



# Newall Green Primary School

*Aiming High To Reach Our Goals*

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## Early Years Teaching and Learning Policy 2018

Document Control	
Title	Early Years Teaching and Learning Policy
Date	January 2018
Supersedes	Version 1
Amendments	Sections were taken out of school's main teaching and learning policy to create an individual EYFS one.
Related Policies/Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Early Years Assessment Policy (2018)</li></ul>
Review	3 year January 2021

**Approved by:** [Elizabeth Bolton] **Date:** [18.1.2018]

**Last reviewed on:** [18.1.2018]

**Next review due by:** [18.1.2021 unless changes are made sooner]

## Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to describe our Early Years curriculum and show how Newall Green Primary Schools strives to give each child the best possible start in life. We have high expectations of all children and we encourage them to develop independence throughout their time in Early Years. We are committed to providing high quality care and education and we aim to provide a wide range of learning experiences. Children's interests, previous experience and needs are carefully considered when planning for their learning. We strive to build good relationships with parents to secure a strong link between home and school. We use the following key documents to underpin our practice in the Early Years: Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2017), Early Years Foundation Stage Profile handbook (DfE, 2016), Development Matters (Early Education, 2012) and Early Outcomes (2013).

The EYFS Framework identifies four guiding principles which we use to shape our practice in school:

- 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, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

## Contents of policy:

- 1) Structure of Early Years
- 2) The Curriculum and Characteristics of Effective Learning
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### **1) Structure of Early Years**

Nursery: In Nursery there are six key person groups which are each led by either a teacher or experienced teaching assistant. They are taught in their groups for whole-class sessions but children then have free-flow throughout the unit during continuous provision. At the start of the year, children's start dates are spread out over a few weeks and they start on a part-time basis initially. This is soon built up to full-time when the children have settled into Nursery. Key people work closely with parents to help children get used to the Nursery routine and parents are invited to stay for part of the school day if necessary. Most children in Nursery start in September after they have turned three. However if we have places available, children who turn three during the year can also join a key person group on a part-time basis until next September. Key people adapt the learning to suit their needs.

Reception: In Reception we have three classes which each have a teacher and at least one teaching assistant. The classes are taught separately for whole-class sessions but the classrooms are opened up during continuous provision. The teachers get to know all of the children and work closely together when planning activities. At the start of the year, most if not all children start full-time straight away as many of them have already attended our Nursery. Teachers discuss with parents of children who have not attended our setting whether they are able to start full-time straight away or begin with mornings for the first few days.

### **2) The Curriculum and Characteristics of Effective Learning**

Nursery and Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the 2017 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available on the school website at <http://www.newallgreen.manchester.sch.uk/files/eyfsframework-april2017.pdf> This clearly defines what we teach. This policy details the specifics of our setting.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are important and inter-connected. Three areas are crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive (DfE 2017: 1.3). These are known as the prime areas. There are also four specific areas, through which the prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and Language – Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking
- Physical Development – Moving and Handling and Self-care
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – Making relationships, Managing feelings and behaviour and Self-confidence and Self-awareness.

The specific areas are:

- Literacy – Reading and Writing
- Mathematics – Numbers and Space, Shape and Measures
- Understanding the World – People and Communities, The World and Technology
- Expressive Arts and Design – Exploring and using media and materials and Being Imaginative.

Characteristics of Effective Learning:

The EYFS Framework identifies three characteristics of effective learning. The Nursery and Reception teachers plan activities within with these characteristics in mind:

- **playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- **active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

On parents' evening key people inform parents on their child's skills and abilities in relation to the three characteristics of effective learning. At the end of Reception, teachers also provide parents with a written report which includes information on each characteristic. Year 1 teachers are also provided with a report and key people meet with them during the Summer term to discuss each child's stage of development and their needs during transition.

### **3) Teaching and learning**

We believe it is essential to have a balance between adult and child-led learning in Early Years. A mixture of adult and child-led learning allows children to practise new skills and take ownership of their learning by applying it in different situations. Carefully planned adult-led activities are important to ensure children learn specific skills and knowledge. Through children's carefully structured play, they can practise these skills and we can then see how much of this learning children have embedded. Both Reception and Nursery follow daily timetables which provide set times for adult-led sessions and time for children to learn through continuous provision. Teachers plan for both adult-led and child-led sessions based on children's needs and any gaps in their learning. Staff will make on-going assessments of the progress and attainment of each child and use this information to aid future planning (*see EYFS assessment policy for more information*).

#### Learning through play (child-led learning)

Learning through play and practical hands on experiences underpins our approach to teaching and learning in Early Years. Through play, children develop a number of skills such as language, their emotions and creativity, social and intellectual skills. Children are able to practise and learn new skills and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Independent learning takes place indoors and outdoors and it is in these different environments that children explore and discover their immediate world. For most children their play/independent learning is natural and spontaneous although some children may need extra help from adults. Adults model and provide time, space and appropriate resources which inspire independent learning opportunities and the imaginations of the children. They observe play and join in when appropriate, watching and listening before intervening. Adults will model, observe, facilitate and extend children's learning. They will often ask children questions about the independent learning in order to develop their language and communication skills. All staff value child-initiated learning and provide safe but challenging environments that support and extend learning and development.

#### Adult-led learning

Through adult-led activities we can introduce children to new ideas, provide opportunities for them to develop their skills and ensure that they experience all areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). In addition to child-initiated learning, children are provided with daily adult-led sessions which usually take place within their key people groups/classes. Reception and Nursery each have three daily teaching sessions. These are normally Phonics, Literacy and Maths but other subject sessions are

also planned for depending on children's learning needs. Children also have a daily story session. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still etc. Teachers plan sessions based on the children's needs and differentiate them accordingly. Children are active learners during these sessions and they are provided with skills which they can then go and practise independently. Adult-led learning can also take place during continuous provision and indoor and outdoor activities are planned to help address gaps in children's learning.

#### Outdoor learning

Outdoor learning is a fundamental part of the Early Years and it has a positive impact on children's development. Being outdoors offers children the freedom to explore, use their senses and be physically active. It also offers opportunities to do things in different ways and on different scales compared to indoors. Our outdoor environment provides a range of resources and activities for children to explore and we try to ensure each of the curriculum areas are incorporated into the outdoor environment each day. Nursery and Reception each have their own outdoor areas and all of the children have free-flow access to them during continuous provision. Each area has a range of learning opportunities including a mud kitchen, climbing equipment, role play/stage area, balancing equipment, large scale construction, wheeled vehicles, water play and literacy and maths opportunities. Outdoors is both a teaching and learning environment, where there is a balance of child-led and adult-led learning. The outdoor area is comprehensively risk assessed and daily checks are completed by staff.

#### **4) Parent partnership**

Parents play a key role in children's development and it is essential for us to have a strong partnership with parents to ensure each child reaches their full potential. We encourage parents to make contributions and share information about their child's learning and development. We also regularly share information on children's progress and next steps in learning. We often invite parents in for workshops, assemblies or stay and play sessions to ensure they feel valued and develop good relationships with staff members. We do this through:

- Daily stay-and-learn sessions – parents are invited into the classroom for the first 15 (Reception) or 25 minutes (Nursery) each day where they can take part in morning activities with the children and talk to the key person
- Providing regular homework and advice on home learning (see section 5)
- Organising a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Special assemblies, performances, sports day, stay and play sessions, etc.
- Providing a range of methods to engage our families in their child's learning. For example morning activities to complete together, sharing/reading books, phonics workshops etc.
- Sending home a school planner so parents can comment on their child's reading and use it to communicate with the key person
- Emailing 2 simple observations to parents 3 times per year
- Asking parents to upload their own observations to 2Simple or write them on a post it
- Asking parents to fill in a form 3 times per year commenting on new skills the children have learned
- Holding parents' evenings twice per year
- Sending out a half yearly report and end of year report
- Sending out a year group newsletter each half term with information on topics etc
- Holding welcome meetings at the start of the year for all parents
- Having informal conversations at the start and end of the day
- Providing an opportunity for parents to meet key people before their children start Nursery

#### Information for new parents and children

For Nursery children, parents are invited to a 1:1 meeting with a Nursery teacher in the Summer term prior to them starting in Nursery. This provides an opportunity for key people to gather information on the child before they start Nursery and allows parents to ask any questions they may have. The children are also invited to these meetings. Nursery parents are also invited to an open day where they can tour the Nursery, find out who their child's key person will be and find out information on school policies etc.

Most children starting Reception have come from our Nursery so parents are already familiar with the school routines. There is a welcome meeting for all Reception parents in September which provides them with information on the daily timetable, how phonics is taught, the curriculum etc. Parents are also invited to informally meet the new Reception teacher after school in the Summer term. For parents of new children, they are also invited to a welcome meeting in the Summer term where they will be provided with

key information on school and also find out who their key person is. The children are also invited to these meetings.

