

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Four Oaks Primary School



"All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early

years have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.” (EYFS Framework 2024)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. Children enter our Reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they are five (although compulsory schooling does not begin until the term after a child’s fifth birthday). Many of our children begin their educational journey at the age of 2 or 3 in our Nursery.

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the relevant DfE guidance and legislation. We ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. We promote teaching and learning to ensure children’s readiness for the next stage of their education and give children a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

At Four Oaks, 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 including busy bee’s as we strive to be the best, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of ‘differences’. All children at Four Oaks are treated fairly. 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 our children including, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

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 Four Oaks, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage. 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.

Positive Relationships

At Four Oaks, we recognise that children learn from role models and carefully chosen opportunities and challenges to become independent and form 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 important 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:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school.
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during visits.
- inviting all Reception parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school.
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress and allowing access to their children's 'Learning Journey' via Evidence Me.
- encouraging parents to comment on Evidence Me observations and upload observations from home.

- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There are formal meetings for parents during autumn and spring term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress. 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 read, phonic workshops, Sports Day etc.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the EYFS staff in Nursery and Reception act as 'Key Person' to all children in EYFS. Children in Little Acorns have a highly trained member of the team to act as their individual 'Key Person' which is shared with parents.

Enabling Environments

At Four Oaks, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Planning within the EYFS follows the schools' medium term and can be adapted to include the children's interests. These plans are used by the teacher as a guide for weekly planning, however the teacher may alter these plans in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning.

Each week children participate in 'Curious Minds'. This is based upon a topic that the children want to find more information about for example; one child wanted to know if a penguin is a bird and does it have feathers? Another wanted to know more about cats.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in children's individual 'Learning Journeys'.

Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the Early Learning Goals. We give an opportunity for the parents to discuss these judgements with the EYFS teacher.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and focussed or rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children can find and locate equipment and resources independently. All EYFS classroom areas have their own enclosed outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's

development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children to explore, use their senses and be physically active and energetic. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all 7 areas of learning.

Learning and Development

At Four Oaks, 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 interconnected.

Teaching and Learning Style

Play and Exploring

"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."

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 have the opportunity to 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 learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods."

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning

Creativity and Critical Thinking

"When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions."

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can 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 are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

The 3 Prime areas are:

- Communication and Language
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Physical development

The 4 Specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive arts and design

Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity.

Practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. It is expected that 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.

Teaching and Learning.

The features of effective teaching and learning in our setting are defined in our whole school policy on Teaching and Learning.

Each area of learning and development will be implemented through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. The school will respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through positive, high-quality interactions and observations. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, explain, demonstrate encourage and reshape what the child is doing through sensitive questioning and conversation.

We include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to develop specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and can apply.

Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place. This looks quite different in the 2 Year Old's Room, Nursery and Reception classes. The focus on Maths, Literacy, and Phonics increases as children move through the rooms. These sessions help to develop a good attitude towards learning and encourage children to: learn as part of a group, listen to the teacher, take turns and enable teachers to support and challenge children to achieve their next steps. We aspire to develop confident readers, writers and mathematicians who have a love of learning. Throughout the Reception year, the children will experience an increasing number of adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to Year 1.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

1. Rationale

At Four Oaks, all planning and provision is based on our knowledge of the needs and interests of our children. Observations of the children form the basis for our knowledge.

This knowledge is gathered through:

- partnership with parents and carers and other professionals
- observing what children do
- observing how children respond to the environment and routines
- assessing their development, needs and interests

This knowledge is used to:

- plan the environment
- plan routines
- plan experiences
- plan for individual needs and interests
- plan for transitions
- review children's achievements and track children's progress

2. Keeping Records

We use a range of ways to record children's achievements. We use an online learning journey called Evidence Me.

3. Observations

3.1 Learning and development observations (Self-initiated play)

Learning and development observations are snap shots of children's achievements that can be noted throughout the day by all adults in the EYFS.

All observations are dated and indicate why the observation is significant for a child's learning and development, as well as being linked to relevant areas of learning.

Observations may include photographs and work samples with a written explanation as to their importance as a record of a child's learning and development. Observations can be recorded by all staff.

