

DEARHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Early Years Foundation Stage

“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.”

“Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage”,

At Dearham we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education. The EYFS is for children from birth to five years of age. The final year of the EYFS is referred to as the reception year. At Dearham we operate the EYFS as an effective unit.

All children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. It is the privilege of the practitioners working in the EYFS to take on the task of building upon that prior learning and experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that Parents/carers, support staff and the Nursery and Reception teachers work effectively together to support children's learning and development.

Aims

It is every child’s right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well-being. At Dearham the overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve these five “Every Child Matters” outcomes.

We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his/her full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

We aim to:

- provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs
- provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond
- provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development
- use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress
- enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self confidence
- work in partnership with Parents/carers and value their contributions
- ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development

Learning and Development

Within the EYFS statutory framework there are seven areas of learning and development that shape our educational programmes. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. 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.

We also support children in 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.

At Dearham we believe these seven areas are equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development. We aim to deliver all the areas through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities.

Planning

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS will be put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning.

All practitioners who work in the EYFS at Dearham are involved in this process. There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

Long Term Planning

The EYFS curriculum provides the basis for planning. Long term topics/themes are planned for on a two year rolling programme and provide a skeletal outline of themes which may be covered. These may be over ridden or adapted depending on the collective needs and interests of the children.

Medium Term Planning

Our detailed medium-term topic planning usually lasts for 3/4 weeks but is very much dependent on the children's responses, needs and interests. For example if the children are extremely motivated, enthusiastic and learning is being constantly extended through activities based around a particular theme then staff will extend this theme by including more opportunities based around the children's learning needs. The same applies if children's interests are moving away from a theme – this will be acknowledged to ensure children's motivation to learn is not compromised. Planning for adult directed activities identifies the intended learning, with outcomes, for children using the development matters statements leading up to the Early Learning Goals. Adults use their knowledge of children's needs and interests to support their planning and children are involved in the planning process for each topic. The adults share themes and ideas with the children and provide opportunities for the children to add their own ideas for learning activities which are then included in medium-term plans wherever possible. Adult led and continuous provision activities are planned during EYFS team meetings with all members of the Early Years Team inputting ideas stemming from observation and knowledge of the children. Enhancements for areas of continuous provision linked to the children's needs and interests are also shown on our medium term planning.

Short Term Planning

Short term plans – these are usually related to specific phonics, literacy and numeracy activities – and show adult led activities over a week. They will show intended outcomes for differentiated groups of children and the corresponding activities planned to help the children meet these objectives.

Staffing and Organisation

Nursery classes work to the ratio of 1:13 led by at least one teacher. Reception class works with the ratio of at least 1 teacher per class of 30 supported by a teaching assistant. Nursery and Reception classes work together as a unit wherever possible. This includes providing children with access to both parts of the classroom on a daily basis.

Outdoor play

We believe that children extend their learning if they are able to try activities in different environments. We offer the children supervised outdoor play every day. A free flow approach is adopted with an adult always on duty outside at these times. This applies to all weather conditions (with the exception of extreme cold, rain wind and snow) and so parents are asked at the beginning of the year to provide appropriate clothing to facilitate this. We use our own cordoned off play area as an extension of the classroom with defined areas of play in order to both reflect and extend the opportunities offered inside the classroom.

Assessment, recording and monitoring

At Dearham Primary we undertake assessment for learning. We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning, and then make informed decisions about the child's progress. This enables us to plan the next steps to meet their development and learning needs. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process.

Formative assessment

This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations, baseline assessment, other focused assessments e.g. sound/number, annotated examples of work, photographs, video and information from parents. This information is recorded using the 2BuildaProfile app and is used to build up a picture of each child's ongoing achievements. Each child has an individual Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Profile folder in which this evidence is stored. We plan for observational assessment when undertaking our medium and short term planning and specific areas to focus our observations on are clearly laid out.

Summative assessment

On entry to Nursery and Reception the children are assessed within their first six weeks using the Early Excellence Baseline. At the end of the EYFS the EYFS Profile summarises all of the formative assessment undertaken and defines the child's progress against expected levels (the seventeen Early Learning Goals). This is completed by the Reception teacher/s and is shared with the Year 1 teacher/s. The Reception teacher/s take part in In-house and local cluster group moderation meetings to moderate evidence towards profile judgements.

The EYFS leaders monitor teaching and learning across the Foundation Stage each year and analyses the EYFS Profile data and development matters data in conjunction with the head teacher.

Learning through play

“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.”

