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Reception curriculum and assessment

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- *quality and consistency in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind;*
- *a secure foundation through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly;*
- *partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers;*
- *equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.*

The EYFS specifies requirements for learning and development and for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The learning and development requirements cover:

- *the areas of learning and development which must shape activities and experiences (educational programmes) for children in all early years settings;*
- *the early learning goals that providers must help children work towards (the knowledge, skills and understanding children should have at the end of the academic year in which they turn five); and*
- *assessment arrangements for measuring progress (and requirements for reporting to parents and/or carers).*

The areas of learning and development

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings. 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; and*
- *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; and*
- *expressive arts and design.*

Educational programmes involve activities and experiences for children, as follows:

Prime Areas:

- *Communication and language development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.*
- *Physical development involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.*
- *Personal, social and emotional development involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.*

Specific Areas:

- *Literacy development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.*
- *Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.*
- *Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.*
- *Expressive arts and design involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.*

Assessment – general principles

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. On-going assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process.

It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. In their interactions with children, practitioners should respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share.

Assessment does not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. Paperwork is limited to that which is absolutely necessary to promote children's successful learning and development. We aim to keep parents and/or carers up-to-date with their child's progress and development. We work to address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals.

Assessment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

- *The statutory framework requires the EYFS profile assessment to be carried out in the final term of the year in which a pupil reaches age 5, and no later than 1 July in that term.*
- *The main purpose of the EYFS profile is to provide a reliable, valid and accurate assessment of individual pupils at the end of the EYFS.*

EYFS profile data is used to:

- *inform parents about their child's development against the ELGs and the characteristics of their learning*
- *support a smooth transition to key stage 1 (KS1) by informing the professional dialogue between EYFS and KS1 teachers*
- *help year 1 teachers plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all pupils*
- *In addition, the EYFS profile provides an accurate national data set relating to levels of child development at the end of the EYFS. The DfE uses this to monitor changes in levels of children's development and their readiness for the next phase of their education both nationally and locally (school-level results won't be published in the performance tables).*