

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

1 Introduction

Statement of Intent

The governors and staff of Grangewood Independent School fully recognise the contribution it makes to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. We recognise that all staff, including volunteers, have a full and active part to play in protecting our children from harm.

All staff and governors believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment, which promotes the social, physical, moral and spiritual development of the individual child. The school recognises the importance of working within the framework for Every Child Matters: Change for Children and the five outcomes outlined within it:

- To be healthy
- To stay safe
- To enjoy and achieve
- To make a positive contribution
- To achieve economic well-being

- 1.1 At Grangewood our Early Years department (EYFS) extends from the age of two years (Nursery class) to the age of five years (end of the Reception Year). Entry into Grangewood is during the term after children are two (although compulsory schooling does not begin until the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday).
- 1.2 Early Years is a crucial stage during which our children are well prepared for later schooling.
- 1.3 The EYFS education we offer students is in-line with the Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (2017) and is based on the following principles:
 - It **builds** on what each child already knows and can do
 - It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged
 - It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, high expectations that encourage accelerated progress and development, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors
 - It provides a rich and stimulating environment
 - It recognises the important role of parents in the education of their children so we seek to work closely by developing good, open communication between home and school.

2 Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

- 2.1 The curriculum of the **EYFS** underpins all future learning by promoting and developing the following strands within the seven main learning areas:

The Prime Areas

- *Personal, Social and Emotional Development*
- *Physical Development (including making healthy choices in relation to food and drink)*
- *Communication and Language*

The Specific Areas

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

3 Teaching and learning style

3.1 The features of effective teaching and learning in our school are defined in our policies on teaching and learning. They apply to teaching and learning in the **EYFS** and teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 and 2.

3.2 The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the **EYFS** are:

- The partnership between teachers and parents that helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement.
- The understanding that teachers have of how children develop, the characteristics of effective learning in relation to each child in the class, and how this must be reflected in their teaching.
- The range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication.
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals.
- 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 space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors.
- The identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents via appointments and at our parental consultation evenings.
- The exchange of records between Grangewood Independent School and the other educational settings in which the children have been learning before joining our school.
- The clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it.
- The regular identification of training needs for all adults working within the Early Years Foundation Stage.

4 Play at the Early Years Foundation Stage

- 4.1** Through play our children explore and develop the learning experiences that help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up their ideas, learn how to control themselves and begin to understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively both alongside other children and on their own. They develop their ability to communicate and co-operate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express emotions and experiences, in controlled and safe situations.

5 Inclusion at the Early Years Foundation Stage

- 5.1** 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 we are planning for their learning (see also Inclusion Policy).
- 5.2** At the **EYFS** we set realistic and challenging expectations keyed to the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. Some children progress beyond this point. We help them do this by planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are precocious, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.
- 5.3** We meet the needs of all our children through:
- Planning opportunities that build on and extend the children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
 - Using a variety of teaching strategies that are based on children's learning needs and learning styles.
 - Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children, and to help them to learn effectively, involving and incorporating individual schemas as appropriate.
 - Offering a safe and supportive learning environment, in which the contribution of each child is valued.
 - Employing resources that reflect diversity, and that avoid 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 providing support as necessary.
 - Providing an environment, experiences and activities for children to display each day the characteristics of effective learning.

6 The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum

- 6.1** Our curriculum for the **EYFS** reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (2017). Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across the prime and specific areas.
- 6.2** We deliver the curriculum using the EYFS Statutory Framework, Development Matters guidance and a more formal morning session based on phonics ('Jolly Phonics/Letters and Sounds'), numeracy ('Numicon Foundation/Heinemann

Mathematics') and literacy ('Schofield and Simms'). We deploy traditional and modern approaches to teaching the curriculum.

- 6.3** Teachers use themes to plan for age appropriate work at the EYFS. Our weekly plans state intended learning, with outcomes, for all the children and show differentiation for individual needs.

7 Assessment

- 7.1** There are different forms of assessing children's development, a summary of a child's achievements at a particular point in time so that their progress can be tracked is known as a 'summative assessment'. Formative assessments consist of annotated photographs, spontaneous and planned observations, information from parents, and samples of children's experiences; all of these will build a picture so that the school can make a best fit judgement of where the child is working at in relation to the EYFS age bands.