EYFS Statutory Framework, 2014

At Dearham we do not make a distinction between work and play. We support children’s learning through planned play activities, and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children’s learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves.

The Learning Environment

“A rich and varied environment supports children’s learning and development.

It gives them the confidence to explore and learn in secure and safe, yet challenging, indoor and outdoor spaces.”

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence. Activities are planned for both inside and outside; children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the school day. The learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas of continuous provision which are not fixed and are ever changing linked to the children’s needs. These areas are carefully arranged to encourage quiet areas and more active areas within the learning environment. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation.

Induction

Nursery children and parents are initially offered a welcome visit whereby the child and parents are invited to come along and meet the adults who will be working with them. This time is used to help children to become familiar with our setting as well as provide an opportunity for parents to ask any questions. Information packs are also given out at this time. At the beginning of the Autumn, Spring and Summer term new children are entered into Nursery in a staggered process whereby children are admitted in small groups in order for them to be supported by the adults in the setting. In September Reception children begin the new term as a class for the full day. If any children find this difficult a reduced timetable may be offered, or if parents feel that this may be the case they can opt for their child to have a reduced timetable from the start.

Reception to Year 1 Transition

Reception and the year 1 teacher have worked together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible.

At Dearham:

- *children are encouraged to develop independence when dressing and undressing and when organising their personal belongings throughout the reception year*
- *reception practitioners plan for more structured activities to be undertaken during the summer terms, encouraging less dependence on adult support*
- *guided reading sessions, involving a group rotation, are introduced during the summer terms in reception in preparation for a similar rotation in year 1 when appropriate, otherwise independent or paired reading continues depending on individual attainment*
- *reception children meet year 1 teacher during assembly, playtime and other whole school activities during the reception year*

- *individual EYFS Profile folders are passed on to year 1 teachers*
- *an EYFS Profile end of year class summary is passed on to year 1 teachers*
- *reception and year 1 teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children in July*
- *reception children visit their new year 1 class and teacher for an hour session in July*
- *the 'Letters and Sounds' national approach to phonics and spelling is continued throughout year 1 and 2*
- *there is a similar structure to the school day during the Autumn Term when the children move into year 1*
- *there is an overlap in approach and routines, e.g. Fruit time, behaviour systems, timetables, etc*
- *where possible, the year 1 children continue to enjoy practical learning experiences which gradually becomes more formalised.*

Home/School Links

We recognise that Parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When Parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise.

We aim to develop this by:

- outlining the reception curriculum to Parents/carers during the new parents meeting in July, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home
- topic/curriculum letters are sent home each half term to keep parents informed of their child's current curriculum and learning needs, with an outline of activities which could be undertaken at home to support this
- encouraging Parents/carers to complete the home/school admissions booklet
- organising a starting school meeting in early September
- operating an "open door" policy, whereby Parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner
- encouraging parents to share their child's 'Magic Moments' which are used to record special moments or achievements at home
- inviting Parents/carers to help in the reception class or other classes in the school and to accompany children on school visits
- encouraging Parents/carers to listen to their child read each night, to make use of the word boxes and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading diary
- encouraging relevant learning activities to be continued at home e.g. maths games and library books, and ensuring that experiences at home are used to develop learning in school
- providing an annual written report to Parents/carers in July summarising the child's progress against the early learning goals
- holding child/parent open days and workshops to enable parents to work alongside their children.

Equal Opportunities

At Dearham we aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. Practitioners, as role

models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas. For further information see 'Single Equality Scheme'.

Inclusion

Children with special educational needs or disability will be given support as appropriate to enable them to benefit from the curriculum. This includes children that are more able, and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Additional adult support may be provided for children with special medical needs e.g. allergies, thus increasing the adult/pupil ratio. Special Educational Needs Support Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support, in line with the school's Special Educational Needs and disability Policy. The EYFS leader would discuss these targets with the child and his/her Parents/carers. Progress is monitored and reviewed every term. The school's SEND co-ordinator is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary. For further information see Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy.

Birthdays, celebrations and festivals

Birthdays are acknowledged in the EYFS and some celebrations and festivals of the religions stated in our Religious Education policy are covered during the two year planning cycle. Each individual child's needs and family beliefs will be respected in this matter and anyone feeling the need to discuss a concern with staff should make an appointment to discuss this.

Health and safety, first aid and fire drills

See School Health and Safety policy.

Child Protection

The member of staff with responsibility for child protection is The Head Teacher. See Child Protection policy.

Equal opportunities

See School Equal Opportunities policy

Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored and evaluated by the Headteacher and EYFS leaders, and will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis.

September 2018

Review date September 2019