



Newton Leys
Primary School & Nursery

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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Reviewed: July 2021

Next review date: July 2023

Aims

At Newton Leys Primary School & Nursery Early Years Stage 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, 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 enable every child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally and to achieve their full potential. We offer a stage 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 when starting their learning journey.

The Curriculum

The Nursery and Reception classes follow the curriculum as outlined in **the revised** 2014 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document which can be downloaded at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>. This clearly defines what we teach. The following policy details the specifics of our setting.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, 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/ house points and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

Enabling environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests and stages

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of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

Learning and development

Our Early Years has one nursery classroom, three reception classrooms and a large outdoor classroom, which is shared. All our learning environments are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The seven areas of learning are defined so that children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

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 Newton Leys Primary School & Nursery all areas are delivered through a child-centred, play based approach, with a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Throughout the Early Years 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 do not follow termly or half termly topics, instead we follow the interests of our children, planning 'in the moment' to capture the children's interests on a daily basis; in doing so we allow the children to become leaders of their own learning.

Play

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the Early Years. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences 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 around them. 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.

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Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective learning, 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. We talk to the children about how they learn and encourage them to identify which specific characteristics of effective learning they display.

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 Early Years, 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 endeavour to identify our least advantaged pupils and inform parents or carers of their opportunity to apply for their child's entitlement to extra funding in school. All extra funding we receive will be used to support areas in which we identify that the child will best benefit. 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.

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Assessment

Throughout nursery and 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)' as a guide. The children are assessed in a 'moment of time' format, where we identify whether each child, is, or is not, working at an 'expected' level.

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 from both at school and home, in adult led activities, through discussions with parents and carers and through talking to the children. We keep written, photographic and video recorded 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 Nursery has a 'Learning Journal' in which we keep samples of the children's work. All Reception children have a Literacy and Maths book, where work for each subject is collated. An online 'Learning Journal' is created for each child which includes observations of children's learning; this incorporates both adult led and self-initiated learning activities from in school, as well as observations from parents and carers at home. The software we use for this is 'Tapestry'.

Reception children will be assessed during the first 4-6 weeks of school against learning statements in all Prime and Specific areas of learning, to determine a baseline, or starting point, for their future learning. Judgements will be based on the adults' observations of children during activities and play. We take part in the statutory baseline assessment which is provided by the DfE. This is carried out when the children demonstrate a high level of well-being and involvement, indicating they have settled well into Reception. We endeavour to engage with parents/carers to ensure their views on their child as a learner will be taken into account.

Observational evidence and samples of children's work throughout the school year will be used to assess children as 'expected' or 'emerging', based on their understanding and achievement of the Early Learning Goals set out in the EYFS curriculum.

Through outcomes of assessment in Personal Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development, Communication and Language, Maths and Literacy, it is judged whether your child has or has not made a 'Good Level of Development'. This information is clearly communicated to parents and careers, in addition to their new teacher, who can then plan for their learning appropriately.

Transitions

At Newton Leys Primary School & Nursery 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.

Both Nursery and Reception hold a meeting (in person or virtually) in the summer term before the children start school to provide parents with key information, school expectations, knowledge on our curriculum and assessment and advice on how they can help their child. In Nursery all parents are offered a home visit prior to their child starting school and in Reception all children who did not attend the nursery are also visited at home. 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. Transition plans are in place for the children moving: into the Nursery, from Nursery to

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Reception and from Reception to Year 1. This provides each child an opportunity to spend time in their new class and with their new teacher before the end of the school year.

In September, after home visits, our new Nursery children will attend a 'Stay and play' session, before starting their normal sessions; a phased entry can be discussed with the Nursery teacher. For Reception children, home visits occur in the summer term; for the first week of Autumn term, these children will then attend school on a part time basis (either every morning, or every afternoon), before they begin full time from the second week of Autumn term.

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.

During children's time in Nursery and Reception a range of shared activities are planned for all classes to help develop children's confidence and to ensure continuity in experiences throughout the foundation stage. Children in both Nursery and Reception make use of the whole school facilities, such as the hall, 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 year, children in nursery and reception are gradually introduced to whole school activities such as assemblies and to using the infant playground.

Partnership with Parents

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what their child does at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child and to feel comfortable in our setting. As well as the Nursery and Reception visit days we offer many opportunities for parents/ carers to share their child's learning environment, have time to talk informally with the practitioners and to meet other parents. We also offer parents a variety of learning workshops to provide advice and information on how they can support their child's learning. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to share information about their child, to ask questions and to discuss their child's learning with the teachers.

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 operate an open door policy, offering parents the opportunity to chat briefly to staff at the beginning and end of the day/session. Reception children are issued with a 'reading record'; the purpose of these books is so that teachers can provide information on children's reading experiences in school and parents can share information about their child's reading outside of school. This information helps to build a well-rounded picture of the child in for everyone.

Parents are encouraged to join in with their child's education from the very start of their school journey. In Nursery all parents are invited to join in with activity afternoons and to join in with a range of activities from supporting phonics activities to sports day. In Reception parents are encouraged to support children's learning through completing reading records, simple homework activities, attending activity afternoons and by joining in on our Learn Alongside mornings.

At Newton Leys Primary School & Nursery we value the importance of the three-way relationship between children, parents and staff, as it enables children to make good progress and to maximise their potential. For children in Nursery and Reception, interim

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reports are provided at the end of the winter and spring terms and a full written report at the end of the summer term.

Formal parents' meetings are offered at the end of the autumn and spring term. An optional meeting is provided at the end of the summer term. During these meetings parents have the opportunity of speaking with the Teachers and Nursery Nurses to discuss their child's progress and development, their next steps in learning and to view their child's learning journals. Parents are always welcomed to discuss their children informally at the end of the school day.

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 children under 5 receive free milk and all children have access to fresh water. The children receive free fruit/vegetables as part of a government scheme. Reception are also eligible for free school meals.

Each Early Years classroom has access to their 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.

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