



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Mission Grove Primary School

VISION STATEMENT

Everyone Aims High
Everyone is included
Creativity is valued

VALUES

Respect, Inclusion, Lifelong learning, High Aspirations, Resilience,
Communication.



Approved by Governing Body

Date:

Review Date :

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Foundation Stage Policy

Statement of Intent

This policy reflects the values and philosophy of Mission Grove Primary School in relation to the teaching, learning and care of children within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). It provides a clear framework within which all staff work and offers guidance on curriculum planning, teaching, assessment and safeguarding practice.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- *Development Matters: Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage* (DfE, 2020, revised July 2021)
- *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* (DfE, effective January 2024)
- The school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- The SEND Policy
- The Behaviour Policy
- The Health and Safety Policy

This policy has been agreed by staff and the Governing Body and is available to all teaching and non-teaching staff. Copies are available via the school office, shared drive and website.

The remit of the Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage at Mission Grove Primary School comprises three age groups:

Robin Class – Provision for two-year-old children in a dedicated learning environment with access to a secure outdoor area designed to promote exploration and physical development.

Puffin Nursery – Provision for three-year-old children, offering access to all seven areas of learning with a well-resourced outdoor learning space that supports continuous provision.

Reception – Provision for four-year-old children in an open-plan environment where children learn through structured play, adult-led teaching and independent exploration. Children have access to an adventure trail, wheeled toys, a quiet area and a landscaped outdoor learning space.

Philosophy

We recognise that children develop rapidly in the first five years of life. High-quality early education is crucial in securing strong foundations for future learning and ensuring that children, particularly those at risk of falling behind, are supported to achieve their full potential.

At Mission Grove Primary School, we follow the four overarching principles of the EYFS:

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

We also embed the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

We aim to provide a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum that:

- Builds knowledge and skills progressively
- Supports language development as a priority
- Promotes independence and resilience
- Prepares children for Key Stage One

Our learning environments are carefully designed to be stimulating, inclusive, safe and nurturing. We promote high expectations alongside warmth and care, ensuring children feel secure, valued and motivated to learn.

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

- Enjoy learning and develop curiosity
- Feel safe, secure and valued
- Develop independence and self-confidence
- Build strong communication and language skills
- Develop attention, persistence and resilience
- Gain knowledge and skills across all seven areas of learning
- Show respect for others and understand diversity
- Develop a positive self-image and sense of belonging
- Experience achievement and celebrate the success of others
- Develop responsibility for themselves and others

Safeguarding and Welfare

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is paramount.

We adhere fully to the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for the EYFS (January 2024). All staff:

- Receive safeguarding training
- Understand child protection procedures
- Are clear on reporting concerns
- Maintain appropriate supervision ratios
- Promote children's health, safety and well-being at all times

Children are supervised on arrival, during learning time, at break times and at the end of the school day until collected by a known adult.

We promote children's emotional security through strong key person relationships and consistent routines.

Key Person

In line with EYFS statutory requirements, each child in Robin Class and Puffin Nursery is assigned a named Key Person.

The Key Person:

- Develops a secure and trusting relationship with the child
- Works in partnership with parents and carers
- Monitors progress and development
- Supports the child's emotional well-being

All staff support children with personal care, lunchtime routines and practical activities while actively promoting independence and self-help skills.

Parental Involvement

Mission Grove Primary School recognises that parents and carers are children's first and most important educators. We actively promote strong partnerships to support children's learning, development and well-being. We understand that highly effective parental engagement has a direct impact on children's progress, confidence and readiness for the next stage of education. Therefore, we prioritise open communication, shared understanding and collaborative working.

Building Effective Partnerships

We promote partnership working in the following ways:

- **Home-School Learning Agreement:** Clear expectations for learning, attendance, behaviour and communication are shared with parents to ensure consistency between home and school.

