

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development. We believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential.

Our EYFS provision is built upon the four guiding principles. These are:

- Every child is a **unique child** who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of **learning and development** Children develop and learn at different rates

These principles underpin all aspects of teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

I. A Unique Child

Child Development

At The Mount we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We acknowledge that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Keeping Safe

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. In both our indoor and outdoor environments, children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazard both within the school and in the wider environment. We encourage a healthy lifestyle including taking part in regular exercise and eating healthy food. We aim to protect the physical and mental well-being of all children

Inclusion

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at The Mount are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our pupils. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of girls with special educational needs, those who are more able, those with disabilities, those from all social and cultural backgrounds, of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We welcome children for whom English is a second or third language. We provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning, to support language development

at home, and to ensure that they also have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English language.

We meet the needs of all our pupils through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Providing language-rich play opportunities
- Visual timetable outlining the daily routine
- 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.

2. Positive Relationships

At The Mount we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with all children and their families.

Key Worker

Each child within the Early Years Foundation Stage will be given a key person. The key person helps to ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. They are also responsible for engaging and supporting parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home and, if appropriate, helping families engage with more specialist support. In the Reception Class the Class Teacher will be the Key Worker for all children in the class, supported by the Teaching Assistants.

Parents as Partners

We believe that parents and carers are our partners in children's learning. We try to develop a close working relationship between home and school involving parents in their child's development. Some of the ways we encourage this are:

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- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school/setting.
- Providing an Early Years Parents' Handbook which outlines staff, routines of the day and a curriculum overview.
- Adopting an 'Open Door Policy' so that parents and teachers have the chance to chat informally at the beginning or end of the school day.
- Inviting parents to school events during the year including; Come and Play, Sports Day and Christmas Plays.
- Sharing termly topics and curriculum overviews on our online platforms.
- Inviting parents to EYFS information sessions
- Whole school newsletters.
- Termly Parent/Teacher consultation meetings in Reception.
- A written report at the end of the academic year.
- The children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school.
- Allowing parents access to the children's online 'Learning Journey' via SeeSaw.

- Providing parents with the opportunity to contribute to their child's online Learning Journey on SeeSaw.

3. Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

The Learning Environment

All classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. Classrooms are set up in areas of learning and children are encouraged to care for their own environment and use resources carefully and creatively. All Early Years classes share an outdoor area and staff plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all areas of learning. In addition all children in the EYFS take part in weekly 'Forest Schools' activities in the Woodland Area.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs.

The EYFS framework provides a long-term plan to follow by ensuring that all areas of learning and development are covered throughout the academic year, and through our EYFS themes and topics. Medium term planning in Reception takes into account the individual children's learning and developmental needs within the English, Maths and Explore, Discover, Create Curriculum. All areas of learning and development are planned for and available to access within the setting. Short-term planning is completed on a weekly basis and is flexible enough to respond to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult-focused and child-initiated activities, both indoors and outdoors.

Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of sensitive observational assessment, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. Staff use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress. These observations are recorded in children's individual 'Learning Journey' online using 'SeeSaw'. Base line assessment will be carried out as the child starts Pre-School. Teacher assessment is used as a baseline on entering Reception.

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS profile is completed for each child. The profile provides parents and carers, staff and Year 1 teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written report to parents, reporting their progress against the ELG's and providing a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. We give a reasonable opportunity for the parents to discuss these judgements with the EYFS teacher. Teacher assessment is moderated internally.

Learning and Development

The seven areas of learning and development are equally important and interdependent and this is reflected in our planning for both adult-led and child-initiated learning. The three prime areas are crucial to develop lifelong learning and to help children form relationships.

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Communication and language
- Physical development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas.

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the world
- Expressive art and design

Teaching and Learning Style

We believe that effective teaching and learning in EYFS is evident through;

- The partnership between staff and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement.
- The understanding that staff 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 work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS.
- 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.
- Identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations.

In the Reception year staff provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support children to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts. Specialist teaching in French, Music and P.E is timetabled weekly across the EYFS. In all planning and guiding children's activities, staff must reflect on the different ways that children learning and reflect these in their practice. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are;

Playing and Exploring

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. Children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

Active Learning

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning. Children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning. They are encouraged to make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing this.

Welfare

At The Mount we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2024.

We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health (including oral health), preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are qualified and suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

Training, support and skills

Continuing Professional Development is key to quality improvement. All EYFS staff have access to in-house training as a whole staff or EYFS team. Next to the school appraisal review, each EYFS staff member has regular staff supervision where they have the opportunity to:

- discuss any issues – particularly concerning children's development or well-being
- identify solutions to address issues as they arise
- receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness

Early Years Staffing and Structure

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In our school, children may join our Pre-School from the age of three (or rising three). Pupils in our Pre-school class will be offered session choices. These will include; Breakfast Club, Morning Session, lunch, Afternoon Session and After School Care. All pupils in their Reception year will attend full time.

We ensure that there are always sufficient staff to give the children the care and attention they need and that the staff to pupil ratio according to the EYFS Statutory Framework is met. In EYFS, there is at least one member of staff who has a current paediatric first aid certificate on the premises at all times when children are present and they accompany children to outings.

This policy applies also to our Before and After School Care Provision.

Related Policies

Safeguarding and Children Protection Policy

EYFS Behaviour Policy

Pupils Supervision Policy