



Policy for:

Early Years Foundation Stage

Date Written: January 2018

Date Reviewed: September 2025

Next Review Date: September 2028

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Governor Responsible for:

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The Grove School

Early Years and Foundation Stage Policy

Aims:

The Foundation Stage sets out to:

- Challenge and set high expectations for learning within the Grove School curriculum themes.
- Present the children with a structured programme of activities which are individualised and appropriate to the needs of each pupil across the seven areas of learning within the Statutory Framework for the Early years Foundation Stage 2025 and the Development Matters non-statutory curriculum guidance document.
- Provide a secure, stimulating, and challenging learning environment in which children are encouraged to learn and play independently. Effective pedagogy is a mix of different approaches. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other, and through guided learning and direct teaching
- Develop a sense of cultural capital building upon the accumulation of knowledge, behaviours, and skills that pupils can draw upon and which demonstrates their cultural awareness, understanding and competence in preparation for their future learning journey into adulthood and the world of work.
- Plan activities and experiences in response to the assessment of individual children's progress, using the B squared assessment tool, the Foundation Stage Profile and individual MAPP (Measuring Against Personal Progress) targets.
- Establish effective partnerships with all stakeholders.

The Foundation Stage Curriculum

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape learning and development in the Early Years setting. There are three **prime** areas, which are seen to underpin all the basics and support the other four **specific** areas of the curriculum.

The Prime Areas of Learning and Development

1. Communication and Language:

To support our pupils to develop their communication and language skills, comprehensive and accurate assessments is vital. As such, a variety of different assessment methods are used relevant to the broad ability level of each pupil. In this important process, the Grove School is helped, supported and advised by the speech and language therapists who visit regularly to ensure that we have a range of perspectives when formulating and developing appropriate personalised programmes which are based on the results of the assessments. These assessments may be through formative, summative, informal or through formal means using the B-squared assessment tool/'I can' statements or through the use of MAPP. We meet the statutory requirement of assessment by completing the EYFS profile at the end of the stage.

Within the early years, we teach and actively encourage pupils to build upon their ability to wait, share and take turns. This is an essential life skill which is essential throughout not only their time in school but throughout their adult life too. There are numerous opportunities throughout the day where these skills are practiced, for example, waiting their turn in a game, following a daily timetable, or sharing during lunch/snack time. Often pupils need visual, verbal, gestural and physical cues to enable them to work towards taking their turn.

2. Personal, Social and Emotional Development:

Children's personal, social, and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Strong, warm, and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention, as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life. The following four areas are embedded throughout the Early Years classes in school and support each child's personal development:

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
- 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.

- Importance of knowing that children learn and develop at their own pace

3. Physical Development:

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally

throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.'

However, within Early Years, pupil's often need extra support and guidance to help with areas of their growth, physical and mental development. Through training programmes, continuous learning and development, skills and expertise as well as support from our many outside agencies, staff work hard to provide unique and individual ways to encourage each pupil to strive towards becoming confident, independent and lifelong learners.

The Specific Areas of Learning and Development

4. Literacy:

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. In Early Years there are a variety of methods, programmes, schemes and ideas used to assist and support each individual pupil to access literacy at their level. Regular reading sessions, sensory based stories, opportunities for group and independent reading time, access to a wide genre of reading materials including rhyme, poetry, fiction and non-fiction books as well as daily songs and nursery rhyme times. Books and stories are widely available within our literacy rich environment in class. Schemes such as Jolly Phonics are used to develop phonics knowledge and early reading skills. Above all, play is at the base of our learning activities.

5. Mathematics:

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage suggests that developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop

the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. Using the medium of play supports the pupils in role play situations such as being shopkeepers, making shopping lists, learning about money and following simple recipes, singing number rhymes, using music to learn rhythm, beat and pattern, practicing time and having as many opportunities to count in real situations such as snack time gives opportunities that are meaningful but fun. It is also important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures.

6. Understanding of the World:

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them and develops their cultural capital from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes, and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world.

7. Expressive Arts and Design:

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear, and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to, and observe.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Also fundamental to our practice is to reflect on the diverse ways in which children learn. This will be assessed using the Characteristics of Effective Learning which are:

- Playing and exploring - engagement. Children investigate and experience things and events around them and 'have a go'.
- Active learning - motivation. Children concentrate and keep trying if they experience difficulties, as well as enjoying what they achieve.

