

## **The Grove School**

### **Early Years and Foundation Stage Policy**

#### **General Statement.**

The Foundation Stage covers the development of children from the age of three to the end of the reception year. It recognises that early childhood is an important stage of life and has its own particular needs. The Foundation Stage acknowledges the many valuable skills children have developed and the importance of the role parents play in this. These skills will have an individual profile for all children who start at The Grove School at this age. Children learn best from their own experiences, we plan for inter-related learning to support children to achieve their full potential.

Our EYFS needs to be understood within the context of and in relation to all school policies which collectively aim to provide the very best teaching provision and learning opportunities for every child.

#### **Aims**

The Foundation Stage sets out to:

- Challenge and set high expectations for learning.
- Present the children with a structured programme of activities which is responsive to the needs of individuals, nurturing learning across the six areas of the Early Goals for children in the Foundation Stage.
- Provide a secure, stimulating and challenging learning environment which encourages children to work and play independently.
- Develop each child's knowledge, skills and enjoyment in all areas of experience, build on prior learning.
- Plan activities and experiences in response to the assessment of individual children's progress, using the foundation stage profile and B squared foundation stage profile.
- Establish effective partnerships with parents and carers, where they feel valued and able to contribute to and participate in school life.
- Foster the Vygotskian approach to Early Education through the use of the 'Key to Learning' Developmental Cognitive Curriculum which details how specifically designed optimal learning experiences may be taught. These experiences create the right conditions for minds

to open, for learning to become a pleasure and for creativity to flourish.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### Foundation Stage Co-ordinator/Class Manager/Teacher/Lead Practitioner

- Monitor the quality and appropriateness of provision
- Communicate with the Senior Management Team
- Ensure Early Years' considerations are addressed in school policies
- Ensure resources are appropriately allocated and hold responsibility for the Foundation Stage budget
- Ensure all staff are aware of and where appropriate follow through with the Foundation Stage policy and induction procedures
- Attend Local Authority courses for Early Years Co-ordinators
- Identify staff training needs
- Monitor planning and practise within the Foundation team
- Manage issues arising from the nursery aged children and support the arrangements for a flexible and successful admission to school.
- Plan and provide an appropriate curriculum for all children of nursery age with consideration of needs and equal opportunities.
- Plan and provide an appropriate curriculum
- Work with the SENCO and multi-disciplinary teams in the identification of and appropriate support for the learning needs of each child.
- Complete records and reports for each child
- Establish and maintain a positive, professional relationship with parents and carers
- Communicate with parents on the children's progress through regular discussion and Annual Reviews of Statements of Special Educational Needs.
- Monitor and record progress of each child and document appropriately.

### Support staff

- Work in close co-operation with and under the supervision of the teacher/ lead practitioner to provide and maintain an environment where all children are secure and learning takes place
- Have full involvement in, and where appropriate initiate a range of activities and play situations
- Assist with planning, observation and assessment

- Liaise with other staff regarding IEPs for each child, this may include working with professionals from multi-disciplinary teams

#### Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher

- Ensure that issues involving the Early Years are included in the School Development Plan
- Disseminate appropriate Local Authority documentation to the Foundation Stage Co-ordinator
- Overall supervision of the admissions procedures in consultation with the Local Authority's Statementing Panel and specifically with the school's named Local Authority Monitoring and Assessment Officer
- Ensure sufficient funding is available to support the maintenance and development of resources
- Ensure that the teaching is effective and efficient so that each child learns to their full potential which is supported by Performance Management within which Coaching and Continuing Professional Development are intrinsic.

#### Teaching and provide learning

Foundation Stage staff aim to provide children with the social and emotional support they need during their first years in school. They help children adjust to the new social context in which they find themselves and to a range of new challenges nurturing confidence in learning. Staffs aim to create successful and stimulating learning situations which reflect the 'Key to Learning' curriculum for individuals and groups. Children will often work collaboratively with their peers and with adults who are able to extend their natural curiosity through interpreting intentionality, questioning and suggestion. Every opportunity is taken to support children's learning through meaningful experiential, interactive contexts of which planned, structured, creative, imaginative, and social play is a key feature.

#### The Learning Context

We aim to create a welcoming, well organised learning environment which provides children with opportunities for discovery across the curriculum. Resources are chosen carefully to reflect the needs of the children and where possible within the constraints of our buildings limitations regarding space are located in designated areas and are easily accessed by the children. Children are encouraged to handle equipment carefully

and to help with tidying up. We aim to encourage independence and develop a sense of responsibility within which nurturing the development of key learning skills and attributes is an intrinsic feature of our methodology /pedagogy.

We ensure that the physical layout of the classroom remains constant to encourage familiarity and independence, although we appreciate the need for flexibility in order to challenge and stimulate. Each classroom reflects the needs of the children who use the room and varies greatly depending on these needs; however they all have access to a wide range of resources and choices of activities that can be used in different ways for different subjects.

