

EYFS Policy



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EYFS vision statement

At Grand Avenue Primary and Nursery School, we value the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) as it is essential for providing secure foundations for future learning and development. We are committed to giving our children the best possible start to their school life and strive to equip children with a love of learning and a natural curiosity, teaching them skills which ensure their well-being now and success in the future.

We value every child as an individual and by listening to the children and those who care for them we seek to personalise each child's learning in a safe and stimulating environment where they are able to flourish and reach their full potential.

Within the EYFS classrooms, we seek to create an environment where children can learn through play and where good behaviour is praised and their self-confidence and independence can grow. We believe learning should be fun and we strongly believe in first hand learning and practical learning experiences, valuing the importance of the outdoor environment to develop children's thinking and problem solving skills.

Principles of Early Years Education:

Our policy for Early Years education is based on the following four guiding principles; 'every child is unique', 'building positive relationships', 'creating enabling environments' and 'valuing the importance of learning and development'.

These are the ways we aim to achieve these principles:

- Creating a strong partnership between home and school.
- Responsible pedagogy enabling access to a rich learning environment based on the EYFS across the seven areas of learning.
- Using play as the vehicle for learning.
- The recognition that every child is a unique child who is constantly learning.
- In the Early Years, the child's own interests and their developmental needs are of central importance. The starting point for a young child's learning is what he/she can already do, recognising that children develop at different rates.
- All aspects of a child's development are considered equally important. The Statutory Guidance for the *Early Years Foundation Stage 2024* and *Development Matters 2023 (revised edition)* provide the basis of our planning, assessment and interventions.
- The role of the adult is seen as crucial in the Early Years.
- Self-motivation and independence are actively encouraged, as are self-discipline, respect for others and positive self-esteem. (These are linked to the whole school code of conduct, known as the GRAND rules)
- Oracy, including reading and language, is at the heart of our curriculum

Learning through play

We provide an exciting and challenging curriculum based on the children's interests and needs intertwined with building skills and knowledge appropriate for their age and stage of development. We aim to provide a variety of opportunities for, child-initiated and adult-initiated activities by:

- Providing materials, situations and experiences that will stimulate children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning.
- Involving children in their learning by following their interests and providing rich, meaningful first-hand experiences
- Creating an atmosphere in which each child is able to proceed at his/her own pace.
- Making provision for different types of learning through play, both indoor and outdoor.

- Using observation to enable the adult to support, consolidate and extend a child's thinking.
- Actively promoting the value of learning through play amongst parents, children and staff.

The Early Years Curriculum

In Nursery and Reception the curriculum is divided into seven different 'Areas of Learning'.

There are three **prime** Areas of Learning:

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

These prime areas are fundamental and once secured enable children to effectively retain knowledge and skills learnt within the specific areas of learning. Securing a solid foundation in the prime areas will be a key focus for the staff within the early years.

In addition, there are four **specific** Areas of Learning:

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

This enables every child to experience all the necessary areas of learning at a level best suited to his/her developmental needs.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The Characteristics of Effective Learning are the ways in which the child engages with other people and the environment. They are: 'Playing and Exploring', 'Active Learning' and 'Creating and Thinking Critically'. These characteristics underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child in continuing to be an effective and motivated learner. The staff within the early years will look for these characteristics being displayed within their classroom environments.

The Early Years Leader will:

- Create, review and monitor the Early Years policy, especially with regard to national and local agendas.
- Keep up to date with current developments and initiatives and advise staff
- Support EYFS Stage staff in planning the curriculum
- Keep governors informed regarding EYFS provision
- Meet with the named governor for the EYFS at least once a year
- Attend relevant courses and report back as appropriate
- Organise and lead regular meetings with all EYFS staff
- Track and analyse data
- Order, organise and monitor resources

The class teachers will:

- Plan the curriculum for indoor and outdoor activities
- Manage the support staff within the classroom
- Assess and record the progress of the children on agreed proforma ie, Sonar and learning journals

- Moderate assessments internally and within the borough at regular intervals throughout the school year to ensure accurate judgements
- Report to parents on the progress and achievements of the children
- Communicate any concerns to parents
- Reflect upon their classroom provision and maintain an attractive and stimulating environment for learning including displays
- Alert the SEND team regarding any concerns about individual children

The Governors will:

- Become familiar with the key issues surrounding EYFS provision
- Support the implementation of the policy
- Observe the EYFS children in school
- Ensure budgetary provision
- Meet with the Early Years Coordinator at least once a year

Entry to Nursery

The transition from home or setting to school is an important and challenging step for both children and parents. We hope to ease the process in the following ways:

- A 'New to Nursery' meeting for the parents in the term before their child starts school.
- An opportunity for children to visit their new class during school time with their parents.
- An optional home visit by the child's teacher and teaching assistant prior to starting.
- Staggered entry in the first weeks of term enabling each child to receive special attention.
- A Stay and Play session to allow children to become familiar with the Nursery environment.

