

Westfield County Primary School

Foundation Stage Policy

Introduction

This policy refers to children who enter FS2 at the beginning of the academic year in which they will be 5 years old. FS2 is often described as the reception year. It is a distinct stage and important both in its own right and in preparing children for later schooling. The Foundation Stage prepares children for learning in Key Stage 1 which starts at the beginning of year 1.

Aims

- To provide an induction programme which enables children to make a smooth transition from their nursery settings into the FS2 unit at Westfield School.
- To build a relationship with both children and parents through pre-school and home visits, information meetings and booklets, enabling children to settle well.
- To establish good partnerships with parents and carers, where they feel valued and able to contribute to and participate in school life and assessing their child's achievements.
- To provide a secure, stimulating and challenging learning environment which encourages children to work and play independently.
- To provide a carefully planned curriculum firmly based on active learning which meets the needs of the individual child and helps them achieve the Early Learning Goals in the six areas of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage.
- To develop each child's knowledge, skills and enjoyment in all areas of experience,
- building on prior learning.
- To challenge children and set high expectations for learning.
- To help the children develop their social skills when interacting with others.
- To build on children's existing skills in thinking, reasoning and communication, enabling them to access the school curriculum.
- To develop the children's physical skills of coordination, control, manipulation and movement.
- To develop the children's aesthetic, moral and spiritual awareness so that they can begin to make judgements.
- To enable the children to understand more about the world around them by exploring both man made and natural features.

Equal Opportunities

The Foundation Stage will be taught in accordance with the present policy for Equal Opportunities. Children will be encouraged to develop a positive attitude towards people of different ethnic groups, cultures, beliefs, gender and ability. We aim to provide equal access for those children with Special Educational Needs and those pupils who are very able and require extension activities.

Pupil/Parent induction process

We have designed an induction programme so that both children and parents have a successful and enjoyable start to school life.

During the second half of the summer term, the Foundation Stage teachers accompanied by a nursery nurse or teaching assistant make home visits to new pupils due to start school in the autumn term. During the visit, information about starting dates, uniform, playtime and lunchtime arrangements are shared with the parents. The parents are then asked questions about the child's health, food allergies, interests and achievements, friendship groups and any worries or concerns.

The new children are invited to spend some time in school familiarising themselves with the classroom environment both inside and out, meeting members of staff and other children.

The new children's parents are invited to an information evening during which they can meet the Head Teacher, Assistant Head Teacher, Foundation Stage staff, a member of the WSA and representatives from the School Council and Playtime Pals. Information is shared about nurture groups, the curriculum, assessment and activities which the children will complete at home linked to topic work. The parents are able to view the classrooms set up for a typical day's activities.

Teachers visit feeder nurseries in Cottingham to meet the children in a familiar environment and to discuss transfer records with the staff.

Starting dates are staggered according to the term in which the child will be 5 years old.

Reception age children i.e. children whose birthdays are between September and December, attend school full time.

Children whose birthdays are between January and March, attend morning sessions only for two weeks.

Children whose birthdays are between April and August, attend the afternoon sessions only for two weeks.

This staggered start to the new term helps groups of children settle quickly and easily into the daily routine and enables staff to spend more time with less confident or anxious children. The school is flexible regarding these starting dates if both parents are working. The main concern is to ensure that pupils' needs are addressed and a happy and settled start is made to school life.

Teaching Styles and Strategies

Effective education requires both a relevant curriculum and practitioners who understand and are able to implement the curriculum requirements. Children develop rapidly during the early years, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. They are entitled to provision which supports and extends knowledge, understanding, skills and confidence and helps them to overcome any disadvantage.

Early years experience should build on what children already know and can do. It should also encourage a positive attitude and disposition to learn and aim to give protection from early failure.

To be effective the curriculum should be carefully structured and have the following strands:

- Provision for the different starting points from which children develop their learning, building on what they can already do.
- Relevant and appropriate content that matches the different levels of young children's needs.
- Planned and purposeful activity that provides opportunities for teaching and learning, both indoors and outdoors.
- Opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and also those that they plan or initiate themselves. Children need time to become engrossed, work in depth and complete activities.
- Practitioners must be able to observe and respond appropriately to children, informed by a knowledge of how children develop and learn and a clear understanding of possible next steps in their development and learning.
- Well planned, purposeful activity and appropriate intervention by practitioners will engage children in the learning process and help them make progress in their learning.
- The use of ICT to support their learning.
- For children to have rich and stimulating experiences, the learning environment should be well planned and well organised. It provides the structure for teaching within which children explore, experiment, plan and make decisions for themselves, thus enabling them to learn, develop and make good progress.

