

The Early Years Foundation Stage at the Mayflower Federation

Nursery: Children can start after their third birthday and can continue in the nursery class until they reach the end of the academic year that they are four years old.

Reception: Children start in Reception the September after their 4th Birthday.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (EYFS). This document encompasses 'The Characteristics of Effective Learning' and 'The Early Years Outcomes'.

The EYFS is grouped into four themes and these are:

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

The Characteristics of Effective Learning are:

- Playing and Exploring
- Active Learning
- Creative and Thinking Critically

The aim of the EYFS is to ensure the whole child develops through fostering and supporting children's learning and development, and welfare.

Learning and Development in EYFS is made up of seven areas. The areas of Learning and Development are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Mathematics
- Literacy
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

The Early Years Foundation Stage is a curriculum from birth to five years old. We follow the strands set by this curriculum and concentrate on providing learning opportunities in each of the seven areas of learning. None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. The 'Prime Areas' of learning are fundamental to the children's successful learning within the 'Specific Areas' and should be introduced in the Nursery year with the gradual implementation of the specific areas.

We observe and respond to the children during child initiated play, drawing upon their current interests and fascinations to impact our future planning. All areas of the curriculum are delivered through a balance of adult directed and child initiated activities. Through play and practical experiences children learn about the world and their place within it. Children learn through first hand experiences, communication, literature and explorative resources. We set realistic yet challenging expectations that meet the needs of each individual child.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

The school fosters and develops relationships between home and school. This begins with home visits prior to children starting in our setting. Children are encouraged to learn to work, share, take turns and communicate with others. They are also encouraged to be sensitive to

the needs of others and to respect other cultures and beliefs. Children are enabled to become confident and develop a positive self-image.

Physical Development

Children are given opportunities to move in a variety of ways, use equipment, develop and practice their fine and gross motor skills. They will develop an increasing understanding of how their body works and what is needed to be healthy. This is done both indoors and outdoors and by working with a wide range of resources.

Communication and Language

This covers all aspects of language development and provides a foundation for the core literacy skills. Developing a child's competence in speaking and listening is of great importance. Children need to be able to express themselves effectively, sharing their own experiences and having an awareness of the listener's needs. They will be able to follow instructions and understand 'how' and 'why' questions in relation to stories or recent events. We aim to extend and enrich a child's vocabulary through the implementation of story time, rhymes, role-play and group discussions.

Literacy

Children are encouraged to develop their fine and gross motor skills by independently accessing the mark-making and 'finger gym' resources both indoors and outdoors. They will take part in adult led activities to develop their reading and writing skills. Within Reception these will include whole class shared reading sessions, weekly 1:1 reading with a member of staff, daily phonics sessions, small group guided reading activities and weekly teacher supported writing tasks.

Mathematics

We aim for children to achieve mathematical understanding, develop skills to help them solve practical problems and use age appropriate mathematical language. Children begin to learn numbers through singing nursery rhymes and by taking part in number activities. This is then enhanced to children having the ability to use and apply number in a variety of contexts. Children are given opportunities to learn about number, addition, subtraction, shape, space, position, pattern and measures. Towards the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage children start learning to tell the time and are provided opportunities to learn about money and how to solve simple calculations.

Understanding the World

All children are given the opportunities to explore, solve problems, investigate, and make decisions. They will learn about their surrounding environment, living things, the world around them and the people who are important in their lives. Children are also given opportunities to develop computing skills and to work with and use modern technology.

Expressive Arts and Design

We provide opportunities for all children to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, design, technology, music, drama, movement, dance and imaginative play activities. Children are given opportunities to make paintings, drawings, collages, models and use musical instruments. Children also learn new songs and rhymes and enjoy singing them with each other. We teach children to name colours, discover what happens when those colours are mixed, and sort and match them through various activities. A specialist music teacher teaches music lessons to the class once a week.

Outside

We have an outside learning space which children have access to each day. We like the children to be outside whatever the weather to ensure that we are not providing any barriers to learning. The outside area is an extension of our continuous provision and there is a variety of resources to facilitate learning. EYFS staff provide planned activities for children as well as giving opportunities for them to make their own choices. Risk assessments are completed for particular items of equipment in our outdoor area.

Styles of teaching and learning

The Early Years Foundation Stage staff endeavours to make each child's time fun as well as educational. The curriculum is structured to provide opportunities for child initiated and adult directed activities. Adult led activities can be 1:1, in small groups of children or whole class. We promote children to learn something new that an adult feels valuable and apply this learnt skill in ways that are freely chosen.

Assessment

All children are assessed by ongoing observations and through professional discussion with members of the team, on a regular basis. These ongoing assessments are used to inform future planning and help identify the next steps in each child's learning. These contribute to the child's 'Learning Journey' which records all of their achievements. Each learning journey will contain photographs, written observations and pieces of work produced by the child. Each member of staff will also have access to the children's next steps. Targets are set and updated each half term, they are sent home to ensure that parents/carers are aware of what their child needs to do to move their learning on. The Early Years Foundation Stage staff share children's achievements with their parents/carers. Formal feedback is given at consultation meetings with parents/carers and each child is provided with an end of the year report. Parents are also regularly invited in to school to view their child's learning journey and make contributions.

Induction Process

When a child is settling into a new School is a time of crucial importance to their later happiness. All children are individuals and while some children will adjust fairly easily to the new environment and new routines, others will take longer to feel comfortable and secure. Together, we can take steps to ensure that the transition into the Mayflower Federation goes as smoothly as possible. Children who have a positive start to their new school are more likely to feel comfortable, relaxed and valued, feel good about themselves as learners and have a sense of belonging to the school community. Most children settle in without too many concerns but there are some children who need more time to develop trust. Please refer to the 'Mayflower Federation Transition Policy' for more details.