



EARLY YEARS EDUCATION POLICY

Introduction

At Garden Fields School the Early Years Policy applies to all children within our Foundation Stage setting who enter the school during the school year in which they are five. Key Stage 1 begins for our children at the beginning of Year 1. The Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and in preparing children for later schooling. The Early Learning Goals set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage.

We promote a love of learning through fostering independence, providing a wide range of enriching activities to engage children in their learning and allowing opportunities for sustained concentration. We value child initiated activities and play to challenge all children and stimulate their own creativity within an exciting learning environment.

Aims

- To ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued, recognising that for some children this may be the first experience of separation from home for a prolonged period.
- To provide experiences that build on what children already know and can do.
- To nurture a feeling of mutual respect between parents, carers and school staff.
- To provide a carefully structured curriculum that allows for children's different starting points.
- To plan purposeful, relevant and appropriate activities, both indoors and outdoors, through the implementation of the Foundation Stage curriculum.
- To provide opportunities for children to engage in both teacher directed and child initiated activities.
- To observe and respond to children's development in order to plan for possible next steps in their learning.
- To organise rich and stimulating experiences that are enjoyable, well planned and encourage children to make progress, based on careful observations and assessments.
- To provide all children with opportunities for learning through an inclusive curriculum.
- To develop a secure understanding of phonics through the RWI scheme.

Teaching and Learning

We use a variety of teaching approaches to provide a stimulating environment to enhance the children's learning. These include group activities, whole class teaching, focusing on individuals and working alongside children as they explore and interact with each other. Well planned, purposeful activity and appropriate intervention by practitioners will encourage children in the learning process and help them make progress in their learning.

We work towards our aims by modelling our planning in the six areas of learning as outlined in the Early Learning Goals:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication, Language and Literacy
- Mathematical Development
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World
- Physical Development
- Creative Development

We encourage children to learn through:

- Watching and integrating with others.
- Experiencing things first hand and exploring ideas in depth.
- Physical movement using all their senses.
- Imaginative play.
- New experiences.
- A secure, supportive and positive environment

We also keep in mind that young children *learn in different ways and at different rates.*

Play

Play is a powerful motivating factor for learning; children are encouraged to engage in a variety of imaginative activities, which leads to an increased understanding of themselves, other people and their environment both indoors and outdoors. We aim to provide opportunities for play in a stimulating context encouraging children to use language effectively and

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develop their social skills. Through play many skills are developed including investigating, problem solving, experiencing emotion, and extending learning through practical and physical situations, fantasy and imaginative play. Good behaviour is modelled and praised. Staff are able to probe understanding and previous knowledge by becoming involved in the children's play, which is a useful aid to assessment.

Assessment and Record Keeping

We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. All children are assessed throughout the year using observations made by the teacher and other adults, which are used to differentiate the curriculum. These are recoded through photographs, notes, video clips, audio recordings and observations of the children on the EYFS Tracker weekly. During the year the children are assessed against the criteria of the Foundation Stage Profile, which is separated into the six areas of learning as outlined in the Foundation Stage Curriculum Guidance. Upon entry the children are assessed on the EYFSP aspect 1 – 3 for all areas. Some children will have evidence of some of the additional profile points.

Parents receive a written annual report taken from the evidence recorded on the EYFS Tracker that offers brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs, and gives details of the child's general progress. The Foundation Stage profile is shared with the parents or carers of each child in at the mid-year point and at the end of their Foundation Stage. Samples of the children's work are stored in their Learning Journal and on the EYFS Tracker through photographic evidence.

Partnership with Parents

At Garden Fields we believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children.

We do this through:

- talking with parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- the teachers visiting most children in their pre-school setting prior to their starting school;
- the children having the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our reception class;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents each term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the school year;
- having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents to become secure, and allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
- arranging a staggered entry to start school, so that the teacher can welcome each child individually into our school;
- organising a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;
- offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents. There is regular communication with home through the child's contact book;
- providing a termly newsletter for the class including curriculum information, dates and reminders.

Transition to Year 1

At the end of the Foundation Stage the children move into Year One which is the start of Key Stage One. At this point not all children will be ready for the Key Stage One Curriculum, and this will be accounted for in the planning for the first term.

Admissions

All admissions are in accordance with the County admissions policy.