



EYFS Policy

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Signed by Chair of Governors	
Signed by Headteacher	

Monksmead School

EYFS Policy

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. Our Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children from the age of 2 to 5 years.

Aims

In Monksmead School Foundation Stage we aim to give each child a positive and meaningful start to their school life, in which they can establish solid foundations on which to develop into independent and fearless lifelong learners.

We encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere; to support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing; to help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and by developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

Our high expectations enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally and to work towards achieving their full potential. We will offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited availability for development through a wide range of new and exciting first-hand experiences that will give children the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test their skills, knowledge and understanding alongside existing experiences in a healthy and safe environment. We recognise the importance of cultural capital for our children and endeavour to support them in achieving the knowledge and skills they need to achieve the best possible start to their early education and prepare them for their future success.

The Curriculum

The Pre-Nursery, Nursery and Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the 2017 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available on the school website or to download at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>. This clearly defines what we teach. The following policy details the specifics of our setting.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

A Unique Child

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

Enabling environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests and stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

Learning and development

All our learning environments are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. Areas of learning e.g. maths, writing and reading are somewhat defined within each classroom so that the children can easily access resources however this is by no means exclusive as we fully value and facilitate the inextricable links between all the different areas of learning. Children are encouraged to access equipment and resources independently.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of **three prime** area of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

There are **four specific areas** of learning:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

At Monksmead all areas are delivered through a balance of well-planned and in the moment opportunities. Learning is centered around play and hands on interactive experiences with a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Throughout the foundation stage our plans ensure that each child has the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area at the appropriate developmental level. Our long term planning ensures coverage of the Early Years Framework and Age Related Expectations including the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). These are assessed throughout the year with judgements being made at the end of the academic year. We follow a half termly topic based approach which allows flexibility to ensure that both children's needs and interests are taken into account.

Play

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the foundation stage. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. In doing so we can provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning and to help

them make sense of the world. Children have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning and the nursery and reception teachers plan activities with these in mind. The characteristics highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. The three characteristics 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

Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Inclusion

Our whole school ethos, as well as that of the foundation stage, embraces inclusion. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures.

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 and we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, so that children are able to reach their full potential. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of all children. We aim to 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. We meet the different needs and interests of our children through interactions across our 3 different settings within our Early Years Foundation Stage.

We will provide: a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively; a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued; resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping; challenging activities for all children and for those whose ability and understanding are advanced. We will monitor children's progress and take action to provide support as necessary. Where a specific need is suspected we will speak to the parents of the child, liaise with the Special Educational Needs co-ordinator and seek advice from outside agencies, such as the speech and language service, the educational psychologist and the bi-lingual support services amongst others. We adhere to the Equal Scheme and Inclusion policies of the school.

Early Years Pupil Premium – we will endeavour to identify our least advantaged pupils and inform parents or carers of their opportunity to apply for their child's entitlement to extra funding in school. All extra funding we receive will be used to support areas in which we identify that the child will best benefit. We will track children's progress to ensure that they

are making good progress and to ensure that support is adjusted to target specific areas as the child develops.

Assessment

Throughout the EYFS children's knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements are assessed and tracked using the developmental stages set out in the document 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)'.

Our assessment depends on us getting to know our children very well and to this end we gather information from a range of sources; observations of the children in play, in adult led activities, through discussions with parents and carers and through talking to the children. We keep written and photographic evidence to help us build up a picture of children's strengths and achievements and to help us to plan for children's next steps in learning. Every child in the EYFS has an online 'Learning Journal' in which we record our observations and photograph samples of the children's work.

Reception children will be assessed following current Assessment and Reporting Arrangements as set out by the Standards and Testing Agency.

Transitions

At Monksmead we recognise that starting school and moving up classes has the potential to be a stressful time for both children and parents. To this end we have established a strong procedure for transitions to ensure that our children and parents are as confident and secure as they can be when facing the challenges of each year group.

All three settings hold a meeting before the children start school to provide parents with key information, school expectations, knowledge of our curriculum and assessment and advice on how they can help their child.

In pre-nursery all parents are offered a home visit prior to their child starting school. In nursery children who did not attend our pre nursery are also offered a home visit. Children that start our Reception class and did not attend our Nursery are offered a home visit or visit in their current setting. This gives children the security of meeting with their teachers in a safe, familiar environment and gives parents time to ask questions and share knowledge or any concerns they have about their child.

In the summer term all incoming Nursery children have the opportunity to meet with their teachers in their classroom on two occasions, once with their parents and once on their own to help them prepare for their new experiences. In Reception children are given at least one opportunity to visit their new classroom and teacher with their peers.

All of our Foundation Stage Classes stagger entry times to ensure that the children have the time to feel welcomed and supported in exploring their new environment.

At the end of Reception children have opportunities to meet with their new teachers in their classrooms prior to starting Year one. At the end of each school year teachers have the opportunity to share their knowledge of each child's knowledge, understanding and achievements, including end of year assessment data, with their next class teacher to ensure that all teachers have a well-rounded picture of the children prior to the new school year.

During children's time in the EYFS a range of shared activities are planned for all classes to help develop children's confidence and to ensure continuity in experiences throughout the foundation stage. Children make use of the whole school facilities, such as the hall, library and playing field for appropriate activities to ensure that children are confident and well prepared for moving around the school and for mixing with older children when they start

school. Throughout the Reception year, when children are ready they are gradually introduced to whole school activities such as assemblies and to using the infant playground.

Partnership with Parents

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what their child does at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child and to feel comfortable in our setting. As well as visit days we offer drop in sessions to our parents to give them the opportunity to share their child's learning environment. We also offer parents a variety of learning workshops to provide advice and information on how they can support their child's learning. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to share information about their child, to ask questions and to discuss their child's learning with the teachers. Parents are actively encouraged to contribute to their child's online learning journey.

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children.

Parents are encouraged to join in with their child's education from the very start of their school journey. All parents are invited to join with a range of activities within the school. In Reception parents are encouraged to support children's learning through completing reading records, simple homework activities and by sharing assemblies and whole class activities.

At Monksmead we value the importance of the three-way relationship between children, parents and staff, as it enables children to make good progress and to maximise their potential. Formal parent teacher meetings are offered in Reception in line with the school's policy. At the same points in the year, Nursery and Pre –Nursery parents have the opportunity of an informal meeting about their child's progress with their keyworker. Parents are always welcome to discuss their children informally at the end of the school day.

Health & safety and safeguarding

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. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2017) and we adhere to the school's safeguarding and child protection policies.

We are a healthy school and our children under 5 receive free milk and all children have access to fresh water. Free fruit is available for Nursery and Reception from a Government scheme. Reception children who stay for lunch are currently eligible for free school meals but can choose to bring in a healthy packed lunch.

Each foundation stage classroom has access to their own toileting facilities and we teach the children the importance of hygiene, hand washing techniques and throughout the year we plan cooking activities to give children experiences of a range of healthy food.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies, including:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Food Hygiene Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- SEND Policy