

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Introduction/Rationale

This is arguably the most important stage of education provided by Great Ouse Primary Academy. It gives every child a firm foundation for successful learning including motivation, positive dispositions and an open approach to lifelong learning. The Foundation Stage has a high priority in our school.

“Children must have access to a rich learning environment where opportunities and conditions allow them to flourish in all aspects of their development.”

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile 2021

We believe that all children should be given the best possible start to their education. We therefore place great value on the quality of our provision in the Foundation Stage.

Aims of the Foundation Stage

- To foster positive attitudes to learning including confidence, curiosity, responsibility and independence.
- To create a ‘language rich environment’ following the principles of ECERS and SSTEW.
- To promote an inclusive ethos and approach to learning for all our children to ensure that none are excluded or disadvantaged.
- To provide children with a well-planned curriculum which fosters enthusiasm for learning and is challenging and progressive within a stimulating environment.
- To develop children’s knowledge, understanding and skills in all areas of learning through first hand experiences and discussion.
- To provide opportunities for children to make choices and become independent in their learning in a variety of safe and stimulating activities both indoors and outdoors.
- To establish and maintain a close partnership with Parents/Carers, families.
- To use assessment based on direct observation of children and discussion with them. To use this to inform future planning, monitor progress and build on children’s prior learning.

The Early Years Principles

The EYFS is based upon seven key features of effective practice. (Development Matters 2021)

- 1. The best for every child**
- 2. High quality care**
- 3. The curriculum: what we want children to learn**
- 4. Pedagogy: helping children to learn**
- 5. Assessment: checking what children have learnt**
- 6. Self-regulation and executive function**
- 7. Partnership with parents.**

Responsible Pedagogy

Responsible pedagogy is evident when practitioners have a good understanding of how children develop and because of that can accurately assess the child when they demonstrate their learning and development. We recognise that children learn in different ways and at different rates. Every child is a unique individual and is treated as such.

We loosely plan areas of focus to be covered each term. When planning weekly, we identify gaps in the children's learning and consider their current interests. We then plan for the next steps of learning. This child-initiated approach alongside considering educational need enables us to plan for the specific needs of our children week by week.

Assessment

Practitioners can use observational assessment to understand children's learning. Practitioners watch, listen and interact as children engage in everyday activities, events and experiences, and demonstrate their specific knowledge, skills and understanding. Observational assessment is the most reliable way of building up an accurate picture of children's development and learning. This is especially true where the attainment demonstrated is not dependent on overt adult support. Observational assessment is central to understanding what children really know and can do. Some observations will be planned but some may be a spontaneous capture of an important moment.

It is likely that observations of everyday activities will provide evidence of children's development in more than one area of learning. Observational assessment doesn't need prolonged breaks from interaction with children, or excessive written recording. It is likely to be interwoven with high quality interactions or conversations in words or sign language with children about their activities and current interests. In this way, we are able to make professional judgements about what children have learnt and understand. Planned observations and important moments are recorded electronically on Tapestry. We also value how daily interactions with each child allows each adult to build an understanding of that child's development. Professional discussions about what we know about each child forms an important part of our assessment process.

On entry to school, we make a 'baseline' assessment of what the children already know, understand and can do. This is used to measure progress made throughout their time in Primary School. We also use assessment evidence to track each child's progress against the early learning goals termly. This progress is reviewed by the class teacher with the Principal and any necessary interventions are put in place.

We involve all adults who come into contact with the children and regard Parents/Carers as especially important in this respect. We want to ensure that parents are able to contribute to the assessment process through an ongoing dialogue between home and school. (See Partnership with Parents).

The Reception Baseline Assessment

The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a statutory assessment from September 2021 onwards. It provides a snapshot of where pupils are when they arrive at school. It will provide a starting point to measure the progress schools make with their pupils between reception and the end of primary school. Each child carries out the short maths, phonics and communication and language assessment with the class teacher. Efforts are made to encourage the children to view the process as a 'special' task avoiding any pressure or stress. If a child finds the process difficult then it is broken into shorter more manageable sessions.

Meeting Individuals Needs

We provide a safe and supportive learning environment at our school where the contribution of all children is valued. We also employ a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's experiences, interests, skills and learning needs. In particular, we plan carefully to meet the needs of:

- Boys and Girls.
- Children with Special Educational Needs.
- Children with disabilities.
- Children from all social, cultural and religious backgrounds.
- Children of different ethnic groups.
- Children from diverse, linguistic backgrounds.

In addition, we select our resources, equipment and materials thoughtfully, choosing those which positively reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping. We carefully track the progress of every child and interventions are put in place if and when needed. (See SEND policy).

Positive Relationships

"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them." Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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. We carefully monitor the well-being of our children and how involved they are in their learning using the Leuven scales. We know that in order to thrive and make progress, children need to feel safe, secure and happy. We are sensitive to the children's needs, feelings and interests, considering these when planning. We take time to help children understand clear boundaries with opportunities for discussion, time to reflect on behaviour and opportunities to develop empathy.

