



# The Children's House

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

This policy should be renewed annually and as required by legislation.		
Action	Reviewer	Date
Review	TH	January 2025
Approved by Chair of COM	DD	January 2025
Date for next internal review		January 2026



# The Children's House

## EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a statutory framework setting out the requirements for Learning, Development and Welfare for children from birth to five years of age. Most children begin their educational journey at The Children's House through the Nursery School, joining from the age of two and a half years. In the first term, they attend Nursery School, with the initial half-term focused on settling in and immersing into the school routine. As the children seamlessly integrate into the setting, The Children's House encourages and supports their continuous engagement in a full day of activities. Children move into Reception following their fourth birthday. The end of Reception marks the end of the foundation stage.

### THE FOUR CENTRAL PRINCIPLES OF THE EYFS

The EYFS is based upon four guiding principles:

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

This Policy explains how our practice is underpinned by these four themes.

#### **A Unique Child:**

We recognise that:

- Every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children develop in individual ways at varying rates.
- Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise, encouragement, celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

#### Inclusion:

We value the diversity and uniqueness of every individual within our school. All children are treated fairly whatever their race, gender, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of each child's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the Foundation Stage we set achievable and challenging expectations that meet the needs of each child. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of each child through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend the child's knowledge, experience and interests and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on each child's learning needs.



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- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support each child and to help them to learn effectively.
- Providing a safe, 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 each child's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary

## Welfare:

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 provide them with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children (see Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy).

We endeavour to meet all the welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for the EYFS:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate to each child's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment are 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 EYFS and to meet the needs of the children.

## **Positive Relationships:**

We recognise that:

- Children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships.
- We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

## **Parents as Partners:**

Parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school, through the Parent Tour.
- Offering both parents and children a Welcome visit to the Nursery and Reception before starting school.
- Operating an open-door policy for parents with any queries.



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- Sharing the children's 'special books' and valuing the on-going contributions to these from parents.
- Offering parent/teacher consultation evenings each year and a two-year Progress Check consultation for parents of under-3s.
- Sending a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the school year, including a statement on attainment on the early years' outcomes at the end of the Reception year.

## **Key Person:**

All staff involved in the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. Children are placed into groups led by a teacher (key person), providing a consistent, supportive relationship each day through which a close attachment is developed and maintained between the child and his or her key person. Attachment provides a sense of security so that children can become confident, independent and capable young learners. The role of the key person is to meet the needs of each child in their care and respond sensitively to their feelings, talking to the parents when appropriate and working in partnership with them.

## **Enabling Environments:**

We recognise that:

- The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development.
- Through observation we assess each child's interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

## **Observation, Assessment and Planning:**

Planning within the EYFS is guided by the school's EYFS curriculum which is based on the EYFS seven areas of learning and development and the educational programmes, as well as the Development Matters guidance into which we incorporate activities and experiences in specific response to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. This fostering of the children's interests develops a high level of motivation for the children's learning. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations. For children who join our Nursery at 2 years of age, our statutory requirement is to complete the 2-year Progress Check which reports to parents the child's stage of learning and development in the prime areas of Communication and Language, Personal Social & Emotional development and Physical Development. The progress check describes the child's achievements and highlights areas where extra support might be needed and describes how the school will provide this.

Teachers make observations of children throughout the EYFS, including a rotation of observations through the Focus Child system, these are recorded in children's 'special books' to include written observations and quotes, photographic evidence and samples of children's work. Information gathered in this way is used to inform future planning through target setting and Next Steps and shared with parents at parent evenings.



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The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA), a short progress measure assessment, is taken in the first 6 weeks in which a child starts Reception. The purpose of the RBA is to form the starting point for cohort-level school progress measures. The baseline assessment is followed by a baseline progress assessment in the second half of the summer term. Data is compared to key stage 2 outcomes 7 years later to form the overall progress measure for the school. At the end of the Reception year each child's development is recorded in relation to the 17 early learning goals, which children expected to have attained by the end of the EYFS. Parents receive this information which we are also required to share with the local authority for the purposes of monitoring children's development locally and nationally.

## **The Learning Environment:**

The Foundation Stage classroom areas are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely, with defined areas for active, quiet and creative play where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. At the Nursery there is no outdoor space and children access outdoor provision through daily, planned trips to local community gardens, and the Upper school playground. The large hall at the Nursery provides space for weekly gross motor activities and Dance lessons. At the Upper School, Reception children have immediate access to an outdoor playground and use is also made of the large church hall for PE, Games and Dance, and the school's garden plot at our local community garden on King Henry's Walk.

