



AKELEY WOOD
SCHOOL

AKELEY WOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL & NURSERY: EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is important in its own right and good early years education is a firm foundation for future learning and development. It is the Early Learning Goals that set out what is expected of most children at the end of the Foundation Stage.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is for children from birth to five years of age. The final year is referred to as the Reception year.

Introduction

At Akeley Wood Junior School and Nursery, we aim to provide teaching and learning experiences of the highest quality to help our children make good progress towards and, where appropriate, beyond these goals.

While following this curriculum we also aim to respond to the individual needs of our children, their families and the community to secure foundations on which future learning can be built.

Our approach ensures that the EYFS meets the aim of improving outcomes and reflects that it is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well-being.

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

- It builds on what our children already know and can do;
- It ensures that all children are included regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- We provide a rich and stimulating environment.

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Curriculum of the EYFS underpins all future learning by supporting, promoting and developing:

- personal, social and emotional well-being;
- positive attitudes and dispositions towards learning;
- social skills;
- attention skills and persistence;
- language and communication;
- reading and writing;
- mathematics;
- knowledge and understanding of the world;
- physical development;
- creative development.

The principles which guide the work of all early years practitioners are grouped into four themes:

- **A Unique Child** - every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships** - children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.
- **Enabling Environments** - the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.
- **Learning and Development** - children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates; all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

We do not view these areas of learning as separate entities. When we plan activities they are designed to meet several, and sometimes many, learning intentions.

Teaching and Learning Style

Teaching and learning in the early years curriculum is carefully planned and structured to meet individual needs. We plan with our practitioners, organising a range of experiences and opportunities which give children the chance to make decisions and choices, work individually or in groups and explore the learning environment. We organise the curriculum into topic areas and make links in all seven areas. These are divided into the Prime and Specific Areas, and the three Characteristics of Learning:

The prime areas of learning:

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

The specific areas of learning:

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

Characteristics of effective learning

The three characteristics of effective learning comprise *playing and exploring*, *active learning* and *creating and thinking critically*. The characteristics describe the different ways children learn rather than what they learn. They begin at birth and are lifelong characteristics which are critical for building children's capacity for future learning. These characteristics need to be understood by practitioners working across all seven areas of learning.

The more general features of good practice in our Nursery and School that relate to the EYFS are:

- The strong partnership between practitioners and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- The secure understanding that practitioners have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- The range of educational approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- The carefully planned curriculum that help children achieve higher than average outcomes in their Early Learning Goals by the end of the EYFS;
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;

- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence, self-management and resilience;
- The support for learning with appropriate and indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment. Including the use of Forest School;
- The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through ongoing observations and assessments, which are regularly shared with parents;
- The clear aims for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do;
- The regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the EYFS and our commitment to ongoing professional development.

Play in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Through purposeful play our children explore and develop learning experiences which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children and adults as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

Inclusion in the Early Years Foundation Stage

We give all our children every opportunity to achieve their best. 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 vulnerable groups, children with special educational needs, children who show exceptional potential, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all 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;
- Making reasonable adjustments to ensure all children have equal access to resources and learning experiences.
- Working together with parents and professionals;
- 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 contribution of all children is valued;
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their peers;
- Monitoring children's progress closely, taking action to provide early intervention where necessary.

Assessment

We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS uses baseline assessments, observation and progress reports written by the practitioner and other adults in the setting.

Observation and assessment procedures include:-

- Spontaneous observations, which record changes, achievements and significant events.
- Planned observations carried out by the child's key worker or teacher to support progress judgements.
- Individual and group tracking which allow the practitioner to highlight areas of development.
- Progress Check for Two Year Olds.
- Pupil Progress Summaries which are completed three times a year
- Reception Baseline Assessment. A Mathematics, Literacy and Language assessment to pupils on entry and exit.
- Ongoing significant observations as the child engages in adult directed, supported and child initiated play (both indoors and out).
- Photos to capture significant observations.
- Samples of work and workbooks in Literacy and Numeracy.
- Parental observations and feedback on their child's learning.
- In Butterflies and Reception, we also undertake reading assessments linked to our Ruth Miskin Literacy programme.

From these observations and reports, next steps are identified and planned for. All observations are measured and identified against the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and Early Years Outcome document. These assessments are shared with parents and Year 1 staff.

Parental Involvement

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children.

We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- Opportunities given to the children to spend time with their teacher/Key Person before starting school, both in their existing and new learning environment;
- Inviting Reception and Nursery parents to a transition meeting during the term before their child starts Pre-School and School;
- Offering parents regular opportunities to meet and talk about their child's progress;
- Online learning journals that can be easily accessed from mobile devices;
- Using Home/School communication books;
- Providing the nursery/school brochure which includes relevant information about the setting and staff before the child starts;
- Information to parents about their child's Key Person and the important role they play in their child's care and education;
- Providing a weekly school newsletter and having parent notice boards displayed outside each classroom door.
- Termly Parents' Evenings.

For more detail please refer to our 'Parents as Partners' policy.


Resources

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. 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.

Conclusion

The EYFS aims to provide every child with a rich and diverse experience through a range of activities. It is hoped that this will provide a foundation for life-long enjoyment of learning.

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Signed 

Mrs C G Page
Headteacher