



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Mission Grove Primary School

Approved by Governing Body

Date: March 2024

Review Date : March 2025

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Foundation Stage Policy

Statement of Intent

This policy reflects the values and philosophy of Mission Grove School in relation to the teaching and learning goals of the children in the Foundation Years. The policy is a framework, within which all staff work, and gives guidance on planning, teaching and assessment. The policy should be read in conjunction with the DFE document Development Matters (Non-statutory) curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage - September 2020, (revised July 2021) and the Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage 'Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five' - September 2021.

This policy document, after presentation to, and agreement by, the staff and Governing Body, is distributed to all teaching and non-teaching staff and the School Governors. Further copies are available in the School Office and on the School shared drive and website.

The remit of the Foundation Stage

The Early Years at Mission Grove Primary School is across three age groups;

Robin Class – Our provision for two year old children in a dedicated learning space with access to a dedicated outdoor area.

Puffin Nursery – Our three year old provision, where children can access all areas of learning with their own outdoor learning area.

Reception - Our four year old provision, an open plan area where children have the opportunity to play and learn with their friends, they also have access to an adventure trail, bikes and scooters, a quiet area and a landscaped play area.

Philosophy

Children learn and develop more from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives. If children are at risk of falling behind the majority, the best time to help them to catch up and keep up is in the early years. Every child can make progress, if they are given the right support.

The philosophy of Mission Grove is to provide a firm foundation, which embraces the EYFS characteristics of effective learning and the underlying themes of a unique child, positive relationships, enabling environments and learning and development. We aim to provide a curriculum that is broad and balanced in content and wide-ranging in approach, helping to ensure future progress and success. We believe that we should create a learning environment that is motivating, exciting and caring, in order to contribute to the children's positive self-esteem and to foster a love of learning.

At Mission Grove Primary School, our aims for all children are:

- to enjoy the process of learning
- to experience equality of opportunity in a caring, safe and secure environment
- to be valued as individuals and acquire self-confidence, independence and self-help skills
- to develop enquiring minds, encouraging independent thought
- to gain knowledge, skills, concepts and attitudes that relate to all areas of the curriculum and to life
- to learn attention skills and persistence, in particular the ability to concentrate
- to cultivate positive attitudes, values and beliefs and develop an understanding of, and respect for, other people's beliefs and cultures
- to experience personal achievement and appreciate the achievement of others
- to develop a positive self-image and an understanding of their value in society
- to acquire the skills to communicate their needs, feelings and experiences
- to develop respect and responsibility for self and others.

In accordance with the EYFS curriculum, each child in our two year old class and Foundation Stage 1 has a named 'Key Person' who takes a particular interest in their progress and development. The Teachers and Early Years Practitioners at Mission Grove make every effort to support and take care of the young children, assisting them in the cloakroom, at lunch time, getting changed for PE and other practical activities, while encouraging independence and self-help skills. Practitioners supervise the children on arrival in school, at break times and at the end of the school day until they are collected.

Parental Involvement

At Mission Grove we recognise the importance of the role of Parents and the significant influence that they have already played in the early education of their child. We wish to build a firm partnership that benefits and enhances their children's development and well-being. This can have a very positive impact on a child's development but relies on a two-way flow of information and knowledge.

We develop this working relationship between the school and Parents and carers as follows:

- We outline the school's expectations in a Learning Contract.
- We hold a Parent consultation early in the year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment.
- We host weekly 'stay and play' and 'stay and read' sessions encouraging parents to be involved in their child's learning and development.
- All parents have access to their child's Learning Journal via the 2 Simple assessment tool, is an online assessment system designed to capture key moments of children's learning and development. Parents can comment on photos and videos and can share their own photos and short videos from home.
- We send home a Star Moments leaflet designed to enable staff and parents or carers to record outstanding achievements.
- We publish a curriculum map detailing the areas of learning and the overarching theme of the half-term.
- We operate an open door policy that allows parents and carers to discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner. Conversely, if staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- We conduct workshops for parents and carers to enable them to be familiar with the teaching methods used in school to make it easier to emulate them at home.
- There will be opportunities for parents and carers to visit the school on a volunteer basis to assist with the children's learning by assisting with guided reading.
- At the end of term, we will invite parents and carers to visit the school informally in order to fully appreciate the work that has been produced in that term.

The Early Years Framework

All children in the EYFS have access to a broad, rich topic based curriculum both indoors and outdoors. This part of the guidance sets out the Early Learning Goals for each area of learning. It shows what practitioners need to know about children's learning in each area and what this means for their teaching, including planning and assessment, throughout the Foundation Stage. It identifies 'stages in' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. These stepping stones identify the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that children need, if they are to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Learning through play

In the Foundation Stage we do not make a distinction between work and play. Through play our children explore and develop the learning experiences that help them make sense of the world. Children learn through planned play activities and staff decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. The child's experience must always be central to the thinking of every practitioner.

Leuven Scales: Measuring well-being and involvement

At Mission Grove all staff will assess the levels of well-being and involvement of the children using the Leuven Scales. Well-being focuses on the extent to which pupils feel at ease, act spontaneously, show vitality and self-confidence. It is a crucial component of emotional intelligence and good mental health.

Involvement focuses on the extent to which pupils are operating to their full capabilities. In particular it refers to whether the child is focused, engaged and interested in various activities.

The rationale underlying the focus on these two-process dimensions is that high levels of well-being and involvement lead in the end to high levels of child development and deep level learning. This latter concept is centred around the notion that learning should result in significant changes in a child's capacity leading to better outcomes in the way that he or she approaches work, relationships and life in general.

The seven areas of learning covered by the framework are:

Prime Areas

Personal, Social, and Emotional Development helps children become confident and establish constructive relationships with other children, parents, and adults. To enable them to achieve this children must first show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly. They should show respect for themselves and others, take turns and share, express their ideas and feelings and respond appropriately to a variety of experiences. Children should be able to work independently, concentrate and persevere with their learning and explore new avenues, initiate ideas and solve practical problems. They should be interested, excited and motivated to learn and have increasing awareness of their own needs. They should be able to dress and undress themselves, manage their own personal hygiene and understand the importance of healthy food choices.

PSED is a critical area of development for young children in all aspects of their lives and gives them the best opportunity for success in all areas of learning. It permeates all aspects of the curriculum, with practitioners using opportunities whenever they arise in class to promote all elements. Children at the expected level of development will be able to work and play cooperatively and take turns with others, form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers and show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs.

Communication and Language helps children to interact with other people, communicate their thoughts, ideas and feelings and build up relationships with adults and each other. Children will learn to listen attentively and respond to rhymes, stories, songs, music, non-fiction and poems with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions. Children will make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding, allowing them to hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers. They should express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.

These outcomes cover important aspects of language development and provide the foundation for Literacy. Children should be helped to acquire competence in English as soon as possible, making use, where appropriate, of their advances in talking and listening and becoming readers and writers.

Physical Development in the Foundation Stage is about improving skills of co-ordination, control, manipulation and movement. It helps children gain better control and co-ordination as they move safely, confidently and imaginatively, and helps them learn how to handle objects, tools and construction materials safely and with control.

Physical development has two very important aspects; it helps children become confident in what they can do and enables them to feel the positive benefits of being healthy and active.

Specific Areas

Literacy helps children to develop a love of reading through stories, songs and rhymes. This will support children to develop the ability to retell stories and narratives using their own words and take part in role-play with confidence, demonstrating their understanding of what has been read to them. They learn to enjoy books and handle them appropriately and with care. They understand that words and pictures carry meaning and that, in English, print is read from left to right and from top to bottom. They come to associate sounds with patterns and syllables and with words and letters, to recognise their own names and some familiar words in their reading environment. In the Nursery and Reception children learn through the Read Write Inc. programme, they learn to read aloud simple sentences using books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, combined with core rhymes and books to encourage a love of reading. The children develop their writing, first using pictures, symbols, letters and familiar words, enabling them to communicate meaning. They then develop the skills and knowledge to write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed, spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters and write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

Mathematics enables children to further their understanding of number, measurement, pattern, shape and space by providing a broad range of contexts in which they can explore, enjoy, learn, practise and talk. These outcomes cover important aspects of mathematical understanding and provide the foundation for Numeracy.

Understanding the World is the area of learning concerned with historical, geographical and scientific learning. Children begin to solve problems, make decisions, experiment, predict, plan and question in a variety of contexts. Allowing them to discover and explore their environment and people and places that have significance in their lives. Children learn about similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been taught. Children explore the natural world around them and understand some important processes and changes, including the seasons and changing states of matter.

Expressive arts and design offer children a way to refine their vision of the world and share these feelings and responses with others. Being creative enables children to make connections between one area of learning and another and so extend understanding. Creative Development allows children to express their feelings in a personal and individualistic way.