## **Learning and Development:**

We recognise that:

- Children learn and develop in different ways and have their own learning styles

The EYFS describes the different ways children learn as The Characteristics of Effective Learning. They include:

## **Playing and exploring – engagement**

- Finding out and exploring
- Playing with what they know
- Being willing to 'have a go'

Through play 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 have the opportunity to express fears or anxieties in controlled and safe situations. We deliver learning for all the areas through purposeful play and learning experiences with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

## **Active Learning - motivation**

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keep trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning and to be able to have time to become absorbed and immersed in their play and lines of enquiry. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions, providing them with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.



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## **Creativity and Critical Thinking:**

- Having their own ideas
- Making links
- Choosing ways to do things
- Being Healthy
- Staying Safe
- Enjoying and Achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Organisation to promote good outcomes for children

Children are given opportunities to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults 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 incorporate the range of available resources into their play in order to extend their learning.

## **LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE EYFS**

### **The Seven Areas of Learning and Development:**

The Early Years Foundation stage areas of learning and development and educational programmes are divided into seven areas of learning and development which describe the skills and knowledge which are the foundation for children's future progress. The three **prime areas** are:

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

The prime areas are applied and reinforced by the four **specific areas**:

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

We value all of the seven areas of Learning and Development equally and understand that they are often inter-connected.

### **The Aspects of Learning within each area:**

Each area of Learning and Development has different **aspects** within it. The aspects of learning and the activities we give children to promote their learning, are described below and in further detail in our separate document entitled Nursery Curriculum.

### **In Communication and language:**

- Listening, Attention and Understanding
- Speaking

Spontaneous opportunities occur throughout every day during 'carpet' times and children's activities. Planned opportunities include circle times, assemblies and show and tell.



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## **In Physical development:**

- Gross Motor Skills
- Fine Motor Skills

Moving and Handling involves the development of children's fine and gross motor control, balance and coordination. Children use tools such as scissors, needles and knives to cut, sew and spread. They mark make, draw and write with pencils, pens and paintbrushes and become adept at constructing with small Duplo and Lego. Children engage running, jumping, throwing and balancing to develop their gross motor skills and coordination. They also participate in yoga, games involving balls to enhance hand-eye coordination and spatial awareness, promoting both health and social interaction. Pre-Reception children partake in weekly sessions with our Head of Games while those under three years, if deemed ready, can participate as early as the Spring term. Our Dance specialist also encourages expression, creativity and coordination through dance steps, gestures and imaginative play.

Carefully planned outdoor visits that provide exercise and fresh air include trips to the Almorah community garden, exploring the local area, visits to King Henry's Walk community garden and play sessions in the Upper school playground. We also have a Healthy Living Week each year, providing further opportunities for learning and outdoor activities.

## **In Personal, social and emotional development:**

- Self-Regulation
- Managing Self
- Building Relationships

We name and talk about emotions to help children recognise, share and manage their feelings and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly. With adult guidance they develop their attention skills and their ability to try new things and persevere with goals. They play alongside one another and begin to develop ideas together as they grow. They learn to share, turn-take and acquire a sense of fairness. They show respect and value for one another's differences and express interest in one another's cultures, languages and beliefs. They learn to look after themselves, their friends and the precious things around them, taking on roles of responsibility, helping to tidy up, looking after their own belongings and learning how to keep themselves healthy, safe and well.

## **In Literacy:**

- Comprehension
- Word Reading
- Writing

Children mark make with paint, sand, chalk, pens, pencils and shaving foam. They practice forming lines and anti-clockwise movements and develop correct letter formation. They use developmental writing in their play and record and keep diaries in teacher-led activities. We develop fine motor skills in threading and cutting, sand and water play, cooking and building. We follow a letters and sounds program, developing very young children's auditory skills through musical games and rhymes and moving into letter sounds and shapes, whole words and beginner reading books. We have a themed 'Book Week' each year in which parents come into school to read to children in their home languages.

## **In Maths:**

- Numbers
- Numerical Patterns



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Children have real problems to solve and practical maths activities and equipment in which to sort, match, compare, sequence, order, add, take-away, share, count, make patterns, predict and recognise shapes all around them.

