



Falconhurst School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

This policy was approved by Teaching Learning and Standards Committee in 2023 for a period of three years or until such a time that changes to the EYFS curriculum make it necessary.

Introduction

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile - Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Falconhurst School children are admitted to Nursery the term following their third birthday and to Reception in the September following their fourth birthday.

Philosophy

The early-years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It introduces the Falconhurst school drivers: possibilities, well-being, and knowledge of the world.
- It ensures that no child is excluded/disadvantaged and actively promotes cultural competence.
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and that builds on what our children already know and can do.
- It uses a range of approaches including focused teaching, child led learning and interest areas.
- It has high expectations for staff, for children and for families to enable each child to develop to their full potential.
- It provides rich and stimulating environments both indoors and out.
- It is a holistic approach, which leads to a continuity of learning and teaching.
- It promotes positive relationships with children and with families.

Approach

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on four themes:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

At Falconhurst School 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 and at varying rates.

We value the diversity of individuals and believe that every child matters. All children are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. All families are valued within our school. In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations keyed to the needs of our children.

We do this 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 learn effectively;
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;

- Employing resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary (such as referrals to speech therapy) as necessary.
- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress.

Positive Relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. We know that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Inviting parents/carers and children the opportunity to spend time in Reception Class or the Nursery for induction visits before starting school.
- Holding a parent consultations and 'Stay and Play' sessions early in the academic year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment.
- Operating an open door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if Foundation staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- Publishing Pathway maps detailing the areas of learning and the overarching theme of the term or half-term as well as regular displays outlining learning in the Nursery.
- Sharing children's 'Learning Journey' with parents/carers online and valuing the on-going contributions to this from parents/carers. .
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their Nursery or Reception year.
- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such, workshops, Christmas productions and sports day etc.
- Offering a range of activities, throughout the year, to encourage specific collaboration between child, school and parents e.g. reading and topic events.

Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to indoor and outdoor environments that are set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision.

Play-based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff. We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

Learning and Development

At Falconhurst, our practice is grounded in the EYFS curriculum, both the Characteristics of Effective Learning and the 7 Areas of Learning. Our curriculum planning includes approaches that are:

- tailored to individual needs
- centred around children's interests in order to achieve learning outcomes
- flexible and responsive, with 'in the moment' plans adapting to follow the interests/needs

- of children and respond to external events
- informed by on-going assessment;
- grounded in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The Characteristics of Effective Learning underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner:

- Playing and exploring - children have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- Active learning - children have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically - children can develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development. Three of the areas are seen as particularly important and are therefore called the 'prime areas'.

Prime Areas:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development: Making relationships, Managing Feelings & Behaviour, Self-Confidence & Self-Awareness.

Communication and Language: Listening & Attention, Understanding, Speaking.

Physical Development: Moving & Handling, Health & Self-Care.

The following four areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. These are referred to as the 'specific areas'.

Specific Areas:

Literacy: Reading and Writing.

Mathematics: Numbers, Shape Space and Measure.

Understanding the World: People & Communities, the World, and Technology.

Expressive Arts and Design: Exploring & Using Media and Materials, Being Imaginative.

Continuous Provision

Continuous Provision enables children to explore recent learning, practice new skills and follow their own interests. At Falconhurst, we value this approach and secure its presence through:

- clearly defined learning spaces, such as role play areas, which are designed to encourage children to extend and deepen their understanding of the EY curriculum.
- Providing an environment and associated resources which facilitates independence, curiosity and hands on play based learning.
- Expecting staff to enhance and deepen learning through careful intervention and questioning.
- Ensuring that carefully chosen and organised high quality resources and experiences are

- available for children to access independently across every area of their learning.
- Planning and valuing opportunities which encourage children to develop learning experiences, practice and build up ideas and skills, learn how to communicate, and develop self-control. Children are given opportunities to take risks, and think creatively alongside others as well as on their own.

Planning

Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can do. It enables children to learn and progress from a range of starting points, and enables learning to happen in a variety of places in different ways.

Long term planning follows whole school pathways, which gives structure and coherence to the school year. Areas of Learning are interwoven into learning doorways which link to the seasons, seasonal celebrations and experiences, along with the local area and greater world. Management of session times, the staffing structure and improvements to buildings/outdoor environments are also vital parts of the long-term plans.

Medium term planning addresses particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each Learning pathway, building on attainment and planning for progression and greater depth. Areas, such as phonics follow a plan -review cycle, with adult deployment and the learning environment adaptations reflecting ongoing observational assessments and the pathway.

Short term planning identifies learning activities, objectives, differentiation, vocabulary and language foci to meet the needs of the children on a weekly basis, daily or 'in the moment' basis.

Assessment, Recording and Monitoring

Within the first weeks of attending the Nursery or Reception classes the adults will get to know the children and assess starting points for children. In the Nursery this will be based on observations of the children and discussions with parents/carers and feeder settings. In Reception this will be through the Baseline assessment system.

Ongoing assessments include on-going observations of children's achievements, interests and learning styles, annotated work, photographs, information from parents/guardians, and more formal assessments, such as for phonics. These assessments enable next steps to be identified, planned for, and met. The observations are shared with families electronically and families invited to contribute.

Our assessment process enables rigorous analysis of data, including the progress of identified groups, identifying gaps, and ensuring challenge and differentiation. These assessments along with teacher knowledge, inform the end of Reception Profile assessments in which attainment is measured against the Early Learning Goals.

At the end of EYFS

The national expectation is for children to achieve a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD) in EYFS profile assessments. At the end of EYFS GLD is when a child achieves 'expected; within all strands within the prime areas of learning as well as all strands within literacy and maths'.

However, every child is unique. Some will exceed this expectation, while others may still be working towards it. Our aim is for all children to progress to their full potential (and at least make good progress from their relative starting points).

End of year reports for both Nursery and Reception children are shared with families and are passed to the child's next teacher as part of our transition arrangements. Reception reports

include The EYFS Profile information as part of the end of year report.

Transition

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle in to their new class quickly and happily.

Families of all children starting in the next academic year (or term for nursery children) are invited into school to meet their child's new teachers and other key staff and learn more about the school.

This is an opportunity to:

- demonstrate the value given/relationships with families
- introduce the school handbook/welcome packs
- enable families to explore the indoor and outdoor learning environments
- help children to begin to become familiar with staff and their peers
- discuss individual needs, such as toileting, medical, dietary or SEND (and possible additional provision, e.g. visits/meetings with preschools)
- explain about expectations, processes and procedures such as uniform, lunchtime arrangements, illness and positive behaviours.

The Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 practitioners, along with school Leaders, work closely together to make the transition within Falconhurst as smooth as possible. Transition arrangements include visits to new classrooms and meeting new teachers along with dedicated Phase meeting time to form individual transition arrangements for children that need additional support with transition.

For those children moving on to different schools we work with the families on an individual basis to follow the induction procedures of the schools involved.

Equal Opportunities

At Falconhurst School each pupil has an entitlement to all aspects of the EYFS. We constantly review our setting, our activities and our approaches to ensure equal opportunities. We follow our school's Single Equality Policy.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in line with the governors' rolling programme of policy review.

It may be reviewed when any one of the following occurs:

- Significant changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Changes to policies of admission to the Foundation Unit.
- To ensure best value in the light of any notable local, national or international initiatives