

EARLSMEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Early Years Policy



SUCCESS *for* ALL

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LGB Approved	1.10.18
BoT Ratified	16.10.18
Date of Review	September 2020

MISSION STATEMENT

At Earlsmead Primary School we encourage all members of our school community to strive to be the best they can be and develop new skills that empower them for life- long learning in order to become confident, valuable, members of society.

We create an inclusive, supportive, safe and challenging environment where all contributions are valued.

Learning is motivating and independence is encouraged hence all become reflective, self-learning team members with a positive sense of wellbeing and a love of learning.

OUR VISION

Working in partnership with children, parents, staff and Governors as a community we will achieve *Success for All* through:

Securing resilience

Understanding values and respecting others

Committing to our learning

Community involvement

Equality for all

Striving to do our very best

Setting high expectations

Early Years Policy

Background information

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Earlsmead, our EYFS accommodates children from the age of 4 to 5 years. We currently have two full-time reception classes in an open plan layout, however due to not all reception places being filled to capacity, as of the academic year 2018/2019, the two classes will merge in to one, subject to new arrivals and class numbers. The setting will be led by one class teacher and one nursery nurse, with two additional adults to support SEN children and to ensure that the 1:6 ratio requirements is met.

Aims

In Reception at Earlsmead we aim to give each child a positive and meaningful start to their school life, in which they can establish solid foundations on which to develop into independent and e lifelong learners.

We will encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere; to support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing; to help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and by developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

Our high expectations will enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally and to achieve their full potential. We will offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited availability for development through a wide range of new and exciting first-hand experiences that will give children the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test their skills, knowledge and understanding alongside existing experiences. We will ensure that children are kept healthy and safe and that they achieve the knowledge and skills they need to start school

The Curriculum

Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the 2014 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available on the school website or to download at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2.

This document was revised in 2017 and a one-page guide explaining the revisions made can be accessed at:

www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2017/03/EYFS-2017_One-page-guide-for-providers_FINAL.pdf.

The curriculum is referred to as 'Development Matters' and all learning carried out within the Reception setting at Earlsmead addresses the strands within this document. The strands are as follows:

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of **three prime** area of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

There are **four specific areas** of learning:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

At Earlsmead all areas are delivered through a well-planned play based approach, with a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Throughout the foundation stage our long, medium and short-term plans ensure that each child has the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area at the appropriate developmental level. Our long term planning ensures coverage so that all children have opportunities to work towards and achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. We follow weekly story-based topics which allow flexibility to ensure that both children's needs and interests are taken into account and that children are being exposed to a wealth of literature.

Play

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the foundation stage. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experience that interest and inspire them to learn. In doing so we can provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning and to help them make sense of the world. Children have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning and the nursery and reception teachers plan activities with these in mind. The characteristics highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. The three characteristics 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

Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Inclusion

Our whole school ethos, as well as that of the foundation stage, embraces inclusion. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures.

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 and we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, so that children are able to reach their full potential. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We aim to 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

We will provide:

- a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping; challenging activities for all children and for those whose ability and understanding are advanced.

We will monitor children's progress and take action to provide support as necessary. Where a specific need is suspected we will liaise with the Special Educational Needs co-ordinator and seek advice from outside agencies, such as the speech and language service, the educational psychologist and the bi-lingual support services amongst others.

We adhere to the Equal Opportunity and Inclusion policies of the school.

Early Years Pupil Premium – we will endeavour to identify our least advantaged pupils and inform parents or carers of their opportunity to apply for their child's entitlement to free school meals. We will track children's progress to ensure that they are making good progress and to ensure that support is adjusted to target specific areas as the child develops.

Assessment

Throughout Reception, children's knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements are assessed and tracked using the developmental stages set out in the document 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)'.

Our assessment depends on us getting to know our children very well and to this end we gather information from a range of sources; observations of the children in play, in adult led activities, through discussions with parents and carers and through talking to the children. We keep written and photographic evidence to help us build up a picture of children's strengths and achievements and to help us to plan for children's next steps in learning.

Every child in Reception has a 'Learning Journal' in which we record our observations and keep samples of the children's work.

At the start of Reception children are assessed to determine a baseline, or starting point, for their future learning. Throughout the year children's knowledge, skills and understanding will continue to be tracked throughout the foundation stage and assessed against the ELG's at the end of reception to establish an end of foundation stage achievement for each child in preparedness for their transition to key stage one.

Transitions

At Earlsmead we recognise that starting school and moving up classes has the potential to be a stressful time for both children and parents. To this end we have established a strong procedure for transitions to ensure that our children and parents are as confident and secure as they can be when facing the challenges of each year group.

Children are invited to a 'stay and play' morning in July and a meeting is held to provide parents with key information, school expectations, knowledge on our curriculum and assessment and advice on how they can help their child.

Alternatively, all parent/carers are offered a home visit prior to their child starting school, this gives children the security of meeting with their teachers in a safe, familiar environment and gives parents time to ask questions and share knowledge or any concerns they have about their child. In the summer term reception children have the opportunity to meet with their teachers in their classroom on two occasions, once with their parents and once on their own to help them prepare for their new experiences.

At the beginning of the school year children are given staggered entry times based on their date of births and needs. This is a two week settling in period to ensure that children have the time to become secure and familiar with the new routines before starting school full time. For the first week children attend school in the mornings only and for the second week children attend for mornings and then stay for lunch.

At the end of Reception children have the opportunity to meet with their new Year 1 teachers in their classrooms during a whole school 'Meet the teacher' day.

At the end of each school year teachers have the opportunity to share their knowledge of each child's knowledge, understanding and achievements, including end of year assessment data, with their next class teacher to ensure that all teachers have a well-rounded picture of the children prior to the new school year.

Children in Early Years make use of the whole school facilities, such as the hall, ICT suite, library and playing field for appropriate activities to ensure that children are confident and well prepared for moving around the school and for mixing with older children when they start school. Throughout the Reception year, when children are ready they are gradually introduced to whole school activities such as assemblies and to using the infant playground.

Health & safety and safeguarding

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow

the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2014) and we adhere to the school's safeguarding policy.

We are a healthy school and our Reception children have access to fresh water, free fruit and a free hot meal at lunchtime, in line with Government initiatives.

Our EYFS provision has its own toileting facilities and we teach the children the importance of hygiene, hand washing techniques and throughout the year we plan cooking activities to give children experiences of a range of healthy food.