### **5) Home learning**

We value the importance of home learning and all key people work closely with parents/carers to ensure they feel confident supporting children's learning at home. At each parents' evening, key people provide activity suggestions for parents to use at home to meet their child's targets. We also provide set regular homework/activities for parents to complete with their children.

Nursery: By the end of the first half term, children will receive their home reading book and parents will be expected to read/share the story with them for 10-20 minutes each day. After October half term, children will also begin receiving one piece of homework per week. This could be suggested activities for parents to do with their child based on the work they have done in class. Or it could be a task for the child to complete on a worksheet. Children will also receive spellings/phonics work as and when it is appropriate.

Reception: During the first half term, children will receive their home reading book and parents will be expected to read/share the story with them for 10-20 minutes each day. After October half term, children will begin receiving Literacy and Maths homework (alternate weeks) based on the work they have completed in class. Children will also receive spellings to practise at home.

### **6) Safeguarding and risk assessments**

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our whole school Safeguarding and Child Protection policy which can be found at

[http://newallgreen.manchester.sch.uk/files/safeguarding\\_policy\\_updated\\_may17.pdf](http://newallgreen.manchester.sch.uk/files/safeguarding_policy_updated_may17.pdf) . The Early Years unit also has its own set of risk assessments which are kept in a file in the unit. These have been read by all staff members and are reviewed frequently. Staff in Early Years perform daily checks of the environment to ensure it is safe.

### **7) Transition between year groups and other settings**

#### Nursery to Reception

Nursery and Reception teachers work closely together throughout the year and take part in joint moderations. This ensures Reception teachers develop a good understanding of Nursery children's abilities and needs before they move up. During the Summer term, each Nursery group spends one lesson per week in Reception. This provides them with the opportunity to get to know the environment and routines in Reception. The children also spend the morning with their new class teacher during the final 2 weeks of term.

#### Reception to Year 1

Reception children make use of the whole school facilities such as the hall, ICT suite and KS1 playground to ensure the children are confident and well prepared for moving around the main school building. Playing out with the KS1 children at lunchtime also prepares them for mixing with older children. During Spring term, Reception also attend KS1 assemblies once per week. In the final Summer term, the Reception classes visit the Year 1 classrooms once per week and take part in activities with a Year 1 teacher. This helps them get to know the environment and routines before September. The children also spend the morning with their new Year 1 teacher during the final 2 weeks of term. The Year 1 teachers are provided with time to observe the children in the Reception environment. Reception teachers also moderate with Year 1 teachers during the year which helps inform the teachers of the children's abilities and needs before they move up.

At the end of each school year, teachers meet to share information on each child with their new class teacher/key person including their knowledge, understanding, achievements and end of year assessment data. This ensures all teachers have a well-rounded picture of the children prior to the new school year. Teachers are also provided with copies of end of year reports for the children in their new class.

#### Other settings

We appreciate that starting at a new setting can be a daunting and unsettling experience for any child. This is why we try to ensure that children have met their key person before starting Nursery in September. If children have attended other settings, key people will contact them to gain further information about the child and discuss how to ensure their transition is smooth. Reception teachers will also contact settings new children have attended and will arrange a visit to observe the child if appropriate.

## **8) Planning and assessment**

We use half-termly topics in both Reception and Nursery as a starting point to learn new things and fire children's imaginations. Our long term plans show the topics we usually follow but they are flexible to ensure we also follow the children's interests, school themes or National events. Each half term the staff meet to plan the next topic and choose enhancements based on children's needs. The long term plans also show how we cover other areas of the EYFS curriculum. Please see an Early Years teacher if you would like to see a copy of the long term plans.

Staff plan in more detail on a weekly basis and teachers in each year group work together to plan lessons based on children's needs. We have weekly planning for Literacy, Maths and Phonics sessions. Expressive Arts & Design, PSED and Understanding the World are taught on a cross-curricular basis and teachers also bring them into their continuous provision planning and activities. Reception children also have a weekly Understanding the World and PE lesson and fortnightly ICT lesson. Both Reception and Nursery have planning proformas for indoor and outdoor continuous provision. The planning shows children's learning challenges and enhancements that will be provided. Continuous provision planning is formally updated every 2 weeks but teachers often change enhancements every few days depending on the children's needs and interests.

For Phonics we follow Letters and Sounds and adapt it to suit our children's needs. In Reception children are grouped in phonics sessions based on their gaps. Literacy is planned around quality texts as we find this is the best way to engage children. At the start of each text, we plan 'hooks' to provide an exciting start to the sequence of lessons. In Maths we use the White Rose materials but we adapt them to suit our children.

*For information on assessment please see our Early Years Assessment Policy (2018).*