

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

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Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) that applies from September 2021](#).

Structure of the EYFS

In the Gipsy Hill Federation, the EYFS is comprised of Nursery and Reception.

We offer both part and full time Nursery places. Part-time places may be in the mornings from 9.00am-12.00pm or afternoons from 12.30pm-3.30pm (subject to availability). Full-time places usually run from 9.00am-3.30pm. For children who receive 15/30 hours of funding but have a full-time place, there is a weekly top up fee. Please contact our school office for price lists.

To find out if your 3 or 4 year old is eligible for 15 or 30 hours of free childcare, please read the government guidance linked here.

Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2021.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

Each of the areas of learning contains aspects that support thorough development in the area of learning.

The prime areas of learning and their aspects are:

- Communication and Language (CL)
 - Listening, Attention & Understanding (LAU)
 - Speaking (S)
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)
 - Self-Regulation (SR)

- Managing Self (MS)
- Building Relationships (BR)
- Physical Development (PD)
 - Gross Motor Skills (GS)
 - Fine Motor Skills (FS)

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas. The specific areas of learning and their aspects are:

- Literacy (L)
 - Comprehension (C)
 - Word Reading (WR)
 - Writing (W)
- Mathematics
 - Number (N)
 - Numerical Patterns (NP)
- Understanding the World (UW)
 - Past & Present (P&P)
 - People, Culture & Communities (PCC)
- Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)
 - Creating with Materials (CM)
 - Being Imaginative and Expressive (BIE)

We use a number of strands to plan for a broad, rich and personalised curriculum for every cohort:

- Termly themes and overarching topics
- High quality texts and stories
- Children's interests
- National, international, religious and cultural holidays, celebrations and events
- Local community events and news
- Enriching experiences
- Parent/ Carer feedback and communication

Practitioners reflect on the different rates at which children develop and use a pedagogy rich in play to support children's development in the three characteristics of effective learning:

- Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experiences things, and 'have a go'
- Active Learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

4.1 Planning

Each of these areas of learning is planned for in the resources, activities and continuous provision in the environment. Here, children can freely choose where they would like to learn and develop their skills. Children also have regular access to the outdoor learning environment. Teachers also use assessment for learning to plan in the moment and respond to the children's needs.

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas. As children progress and develop a solid foundation in the prime areas, focused teaching

on the specific areas is introduced. The prime areas of learning are always considered to complement skills development in the specific areas.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

4.2 Teaching

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

In Nursery, children take part in class group-time activities focused on the prime areas. Such activities will often involve stories, songs, concrete resources and lots of participation. The planning reflects the children's developing attention skills. The teacher may work with the whole class with support from the teaching assistants, or each adult may lead a smaller group session each. Teaching then centres on focus activities in which staff teach specific skills and scaffold children to achieve their individual next steps in an area of learning.

In Reception, children take part in 3-4 whole class carpet-time activities per day. Phonics is taught daily and maths is taught at least 4 times per week. Other carpet-time teaching focuses on a key text of the week, the class topic, a special event and other areas of the curriculum, to ensure broad coverage. Following phonics lessons, adults teach small reading groups while the other children practice applying their new phonics skills. At least one other focus activity is planned in advance for the week for all children to take part in, while other focused teaching is planned for as the week progresses to take account of arising interests and areas for development.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more directed activities, which may be adult supported or set as an independent challenge. At the Gipsy Hill Federation, we want to prepare our children for their journey into Key Stage. However, we thoroughly recognise and value the importance of play. The Early Years Foundation Stage is a time for play and exploration. This core value guides our practice to the end of Reception and into Year 1.

Assessment

At the Gipsy Hill Federation, ongoing assessment is at the heart of early years practice. Staff use the rich information gathered from observations of and interactions with children to identify children's interests, strengths and next steps. Staff then use this to carefully plan both independent and adult directed learning opportunities to support and extend each child's learning. We also take into account observations shared by parents/carers as a child's first and most enduring educator. We use the online learning journal Tapestry to record observations. Parents/Carers are supported to access Tapestry, respond to classroom learning and share learning from home.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

Meeting expected levels of development ('expected')

Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated within the Gipsy Hill Federation (referring to the Development Matters guidance), to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Working with parents and families

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities. Tapestry, our online learning journal also provides parents/carers with ongoing access to their children's development and participation.

The class teacher takes on the key person role for each child. With the support of teaching assistance and early years educators, they ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

We recognise that parents and carers are a child's first and most enduring educators and we aim for the school and parents and carers to work closely in Early Years. This can have a very positive impact on a child's development but relies on a two-way flow of information and knowledge. Parent consultations early in the year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment as well as to build on community cohesion and wellbeing.

We aim to develop this by:

- A thorough and supportive induction process
- An open – door policy
- Parent evenings
- Suggestion box
- Phone calls
- Newsletters
- School Website
- Tapestry

The school is committed to ensuring all families feel welcome and included in the setting and we have adopted certain practices to help support families with EAL. We also support children within the setting by using lots of visual aids, signing, props and puppets, labels and signs in home languages, multi-language books.

All parents will be invited to join the Friends of School Association, which exists to facilitate social occasions so that families can get to know one another and feel part of the school, to raise money to provide extras that enhance the education of all children in school.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth
- Mental well-being and feelings
- Listening to our bodies
- Healthcare professionals and ‘people who help us’
- Taking local area trips to look at the facilities in our communities
- Encouraging independence and self-care as appropriate, e.g. taking care of belongings, managing toileting

We have included basic teaching of oral hygiene practice which is applicable within Personal, Social and Emotional Development.

Your child’s diet is very important for developing and maintaining strong and healthy teeth. It is helpful to include good sources of calcium (yogurt, broccoli, and milk) in your child’s diet to help build strong teeth. Teaching your child about healthy eating habits is one of the best practices for a lifetime of good health. Here are some helpful tips:

- Eat fruits and vegetables for snacks rather than sweets and biscuits.
- Brush your child’s teeth twice daily.
- Serve water at mealtime rather than juice.

Children have access to water throughout the day. They are taught to recognise their needs and manage their hygiene by washing their hands and washing their cups. Healthy snacks are also provided. Teachers may choose to share these during a ‘snack-time’ to facilitate socialising and turn-taking, or have them available for the children to help themselves to throughout the day.

Full-time Nursery children and Reception children are encouraged to have school dinners at school. In doing so, children have a choice of balanced meals, take part in a whole-school routine and learn to use cutlery which supports their fine motor skills. Kitchens are able to cater for allergies and provide for most dietary needs. Healthy packed lunches are also welcome. We work closely with our SENCOs, school nurse and other external professionals to support children and families as necessary.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.