- **Transition and Settling Meetings:** Early consultations provide opportunities to discuss children's starting points, strengths, interests and any additional needs, ensuring provision is well matched from the outset.
- **Regular Communication:** We operate an open-door policy, encouraging informal dialogue. Staff proactively communicate with parents regarding progress, well-being or emerging concerns to ensure early intervention where necessary.
- **Online Learning Journal (2Simple):** Parents have secure access to their child's online Learning Journal. Observations, photographs and assessments are shared regularly. Parents are encouraged to contribute their own observations, enabling a holistic understanding of each child's development across home and school contexts.
- **Curriculum Transparency:** Half-termly curriculum overviews are shared to inform parents of key knowledge, vocabulary and skills being taught. This enables parents to reinforce learning at home.
- **Stay and Play / Stay and Read Sessions:** Structured opportunities are provided for parents to engage directly in learning activities. These sessions model effective teaching strategies and promote understanding of how children learn in the early years.
- **Parent Workshops:** Workshops in areas such as early reading, phonics and mathematics equip parents with practical strategies to support learning at home, strengthening consistency and impact.
- **Volunteering Opportunities:** Parents are welcomed into the setting, where appropriate, to support learning activities and contribute to the school community.
- **Celebration Events:** Termly sharing sessions allow parents to celebrate children's achievements and see progression in learning.

Through strong parental partnerships, we aim to ensure that:

- Children make sustained progress from their starting points.
- Gaps in learning are identified and addressed early.
- Parents understand how to support learning effectively at home.
- Children feel secure through consistent expectations between home and school.
- Families feel valued, informed and actively involved in school life.

Effective partnership working strengthens outcomes for all children and supports their successful transition to Key Stage One.

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 Structure

Our Early Years provision is organised to ensure high-quality teaching, appropriate adult–child ratios and effective support for all children.

Two-Year-Old Provision (Robin Class)

We offer up to 30 part-time places within our dedicated two-year-old setting. Provision is carefully structured to provide a nurturing environment with appropriate staffing ratios in line with statutory requirements.

Nursery (Puffin Nursery)

We offer both full-time and part-time places. Children may attend for 15 hours or 30 hours per week. In addition, extended provision is available, offering additional hours until 6:00pm.

Currently, we are able to offer up to 25 full-time places and 90 part-time places, subject to availability and funding arrangements.

Reception

Our Reception provision consists of four classes, each with a maximum of 30 children. Classes are staffed in accordance with statutory requirements to ensure effective teaching and high levels of support.

Across all year groups, teaching combines adult-led instruction with carefully planned continuous provision, enabling children to learn through a balance of structured teaching and purposeful play.

The Learning Environment

The learning environments are carefully designed to be safe, inclusive and highly enabling. They promote independence, curiosity and sustained engagement, ensuring that all children can explore, practise and embed new knowledge and skills.

Each classroom is organised into clearly defined areas of continuous provision that reflect the seven areas of learning. These areas are thoughtfully resourced to allow children to independently select, apply and revisit learning. Resources are accessible, labelled and developmentally appropriate, fostering autonomy and responsibility.

Continuous provision is carefully planned and regularly enhanced to:

- Consolidate previously taught knowledge and skills
- Introduce new vocabulary and concepts
- Provide challenge and extension
- Support children at different stages of development

Adults interact purposefully within the environment, modelling language, extending thinking and scaffolding learning to deepen understanding.

Indoor and Outdoor Learning

The EYFS benefits from secure, enclosed outdoor learning spaces. Children have regular opportunities to move freely between indoor and outdoor environments, supporting independence, decision-making and sustained involvement.

Outdoor learning is an integral part of the curriculum and is planned with equal rigour. It enables children to:

- Explore on a larger scale
- Develop physical strength, coordination and resilience
- Engage their senses in rich, real-life contexts

- Apply mathematical and problem-solving skills practically
- Develop and extend vocabulary through meaningful experiences

Language and Cultural Capital

We recognise that a language-rich environment is fundamental to children's progress. Across all areas of provision, adults prioritise high-quality interactions, introduce ambitious vocabulary and model precise language.

Through carefully selected texts, experiences, themes and enhancements, we deliberately build children's cultural capital. We aim to broaden their knowledge of the world, expose them to new experiences and develop understanding beyond their immediate environment.

Responsive and Inclusive Design

The learning environment is regularly reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of all learners, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Adjustments and enhancements are made in response to ongoing assessment, ensuring appropriate support and challenge for every child.

Our learning spaces are designed not simply to occupy children, but to actively drive progress, independence and a love 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.