

ASTON ALL SAINTS C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Foundation Stage Policy

Date: May 2017

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“The Christian ethos is at the heart of all we do in school and underpins all our aims.” It is our aim that every member of our school community feels valued and respected and that each person is treated fairly and well. We are a caring community, whose values are built on mutual trust and respect for all. The school Foundation Stage policy is therefore designed to support the way in which all members of the school can live and work together in a supportive way. It aims to promote an environment where everyone feels happy, safe and secure”.

At Aston Church of England School we aim to provide a curriculum which is “well planned and resourced to take children’s learning forward and to provide opportunities for all children to succeed in a caring environment in which every child feels valued”. The Early Years Foundation Stage lays the foundation upon which Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 staff build and we aim to give children secure foundations for later learning. These early experiences also affect children’s attitudes to learning and create the basis for later learning, in school and beyond. Childhood is important in itself and we want all children to have enjoyable and satisfying childhood experiences.

The Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and in preparing children for later schooling. The Early Learning Goals set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Principles

In our Foundation Stage, we aim to offer our children education which is based on the following principles:

- it builds on what our children already know and can do;
- it ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- it offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of all children and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- it provides a rich and stimulating environment
- a relevant curriculum and practitioners who understand and are able to implement the curriculum requirements.
- practitioners who understand that children develop rapidly during the early years – physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially
- there should be opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and also those that they plan and initiate themselves
- adults within the classroom must be able to observe and respond appropriately to children
- well-planned, purposeful activities and appropriate intervention by practitioners will engage children in the learning process.

Above all, effective learning and development for young children requires high quality care and education by practitioners

General Aims and Underlying Philosophy

We have a specific Foundation Stage policy to ensure that:

- the needs of the youngest children are met within the context of whole school policies
- there are agreed approaches and organisational structures in place, appropriate to the age of the children
- the curriculum experiences of the children are appropriate to their age and stage of development
- there is continuity and a smooth transition in learning when children move from Foundation 2 into the next key stage
- the needs of the youngest children are considered carefully in matters of administration, organisation and management
- children experience a smooth transition from home, nursery or pre-school settings into the Foundation 2 class.
- all staff, including those not working directly with them, have an understanding of how young children learn
- the importance of play as a vehicle for learning is fully valued

Teaching and learning style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 2.

We believe that learning for young children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practise, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the Foundation Stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through playing and talking

We believe that teaching means systematically helping children to learn so that they are helped to make connections in their learning and are actively led forward, as well as helped to reflect on what they have already learnt. Teaching has many aspects, including planning and creating a learning environment, organising time and material resources, interacting, questioning, responding to questions, working with and observing children, assessing and recording children's progress and sharing knowledge gained with other practitioners and parents.

The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;

- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are regularly shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;
- the clear aims for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do;
- the regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Foundation Stage.

Liaison with Nurseries and Induction Policy

Initial Contact with Nursery

Once established that the child has a place at the school, the Foundation 2 teacher will contact the nursery to establish the child's hours at nursery. This is to ensure that the children will be able to visit the school with friends from their intake.

With this information, visits are then arranged for the children. Visits are usually arranged with the children in small groups (up to 10) over a number of weeks. Each child has the opportunity to make 3 visits, or more if necessary, during the term previous to the one in which they start school.

School Visits

When the nursery children visit school for the first time they will have opportunities to meet the existing class and take part in a variety of activities. An older child is generally assigned to each new child to support them and show them around, both indoors and outdoors. The children may bring a snack and a drink with them.

On one or more of the child's visits, there is the option for each child to have a school lunch if they wish, providing that a parent stays with them on this occasion. This has been requested by parents via our end of year evaluation form in the past and this has proved to be a successful part of our induction process.

Children with Special Educational Needs will be offered additional visits if necessary to aid transition.

Teacher Visits to Nursery or a private nursery setting

At this present time the majority of our children arrive in Foundation 2 having attended LA Nursery provision (i.e Aughton Early Years Centre, Lodge Lane Nursery and Swallownest). We encourage the nursery settings to pass on any records to support our baseline assessments. For some children it might be appropriate to make a home visit. The Foundation teacher visits these nurseries

in order to build relationships with the children and to develop positive liaison links with the parents and staff.

New Parents Meeting

Parents are invited to attend a meeting in school which gives them the opportunity to:

- meet staff and look around school
- find out more about the day to day organisation of the school
- have the opportunity to ask any questions or voice any worries they may have.

In giving parents a chance to look around school whilst the children are working it enables them to witness first hand the positive ethos and atmosphere of the school. It also gives them time to view the working relationships between staff and pupils.

Arrangements for Induction

As discussed in the LA document, Quality in Action, it is vital that the needs of very young children should be paramount in planning the arrangements for admission.

We strongly feel that the time spent integrating the children into school in this sensitive and positive way is an investment for the future relationship between the child, parent and school.

We induct our children according to their age. The eldest children start first, and a week later the younger children start. We aim to have all the children at school by the end of the second week

If the admission of children is staggered over a short period of time then the transition process is more likely to be smooth and trouble free, with less likelihood of the child becoming over tired and distressed.

