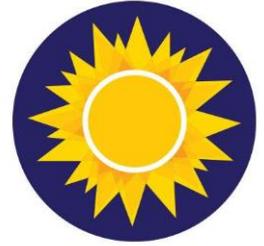


Midsomer Norton Primary School



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in his or her own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

“Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage”,
Department for Education, 2012

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Midsomer Norton Primary School, we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development .

Aims

We aim to:

- provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs
- provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his/her full potential.
- provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development

- use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress
- enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self-confidence
- work in partnership with Parents/carers and value their contributions
- ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development

Learning and Development

The three prime areas of learning and development are:

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

The four specific areas of learning are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design
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We aim to deliver all the areas through planned, purposeful play, reflecting child-initiated activities as well as those which are adult led.

Planning

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

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.

Long Term Planning

We have created a framework, which gives structure and coherence to the curriculum. In Reception, themed topics are planned for each of the six terms and the early learning goals and educational programmes are distributed over the terms, to determine broad and balanced coverage. Some early learning goals provide a focus for certain terms, particularly those relating to Understanding the World. Topics may be changed to reflect the interests and needs of a particular cohort/group. A flexible approach ensures learning is linked to the world around us. In the 2-3 year old nursery class all learning is child led, responding to the interest of the child and how he/she interacts with the environment around them. In the 3 - 4 year old provision there is an element of some adult led activities but the majority of the learning that takes place is child initiated with the staff enhancing this by high quality interactions.

Medium Term Planning

In Reception each of the areas of learning are addressed in more detail. Learning objectives, assessment opportunities, activities and previous experiences are devised with the children and shared with the parents at the beginning of each term.

Short Term Planning

Across EYFS, we identify specific learning objectives, activities, differentiation, deployment of adults and resources, to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly and day-to-day basis. It allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests and for revision and modification, informed by on-going observational assessment.

Staffing and Organisation

There are 16 places per session in our 2-3 year old nursery class. There are 30 places per session in our 3-4 year old nursery class. There is a maximum intake of 45 children into Reception. There is a teaching assistant in the class/unit throughout the school day. The children have daily opportunities for structured and free-flow play both in the classroom and in the custom built EYFS outdoor area. This time is supported by an adult, who acts as a facilitator to the child's learning.

The teacher liaises with the teaching assistant, regularly involving them in planning, preparation and assessment.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

The EYFS curriculum is based on an observation of children's needs, interests and stages of development. In partnership with parents, the school promotes the learning and development of pupils to ensure they are ready for the next stage of education.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape education programmes in EYFS settings. These are split into two sections – prime and specific; however, all the sections are interconnected and important.

The 'prime' areas of learning and development are:

- **Communication and language** -
 - Listening, attention and understanding
 - Speaking
- **Physical development**
 - Gross motor skills
 - Fine motor skills
- **Personal, social and emotional development** -
 - Self-regulation
 - Managing self
 - Building relationships

The 'specific' areas of learning and development are:

- **Literacy**
 - Comprehension
 - Word reading
 - Writing
- **Mathematics**
 - Number
 - Numerical patterns
- **Understanding the world**
 - Past and present
 - People, culture and communities
 - The natural world

- **Expressive arts and design**

- Creating with materials
- Being imaginative and expressive

The early learning goals (ELGs) above are not used as a curriculum or in any way to limit the wide variety of rich experiences that are crucial to child development. The ELGs are used to support teachers to make a holistic, bestfit judgement about a child's development and their readiness for Year 1.

Activities are planned to reflect children's interests and individual circumstances in order to provide each child with a challenging and enjoyable experience.

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. Formative assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Early Years staff know the children's level of achievement and interests, and shape teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge. In their interactions with children, Early Years staff should respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share.

When assessing children, Early Years staff should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement to assess whether a child is at the expected level of development. Staff should not be required to prove this through collection of physical evidence.

Children entering Reception will be assessed within the first six weeks using the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). The RBA assesses a child in early mathematics, literacy, communication and language. 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. Each child's level of development must be assessed against the early learning goals, as a best fit judgement. Early years staff must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). This is the EYFS Profile.

Learning through play

At Midsomer Norton we do not make a distinction between work and play. We support children's learning through planned play activities, and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities.

The Learning Environment

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. Children should feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence.

Liaison with pre-school settings, within the EYFS and induction

At Midsomer Norton, Nursery and Reception staff work closely together to support induction. A member of the EYFS team undertakes visits to other pre-school settings to read a story to prospective children and to talk about starting school. The reception and nursery teachers meet to discuss assessment and induction issues. In nursery, families are invited to an induction session to familiarise parents and carers with staff, the school and the school day.

