

# Curriculum Policy - EYFS

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## Rationale

“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. It is recognised that a secure, safe and happy childhood alongside good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

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 broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life”.

EYFS – Statutory Framework (Amended)

## Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In the Avenue Nursery and Pre-Preparatory School (the School) children begin in the Afternoon Nursery class when they are rising three.

The School was exempted by the Department for Education on 5 March 2013 from the Learning and Development requirements of the EYFS, thereby removing the need for the School to report to the Local Authority in respect of the Foundation Stage Profile Scores attained by our Reception children. However, the school follows the Safeguarding and Welfare requirements of the EYFS. We also adhere to all the principles and values underpinning the statutory framework. These are summarised as follows:-

- Quality and consistency in all early years settings, so that every child progresses and thrives and achieves to the best of his or her ability.
- A secure foundation through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly;
- Partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers;
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practise, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

## Overarching principles

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

## A Unique Child

Every child should be happy, secure, valued and confident. At The Avenue Nursery and Pre-Preparatory School our philosophy is to value every child as a unique individual. We provide a supportive and secure environment in which every child can flourish and learn at their own pace and in their own individual way. Our role is to stimulate and encourage their development and enjoyment of learning through a variety of different activities in secure indoor and outdoor situations, through play and through both structured and creative activities.

## Equal Opportunities

Every child is unique and every child is valued equally at The School. We endeavour to ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to be successful in the Foundation Stage and are able to achieve their full potential regardless of their gender, ability, faith, race, cultural background, SEN or any physical or sensory ability. We aim to use resources, which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping. Children are taught to care for school resources and treat them with respect. (Also see Equal Opportunities Policy)

## Meeting the Diverse Needs of Children

We are committed to providing a learning environment for all, where the gifted, those who have English as an additional language, the less able and those with learning difficulties work alongside each other and are catered for with differentiated approaches.

- All children's progress is tracked and observed and those who need extra support are identified and supported by the teacher in the classroom, the SENCO and the Cantabile Care programme. This programme provides for timely intervention with regard to children who have been identified as needing support with speech and Language, Social skills, behavioural issues, Listening and processing of information or Occupational therapy. These sessions are provided free as part of our EYFS Provision.
- There are twice yearly Parent Consultation meetings during which parents have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress with the class teacher.
- All Early Years children have a 'Tapestry' online learning journal account to encourage communication with home, weekly observations from keyworker to parent and private teacher reflections to provide next steps for each child and tailor our curriculum to each individual and unique child. This also raises the OAP (Observation, Assessment and Planning) process helping to identify early with intervention and support where needed.

(Also see Special Educational Needs and Learning Difficulties and Disabilities Policy)

## Safeguarding and Welfare

In the Foundation Stage we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the revised Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2025.

We take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well. We ensure the suitability of adults who have contact with children; promote good health; manage behaviour; and maintain records, policies and procedures. Please also see the separate Child Protection policy and related guidance.

## Transitions

In the Foundation Stage we understand the importance of the Transition period to either Reception or year one and view this as a process rather than an event. In view of this, parents of the Nursery children are also invited to attend an EYFS curriculum meeting at the beginning of the academic year when the Nursery Lead will explain the curriculum and answer questions. The settling in procedure is also explained.

## Positive Relationships

In the Foundation Stage we recognise that children learn best when they are happy, safe, their individual needs are met and they are able to develop secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

## Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value and respect the contribution that they make. We always make time for parents at the School and they are free to discuss their child's development and related issues or concerns as necessary. Staff are approachable and enjoy sharing with parents' children's achievements and successes and this is aided by the use of 'Tapestry' the online learning and assessment tool used throughout the EYFS

- All children will receive a written report at the end of the School Year.
- Parents will receive weekly newsletters and the curriculum is outlined at the beginning of the year in a full and comprehensive meeting.
- We will welcome parents into the School on occasions to contribute their knowledge and experience regarding the celebration of particular Religious festivals during weekly Assembly.
- All parents will be invited to join the PTA.
- Throughout the year there are a range of activities to which families are invited, both in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1; New Parents' evening, Sports Week, Art shows, School Plays and events organised by the PTA.

