



**Ham Drive Nursery School and
Day Care**



EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Aims

This policy is intended to support and encourage staff in meeting the statutory requirements and in the delivery of high quality experiences for children's learning and development. It is written in light of the publication of the EYFS framework (2014), Every Child Matters (ECM) and in the context of our vision for the provision of high quality play experiences for all children.

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfill 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. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its' own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage pg 5 DFE 2017)

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year.

Four guiding principles shape our practice at Plymouth Nursery Schools Federation

- 1) Every child is a unique child
- 2) Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
- 3) Children learn and develop well in enabling environments
- 4) Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

A Unique Child

Child Development

At Plymouth Nursery Schools Federation 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 celebration/ sharing circle times to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusive Practice

We value the diversity of individuals within our school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children and their families are valued.

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 into account our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able;

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children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We liaise closely with all relevant professionals in order to provide early support for those children and their families who need it.

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 contributions of all children are valued
- Assigning a key person to each child who makes links with children's home experiences through parents/carers
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- Planning challenging activities for children whatever their age and stage of development
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

Keeping safe

It is important to us that all children are and feel 'safe'. We help children become familiar with safety, boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Our children will be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical, emotional and psychological well being of all children. (See our Safeguarding Policy)

"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 EYFS pg. 16 DFE 2017)

At Plymouth Nursery Schools Federation we understand that we are legally required to comply with the *Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements* as stated in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children
- Secure the keyperson role and meet ratios of 1:13 and in the Day Care provisions 1:8 for 2-3 year olds; 1:4 for 2 year olds and 1:3 for those children under 2
- Provide healthy snacks and encourage healthy meals
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill or have an accident
- 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 all staff have access to regular CPD (Continuous Professional Development) and supervision
- 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.

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Health and Well-being

Children's health is an integral part of their emotional, mental, social, environmental and spiritual well-being. We promote healthy snacks and offer foods from different cultures to develop their taste preferences. Activities relating to the food cycle are interwoven in planning e.g. planting seeds, gathering preparing and eating! We ensure that children can rest during the day and have a designated quiet area indoors and places outdoors where children can relax alongside space for vigorous free movements.

Positive Relationships

Respecting Each Other

At Plymouth Nursery Schools Federation, we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent through forming secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we highly value the contribution that parents make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in supporting their child/ren's development. We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before they start in our school
- The children having the opportunity to spend time with staff prior to starting as part of transition
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's development and progress and allowing free access to their children's Learning Journal
- Encouraging parents to talk to their child's key person about any concerns they may have
- Offering various activities throughout the year that involve parents and carers in the life of school for example, community events
- Encouraging parents to contribute towards their child's Learning Journal
- Supporting parents and carers whose first language is one other than English

Supporting Learning

Effective teaching approaches will be secure where we:

- Actively and respectfully listen to what the children have to tell us whatever their current or preferred communication system
- Engage and stimulate our young learners
- Plan for their learning using their interests as our starting points
- Allow for regular review of progress towards learning outcomes
- Vary what we provide to match children's needs
- Maximize opportunities to explore in a whole group, small group, paired, individual and independently

Routines are an important way that children feel secure and can make sense of all the opportunities offered throughout their time in school

Our routine is structured yet very flexible. We have small group time and whole group time and opportunities for singing and story-telling in different groups. Children will use free play continuous provision indoor and outdoor throughout their day and will also be supported through adult – led activities.

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Key Person

At Plymouth Nursery Schools Federation each child has a key person. The key person builds confidence, gives children opportunities to express their thinking and use their initiative. We believe children learn and develop effectively when the key person provides:

- Warm and consistent relationships with clear expectations
- First-hand experiences
- Individual and collaborative learning experiences
- Appropriate pace
- An environment where children can take risks
- Innovative delivery
- Clear expectations
- Opportunities to review and reflect
- Thinking time
- Thorough preparation and organisation
- Activities building on prior learning
- Open-ended, thought provoking challenging questions
- Support for children with differing needs
- Support for parents and carers.

All staff involved with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage aim to develop good and warm relationships, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen.

“The best kind of teacher is one who helps you do what you couldn’t do for yourself but doesn’t do it for you”

(Child aged 8, quoted in “Teaching Children to think” by Robert Fisher, Nelson Thornes 1990)

Enabling Environments

Observation, Assessment and Planning and Supporting Every Child

At Plymouth Nursery Schools Federation, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s learning and development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, before planning challenging, but achievable, activities and experiences to extend their learning and development. Assessment of their achievements will ensure they make the appropriate progress.

Observation is key to planning an appropriately challenging and exciting curriculum.

The recording of observations is practicable, organised and well-managed. Observations are recorded in children’s individual ‘Learning Journeys’. They also contain information provided by the practitioner, parents and other professionals where appropriate. Next steps are identified and judgements can be made regarding the child’s achievements.

Planning meetings are held fortnightly to enable all staff to contribute towards learning and development, based on their observations. Children also play an important part in planning their own learning through Assessment for Learning (AFL) and consultation, particularly when ‘new’ themes are being formulated so that personalised learning is paramount.

Long Term Planning

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Development Matters Guidance details the development matters which are adhered to. In our school we have themes appropriate to our cohort of children and the community to which they

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belong, these will include seasonal and festival based inputs that support the themes that arise from the children's own interests. Continuous provision plans also form the basis of long term planning.

Medium Term Planning

Planning can run for a few weeks, month or half termly and is based on the needs and interests of the children for all areas of learning and development. Planning details the proposed development matters to be focused upon gives an overview of possible enhancements to continuous provision, the adult focused activities, resources, display and visits/visitors to school. Often themes are used as a vehicle for delivery.

