



Be the best you can be, every day.

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Introduction

THIS DOCUMENT IS a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the Early Years Foundation stage curriculum at North Downs Primary School.

IT WAS DEVELOPED through a process of consultation with teaching and non-teaching staff and Governors.

IT WAS APPROVED BY Governors in Spring Term 2024.

THIS POLICY WILL NEXT BE REVIEWED in Spring Term 2026.

The Foundation Stage at North Downs Primary School follows the policies of North Downs Primary School. This policy sets out additional features of the Foundation Stage

At North Downs Primary School we adhere to the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (EYFS) 2021:

“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 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. 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 Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At North Downs Primary School this is applicable to our two Reception classes, one class at the Betchworth site and one at the Brockham site.

All children join us full time within the first few weeks of term. The entry procedure varies according to the intake.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based upon four themes:

- **A Unique Child,**
- **Positive Relationships.**
- **Enabling Environments with teaching and support from adults**
- **Learning and Development**

The framework covers the education and care of all children in early year's provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

This policy explains how our practice is underpinned by these four themes.

A Unique Child

At North Downs Primary School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school. All children at North Downs Primary School are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school. We invite families to share religions and family milestones when we can.

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Safeguarding and Welfare

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children (See the school Safeguarding Children Policy)

At North Downs Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage.

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.

The safeguarding and welfare requirements, specified in this section, are designed to help providers create high quality settings which are welcoming, safe and stimulating, and where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

We:

- 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 and have DBS clearance
- 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.

Children have access to water at all times of the day and they have a fruit snack during the day. They access the indoor and outdoor learning areas throughout the day in most weathers with appropriate clothing and care.

Intimate Care

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support with, for example, dressing or changing clothes after a toilet accident. This would be discussed with parents and professionals and incorporated into an Individual Care Plan for the pupil.

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents/carers to give the right support to an individual child. No intimate care is to be given without written permission of the parent or carer: all parents will be asked to provide that permission when their child starts Reception at North Downs. Where a child is identified as having a need to regular intimate care, a care plan will be followed, written in partnership with parents/carers. (See Surrey CC Intimate Care Guidance).

Positive Relationships

At North Downs Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with our children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- offering parents opportunities to talk about their child before their child starts in our school.
- creating opportunities for children to spend time in the Foundation Stage before starting school.
- operating an open door policy for parents with any queries or concerns.
- sharing information on learning though fortnightly learning letters.
- offering three parent/teacher consultation evenings per year.
- offering parent workshops as appropriate.
- reporting on the child's progress towards the EYFS Early Learning Goals at the end of the Foundation Stage. The report will be accompanied by a certificate verifying each child's attainment against the Early Learning Goals.
- developing a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them, taking time to listen to them and nurturing their curiosity. In line with the EYFS curriculum, staff spend their time engaged in quality interactions with children, rather than recording written observations. Tapestry is available should there be a need for remote learning.

Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment with planned continuous provision. The free flow between the

inside and the outside has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.

Play based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff.

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interest, passions and abilities. Children are encouraged to make their own selection of the activities on offer as this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and are checked throughout the school day. Reflection in practice enables all staff to make any necessary adjustments to ensure a safe learning environment is maintained.

Learning and Development

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape educational provision in all early years settings. The areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three areas; referred to as the prime areas, are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn, to form relationships and thrive:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Staff guide and scaffold learning experiences through purposeful play with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Children's development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Reception pupils also participate in a daily phonics session, following the guidance in 'The Reading Framework, teaching the foundations of literacy' DFE document.

The characteristics of effective learning:

The environment and delivery of the curriculum ensures that the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are incorporated:

- **Playing and exploring** - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'. In their play children learn at their highest level

Through play, children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems, learning to take turns and work in collaboration with others.

- **Active learning** - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their own learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

- **Creating and thinking critically** - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move freely and purposefully around the classroom to extend their learning.

Observation

Foundation Stage staff use interactions with the children as the basis for planning. Staff are skilled at interacting with and observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These interactions and observations then lead the direction of the planning and ensures that identified needs are reflected and that all children are able to make progress. Relevant and significant observations are recorded on Tapestry.

Planning

Teachers plan to meet the needs of each group and use the EYFS Development Matters document. To meet the needs of individual children staff may use different stages as appropriate. This means that SEND children are able to work at their level of development. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. The staff use the children's interests to support their planning; fostering the children's interests develops a high level of motivation for their learning.

Assessment

During the first six weeks of starting Reception the children will complete a short assessment -The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA), which is carried out on a 1:1 basis. This is a national assessment completed by all children starting Reception.

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage.

Each child's level of development is recorded against the Early Learning Goals as Emerging or Meeting the Expected level of Development. We make regular assessments of the children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence and through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both teachers and other adults, as appropriate.

At the end of their foundation year in school the children's progress is recorded and each child's level of development is recorded against the seventeen Early Learning Goals of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. This information is sent to the Local Authority and it is shared with parents in the end of year report.

Transition

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support the children with the transition and ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child.

Parents of all children starting in the next academic year will be invited to an induction evening in the summer term to meet their child's new teachers and other key staff and learn more about the Reception curriculum.

September intake - When the children join in September the following procedures will apply in order that they can gradually adjust to their new surroundings:

- **Stay and Play session** - The children are given an opportunity to come in to school and meet their new teacher and other children in their class in a group of up to 10. Parents are welcome to stay for this 45 minute
- **New class session** - Children are invited to attend one morning or afternoon session, in the same group of up to ten Parents leave their children during this session.

These sessions means that the children are familiar with the Reception environment before the whole class starts.

- **Whole Class** - Once all children have attended one group session, the whole class will attend until lunchtime and by the end of the second full week of term all children will stay for lunch.
- During the third full week and thereafter, children will attend the full school day unless the Foundation staff and parents or carers agree that it is not in the best interests of an individual child.

We have links with our main feeder pre-schools. Foundation Stage teachers meet with the main providers and speak to other providers to discuss each individual child and their transition process into school.