

THOMAS RUSSELL INFANTS' SCHOOL

FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children aged from zero to the end of the Reception Year. At Thomas Russell Infants School, all children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five (compulsory schooling begins at the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday).

We recognise the EYFS as important in its own right. It introduces the children to life in school and sets the basis for their future learning.

Children joining our school may already have experienced some form of Early Years education. Many children have been to one of a range of settings that exist in our community. The Early Years education that we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds upon what our children already know and can do;
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and a range of activities that provide opportunities for learning, both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a happy, safe and stimulating environment;
- It recognises the importance of children enjoying their learning and provides a wealth of hands-on experiences.

Aims of the Foundation Stage

The curriculum planned in the EYFS underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

- Personal, social and emotional well-being;
- Imagination and creativity;
- Social skills;
- Concentration skills, persistence and independence;
- Language and communication skills;
- Mathematical development;
- Reading and writing skills (including those that underpin the actual reading and writing processes);
- Knowledge and understanding of the world;
- Physical development;
- Creative development;
- Positive attitude towards themselves and their learning.

Learning and Teaching Styles

Our school policy on learning and teaching defines the features of effective learning and teaching in our school. These features apply to the teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do in the teaching in Key Stage One.

The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the EYFS are:

- The partnership between teachers and parents. We recognise that parents may feel apprehensive in bringing their child to school for the first time. We aim to develop excellent relations with all parents to make their first year as enjoyable and informed as possible. We celebrate their child's achievements with them wherever possible in turn;
- The carefully planned induction process which welcomes all children into the Reception Unit and prepares them fully for life at our school;
- The understanding that Early Years Practitioners have great knowledge about how children develop and learn and how this affects the opportunities that we provide;
- The ongoing use of the Foundation Stage Profile which is supported by constant formative assessment and termly summative assessments, as well as regular observation;
- The range of opportunities that provide first-hand experiences and encourage independence and self-management;
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the EYFS'
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, developing their sense of achievement and helping them to become happy, confident learners;
- The support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and resources;
- The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations and assessments which are regularly shared with parents;
- The good relationships and liaison between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;
- The clear aims for our work and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve our Early Years provision;
- The regular attending of Early Years cluster meetings, liaison with our Early Years Advisory team and the identification of training needs of adults within our setting.

Play in the Foundation Stage

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences which help them to make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learning how to control themselves and developing the need for rules. They are given the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. Through role-play, children will re-enact experiences with their friends and peers.

Inclusion in the Foundation Stage

At Thomas Russell Infants' School we believe that all our children matter. We give the children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of their abilities and life experiences when planning for their learning and constantly review our teaching to suit all abilities and needs (see Inclusion Policy).

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. It is our aim that the children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage but also some progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, children identified as having Special Educational Needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We also take into account when planning, the young age of our children and the need to develop many personal, social and emotional skills when starting school. Children who are still working on the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception will continue to be assessed using the Foundation Stage Profile for the first term in Year 1, if appropriate.

We meet the needs of all children through:

- Planning opportunities that 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 the children’s learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support the children;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Using quality resources that reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of the Early Learning Goal expectations;
- Monitoring children’s progress and taking action to provide support as necessary. This involves additional help for some of our children.

The Foundation Stage Curriculum

The curriculum for the EYFS in our school is based upon the six areas of learning which are identified in the “Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance”. The activities that are planned and delivered often incorporate many aspects of the different areas of learning.

The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Our medium term planning is completed half termly and identifies the intended learning with outcomes related to the Early Learning Goals.

The Early Learning Goals are in line with the objectives in the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy. On a daily basis the children experience sessions with a Language and Communication, Reading and Writing and Number and/or Shape, Space and Measure focus. As part of the transition to Year 1, by the end of the Foundation Stage, the children are taught a more structured literacy and numeracy session.

Assessment

We make daily assessments of the children’s learning and use information gained to ensure future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of ongoing completion of criteria sheets, observation and summative assessments completed at the end of each term.

All children in Reception have a Foundation Stage Profile. This forms an overall assessment of the child based on seven areas of learning. The Profile is completed at intervals throughout the year and is mainly informed through observation assessments. Information is sought from the child's previous educator and from their parents at the beginning of the Reception year. The child's parents then contribute their thoughts throughout the year in Reception.

The Role of the Parents

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. It is our aim to support parents to the best of our abilities as they introduce their child to school. We do this through:

- Giving the opportunity for parents to share information about their child with the teacher/school before their child starts school, e.g. summer term meetings
- Visiting children in their pre-school setting prior to their starting school;
- Giving the children the opportunity to spend time in the Reception classrooms with the staff before starting school;
- Providing all children and an accompanying adult with a "trial" lunch in school;
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school and to subsequent parents meetings after their first half term in Reception;
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress;
- Encouraging parents to talk to a member of the Early Years Team if they have any questions or concerns, through our 'open door' ethos. There is a formal meeting for parents each term at which the teacher and parents discuss many aspects of the child's development and progress. Parents receive a report on their child's achievements and attainment at the end of the school year;
- Providing clear and concise verbal and written information on routines, procedures and other aspects of school life;
- Offering a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents. We strive to make parents feel involved in their child's education through regular updates of events in school and copies of medium term planning;
- Forming weekly communication between home and school through the use of the "Learning Log".
- Communication and signposting on the school website.

Learning Environment

We plan a safe and stimulating environment both indoors and outdoors that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect the community in which the children live and the wider world. We encourage the children to become independent learners by allowing them to make their own selections of activities on offer. We display the children's work with them and value the contribution that all children make to the displays in our classrooms.

Signed: _____

Date: March 2013

Next review: March 2014