Nursery preparation for Reception

- PE lessons take place in the hall
- The outside classroom is used by both year groups
- Reception class teachers work alongside Nursery children during the summer term
- Regular visits are made by the Nursery children to their new classrooms during the Summer Term e.g. for story swap sessions afternoon visits
- The role play area becomes a classroom

Induction to Reception

- Home visits for children who join Grand Avenue from other settings (see appendix 1 for staff guidance)
- Stay and Play sessions are offered to allow the staff and children to become familiar with each other.
- Clear routines established within the classroom
- Reception children have a staggered start, joining school for the morning sessions only, then lunchtimes (with Reception staff sharing lunch with them and being in duty during the break time) and finally full days
- Reception teachers accompany the children to lunch and into the playground during the lunchbreak for the first few days and at least one member of the Reception staff is always with the children in the lunch hall or outside in the playground throughout the year
- Reception children attend KS1 assemblies gradually as the year progresses, for example, to watch class assemblies

Home School Links

We believe that a strong partnership between parents and teachers is vital and we aim to do this in a number of ways.

- We operate an 'open door' policy towards parental contact.
- Formal parent evenings with individual appointments for each child twice a year
- A comprehensive written Record of Achievement sent home in July.
- A termly curriculum newsletter is sent home providing information on topics to be taught and routines of the day.
- A noticeboard is in the entrance to the nursery informing parents of half-termly and weekly plans, letters sent out, events etc.
- A weekly information sheet sent home via email and placed on window/noticeboard for parents and carers.
- Regular open afternoons in which parents share their children's Learning Journals or classroom activities with them
- Reading books are sent home regularly.
- Inviting parents to help in class
- Parents encouraged to record events and experiences in the learning journal through WOW moments
- Home learning journals sent home every holiday with challenges for the children to try and record in their home learning journal. These are then shared with the class after the holiday.

Assessment

Key assessment information for EYFS:

Within the early years, the emphasis is on teachers building strong and positive relationships with the children in their class. The Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance states that staff should spend time getting to know children's individual strengths and areas of needs rather than on completing paperwork. Therefore, our main assessment tool in the early years is the teacher's knowledge of the child. This knowledge is then used to plan a progressive curriculum that supports the needs of the cohort.

As well as teacher knowledge, Learning Journals are regularly updated to build a picture of each child's achievements across the curriculum. Observations of individual children's progress in all areas of learning are recorded.

The Sonar system is used to record and track the progress of the children at half-termly intervals. At the end of the Reception, year teachers then use this information and their own observations and assessments to make a 'best fit' judgement against the seventeen Early Learning Goals. Children are judged to be either 'emerging' or 'expected'. This information is shared with the Year One teachers who will use it to assist with the planning of activities and experiences.

Equal Opportunities

The Early Years team is committed to the principles and aims in this document, all children are given equality of opportunity regardless of ethnicity, culture, gender or ability ensuring that the youngest children at Grand Avenue will have the best possible start to their school life.

Appendix 1

Home Visit Guidance for Staff

The aim of home visits is to allow the early years staff to meet and begin building relationships with the children starting at Grand Avenue Primary and Nursery School and their families. The staff members can begin to learn about the children's background, culture, interests and strengths and any areas they may need support.

Home visits will take place at the end of the summer term for children joining our nursery and at the beginning of the autumn term for children joining our reception cohort. Children who attend our nursery will not receive a home visit but will have visits to meet their reception teacher.

Parents will be informed of their home visit with plenty of notice to allow time if changes need to be made to the day or time. The visits will be grouped geographically to ensure it is easy for staff members to move between different homes.

Staff members must always conduct home visits in pairs. Whilst on a home visit, staff members should be given different roles, for example, one can focus on talking with the parents/carers while the other plays with the child and learns about their interests.

Parents may refuse to have a home visit. In this case, the child should be invited to visit the school instead.

Any safeguarding concerns identified during the home visit must be recorded in line with the school policy.

Top tips for staff:

- It's important for staff to be respectful of families' cultural norms e.g. you might be expected to remove your shoes before entering the house.
- Use a conversational tone, rather than focusing on taking notes.
- Parents can often feel nervous about their child starting school. Use the home visit time to listen to and address any parental concerns.
- Take along activities and toys to share with the child. This can help with the initial interactions and help the child become excited about school.