

Meridian Community Primary School and Nursery



EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Updated July 2016

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1. Overall purpose

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

The EYFS Statutory Framework sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.” (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2012)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year.

Our aims, principles and pedagogy at Meridian Community Primary School are clearly defined in this policy which fully supports the Early Years Foundation Stage framework (EYFS) in providing every child with the best possible start by laying a secure foundation for future learning. The EYFS principles which guide the work of all practitioners are grouped into four distinct but complementary themes.

- **A Unique child** recognises that every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and assured. The commitments are focused around development; inclusion, safety; and health and well-being.
- **Positive relationships** describes how children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person/s. The commitments are focused around respect; partnership with parents; support learning; and the role of the key person/s.
- **Enabling environments** explains that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children’s development and learning. The commitments are focused around observation, assessment and planning; support for every child; the learning environment; and the wider context-transitions, continuity and multiagency working.
- **Learning and development** recognises that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates, and that all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected. Learning is based through ‘play and exploration’ – learning through experience, adult involvement and time and space both indoors and outdoors.

The themes foster the characteristics of effective early learning –

Playing and exploring

Active learning

Creating and thinking critically

This approach ensures that the EYFS meets the Every Child Matter's and EYFS overarching aim of improving outcomes and reflects that it is every child's right to grow up safe; healthy; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution; and with economic well-being.

At Meridian Community Primary School we strongly believe that everyone, both children and adults, must have every opportunity to meet their full potential and to achieve and celebrate success.

2. Our school's aims

At Meridian Community Primary School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We also recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by the reaction of others and we follow the school values, use praise and encouragement, as well as circle times to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

As practitioners we also recognise that children enter school with a range of experiences and abilities. We aim to provide a rich and stimulating learning experience for all children that will embody the outcomes and EYFS principles. We do this by:

- having the needs of children at the centre of all we do (*a unique child, learning and development*)
- reflecting on practice in order to continually improve the quality of our learning and teaching (*enabling environments, learning and development*)
- fostering high self-esteem and self-confidence in every child (*unique child, positive relationships*)
- providing a secure, happy and stimulating setting in which a child can learn effectively (*a unique child, enabling environments*)
- enabling every child to develop the positive attitudes and skills necessary to empower each one to achieve their full potential in all aspects of the curriculum in order to become confident, creative and flexible thinkers and learners (*a unique child, learning and development*)
- including each child as an individual, acknowledging and providing for their different needs and learning styles (*a unique child, enabling environments*)

- providing a rich, meaningful and integrated curriculum that excites and motivates (*learning and development, enabling environments*)
- giving each child a thorough grounding in the skills within each of the seven areas of learning thus providing a sound basis for all future learning (*learning and development*)
- helping children develop respect for others and to become aware of their responsibility for their environment and their own behaviour and conduct (*positive relationships*)
- developing a close and effective partnership with parents/carers and the wider community (*positive relationships*)

3. Underpinning Principles and pedagogy

Inclusive, effective learning and teaching at Meridian Community Primary School is based on the following core beliefs and principles:

- Children are happy, healthy, fed, rested and feel safe and secure in their environment (*a unique child*)
- Everyone is valued and celebrated for their individuality, uniqueness and their achievement and progress (*a unique child, positive relationships*)
- Learning is made exciting, creative, meaningful and fun in both indoor and outdoor contexts so children remain motivated, interested, fully involved and active (*learning and development, enabling environments*)
- Learning experiences, teaching approaches, resources and activities meet the needs **of all learners**: their individual differences, strengths and learning styles. Everyone must have appropriate access to and challenge from the Development Matters Guidance (*a unique child, positive relationships, learning and development, enabling environments*)
- All adults prioritise supporting the development of children's and each other's confidence and high self-esteem (*positive relationships*)
- Children will receive ongoing praise and encouragement based specifically on what they have done well (*a unique child, positive relationships*)
- Children are empowered to take risks, learn from mistakes and are enabled to see this as a necessary and important part of their learning process (*learning and development, enabling environments*)
- Expectations and boundaries are made clear to children. They understand **what** they are learning and **why** and are encouraged to achieve appropriately challenging learning targets for themselves. They are supported in taking ownership of their

learning and participate in planning their learning journeys (*a unique child, learning and development*)

