

# **Dimple Well Infant School and Nursery**



## **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

Approved by Governors

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## **An introduction to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five 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 together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021 (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years' providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept safe and healthy. 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 Principles of the EYFS**

Four guiding principles shape our practice in Foundation Stage. These are:

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers;
- children **develop and learn** in different ways and at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in Early Years provision, including children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

## **The EYFS Curriculum – 7 areas of learning**

The EYFS Curriculum provides a high quality teaching program which promotes children's learning.

During a child's time in Foundation Stage he or she will work towards achieving the 'Early Learning Goals', which is a statutory requirement for all 3, 4 and 5 year olds who attend an early years setting. The Early Learning Goals set expectations for the end of the Foundation Stage, though these expectations are high they are achievable for most children. This will help to give children secure foundations on which future learning can be built.

The Early Learning Goals are organised into the following 7 areas of learning and development:

- **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.
- **Literacy** development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be 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 planning children's activities, we reflect on the different ways that children learn and use these in our practice. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- **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.

Planning is fluid and allows necessary spontaneity to ensure that we support child interest and maximise children's learning through encapsulating innovative methodologies in the classroom.

Children's play reflects wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. Children learn effectively from experiences they have initiated and by playing alongside peers. We plan an environment to reflect interests to inspire our young learners while also ensuring children have the opportunity to extend and practise key skills they have learned through direct teaching. Through observation, we assess children's interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend learning. The EYFS environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, quiet, creative, and exploratory; the characteristics of learning are evident in these environments. The EYFS provision has defined learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently in accordance with the set task / challenge

or learning provision. The EYFS provision has safe outdoor areas, and children are able to move freely between the indoor and outdoor spaces. We view both indoor and outdoor play as an integral part of children's development and plan activities and resources for both inside and outside play, enabling the children to develop in all areas of learning.

## **Context of learning**

### **Staff**

In EYFS there are 3 teachers – one with a responsibility for Nursery and two with responsibilities for Upper Foundation. The Head teacher has responsibilities to carry out performance management for the Foundation Stage staff and collectively they develop a yearly action plan based on careful analysis of Foundation Stage Profile data. We also have experienced Nursery Nurses and Teaching Assistants. All adults in our setting are a vital resource towards effective progress, sensitive observation, assessment and interaction to maximise learning. We appreciate that children develop rapidly, though often at different rates. Our provision supports and extends knowledge, skills, understanding and confidence, overcoming any disadvantage and ensuring children feel secure and valued. The Key Person approach in Nursery works to enable appropriately close attachments between children and practitioners ensuring a sense of security, confidence and developing capability.

### **Resources**

Resources within the classroom are well organised, clearly visible and accessible to all children, helping to lead towards independence and the children taking responsibility for their own learning. Resources are of a high quality and are safe for the children to use independently.

### **Inclusion**

At Dimple Well Infant School and Nursery we believe it is important to provide an Early Years education that aims to meet the individual needs of every child in our care. Children are made to feel safe and secure and are valued as individuals. Independence is fostered as are positive attitudes to learning and each child is encouraged to reach their full potential regardless of their ethnic and socio-economic background, race, gender or ability. Policies and procedures comply with the public sector equality duty in the Equality Act 2010 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014.

The school has a SENCO who liaises with the Foundation Stage teachers. The children are carefully monitored to ensure that they make the best possible progress. Parents are regularly kept informed of their child's progress and are encouraged to support and help their child's learning.

### **Role of parents**

Parents are encouraged to take an active part in their child's education and are always welcome in our classroom. We strive to build good relationships with parents from first contact. We have stay and play sessions and many other events throughout the year to actively encourage parents to be involved in their child's learning journey. We regularly keep parents up to date through our website, Twitter page, Parent Hub and newsletters etc.

## **Assessment**

We complete a Baseline assessment for each child in the first 3 weeks of a child joining the setting (whether they are in Nursery or Reception). This provides us with information about what each child can do and is used to inform planning and to monitor progress. The assessment is carried out through play-based activities, observations of the child playing and through conversations with parents. We hold pupil progress meetings to analyse progress and to identify any children who need additional support or greater challenge.

Staff also capture significant moments in a child's learning by taking photos and making brief notes. All this evidence is collected and stored in an online program called Evidence Me. We encourage parents to regularly contribute to their child's learning journey via the Evidence Me programme.

In the final term of the Reception year the EYFS Profile has to be completed for each child. The EYFS Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile reflects: ongoing observations; all relevant records held by the setting; discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judge can offer a useful contribution.