Short Term Planning

This is written fortnightly and details adult focused and child-initiated learning experiences on a daily basis. It outlines the elements of development, effective learning for children and will detail prompts for staff linked to observation as well as key language/questions and resources.

Evaluations and next steps determine our planning for subsequent weeks. Planning for and with other agencies is also incorporated where possible and appropriate. Where appropriate, reference will be made on short term planning for children with Special Educational Needs or disability linked to their Individual Education Plan (IEP) or for Looked After Children (LAC) linked to their Personal Education Plan (PEP) where appropriate. For children who have a first language other than English links to bi-lingual support or visual strategies will also be made using specific strategies.

In terms of assessment there are two key systems for tracking children's development and progress: the Learning Journey and the tracking process which feeds into the EYFS Tracker package which enable children's progress to be monitored and for the SLT to raise questions for the children's Key Person where additional support or challenge is needed. Staff complete these assessments on an on-going basis and after a child's first half term and then termly thereafter. The analysis of this data highlights areas for future development.

The Learning Environment

A high quality environment is key to our success. It is the shared responsibility of staff and children to care for the environment both indoors and outdoors. Staff take pride in developing areas of continuous provision and displays which enhance and broaden opportunities.

The EYFS learning environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely indoors and outdoors. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The environment is organised into continuous provision areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Our outdoors provision offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers our children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.

We are committed to providing high quality continuous provision. Areas are established and maintained, audited and resources replenished regularly. Resources are labelled and organised to aid self-selection and our provision reflects the cultures and community that we serve. Risk assessments, where appropriate, are in place and areas are print rich.

We aim to reflect the community we serve and represent our children appropriate to their age and/or stage of development. We are respectful of children's uniqueness across all areas of learning and development and displays reflect current themes in learning. Displays show what children have experienced and learnt and are annotated by adults describing the process involved and, where appropriate, the outcomes. Our displays are interactive, inviting and of high quality. Staff have their own boards, in their Key Group rooms which reflect their key person group experiences and these are changed on a regular basis.

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The Wider Context

We recognise that children's social, emotional and educational needs are central to any transition from home to setting, within one setting or from setting to setting. We communicate with other settings and with parents/carers to ensure that children's needs are met. Information is shared in order that there is continuity in their learning and development.

Visits are undertaken by all key people to meet with the children prior to them starting in school. These visits provide the opportunity to discuss individual needs and to meet the children within the home environment.

We have good links with local schools and early years settings and during the Summer term in particular we have the opportunity for reciprocal visits for both staff and children.

Staff work together across services in order to achieve the Every Child Matters outcomes, this may involve working with multi-agency professionals. Our aim is for all key partners to communicate well and put the children and their families needs first. Staff know the local area well and use this knowledge to plan the children's learning.

Learning and Development – Characteristics of Effective Learning

Play and Exploration

At Plymouth Nursery Schools Federation, we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. They develop their skills through a variety of processes. These include:

- Investigation
- Experimentation
- Listening
- Observing
- Talking and discussing
- Asking questions
- Practical exploration and role play
- Retrieving information
- Imagining
- Repetition
- Problem solving
- Making choices and decision-making

We use the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' to shape our practices; in observing, interacting and planning provision. We provide opportunities for children to become engaged, motivated and to think critically. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas, and learn how to control their behaviour 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 can express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. This happens best when children have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides our children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning. Children's learning is extended through accessing resources freely and being allowed to move them around our setting.

Children are given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning and development, not just through the arts. Staff support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open-ended questions.

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Areas of Learning and Development

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning and development.

Three prime areas:-

- 1) Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- 2) Communication and Language
- 3) Physical Development

And **four specific** areas

- 1) Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy
- 2) Literacy
- 3) Understanding of the World
- 4) 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 focused and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS (end of the reception year).

Children are taught how to use all resources safely through focused activities. The adult's role within continuous provision areas encourages our children to interact with resources and the environment with care and respect; and with regard for health and safety. We offer a range of resources both natural and man-made. We have a range of multi-sensory, multi-cultural and non-stereotypical resources which are reviewed and replenished regularly.

Leadership and Accountability

The Executive Headteacher, ensures that local and national initiatives and directives are appropriately responded to and provided for in liaison with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), reporting regularly to the Governing Body. Self-evaluation is important to us and we use multiple reflective approaches to inform our school development plan (SDP) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD). We have a termly cycle for self-evaluation in place which ensures that we are constantly monitoring the quality of what we do.

We review our practice and provision frequently which then informs our school development plan.

Internal mechanisms regarding monitoring quality include:

- observations of teaching
- peer observations
- data analysis
- performance management and appraisal
- consultations
- action planning and target setting
- staff discussions
- policy review

Monitoring takes place through the SLT, Governing Body Meetings, appraisals, performance management meetings and through Ofsted inspections. We evaluate as a staff and SLT with parents/carers, our multi-agency partners and the community.

Continuous Professional Development

We are committed to all staff accessing Continuous Professional Development. Individual training will be chosen or identified based on individual's interests or remits, linked to appraisal or performance management and in response to Ofsted inspections and national/local initiatives and to priorities identified in the SDP. We have systems in place to cascade this information with others and ascertain the impact of the training on our provision.

N.B. This EYFS Policy reflects the ethos, values and practices of all our school policies.

All relevant legislation and guidance has been adhered to in developing this policy.

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Policy agreed by Governors: 19.4.18

Signed:

Wendy Rees: Chair of Governors.

Policy review date: April 2019.