



Early Years Policy

Mortimer Primary School Early Years Policy

Introduction

At Mortimer Primary School we believe every child deserves the best possible start in life so that they are able to reach their potential. In the Foundation Stage, we provide a broad and balanced play based curriculum which enables each child to develop emotionally, socially, physically, creatively, and intellectually at their own developmental pace.

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

At Mortimer Primary School we aim:

- To provide for equality of opportunity ensuring that every child is included and not disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender or ability
- To provide a high quality curriculum in line with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage ensuring that every child makes progress
- To ensure that they have the knowledge and skills they need to start school (school readiness)
- To ensure all children are kept healthy and safe
- To provide learning opportunities planned around the individual needs and interests of the child, and informed by the use of ongoing observational assessment
- To promote independence and encourage children to be risk takers
- To promote our children to be self-motivated and independent learners with a positive attitude to learning and self-regulation
- To encourage active learning through first hand experiences both indoors and outdoors
- To foster positive home school links and share a common sense of purpose with parents

Teaching and Learning

At Mortimer Primary School we are committed to the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework which is based around four important, guiding principles:

A Unique Child

- Every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We understand that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates and that children's attitudes are fluid and can be influenced by others.

Positive Relationships

- Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person. We aim for any relationship to be respectful, caring and professional.

Enabling Environments

- The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. In the classroom and outdoor environment, we observe and assess the children's development and interests. There is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.

Learning and Development

- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected. At Mortimer our setting is designed to enable children to learn and play independently.

These principles can be seen in all seven areas of learning, which are:

1. Communication and Language
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development
4. Literacy
5. Mathematics
6. Understanding of the World
7. Expressive Arts and Design

The first three areas are known as the Prime Areas with the other four being known as the Specific Areas. At Mortimer Primary School we acknowledge that the three prime areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

Mortimer offers a play based curriculum in which children are encouraged to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world around them, learn new vocabulary and concepts, facts and skills, and explore ideas, feelings and relationships. Both child initiated tasks and teacher led activities are planned for indoors and outdoors. We provide a well-equipped indoor and outdoor learning area which facilitates learning for all children and engages them in the curriculum.

Planning for Effective Learning

The teaching staff complete both long and medium term planning which shows how the principles of the EYFS will be put into practice as well as short term planning which shows how the children's learning and development will be supported. These plans include all areas of learning and are often cross-curricular. Planning responds to children's interests, observations and their current level of development. Plans are flexible to adapt when necessary. Each teacher maintains their own planning file.

Adult led activities are planned for by the staff and delivered in either whole class or small groups where appropriate. Adult directed activities are planned in order to consolidate learning and are available within the continuous provisions, however, child initiated learning is at the heart of our curriculum. Practitioners use their observations and interactions to carefully develop children's knowledge and understanding through scaffolding and appropriate questioning.

The teaching staff also reflect upon the different ways that children learn. These are known as the characteristics of effective learning.

- **playing and exploring** – children investigate and experience things and 'have a go.'
- **active learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements
- **creating and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Assessment

It is statutory to complete the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile for each pupil. The profile comprises of 17 assessments across the Early Learning Goals.

Nursery

Baseline assessments are completed within the first 6 weeks on entry to Nursery and then a summative assessment is made every half term. Parents are informed of their child's progress at key points throughout the year.

Reception

On entry to Reception, once again, baseline assessments are completed within the first 6 weeks in line with government requirements (currently RBA). Children are subsequently assessed against the 7 areas of learning every half term.

At the end of the Reception year the children's achievements in each of the seven areas of learning are reported to parents and the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is completed in full with results being reported to the LA. In 2021, judgements were reported as Expected, Exceeding or Working Towards to the expected standard, however, we are currently awaiting new guidance from the LA for the current cohort.

Within the Foundation Stage the evidence used to complete the Foundation Stage Profile is gathered through daily interactions with children, formative assessments, observations, parental contributions and professional judgement.

Assessment is used to track children's progress, inform planning (enabling staff to deliver a curriculum specific to the children's needs) and the children's next steps, as well as inform next teachers during the transition process and review practice and policy.

Nursery Admission Policy

Names are taken for the waiting list once a child has reached their second birthday. Children are admitted to the nursery during the September that follows their third birthday.

The places for the September intake are offered in the previous February. If the nursery is oversubscribed, then the LA criteria are used to allocate places:

1. Sibling link (within the primary school)
2. Catchment area
3. Outside the area

Parents are invited to an open evening in June. The parents are addressed by the Head Teacher, Early Years Lead Teacher, Nursery Teacher and Nursery Staff. All parents receive a school brochure, confirmation of a morning/afternoon or 30-hour place and a date for a visit. Parents are invited to sign up for a home visit as well as go for a look around the nursery, ask any questions and access the resources. The staff work very closely with parents to ensure both parent(s) and child settle into this new environment comfortably and securely.

Transition

All children are fully supported during their learning transition.

Nursery to Reception

- During their year in nursery, all the children will access parts of the school building during their normal nursery routines. The main hall, the 'top hall' and the garden are all regularly used for physical, creative and knowledge and understanding of the world activities.
- Throughout the year nursery children are invited to join in with some reception activities such as music shows, Magic Andrew, watching class assemblies, drama productions etc.
- Ongoing liaison between reception and nursery staff.
- In the summer term reception staff meet the nursery children in the Nursery setting.
- In the summer term nursery children visit their new reception class on a number of occasions for story time, circle time and to engage in creative activities.

