

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2025/27

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Introduction

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding policy, allegations against a member of staff, acceptable use by staff and the medical conditions policy.
In addition, please see our procedure for checking the identity of visitors, our procedure to be followed in the event of someone failing to collect a child or a child going missing, and our complaints procedure.

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from three years of age to the end of the Reception year. At Sheepy Magna, all children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they turn **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 Year 1. The Early Learning Goals set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal. Many have been to one of a range of settings that exist. The early year's education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

it builds on what our children already know and can do;
it ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
it offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children and activity that provides opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
it provides a rich and stimulating environment.

Aims of the Foundation Stage

The curriculum of the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

personal, social and emotional well-being;
language and communication;
physical development;
reading and writing;
mathematics;
knowledge and understanding of the world;
creative development;
positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning;
social skills;
attention skills and persistence.

Teaching and Learning style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage just as much as they do through the rest of the school.

The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;

- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are regularly shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;
- the clear aims for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do;
- the regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Foundation Stage.

Play in the Foundation Stage

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Inclusion in the Foundation Stage

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. Some children progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of all genders, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;

- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary. This involves speech therapy for some of our children.

The Foundation Stage Curriculum

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage in our school reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. The experiences that our children meet often enable them to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning.

The Early Learning Goals support the objectives in the National Curriculum for Maths and English. Throughout the Reception Year in our school, children have a daily Mathematics and Literacy lesson. This is mostly practical, play-based learning which moves into more formal 'sit-down' lessons. This helps to provide a smooth transition into Year 1.

The Development Matters 2021 document provides a guide for assessment checkpoints throughout the Foundation Stage.

Assessment

We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate.

During the children's first few weeks in the reception class, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using the Development Matters expectations for children aged 3 – 4 years old. We use this information to modify the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. We share this information with parents at the parental consultation meeting in the autumn term. The teacher completes the assessment again at the end of the child's reception year and records each child's attainment level. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead.

Each teacher keeps tracking documents, individual and cohort records, and examples of each child's work in their Learning Journey's which are updated regularly. These documents contain a wide range of evidence that we share with parents at each parental consultation meeting.

Parents receive a half termly report that highlights objectives that the child has achieved in reading, writing and maths and their next steps.

The role of parents

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 to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- the teacher visits all children at local playgroups prior to their starting school;
- the children have 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 report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents to become secure, and by allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
- arranging for children to start school over the first two weeks of term. We encourage parents to stay if there are problems with the child's admission;
- arranging 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 school reading or writing diaries. We invite parents to curriculum meetings to discuss the kind of work that the children undertake in the reception class.
- Encouraging parents to share their children's home experiences on Tapestry or Seesaw

Resources

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning.