



Foundation Stage

Reviewed: November 2016

By: Team for Qualities of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

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Next review date: November 2018

FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

RATIONALE

“Few things are more important than giving our children the best possible start to their education” – Ron Dearing.

The period from birth to five is one of rapid growth and development – physical, emotional, moral and intellectual. At this stage children’s developmental needs are complex and inter-related”. (Starting with Quality – DES 1990)

Young children entering formal education have many years ahead of them in school. It is therefore important to begin this process in a sensitive and caring manner. To settle into school with eagerness and enjoyment can develop the beginning of a love for learning.

AIMS

At Teynham School we endeavour to create an environment of emotional warmth, with consistent praise and encouragement, so that each child feels individually valued, well motivated and confident to face new challenges and reach our high expectations with a sense of achievement. An inclusive, good quality Foundation Stage education is the entitlement of every child.

Principles

At Teynham we provide children with carefully planned activities that allow them to engage at their own level and to be supported to pursue activities to meet their own needs. We offer children rich experiences in a variety of situations, in an environment that invites them to engage.

We provide this by:

- Creating an exciting environment that children will want to engage in.
- Offering a space where children can feel secure enough to be able to explore, experiment and take risks with confidence, an environment which is caring and where children are happy and eager to learn.
- Planning activities with starting points that enable children to engage at their own level, satisfy their own curiosity, develop their own ideas, make informed choices and build upon previous experiences.
- Having high expectations of what children can achieve both independently and with support, enabling each child to reach his or her full potential.
- Celebrating children’s achievements and being excited by what they can do.
- Building children’s self esteem and confidence encouraging them to become self-motivated and independent.

- Providing a broad and balanced curriculum that is rich with a variety of experiences.
- Providing active learning experiences that will prepare children for the next step in their educational journey.

ORGANISATION OF THE FOUNDATION STAGE AND EARLY LEARNING GOALS

Admission

Please see the transition policy for information on admission, pre-school visits and induction.

The Foundation Stage is the title for education provided for children aged between 3 and 5 years old. It supports our children's learning in the reception classes by reminding us of all their early needs. It covers 7 areas of learning and development which shape the educational programme in our Early Years Setting:

Three Prime areas: Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development.

Four Specific areas: Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design.

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage should underpin all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Communication and Language
- Literacy – reading and writing
- Mathematics – numbers, shape, space and measure
- Knowledge and understanding of the world
- Physical development
- Expressive Arts and Design

The Early Learning Goals are outcomes for children that are set by government, as they reach the end of the Foundation Stage and their reception year but they are not the limit of the experiences young children should be offered.

The curriculum is accessed through a combination of playing and exploring, active learning and periods of creating and thinking critically.

As part of the Foundation Stage at Teynham we work within a structured phonics programme. With this in mind it is crucial that there is progression in what children do and learn throughout the Reception year. They are working towards what will be expected of them in Year 1. At Teynham School we progress towards this by having English and Maths sessions in place by the end of the Reception year.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

Play is fundamental to young children's learning and development. Children learn best when they are actively involved in enjoyable, absorbing and stimulating activities.

As adults we need to be aware of how children learn and develop. We know that effective education requires a relevant curriculum and practitioners who understand and are able to implement the curriculum requirements. The most useful learning at the Foundation Stage arises from play, which allows children to develop understanding and gain confidence in their abilities almost as a by-product of having fun.

Play provides an opportunity for children to come to terms with themselves, their culture and language, other people and the world, and make sense of real life situations. Play provides opportunities for exploration, investigation, problem solving and for children to practise their skills. It also provides opportunities for them to represent their experiences and use what they have learned in a variety of ways.

A major focus of play is that it needs to be child initiated in order that children can begin to make their own decisions and choose what they do. Children are given the opportunity to play in a plan-do-review format, daily.

Play:

- Is the natural and enjoyable way for young children to learn.
- Is an essential and rich part of the learning process.
- Allows children to develop, consolidate and apply new skills and ideas, investigate, experiment and solve problems, explore and make sense of the world around them, learn about making choices and decisions and to take risks without fear of failure.
- Puts children in charge of their own learning.
- Enables children to develop their personal qualities and attitudes, to develop social skills and form relationships.
- Takes place both indoors and outdoors.

At Teynham we believe that play should be well planned and purposeful in order to extend and support learning. It should take place in a well-structured environment with meaningful context. We commit a great deal of time to careful planning to ensure that this takes place.

THE ROLE OF THE ADULT

We should play a very positive role in working with the children. In order to meet children's needs and help all children achieve their potential it helps if we:

- Understand how children learn at this stage of their lives.
- Provide a safe and supportive environment where all children are valued.
- Plan opportunities to build on and extend children's knowledge and experiences through play.
- Provide a wide range of activities and starting points for groups and individuals.
- Observe children's responses and review planning in the light of these observations.
- Monitor children's progress.
- Develop children's learning in an informal and enjoyable way.
- Extend language and communication skills through play.
- Know when to intervene in children's learning.
- Model appropriate behaviour.
- Play with children.
- Allow children to take control, make choices and decisions.

High quality adult intervention in children's early experiences and play will lead to effective learning and development of young children.

Children should be offered a balance of adult directed, adult supported and independent activities which allow them to move from needing support to being able to do something on their own.

They should also be provided with experiences within large groups, small groups and independently, so that they may have the opportunity to work in different ways and situations.

At Teynham we are committed to working with parents. Parent helpers are encouraged to support activities within the school. Together we can provide children with a high quality early childhood, filled with meaningful experiences. We believe that children's quality of learning is enhanced through dialogue with adults. It is important that we offer children the experience of working with as many adults as possible.

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The Foundation Stage curriculum is provided through careful planning and resourcing of indoor and outdoor areas. They are of equal importance and it is essential to view them as one learning environment.

Within the learning environment a range of specific areas should be available.

Areas of provision include:

- Home corner and role-play.
- Creative area.
- Small and large construction.
- Sand and water.
- Malleable and tactile opportunities.
- Book corner.
- Graphics and writing table.
- Small world play.
- Music and sound making.
- Mathematics.
- Information and communication technology.
- Listening corner.
- Carpet areas for children to sit together. Outside area equipped with climbing apparatus, sand and water areas, pond, staging, planters and story telling area.

Areas should be supported by interactive displays, which children can explore with all their senses. Where possible children should be involved in planning, setting up and adding to these areas. Displays should also be a celebration of the experiences that children have had and the work that they have done, where appropriate.

Resources must be labelled and well organised in storage containers (where appropriate), which are at the children's level to allow them independence in selecting and using materials.

The organisation of the environment is to help children become autonomous, creative and motivated learners in control of their own learning.

The environment should support a learning experience for children which is:

- Active: that gives plenty of hands on involvement.
- Personally meaningful: that capitalises clearly on what children are interested in.
- Exploratory: that invites possibilities and delights in curiosity.
- Developmentally appropriate: suited to the age and the stage of the children.
- Pro-social: that provides opportunities for interaction and co-operation.
- Creative: that encourages children to be inventive and imaginative.
- Integrated: that as much as possible is holistic and does not break down learning into sub-skills.
- Rigorous: that stresses child responsibility, initiative and commitment.

At Teynham we believe in providing a stimulating and exciting environment that supports children to learn and to take responsibility for their own learning. We are committed to creating an environment that facilitates this through careful planning and organisation.

PLANNING

Long term planning

This is a yearly plan showing an overview of the Early Learning Goals and in what term the main focus for these goals will be covered. In the long term, yearly plan, the goals are covered in 7 areas. These are: Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design.

Medium term planning

The medium term planning sheets feed from the yearly overview into a termly plan. These contain clear learning objectives, possible teaching /learning activities, key questions, areas for assessment and resources.

Short term planning

Weekly plans show learning objectives (tools for our toolkit), success criteria, next steps and activities, language to use, how the children will be grouped and what the adults will do.

ASSESSMENT

With the revised EYFS profile the assessment will include all seventeen learning strands and is based on teachers' ongoing observations and assessment records rather than testing. Observations will be undertaken to inform and influence planning, progression and continuity. Records of observations will be made and will be kept in each individual pupils 'My Learning Journey' folder.

Other assessments include:

- Running reading records
- Sight vocabulary
- Phonics

HEALTH AND SAFETY

All routine procedures relating to safe practice are agreed and will be consistently adhered to by all staff and support staff. In line with the schools Health and Safety policy, children are instructed and supervised in the safe use of all equipment. In particular, extra care should be taken when using outdoor play equipment and whenever water play equipment is used.

FIRST AID

There is always a person that is trained in paediatric first aid available onsite and the leading practitioner of the Foundation Stage (Miss K Mason) has full and up-to- date paediatric and emotional first aid training.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The senior leadership team is responsible for monitoring classroom teaching throughout the Reception classes on a yearly basis. The curriculum is discussed and evaluated with both the senior leadership team, and the Foundation Stage Teacher to ensure a high quality of both teaching and learning are maintained.

LINKS WITH OTHER POLICES

The Foundation Stage policy operates in line with whole school policies, which address the important issues of behaviour, special educational needs, gifted and talented children, health and safety, equal opportunities, transition from Year R to Year 1, etc.