



**Maidstone-Causton
Federation**

Early Years Policy

Adoption/ Review	Committee	Author	Lead Person	Review Date
2014	Curriculum	EY Leader		Oct 2018
September 2018	Learning and achievement	EY Leader	Ex HT	Sept 2020

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to their full potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure safe and happy childhood is important in it’s own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance.”

(EYFS 2012)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Maidstone Infant School many children join our school Nursery at 3 years old. Children enter the Reception classes in September of the school year in which they turn five. Parents have the option to accept a part time place for their child until the term in which they turn five, when full time attendance becomes statutory.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

A Unique Child

At Maidstone Infant School and Nursery 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 celebrations and sharing of learning. Adults model positive attitudes and learning behaviours to encourage a ‘can do’ attitude amongst all our learners.

Inclusion

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by monitoring assessments and achievements of different groups of children within our setting to ensure that all children are given equal opportunities to achieve to their full potential through planned activities and access to provision.

We meet the needs of all our children 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 to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity within our setting,
- planning activities to extend and challenge children’s abilities;
- monitoring children’s progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

Welfare

“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.”

It is important to us that all children in the school are ‘safe’. We aim to support children in understanding the importance of rules and boundaries. We provide children 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.

Safeguarding

In the EYFS all staff receive training in relevant safeguarding procedures. We follow the procedures set out within the whole school safeguarding policy.

Positive Relationships

At Maidstone Infant school we believe that children learn to be strong independent learners through fostering secure relationships with those around them.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children’s first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

We do this by:

- providing Home Visits for children starting within our school Nursery.
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts Reception;
- offering the opportunity for children and their parents to visit the classes for ‘stay and play’ sessions.
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about and reflect upon their child’s progress in our Nursery and Reception classes through inviting them in for ‘learning journey coffee sessions’ and allowing free access to the children’s ‘Learning Journey’ folders;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child’s teacher if there are any concerns. There is also a formal parents evening each term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child’s progress. Parents receive a report on their child’s attainment and progress every term.
- we arrange a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: stay and play sessions, class assemblies, sports day etc.
- providing space in the children’s ‘Learning Journey’ booklets for parent to leave comments relating to the children’s achievements, interests and developing needs. These comments are valued and incorporated into planning for the individual child.

Key Person Approach

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children and their parents, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the EYFS staff act as a 'Key Person' to children in their class.

Enabling Environments

At Maidstone Infant School and Nursery we recognise that the learning environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and understanding their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging activities and experiences to extend the children's learning. This also involves reflecting upon the continuous provision we offer and ensuring that this is meeting the interests and learning needs of all our children. Resources should be accessible for children to encourage independence and exploration.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The planning within the EYFS follows a long term overview of the Early Years Outcomes age bands and the end of Reception Early Learning Goal summative judgments. These assessment bands are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for the intended learning outcomes for different groups of children within weekly planning.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects the interests of and 'next steps' in learning for individual children. Assessment in the EYFS largely takes the form of observation; this is carried out by the class teachers and support staff. These observations are recorded on Target Tracker Link, where each child has an online learning journey. 80% of observations take place during children's independent learning, 20% take place during adult led activities. Observations of children's independent learning give a true reflection of consolidation of skills, emerging next steps and also the interests and learning characteristics of the child. These are all used to inform planning. Outcomes from each child's learning journey feed into half termly data collections using a 'best fit' judgment within the Early Years Outcomes age bands. Children are recorded as 'beginning' 'within' or 'secure' in each band. Children are tracked as individuals and by groups to ensure that good progress is being made. Teachers are encouraged to reflect on assessments in Phase Team meetings and Pupil Progress Meetings to ensure that good progress is attained by all children and where progress is slow intervention measures can be put in place.

At the end of the Reception year children are judged against the Early Learning Goals. They are assessed as 'emerging' 'expected' or 'exceeding' against these goals. The school measures a 'Good Level of Development' for children at the end of the Reception year in line with the DfE guidance, this states that children must meet the 'expected' level of development in the Prime Areas of Physical Development, Communication and Language and Personal, Social and Emotional Development; as well as the Specific areas of Literacy and Maths.

Learning and Development

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of three **prime** areas of learning:

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

And four **specific** areas of learning:

- Literacy
- Maths
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities.

At Maidstone Infant School and Nursery we aim to offer a holistic approach to learning within the Early Years, understanding that individual children have different abilities, interests and needs. We plan and facilitate opportunities for development in each of the seven areas of learning, understanding that these areas need not work in isolation from one another.

We ensure that the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' are reflected upon so that teaching and provision reflects and meets the needs of individual learning styles.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom is 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 classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS classes have access to their own enclosed outdoor areas. This has a positive effect on the children's development as being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that reflect the opportunities inside the classroom, across the seven areas of learning.

Play

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

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 experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active Learning

"Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods."

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to be allowed opportunities for 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.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

“When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.”

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. 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 are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Transitions

At Maidstone Infant School and 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 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 the summer term Nursery and Reception children have the opportunity to meet with their teachers in their classroom on two occasions to help them prepare for their new experiences.

At the end of reception children have the opportunity to meet with their new teachers in their classrooms on three occasions prior to starting Year one. Parents are also invited to attend the Year 1 Learning Fair, at which parents and children find out about learning and the curriculum in the new year group. At the end of each school year teachers have the opportunity to share their evidence 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 playground 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 Nursery year, children are gradually introduced to whole school activities such as assemblies.

Monitoring

The EYFS Leader is responsible for ensuring the implementation of procedures set out within this policy.

