

Stramongate Primary School

January 2023

EYFS Policy



'Every child deserves the best possible start to life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential.'

EYFS framework

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Stramongate EYFS Policy

Introduction

The first year of school is a unique and special time in every child's life and needs to be valued as such. This policy has been written to reflect Stramongate's motto of 'Be kind, work hard and discover' and the core values of the school - respect, perseverance, self belief, pride and achieve. These values underpin all learning experiences in relation to the education and well-being of all Foundation Stage children. This policy provides a framework within which both teaching and non-teaching staff can operate and gives guidance on planning, teaching and assessment. This policy should be read in conjunction with EYFS Guidance in particular the two key documents 'Development Matters' and the 'Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage'.

This document has been prepared for the use of

- Teaching and support staff
- The Governing Body
- Parents
- Inspection Teams

Principles and Aims of our EYFS Policy

The aims below set out the rationale behind the teaching of early years in our School.

- To provide a welcoming environment for children and their families
- To ensure that all children feel included, secure, valued and safe
- To establish positive relationships with parents
- To keep parents well informed about the curriculum and their child's progress

- To build on what children already know and can do and to celebrate achievement
- To help children make links in their learning
- To stimulate positive attitudes and dispositions to learning
- To encourage independence
- To value children's interests, providing a balance of direct teaching and child initiated activities
- To help children build friendships and learn to co-operate with each other
- To provide a solid foundation in the three prime and four specific areas of learning, through well planned, rich and stimulating experiences
- To make careful observations in order to support and extend children's learning appropriately and to develop the characteristics of effective play
- To ensure that children with special educational needs are identified and receive appropriate support.

Admission/Induction Arrangements

Prior to September

1. Feeder nurseries are contacted to arrange visits from members of the Foundation Stage team to observe and discuss the prospective school children.
2. All parents/carers are invited to attend an induction evening at School to gain information about the Foundation Stage.
3. Children visit for one induction session with their class teacher.
4. Home visits to each child and their family are offered by the class teacher and a teaching assistant.
5. Stramongate Nursery children come over during a couple of lunchtimes to play and meet the staff in the summer term. Events are organised in the Summer term that Nursery can participate in e.g. Muddy Morning, Sports Day.

Starting school

At present, we have one Reception class. In the event of an increase of numbers and two classes being formed, the Reception children will be split equally by age, gender, and taking in to account any children with English as an additional language (EAL) and learning support needs. We aim to ensure that, where possible each child shall be placed in a class within a friendship group. We also listen to feedback about individual children from Nursery staff.

Children begin by doing six half days (three mornings and three afternoons) and then move on to doing two 'three-quarter' days, staying from 9.00am till 1.00 pm, hence staying for lunch. The children will then progress on to doing full days, currently from 9.00am until 3.15pm. We believe this is the best way to settle the children and really get to know both them and their parents in those early days. We constantly review this induction process.

Daily routine

Initially the children are brought in to the classroom from 9am for registration and the start of the day. Timings are changing in September 2023 and the policy will be adjusted to reflect this. The children are gradually introduced to assemblies. We aim to get them in as early as possible. At first the children will only attend KS1 assemblies. When confident with the routine, the children will then attend whole school assemblies.

During the first couple of weeks of the Autumn term, the Reception children have separate playtimes to the rest of the school to allow the children to familiarise themselves with the playground. The amount of time needed before joining the rest of the school at playtime will depend on the needs of the children. We use Y5/6 Buddies along with Sports Leaders to support children during Lunchtime.

At the end of the day the children are lined up in their classroom and taken out to the playground to greet their parents. Two members of staff are present in the classroom in order for the children to be handed over safely to their parents.

Partnership with Parents

Parents and families are central to a child's well-being and practitioners should support this important relationship by sharing information and offering support to learning in the home.