Observations may include:

- anything significant that a child does independently
- anything significant that a child says in conversation with you or peers in their play
- next steps when appropriate and use these to inform weekly planning and provision or children's individual next steps

3.2 Observation analysis

The teacher and other staff will use all observations and consider their knowledge of the child to analyse what a child has learnt and how he/she is developing each half-term. This information is used to plan exciting, challenging and achievable experiences and next steps for the child.

Some of the next steps will be implemented within the whole class planning to develop adult initiated activities and provision, and some will be followed up individually with the child.

3.3 Informal discussion

As stated in the EYFS Framework, not all observations need to be recorded. Discussions with colleagues and children sharing ideas and information can be used to plan the next session, future activities or make changes to the environment.

3.4 Adult led activity observations

Adult led activities will usually have a specific learning objective which will form the basis for observing children's responses and achievements.

Only significant observations will be recorded in a child's profile.

Staff may need to record a list of which children have taken part in an activity and monitor which children rarely take part in certain areas. This evaluation will be used to inform future planning to increase or initiate a child's participation, such as taking activities outside or adding objects of interest.

4. Assessment

Assessment plays an important part in helping us to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, plan activities, and assess the need for support.

Parents will be kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development, and the EYFS lead will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents.

4.1 Formative assessment

Ongoing formative assessments are used to assess the day-to-day learning and development of children in the EYFS. All staff interact and observe children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles and will use this information to shape learning experiences for each child.



4.2 Summative assessment

The EYFS setting will undertake a summative assessment of the level of each child's development at certain stages. These are:

Progress check at age two – a short written summary of children's development in the prime areas.

Reception Baseline Assessment – a short assessment which is taken within the first six weeks of a child starting reception year. At Four Oaks we aim to complete this within the first full week of a child joining our school.

The EYFS Profile – a comprehensive assessment completed at the end of the EYFS to provide a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, attainment against the early learning goals (ELGs), and their readiness for Year 1.

The school reports EYFS Profile results to the LA when these are requested. The LA has a duty to return this data to the relevant government department.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to the assessment process for children with SEND as appropriate.

The EYFS lead and SENDCo will discuss any cause for concern in a child's progress with the child's parents, especially where this concern relates to the prime areas of learning. A strategy of support will be agreed upon and consideration will be taken as to whether the child may have SEND which requires additional support.

The school takes reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children with EAL to use their home language in play and learning whilst also ensuring that these children have sufficient opportunities to reach a good standard of English. During assessment, if it is found that a child does not have a strong grasp of English language, the EYFS Lead will contact the child's parents to understand their level of skill in their home language to ascertain whether there is cause for concern about a language delay.

5. Parents

We firmly believe that the EYFS cannot function without the enduring support of parents. Parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's Learning Journey via home learning activities and by uploading observations and comments to Evidence Me. We have two formal Parents' Consultations in the autumn and spring terms. Reception, Nursery and Little Acorns reports are given out in the summer term.

Parents/carers will be invited to add their comments. A copy of the review is photocopied and given to parents/carers.

6. 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 are put into practice and is always informed by the observations of children's interests, development and learning.

6.1 Adult-led activities

There is a balance between adult-initiated activities and those initiated by the children's needs and interests. Some adult-led activities will be based on children's needs and interests, some will be designed to develop new experiences and observe children's responses and some will be designed to provide children with opportunities to consolidate learning opportunities.

All activities are monitored to assess children's learning and development and then reviewed to decide if the activity is to be repeated, extended or changed in order to support children's learning and development. These activities will take place with differing groupings, in a range of contexts, indoors and outdoors. The children's responses and interests are used to plan what is next (next steps) and to develop the weekly planning and provision.

6.2 Weekly planning for play and learning

We identify specific learning objectives, activities, differentiation, deployment of adults and resources to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly and day-to-day basis. It allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests and for revision and modification, informed by on-going observational assessment.

6.3 Medium term review

The EYFS Team meet to review children's learning and plan for next steps. These planning meetings involve:

a) Evaluation of assessments and planning

- reflection on the current interests and needs of the group
- an evaluation of observation and assessment across areas of learning and development

b) Planning:

- What are the next steps?
- What should be the foci for learning and development?

- The identification of intended learning and development for the next term (to remain flexible)
- How could this learning and development be facilitated?
- An outline of experiences and opportunities
- Possible provocations or interesting ideas
- Adaptations to provision and resourcing

Completed by- A Duff, EYFS Lead

Date – Autumn term 2025

Date to be reviewed– Autumn term 2026