Characteristics of effective learning

The characteristics of effective learning describe factors which play a central role in a child's learning and in becoming an effective learner. They are vital elements of support for the transition process from EYFS to Year 1. The characteristics of learning run through and underpin all seven areas of learning and development, representing processes rather than outcomes. Information describing the child's characteristics of effective learning will provide Year 1 teachers with vital background and context when considering the child's next stage of development and future learning needs.

Playing and exploring – engagement

- Finding out and exploring – show curiosity, interest, use senses to explore and engage in open ended activities
- Playing with what they know – representing their experience in play, taking on a role in their play and acting out experiences
- Being willing to have a go – initiating activities, seeking challenge, taking risks and engaging in new experiences and learning by trial and error

Active learning – motivation

- Being involved and concentrating – maintaining focus, paying attention, not easily distracted and showing high level of energy and fascination

- Keep trying – persistence, bouncing back after difficulties using different approaches
- Enjoying and achievement what they set out to do – show satisfaction in meeting own goals, be proud of accomplishments, enjoy meeting a challenge

Creating and thinking critically - thinking

- Having their own ideas – thinking, problem solving and finding new ways to do things
- Making links – noticing patterns, making predictions, testing ideas, developing ideas of grouping , sequences, cause and effect
- Choosing ways to do things – planning, make decisions, solving problems, changing strategy as necessary, reviewing approaches

Class Organisation and Teaching Style

In our 2 Year Old provision we are able to offer 24 part time places. In Nursery we offer full time and part time places where children can attend for 15 or 30 hours per week. We are also able to offer additional hours up until 6pm. At present we are able to offer 25 full time spaces and 90 part time spaces.

In Reception we have four classes, each class has a maximum of thirty children.

The Learning Environment

The Foundation Stage classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, quiet or creative. Each classroom has defined learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The Foundation Stage has enclosed outdoor areas, and children are able to free-flow between the indoor and outdoor spaces. Being outdoors offers the children opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. They are able to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all the areas of learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The planning within the EYFS is based on the Development Matters statements and the Characteristics of Effective Learning statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. These plans are flexible so that teachers can respond to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning. This fostering of the children's interests develops a high level of motivation for the children's learning. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations. These observations are recorded in a variety of ways, and contribute to the child's individual profile book. At the beginning and the end of the reception year in school, the child's progress is recorded through an on entry Base Line Assessment test (statutory assessment and 2 Simple – Evidence Me) and then on the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Each child's level of development is recorded against the 17 Early Learning Goals.

Assessment

We will complete a progress check for all our 2-year olds after they have settled with us. This progress check will be a short written summary of the child's development in the Prime Areas and will be recorded and shared with parents. There will be a discussion with the parents regarding their child's development and what they are able to do at home. This discussion will lead to planning next steps which will reflect the developmental level and needs for the individual child.

In nursery and reception our children's progress is assessed using The Leuven Scales, Development Matters, Characteristics of Effective Learning and then in the summer term against the Early Learning Goals as part of the summative profile arrangements.

This assessment together with careful, continual and consistent monitoring by the teachers throughout the school year enables early intervention in any special needs that might occur and provides a sound basis for practitioners to plan for children's progress.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school. All children at Mission Grove Primary School are treated fairly whatever their race, gender, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school. In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with 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 meet the needs of all our 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 children's learning needs;
- 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;
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

Equal Opportunities

All teaching and non-teaching staff at Mission Grove should ensure that all pupils, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity and social circumstances, have access to the whole Curriculum and opportunities to make the greatest progress possible in all areas of the Foundation Stage. Staff should ensure that all children feel secure, included and valued. No child should feel excluded or disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture, home language, family background, special needs, disability, gender or ability.

Special Educational Needs & Disability

At Mission Grove Primary School we aim to provide a happy, stimulating and secure environment for all children, where individual abilities are recognised.

All children are given the opportunity to develop skills to the very best of their ability.

We believe in early intervention and provide equipment, resources and learning activities to meet the individual needs of those children in the Foundation Years who need additional support or who have particular needs or disabilities.

Mission Grove works with parents to identify learning needs, to respond quickly to any area of difficulty and to formulate an effective strategy to meet these needs, so that later difficulties can be avoided. (For further information please refer to our Policy on Special Educational Needs)

Monitoring and reviewing the Policy

This policy will be reviewed every three years thereafter, and relevant adjustments made as appropriate.

Signed:

Chair of Governors

Signed:

Head teacher

Date:

7th March 2023

To be reviewed: