

Early Year Foundation Stage Policy



Thorn Grove Primary School

Approved by the Teaching and Learning Committee on:	17th June 2021
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Introduction

Within this document, the term EYFS is used to describe children who are in the Nursery and Reception classes, commonly referred to as the Early Years Foundation stage. We adhere to the statutory framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within the setting.

Thorn Grove Primary EYFS Provision

The EYFS applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Thorn Grove, we offer provision for children who are able to start Nursery in the September, January or Easter intake following their third birthday. Children are also able to join Reception for a place starting in September following their fourth birthday. Applications for school places at Thorn Grove must be made by applying centrally, through the admissions department on the Stockport Council's website. www.stockport.gov.uk/schooladmissions

The EYFS Curriculum

There are seven education programmes in the EYFS curriculum, which are all inter-connected. There are three prime areas which are crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for helping their capacity to learn. These are:

- **Communication and Language**
- **Physical Development**
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

There are then four specific areas through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. These are:

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

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

A Unique Child

We celebrate the uniqueness of each child by offering personalised learning opportunities and through working closely with families and professionals from other settings who have knowledge of the child. The curriculum and the opportunities we offer are designed to help children develop a positive growth mind-set and awareness of cultural diversity. We recognise that children learn in different ways and at different rates and we accommodate this in the provision we offer.

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 and carers. We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents and carers have played, and will continue to play in educating their children.

- We talk to parents about their child before starting school
- We offer home visits for the Nursery children and home visits for the Reception children who have not attended our Nursery
- We give children an opportunity to spend time with their new teacher before the term starts through settling in sessions in Nursery and Reception and two transition visits for the children starting in Reception
- We invite parents and carers to an EYFS induction meeting during the term before their child starts school
- We hold one-to-one meetings with parents after their child's first half term in school, to discuss the effectiveness of the transition process and their child's learning at home/school
- We offer parents regular formal and informal opportunities to talk about their child's development through weekly 'Stay and Play' sessions and termly coffee mornings
- Parent workshops are held at regular intervals throughout the year to offer further insight into the teaching methods we use for phonics, writing and maths, including how children can be supported at home
- At the end of the year we hold an annual 'Family picnic' event to bring all our EYFS families together. This provides an exciting and happy transition between Nursery, Reception and Year 1
- In the summer term, we provide parents with an annual written report detailing their child's progress. This report also provides parents an opportunity to share their views

Enabling Environments

At Thorn Grove Primary School, we recognise that the physical and human environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. We observe the children and assess their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend children's learning.

Observation, assessment and planning is based on each child's ongoing formative assessment. We also have long, medium and short term plans to ensure coverage is equitable but these do change according to the needs of individuals and the interests of the class.

Observations in the EYFS are used to inform practitioners of children's current learning and next steps towards reaching their Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception. Observations are made by teachers and teaching assistants working with the child. They are gathered on an app called Tapestry and shared with parents. Parents have the opportunity to comment on their child's observations and they can also add their own observations of their child at home. This in turn informs and feeds into the judgements made on each child at the end of the year.

At the end of the Reception year, each child will be assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs), each one linked to the education programmes listed in the EYFS curriculum above.

The Reception teacher will record each child's level of development against the 17 ELGs as Emerging or Expected. At the end of the year, the Reception teacher will create a commentary of the child's skills in relation to the three key characteristics of learning (Playing and exploring, Active learning, Creative and critical thinking)

The Learning Environment

Our learning environments are organised to enthuse children to explore and learn securely and safely. The Nursery and Reception classrooms are arranged into continuous provision areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Our outdoor environment is equally important and vital in offering children the opportunity to develop a healthy and active lifestyle whilst exploring, discovering and promoting a sense of well-being through freedom and movement.

We positively encourage independent learning and allow children to approach challenge at their own level. Resources in our learning areas are carefully planned to help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning.

The Wider Context

Thorn Grove is a truly unique main stream primary school. It is unique because situated within it, is a small Educational Resource Base for Deaf pupils. The parents/carers of these students have chosen a sign bilingual approach for the education of their child. The Deaf Base, which is resourced and managed by Stockport Sensory Support Service, caters for a small number of pupils who live within the Stockport Borough. The students that attend Deaf Base are very much part of the school community and access where possible our main stream provision.

Thorn Grove is very fortunate to have a team of very skilled dedicated professionals who work hard to ensure that children enjoy coming to school and that they are working hard each day to achieve their dreams.

We also work closely with outside agencies to support children's development. Where appropriate we involve health and social care professionals, family support worker and other members of the local community. We have a diverse school and we actively promote community cohesion. We enthusiastically engage in moderation meetings with other local schools with a view to securing agreed academic judgements. This helps immensely when accepting children from different settings with assessment data that is now accurate and reliable. The link with these schools also helps us to strengthen the continuity for families who join us.

Learning and Development

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 interconnected. Through our teaching and learning we ensure that children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement. Our practitioners understand how children develop and learn, and consider this when they plan teaching opportunities.

We offer children first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play. Our carefully planned curriculum helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS.