Partnership with Parents

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring 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:

- The EYFS staff offer to meet all children with their parents prior to their starting school.
- We contact all previous settings to discuss each child and visit them in that setting where possible.
- The children and parents have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during a transfer 'play and stay'.
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting before their child starts school.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress.
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There are formal meetings for parents at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. 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: celebration assemblies, Class assemblies, Open days, Sports Day etc.
- Sharing evidence of each child's school experience on Tapestry to involve parents.
- Inviting parents to review and add to assessments made on the online assessment tool Tapestry.

To this end we work hard to promote a successful partnership with a two-way flow of knowledge, information and expertise.

Enabling Environments

Resources, Play and Talk

We believe that play in a well organised environment enables children to learn with enjoyment and challenge. We understand that encouraging children to explore and investigate provides 'firm foundations' and key knowledge for future learning. We therefore ensure that children have plenty of opportunities to play and experiment in a secure environment with effective support from caring adults. Our ethos is that if a child is excited and motivated by learning, especially in the early days at our school, then we are already helping that child to become a lifelong learner.

There is a careful balance of adult led and child-initiated play allowing for discussion and talk between children as they develop their ideas and learn. The adults promote learning through skilled questioning, modelling, providing challenge and extending understanding in response to the children's choices and interests.

Safeguarding

At Great Ouse Primary Academy, we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements.

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.
- In the case of concerns record via our Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS).
- Read all concerns uploaded onto CPOMS.
- All staff follow data protection policies.
- Attend weekly safeguarding meetings.

Learning and Development

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

When observing we look for characteristics of effective learning. These can be found in Development Matters and should be referred to.

Playing and exploring – engagement

- Children investigate and experience things and have a go

Active learning – motivation

- Children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements

Creating and thinking critically – thinking

- Children have and develop their own ideas, making links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

The areas for learning and development

Our core reference document is the 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' and the 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage' which includes the principles for good practice which underpin the provision at Great Ouse Primary Academy.

Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving.

These are the prime areas:

- communication and language
- physical development
- 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
- expressive arts and design

Within these areas of learning, the Early Learning Goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. Some children in our school will exceed these goals and others will still be working towards them as they enter Year One. We carefully assess and track the children's progress towards these goals and plan for their next steps in learning.

Great Ouse Primary Academy EYFS Curriculum

We use 'Development Matters' as the foundation to plan experiences and learning each week. We also consider our own 'goals' which are unique to our setting and are adapted for each cohort. These goals are carefully chosen to provide the experiences we identify our children will benefit from to prepare them for both their future school life and to be well rounded members of society. These are planned recognising the importance of developing an understanding of Cultural capital, British Values and Environmental issues.

- **SETTLE** into the setting and build relationships with adults and a circle of friends.
- **SHARE** a favourite story and retell it on an annotated story map.
- **WRITE** their name using the correct letter formation, holding the pencil correctly.
- **EXPERIENCE** a new cultural celebration or event.
- **BUILD** a 3D model using construction materials.
- **PERFORM** a dance, song or role play to a group.
- **GROW** vegetables and eat the produce.
- **EXPLORE** nature and find ways to protect it.

Transitions

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle into their new class quickly and happily.

In our school we offer:

A yearly intake into Reception. All children who have turned four by September 1st begin Reception in September.

Termly entrance into Pre-School: September, January and Easter in the term after the child turns three.

Arrangements for children settling into our school begin with a staggered start so that children are given enough time to feel secure in their new environment. Parental involvement is valued and welcomed with plenty of opportunities for cooperation and collaboration.

Starting EYFS –

- We contact previous settings to discuss the child and visit them wherever possible.
- We write a letter to each child with a photo of the class teacher to explain how we are looking forward to meeting them.
- We send parents an information booklet about school routines and procedures along with a photo booklet of EYFS staff and key areas of the classroom and encourage families to share regularly over the summer.
- We offer all families the chance to meet staff and discuss their children filling out an 'All About Me' booklet. In pre-school time is taken to discuss Pre-School with parents and how to support their children as they settle and learn.
- During this meeting the children play with an adult from school, getting to know each other.
- The children visit school with a parent for a play and stay session. They can explore the setting together and meet new friends.
- During a short storytime at the end of the Reception session the EYFS leader shares a presentation with parents outlining the ethos of learning in the EYFS and how they can support at home.
- Reception children are offered a 'staggered start' with shorter sessions in smaller groups to allow them receive an appropriate amount of adult support as they settle into the routine and learn about the expectations. We believe this ensures that the first few days at school are positive.
- In Pre-School the start is staggered with children starting on different days.
- A longer staggered start is arranged between staff and parents if necessary.

Staffing and Organisation

Our Pre-School/Reception classes are taught by teachers who have an Early Years qualification and/or experience. They work alongside Pre-School Practitioners and Higher-Level Teaching Assistants. We also welcome parental help in the classroom and on trips and visits.

It is fundamental to keep our practice up to date; we therefore ensure that all our staff working in the Foundation Stage attend courses and training on a regular basis as part of our schools Professional Development Programme.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy is monitored on an regular basis by the and reviewed formally as per dates below:

- EYFS Leader
- Principal

Reviewed September 2021

Next Review September 2024

GreatOuse
PRIMARY ACADEMY