### **The Foundation Stage Curriculum**

During their time in nursery and reception the children follow the Early Learning Goals which provide the essential foundation blocks on which to build future learning. It is an important, distinct stage which aims to support and develop:

- personal, social and emotional well-being
- social skills both inter and intra relationship skills
- a positive attitude towards learning including co-operation, motivation and engagement
- Learning attributes including concentration and attention skills

These are achieved through the six areas of learning which are:

- Language and Literacy
- Mathematics
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World
- Physical development
- Creative Development
- Personal and Social development

As the Foundation Stage covers learning in both the Nursery and Reception years it is important that continuity is maintained but that a child's experiences and learning are developed. Staff aim to provide a curriculum which recognises the wide range of abilities of every child and plan learning experiences to develop all children's abilities. During their time in the Reception Stage all children will be introduced to elements from the National Curriculum at a level appropriate to their needs the planning for which, for some children, will be within the P Scales.

### **The Importance of Play in the Foundation Stage**

Play is an essential aspect of children's early learning. Through play children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build ideas, develop social skills and begin to understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. Children communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. Play enables children to explore their feelings and fear or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

### **Planning in the Foundation Stage**

Successful planning involves clear perceptions about objectives of the curriculum and how different activities can contribute towards their achievement. Curriculum planning should relate to:

- the children's stage of development
- individual needs
- the Early Learning Goals for the Foundation Stage
- assessment and progression

Planning should involve all members of the team who work with each child who is at this stage to ensure continuity of expectations and understanding of the individual stage of a child's learning

Planning is seen as a continuous process. Learning intentions are identified through the use of B-Squared and the 'Key to Learning' programme and supporting experiences and activities are planned to reflect these. Adults observe children's responses to these activities and use the knowledge to promote and extend learning. There is a continuous cycle involving planning, observing and assessing.

### **Planning process**

1. Long term curriculum planning, which is part of the whole school planning, ensures continuity, progression and coverage.
2. Medium term planning may focus on a specific area of learning under a theme heading. This identifies broad learning intentions for all areas of learning, assessment opportunities and differentiation.
3. Short term planning shows specific learning intentions, supporting activities and daily organisation. It identifies in more detail personalised curriculum needs and assessment and opportunities for observation, which then feeds back into future planning.

### **Observation and Assessment**

Assessment and record keeping, informed by careful observations, enable staff to plan a curriculum that will meet the needs of individuals and ensure effective continuity and progression. Observations and assessments are built into the planning process.

The observation and assessment of children's learning helps to:

- inform planning
- ensure obstacles to learning are identified and responded to
- provide an all round picture of the child's development
- provide information which can be used to evaluate the quality of the provision

Evidence of children's progress and achievement is collected through:

- observations which may be both formal or informal and of a targeted child or a group
- questioning and interaction where appropriate
- samples of work
- talking to parents and colleague

All members of staff who work with a child should be involved in the observations.

### **Baseline Assessment**

The children in Reception are assessed during their first weeks in school using a format devised within school by the staff who works with these children. The results are discussed with parents at the child's Annual Review Meeting. This assessment enables staff to plan and prepare learning experiences to support and develop a child's understanding.

### **Record keeping**

Record keeping starts at the beginning of a child's time at The Grove School and takes account of previous experiences. Recording and reporting of children's performance is thorough and understood by all concerned.

Records help staff to:

- monitor children's progress
- evaluate the curriculum, the children's learning and the need for additional personalisation.
- plan curriculum development

Confidentiality of all records is respected.

### **Reporting to Parents**

Within the early years of a child's learning and similarly throughout every stage communication takes place on a regularly planned basis and additionally whenever parents or staff feel the need to do so. The individual learning needs of children attending The Grove School are complex with progress being dependent upon personalised approaches to support cognitive, physical, social and emotional development as well as to progress learning dispositions and skills.

Children's progress is reported on more formal basis through a written School Report which contributes to the Annual Review of Statement meetings. These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss children's work, share information concerning all aspects of the child's development and progress and most importantly to agree new targets for the child for the forthcoming year. Through the support of multi -disciplinary teams and our school nurse we work closely with parents supporting in the areas for which additional partnership working would be appreciated.

### **Equal Opportunities**

We are aware of the importance of ensuring that all children receive equality of opportunity at The Grove School. We aim to:

- challenge gender issues and racism
- avoid the use of stereotypes in books and resources
- choose resources which promote positive role models
- encourage all children to access a wide variety and type of resource
- develop reflective thoughtful and caring individuals who are accepting of everyone's uniqueness being supportive and helpful to others.
- encourage all children to share ideas during discussions
- encourage respect for all members of the school community
- teach children about a variety of cultures, faiths and festivals and encourage children to share their own experiences with adults and peers
- provide resources which reflect our multi-cultural and multi-faith society

