

Marsh Green Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2023-2024



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Early Years Foundation Stage

“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 its 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 EYFS Foundation Stage 2021

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Marsh Green 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, however we also believe early childhood is valid in itself, as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

The EYFS is for children from birth to five years of age. The final year of the EYFS is referred to as the Reception year. All children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. It is the privilege of the practitioners working in Nursery and Reception to take on the task of building upon their first learning experiences. This is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that parents, carers, support staff and the Foundation Stage teachers work effectively together to support children's learning and development.

Aims

It is every child’s right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well-being. At Marsh Green Primary School the overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve these and the four guiding principles that shape practice within our Early Years setting. These principles are:

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

A Unique Child

At Marsh Green, we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We know 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 and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by taking account of our children’s range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning. At the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations keyed to the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. We do this through:

- Planning opportunities that 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.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively.
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Employing resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- Promoting equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- Monitoring children’s progress and taking action to provide support as necessary (such as referrals to speech therapy) as necessary.
- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children’s needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress.

Positive Relationships

At Marsh Green, 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 - We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Talking to parents/carers before their child starts school at our open afternoons and induction meetings
- Outlining the school's expectations in the Home-School agreement.
- Providing an induction presentation for Reception parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss school routines, expectations and to answer any questions parents/carers may have.
- Providing parents with an opportunity to view the setting and environment.
- Parent Events such as; Marvellous Monday to see how their child is settling into their new environment
- Operating an open door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if Foundation staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- Written contact through school newsletters and email communications.
- Offering two parent/teacher consultation meetings per year at which their child's progress is discussed.
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in Reception.
- Asking parents to sign a generic permission form for visits, food tasting and photographs etc
- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as in-school events, focused parent workshops, Christmas productions and sports day etc.
- Offering opportunities for parents and carers to visit the school on a volunteer basis to assist with the children's learning e.g. hearing readers.

Enabling Environments

At Marsh Green, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision, which provides a variety of high-quality and cross-curricular resources. Play-based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff. We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning.

Learning and Development

The Early Learning Goals (the knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should have acquired by the end of the Reception year) and the educational programmes (the matters, skills and processes which are required to be taught to young children) are set out in the "Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage" document (Department for Children Schools and Families, 2021).

Learning and development is categorised into three prime areas of learning:

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

Additionally there are four specific areas of learning:

- ☐ Literacy
- ☐ Mathematics
- ☐ Understanding the world
- ☐ Expressive arts and design

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is by:

- ☐ Playing and exploring
- ☐ Active learning
- ☐ Creating and thinking critically

We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his/her full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

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 set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond
- 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

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 do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS will be 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. All practitioners who work in Early Years at Marsh Green Primary School are involved in this process. There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

Long Term Planning

We have created a framework, which gives structure and coherence to the curriculum. Topics are planned for each of the six half-terms and the steps leading towards the Early Learning Goals 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 Knowledge and Understanding of the World.

Medium Term Planning

We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each half term. We include links between areas of learning and development for pupils to address any gaps in their learning. Learning objectives, assessment opportunities, and activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified.

Short Term Planning

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, which is recorded on the Assessment for Learning Grid that all practitioners contribute to. At Marsh Green Primary School we follow the Early Learning Goals and additional statements set out in the "Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage" (Department for Education, 2021) when planning. This document supports the implementation of the statutory requirements for the EYFS.

Staffing and Organisation

At Marsh Green Primary School there is one Nursery class with a maximum intake of twenty-six children in each session. We maintain an adult/pupil ratio of 1:13 within the Nursery year; consisting of a teacher and a Nursery nurse. There are two Reception classes, with a maximum intake of thirty children each. We maintain an adult/pupil ratio of 1:15 within the Reception year; consisting of a teacher and a teaching assistant in each class. The children have daily opportunities for structured and free-flow play both in the classroom and in the 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. We are always aiming to improve our teaching skills, knowledge and understanding and so all practitioners are encouraged to participate in local authority courses, in-service and local cluster group training. Practitioners also conduct and attend in-house training and disseminate new initiatives, ideas and teaching methods to colleagues.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1. Children experience a wide range of activities during teachers planning, preparation and assessment time through Physical Education and Drama sessions.

Assessment, Recording and Monitoring

At Marsh Green Primary School we undertake ongoing assessment as this is an integral part of the learning and development process. These observations are used to shape future planning. We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning, and then make informed decisions about the child's progress. This enables us to plan the next steps to meet their development and learning needs. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts in Reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). Every child in Reception screened using language screen for the NELI programme in Reception. The lowest 20% are then selected for an intense twenty week intervention to help develop early speech and language skills.

Alongside written observations of children in their play, we complete phonics assessments each half term. At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

Formative Assessment

This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment may

take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations, on-entry assessment, other focused assessments e.g. sound/number, annotated examples of work, photographs, video and information from parents. Each child has an individual Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) profile on the electronic app called Evidence Me. Parents are encouraged to engage in the application and observations are shared regularly. They will get a focused observation each term.

Summative Assessment

The EYFS Profile summarises all of the formative assessment undertaken and makes statements about the child's achievements against the Early Learning Goals. It is completed on-entry and at the end of each term by the class teacher. The teacher also undertakes in-house and local cluster group moderation. For further information see the Assessment Policy.

Teaching and learning in Literacy and Mathematics is monitored by whole school work sampling. Other areas of learning and development in the foundation stage are monitored during EYFS team meetings. The EYFS leader monitors teaching and learning across the Foundation Stage each year and analyses the EYFS profile data in conjunction with the head teacher.

Learning Through Play

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development."

"Early Years Foundation Stage",
Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007

At Marsh Green Primary School 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. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's play through high-quality interactions and providing opportunities for adults to model, clarify and reinforce different concepts, all whilst continuing to model a range of vocabulary to all children.

The Learning Environment

"A rich and varied environment supports children's learning and development. It gives them the confidence to explore and learn in secure and safe, yet challenging, indoor and outdoor spaces."

"Early Years Foundation Stage",
Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence. Activities are planned for both the inside and outside; children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom during child-initiated play.

At Marsh Green we believe in the importance of children learning through role play. This increases their communication skills, play skills and understanding of the world around them. As such our classrooms are heavily influenced by our role play areas. Our reading, writing and mathematics are incorporated within the role play areas. In the Nursery, there is a sand and water area which all pupils can access. The outside learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas: role play 'home' shed, sand area, 'quiet' den, climbing frame, wheeled toy, small world, water, discovery, writing, maths, music and creative. These areas are carefully planned for and arranged to encourage quiet areas and more active areas within the learning environment. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation, whilst providing them with a variety of open-ended resources and stimulating stimuli.

Transition from Home to Nursery

In May, all parents/carers are invited to attend a welcome meeting with the Headteacher, EYFS leader, Nursery teacher and Nursery Nurse. During this meeting they receive the Marsh Green Primary School Nursery information booklet and other necessary information about their child's transition into their new setting.

To prepare children for their first steps in school we invite each child, with their parent/carer, to make several visits for play sessions in the Nursery, in the term before they start. In September the children start Nursery by attending 1 hour three times in the first week, 3 hours three times in the second week and then full time thereafter (15 hours a week) We recognise that every child is different and we encourage parents/carers to settle their child for as long as is necessary without feeling pressured to leave by a set time or by a set number of days.

Transition from Nursery to Reception

In June, all parents/carers are invited to attend a meeting with the Head teacher, EYFS leader, and Reception teachers. During this meeting they receive the Marsh Green Primary School Reception information booklet and other necessary information.

To prepare the children for the transition the Nursery staff talk positively and enthusiastically about what it is like in Reception. The children will meet their new teacher and spend a session in their new classroom.

The children should be familiar with the Reception classroom as they have had the opportunity to go in there and take part in activities during daily child-initiated play sessions. Children who are not confident are targeted and supported by the Nursery staff to go and explore the Reception environment during the summer term.

Transition from Reception to Year 1

In July all parents/carers are invited to attend a transition meeting with the EYFS leader and Year 1 teachers to discuss the changes and how the children are prepared for the next exciting steps in their school education.

To prepare the children for the transition the Reception staff talk positively and enthusiastically about what it is like in Year 1. The children will meet their new teacher and spend a session in their new classroom.

During the summer term children will join the KS1 children during 'playtime' in the main playground and attend the celebration assembly. They will be supported by Reception staff and introduced to the playground rules and routines. Children will also be introduced to the whole school behaviour expectations and reward systems.

During the Autumn term the school day has a similar structure to that which has already been experienced in Reception and children will have access to an outside area. Where possible, the year 1 children will continue to enjoy practical learning experiences which gradually becomes more formalised towards the end of the academic year. For more information, please see the Transition Policy on the school website.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that Parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When Parents/carers 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 curriculum to Parents/carers during the parents meeting in the summer term, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home
- The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.
- parent information booklets are sent home each half term to keep parents informed of their child's current curriculum topic and possible activities.

- during Reception homework will be set weekly.
- to encourage parents to help their children record activities undertaken with the class mascot.
- operating an “open door” policy, whereby Parents/carers can discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner
- sharing progress at school through annotated photographs and encouraging parents to contribute to their child’s profile on Evidence Me. This is conducted electronically over the internet through a programme called Evidence Me.
- inviting Parents/carers to help in the class or other classes in the school and to accompany children on school visits.
- encouraging Parents/carers to listen to their child read each night, to make use of ‘Read Aloud’ sessions on the school website. Parents are expected to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading diary, at least 3 times per week.
- 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 targets with Parents/carers at parents’ evening in October and March (informed by the EYFS Profile)
- providing a written report to Parents/carers in July summarising the child’s progress against the Early Learning Goals and Development Matters statements.
- holding child/parent workshops to enable parents to work alongside their children.

Equal Opportunities

At Marsh Green Primary School 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 further information see ‘Equal Opportunities Policy’.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at Marsh Green, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. The curriculum for children with special educational needs will be given support and be adapted to enable them to benefit from the curriculum. This includes children that are more able, and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Additional adult support may be provided for children with special medical needs, in line with the school’s Special Educational Needs Policy. Pupil Profiles are written and reviewed every term with parents. 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 Special Educational Needs Policy.

Safeguarding

Please refer to the Safeguarding Policy.

Health and Safety

Please refer to ‘Health and Safety’ Policy with specific reference being made to Risk Assessment and Medical needs (First Aid Training). Additional reference should also be made to the EYFS Risk Assessment.

A member of the EYFS team must be paediatric first aid trained. Elizabeth Playle is currently the paediatric first aider in the Marsh Green Primary School EYFS base.

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.