## **In Understanding the World:**

- Past and Present
- People, Culture and Communities
- The Natural World

We nurture children's natural curiosity about themselves and the world around them through engaging with children's own experiences and by looking at photographs, books, maps, travel, objects and artefacts. We have a themed Our Wonderful World Week, Harvest Festival Week, Science and Recycling Week each year.

## **In Expressive Arts and Design:**

- Creating with materials
- Being Imaginative and Expressive

Children form, develop and express their ideas in art, dance, drama and music each week and perform concerts to parents each term.

## **Reflecting fundamental British values in the early years:**

There is a statutory requirement within the EYFS to provide all children with experiences which reflect the fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs. We address this in the following ways:

### **1. Democracy: making decisions together**

As part of the focus on self-confidence and self-awareness as described in Personal, Social & Emotional development:

- Children express their views and value one another's views at Circle Time, School Council, Monitors and other assemblies
- In age-appropriate ways, children participate in democratic actions eg sharing views and voting with a show of hands on theme of role-play area; putting forward their ideas and using a simple ballot box to vote for play equipment or a name for the pirate ship
- Children develop an emotional vocabulary by talking about their feelings

### **2. Rule of Law: understanding rules matter**

As part of the focus on managing feelings and behaviour:

- Staff help children to understand their own and others' behaviour and its consequences and to learn to distinguish right from wrong
- In Circle Times and assemblies children create their own school and class rules and rules for using new equipment or visiting a special building or place eg agreeing rules about tidying up and ensuring that all children understand that rules apply to everyone

### **3. Individual Liberty: freedom for all**

As part of the focus on self-confidence and self-awareness and people and communities as described in Personal, Social & Emotional development and Understanding the World:

- Children are helped to develop a positive sense of themselves through activities which increase their confidence in their abilities e.g. risk taking in an obstacle course, mixing colours, talking about their experiences and learning



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- Children develop the language of feelings and responsibility, reflect on their differences and understand we are free to have different opinions e.g. Our Wonderful Week in which parents and children share their different languages, cultures and beliefs, transition circle times as children move from to their next class or school
- 4. **Mutual Respect and Tolerance: treat others as you want to be treated**  
As part of the focus on people and communities, managing feelings and behaviour and making relationships as described in Personal, Social & Emotional development and Understanding the World:
  - The school has a policy of inclusion which it practices through its admissions and curriculum policies and its Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Policy
  - Children learn about their own and others' faiths, communities, cultures and traditions through sharing practices, celebrations and experiences at festival times, in Religious Education at the Upper School, through themed weeks such as Our Wonderful World, Harvest and in assemblies and concert performances
  - In circle times and spontaneously throughout each day, staff encourage and explain the importance of tolerant behaviours such as sharing, respecting other's opinions
  - The school uses books, displays, resources, visitors, visits, circle time and assembly discussions to reflect the rich diversity of our school and the wider community

## STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Key features of our support and provision for children are:

- A strong partnership between teachers and parents so that each child feels happy and secure being here and develops a sense of well-being and pleasure in what they do and achieve
- Each child has a teacher/keyworker who is responsible for their care and education
- Teachers' in-depth understanding of how children learn in the foundation stage
- Teaching approaches which provide first-hand and real experiences to children, give clear explanations and make carefully timed, sensitive interventions that extend and develop their play and talk
- A curriculum that enables children to have equal access to each of the seven areas of Learning and Development and attain their full potential in the Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception
- Through observations of children and monitoring and recording their progress, to provide activities, resources and experiences that build on and extend children's interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities
- Defined areas of continuous provision for: sand and water; home corner; role play; construction and blocks; art and craft activities; book corner, science and nature study
- A timetable providing a balance of sustained child-initiated and adult-led activities
- Encouraging children to communicate and talk about their learning
- Encouraging children to develop independence.
- Accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and labelled resources

## THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HEAD AND SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM IN SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT



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## **Developing Policies and Practice:**

These are developed through regular weekly staff meetings and Insets. Policies and procedures are available to parents and staff through the Parent and Staff Portals and Parent and Staff Handbooks. In developing policies and practice the Headteacher, Deputy Head and SLT acknowledge current government and local authority guidance, regulations and the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework. The School works closely with the local authority's early years' service (Safeguarding Team, link advisory teacher, CPD) and participates in audit inspections as and when required. The Headteacher and SLT maintain current knowledge of relevant developments in early years through attending courses and training, subscribing to early years publications and regular use of government websites.

