



Policy: EARLY YEARS POLICY

Introduction

Early Years Education is the foundation upon which children build the rest of their lives, and is an education that encompasses all learning. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of Early Years at St John's Meads.

The Nature of Early Years Education

In this policy, the Early Years of education refers to children in the reception year. This is referred to in the Foundation Stage curriculum, which also covers pre-school settings 'Birth to Five'. Early Years education is concerned with the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of the individual child, with no area standing in isolation from the others.

Entitlement

The reception children are given opportunities to achieve targets, referred to as Early Learning Goals, in seven areas of learning – personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; problem solving reasoning & number; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development. Reception children will work towards these goals which, on achievement, will introduce National Curriculum Key Stage 1 objectives. Each child is viewed as an individual, with specific needs being met in appropriate ways, according to their stage of development. Individuality is encouraged, independence is fostered, and each child encouraged to achieve their best.

Implementation

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children are enabled to participate as effective members of a group and a whole class, as well as individuals. They are made aware of behaviour which is acceptable to others, and are encouraged to share resources, ideas, thoughts and adult time. Children are helped to consider the needs of others and a positive self-image is reinforced. Children have the opportunity to become involved in a wide range of first-hand experiences, leading to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and concepts. Concentration and perseverance are encouraged as the children are introduced to appropriate aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Communication and Language

Children are provided with opportunities to communicate thoughts and ideas with confidence. This includes speaking and listening in different situations.

Literacy

Children are introduced to various books and texts throughout the year to enhance their Literacy learning. They will be given the opportunity of being able to enjoy a wide range of books and to read simple texts. They are also encouraged to write for a variety of different purposes, which usually match the theme or topic of study.

Problem Solving, Reasoning & Number

Children are given opportunities to become confident and competent in their learning, and to use key skills. This area of learning includes counting, sorting, matching, seeking patterns, making connections, recognising relationships, working with numbers, shapes, space and measures in order to problem solve.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

In this area of learning, children are given opportunities to develop the crucial knowledge, skills and understanding that help them to make sense of the world. This forms the foundation for later work in science, design and technology, history, geography, and ICT.



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Physical Development

Opportunities are provided to ensure improved skills in co-ordination, control, manipulation and movement. It also helps children gain confidence in what they can do and enables them to feel the positive benefits of being healthy and active, fostering a positive sense of wellbeing.

Creative Development

Children are given the best opportunities for effective creative development, enabling them to make connections between one area of learning and another, extending their understanding. This area of learning includes art, music, dance, role-play and imaginative play.

Organisation

The Foundation Stage curriculum is delivered through structured play and focused learning activities, where the learning has been clearly identified. Opportunities are provided for a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. All children are encouraged to revisit their learning in these child initiated times to build on their independence and to further deepen their learning. Adults interaction also plays an important part in this to facilitate the learning taken place and to support or challenge when required.

Activities within and outside the classroom, are carefully planned and structured to encourage full access and active participation of all children, whatever ability, gender, race and culture. An outdoor covered area extends classroom learning opportunities and is equipped and resourced appropriately. Reception children have well-ordered and easily accessible resource areas. A safe environment is ensured.

In the Summer term, the Reception class completed rotation groups with the Year 1 class, where activities are linked to the class topic. These are carefully planned by both the Reception and Year 1 teachers together, encompassing both Early Years goals and Year 1 objectives and are delivered by all the Early Years and Year 1 staff. The two classes are organised into four groups of mixed ability children. This means a ratio of approximately 1 adult to 15 children. Activities are differentiated and supported by staff where required and activities take place using two classrooms, and outside facilities.

The Role of Parents

Parents are encouraged to work in partnership with staff and become involved in their child's education. The Foundation Stage Profile is discussed at termly intervals and parents kept fully informed of their child's achievements.

Parents are also invited into school termly to view their child's learning journey and to discuss some of the learning we have been doing in class with their child. Parents are also encouraged to fill out 'news from home' slips of learning taking place at home, which are then celebrated with the whole class.

A meeting is held with the parents of pre-school children in the term before admission. At this meeting the school's Early Years Policy and the way in which the Reception Class is structured will be explained. Parents of pre-school children will receive information folders, including the school Prospectus. An individual interview with parent and child is arranged during the last week of the Summer term either in school or as a home visit. (Term 6)



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Admission

Children are admitted in September, on a full-time or part-time base, depending on their date of birth and discussion between parent and teacher. A staggered admission system is used.

Planning

Planning follows the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework which has been cross linked to the National Curriculum Key Stage 1 guidelines to ensure continuity and progression through transition. Long term, half-termly and weekly plans, ensure activities and areas of learning are covered. Termly topics are introduced through story texts and other activities to ensure children are immersed in their learning. The Reception and Year 1 classes cover the same topic and ideas and activities are discussed frequently, especially when planning for rotation activities across the two classes. Teaching assistants are advised and kept informed of planning and work closely with teachers to deliver learning objectives and discuss assessment.

Assessment

Foundation Stage profiles are begun as soon as entry to school is completed. The teachers and teaching assistants make planned, regular observations and track progress towards the Early Learning goals. Assessments inform future planning of children's needs. Parents are kept informed of progress, and parents are given a final progress report at the end of the school year. Children's progress towards the Early Learning goals informs planning through the vital transition stage into the Key Stage 1 curriculum.

Continued Professional Development (CPD)

Both teacher and teaching assistants attend relevant training courses, related to curriculum developments. The CPD co-ordinator is responsible for co-ordinating professional training needs.

The Role of the Head teacher and the Early Years Co-ordinator

The Early Years co-ordinator will work alongside the Head teacher to inform all school staff of any new developments and changes in the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Policies and framework will be reviewed as part of the school development plan.