At Stramongate we feel that establishing a positive partnership with Foundation Stage parents is imperative. We aim to do this in several ways:

- Discussions with the Headteacher and Foundation Stage staff prior to seeking admission
- School prospectus
- Information booklets on the Foundation Stage
- Home visits
- 'Induction Evening' - event for parents where staff explain classroom routines and expectations
- Foundation Stage information pack with activities for children and parents to share e.g. 'All About Me' booklet
- Parents' information noticeboard – copies of newsletters, topics, menus, homework and suggestions for how parents can become involved in their child's learning, etc.
- Parents let us know of their child's achievements through feedback 'stars'
- Newsletters and topic overviews sent home regularly
- The use of Tapestry to update parents on their child's learning and also what they have been working on in class to create a 'dialogue' between home and school. We also use Tapestry to model key teaching points through teaching videos.

- Parents accompany their child into the classroom at the start of the day (chance to speak to the staff)
- Parent and child induction programmes
- Parents' evenings
- Sharing children's records, and progress with parents
- Use of floor books to share clear aspects of curriculum learning
- Curriculum evenings, e.g. Phonics, Reading, Numeracy
- Parents invited and encouraged to help in the classroom
- FOSS (Friends of Stramongate School) events
- An up-to-date website
- Parent mail texts and email messages
- Inviting parents in to help out in the classroom on special days and on our many trips

Parents tell us that they feel involved with their child's education when there is two-way communication at all levels, from speaking to their class teacher, to finding out what is happening in the wider school community. We also find that children learn best and flourish when their parents feel they are part of the learning journey, whether it is sharing the children's achievements or accompanying us on a trip. We pride ourselves on building strong relationships with the parents.

The EYFS Principles and Curriculum

The EYFS is for children from birth to the end of the Reception year. It is based on four overriding principles (A Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments and Learning & Development).

1. [A Unique Child – 'Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, confident and self assured'](#)

At Stramongate it is the responsibility of all teachers to ensure that all pupils irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity and social circumstances have access to the whole curriculum and make the greatest possible progress.

We ensure this in various ways including:

- Valuing every child
- Treating each child as an individual
- Providing an environment which is free from stereotypical images
- Using resources that positively reflect diversity
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies, based on children's learning needs
- Planning challenging opportunities for more able children
- Facilitating equal access to activities by all children
- Supporting children with special educational needs as appropriate e.g.
 - providing additional support from adults
 - adapting activities or environments

- using specialist aids and equipment
- using multi-sensory materials and experiences
- Supporting children with English as an additional language as appropriate e.g.
- valuing child's home language(s)

- providing a range of opportunities for children to engage in speaking and listening activities in English with peers and adults
- Celebrating individuality, festivals and achievements

2. Positive Relationships – ‘Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships’

At Stramongate we focus on building respect for each other and the wider world. We encourage the children to become independent learners through our nurturing of relationships. We build strong relationships between children, parents, staff and outside agencies by being welcoming, friendly, professional, consistent and caring. The introduction of the ‘Resilience Rucksack’ and following the ‘SCARF’ PHSE Programme helps children to focus on how to learn and the skills they need.

3. Enabling Environments – ‘Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults who respond to their individual needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and or carers’.

We aim to create a bright, vibrant and interactive learning environment where children’s work is displayed alongside teaching aids. The displays and environment, both indoor and outdoor, changes with what we are learning at the time. Children’s voices are reflected on the displays and around the classroom where possible.

4. Learning and Development – ‘Children develop and learn at different rates’

We recognise that children are individuals who need personalised learning. We plan their next steps referring to ‘Development Matters’. Continuous provision is enhanced with the children’s independent learning in mind.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The characteristics of effective learning involves the way in which children engage with other people and their environment – playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically. These characteristics underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

At Stramongate we seek to observe each child in their play, interacting as necessary to help them build up their effective learning skills. Through our positive outlook across the team, the staff encourage the children to ‘have a go’, explore and make links.

Learning and development

The Learning and Development principle is organised into prime and specific areas of learning:

Prime areas:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Communication and language
- Physical development

Specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

We promote this through:

- Establishing warm, caring relationships
- Nurturing self esteem and confidence
- Promoting self respect and respect for others
- Promoting awareness and appreciation of different cultures
- Encouraging self-discipline
- Encouraging independent learning

for example through:

- Following the SCARF PHSE Programme including weekly circle time and bucket fillers
- Praising achievement
- Resources promoting positive images of differences
- Multicultural resources
- Providing positive role models
- Secure routines and a safe environment
- Labelling resources clearly and making them accessible
- Self registration in the early days (reading), progressing on to 'signing in' (writing)
- Ensuring there is time and space for children to focus on activities and experiences that develop their own interests
- Planning for children to work independently, and also in collaborative groups where they need to share and co-operate

Communication and Language

This area of learning includes speaking and listening in different situations and for different reasons. It's about children communicating their thoughts, feelings and ideas.

We do this in various ways including:

- Valuing children's talk
- Providing opportunities for children to communicate their thoughts ideas and feelings, and to develop conversation with children and adults
- Incorporating communication, language and literacy development in planned activities in each area of learning
- Giving opportunities to share and enjoy a wide range of rhymes, music, songs, poetry, stories and non-fiction books
- Sharing news through daily Snack Time
- Encouraging careful listening through games, stories, circle time, music
- Using open ended questioning to stimulate thought and encourage the children to express their own thoughts
- Providing an environment which promotes the written language: signs, labels, notices, a book area, rhymes on laminated card, environmental print e.g. telephone directory, magazines, menus, eye charts in the role play area
- Encouraging children to retell stories, by using small world play, puppets
- Encouraging children's imaginative story telling through role play, small world play, sand and water play
- Linking language with physical movement e.g. in action songs and rhymes, cookery, gardening

Physical Development

This area of learning is about improving children's skills of coordination, control, manipulation and movement. Making progress in physical development gives children confidence and enables them to feel the benefits of being healthy and active.

We do this in various ways including:

- Developing and improving co-ordination, control, manipulation and movement (in both fine motor and gross motor skills)
- Helping children gain confidence in what they can do
- Offering appropriate physical challenges, enough space and time, and a range of resources both inside and outside to develop skills such as climbing, balancing, throwing, catching, manoeuvring wheeled toys
- Encouraging a variety of movement through dance
- Developing fine motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination through drawing, cutting, painting, manipulating clay and dough, pouring sand and water, threading beads, construction kits, tools

- Giving opportunities to play on the adventure playground and use PE equipment at playtimes
- Providing dedicated and differentiated 'movement/handwriting' time.
- Providing a dedicated PE session each week, a weekly outdoor Muddy Morning and daily access to outdoor provision
- **Literacy**

This area of learning involves the children becoming confident readers and writers, based on a good foundation of phonics teaching.

We do this in various ways including:

- Encouraging a good grasp of Phonics through consistent and well planned Phonics using 'Little Wandle' which will always be delivered by staff fully trained in the scheme.
- Ensuring reading books are accurately aligned to pupil Phonic knowledge. We use 'Collins Big Cat' texts which match our Phonics teaching.
- Ensuring children have three focused Practice reads each week focusing on the key components of reading development (Decoding using Phonics, Prosody (using expression and intonation) and comprehension.
- Ensuring children have the opportunity to apply their Phonic knowledge into writing on a daily basis within the Phonic session.
- Involving parents in how we teach Phonics through provision of a parental workshop and uploading teaching videos on to Tapestry for parents to access.
- Promoting children's emergent writing through role play (e.g. writing orders in the café) and in the writing area – using a variety of writing materials and responding to stimuli such as postcards, greeting cards, flap books, letters
- Providing opportunities for children to see adults writing for a purpose e.g. writing the shopping list for the cookery ingredients the class needs
- Talking about the features of books especially in shared text time
- Encouraging handwriting skills by supporting fine motor control and hand-eye co-ordination through activities such as malleable play, bead threading, jigsaws, pegs and pegboards, finger paints, drawing in sand trays and also through differentiated handwriting sessions.
- Provision of a library area in the reception unit with up to date tiles and books changed regularly linking to current topics.
- Children take home a 'reading for pleasure' book each week to promote a love of books and reading
- Promoting links with Kendal library with the aim of having all Reception children members of our local library.
- Encouraging children to share and enjoy books together. Our daily story time is a priority in Reception.

Mathematics

This area of learning includes developing mathematical understanding through stories, songs, games, everyday activities and imaginative play, so that children enjoy experimenting and become confident, comfortable and curious about numbers, shapes, patterns and measures.

We do this in various ways including:

- Giving children a variety of experiences to count, sort, match and order real objects
- Developing mathematical understanding through practical activities and first hand experiences
- Providing a meaningful context for maths e.g. stories, role play, real problems such as planning a party, cooking
- Making regular use of number rhymes and songs
- Developing children's use and understanding of mathematical language
- Providing opportunities to explore volume and capacity, for example, in sand and water play
- Providing opportunities to investigate shape and size, for example, in building and construction
- Looking for numbers, patterns and shapes in the environment
- Using and experimenting with numbers, including numbers to 10 and beyond
- Talking about numbers, and using open ended questions to encourage children's mathematical thinking
- Developing a sense of time through daily routines
- Developing positional language through small world play, e.g. positioning furniture in the dolls house or animals on the farm

Understanding the World

In this area of learning, children are developing the knowledge, skills and understanding to help them make sense of the world. This forms the foundation for later work in science, history, geography, design and technology, and information and communication technology.

We do this in various ways including:

- Providing first hand experiences that encourage children to explore, observe, predict, compare, solve problems, question, make decisions, discuss, think, use all their senses
- Providing a wide range of activities indoors and outdoors that stimulate children's interest and curiosity
- Providing a weekly 'Muddy Morning'
- Promoting children's thought and investigation by asking open ended questions
- Encouraging the children to explore the immediate environment

- Developing geographical concepts, features and language through small world play e.g. road mats, model villages, making landscapes in the sand tray
- Introducing children to different environments through regular visits
- Recreating and exploring different aspects of their environment and the wider world through role play e.g. shops, castle, the post office, the airport
- Using water play to investigate floating and sinking, absorption, bubbles, ice, etc.
- Using sand play to compare the qualities of dry and wet sand
- Using paints, malleable materials and cooking to explore materials and observe changes
- Using construction kits, blocks and 'found' resources to develop design and technology skills
- Using programmable toys, walkie talkies, mobile phones and computers to develop ICT
- Discussing the weather
- Developing an understanding of a sense of time through daily routines
- Developing a sense of the past, present and future through discussion about events e.g. today we are doing this ..., yesterday we..., tomorrow we will ...,
- Using photographs to compare, contrast, notice changes and sequence in chronological order e.g. photos of the children now, as toddlers, and as babies
- Using stories and role play to recreate life in a different time e.g. Goldilocks and the Three Bears, castle
- Using artefacts e.g. traditional toys, their baby toys, their parents' toys to get a sense of the past, to compare and contrast
- Listening to older people's memories of their school days
- Recording children's experiences through an 'Understanding of the World' floor book which allows them to reflect on their own learning, ask questions and deepen their understanding.

Expressive Arts and Design

This area of learning includes art, music, dance, drama and imaginative play. It provides opportunities for children to try new experiences and express themselves in a variety of ways. Creativity is an important part of successful learning; it enables children to make connections between experiences, helps them to solve problems and be inventive.

We do this in various ways including:

- Valuing children's creativity and original ideas
- Encouraging children to express themselves through art, music, dance, role play and imaginative play
- Encouraging imaginative play in a range of contexts e.g. role play, small world play, construction, malleable materials, sand and water play, puppets, storytelling
- Providing multi-sensory experiences
- Providing opportunities for children to explore, colour, shape, texture and space
- Providing opportunities for children to enjoy and respond to music. We provide a dedicated Music session each week following the Music scheme 'Charanga'. Children have access to both tuned and untuned percussion.

- Providing a wide range of good quality materials with which children can explore and experiment
- Allowing sufficient time for children to explore and experiment, develop and refine ideas
- Helping children develop confidence in their own ideas and abilities
- Helping children become more independent in making choices, selecting resources and techniques, responding to stimuli.

Outdoor Play

At Stramongate we plan purposeful and stimulating learning experiences that will capture children's interest and curiosity. The outdoor environment allows for children to learn by working on a larger, more active scale, and can provide for a wide range of different experiences. The outdoor area is available for the children to use throughout the school day outside of key teaching sessions. They can access this area as a part of their independent 'busy time'.