There is an option for parents to prolong the induction period, possibly on a part time basis, for example, for a very young child or for a child with specific needs.

Each child is assigned a Key Person with whom parents can liaise with if they need to speak to someone about their child. Children may also work in small groups with their key person throughout the week. For example in phonics activities or circle time. Staff share information with each other, however, and we do stress that all staff are available to all parents and children within our foundation stage class.

Play in the Foundation Stage

Well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge. "Play is essential for 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 when it is guided by others." (taken from Statutory Framework for EYFS). They learn through practical, meaningful experiences and can experiment without fear of failure.

We believe that the role of the practitioner is crucial in planning and resourcing a challenging environment. The practitioner also supports children's play through planned and spontaneous play and extending children's language and communication in their play.

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Inclusion in the Foundation Stage

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 (see our policy on inclusion).

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. Some children progress beyond this point. We aim to 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. This involves speech therapy for some of our children.

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage in our school reflects **three prime areas** (communication and language, physical development, and personal, social and emotional) as well as **four specific areas** (literacy, mathematics, understanding of the world and expressive arts and design). The experiences that

our children meet often enable them to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning.

The 17 Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. The staff plan for both age appropriate play activities and for adult led activities that help the children progress towards these goals.

Assessment

Assessment in the Foundation Stage is carried out through ongoing observations and knowledge of the whole child. Assessments are built up throughout the year from ongoing learning and teaching. There is a link between observation and planning. Other planned observations will also take place each term, e.g. phonics assessments, independent writing, numeracy skills etc.

Planned observations are also carried out to ensure that we assess each child's development in relation to 'development matters' and the 'early learning goals'. The Foundation Stage 2 teacher meets with the parents each term to discuss individual children's progress as well as sharing curriculum targets.

Each child has their own learning journey that records the children's achievements through their own play and through adult focused activities. It is a picture of how a child progresses and what a child has achieved, knows and can do by the end of Foundation Stage. All staff make a contribution to the learning journeys which means everyone is aware of how to move a child's learning on. We also encourage parents to contribute to their child's learning journey through 'learning at home' sheets in order that we have a picture of the child both at school and at home.

Each child has their own individual tracker where we track their progress using the age related stages.

At the end of the year the teacher will determine whether children are meeting 'expected' levels, are 'exceeding' them, or are below expected level ('emerging') when completing the foundation stage profile for each child. It sets out a way of summarising young children's achievements at the end of the Foundation Stage and provides important information for parents and Year 1 teachers. We also record this information on a class sheet to enable us to see quickly where gaps in the children's learning may be occurring, or where the children's strengths may lie.

Match to Foundation Stage Profile and Record Keeping

We use the Individual Foundation Stage Profile to inform our curriculum planning. The outcomes may indicate an individual or a number of children with similar needs for which it may be possible or suitable to plan activities for them as a focussed teaching group.

We also use the children's profile from the nurseries and samples of work received from our feeder nurseries to assess what stage a child's development is at. This will help to inform us as to what a child's needs may be and what experiences they may benefit from.

Along with their Foundation Stage profile, we file samples of work and/or evidence in each child's file. We keep ongoing records of assessment for each child, including;

- numeracy key objectives
- phonics
- writing samples
- sketch sample

At the end of the year, each child receives a Record of Achievement reporting on the 'Characteristics of Learning' and the seven areas of learning, detailing their experiences and progress made.

Visits within the Foundation Stage

As very young children they learn through first hand experience, through exploration and discovery. We aim to provide a secure and stimulating environment within school and see visits into the wider community as a natural extension of this approach.

Visits, visitors, the school grounds, the community and first hand experiential approach in general enriches the children's understanding giving them experiences which they will be eager to talk about.

We use the Rotherham LA + school Risk Assessment forms which must be agreed before the visit.

Planning

We organise the curriculum through termly themes. We try to plan themes that tie in with the children's interests and also ensure a broad and balanced curriculum over the year. The planning proforma outlines the early learning goals/teaching objectives in the seven areas of learning and also outline the activities and experiences. Objectives are from the Early Years Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. For literacy we use the Jolly phonics scheme alongside the Letters and Sounds curriculum. Past planning for individual topics is kept and is a valuable resource for teachers when planning.

The role of parents

We believe that parents are the children's first and most enduring educators and that in order to have a positive impact on a child's development and learning it is essential to develop a close working relationship with parents.

We do this by:

- talking to parents about their child before he/she starts school;
- visiting all children in their nursery/pre-school setting prior to starting school;
- offering children the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;

- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our foundation class;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents each term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents to become secure, and by allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
- arranging for children to start school over the first three weeks of term. We stagger the starting time of each child over this period, so that the teacher can welcome each child individually into our school. We encourage parents to stay if there are problems with the child's admission;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;
- offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents. There is regular communication with home through the child's school diary. We invite parents to workshops to explain how we teach reading, writing and numeracy in the foundation stage, and also invite them into the classroom to see the children in action!
- offering a meeting to explain what to expect when they receive their child's profile at the end of the year.

Resources

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning.

Signed:

Date: