

PARK WOOD SCHOOLS FEDERATION



Foundation Stage Policy

March 2018

Draft - Awaiting ratification by Governors

Aims

- To provide quality care in an environment where the individual child feels safe and secure.
- To provide an environment in which we can foster the emotional wellbeing of every child, ensuring children's thoughts and opinions are valued.
- To promote language development through all areas of the curriculum.
- To promote independence through a stimulating and exciting environment, in which children are encouraged to play and explore.
- To ensure that all children have equal access to quality experiences through purposeful and enjoyable activities which focus on individual learning styles and requirements.
- To use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress by looking carefully at their next steps.
- To ensure that the partnerships between home and school continue to enrich the children's experiences.
- To provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage One and beyond.

Introduction

At Park Wood, we have a Foundation Stage unit with three classrooms. Two classrooms are joined together to create a joined learning space where children can access the different areas of the classroom which promote learning in all areas of the curriculum. The third classroom has enough tables and chairs to seat the whole class, and is used for directed teaching time in Literacy and Maths (each class has a session in the morning and a session in the afternoon). Whilst one class has their directed teaching time, the other two classes share the joined learning space (see "**Importance of Play**").

Each child has their own "base class", with an allocated teacher and teaching assistant, yet they will have the opportunity to work with all adults throughout their day. As a result, it is not only the class teacher and teaching assistant who knows each child very well – it is the whole Foundation Stage team.

Admissions Policy

Pupils are admitted to school in accordance with Medway local authority admissions policy. Prior to admission, tours of the school are offered to enable parents to make an informed choice.

Starting School and Settling In

The school has strong links with the main feeder pre-school groups to promote a smooth transition to the school. Prior to starting school, staff from Foundation Stage visit the children in their pre-school setting where possible before inviting the children to come and experience the Foundation Stage classrooms with their key person. Transition meetings with each child's key person are held to discuss the individual needs of the children.

During the first full week, the children attend a morning or an afternoon session. This is to ensure their emotional needs are met, giving them the opportunity to learn their new environment in smaller cohort groups, the teaching staff and all of the new routines. After the first full week, all children attend the morning session as well as lunch time as a whole class, before attending full days. Individual parent consultations are held within the first few weeks of term.

The Curriculum

We follow the "Development Matters in the EYFS" guidance (Early Education, 2012) to support us with our planning and assessment. When starting school, the transition documents from feeder pre-schools enable us to ensure continuity for children.

The themes set out by the guidance, which underpin our observation, assessment and planning, are:

A Unique Child

Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Positive Relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.

Enabling Environments

The environment responds to the individual needs of each child and there is a strong partnership between practitioners, parents and carers.

Learning and Development

Practitioners teach children by ensuring there are playful, yet challenging opportunities across the prime and specific areas of development:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Physical development
- Communication and language
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive Arts and Design

Within Learning and Development we focus on the **characteristics of effective learning**:

"The ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment – **playing and exploring, active learning** and **creating and thinking critically** underpin learning development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner."

Reading is at the heart of our curriculum; our belief being that better engagement with high quality literature will lead to improved outcomes for children. We use

the resource "Power of Pictures" developed by The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) to aid our planning. Each term, we choose one or two high-quality picture books from the Power of Pictures scheme that we believe will interest the current cohort of children. We then plan using the teaching sequence provided as guidance, which has a strong emphasis on spending time exploring and responding to the illustrations, developing vocabulary and comprehension of the story, as well as motivating the children to become authors themselves.

Daily systematic synthetic phonics is taught using the Read, Write, Inc phonics scheme. Children are taught in small groups based on teachers' on-going assessments of their next steps.

Importance of Play

The EYFS profile advocates that there should be a balance of adult-directed and child-initiated activities and stresses that well-planned play is a key way in which children learn. It enables children to learn independence, social skills, self-discipline and positive self-esteem. Zones have been created across two classrooms to provide opportunities for the children to work on their next steps through play, such as:

- Role play areas e.g. shop, home corner
- Small world play
- Construction corner
- Library area
- Curiosity corner
- Art/creative areas for activities on a large and small scale, individually and in groups
- Technology (Clever Touch interactive boards, computers, tablets, programmable toys)
- Large outdoor play e.g. large construction kits, obstacle courses, role play on the stage, use of the wider school grounds
- Small outdoor play e.g. chalk, sand and water, puppet theatre, mud kitchen

Our environment is seen by practitioners as another 'teacher'. We aim to ensure there are reading, writing and number opportunities in as many areas of the classroom as possible, and that there are readily available resources, for children to practice their new skills.

It is our aim that children learn to work independently to secure skills and ideas they have previously developed with adult support. In order to encourage children to access different areas of the classroom, each child has a "challenge card" to complete by the Thursday of each week, which provides a source of motivation for them to try new activities.

Adult-directed

We believe it is important that children are provided with sufficient direct teaching time every day in reading, writing and mathematics. To enable this, one of our classrooms has been set up to provide a directed teaching space, similar to a classroom you would find in Key Stage One. Each class spends time there in the morning for "Busy Fingers" and in the afternoon for "Monster Maths".

During this time, the children either spend time with the teacher or teaching assistant working on their next steps, or they take part in an activity chosen by the teacher to allow them to practice and consolidate previously learned skills with growing independence. We try and encourage the children to become active learners, developing their ability to maintain focus on an activity for a period of time.

Assessment

The Foundation Stage profile is an ongoing assessment of achievement in the Foundation year. It refers specifically to progress measured against the Early Learning Goals and will be reported to parents in the summer term and passed on to the next teacher.

Teachers carry out on-entry assessments of each child during their first few weeks at school, referring to the records passed on to Foundation Stage from pre-school groups. Parent interviews are also held in September. This provides a starting point against which to measure achievement.

Staff plan observations of the children on a regular basis which inform future planning, and formative and summative assessments are made throughout the year. Teachers use their observations to judge whether a child has mastered a skill with independence.

All Foundation Stage Teachers must attend inter-school moderation annually. At Park Wood, we work with local schools and pre-schools to validate our judgements throughout the year. Information gathered from the profiles on both individual children and the cohort are used to inform planning in Key Stage 1 and are reported to the council.

Reporting to Parents

Consultations are held three times a year when progress is reported to parents. We operate an open door policy where parents can talk with us at the end of the school day whenever possible. Children are also encouraged to bring adults and siblings into the classrooms after school to celebrate their achievements.

Parents in Partnership

We aim to work in partnership with parents and carers to support each individual child and to ensure no child is disadvantaged or excluded.

Every term, parents are invited in to "stay and play" sessions with a particular focus, such as phonics, the arts, number etc. We actively encourage parental help in all class and school activities such as trips to the local area and cooking activities.

Information about how to help at home is given to parents at the initial interviews. We also hold a curriculum meeting in September to explain how children learn through play and provide parents with ideas for supporting their child's development of key skills. Throughout the year, parents are provided with additional information about how they can help at home through the use of Learning Journeys and "Talking Homework", as well as our termly newsletters.

All children have a home/school contact book, which is used to transfer information and provide reading and phonics activities to try at home.

We encourage parents to share their children's 'wow' moments with us via email, or written on our 'wow' windows.

Equal Opportunities

At Park Wood we believe it is the right of all children to have access to a broad and balanced curriculum regardless of gender, race, class or special educational need or disability.

Health and Safety

The school's guidelines on health and safety issues are followed.

Children will only be dismissed to a parent or carer at the end of the day unless staff have been notified of any change. There is a password for every child, should somebody else need to pick a child up.