Nurture Groups

On entry the children are placed into 2 classes and 5 nurture groups. Each group has a member of staff as a leader, a special carpet area with storage space, a cloakroom area and a group colour. Group leaders meet and greet the children, discuss relevant information with parents, register the children and lead PSHCE circle times. Each leader is responsible for observing and assessing the children, collecting evidence of achievement and completing individual profiles.

Organisation and Resources

The open plan area is organised so that children can be independent, active learners. There are three small carpet areas for adult lead group work or independent child initiated activities. The two larger carpet areas are suitable for whole class teaching of literacy, numeracy, music and story telling. The hard floor area is used for sand, water, paint, malleable materials, junk box model making and other creative activities.

Children have access to large and small construction toys, a role play area, investigation table, a listening centre and CD player and Small World toys. There are mark making areas, book corners and three computers which are networked to the main computer suite. Resources are well maintained and clearly labelled for easy access by the children in order to develop their independence. Children are encouraged to select activities independently and to tidy and clear away resources safely.

The outdoor play area reflects activities that are available in the classroom i.e. role play, construction, mark making, problem solving, sand, water, music making and creative activities. Trampolines and small PE apparatus are used inside the fenced area and bikes and scooters are used on the playground. Large outdoor equipment is stored in a wooden shed.

The staff are time tabled to supervise the outdoor area in all weathers. The two canopies provide both shade and shelter. Waterproof clothing is available in very wet weather. The children have free access to the outdoor area and are encouraged to be independent both in their choice of activities and the clearing away of resources at the end of the day.

The Foundation Stage Curriculum

The Foundation Stage curriculum is organised into six areas of learning:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

This area of learning is about emotional well-being, knowing who you are and where you fit in and feeling good about yourself. It is also about developing respect for others, social competence and a positive disposition to learning.

Communication, Language and Literacy

This area of learning includes speaking and listening, linking sounds to letters and reading and writing words.

Problem Solving, Reasoning and Number

This area includes number recognition, calculating and problem solving, shape, space and measures.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

In this area of learning children are developing the crucial knowledge, skills and understanding that help them to make sense of the world. Knowledge and understanding of the world forms the foundation for later work in Science, Design and Technology, History, Geography and Information and Communication Technology.

Physical Development

This area of learning includes large and small scale physical activity, the use of tools, construction and malleable materials and an awareness of health and fitness.

Creative Development

This area of learning includes art, music, dance, role play and imaginative play.

Planning

A topic based approach is used to include all six areas of learning. During the autumn term topics are carefully selected by the FS2 staff to ensure continuity, progression and full coverage of the Early Learning Goals. The curriculum is flexible enough to allow for unexpected and unforeseen opportunities for children's learning that arise from everyday situations. We believe that activities should always be relevant, imaginative, motivating, enjoyable and challenging. During the spring and summer terms the children are given the opportunity to choose topics, themes within a topic and activities for free choice time.

Daily planning shows learning objectives and activities with differentiation.

Teacher and support staff responsibilities.

Structured and child initiated play activities.

Observation and Assessment

The observation and assessment of children's learning helps to:

- Inform planning
- Provide an all round picture of the child's development
- Provide information which can be used to evaluate the quality of curriculum provision

Evidence of children's progress and achievement is collected through:

- Observations
- Questioning and interaction
- Marking samples of work
- Talking to parents and colleagues

Teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants are involved in the observation process.

Baseline Assessment

The children are assessed during their first weeks in school and the data is recorded electronically on the eProfile and sent to the local education authority. This assessment allows staff to plan and prepare learning experiences to support and develop a child's understanding. Throughout the year assessments are recorded on individual, group or whole class assessment sheets and photographic evidence is kept in the child's Foundation Stage Profile Evidence booklet. Assessments are shared with parents during the spring term and written reports are given to parents at the end of the summer term.

Share a Skill

It is recognised that children learn through play and the Share a Skill scheme encourages parents to become involved in their child's learning. Parents are invited to help their child choose an activity bag containing games and literacy and numeracy activities. The bags are returned and exchanged every week. The children also borrow story books.

Visits to enrich the curriculum

We endeavour to introduce an element of 'magic' into every topic and to use visits within the local environment to enrich the curriculum. We visit the local market, the library and invite parents working in interesting professions to talk to the children. At the end of the summer term a full days trip is organised.

Transition to Key Stage 1

Completed Foundation Stage Profile data is given to the year 1 teachers at the end of the summer term. It is recognised that some children will continue to make progress through the Early Learning Goals in Key Stage 1.

We give Foundation Stage children an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the year one area and staff at the end of the summer term to ease any anxieties they may feel about transition.