- Children experience a rich, stimulating and appropriately challenging planned curriculum based wherever possible on real-life, first hand experiences. Learning opportunities deriving from spontaneous, unplanned events are also capitalised upon wherever possible (*learning and development, enabling environments*)
- There is a close and mutually supportive partnership between school home and other agencies, sharing information and working collaboratively in the best interests of the child and their family (*positive relationships*)

4. Inclusion

We believe it is our responsibility to ensure positive attitudes to diversity and difference – not only so each child is included and not disadvantaged, but also so that they learn from the earliest age to value diversity in others and grow up making a positive contribution to society.

We do not discriminate in terms of race, colour, gender, religion or cultural heritage. Equal opportunities for children mean that we make sure all children have an equal opportunity to learning.

We focus on each child's individual learning, development and care needs and remove or help to overcome barriers for children where they exist. We identify children who may need extra support in school in consultation with parents, pre-school experiences and our own observations. These children will then be placed on the SEND register and supported in school. When necessary, outside agencies will be informed to ensure that the child is supported in the best possible way. This will only happen with parental permission. Children who have English as an additional language (EAL) are supported by bi-lingual assistants and the EMAS service. Lessons and activities are differentiated to ensure that all children's learning needs are met. We also extend the learning for the more gifted and talented children.

(See also Special Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Equal Opportunities Policy)

5. The learning environment and its organisation

Learning through play

Play is a fundamental part of the learning process in the foundation stage.

Most children play spontaneously, although some may need adult support. Moreover, it is through play that children develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally.

Both indoor and outdoor environments are well planned to support children's learning through planned play activities and opportunities for spontaneous self-initiated learning. Plans reflect themes and skills that children are learning whilst also extending and developing children's language, communication and social skills through meaningful play based contexts.

Through play, in a secure and safe environment and with effective adult support, children can:

- explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them to make sense of the world
- practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills
- learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules
- be alone, be alongside others or co-operate as they talk or rehearse their feelings
- take risks and make mistakes
- think creatively and imaginatively
- communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems

The learning environment

This is crucial for effective learning. We provide the children with a stimulating, well organised and accessible environment. All areas and resources are clearly labelled. Displays are changed regularly to show and value children's individual learning. Displays are also interactive, highly stimulating, consistently the same and are encouraged to be used as a resource.

The learning environment makes provision for all seven areas of learning, none of which can be delivered in isolation from each other. All areas are equally important and interdependent to support a balanced and holistic approach to child development. Learning is delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child initiated activities.

(See also school display policy)

Provision for the seven areas of learning

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children are provided with experiences and support which will help them to develop a positive sense of themselves and of others. Children are encouraged to take risks, make mistakes and learning how to relate to others socially and make friends. We also encourage the children to become independent and self-reliant within the setting through role modelling and scaffolding of behaviour. Provision for Personal, Social and Emotional Development is divided into the following areas – making relationships, self-confidence and self-awareness, managing feelings and behaviour.

Communication and Language (C&L) Literacy Development

Communication and literacy skills are at the core of all learning and children will be given numerous opportunities for speaking and listening, drama, role-play, listening to stories and information books and many opportunities for mark making and recognising different print in our environment. Provision for communication and language is divided into the following areas – Listening and attention, understanding and speaking. Provision for literacy development is divided into the following areas – reading, writing.

Mathematics

Children are supported in developing their understanding of problem solving, reasoning and numeracy in a broad range of contexts in which they can explore, enjoy, learn, practise and talk about their developing understanding. Children are provided with opportunities to develop confidence and competence in 'real world' mathematical contexts both inside and outdoors. Provision for mathematics is divided into the following areas – numbers and shape, space and measures.

