

E21C Trust Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

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Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Mottingham Primary School, children join the Reception class in the year that they turn five. In partnership with parents and carers, we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life.

We endeavour to ensure that children “learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.” We aim to support children in their learning through “teaching and experiences that give children the broad range of skills that provide the right foundation for good progress through school and in life.” (Statutory Framework for the EYFS)

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A unique child – developing resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals;
- Positive relationships – supporting the children in becoming strong and independent;
- Enabling environments – where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child;
- Learning and developing – an acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates.

Inclusion/Special Educational Needs (SEND)

All children and their families are valued at our school. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities.

Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and the school’s Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) is called upon for further information and advice.

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.

Welfare

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them." (Statutory Framework for the EYFS)

We are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare and safeguarding of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Parents (and Carers) as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- giving children the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during transition sessions;
- inviting all children and parents to 'stay and play' sessions prior to starting school;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents including: stay and play sessions, celebration assemblies, school visits;
- ensuring all parents know that their child's teacher and teaching assistant are their key workers;
- by providing a quiet and confidential area where parents are able to discuss any concerns.

Enabling Environments

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision.

Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following children's interest. Effective planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure we follow their current interests and experiences. These observations are recorded in the children's individual learning journeys.

Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning.

Learning and Development

Teachers and Teaching Assistants provide the curriculum in the Reception classes of up to a class size of 30 children.

There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are "prime areas" and four "specific areas."

The prime areas are

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development.

The specific areas are

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the world
- Expressive arts and design

Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents and other settings, children's development levels are assessed. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. However, if a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is used as an essential part of children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.

There is an on-going judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

"As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1."

(Taken from Statutory Framework for EYFS)

Both planning and guided activities will reflect on the different ways that children learn. We support children in using the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These are:

- playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'Have a go'
- active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; and
- creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

(Taken from Statutory Framework for EYFS)

Transition

From Nursery/Feeder settings

During the Summer Term prior to a child's entry into the Reception year, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition:

- Parents and children are invited to an induction session(s) in the Reception classes;
- Members of school staff make visits to feeder settings. The number of visits will depend on the child's needs and how much information gathering is required in order to support the child's transition;
- Children requiring extra support will have additional visits regardless of their setting. Often these children will have been identified as requiring additional support or are part of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process.

From Reception Class to Key Stage 1

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile includes on-going observations, all relevant records held by the setting, discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

Each child's level of development is assessed against the Early Learning Goals. The Profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs, and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.