

Farrowdale House Preparatory School Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy



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At Farrowdale House Preparatory School, we pride ourselves on our traditional values and strong “family” ethos and offer a safe, secure environment where students can flourish and excel. We provide a rich learning environment which enables your child develop their skills and learning from the very beginning of their journey with us, in Early Years.

EYFS Intent

The Early Years curriculum is primarily designed around the needs, strengths and interests of the children. Incoming data from previous settings and initial Baseline assessments are used to inform planning and to quickly identify children’s next steps. This then ensures focus groups can be set up and tailored to support those making slow progress, as well as extending those who are making accelerated progress. During Term 1 and 2 there is a key focus on the Prime Areas, especially Communication and Language and also developing their gross and fine motor skills.

Phonics is a priority from the very beginning of Term 1, with lessons being taught early in the term. At Farrowdale, we follow the Read Write Inc program to ensure that the children get the best start to their reading journey. This program incorporates structured phonic sessions and the children are taught the 44 sounds and apply this when decoding and segmenting.

We have a heavy focus on reading and early literacy skills and expect that parents read with their child each day to help build their early skills. At school, the children have five phonics sessions each week, a daily story, literacy sessions themed around books and they also read with the teacher and teaching assistant twice a week. All children have the opportunity to take home a bedtime book of their choice to share with their family and this will be shared at school with teachers too. When your child enters reception, they will be assessed and be allocated a book which matches their ability level. This will also be extended once your children are decoding confidently, and key word books will also be sent home for your children to practise reading.

Children are empowered to become independent learners and to support this, are regularly consulted regarding the provision. Their interests and ideas are used to design provision within the environment, as well as to design the curriculum. This results in the children being highly motivated to learn. The EYFS Unit has been designed to support children to develop a deeper level of play, using ‘real’ items and open-ended resources to extend and stretch their imagination.

EYFS Implementation

EYFS practitioners are experienced and have excellent curriculum knowledge. They tune in to children’s current motivations and carefully extend and scaffold these experiences through on-going formative assessments and planned interventions. Practitioners engage in sustained shared thinking, questioning, encouraging children to apply what they have learnt in teacher directed sessions during child-initiated time. The environment and resources are regularly evaluated to ensure that it supports the development of children’s independence skills and the characteristics of effective learning. The classroom environment has been based around The Reggio Emilia Approach, which is heavily child led, focusing on the child’s interests and setting up provocations to spark interest and curiosity. The teacher and teaching assistant use Tapestry to create an online learning journey which sends parents

observations of what activities they have been completing throughout their time at school. In addition to this, paper learning journeys are also created to capture a range of independent learning.

The parent role as the children's first and most enduring educator is fully respected, and they are regularly informed on the children's progress and attainment. This aspect is reciprocated by allowing the parents voice to be heard, through the sharing of 'wow' moments, where parents can share their child's achievements from home throughout their time at school onto Tapestry. Parents are invited to learn more about the EYFS curriculum through workshops e.g. phonics, reading and maths. Parents are also kept up to date with what their children are learning through class Dojo and can communicate with the teacher through this. Parents can also access weekly and termly overviews of their child's learning on our school website.

EYFS Impact

With the successful implementation of both an enriched, rounded and balanced curriculum and a safe, stimulating and challenging learning environment, children will be able to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding that enables them to develop a love of learning. All children will have experienced a curriculum that provides exciting and inspiring learning experiences and opportunities for children to learn through hands on experiences; enriched through educational visits. Children will have their curiosity stimulated, and will be encouraged to ask questions about both the world around them and the different learning experiences they encounter. Through our embedded ethos and their Characteristics of Effective Learning, children will; develop confidence in themselves to take risks in new experiences, remain resilient through challenges, be able to use vital personal, social and emotional skills to work with others and be able to develop the independence and confidence to be resourceful in finding support when needed. Every child will be recognised as being unique and will have their individual needs recognised and supported to ensure they achieve their full potential. It is our aim that throughout their foundation year, children develop tolerance, compassion and a love of learning, as well as the essential knowledge and skills that will enable them to be fully prepared for the next stage of their education as they transition from Foundation Stage to Year One.

EYFS Curriculum Context

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to reach their full potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services, they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school we give all children the opportunity to start school in Term 1 of the academic year.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments

- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

At Farrowdale House Preparatory 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/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at Farrowdale House Preparatory School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school. 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 EYFS 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. We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

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 wellbeing of all children

“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.”

At Farrowdale House Preparatory School we understand that we are legally required to comply with 4 certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2019. 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 and efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

Positive Relationships

At Farrowdale House Preparatory School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. Parents as Partners 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:

- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school (Term 6).

Parents have opportunities to meet other support staff and agencies (e.g. School nurse, SENCO)

- Completing transition meetings with the parents and child during the first two weeks of their child starting school.
- The children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during Story time afternoons and one taster session;
- Offering parents regular/daily opportunities to talk about their child’s progress in our reception class;

- Weekly parent updates on our website detailing information about the child's learning and activities at school throughout the week.
- Information is shared through Tapestry and class Dojo
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns;
- Encouraging parents to share 'wow moments' in their child's learning and development at home. These are then celebrated in school and added to the child's learning journal.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Share days, parent workshops, Sports Day, parent story sharing times etc.

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. At our school the EYFS teacher acts a 'Key Person' to all children in EYFS, supported by the Teaching Assistant. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help them become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the children and build a relationship with their parents.

Enabling Environments

At Farrowdale House Preparatory School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning. The provision is designed to promote open ended play, as not to restrict the children's imagination, and also to enable the children to develop a multitude of skills.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS class has it own enclosed outdoor area. This 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. It offers the children opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.

Learning and Development

At Farrowdale House Preparatory School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected. Our teaching and learning style defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features are embedded into the EYFS through;

- The partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- The range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS;
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- The support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment; •

The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents;

- The good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school; The Characteristics of effective learning of the EYFS underpin learning and development across all areas and support the children to remain effective and motivated learners.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

Play and Exploring

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas, and 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. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active Learning

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their 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.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

Children should be given opportunities to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

Three Prime Areas

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

Four Specific Areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive Arts and Design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

EYFS Planning Assessment, Recording and Reporting

The Planning within the EYFS is led by the children's progression through Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage using the school's Long-Term Plan and Medium-Term Plans (MTP's), which are based around half termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning, however the teacher may alter these MTP's in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment and Observations

An Initial Baseline Assessment takes place in the first two-three weeks of school. It operates as part of everyday effective practice, working within the principles and practices of the current EYFS. Formative Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation of daily activities and events. These observations evidence learning that is spontaneous, independent and consistent. Judgements take account of a range of perspectives – the child's, the parents and carers and adults in school. These observations are recorded in children's individual Learning Journals or using Tapestry. These are used to make judgements for the EYFS Profile at the end of Reception. The Class teacher reviews each child's development 6 times a year, making best-fit judgements about whether a child is showing typical development for their age. The data is carefully tracked and recorded and is shared with the Senior Leadership Team.

The EYFS Profile - the final assessment is based on the ongoing observations of the prime areas, specific areas and the characteristics of effective learning. It consists of a level descriptor of the level of attainment in relation to the 17 Early Learning Goals and a short narrative of how the child demonstrates the three characteristics of effective learning. Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELG's and assessment scales.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teacher to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Head Teacher and Proprietor will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.