North Westminster Federation

Working Together to Grow Our Future

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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'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.'

Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2020

Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind.
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

Statutory Framework of EYFS

We adhere to the 'Statutory Framework of the EYFS' and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings. These are:

1. **Every child is a unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships.**
3. Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments** with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
4. Children **develop and learn at different rates**. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years' provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven curriculum areas, using play as the center for learning.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers.
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment and by the children's own ideas and interests.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated, child-initiated and adult supported.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors.

Curriculum

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS framework:

'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities'.

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve the Early Learning Goals.

All seven areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive, both in the EYFS and into Key Stage 1.

These three areas are the prime areas:

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

Children are also supported through the four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

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

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

1. **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

2. **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties.

3. **Creating and thinking critically -** children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they can explore, think creatively and be active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication, and physical development.

We create medium term plans based on a series of topics each of which offers experiences in all seven areas of learning.

At the beginning of each topic the children are encouraged to share their ideas for learning experiences with us which we record in a class 'Floorbook'. These ideas are then used to inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations which identify areas to focus on.

We always remain flexible to allow for unplanned circumstances and children's responses. Our planning is continually evaluated by all staff to ensure that children's individual 'Next Steps in Learning' and personalised learning needs are met.

Children will engage in whole group and small group activities alongside their independent learning. There are also allocated times for whole class daily 'carpet learning sessions'.

Planning and observations

EYFS staff must plan activities for children that will enable them to develop and learn effectively, the areas to focus on are in the 3 prime areas of learning.
EYFS staff must plan for individual interests of each child and challenge children wherever possible with an enjoyable experience .Where a child may have a special educational need or disability staff must consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

EYFS staff to plan children's activities around children's interest, these must be incorporated into their practice.

The learning environment provides a key element of planning with enhancements being used to develop and extend the children's learning through play alongside the adult led activities. The planning is based on themes with some discrete teaching, for example in phonics.

Observations of the children help to inform the teacher's planning and the children's next steps for learning. Relevant and significant observations of child-initiated learning are recorded individually for children online via the 'Evidence me'. Parents are invited to view this online and to contribute observations from home. Other evidence, including adult led activities are recorded in each individual child's guided maths and English books.

Floorbooks are used to track learning, enhance language skills and develop the children's vocabulary. The purpose of Floorbooks in our setting is to encourage the use of a wider vocabulary and to enrich a child's language and communication skills. They also provide an evidence based log to inform tracking and demonstrate coverage of the federation curriculum.

Assessment

At the North Westminster Federation, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests, and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also consider observations shared by parents and/or carers.

When a child is aged between 2 and 3, staff review their progress and provide parents and/or carers with a written summary of the child's development in the 3 prime areas. This 'progress check' highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed.

During the first few weeks of September adults in nursery observe the children as they settle in to obtain information for attainment on entry. At the end of the first term in nursery, the teacher will assess the ability of each child using their collected observations and information .These assessments are then carried out termly and allow us identify children's progress. This information is then used to inform future planning.

During the first term in the reception class, the teacher assesses the ability of each child, using the Foundation Stage Profile and assessments from nursery and other previous settings. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. We share the information contained in the Foundation Stage Profile at our parental consultation meetings.

Parents and carers receive an annual report that offers comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress. These reports also include information about the characteristics of effective learning. We complete these in June, and share them with parents in July each year.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). The Reception Baseline Assessment is a statutory assessment from September 2021 onwards. It provides a snapshot of where pupils are when they arrive at school. It will provide a starting point to measure the progress schools make with their pupils between reception and the end of primary school.

The teacher completes an assessment each term, and then updates individual tracking sheets and class tracking sheets. 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’)

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Working with parents

We recognise the central importance of parents/carers as children’s first educators. We believe they have a significant role to play in the lifelong education of their child. We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents/carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child’s learning.

We always encourage parents to take part in their child’s education in a variety of different ways;

- Being welcoming and approachable and having an open-door approach for parents to voice concerns/ask questions.
- Inviting them to a parent consultation in the Autumn and Summer Terms to discuss how their child has settled and share progress and next steps for learning.
- Valuing parents’ contributions to learning journeys.
- Providing curriculum planning overviews for each topic, each term, highlighting how they can support their child at home.
- Inviting parents into school for open days where they will come to observe our teachers in action.
- Inviting parents into school for ‘parent phonics’ sessions to demonstrate how we teach phonics and help them support their child.

- Encouraging parents to read with their child at home and make comments in their reading record books.
- Providing parents with an annual mid-year report and an end of year summary report detailing achievements and their child's EYFS profile.
- Holding information evenings before the children start school.

Monitoring of the EYFS

We are committed to providing the best possible experiences for our children. The EYFS Leader is responsible for monitoring provision, teaching and learning and children's progress. Information is shared with the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, the Senior Leadership Team and Reception team as appropriate, and any necessary actions are taken.

All adults in the Reception team have a key role in children's learning and development. Therefore, they are required to be knowledgeable and skilled in the EYFS curriculum. Any training needs for existing or new members of staff are identified and addressed as part of performance management targets.

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 EYFS 2021

We understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years through our curriculum, for example by talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things.
- The importance of brushing your teeth.

We follow statutory guidance for safety around tooth brushing.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.