



Foundation Stage Policy

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Version control reference 4 Foundation Stage Policy	New principal, new daily process
Version control reference 3 Foundation Stage Policy	
Version control reference 2 Foundation Stage Policy	
Version control reference 1 Foundation Stage Policy	

Date of new review	September 2024	Owner	Principal
Type of Policy	Statutory	Approving Body	Regional Board

Curriculum Aims and Principles

Our Foundation Stage extends from children aged two to five years old. Children join our setting having learnt a great deal already and it is our job to help support and extend these teachings through a structured, caring and challenging environment. Children develop rapidly during this age phase in physical, emotional, social and intellectual skills. Every child is given the opportunity to develop their skills in a way that is suited to their learning ability. We believe in the unique child and aim to unlock their full potential through delivering an exciting and enthusiastic curriculum that engages all. Independence is paramount and so we set very high expectations for both behaviour and learning.

Links with other policies

In the Foundation Stage we believe in forming a community and this includes working with the whole school. We follow the schools policies for: behaviour, Child Protection, Equal Opportunities, Literacy, Anti-Bullying, Special Educational Needs, Intimate Care, SRE, Drug education, Health and Safety and Teaching and Learning.

Organisation

Children can join our Nursery the term after they turn two or three; September, January or April. We offer continued provision into the Reception year through applications to the LA admissions department. Nursery children are offered a choice of three sessions: every morning (8.45 am-11.45 am), every afternoon (12.15 pm – 3.15 pm) or all day. Reception children join in the September after their fourth birthday. They are entitled to full day sessions free of charge. When a new child starts with us, they are: invited to a 'stay and play' or 'meet and greet' session before their start date where they are given a booklet of information and they will be offered a home visit. In Reception, all parents and carers will be invited to an essential meeting to go through the routines of the unit, learn how we teach phonics, maths and how they can support their child at home including homework set.

Our Foundation Stage unit is located at one end of the school. We have stringent safety measures in place: all outside gates are locked during the day and visitors have to report to the school office. Our Nursery and Reception classes are in separate classrooms, and each have their own outside area. As there are low level gates in place between the outside spaces, this enables children to have the opportunity to share the outside environment when appropriate. For example, during times of the year near transition, the shared space is opened up. This enables children to support one another in their learning and gives them the chance to work with others of the same ability regardless of age.

We aim for a great proportion of the day to be devoted to child-initiated learning. Children learn best through exploration and experimentation and our curriculum reflects this. All children will be involved in adult directed carpet sessions through-out the day at various levels related to the age and stage of the individuals. For those who are here for lunch, we offer the opportunity to bring a packed lunch or have a hot school meal. These are nutritionally balanced and follow our school food policy. Lunch is from 11.30 am to 12.15 pm. We are part of the fruit and milk schemes that give children one piece of fruit and a cup of milk a day. Water is freely available. These snacks are taken during dedicated snack times to allow for proper adult supervision. Eating is also promoted as a social event and adult support helps children to develop their skills in this area of learning.

Educational visits are highly important to support the learning process and develop a greater understanding of the world around them. We follow the schools Educational Visits policy to ensure safety at all times. At least two members of staff working in the unit are fully paediatric first aid trained. The first aid box is kept in the kitchen areas and clearly accessible. Medicines will only be administered in accordance to the schools medicines policy. All emergency contact numbers are held in the school office alongside allergy and medical information.

Planning and Organising the Curriculum

All staff are involved in the planning process through termly team meetings. The children are encouraged to participate in this process through observations of interests, discussions and assessments. All planning documents are readily available for staff to see. They reflect all styles of learning and include every child's unique abilities. In Reception, a daily phonics session takes place as well as maths, story and circle times. Other areas of curriculum are covered through both adult and child initiated activities.

Children learn best through talk, play, repetition and first hand experiences. We ensure the environment and resources reflect this and encourage children to take ownership over the experiences they have. There are clear areas of learning set out within the rooms and outside spaces; these are labelled so children know where they can access the resources they need. These areas are stimulating and offer interest for all age phases providing challenges and opportunities to develop language. Communication skills underpin all learning so we offer great opportunities to develop these skills through the use of visual aids and speech. The role of the interactor is to facilitate child initiated learning through having a clear understanding of the curriculum from age phases 0-3 years leading into the Key Stage One curriculum. For those in Cherry and Plum Class (ages 2-4), there is a great focus placed on the Three Prime Areas – Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language and Physical Development. Our curriculum reflects this focus.

During adult directed sessions, children are grouped according to the stage appropriate for their learning always ensuring they are given plenty of opportunities to build on skills known and develop new skills in a supportive atmosphere.

As increasing independence is so important, we encourage children to self register, find their own coat peg and choose their learning throughout the day. We also encourage them from the age of 3 to leave their nappies (unless there is a medical reason why they need to wear a nappy), milk bottles and dummies at home. It has been proven that speech is greatly improved when children stop using dummies and milk bottles at an early age. We want children to develop good speech and communication skills. Parents and Carers are asked to bring a change of clothes for children in case they have an 'accident.' We have changing facilities on site and can support parents/carers in toilet training children through sticker charts and reward schemes. In the Cherry Class (2-3 year olds), staff work with pupils and parents/carers to support potty training. All staff follow the intimate care policy when supporting children to get changed.

Assessment and Record Keeping

All pupils are base lined at the start of their time with us at Dashwood using either a formal approach (e.g. Government Reception Baseline Assessment) or informally through observations and activities. Assessments are then on going and daily and are in the form of: short observations on Tapestry, pupil's self-initiated work, adult direct tasks and oral discussion. These are then stored in exercise books and/or online on Tapestry for each individual child. These inform a pupil's profile. The online Learning Journeys are kept up to date regularly by a pupil's key worker and are accessible to parents/carers. Evidence of achievement is used to inform planning and next steps for groups and individual children. These next steps are shared with children and with parents/carers during parents' evenings and through Tapestry.

We have many forms of tracking to ensure every child makes progress through out their time in the unit. Tracking comes in the form of: online learning journeys; class tick lists; class tracking grids; WellComm scores, the use of Arbor and individual assessment tracker grids. These are analysed at least four times a year.

Parents and Carers are kept informed of pupil's progress through daily informal conversations, Tapestry uploads, formal parents' evenings, mid-year progress and attainment reports, a formal report at the end of Nursery and Reception, as well as certificates of achievement. Information of progress and abilities is transferred to Key Stage One through transition meetings and Arbor.

Staffing, Equipment and Resources.

Our Foundation Stage Unit is led by an Early Years Co-ordinator. In the team there are also teachers for classes with pupil's aged 3-5 and at least one other practitioner per class. In Cherry class (2-3 year olds), we have staff with at least level 3 qualifications. We follow the statutory requirements for adult to child ratio of at least: 1:5 in Cherry Class, 1:13 in Plum Class and 1:15 in Reception. We employ extra practitioners to give a greater adult to child ratio on a daily basis and support pupils with additional needs. All staff are key workers for children in Foundation Stage. Staff are known by their first names to help children to form relationships and they are positive role models for pupils behaviour. They take on an area of responsibility in the classes which includes: setting up, displays, tidying and ensuring resources are kept up to date and well stocked. At least one activity from each area of learning is set out on a daily basis both inside and outside before the children arrive for their day. Resources and stock can be ordered through filling out an order form. This form must be signed by both the co-ordinator and the Principal before it is handed in to the school office. We have a pre-planned rota for leading input (carpet) sessions, outside, interaction and adult directed activities. Every adult in the unit devotes time to their key family children weekly and take the time to greet each child as they come into school.

Resources are made accessible to children and therefore there is an emphasis on taking responsibility for looking after our equipment and tidying up. Each child is given an area of the unit to tidy/pack away daily in the Reception classes and pupil's in the Nursery classes are encouraged to help staff to tidy up. Staff support the children with this task and encourage independence.

Staff Development and Support

A clear appraisal cycle is in place for all staff in the school. This cycle offers opportunities to develop skills through CPD. Oxfordshire's 'Step into Training' is available for all FSU staff to access. Staff are encouraged to reflect on their current practices through briefing meetings. The FS co-ordinator supports staff through regular in house training sessions and having an open door policy where everyone's ideas are listened to.

New staff and volunteers are supported with a booklet containing information about the children, timetables, confidentiality and rules/routines. We aim to provide continuity and security for children by ensuring a familiar adult is always around. For this reason, teacher and TA PPA is taken at separate times in the week. Support for planning and assessment is therefore given through team meetings.

Partnerships with the Parents/Carers, Community and Agencies

The involvement of family members in the Early Years is very important. All families are encouraged to be actively involved in the education of the children. We welcome families to come and help in the classroom, assisting the children with activities, making resources, fundraising and supporting us in educational visits. This support is also in form of home activities. Children are given the opportunity to take books home and complete fun activities to support their learning. Parents and Carers are informed about their child's learning through termly newsletters, signs and texts. They are encouraged to partake in the assessment procedures by adding experiences at home onto Tapestry. It is very important to us that the communication is good between school and home life for a child so we send out regular questionnaires to seek the views of parents/carers and children about what they like and what they would like to see improved upon.

Regular community events are held to encourage children to feel like they belong. This includes working with the rest of the school for events such as fundraising, inviting community members into the school and going out to visit others in the surrounding area. With this in mind, we also work very closely with other professionals and agencies such as: Family support, Social Services, Health Agencies (School Nurse, Health Visitors, SALT) and Community Support (PCSO). Parents and Carers often need support to help meet the needs of their child so we also act as a facilitator to point them in the right direction to access what they need. We believe in raising the importance of working together to shape a child's future.