- In the summer term a meeting between the nursery staff and reception staff is planned to exchange information about the children in the setting.
- Nursery data is analysed and presented to the reception staff.
- Nursery learning journeys are shared with reception staff to give a broad and balanced view of each child's achievements.
- For children from other settings information is gathered by telephone and mail. The children are visited in their setting where possible and are also invited to 2 visits.
- The equipment and organisation in reception compliments and extends the experiences of the nursery setting.
- A 'Welcome to Reception' parents meeting is delivered by the Foundation Stage Lead Teacher.
- In the autumn term of Reception, a 'Reading with your Child' meeting is delivered by the Foundation Stage Lead Teacher.
- A 1:1 informal interview between the class teacher and parents on entry is invaluable
- In the autumn term a formal parents meeting is held by each class teacher (Nursery and Reception) to advise parents about how their child has settled into school life.

Reception to Year 1

- Throughout the reception year the children are integrated with Key Stage 1 for activities such as Key Stage assemblies, musical productions and physical activities.
- In the summer term reception children visit their new Year 1 class for story time and to engage in creative activities.
- Towards the end of the summer term the reception children enter the school on a morning through the infant yard.
- In the summer term a meeting between the Reception Staff and Year 1 staff is planned to exchange information about the children in the setting.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile data is analysed and presented to the Year 1 staff.
- The equipment and organisation in the Year 1 classrooms and practical area compliments and extends the experiences in the Foundation Stage setting.
- In the autumn term a formal parents meeting is held by each class teacher.

Home School Liaison

All of the Early Years practitioners play a key role in working with parents to support their children. Parents are regularly informed about the organisation of the Early Years setting, the curriculum, children's progress and achievements including any identified learning needs or difficulties. This information is conveyed through a number of ways such as Class Dojo (Nursery), Tapestry (Reception), social media, parent's meetings, parent's evenings and daily conversations with parents. A parent's notice board is also located in the Owl

Room window. School newsletters are sent out regularly via email. In the nursery each child's learning journey is maintained and parents are invited to contribute to these. They are available for parents to share upon request as well as at parent's evenings.

In the reception year, each half term, a curriculum information sheet is sent to parents informing them of their child's current topic, literacy and numeracy objectives. Home-school reading diaries are sent home weekly and parents are encouraged to become involved with their child's reading progress by regularly listening to them read and commenting in the diary. Throughout the year parents are invited to watch their child participate in class assemblies, whole school productions and also to assist with educational visits, cookery and creative activities.

Collections from School

We recognise that it is not always possible for those with parental responsibility to collect their child from school. In such circumstances, we have clear procedures for the collection of children from school. We ask that parents give the school notice that an alternative person will be collecting their child. This can be done in advance or by telephoning the school during the day or by informing a member of staff. We require a person with parental responsibility to inform us each time an alternative person is due to collect their child.

If someone other than a person with parental responsibility arrives to collect a child without the school being informed, the school will telephone someone with parental responsibility to check that it is acceptable to release their child. In the rare event that a parent is not contactable, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will make the decision to release the child to the alternative person or not.

This decision will be made by taking the following information into account:

- Whether the alternative person is known to the child.
- Whether the alternative person is known to the school.
- Whether the alternative person has collected the child before.
- Whether the alternative person is recorded in the contacts for the given child.

Parent Volunteers and Students

Parent volunteers are welcomed into the Foundation Stage. They regularly help with cooking activities, creative activities and educational visits, providing invaluable assistance. (See our separate Parental Involvement policy.) Students regularly attend the Foundation Stage to complete parts of their training. Each student is supervised by a member of staff and monitored throughout their visit. It is necessary for parents and students to obtain an up to date DBS certificate.

Inclusion

At Mortimer Primary School we provide a broad and balanced education for all children. Teachers and support staff provide learning opportunities that are matched to the needs of all children. Where appropriate planned activities for pupils with SEND reflect the child's Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP). Where appropriate, children who are exceeding are supported and challenged developing knowledge, skills and understanding in their identified area of learning.

For further details, see separate policies – SEND, Medical Needs Policy.

Equal Opportunities

At Mortimer Primary School we seek to ensure appropriate and equal access to the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum for all children regardless of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender or ability. We deem 'appropriate' to mean that which is educationally beneficial to our children.

For further details, see our separate Equal Opportunities Policy.

Monitoring and Reviewing

All year group lead teachers and staff involved in the Early Years setting are responsible for monitoring and reviewing the provision. Teachers and support staff regularly meet for informal professional discussions and also weekly planning meetings. Lead teachers will use collected data and professional judgements to ensure pupil standards and achievements are maintained and improved. The Foundation Stage lead teacher will work alongside the Early Years staff to support pupil development, support the educational progress of pupils and support the development and enhancement of teaching practices. The senior management will be responsible for monitoring progress in the Foundation Stage.

Safeguarding Young Children

At Mortimer Primary we strive to ensure the safety of all the children in our care. In the Early Years setting we follow the school's policies and procedures relating to safeguarding young children (KCSIE).

See separate policies: Child Protection, Health and Safety, Drug and Substance Misuse, E-safety, Educational Visits, Equal Opportunities, Behaviour, Anti-bullying, Parental Involvement, Healthy Eating, Sex and Relationships and Special Education Needs.

Risk Assessment

In the Early Years setting we ensure outdoor and indoor spaces, furniture, equipment and toys, are safe and suitable for their purpose. Risk assessments relevant to the Early Years setting are identified, conducted and reviewed according to the significance of individual risks. The risk assessment documentation can be viewed in the schools Risk Assessment File. All reasonable steps to ensure that hazards to children, both indoors and outdoors, are kept to a minimum.