

The Meadow School Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

1. Intent

At The Meadow School, our EYFS curriculum is designed to ensure that every child develops a strong foundation for lifelong learning, achieving the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to succeed in Key Stage 1 and beyond.

We recognise that every child is a unique individual who is capable, resilient and competent. Our intent is to provide a rich, inclusive and carefully sequenced curriculum that promotes curiosity, independence, communication and a love of learning.

We aim to:

- Ensure all children make strong progress from their starting points and are well-prepared for Year 1.
- Develop confident communicators who can listen attentively, speak clearly and engage in meaningful interaction.
- Foster early reading, writing and mathematical understanding through high-quality teaching and play-based learning.
- Support children's personal, social and emotional development so they can build positive relationships, regulate emotions and develop self-confidence.
- Provide an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum that responds to children's interests while ensuring coverage of all areas of learning.
- Promote equality of opportunity so that all children, regardless of background or need, can succeed.
- Develop Characteristics of Effective Learning so children become independent, motivated and reflective learners.

We value strong partnerships with parents and carers, recognising them as children's first educators and essential partners in learning.

2. Implementation

Curriculum Structure and Teaching Approach

At The Meadow School, our EYFS curriculum is carefully designed to provide a broad, balanced and ambitious foundation for all children. It is underpinned by the EYFS Statutory Framework and is planned to ensure that knowledge, skills and vocabulary build progressively over time, preparing children for future learning and a successful transition into Key Stage 1.

Children learn through a balance of:

- Adult-led teaching
- Child-initiated learning within high-quality continuous provision
- Play-based learning opportunities
- Small-group and whole-class teaching
- Indoor and outdoor learning experiences

Learning is organised through meaningful contexts for learning, which typically change each half-term. These contexts provide a purposeful framework through which key knowledge, skills and experiences can be introduced, revisited and embedded. Planning is informed by curriculum objectives and assessment information to ensure progression for all learners.

While our curriculum has clear long-term aims and progression, it remains responsive to the interests, questions and experiences of the children. Practitioners carefully observe children's play and interactions and use these observations to identify opportunities to deepen learning, extend vocabulary and promote sustained shared thinking.

We recognise that some of the most powerful learning opportunities arise unexpectedly. Therefore, alongside planned experiences, staff respond thoughtfully to significant moments and emerging interests. For example, following the discovery of a birds' nest in the outdoor area, learning was adapted to build upon children's curiosity, leading to opportunities for observation, discussion, nest construction, mark-making and writing, creative expression and scientific enquiry. These experiences enable children to engage in meaningful learning while continuing to develop curriculum knowledge and skills.

Adults play a crucial role in supporting learning by modelling language, extending thinking, asking purposeful questions and providing appropriate challenge. Through high-quality interactions, children are encouraged to explore, investigate, problem-solve and make connections in their learning.

We enrich the curriculum through visitors, celebrations, stories, seasonal events, outdoor learning opportunities and first-hand experiences where appropriate. These experiences are carefully chosen to broaden children's understanding of the world, develop cultural capital and inspire curiosity. These experiences are carefully chosen to broaden children's understanding of the world, develop cultural capital and provide experiences that may be beyond their everyday lives.

Our approach ensures that learning is both purposeful and engaging, providing children with opportunities to develop independence, resilience, creativity and confidence while making strong progress across all areas of learning.

Prime Areas of Learning

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

Children are supported to develop positive relationships, self-regulation, confidence and an understanding of their own emotions and those of others. Staff model and teach appropriate behaviour, empathy and independence throughout the day.

Communication and Language (C&L)

Language development is prioritised across all areas of learning. Children are supported to develop listening skills, vocabulary and confident spoken language through high-quality adult interaction, storytelling, role play, discussion and structured activities.

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Physical Development

Children develop both gross and fine motor skills through planned activities and continuous provision. They are taught to manage personal hygiene, take safe risks and develop independence in self-care. Daily access to outdoor learning supports physical development further.

Specific Areas of Learning

Literacy (Reading and Writing)

Early reading is a high priority at The Meadow School. We follow the Rocket Phonics programme (Rising Stars) to deliver a systematic synthetic phonics approach. Teaching is delivered daily and is carefully sequenced to ensure children progress from secure phonemic awareness through to fluent reading and early writing.

Children are taught to:

- Recognise and pronounce phonemes accurately
- Blend sounds to read words
- Segment words for spelling
- Apply phonics knowledge in reading and writing from the earliest stages

Reading books are closely matched to children's phonics stage and are regularly sent home to support reading fluency and parental engagement.

Alongside phonics, children are immersed in high-quality texts daily to develop vocabulary, comprehension and a love of reading.

Mathematics

Mathematical development is taught through practical, hands-on experiences and adult-led sessions. Children develop a secure understanding of number, shape, space and measure through exploration and problem-solving.

Children learn to:

- Subitise and recognise numbers
- Understand composition of number

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- Add, subtract, double and halve in practical contexts
- Use mathematical language accurately
- Explore pattern, shape and spatial reasoning

Understanding the World

Children explore their immediate and wider environment, developing knowledge of people, cultures, communities, the natural world and technology. Learning is enriched through first-hand experiences, exploration and discussion.

Expressive Arts and Design

Children are supported to explore and express ideas through art, music, dance, role play and construction. Creativity is valued and children are encouraged to experiment with materials, techniques and imagination.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We explicitly teach and model:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

These characteristics are embedded throughout the environment and curriculum and supported through Forest School sessions and outdoor learning experiences.

Continuous Provision and Environment

The indoor and outdoor environments are carefully planned to support all areas of learning. Children access continuous provision daily, allowing them to explore, revisit and deepen learning independently.

From the Spring Term onwards, opportunities are increasingly planned for children to independently apply, revisit and consolidate previously taught learning through structured challenges within continuous provision.

Outdoor learning is a fundamental part of the EYFS curriculum and is available throughout the school day. Children have access to a wide range of resources, including natural and investigative areas such as the school grounds, wildlife area, pond, garden and mini-beast habitats.

Staff interact purposefully with children outdoors to extend learning, model language and challenge thinking.

Assessment, Planning and Progress

Assessment is ongoing and based on high-quality observations of children's learning. Each child has a Learning Journey (Tapestry) which documents progress, achievements and next steps.

We use:

- The statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)
- Baseline assessments on entry to identify children's starting points
- Continuous formative assessment
- Development Matters and EYFS Statutory Framework
- Regular professional dialogue and moderation

Planning is responsive and informed by:

- Observations
- Children's interests
- Assessment of next steps
- Curriculum progression

Progress is monitored carefully to ensure all children make strong progress from their starting points.

Home-School Partnership

We value parents as partners in learning. Parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's Learning Journey via Tapestry and engage in school-based learning opportunities.

We provide:

- Induction and transition sessions
- Parent workshops and information evenings
- Opportunities for classroom involvement (where appropriate and DBS checked)
- Regular communication about progress and next steps

Transition to Key Stage 1

We work closely with Key Stage 1 staff to ensure a smooth transition from EYFS into Year 1. Opportunities for shared learning, professional dialogue and curriculum alignment support continuity in children's learning and development. Increasing expectations for independence, self-regulation and application of learning help children become confident and prepared for the next stage of their education.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

We are committed to ensuring that all children, including those with SEND, are fully included and supported to access the EYFS curriculum.

Children who may require additional support are identified as early as possible through ongoing assessment and close partnership with parents and external agencies where appropriate.

We adapt provision to meet individual needs and work closely with parents, the SENDCo and external agencies where appropriate.

We ensure equality of opportunity regardless of:

- Ethnicity
- Culture
- Religion
- Language
- Gender
- Ability
- Family background

All staff actively promote inclusive practice and challenge stereotypes.

Safeguarding and Welfare

Safeguarding is central to our EYFS practice. All staff are trained in safeguarding procedures and follow the school's safeguarding policy at all times.

Children's emotional wellbeing is prioritised, and staff work closely with families to ensure that children feel safe, secure and ready to learn.

Children are supervised appropriately at all times, including during outdoor learning and continuous provision. Risk assessments are used to ensure safe but stimulating learning experiences.

3. Impact

The impact of our EYFS curriculum is that children leave Reception as confident, curious and independent learners who are well-prepared for the demands of Key Stage 1.

By the end of EYFS:

- Most children achieve a Good Level of Development (GLD)
- Children demonstrate strong communication and language skills
- Children can read simple words and sentences using phonics knowledge
- Children show early number confidence and problem-solving skills

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- Children are emotionally secure, socially confident and able to regulate behaviour
- Children demonstrate curiosity, resilience and independence in learning

Our ongoing assessment, moderation and tracking ensure that children who are not yet on track are quickly identified and supported.

We aim for all children to leave EYFS with the foundations needed for future academic success and a positive attitude to learning.