During the summer term, a range of induction events are held so that parents/carers and children have the opportunity to meet the class teachers and to visit the Reception classrooms. Parents are given a copy of the Parents & Carers handbook which outlines the curriculum and school routines and other relevant information about Reception, along with a document pack to be completed and returned to school.

Home Visits

We offer the parents a home visit which enables a first meeting between the child and teacher in an environment which is safe, and where the child feels in control. Once the child has started school, our teachers can mention a particular aspect of the visit as a starting point for

conversation. This may help the child feel that the teacher knows a little about them. Recognising a friendly face as soon as they enter the classroom can also help the child to settle more quickly.

For our teachers, a visit provides the opportunity to:

- establish early, positive contact
- see the child in their own familiar settings
- meet other family members, people and pets who are important to the child
- understand the problems that the children might encounter at school, and also to appreciate the wealth of learning that goes on in the home

Starting in Sunbeams or Sun Class (2 year old provision and Preschool)

We recognise that young children and their parents/ carers have differing needs in regards to starting in an Early Years setting; therefore, parents are invited to stay if necessary as their child settles in and becomes used to the nursery staff and environment.

Transition within the Two year old (Sunbeams) and Preschool (Sun class)

Sunbeams class caters for 2-3 year olds. Sun class caters for 3-4 year olds. The timing of the transition from Sunbeams and Sun will vary depending on the child's readiness. EYFS staff and parents/carers decide when a child makes the transition together in partnership.

Starting school in Reception

The Reception cohort will be divided into two groups. During their first full week in school, Group 1 attend mornings and Group 2 attend the afternoons. During the second week Group 2 attend mornings and Group 1 attend the afternoons. Both groups then start full time. This allows:

- children to become accustomed to new routines in a secure environment and gradually build up to full-time attendance
- children to begin to build new friendships and to learn to celebrate their own unique qualities.
- children to establish secure and confident relationships with staff.
- the practitioners to get to know the children individually and establish good relationships
- the reception teachers to carry out assessments

Reception to Year 1 Transition

Reception and the Year 1/2 teachers work together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible.

At Midsomer Norton:

- children are encouraged to develop independence when dressing and undressing and when organising their personal belongings throughout the reception year
- reception practitioners plan for more structured activities to be undertaken during the summer terms, encouraging less dependence on adult support
- an EYFS Profile end of year class summary is passed on to Year 1/2 teachers
- Reception and Year 1/2 teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children in July
- Reception children visit their new class and teacher for two sessions in July
- the 'Read Write Inc' national approach to phonics and spelling is continued throughout year 1 and 2
- there is a similar structure to the school day during the Autumn Term when the children move into year 1
- there is an overlap in approach and routines, e.g. Fruit time, behaviour systems, timetables, etc
- where possible, the Year 1 children continue to enjoy practical learning experiences

Home/School Links

We recognise that parents are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

- outlining the reception curriculum to parents during the new parents meeting in July, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home
- topic webs and curriculum letters are sent home each term and published online to keep parents informed of their child's current curriculum and learning needs, with an outline of activities which could be undertaken at home to support this
- operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner
- sharing progress at school through annotated photographs and encouraging parents to comment on their child's progress
- inviting parents to help and to participate in Drop and Read/Count/Spell
- encouraging parents to listen to their child read each night and to comment on reading progress in a reading diary
- encouraging relevant learning activities to be continued at home e.g. maths games and library books, and ensuring that experiences at home are used to develop learning in school
- discussing individual progress with parents at parents' evening in October and March (informed by the EYFS Profile)
- providing an annual written report to parents of Nursery leavers and Reception children in July summarising the child's progress against the early learning goals and the children's age development age range.
- holding child/parent open days and workshops to enable parents to work alongside their children.

Equal Opportunities

At Midsomer Norton we aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in

promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas. For more information see the school's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Inclusion

Children with special educational needs will be given support as appropriate to enable them to benefit from the curriculum. This includes children that are more able, and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities.

We believe in the importance of early identification of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The EYFS team work with the school SENCO and parents to ensure needs are identified and appropriate provision put in place. SEN Support Plans and Education & Health Care Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support, in line with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy. The EYFS teachers discuss these targets with the child and his/her parents. Progress is monitored and reviewed a minimum of three times a year. The school's SEN co-ordinator is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary. For further information see the school's Special Educational Needs Policy and Inclusion Policy.

Safeguarding and welfare

All necessary steps are taken to keep the children in the setting safe and well.

Any safeguarding or welfare issues are dealt with in line with the Safeguarding Policy, and all members of staff in the EYFS are required to read this policy as part of their induction training.

Child Protection

Please refer to 'Child Protection' Policy.

Health and Safety

Please refer to 'Health and Safety' Policy.

Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored and evaluated by the Headteacher and EYFS leader, and will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Agreed Date: April 2021

To be reviewed: April 2022