Understanding the world (UW)

Children explore this area of learning through first hand experiences in and out of the classrooms. Their learning is supported through opportunities for them to learn to use a range of tools safely, encounter creatures, people, plants, and objects in their natural environment and in real-life situations. Children undertake practical experiments and work with a range of materials. Children are encouraged to ask questions to gain knowledge; skills and understanding that will help them make sense of the world. They are encouraged to use all of their senses to learn about the world around them and to make connections between new information and what they already know. Knowledge and Understanding is divided into the following areas – people and communities, the world, technology.

Physical Development (PD)

Children are encouraged to learn through being active and interactive, improving their skills of co-ordination, control, manipulation and movement. Children have access to an outdoor area and playgrounds. Children are also supported in developing an understanding of the importance of making healthy choices in relation to food and understanding the importance of and effects of exercise. Physical Development is divided into the following areas – moving and handling, health and self-care.

Expressive arts and Design (EAD)

Being creative enables children to make links from one area of learning to another, represent their experiences and in so doing, demonstrate their developing understanding of ideas and concepts. The learning environment both indoors and outdoors extends the children's creativity and imagination by supporting their curiosity, exploration and play. Children are provided with lots of opportunities to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through art, music, drama, role-play and dance. Expressive arts and design is divided into the following areas – exploring and using media and materials, being imaginative.

Rich provision for learning is made indoors and outdoors through:

- Malleable/modelling
- Creative activities
- Sand (wet and dry)
- Literacy activities
- Maths activities
- Water
- Small world/imaginative play
- Workshop/making area
- Exploratory/investigative play
- Role-play – linked to the current topic theme.

- Physical - fine and gross motor skills

Provision inside the Reception classrooms includes:

- book and story corner
- listening area
- mark-making and writing area
- small world area
- role-play
- maths area
- creative area
- construction area
- science and investigation area

The outdoor area is staffed through a rota basis which includes class teachers and teaching assistants. This allows adults sustained opportunities to observe and assess learning and extend provision according to children's interests. All areas including outdoor play are intended for children to access independently. All children are given the opportunity to access these areas over the course of the school day.

Outdoor learning

We are committed to enabling children to engage in as much outdoor learning as possible. Outdoors provides a unique context for learning. It also gives staff and children many opportunities to expand the scope and freedom of learning in ways that is not possible indoors.

In Reception and Nursery, the outdoor learning environment is as important as the indoors. It is a statutory part of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2012. Each week outdoor learning opportunities are carefully planned so that there is a range of activities and provision that complements and extends the current topics and themes allowing for lots of self-directed and supported learning.

Staff and their deployment

There is a large team of adults working in Reception and Nursery consisting of:

- Four fully qualified teachers
- Seven full-time teaching assistants

There may be individual needs teaching assistants working in the team if children have been allocated this support as part of their statement of special educational need.

6. Planning

Learning is developed through meaningful, structured play contexts, carefully planned at a number of levels.

Long term planning is informed by the Development Matters Guidance. Our whole year curriculum framework charts basic coverage over the year and ensures that children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. There is a balance of child initiated as well as adult initiated learning opportunities.

Medium term plans are revisited each half term or term as appropriate. They cover each of the seven areas of learning, using the relevant statements from the Development Matters Guidance, making reference to the 'ages and stages' and early learning goals from the Development Matters Guidance. Adult focused tasks and activities are identified alongside enhanced self-initiated learning. There are also many opportunities for adults to support children in the pursuit of their own learning journeys.

Short-term plans are written weekly, ensuring that the seven areas of learning are implemented. Literacy plans also include the specific teaching of reading through phonics, big books and individual reading, guided reading (summer term) and writing. Mathematics plans include problem solving, number and space, shape and measures.

Short term planning includes:

- A plan for literacy
- A plan for phonics
- A plan for maths
- A weekly timetable which incorporates learning opportunities for UW, P.S.ED, P.D, and EAD, C&L.
- An 'environment' plan which includes the outdoors, ensures flexibility to enable us to respond to the individual needs of the children and special events etc

Ongoing formative and summative assessment is used to evaluate and adapt plans to ensure that they are meeting the needs of the children.

