

Maple School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



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Early Years Foundation Stage Rationale

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services, they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance." (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage July 07)

At Maple school we believe that a child's year in the Reception class sets the foundations for all their future learning and development. The EYFS Curriculum is based upon 4 principles:

- A Unique Child - where every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured and includes...
 - Child Development
 - Inclusive Practice
 - Keeping Safe
 - Health and Wellbeing
- Positive Relationships - where children learn to be strong and independent from a base of secure relationships with parents and/or a key adult and includes...
 - Respecting each other
 - Parents as Partners
 - Supporting Learning
 - Key person
- Enabling Environments - where the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning and includes...
 - Observation, Planning and Assessment
 - Supporting every child
 - The Learning Environment
 - The wider context
- Learning and Development - where children develop in different ways and at different rates and all areas of learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected and includes...
 - Play and exploration
 - Active learning
 - Creativity and Critical Thinking
 - Areas of Development and Learning

Good provision that takes into account all these areas, ensures that children at Maple School are provided with firm foundations to their learning, in a secure environment that fosters well rounded, happy children who want to learn and have a good start to their school life.

Aims

- To make the child's first experience of school happy, positive and fun and one where they develop to their full potential, at an appropriate pace
- To provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum through a range of adult directed and child initiated activities that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in KS1 and beyond
- To provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development
- To provide a stimulating learning environment where children are safe and secure and are able to develop independence, self confidence and a joy and excitement to learn both inside and out
- To work in partnership with parents to ensure a link between the child's home and school experiences

- To engage in observations and assessment which feeds into future planning and meeting individual needs
- To provide experiences and opportunities for all children to learn and develop, irrespective of their needs or background

Learning and Development

The early learning goals (the knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should have acquired by the end of the Reception year) and the educational programmes (the matters, skills and processes which are required to be taught to young children) are set out in the "Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage" document (Department for Children Schools and Families 2007).

The six areas of learning and development are:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)** - This area develops a positive sense of self, respect for others, social competence and a positive disposition to learn and forms the basis for all other learning in the Foundation Stage.
- **Communication, Language and Literacy (CLL)** - Communication and language, both written and spoken, are provided in a wide range of contexts and are at the heart of all learning opportunities.
- **Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy (PSRN)** - This area develops skills and confidence in working with numbers, calculating, shape, measurement, and pattern, to solve real problems.
- **Knowledge and understanding of the World (KUW)** - This area develops the crucial knowledge, skills and understanding to make sense of the world and forms the foundations for later work in Science, Design and Technology, History, Geography, ICT and RE.
- **Physical Development (PD)** - Physical Development in the Foundation Stage is about improving skills of coordination, manipulation, and movement in both fine and gross motor activities. This happens both indoors and outdoors and opportunities for physical activity are provided throughout the day as well as in PE sessions.
- **Creative Development (CD)** - Creativity is fundamental to successful learning and is developed through art, music, dance and drama.

We believe these six areas are equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development. We aim to deliver all the areas through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities both inside and out.

Learning through play

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development." ("Early Years Foundation Stage", Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007)

We support children's learning through planned play activities, and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves.

The Learning Environment

"A rich and varied environment supports children's learning and development. It gives them the confidence to explore and learn in secure and safe, yet challenging, indoor and outdoor spaces."

("Early Years Foundation Stage", Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007)

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence. Activities are planned for both the inside and outside and children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the school day. The learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas: role play, book corner, graphics area, maths area, music/listening centre, computer area, creative area, malleable/investigation area, small world, construction, sand, water, puzzles and games and outside. These areas are carefully arranged to encourage quiet areas and more active areas within the learning environment. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation. We operate a planning board system that encourages children to select activities and resources independently.

Planning

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS will be put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning. All practitioners who work in the Reception class are involved in this process.

Planning will take place collaboratively between the teacher and other staff involved in E.Y.F.S. These describe the learning activities linked to objectives and assessment opportunities. There will be termly medium term plans which include the learning objectives to be covered.

Short term plans are decided on a weekly basis from observations and also taking into account the current needs of the children. Observations on focus children will also provide additional information for assessment purposes. We identify specific learning objectives, activities, differentiation, deployment of adults and resources, to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly and day-to-day basis. It allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests and for revision and modification, informed by on-going observational assessment.

The children will be given opportunities to explore and develop learning experiences, which help them to make sense of the world through structured play. They will practice and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They will have opportunities to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They will communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

The learning environment is planned for both indoors and outdoors to encourage a positive attitude to learning. The children make their own selection of the activities on offer as this encourages independent learning.

