

Early Years Policy



'Proud to shine'

Policy Lead: Zoe Meredith

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Approved by: Richard Thorpe

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Grange Park Primary School and Nursery

Early years policy

This document is a statement of the aims and principles for Early year's Foundation stage at Grange Park Primary school

The implementation of the policy is the responsibility of all early years' staff and the Assistant Head Teacher who is the Foundation stage leader. The policy provides a basis for the monitoring and evaluation of good practice.

Rationale.

Children in the Early Years are constantly encountering new experiences. They are seeking to understand these experiences in order to extend their skills, develop their confidence and build on their previous learning and develop. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early year's 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.

Early year's teaching and learning at Grange Park Primary school and Nursery follows the principles of the new EYFS guidance and lays secure foundations for children's later learning. We intend to foster independence and confidence in every child.

At Grange Park we seek to provide:

- quality and consistency, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind;
 - a secure foundation through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly;
 - partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers;
 - equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.
- safeguarding and welfare requirements to keep children safe and promote their welfare.

Principles and Aims.

At Grange Park Nursery and Grange Park Primary School the EYFS four guiding principles shape our practice. These are:

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;

- children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers;
- children **develop and learn** in different ways and at different rates.

The EYFS learning and development requirements comprise:

- the seven areas of learning and development and the educational programmes (described below);
- the early learning goals, which summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that all young children should have gained by the end of the Reception year; and
- the assessment requirements (when and how practitioners must assess children's achievements).

At Grange Park we support through the **3 prime areas** and the **4 specific areas**:

- **Communication and language development** involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity including moving energetically and developing strength. They are also encouraged to make healthy choices in relation to food as well as being expected to use cutlery correctly.
- **Personal, social and emotional development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to self-regulate their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.
- **Literacy development** involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.
- **Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to explore shapes, spaces, and measures.
- **Understanding the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people (past and present), places, technology and the environment.
- **Expressive arts and design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities including singing, dancing and inventing and adapting their own stories.

As practitioners we consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in our care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development. When working with the youngest children we focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively, and become ready for school. It is expected that the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. But throughout the early years, if a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, we will discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. We will consider whether a child may have a special educational need or disability and may require specialist support.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. 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 which is guided by adults. We respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice. The **three characteristics of effective teaching and learning** are:

playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';

active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; and

creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Welfare requirements

At Grange Park we ensure that children's unique needs are met and that they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We provide an environment which is welcoming, safe and stimulating.

We safeguard and promote the welfare of children in our care. Mrs Millington (Deputy Head) is the 'Designated Safeguarding Lead', along with deputy DSL's - Richard Thorpe (Headteacher), Zoe Meredith (Assistant Head) and Angie Atkinson (Pastoral Manager) are all responsible for safeguarding children. We adhere to Grange Park child protection procedures and use CPOMs to record any safeguarding incidents which are then followed up by DSL's. All staff undertake regular child protection update training and it is part of new staffs induction.

Ways of Working.

Admission arrangements.

Children may now enter Nursery the term after they reach three and as rising three's if they are eligible. The children will attend Nursery under the universal offer of 15 hours per week. They may also be eligible for 30 hours - although these places are limited. The children enter Nursery from pre-school provision, voluntary or private or straight from home. Staff visit the children at home during the half term prior to them starting Nursery. Staff group the children according to needs and previous siblings, after the home visit the new entrants join a 'Key person' group. There are 3 groups in 3 colour areas in the Nursery each with a similar number of children a.m. and p.m. Our morning sessions are for our older children and our younger children attend in the afternoon.

Admission to the Nursery follows guidelines set out by Telford and Wrekin. The Nursery has capacity for 60 children.

Children enter their allocated Reception class in September if this is the parent's wishes. All children can start school in the September of the year they are 5 years old. Again strict procedures pertaining to admissions prevail and follow the Telford and Wrekin guidelines. The 2 Reception classes can take a maximum of 30 in each.

Appeals by children wishing to secure a place at Grange Park when the Reception classes are already at 60 are organised by Telford and Wrekin and decisions given to the Head in writing after the appeal is heard.

