



# NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME SCHOOL

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

This Document is available upon request to parents and prospective parents and is published to parents and prospective parents on the School's website

### Policy Statement

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) covers the period of education from birth to the end of the academic year in which a child reaches five years of age.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the area of education upon which young children build the rest of their lives. It is a single framework for care, learning and development. All children should be given the opportunity to experience the best possible start to their education and to develop solid foundations which will ensure that they flourish throughout their school years and on into adulthood.

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage sets out the standards for the learning development and care of children from birth to five years of age. The EYFS seeks to provide:

- Quality and consistency
- A secure foundation
- Partnership working
- Equality of opportunity.

The Early Years Foundation Stage specifies requirement for learning and development and for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The requirements cover:

- The areas of learning and development
- The Early Learning Goals
- Assessment arrangements for measuring progress and requirement for reporting to parents and or carers
- Safeguarding and welfare requirements

The EYFS curriculum sets a series of Early Learning Goals (ELGs) for children to work

towards by the time they complete their Reception year. Most children will achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of their Reception year. Some children will need to continue to work towards the ELGs in Year 1.

In the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception), high quality, well resourced, integrated early education makes a positive contribution to this distinct stage in a child's development. Stimulating and appropriate experiences provide each child with opportunities to develop their skills to the best of their ability across all areas of learning.

In our school, children join the Nursery in the term in which they reach their third birthday or join the Reception class in the school year in which they are five.

The EYFS is based upon four Foundation Stage principles:

1. A Unique child
2. Positive relationships
3. Enabling environments
4. Learning and development

### **1. A Unique Child**

'Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured' *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation, DfE, 03/14*

At Newcastle-under-Lyme Junior School, we recognise that every child is unique. We know that each child develops in different ways and we therefore use a variety of approaches in our teaching, continually developing strategies to enable all of the children to learn and to reach their potential. We recognise that each 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 and rewards to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

### **Transition**

Transition into the Foundation Stage is tailored to the needs of individual children. All children will have the opportunity to visit the setting and become familiar with the building before starting. If it is felt that a child needs more visits or other support, this will be arranged.

### **Inclusion**

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of '*differences*'. All children are treated fairly, regardless of

race, religion or ability. All children and their families are valued within our school. Parents and carers are asked to inform us of any relevant background information including social and cultural information so that discussions may be directed sensitively if necessary. We use resources that reflect diversity and that avoid discrimination and stereotyping and actively celebrate cultural differences through our stories and assemblies.

In our school we believe that all our children matter. 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. The planning in the Foundation Stage allows for child initiated learning to be integrated into the weekly planning ensuring children's ideas are valued and their interests explored. Children are given the opportunity to participate in activities and share their ideas, feelings and views, developing their understanding towards others and their own self-esteem.

Children are tracked closely throughout the Foundation Stage and given 'next steps' to work towards. This reflects their understanding of their own abilities, empowering them to make decisions and choices about their learning and development. In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We meet their needs 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 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 and tracking children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

### **Safeguarding and 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'. *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation, DfE, 03/14*

It is important to us that all children in the school are safe. We aim to educate children about boundaries and rules to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop important life skills. Children

should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognize and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of all children. See *whole School Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy.*)

At Newcastle-under-Lyme Junior School we understand that we are required to legally comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the *Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2012*. We understand that we are required to:

- 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 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 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 meet all these requirements.

## **2. Positive Relationships**

At Newcastle-under-Lyme Junior School, we recognise that secure relationships help children learn to be strong and independent. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

### **Parents as Partners**

We acknowledge that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We appreciate the role that parents have played in the past and are doing presently. We do this through:

- talking to parents before their child starts in our School/Nursery;
- allowing children the opportunity to spend time with their teacher or Key Worker before starting school/nursery during an induction session or an induction afternoon;
- inviting all Reception parents to an induction meeting (where possible this will take place before their child starts School);
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher or Key Worker if there are any concerns.

- offering two Parents' Evenings for every year group during the course of the school year; these are currently during the autumn and spring terms.
- a meeting in October and March for Nursery children.
- an end of term report to parents in the autumn and summer terms;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: class assemblies, sports day, Mothers' Day, etc;
- regular newsletters.
- the Junior School App.

All staff involved with the EYFS develop good relationships with the children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school, Reception teachers act as a 'key person' to all children in their class, supported by the Teaching Assistants. In the Nursery each child has a base group with a designated Key Person.

Our onsite Nursery provides an excellent opportunity for continuity of learning through play and regular consultations take place with the Reception team. There is a comprehensive transition programme in place.

### **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.

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

Planning in the Foundation Stage follows the EYFS Framework. The teacher or Key Worker may alter these plans in response to the needs, achievements and interests of the children.

We make regular assessments of children's learning through observation and we use this to inform the EYFS Profile and to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Each child's level of development is recorded against 17 assessment scales derived from the early learning goals. The Tapestry Learning Journey (an electronic record of a child's progress) is transferred to Reception teachers for them to build upon and document each child's development. The Tapestry Learning Journey is given to parents at the end of the Foundation Stage. Within the final term of the EYFS, a copy of the Profile is available at parents' request. At the end of the Foundation Stage parents are sent a copy of the Outcomes Report and the Characteristics of Effective Learning. The Profile data is passed to Year 1 teachers to assist with the planning of activities in Year 1. Parents may access their own child's development records at any time. Written requests must be submitted to access personal files. All

such requests will usually be accommodated within a 24 hour time period.

### **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. Reception and Nursery each have their own enclosed outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. 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 help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning.

### **4. Learning and Development**

At Newcastle-under-Lyme Junior School, we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter-connected.

### **Teaching and Learning Style**

In line with our expectations of effective teaching and learning in the Junior School, the following features apply to teaching in the EYFS, just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 1 and 2:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers 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;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents.

## **Play**

“Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems and relate to others.” (EYFS Framework)

Through planned, purposeful 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 are able to express a range of emotions in a controlled and safe environment.

## **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.” (EYFS Framework)

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.

## **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.” (EYFS Framework)

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 to extend their learning.

## **Areas of Learning and development**

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning, comprising three prime areas and four specific areas:

The prime areas are:

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

The four specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding 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. In each area there are ELGs that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

### **Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of all staff teaching in the EYFS to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Head of the Junior School, Head of Pre-Prep and Nursery Manager will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the school monitoring schedule.

A Burgess

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