## Enabling Environments

We recognise the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development. Our outside play space is divided into three areas to enable the children to make full use of the play facilities regardless of the weather. Two age appropriate climbing apparatus, a climbing frame, bicycles and tricycles are provided in addition to a sand pit, a 'house' area for imaginative play. The grassed area is used for football club and Sports Week plus providing a valuable play space for every day play times. There are also areas for gardening club with a smaller allotment area and herb and flower boxes.

## Classroom Organisation

All EYFS Staff understand the importance of an environment that is inspiring and stimulating and which encourages the children to be independent. Therefore, we aim to provide an environment that is safe and secure, where the children can play, explore, experiment, develop confidence, be curious and learn. We foster autonomy and encourage the children to be able to help themselves and each other as they move around the setting. Resources are clearly labelled for the children's ease of accessibility.

We will ensure there is a balance of child-initiated and adult-led based activities. We will use small group or whole class times as an opportunity to encourage a particular aspect of learning or to discuss a particular topic. The interactive whiteboards provide additional learning opportunities for the benefit of all the children in the EYFS.

All planning is in line with the EYFS guidance. An EYFS team meeting is held termly which discusses the OAP procedure and next steps for each child. Daily check-ins and weekly planning with all members of the team are held. All long term plans are uploaded onto our school drive, medium plans are hung in a folder in each classroom and on drive and weekly plans are displayed on our notice boards and also on drive.

## Assessment and Record Keeping

The school will adhere to the School Policy for Assessment and Record Keeping. Throughout the year we carry out both formative and summative assessments. Continual observations inform and guide everyday planning. We use the online Learning Assessment “*Tapestry*” for the children in the Nursery both Swans and Cygnet classes , Reception.

At the end of the EYFS children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) to determine whether they are meeting expected levels of development or emerging and still working towards these goals.

Assessment is used to inform planning, celebrate achievements and guide the next steps in learning. It is enriching to support all aspects of children’s growth. The curriculum remains broad and balanced, promoting a holistic development and fostering a lifelong love of learning.

Nursery Cygnet Class Assessments are split into three categories:

1. On-going daily/weekly observations
2. Summative termly assessments using ‘Reflections’ on Tapestry
3. Twice yearly Assessments. Firstly a blend of progress point two check and inhouse rising three assessments and secondly a full end of year in house EYFS Assessment each looking into every area of learning and development.

Nursery Swans Class Assessments are split into three categories:

1. On entry baseline assessment performed using CEM online tool charting language and maths development, PSED and Motor Development
2. Summative termly assessments using ‘Reflections’ on Tapestry
3. On-going daily/weekly observations

Reception Class is split into four categories:

1. Observation and assessment: continuous observation, notes, video and learning journals
2. Baseline Assessments using CEM in depth online assessment tool looking at all areas of development and learning.
3. On-going formative assessment: teacher notes and digital records
4. Summative Assessment reviewing learning key points and adapting to children’s needs

## Staffing Ratios

The Nursery Cygnet’s Class is staffed by an experienced Early Years Lead Teacher, and a Nursery Practitioner. The rising three children have a ratio of 1:5 and older children 1:8. The school will ensure there is always adequate supervision to ensure that the needs of the individual children being cared for are met.

The Nursery Swans class are staffed by a mixture of qualified and experienced nursery teachers and early years practitioners. The required staffing ratio of 1:13 for ‘teacher present’ and 1:8 with other suitably qualified staff will always be met.

Reception is staffed by a fully qualified teacher and an experienced, qualified TA.

All members of staff have attended certified courses in Paediatric First Aid. All staff will attend a Fire Training course at the beginning of the school year and are expected to complete online training in Child Protection on a regular basis.

All children in the EYFS will have a designated key person who is responsible for the assessment of that child through observations, written reports and discussion with parents.

## Learning and Development

All the activities are planned so that the outcomes set out in the 'Development Matters' guidance during Nursery and Reception years are met and children achieve the 'Early Learning Goals' by the end of their Reception Year.

In the Foundation Stage we recognise that 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 inter-connected.

## Foundation Stage Curriculum

### *Communication and Language*

We pride ourselves on giving all children the opportunities to experience a rich language environment in order to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves plus the ability and confidence to speak and to listen in a variety of situations.

### *Physical Development*

The physical development of a young child is promoted in our Foundation Stage through the provision of opportunities for children to be active and to improve their skills of coordination, balance, control, manipulation and movement. We support them in using all their senses to learn about the world around them and to make connections between new skills and what they already know. Dance, Drama, PE, swimming (Reception), climbing on the fixed frames in the garden and riding bikes and tricycles all contribute towards the physical development of the children in the EYFS. The development of fine motor skills are also vital in every child and activities designed to promote these skills are provided on a regular basis in the EYFS. These skills are a necessary requirement for the development of letter formation, colouring and so on.

### *Personal, Social and Emotional Development*

Children thrive when they feel safe and secure in a warm and friendly environment. Self-esteem and self-confidence are two vital components, which are encouraged and built upon during a child's stay at the school. Circle times provide opportunities for children to listen to each other, to describe events that have taken place and to talk about their families and friends. Show and Tell (Reception) also provides a platform for each child to present a special object that is important to them and to explain why. PSHE classes in Reception also engage children in exercises designed to make them aware of others' needs and feelings and to respect others' thoughts and ideas. Stories and poems also add to the materials used to promote friendship and respect. Children take home a doll or toy and are encouraged to share what they have done over the weekend with it. All EYFS children have mindfulness lessons as part of daily relaxation classes, included in their PSHE lessons (Reception) or taught by our Mindfulness Coordinator or class teacher.

### *Literacy*

Cygnets class children have weekly 'Phase One' Phonics lessons which are revised daily and enhanced by our cross curricular style of teaching.

Swans class children are introduced to letters and sounds via '*Letterland*', which is a fun, animated alphabet comprising particular characters for each letter. Children are also introduced to preparatory activities, which encourage a correct and comfortable pencil grip. The children continue the learning from Cygnet's revising phase one and continuing through all initial sounds combining some of phase 2 and 3 to complete the alphabet over the

course of the year. Through our cross curricular teaching style, we immerse the children in the sound from garden club, science, topic work or cookery. We, go to the library often, understanding that print tells a story and provide many different activities to promote early mark making which all contribute towards the eventual goal of correct letter formation.

In Reception Class the children continue to use Letterland for consistency of learning and systematically completed each phase of the phonics scheme up to an end goal of starting phase 5 if the child is ready.

### *Mathematics*

Children are supported in developing their understanding of problem solving, reasoning and numeracy in a broad range of contexts in which they can explore, enjoy, learn, practise and talk about their developing understanding. We plan continual opportunities to practise and extend their skills in these areas and to gain confidence and competence in their use. They are extended and enhanced with their teacher in our cross-curricular teaching.

### *Understanding of the World*

We will support children in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding that help them make sense of the world. Their learning is supported through providing opportunities for them to use a range of tools safely, encounter creatures, people, plants and objects in their natural environments and in real life situations, undertake practical 'experiments', and work with a range of materials.

### *Expressive Arts and Design*

We will extend children's creativity by the provision of support for their curiosity, exploration and play. We provide continual opportunities to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings, for example through a variety of art, music, movement, dance, imaginative and role play activities and design and technology.

### *Play*

Play underpins the delivery of the EYFS and as Foundation Stage practitioners we understand play is central to young children's development and educational growth. During play, children develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally. Well planned and child-led play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which children learn with enjoyment, and we aim to provide play activities which allow our children to play spontaneously as well as with support from adults.

### *Other related policies*

This policy is to be read in conjunction with, inter alia, the following policy documents:

- Admissions
- Child Protection (2025)
- Educational Trips
- Equal Opportunities
- SEND