7. Assessment

Children's learning and development is assessed against the Development Matters Guidance. Assessment is achieved through observation of the children's independent and adult-initiated learning. Information from parents/and or other carers/settings is also used to inform our assessments.

Formative assessment for learning (AfL)

Such assessments are based on staff's accumulating observations and knowledge of the whole child. They are used to plan appropriate next steps for groups and individuals and inform short-term planning. These assessments can include:

- On-going –assessment of activities
- Observations of children using a variety of formats including focused observations, tracking, tick lists, post-its/stickers, ipad photos etc.

A look, listen, note approach helps us to get to know the children better and develop positive relationships with them and parents. It also helps plan appropriate play and learning

experiences based on the children's interests and needs, and identify any concerns about a child's development as well as further develop our understanding of a child's development.

Learning intentions and success criteria are shared with children in appropriate language. Children are also encouraged to assess their own work and those of their peers in appropriate ways. Children are also involved in their 'next steps in learning' through individual maths and literacy targets during the summer term.

Summative assessment of learning

Observations of children demonstrating their knowledge and skills in the learning environment are continually made.

Following our period of induction, children are assessed against the ages and stages in the Development Matters Guidance and through Early Excellence baseline. These outcomes are entered into Target Tracker, which is updated termly. These are used to build up a picture of what children know, understand and can do over the course of the year and are also used to inform initial target setting.

The EYFS profile data is collated in the Summer Term towards the end of the Reception year.

Children are assessed in all seven areas of learning against the ages and stages and the Early Learning Goals and judgements are made regarding their 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' which informs their EYFS profile. A child's achievements are derived from observations of consistent and independent behaviours that demonstrate unequivocally a child's capabilities. The organisation of the EYFS profile is as follows:

- A child assessed as emerging is working towards the Early Learning Goal for that area.
- A child assessed as expected is secure in the Early Learning Goal for that area.
- A child assessed as exceeding is working beyond the Early Learning Goal.

EYFS profile scores need to be given to the school office by the end of June each year.

Phonics knowledge and skills are assessed regularly and updated on class phonic tracking sheets. High frequency word recognition is also regularly tracked and passed on to the child's next teacher. This information is centrally held and monitored.

Every child will also undertake an independent piece of writing which is levelled each term to put in the writing portfolios. This is also periodically moderated by year group teams and cross year group teams in staff meetings.

In the EYFS, teachers and TAs keep records of observations, focused teaching tasks, including assessment sheets and any other information that will inform planning, target setting and report writing.

8. Reporting: sharing information and working in partnership with parents and carers

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

Parents as Partners

At Meridian Community Primary School and Nursery we build professional relationships with parents/carers to ensure we don't become over familiar. We are cautious when accepting and adding friends on social media and we remain professional with any parents/carers we might know outside of school in the local community. We keep all school and pupil information highly confidential at all times.

We believe that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value highly the contribution that parents make.

We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- New parents meeting in June
- Providing opportunities for children to spend time with their teacher and teaching assistant during 'meet the teacher' in June
- Our 'open door' policy where parents/carers are able to talk to their child's teachers about any concerns they may have.
- The parent curriculum meeting in Autumn Term provides opportunities to learn more about the children's learning journey that term.
- Parent workshops about our approach to reading, writing and mathematics in the Autumn term.
- Termly parent/carers consultations to discuss the child's progress and development.

Every effort is made to inform parents and we inform them of their child's learning in numerous ways:

- Home/school reading record books
- Termly/half termly learning journey information
- Regular newsletters which recounts key aspects of our provision such as visits and visitors
- Notice board which informs parents of key dates and sound of the week
- Website and VLE
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Written reports are sent home at the end of the summer term. All reports are seen and signed by the head teacher. Parents are given a voice via the parent/carers questionnaires.

Parents are regularly reminded that they may request an appointment to discuss any aspect of their children's work or behaviour whenever they feel it is necessary. Teachers will seek

additional meetings with parents whenever pupils' achievement, progress or behaviour is causing them concern.

Parents of pupils with special or additional needs may request an opportunity to consult with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. They will receive regular and updated learning plans.