## **Planning for Individual Children and the Environment:**

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and SLT to support staff by putting manageable observation, record-keeping and planning systems in place. The school creates long and medium-term plans for routine activities (continuous provision). Teaching staff use the Focus Child approach to create observations and evidence of children's interests and needs and plan weekly for provision and topics on the basis of that information. There is a minimum of one whole school Themed Week each term. Teachers maintain the children's Special Books. Teachers assess and monitor the progress of children in their class and report to parents each term.

## **Continuing Professional Development:**

All staff are observed and appraised once a term. The appraisal process includes identifying training needs and continuing professional development for individual members of staff and for the staff as a whole. The process of identifying training needs and CPD is also informed by regulations and requirements laid down for the early years sector by the government and local authority; analysis of data related to the attainment of individual children and groups of children in the EYFS. The school uses management training, local authority training provision and external agencies, to provide staff training and courses.

**Regular setting evaluation will address SEF guidance and Quality Indicators:** The Headteacher consults with children, parents and staff and uses the EYFS welfare requirements, the seven areas of learning and development, analysis of data gathered by the school and ISI's judgement criteria to complete the school's SEF. From this, the School Improvement Plan will be developed annually and localised action plans will be developed in different areas of policy, practice, curriculum and provision.

## **THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHERS IN THE EYFS**

**The Role of the Teacher ('Key person'):** Children are put into groups with a teacher ('key person') who is responsible for their care, learning and development. Each group has its own designated area to help children feel secure and develop a sense of belonging. The school recognises the importance of young children developing close relationships with their 'key person'. Teaching staff form responsive relationships with children and are sensitive to their individual needs.

**Reflecting the home environment within the setting:** Teachers are responsible for establishing a good working partnership with parents. They communicate with parents (day to day contact, parent evenings, school forms) to gather information about children's families, culture, faith, special events



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and to share information about what the child is doing at home and in school. Children's home environments are reflected in the school environment through topics, resources, visitors, visits, displays, books, role play and other activities.

**The Role of the Teacher:** The teacher in Reception is responsible for conducting the CEM baseline assessment at the beginning of the school year, followed by a baseline progress assessment in the second half of the summer term. They will report to parents and the local authority on children's attainment in the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Reception year (EYFSP). In addition to these responsibilities, the teacher also leads and oversees the planning, resourcing, organisation, and management of the staff team in Reception, ensuring effective delivery of the curriculum and assessment requirements.

**Outdoor play:** Our Nursery building does not have immediate access to an outdoor area. During their time at the Nursery we will take children to the Almorah community garden, the Upper School playground, King Henry's Walk Garden and Rosemary Gardens.

All areas of children's learning and development are planned for in the school's medium-term plans.

At the Upper School, children have immediate access to the playground. Playtimes are planned – 30 minutes in the morning and 45 minutes after lunch. Activities are planned and resourced to cater for children's interests and class themes. All areas of learning are covered.

**Record-Keeping:** Teachers are responsible for gathering observations and evidence of what children can do and using this to assess their progress and inform planning for next steps. Teachers maintain the children's special books and record and providing evidence (written observations, photographs, samples of work) of children's progress in the Development Matters across all seven areas of learning and development and providing evidence.

**Children with special educational needs:** Teachers should raise concerns with the Head teacher or Deputy Head who will involve the SENCO at that point. Teachers participate in developing and reviewing children's Individual Education Plans with the SENCO and the parents.

**Children with English as an additional language:** Teachers are responsible for liaising with our EAL coordinator and assessing bi-lingual children's stage and subsequent progress in learning English as a second or simultaneous language. Teacher observations take place every term and these, along with learning goals, are shared with parents. The register is updated termly.

## RECORDS

An essential part of the EYFS is observing and listening to children in order to identify their interests and needs and monitor their progress. This helps teachers to plan opportunities which build on children's learning and development. We create a record of each child's progress across the seven areas of learning and development, and we keep written observations, photographs and samples of



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their work in children's special books. Our records of children's progress are informed by the information we gather from parents through school forms, meetings and day to day contact. Parents have access to their child's records at any time and the records are discussed at Parents Evening each term. Parents are invited to make an appointment at any time to discuss progress or concerns with their child's teacher. If an area of concern is identified, we will consult with parents and take action to provide support. This may include the involvement of our Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and, if appropriate and in consultation with parents, specialist agencies outside the school.

This Policy has been agreed by the Council of Management in January 2025 and will be reviewed annually.

Signed \_\_Danielle Dufey \_\_\_\_ Chair of the Council of Management \_\_\_\_\_