- Creating and thinking critically - thinking. Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between different and experiences and develop strategies for doing things.

Planning and Curriculum:

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and a mix of both adult-initiated and child-initiated activity. The learners follow personalised and individual pathways that are differentiated according to their potential, progress, and ability level. This flexibility and personalised approach in the curriculum enable staff to respond to individual circumstances and learner's needs throughout their learning journey. This ensures that learners engage in learning physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually and that they have a breadth of not only knowledge and skills, but of life skills too.

Planning process

1. Whole school planning is taken from the National curriculum when appropriate to ensure that the termly theme reflects the knowledge and skills required by learners are up to date and that they are challenging.
2. Medium term planning may focus on a specific topic of learning under the theme heading. This then identifies broad learning intentions for all seven areas of learning.
3. Short term planning shows specific learning intentions, supporting activities and daily organisation. It identifies in more detail personalised curriculum needs and assessment and opportunities for observation, which then feeds back into future planning.

Direct Teaching: At specific times in the day the children will take part in an activity that is teacher led. Such sessions include rhyme time or story time, 1:1 intervention, intensive interaction as well as teaching new skills to support their learning within the classroom environment. All direct taught sessions are carefully planned and tailored for each group or individual using previous assessments of the children's knowledge, skills, and ability. During child-initiated activities the adults' role is to show an interest in the children's ideas, build conversation, facilitate, and share ideas and model different skills. Such interaction with the children is essential as this helps to build the children's understanding and therefore guides new learning. This ensures that planning in Foundation Stage is a continuous process, involving planning, observing, and assessing.

Learning through play in the Foundation Stage

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence and developing tolerance of those working beside them. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. Children can practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play enables children to negotiate roles, communicate, investigate, and explore their concepts and ideas. Adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching, and extending play, skills and language.

Observation and Assessment

Assessment, recording and reporting of progress is an essential and important part of the Early Years for children's learning and development. Assessment takes a variety of forms to gain an understanding of each child's level of understanding. These can be through observations, photographic evidence, examples of work and parental conversations. Assessment occurs throughout any taught session as well as during free flow times when children are embedding and extending any previous learning. These assessments will then be used to shape and adapt any future learning.

At the start of both Nursery and Reception children are assessed to determine a baseline for their future learning using the B Squared assessment tool or MAPP tool depending on individual needs. Judgements will be based on the observations of children during activities and play. The results are discussed with parents at the child's Annual Review Meeting. This assessment enables staff to plan and prepare learning experiences to support and develop a child's understanding. The Foundation Stage Profile, the end of year assessment of children's achievements in all areas of learning, is a statutory report. Observational evidence and samples of children's work throughout the school year will be used to assess children as 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding' based on their understanding and achievement of the Early Learning Goals set out in the EYFS curriculum.

Assessment is ongoing throughout the year. B squared targets are updated least every term and more so if required. Evidence of children's progress and achievement is collected through observations which may be both formal or informal and of a targeted child or a group, questioning and interaction where appropriate, samples of work and talking to parents and colleagues.

Reporting to Parents

Within the early years of a child's learning and similarly throughout every stage, communication takes place on a regularly planned basis and additionally whenever parents or staff feel the need to do so. The individual learning needs of children

attending The Grove School are complex with progress being dependent upon personalised approaches to support cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development as well as to progress learning dispositions and skills.

Children's progress is reported on a more formal basis through a written School Report which contributes to the Annual Review of Statement meetings. These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss children's work, share information concerning all aspects of the child's development and progress and most importantly to agree new targets for the child for the forthcoming year. Through the support of multi-disciplinary teams and our school nurse we collaborate closely with parents supporting in the areas for which additional partnership working would be beneficial.

Equal Opportunities

We are aware of the importance of ensuring that all children receive equality of opportunity at The Grove School. We aim to:

- challenge gender issues and racism
- avoid the use of stereotypes in books and resources
- choose resources which promote positive role models
- encourage all children to access a wide variety and type of resource
- develop reflective thoughtful and caring individuals who are accepting of everyone's uniqueness being supportive and helpful to others.
- encourage respect for all members of the school community
- teach children about a variety of cultures, faiths and festivals and encourage children to share their own experiences with adults and peers
- provide resources which reflect our multi-cultural and multi-faith society

Safeguarding & Welfare

We understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2025.