Staffing and Organisation

The FS Teacher is supported by a fulltime TA (job share) all year to ensure an adult/pupil ratio of 1:15. There is an additional adult for mornings only in the Autumn term due to all the children starting school in one intake. All staff are involved in planning, preparation and assessment and regular meetings as well as informal discussions are a regular feature of our working practice. The Teachers' PPA time will be covered by the HLTA supported by a TA one morning per week

Assessment

- Monitoring of each child will take place through regular observations, discussions, photographs and record keeping and planned assessment.
- Informal assessments to gauge individual children's abilities will take place at the start of the year.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is updated in Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication, Language and Literacy Development, Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy six times annually, and in Knowledge and Understanding of the World, Physical Development and Creative Development three times annually. At the end of the year the E.Y.F.S. profile results are sent to the L.E.A.
- An end of year a report summarising the achievements from the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is sent to parents.
- The profile data is discussed with the Year 1 teacher so that she/he can continue to help the children to achieve the early learning goals if they have not done so before they can access the K.S.1 curriculum.

- Following FSP assessments in the 1st half of the Autumn term, end of year targets for progress in the FSP are set

Induction - Parents and Children

All children come into Maple School in one intake in September. The children are fed from a wide range of local Nurseries and pre-schools (both private and state)

- The children attend three afternoon sessions in the Summer term before they start, to familiarise them with the setting and staff. One of these sessions also includes a lunch for parent and pupils
- The teacher endeavours to visit most children in their pre-school/Nursery settings to meet the children, liaise with the staff to get information about the child and get an idea of the setting they have come from
- When the children start in September they stay for half days for the first 2-3 weeks before starting full time.
- Parents are invited to two afternoon meetings (prior to their children starting) where general school issues and routines are discussed, led by the head teacher and other school staff. There are also two evening meetings (one prior to children starting and one a few weeks into their first term) led by the FS teacher which address specific issues relating to the FS such as the curriculum, learning through play, the importance of indoor and outdoor learning as well as general routines and expectations
- Parents are also invited for a short meeting before the children start full-time to discuss how they have settled and whether full days are appropriate (especially for the younger children)
- A welcome pack is sent to parents prior to their children starting which includes practical information about what they will need as well as suggestion for how they can support their child's transition to school

Reception to Year One Transition

Reception and year 1 teachers have worked together to make the transition from the Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible.

- The same levels of independence that have been developed throughout the Reception year are expected to continue as children move up into Year One
- Reception practitioners plan for slightly more structured activities to be undertaken during the summer term to encourage less dependence on adult support
- In the first term in Year One the teachers plan with the FS Early Learning Goals in mind, working towards Year One NC expectations toward the end of the first term
- Guided reading sessions, involving a group rotation, are introduced during the spring term in Reception in preparation for a similar rotation in year
- The EYFS Profile results and a copy of the report are discussed and passed on to the Year One teacher
- Reception and Year One teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children and their next targets in July
- Reception children visit their new Year One class and teacher for an hour session in July
- The Year One teacher makes informal visits to the Reception class to get to know the children in the last few weeks of the Summer term
- Year One has provision for planning and Child Initiated learning throughout the year but longer sessions are planned for in the first term
- The Year 1 classrooms is set up in a similar way to the Reception classroom with defined areas such as role play, graphics, construction, small world etc and resources that are accessible in the same way to continue to promote independent learning
- Year One have access to an outside area and this is used on a on-going basis
- The Year One teacher meets with parents early on in the Autumn term to explain the transition from Reception to Year One and answer any concerns

Home/School Links

We recognise that parents are the child's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make, encouraging them to share information about their child with us as we partner with them in their child's learning and development. We aim to develop this by:

- Outlining the Reception curriculum to parents during the new parents meetings in June and September, to enable them to understand what their children will be doing in school and the value of supporting their child's learning at home
- Meeting with the parents soon after the children start in September to discuss how the children have settled
- Sending home a termly topic letter, informing parents of the learning that will be taking place at school and how they can be involved in that
- Operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner
- Inviting parents to help in the class on a regular basis and to accompany children on school visits
- Encouraging parents to listen to their child read each night and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading diary
- Encouraging relevant learning activities to be continued at home, as and where appropriate
- Discussing progress and individual targets with parents at Parents' Evening in October and February (informed by the EYFS Profile)
- Providing an annual written report to parents in July summarising the child's progress against the early learning goals and EYFS assessment scales
- Parents are invited to a class assembly in the Spring Term to share aspects of our learning.

Equal Opportunities

We aim to provide all pupils, equal access to all aspects of school life and work, to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas.

Inclusion

Children with special educational needs will be given support as appropriate to enable them to benefit from the curriculum. This includes children that are more able, and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities.

Individual Education Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support, in line with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy.