adult to enable him/her to develop a secure attachment; the opportunity for the practitioner to develop a supportive relationship with the parents/carers, as well as helping to track and share the child's progress and development, ensuring that every child's learning is tailored to meet their individual needs.

## *Parents as Partners*

Parents and carers are our children's first and most enduring educators and we are committed to working in close partnership with them in order to enable each child to achieve his/her potential. We maintain an effective partnership between home and school by:

- Listening to parents' accounts of their child's development and any concerns and aspirations they have;
- Providing detailed information prior to admissions, enabling a smooth transition process;
- Inviting all EYFS parents to a welcome meeting;
- Visiting all EYFS children in their home setting prior to them starting school, to discuss their children's circumstances, interests, skills and needs and for children to meet their teacher/key worker;
- Welcoming parents and carers into the classroom to share their expertise and enrich the learning opportunities provided;
- Ensuring parents and carers are kept well informed about the curriculum and school life via parent's notice boards, weekly newsletters, leaflets and school website;
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress;
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between children, school and parents/carers, e.g. sports day, trips, themed activity days, class assemblies etc.;
- Other partnerships including coffee mornings, parent workshops, mother and baby groups, Come Dine With Me Lunch sessions, Come Learn With Me sessions, exercise classes etc.;

# Enabling Environments

We recognise that children learn and develop well in enabling environments. Staff work closely with parents and carers to observe the children's interests, learning and development and use the information gathered to plan challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

The EYFS learning environments, both inside and out, are carefully organised into learning areas, where children are enabled to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Each EYFS class has access to an outdoor space, which is an essential part of the EYFS curriculum and has a significantly positive impact on children's learning and development. Children will have the opportunity to be outside in all weathers. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales. It offers the children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active.

## *Learning through Play*

Well planned play, both indoors and outdoors, provides key opportunities for young children to learn with enjoyment and challenge. We recognise the importance of adult support and a secure environment in ensuring effective high quality, purposeful play.

Effective high quality play opportunities involve:

- Planning and resourcing a challenging environment;
- Supporting children's learning through purposeful, planned play activities;
- Extending and supporting children's spontaneous play;
- Extending and developing children's language and communication in their play.

The secure environment and adult support in play enables children to:

- Explore, develop and represent learning experiences which help them to make sense of the world;
- Practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills;
- Be alone, be alongside others or cooperate as they talk or rehearse their feelings;
- Take reasonable risks, making and learning from mistakes;
- Think creatively and imaginatively;
- Communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems.

# Learning and Development

At the core of our children's learning is the EYFS curriculum which is carefully planned to ensure progression and continuity of skills in seven areas of learning. These areas of learning depend on each other to support a rounded approach to early years' development. All the areas will be delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

## *There are three prime areas:*

### **Communication and Language**

**Development** involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

**Physical Development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their coordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

### **Personal, Social and Emotional**

**Development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

There are also four specific areas through which the prime areas are strengthened and applied:

**Literacy** involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

**Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.

**Understanding the World** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community by providing them with opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

**Expressive Arts and Design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities: in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

# Curriculum

## Our Curriculum

We have used the guidance below from Development Matters to help us write a rich and rigorous curriculum designed to enable all our pupils to make excellent progress from their starting points towards achieving the Early Learning Goals. We understand that:

- The curriculum is a top-level plan of everything the early years setting wants the children to learn.
- Planning to help every child to develop their language is vital.
- The curriculum needs to be ambitious. Careful sequencing will help children to build their learning over time.
- Young children's learning is often driven by their interests. Plans need to be flexible.
- Young children do not develop in a fixed way. Their development is like a spider's web with many strands, not a straight line.
- Depth in early learning is much more important than covering lots of things in a superficial way.

Our curriculum is organised into broad themes, for example, People or Growing Things, which are linked to different strands of Understanding the World and Expressive Arts & Design. Each theme is linked to a high quality picture book and, where appropriate, one or two accompanying non-fiction texts. These books help bring the theme to life for our pupils and make the learning memorable.

We carefully decide what key knowledge and skills we want our pupils to gain from each theme and frame this learning in weekly curious questions, for example, "Are all families the same?" or "Where do tomatoes come from?". However, flexibility is also built in through weekly planning sessions which allow us to respond to pupils' interests.

Planning always follows the same pattern: observation, analysis and using information about the children to plan for the next steps in their learning.

Through careful planning we aim to:

- Provide a carefully structured curriculum, building on and extending children's knowledge, experiences, interests, stages of development and skills;
- Provide a wide range of well planned, purposeful, challenging activities that utilise the children's interests, needs and previous knowledge;
- Present activities in many ways and use a range of teaching strategies;
- Develop self-esteem and confidence in their ability to learn;
- Provide a safe and secure learning environment, where each child is valued and where racial, religious and gender stereotypes are challenged;
- Monitor children's progress, identifying areas of concern/next steps and taking action to provide support.

# Assessment and Recording

## ***Assessment and Recording***

On-going assessment through observation is an integral part of the learning and development process. We make regular assessments of children's learning and use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate.

Staff ensure that they:

- Make systematic observations and assessments of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles;
- Use these observations and assessments to identify learning priorities, next steps, interests and to plan relevant and motivating learning experiences for each child;
- Match their observations to the expectations of the Development Matters and Early Learning Goals;
- Assessment does not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children.

We use the Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals to assess the children in the Foundation Stage. In each learning area, the Development Matters and Early Learning Goals define the expectations for most children. Practitioners plot the individual progress of each child as they grow and develop. As the child progresses through the EYFS, staff will make judgements based upon their observations of the child in all seven areas of learning.

During the Reception year, the children are assessed against the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. This is also informed by the observations, assessments, discussions with parents/carers and other professionals and each child's level of development is recorded against the Early Learning Goals.

During the year, there are formal opportunities to feedback information to parents and carers through parent/carer consultations in the Autumn, Spring and Summer Terms. Parents and carers are vital partners in the assessment process. Towards the end of the academic year, a written report, covering the seven areas of learning, will be given to parents and carers indicating whether children are meeting ***expected*** levels of development or not yet reaching expected levels (***'emerging'***).



# Transition Across the EYFS

At Thomas Fairchild Community School, we value the importance of our pupil's wellbeing and confidence when entering a new year group and class. We understand that this could be a challenging and apprehensive time for pupils and that this can subsequently affect their wellbeing and academic achievement. Therefore, we aim to ensure that pupils feel safe, secure and settled in their new environment by effectively implementing a transition plan across the Early Years Foundation Stage.

There are many strategies taken to aid effective transition including parental involvement, environment planning and plenty of opportunities for new teachers and pupils to meet in a familiar context.

## *Pupils entering Two Year Olds & Nursery*

- Regular, short blocks of time with their key person.
- Home Visits will be conducted in July/September before the children start.
- Staggered entry in September.
- A more personalised plan for some children if required.

## *Nursery to Reception Transition*

We start the transition within our school in the spring term by arranging visits in small groups and encouraging increased interaction between Reception and Nursery during curriculum events. We also run a Gruffalo's Picnic welcome event in the summer term for all new parents and carers and offer a home visit to every child.

## *Reception to Year 1 Transition*

Reception practitioners prepare children for more formal learning and the introduction of the National Curriculum in Year 1. They do this by:

- Encouraging independence in self-care and learning.
- Offering an increasingly structured timetable as the Reception year progresses.

The transition from the EYFS to Key Stage 1 is made as smooth as possible by:

- Starting Read, Write, Inc. in the EYFS and continuing in Key Stage 1;
- Sharing individual EYFS Profiles with Year 1 teachers;
- Reception and Year 1 teachers meeting to discuss each child's stage of development and learning needs, to assist with the planning of activities and ease transition into Year 1;
- Reception children being introduced to Year 1 teachers during assemblies, playtime and other whole school activities during the school year;
- Children visiting their new class and teachers during 'Moving Up Days' in July.

# Welfare Arrangements

*'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.'* (3.1 statutory Framework for EYFS 2021)

At Thomas Fairchild Community School, we recognise our responsibility for promoting the welfare of our youngest children:

- All adults with access to our children will receive the appropriate level of DBS checking and as part of the induction process, will have discussed and signed a school code of conduct;
- All staff employed by Thomas Fairchild, receive a thorough induction training to help them understand their roles, responsibilities and key information about how things work in the school;
- All staff employed by Thomas Fairchild Community School, will undertake regular Child Protection training and are expected to follow the school guidance in following up a cause for concern;
- Staffing will be organised to ensure the safety of the children and to ensure staff/child ratios are always followed;
  - 2YOP: 1:4
  - Nursery: 1:13
  - Reception: 1:15
- First aid will only be administered by trained personnel. Procedures are in place to inform parents/carers of accidents involving their child;
- Procedures are in place to ensure security of children and the safe release of children into the care of individuals named by the parent/carers;
- As a healthy school, there is a focus on emotional well-being, healthy eating and physical activity. Good health will be promoted and appropriate action will be taken when children are ill;
- Routines are in place to support children's growing understanding of personal hygiene;
- Children's behaviour is managed effectively through the use of a whole school behaviour system, which is adapted to the stage and development of individual needs;
- Risk assessments will be undertaken and reviewed regularly;
- Indoor and outdoor premises, furniture and equipment will be regularly checked and repaired, washed etc. as required;
- Records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting will be maintained;
- Policy documents will be available for parents and carers.

# Monitoring and Review

At Thomas Fairchild Community School, we self-evaluate through our school development plan and action plans. Delivery of the EYFS policy will be monitored within the school monitoring cycle: teacher observations, planning and interactive learning diary monitoring, interviews with children, analysis of the EYFS data and parent/carer feedback.

Policy Reviewed	September 2021
Adapted by Governing Board	September 2021
Review Date	September 2023