We enable children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities. Children are encouraged to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management. Learning is supported by appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment. We identify progress and future learning needs of children through observations and making regular assessments on each child.

The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning in the Early Years are:

Playing and Exploring

Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests. We believe that through play children achieve their highest learning potential. Playing with peers is important for children's development. Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them to 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.

Active Learning

Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. We give children a degree of independence and control over their learning. As they develop their confidence they learn to make decisions and this provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creative and Critical thinking

When children have opportunities to play and engage with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.

We give children opportunities to be creative in all areas of learning. Adults support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions.

Principles into practice

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS curriculum, using play as the vehicle for learning
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support
- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider context
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child initiated, supported by the adult
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out

Home Visits

- Prior to any child being welcomed into our school the first point of contact will be made, with both parents and child, in the home
- A home visit will be made shortly before the child is due to start Nursery and for those children new to Reception, who have not attended our Nursery. Two members of staff will make the visit
- The visit will give the staff the opportunity to meet both parents and child in comfortable and secure surroundings
- If home visits are not possible arrangements will be made for the family to meet in school.
- Meetings will be used, not only to get to know parents and child, but additionally to explain routines, times etc and to answer any questions that may be asked of the Nursery or the school. They will enable staff to interact with the child and provide him/her with a reference point for when they do eventually formally start Nursery or Reception
- Meetings will give an opportunity for both parents and school to discuss mutual expectations or support that may be offered
- The opportunity will be available to arrange Nursery/Reception visits prior to starting. Parents and child will visit together to enable smooth settling procedures
- Communication will be encouraged between settings where children attend before or after school clubs or day care settings

Transition Practices

Transitions (children new to nursery or moving from one class to another) are carefully planned for and time is given to ensure the continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and child-minders. Children attend introductory sessions to Nursery/Reception to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. Parents receive a Welcome pack and questionnaire linked to their child's personal interests.

In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

Ratios

The school will ensure that staff levels within the Early Years setting comply with statutory guidance and can meet the needs of the children, provide suitable levels of supervision and keep them safe. Children will be kept within sight and hearing at all times. The EYFS Leader will oversee all EYFS provision.

- There will be at least one member of staff for every 13 children
- Classes will be led by a qualified teacher supported by suitably qualified support staff.

The EYFS Leader will make sure that;

- There are correct adult to child ratios at all times
- At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid certificate will be on the premises at all times when children are present
- Risks have been assessed carefully before carrying out any practical activities or trips

The Early Years Foundation Profile

The EYFS profile assessment must be carried out in the final term of Reception in which a child reaches age 5, and no later than 1 July in that term.

The main purpose of the EYFS profile is to provide a reliable, valid and accurate assessment of individual children at the end of the EYFS.

EYFS profile data is used to:

- inform parents about their child's development against the ELGs and the characteristics of their learning
- support a smooth transition to key stage 1 (KS1) by informing the professional dialogue between EYFS and KS1 teachers
- help year 1 teachers plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children

The EYFS profile provides an accurate national data set relating to levels of child development at the end of the EYFS. The DfE uses this to monitor changes in levels of children's development and their readiness for the next phase of their education both nationally and locally.

At Thorn Grove, we begin by assessing a baseline on entry to Nursery and Reception within the first 3 – 6 weeks. This is reviewed termly as part of our School Assessment procedure.

In the final term of Reception, teachers must review information from all sources to make a judgement for each child, for each ELG. The judgement must say whether the child's learning and development is:

- best described by the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS (expected)
- not yet at the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS (emerging)

Safeguarding within Early Years Settings

Refer to Safeguarding Policy on the school website.

As an Early Year's provider delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the school aims to meet the specific safeguarding and child protection duties set out in the Childcare Act 2006 and related statutory guidance.

The school will ensure that children taught in Nursery and Reception classes are able to learn and develop and are kept safe and healthy so that they are ready for school by providing a safe, secure learning environment that safeguards and promotes their welfare, and takes appropriate action where there are child protection concerns.

All safeguarding and child protection policies within the school will apply equally to children in Early Year's settings so far as they are relevant to that age group.

In relation to the use of mobile phones within the early years setting we will ensure:

- Parents and carers are asked to switch off mobile phones if they are coming into the early years setting and leave the setting if they need to use their mobile;
- Parents are generally prohibited from taking any photographs of children in the early years setting, however for special events such as school performances, may do so on the understanding that the images are not posted onto social media sites or otherwise shared, and providing there are no objections from any other parents attending whose children are taking part in the event;
- Staff seek parental permission to take photographs of the children, which must be linked to teaching the curriculum and that they use school equipment only for this purpose;
- Staff switch off personal mobile phones in the Early Years setting and use them only during breaks outside the setting.

Other Policy Requirements fall under other general policy arrangements:

- Safeguarding policy
- Online Safety policy
- SEND policy
- Behaviour and Discipline policy
- Equal opportunities
- Anti-bullying policy

Management arrangements

The EYFS Leader in conjunction with the Head Teacher is responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of this policy.

All Staff are responsible for implementing procedures outlined in this policy.