Parental involvement in helping in classrooms and on school visits is actively encouraged. Parents must have CRB clearance before they can do this. An induction on helping in school is given to all parents and other voluntary helpers in advance.

9. Transition into and out of reception

We realise that change can be unsettling and worrying for individuals. If not handled in a supportive and well-managed way, pupils' progress and attitudes to learning can be adversely affected. We aim to promote continuity of experience for all our pupils to try and limit any anxiety or worry they may have. Currently, the following arrangements are in place:

Pre-School Links and Liaison

We have an unusually large number of feeder settings. Despite this we have good links with our local pre-schools and team leaders make visits to the appropriate provision. We aim to make contact and visit local pre-schools in June or July each year prior to the children starting new school. These visits provide the opportunity to discuss individual needs and to meet the children within the school environment. Where necessary we will visit children at home.

Where possible, our Foundation Stage leader attends regular network meetings with our local pre-school providers. Termly meetings are also held with our after school provider, Class of their Own.

Transfer process – Pre-school into reception

Information exchanged:

- Information meeting for new parents (early June) – at this meeting:
 - Parents find out and meet their child's new teacher and visit the classrooms
 - Senior staff deliver a short presentation about life at Meridian Community Primary School such as our induction process, uniform, exits and entrances, communication etc.
 - Parents receive an information pack in which is included information on induction and starting school arrangements and a parents' information booklet, all about me booklet, uniform price list, contact information, sample dinner menu and a free complimentary school book bag
- Early years' providers send schools the child's transfer and assessment records – teachers use these to inform early planning/assessment

Other processes:

- Children are invited to meet their new teacher and teaching assistant - parents stay and chat through the 'All about me' booklet
- Teacher shares information in first few days of the autumn term
- Children are inducted in begin school in small groups of six-eight to ensure a smooth transition. This provides time and space for children and adults to settle by getting to know each other and their classroom.

Transition process – YR into Year 1

Information exchanged:

- EYFS profile class overview
- Characteristics of Learning overview
- Phonics tracking sheets
- High Frequency word checklists
- Writing profiles
- Learning Journey, Writing Book, (all sent home)
- SEN information and learning plans

Other processes:

- Children come to a 'meet the teacher' morning and spend time getting to know the Year 1 class teacher and TA in July.
- Teachers receive and read children's records sent from the Reception teacher, including SEN records before term starts. Teachers meet to discuss these.
- Parents/carers are invited in September to a curriculum chat meeting where the routines of Year 1 are explained.
- The timetable is more 'relaxed' in the first half term allowing children time to settle into their new routine.
- Children make an 'all about me' book in the summer term and share these with their new class members.
- Home/school reading journal books allow dialogue between home and school
- Parents/carers consultation evening held in Autumn, Spring and Summer term.
- 'Open door' policy means that staff are available to discuss any issues/ concerns at mutually convenient times.

10. Continuing professional development

Meridian Community Primary School is committed to developing all staff. The Reception and Nursery team will have a range of CPD opportunities which might include:

- Professional discussion and dialogue – ongoing informal discussions, performance management, feedback after lesson observations and at staff meetings
- Visits to other schools
- INSET and attendance at specific training courses (in and out of school)

- Opportunities for paired planning and teaching
- Observing other colleagues teach (peer observations and teacher coaching)
- Own reading and research

A balance of CPD is sought between individual development and whole school needs as identified in the School's Development Plan.

11. Monitoring and review

The implementation of this policy will be monitored informally through incidental observation and through staff discussion.

More formal and structured monitoring will take place through lesson observation, planning and learning search, pupil interviews and analysis of parent questionnaires. This will include the SLT, subject leaders, governors and, occasionally, local authority advisors.

Formal monitoring activities will be plotted into the school's monitoring plan. The EYFS Profile results are formally fed back to staff and governors each Autumn Term and identify areas for development for the oncoming year.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Leader will lead a policy review every three years or sooner if changes are needed. Views of other stakeholders will be sought in advance. This policy will be reviewed in Autumn 2019.