

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



In Chestnut class we provide children with a caring environment that enables all children to succeed as unique individuals.



Policy Date: January 2021

Policy Approved: By Governors Improvements Committee
on 4th January 2021

Ratified by FGB: at their meeting held 18th January 2021

Next Review: January 2024

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage
3. The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework
4. Active Learning through Play
5. Assessment and Record Keeping
6. Planning
7. Parents as Partners
8. Admissions and Induction
9. Equal Opportunities
10. Inclusion



1. Introduction

‘Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil 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.’ EYFS Statutory Framework 2017

Early Years Education is the Foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Newlands Primary School.

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching adults.

In the policy the term ‘setting’ refers to the Early Years educational provision at Newlands Primary School.

This is available to children who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old. These children are in the final year of the EYFS. In the National Curriculum this is referred to as the Reception Year, or YR.

In the policy the term ‘practitioner’ refers to the members of staff working with children within the setting.

At Newlands Primary 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, 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 assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.



2. Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

In the EYFS setting at Newlands Primary School we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, to enable them to develop their full potential.

We aim to support each child's welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special.
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates - physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued by the practitioners looking after them.
- Fostering and nurturing children's self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community.
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- Encouraging children's independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes.
- Developing children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions differ to their own.
- Understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development.
- Providing learning experiences in play which reflect children's personal interests and areas of curiosity to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn.
- Providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development.
- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.



3. The Early Years Foundation Stage framework

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape the educational journey in the early years. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the prime areas, are:

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

There are also four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

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

These Areas of Learning and Development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all Areas of Learning and Development are all closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum which allows children to make lots of links between what they are learning. All Areas of Learning and Development are given equal weighting and value. At Newlands Primary School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected. In order to provide the children with a safe, stimulating, exciting and challenging learning environment in EYFS we:

- develop a strong partnership between staff and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- understand how children develop and learn, and how this affects our teaching;
- provide a range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- carefully plan the curriculum, based on interests and needs, that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout the EYFS;
- create opportunities for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- encourage children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- support learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;



4. Active Learning through Play

“Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development.”

At Newlands Primary School we recognise that young children learn best through when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning through play.

We recognise the importance of children’s play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.

In the EYFS setting at Newlands Primary School practitioners provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support children to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts. Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding.

In providing these active learning opportunities through play we understand the central position of play within the EYFS framework. This is essentially a play-based curriculum and pedagogy as the provision of play opportunities underpins its delivery within settings.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. There is an ongoing judgement to be made by staff about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults.



5. Assessment and Record Keeping

Ongoing assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of the EYFS setting at Newlands Primary School. Regular, planned and focused assessments are made of children's learning and individual needs. A record of each child's progress in all areas of their learning is kept by retaining and filing their assessment data as well as significant landmarks recorded in their ongoing 'learning journey'.

The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child-initiated play. Observations take place daily (both formally and informally). Practitioners make time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. They also make spontaneous observations to capture significant moments of children's learning. Observations are recorded in different formats (e.g. narrative style, post-it notes, whole class grids, photographs shared with parents using Tapestry). All practitioners are involved in observing children.

Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles.

Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified, and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

Other methods of assessing children in the EYFS setting include engaging alongside children in their play, annotation of children's written work, talking with children about their task or play and in Learning Journeys, both in paper and in electronic format.

Learning Journeys record children's progress over the academic year in all Areas of Learning and development of the EYFS framework. Samples of children's work are gathered, along with photographic/video evidence and observations.

There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child's development using the new Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (2017) and 'Development Matters'. This is updated at least once each half term to track individual progress. At the end of the year it provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements.

Baseline assessment is carried out using the EYFS Profile during the children's first six weeks upon entering the setting. Judgments made on children's development in the Profile are based on practitioners' evidence of children's behaviour observed independently and consistently in their self-initiated activities across all Areas of Learning and Development.



6. Planning

The EYFS framework provides a long-term plan to follow by ensuring that all Early Learning Goals are covered throughout the academic year. Practitioners consider the individual children's learning and developmental needs by recording in a PLOD (Possible Lines of Development) and in the moment planning sheets shared on display, creating a 'planning wall' which model planning for all EYFS team members. All Areas of Learning and Development are planned for and available to access within the setting. The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult focused and child-initiated activities indoors. The setting also makes use of the outdoor environment whenever possible.

Educational visits within the local community and further afield are also planned to support children's learning within the classroom.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice. The Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning are:

- Playing and Exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'

Through 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 can think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

- Active Learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children are encouraged to be independent and control their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.

- Creating and Thinking Critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

Children are given opportunities to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and can move them around the classroom to extend their learning.



7. Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children.

At Newlands Primary School we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development. So, practitioners endeavour to encourage the regular sharing of information about the children with parents.

We value the role of parents as children's primary educators. Through home visits prior to their start date and informal chats at the beginning and end of the day once in school. Practitioners encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes). This supports practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests. Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting using the online Learning Journal (Tapestry), letters sent in their communication books, reading records and informal chatting at the beginning and end of the day. Whole school newsletters are also sent home on a half termly basis.

Parents are invited to attend parents' evenings during the academic year. The first of these takes place during the Autumn term to allow practitioners and parents to discuss how children have settled into the setting. Another parent's evening takes place during the Spring term where practitioners will feedback on children's learning and development progress.

Other opportunities for practitioners to share children's learning, development and well-being with parents include Learning Journeys, end of year reports and Celebration assemblies where children's achievements are recognised.

Parents are also invited to get involved with school life. There are opportunities for them to help with activities such as educational visits and reading, as well as offering their skills (e.g. cooking, art, music) to support children's learning. Parents may be invited into the setting on other occasions such as open afternoons where children show them their work and special events for Mother's and Father's Days.

The setting has a friendly, open-doors ethos based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and practitioners are available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of the day. Parents are always welcomed into school and encouraged to discuss any concerns they might have.



8. Admissions and Induction

Newlands Primary School provides full-time Early Years education for children in the Reception Year. This is for children who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old.

Before they start in the setting, all children are offered a series of visits during the Summer term. The purpose of these initial visits is for the children to meet their new practitioners and start to become familiar with the setting environment. Practitioners, with parental permission, will also go to visit the children in their current pre-school settings. The aim of these visits is to support practitioners develop their knowledge and understanding of each child to make the transition period to Newlands Primary School as smooth as possible.

In the Summer term parents are invited into school to meet the setting practitioners. At this meeting information regarding the induction process and what goes on in the setting is shared. There is also time for informal chat and parents' questions. School information packs will be distributed to parents at this meeting, detailing school routines and expectations.

From September children attend the setting full-time, though parents can opt for their child to attend part-time should they see fit. Every effort is made to make children feel safe, secure and happy. There is a relaxed and open ethos in the setting. Established routines, a calm atmosphere and encouraging talk are some of the strategies practitioners use to maintain children's positive feelings about school.

See Admissions Policy for more information.



9. Equal Opportunities

At Newlands Primary school we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families

All practitioners at Newlands Primary School have a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring that inclusive practice is delivered in the EYFS setting. All children, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture or religion, and social circumstances, can experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development within the EYFS setting at Newlands Primary School. See Single our Equalities Policy for more information.

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 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 language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

At Newlands Primary school we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2017. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- 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 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.



10. Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at Newlands Primary School are treated regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

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 account of 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 all children regardless of gender, special educational needs, ability, disabilities, social and cultural backgrounds and those of different ethnic groups who may have diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We have arrangements in place to support children with SEN or disabilities and adhere to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. Our School has a designated Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and further information regarding SEN can be found separately in our Special Educational Needs Policy.