- 7.2** Formative assessments enable the school to plan the provision and meet the needs of the children's interests and next steps; this type of assessment is ongoing, all day, as the school gathers evidence through observations which will then feed into the planning. Assessments such as the Progress Summary and Tracking documents are summative assessments that are best completed together.

- 7.3** The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Profile: 2019 Handbook contains important information about assessing children's attainment.

It includes information about how and why EYFS assessments should be carried out and guidance on:

- How to complete an EYFS Profile.
- Recording children's attainment.
- Making accurate and reliable judgements about EYFS attainment.

- 7.4** At Grangewood we use the EYFS Handbook alongside the EYFS Assessment and reporting arrangements and exemplification materials. The Foundation Stage Profiles are updated every half-term and this information is used to inform target setting for the next half term and to summarise pupils' progress. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Early Years takes the form of observation, involving both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate. Children are observed in both adult-led and child-initiated activities. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement.

- 7.5** On entry assessments are a great way to identify children's starting points and to gain information to use to help plan suitable experiences. Communication with parents is key in this process as they hold the information on their child's learning development. 'All About Me' sheets are completed by parents and give the staff a small snapshot of information about the child.

- 7.6** During the first three weeks in the reception class the teacher assesses the ability of each child, using the Foundation Stage Profile. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the class, in order to adjust the

teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. We share the information contained in the Foundation Stage Profile at our parental consultation meetings.

- 7.7** The teacher, after continuous assessment of the children, updates the Foundation Stage Profiles. At the end of the final term in Year Reception we send a summary of attainment using the 17 Early Learning Goals to the Local Authority for analysis. The child's next teacher uses this information along with a narrative on how the child demonstrates the three characteristics of effective learning to make plans for the year ahead. We also share this information at parental consultation meetings.
- 7.8** The teacher keeps observation notes, as well as examples of each child's work. This evidence can be shared with parents at parental consultation meetings.
- 7.9** Parents receive an annual report that offers brief comments on their child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs, and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these in June, and send them to parents in early July each year.

8 The role of parents

- 8.1** We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We therefore recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:
- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school (this may be during our Foundation Evening or during an arranged home visit).
 - Opportunities given to the children to spend time with their teacher before starting school (for example, during their assessment/induction session and in a class-swap afternoon in the summer term where each child in the school spends time in the class that they will join in September).
 - Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school.
 - Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our EYFS classes (Nursery, Pre-Reception and Reception).
 - Inviting parents to the Foundation Evening where they can find out more about the curriculum and teaching and learning in EYFS.
 - Encouraging parents to talk to their child's teacher/Key Person if there are any concerns.
 - Having flexible admission arrangements, and allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances.
 - Encouraging parents to stay if there are any settling-in problems with their child.
 - Offering a range of activities, throughout the year, that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents.
 - Provision of various activities that involve parents, i.e. regular communication with home through the child's school bag, and inviting parents to meetings in order to discuss the kind of work that the children are undertaking, 'story-telling' sessions, etc.

- 8.2** There is a formal meeting for parents in the autumn, spring and summer terms at which the parents discuss their child's progress in private with the teacher/Key Person.

9 Resources

- 9.1** We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. Materials are clearly labelled and accessible. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning.

10 EAL

- 10.1** Children are given opportunities to listen to stories in other languages as well as English.
- 10.2** Children are encouraged to express themselves in other languages with which they are familiar, as well as English and to communicate in a range of ways, staff then support the acquisition of English by modelling and extending children's vocabulary inspiring children who are confident and skilled communicators.
- 10.3** We create a developmentally appropriate, supportive and stimulating environment in which children can enjoy experimenting with and learning language. We endeavour to provide a relaxed, stress-free environment and liaise with parents to build relationships.
- 10.4** Using ECAT training our EYFS staff plan and provide every day, fun and interesting experiences which reflect children's interests to further encourage early language development right from the outset.

11 Monitoring and review

- 11.1** This policy is monitored by the Early Years Co-ordinator, and is reviewed by the staff and Governing Body every two years.

Last Review Date: Dec 2018

Next Review Date: Dec 2020

Signed:

Member of Governing Body: Date:

Chair of Governors: Date: