

# MEREWORTH COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



## Early Years Foundation Stage

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## **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Mereworth Community Primary School, children join the Reception class in the year that they turn five. In partnership with parents and carers we enable children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life.

### **Aims**

At Mereworth we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

We encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere; to support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing; to help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and by developing the confidence to work towards personal goals. A fundamental ethos of the school's learning style is the use of Growth Mindset.

Our high expectations will enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally and to achieve their full potential. We offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited availability for development through a wide range of new and exciting first-hand experiences that give children the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test their skills, knowledge and understanding alongside existing experiences. We will ensure that children are kept healthy and safe and that they achieve the knowledge and skills they need to start school.

### **The Curriculum**

Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the 2014 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available on the school website or to download at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>. This clearly defines what we teach. The following policy details the specifics of our setting.

## **The EYFS is based upon four principles:**

- A unique child – developing resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals.
- Positive relationships – supporting the children in becoming strong and independent.
- Enabling environments – where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child.
- Learning and developing – An acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates

### **A Unique Child**

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/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

### **Equal Opportunities**

All members of the school are treated as individuals. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity and the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse and multi-faith society.

### **Inclusion/Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

All children and their families are valued at Mereworth Community Primary School. Our whole school ethos, as well as that of the foundation stage, embraces inclusion. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always

discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and the schools PAENCO (Pupils Additional Educational Needs Coordinator) is called upon for further information and advice. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the school's policy for SEN.

**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.

In order to accommodate the individual's particular learning style, lessons will be planned wherever possible in a multi-sensory way so that the various activities will cater for all pupils. There will also be a consideration of how to record lesson outcomes so that the pupil is offered a variety of methods and is not inhibited by any specific difficulty.

**Early Years Pupil Premium** – we will endeavour to identify our disadvantaged pupils and inform parents or carers of their opportunity to apply for their child's entitlement to extra funding in school. All extra funding we receive will be used to support areas in which we identify that the child will best benefit. We offer an intervention 'Talk Boost' which provides targeted small group Teaching Assistant support, focused on listening and communication skills specifically in EYFS. We will track children's progress to ensure that they are making good progress and to ensure that support is adjusted to target specific areas as the child develops.

## **Welfare**

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy)

“Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.”

At Mereworth we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare and safeguarding 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.

## **Positive Relationships**

We recognise that children learn to be independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

## 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. We do this through:

- Making home visits to talk to parents about their child;
- Ensuring that the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during transfer sessions;
- Supporting children through the transition from pre-school to Reception with the children initially attending part time. This is also to support staff and parents in getting to know each other as well as the children.
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school and again during the child's Reception year in order to detail how we aim to work with their child particularly in relation to reading and phonics;
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents twice a year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private and share the child's 'Learning Journey'. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: stay and play/learn, celebration assemblies, school visits;
- Providing parents opportunities to celebrate their child's learning and development by contributing information which inform planning and provision;
- Written contact through a home school diary as well as the acknowledgement that parents can ring school to contact class teachers.
- Ensuring all parents know that their child's teacher and teaching assistant are their key workers.
- Providing a quiet and confidential area where parents are able to discuss any concerns.
- Encouraging parents to support home learning and reading by providing them with the skills and information they need.

## **Enabling Environments**

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident and secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision.

Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following children's interest. Effective planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure we follow their current interests and experiences. Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning.

## **Learning and Development**

Teachers and Teaching Assistants provide the curriculum in the Reception Class of up to a class size of 30 children. We have one foundation stage classroom and a large outdoor learning environment.

## **Areas of Learning**

The EYFS is made up of three **prime areas** of learning:

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

There are four **specific areas** of learning:

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

Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents and other settings, children's development levels are assessed. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

However, if a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. This may also include a discussion with the PAENCO in order to access Special Educational Needs support.

At Mereworth:

“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 used as an essential part of 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 on-going judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child’s emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.”  
(Statutory Framework for EYFS 2014)

Planning and guided children’s activities will reflect on the different ways that children learn. As a team, we write long term and medium term plans using the EYFS based on a series of topics each of which offers experiences in all seven areas. These plans are reviewed by the Head Teacher and then inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations, which remain flexible for unplanned circumstances or children’s responses. Children have whole group and small group times which increase as they progress through the EYFS with times for a daily phonics session using ‘Letters and Sounds’, teaching aspects of Mathematics and Literacy, including shared reading and writing.

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning and the reception teachers plan activities with these in mind. The characteristics highlight the importance of a child’s attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. The three characteristics are;

**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.

Religious Education is also taught in accordance with Kent guidelines.



## **Observation and Assessment**

Throughout Reception Class children's knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements are assessed and tracked using the developmental stages set out in the document 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)'.

Our assessment depends on us getting to know our children very well and to this end we gather information from a range of sources; observations of the children in play, in adult led activities, through discussions with parents and carers and through talking to the children. We keep written and photographic evidence to help us build up a picture of children's strengths and achievements and to help us to plan for children's next steps in learning. Every child in Reception Class has a 'Learning Diary' in which we record our observations and keep samples of the children's work for the seven different areas. These ongoing observations are used to inform the EYFS Profile/Development Matters bands. The child's progress is reviewed every term and is regularly discussed with parents.

Reception children will be assessed on entry (during the first 6 weeks of school) against learning statements in Development Matters for Mathematics, Literacy and Personal, Social & Emotional, Communication & Language & Physical Development to determine a baseline, or starting point, for their future learning. Judgements will be based on the adults' observations of children during activities and play. There will not be any form of testing and parent's views on their child as a learner will be taken into account.

The DfE has confirmed the EYFS profile will remain statutory for the 2016/17, 2017/18 & 2018/19 academic years. Observational evidence and samples of children's work throughout the school year will be used to assess children as 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding' based on their understanding and achievement of the Early Learning Goals set out in the EYFS curriculum.

## **Health and Safety**

We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2014) and we adhere to the school's Safeguarding Policy. There are clear procedures for assessing risk (see whole school Risk Assessment Policy) which includes procedures for keeping children safe during outings. For any aspects of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment a daily risk assessment is conducted. The Staff Handbook, Safeguarding and

Child Protection Policies, and Use of Mobile Phones and Cameras Policy provide detailed information and procedures to ensure the safety of the children.

**In line with the EYFS statutory framework 2014 we undertake;**

- A whole school medicines policy ensuring that there are systems in place to ensure that medicines and the systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medication are kept up to date. Medicines will not be administered unless they have been prescribed by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist. Medicines are only administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child's parent and/or carer. A written record is kept each time a medicine is administered to a child.
- Fresh drinking water is available at all times
- Children's' dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required
- Children are encouraged to eat healthy snacks and drinks.
- A first aid box is accessible at all times and a record of accidents and injuries is kept. EYFS staff have undertaken paediatric first aid training.
- The PAENCO is the named behaviour manager for the whole school with the EYFS leader as the lead behaviour manager for the Early Years.
- A Health and Safety policy and procedures which cover identifying, reporting and dealing with accidents, hazards and faulty equipment.
- A fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy.
- Staff are expected to wear clothing that supports them in playing and engaging with children at floor level.
- Our foundation stage classroom has access to their own toileting facilities and we teach the children the importance of hygiene, hand washing techniques and throughout the year we plan cooking activities to give children experiences of a range of healthy food.

**Transition**

**From Pre-school /Feeder settings**

Prior to a child's entry into EYFS, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition:

- Parents are invited to a meeting to ensure they know about school procedures and to share any concerns they may want to express.
- At the beginning of the school year new children are given staggered entry times to ensure that they have the time to feel welcomed and to support them in exploring their new environment. In Reception Class there is a two week settling in period to ensure that children have the time to become secure and familiar with the new routines before starting school full time. In week 1, the first 3 days, teachers do home visits where they meet each child in their home environment and discuss anything that is relevant to each child and parent at that time. Parents complete a form, detailing relevant information on entry, which is used during the first term to support transition and to inform planning. In week 2 the children attend school in the mornings and stay for lunch and from week 3 the children stay all day.
- The children are invited to three separate visits to their reception class. Two of these visits are without parents who are invited to an informal meeting with FOMS (Friends of Mereworth School).
- Members of staff from Mereworth make visits to feeder settings. The number of visits will depend on the child's needs and how much information gathering is required in order to support the child's transition.

### **From Reception Class to Key Stage 1**

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile includes on-going observation, all relevant records held by the setting, discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). Reception children are also assessed against the 21 STEPS school assessment system in the final term to provide a benchmark against the National Curriculum expectations for Reading, Writing and Maths. The Year 1 teacher is given a copy of the 21

STEPS assessment information and the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. This informs the dialogue between Reception and the Year 1 Teacher about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

The Senior Leadership Team monitors planning, classroom organisation and practice to ensure there is consistency across the year group and that the policy is being implemented including the quality of the education provided meets the needs of all the children. Planning is reviewed constantly to incorporate new ideas and thinking and to improve the quality of learning. The Foundation Stage team have informal weekly meetings, and regular formal meetings with the Senior Leadership Team. There are regular opportunities to moderate work and review progress across the year group.

### **Governors**

There is a designated Early Year's Governor whose responsibility is to liaise, support and monitor the early year's provision. The current early year's governor is Sharon Denney.

The following documents should be read in conjunction with this policy: Admissions Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Complaints Policy, Anti-bullying Policy, E- Safety Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Use of Mobile Phones and Cameras Policy and the Child Protection Policy.