Parents have the right to defer entry to the Reception class before the age of 5 years old.

Induction procedures.

Nursery Staff visit all new entrants in their home setting during the half term before they start Nursery. We operate a staggered entry for children during their first week so staff can get to know children and settle them in.

Prior to transferring to school, Reception staff speak to staff from the child's previous setting and visit children who have not attended the school nursery. Parents and children are invited to visit the Reception classes for two sessions. This builds up 'Positive relationships' with parents and children. Children and parents have;

- An initial information giving meeting discussing the school prospectus with the Head and Deputy Head for parents, the children meet their new teacher.
- Two morning sessions for the children to work in the Reception class and meet staff. Nursery staff support in the reception class for these sessions.

- Parents and children are also invited to 'Tea at Grange Park' before the children start.

Reception children begin school on the same day as the rest of school but have a part time timetable for the first week. Nursery children may start Nursery later than School to allow staff to undertake any home visits of new Nursery pupils to take place.

The curriculum and effective practice.

The Nursery and Reception environments are organised into areas to link with the 7 areas of development and learning as described earlier.

Planning reflects all areas of learning and all areas are interlinked and equally as important. Our long term planning is based on the statements in the EYFS ages and stages document. All staff in our Foundation stage use 'In the moment' planning to pursue the children's interests and collect observational evidence which is shared on Story Park.

In the Foundation stage the emphasis is on active learning both indoors and outdoors, with child initiated learning and adult led learning taking place based on observations and teacher assessments and linked to the EYFSP. Also, in the Nursery, parents are encouraged to help their children plan child initiated activities each day. They are able to follow their children's interests on Storypark and add evidence of activities they have completed at home.

In the Reception class active learning is still paramount and teaching methods will reflect a balance of child - initiated and adult - led activities across all 7 areas of learning. The Early learning goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation stage.

Both the Nursery and Reception class have access to a safe secure outside 'Learning environment' to provide teaching and learning opportunities that support all curriculum areas out of doors and 'supports every child's' learning. Regular physical activity is important in Nursery and Reception to develop both fine and gross motor skills.

The organisation of the classroom environment and resources in the Nursery and the Reception class should accommodate child-initiated and independent learning. We encourage all children to access their own resources and equipment for their activities.

Assesment and records.

All Foundation staff are involved in the assessment and monitoring process. Monitoring of Early year's practice is undertaken regularly to ensure the requirements of the EYFS are planned for and carried out effectively and the needs of all the children are fully met.

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their age and stage, interests and next steps needed, and then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. In their interactions with children, they respond to day-to-day observations about children's progress, and observations that parents and carers share. All children have an Electronic Learning Journey (Story Park) to keep a record of independent evidence. The evidence is linked to the child's online Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP), which is available for parents to view and comment on at any time.

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than 30 June in that term, the EYFS Profile must be completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile must reflect: ongoing observation; all relevant records held by the setting; discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). This is the EYFS Profile.

Assessments in the Nursery.

We start this process before the child joins the Nursery, by listening to parent's accounts of their child's development and interests and note any concerns. The parents complete a home visit sheet with staff and this provides the starting point of a child's profile.

Practitioners in the Nursery make systematic observations and assessments of each child's developments, interests and learning styles. These are then used to identify learning priorities and plan relevant and motivating learning experiences for each child. Planning is completed retrospectively based on the interests of the children. Observations are matched against the expectations of the EYFS. Children need to build on previous learning experiences, and staff provide learning opportunities to ensure they make progress.

All children in the Nursery have their own Learning journey books in which parents, staff and children can contribute also copies of children's records and on-going observations will be kept. The Learning Journeys are kept in each child's drawer in the Nursery.

Reception class assessments.

In the Reception class careful observations and assessments ensure that the developmental needs of the child are met. These are undertaken throughout the child's time in the

Reception class and build up a child's Foundation stage profile. Child initiated evidence and some independent evidence will be kept on the child's electronic learning journey (Storypark) to build up a picture of each child's development to inform the child's EYFSP. Letters and sounds knowledge and Reception key words are assessed termly.

Record keeping.

Staff make ongoing assessments of the children and their progress is discussed regularly at Foundation Stage progress meetings, based on any evidence that has been collected as well as the teachers' knowledge of the children.

Staff in the Nursery and the Reception class write 'parent friendly' reports which provide a more rounded picture of individual children. Parent meetings take place formally three times during a child's time in the Nursery and in the Reception class.

The final meeting is at the end of the child's time in the Nursery and is a discussion about the child's development in all seven areas of learning. All records are passed onto the child's Reception teacher. The teacher then continues the record and makes judgments based on the evidence at the end of the Foundation stage. The judgments are then moderated with the foundation stage co-ordinator. The children's FSP judgments are then submitted to the Local Authority.

Partnership working with parents and carers.

Parents are children's first and most enduring educators. We at Grange Park Nursery and at Grange Park Primary school endeavor to establish 'positive relationships' with parents.

Parents are actively encouraged to accompany their children into Nursery and to stay as long as they like with them to give time to become secure. All staff are available in the morning and after Nursery sessions to discuss children's needs and all parents are made to feel welcome and valued.

Parents are welcome into the Reception class at the start of the day for the first two weeks to help them to settle in. After this time, we encourage the children to come in on their own to develop their independence. The Reception teacher is always available to discuss any issues with parents at the end of the school day. Longer appointments can be made through the school office.

Foundation stage staff use a variety of ways to keep parents fully informed about the curriculum and activities on a regular basis.

- **All termly and weekly planning is placed on the Nursery notice board.**
- **Termly newsletters are sent to parents with a list of forthcoming events with dates in a parent friendly format.**
- **Regular letters to inform parents of trips and meetings.**

- Curriculum information letters.
- Planning sheets available to parents every morning in Nursery to show them the sorts of activities their children are choosing. Parents plan with their children.
- Foundation stage meetings to explain the principles of the stage and how it affects their child in Nursery and Reception as required.
- Phonics, maths and fine motor drop-in sessions to enable parents so they can support their child at home.

In the Reception class the above emboldened statements are used to keep parents informed as well as;

- Reading diaries are used to communicate between school and home.
- Literacy and Numeracy meetings specifically for parents of reception children.
- Induction meetings.
- Information from home to support children's development and progress.

Meeting the Diverse needs of children.

Meeting the individual needs of all children is at the heart of the Foundation stage at Grange Park We promote positive attitudes to diversity and difference so that all children and families feel included safe and valued and that all children and adults are treated as individuals and are not discriminated.

We plan for each child's individual care and learning requirements. We focus on helping to counter underachievement and overcoming barriers for children where these already exist. We identify and respond early to needs which could lead to the development of learning difficulties. Similarly we provide for children who are working beyond their developmental age and extend their learning.

The role of adults and Key person role.

Every child at Grange Park Nursery has a key person who from the induction day gives them reassurance to feel safe and cared for and builds relationships with the child's parents. The key person helps the child become familiar with the Nursery environment and confident to explore it.

The Nursery and Reception class welcomes students and has built up strong relationships with local further education institutions and local schools.

Nursery and the school welcome parents working in classrooms.

All adults who work regularly in school are police checked and their DBS forms kept in school.

Success criteria.

These are the criteria to which the policy will be monitored and evaluated.

- Nursery and reception staff fully aware of the EYFS curriculum, welfare requirements and developmental stages of the EYFS and the Early Years outcomes.
- Nursery/Reception staff effectively using their observational evidence to inform planning and the development and learning record and at the end of Reception the Foundation stage profile.
- Parents are partners in the process.

Review and further developments.

The policy will be reviewed annually by all early years' staff and then up-dated by the Foundation stage co-ordinator and shared with all staff.

- Self-evaluations, learning walks, monitoring and audits will take place termly involving all early years' staff and the early year's co-ordinator along with other Senior Leadership team will monitor on a regular basis to ensure practice reflects policy.
- The Policy will be shared with staff and Governors.
- All staff access CPD as part of the schools CPD priorities.
- An audit of early year's resources / environment will be undertaken each year and curriculum priorities identified and resources requested to meet the needs.

This policy will be reviewed in Sept 19

Early Years Governor responsibility - Angie Atkinson and Jo Saville