Short term planning will show how teachers plan for children to spend time outdoors actively engaged in purposeful activities. Examples of opportunities that are provided are:

- Role play (building site, fire fighter, Three Bears' Cottage etc, continual change of home corner)
- Clipboards to support observational drawing and emergent writing
- Circle games/parachute games
- Maths trails
- Growing plants, investigating minibeasts, observing the weather
- Sand and water play
- Large construction
- Large scale art work
- Wheeled toys, climbing/balancing equipment
- Work bench
- Small apparatus such as bean bags, hoops, skittles
- Conservation areas for environmental education
- Opportunities to follow maps or plans
- Open-ended equipment to allow for creative play (fabric, giant pegs, planks etc)
- Children also participate in a weekly 'Muddy Morning'.

Planning

- Long term planning: yearly cycle of mini topics (1, 2 or 3 weeks long).
- Medium term planning: topic break down and how each topic links to EYFS areas
- Short term planning: weekly plans incorporating the areas of learning taught through teacher directed tasks, child initiated tasks and continuous play provision.
- Planning is flexible to respond to those unplanned but important occasions, e.g. the snowy day, a power cut, an earthquake.
- Planning is displayed in the classroom.

Assessment

Assessment, recording and reporting should be in line with the school's ARR policy.

Assessment procedures include:

- Careful observations carried out while children are engaged in normal classroom activities, in order to gain an insight into children's interests and what they can do. We share this information with parents using Tapestry.
- Careful observations carried out during focused group work/whole class teaching in order to assess children's level of understanding related to specific skills and concepts
- Discussions with children about their interests and their learning
- Baseline Assessments, termly progress records (shared with parents) and end of year assessment based on whether Early Learning goals have been reached or whether pupils are still working towards Early Learning Goals (Emerging).
- All observations, assessments and recording are an integral part of teaching, as they inform future planning for children's needs
- Exchange of information with parents e.g. Regular in class assessments, Phonics Tracker and Tapestry
- Three parent's evenings throughout the year and parent conferences where necessary
- Annual report for parents

We receive records and profiles from feeder nurseries to ensure continuity and progression from Nursery to Reception within the Foundation Stage. Foundation Stage profile, Baseline results and teacher assessments are passed from Reception to Year 1 staff at the end of the Reception year in order to ensure continuity and progression.

Safeguarding the Children

At Stramongate we take steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children through:

- Having daily fruit and milk time
- Talking about keeping our bodies healthy and healthy lifestyles
- Encouraging active playtimes through the provision of games toys
- Liaising with the parents when their child is ill, has fallen or has injured themselves
- Promoting positive behaviour through verbal praise, stickers and charts, feedback to parents and carers
- Always making sure there is a member of staff in the outdoor patio area when it is open to the children
- Making sure the staffing ratios are adhered to, both within and outside of the school premises
- Circle time sessions and SEAL/Memo of the month assemblies
- Checking that adults who work with the children are suitable to do so
- Maintaining safe and suitable equipment, furniture and toys for the children
- Meeting individual needs through careful planning and liaison with the relevant staff and/or outside agencies
- Filling in CPoms when concerns arise about child protection and welfare, liaising with DSL.
- Keeping the school site secure
- Mobile phones and cameras are only used in the setting by CRB checked staff and are only used for assessment or reporting purposes, such as being stuck in the children's Learning Story books or in a class file.
- Medication for the children (such as inhalers) is stored in a secure cupboard labelled 'First Aid', as is the First Aid folder, where all members of staff including midday staff are able to have access to. There are always at least two members of staff who are trained in paediatric first aid.

Staff Professional Development Provision

Needs are identified by individuals during CPD and performance management meetings, by curriculum review and through the School Development Planning process. Needs are recorded and prioritised by the Head. Individual needs are considered as part of the Staff Development Policy. School needs are considered and planned for by the Head in conjunction with the School Development Plan and the Vision for the School.

Evaluation

This Policy for the Foundation Stage will be reviewed every three years or sooner if necessary to reflect changes in practice.

