



Stukeley Meadows Primary School

EYFS POLICY

September 2018



Stukeley Meadows Primary School

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

Stukeley Principles

‘Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their 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.’
(Early Years Foundation Stage Profile - Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012)

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Stukeley Meadows Primary School, children are admitted to our Foundation Stage in the September following their fourth birthday.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives and at Stukeley Meadows Primary School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that it is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

Aims & Objectives

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At Stukeley Meadows Primary School, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

The early-years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know 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, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment
- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on four themes:

A Unique Child
Positive Relationships
Enabling Environments
Learning and Development

Stukeley Policy and Practice

A Unique Child

At Stukeley Meadows Primary School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We also recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates and seek to accommodate this within our provision at all times.

- Inclusion - We value the diversity of individuals within the school and believe that every child matters. All children at Stukeley Meadows Primary School are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. All families are valued within our school.
- We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning.

At the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that match the needs of our children as individuals, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. We do this 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 learn effectively
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- Employing resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- Planning challenging activities to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, 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
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary (such as referrals to speech therapy) as necessary
- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress

Positive Relationships – Home/School Partnership

At Stukeley Meadows Primary School we recognise that children become strong, confident and independent learners and individuals in the context of being in secure relationships; thus we aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Talking to parents/carers before their child starts school at our welcome evening and tasters sessions as well as welcoming email contact whenever it is required.
- Arranging, where possible, visits by the teacher to all children in their home setting and childcare provision prior to their starting school.
- Providing a handbook of information about starting school at Stukeley Meadows as well as access to EYFS area on the school website.
- Inviting parents/carers and children the opportunity to spend time in Foundation Stage Class for an induction/taster session in the summer term prior to their September start.
- Providing an induction/welcome meeting for Reception parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss school routines, expectations and to answer any questions parents/carers may have as well as introducing families to the wider school community provision eg. catering service, Funtimes, PTA (Fosms), governors, inclusion team etc.
- Holding a parent consultation early in the academic year (October) to discuss how a child is settling into the school environment and dealing with any potential issues as early as possible.

- Operating an open door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if Foundation staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- Written contact through school newsletters and website. Providing “Wow” slips to enable parents to record outstanding and significant achievements in their child’s life outside of school hours.
- Inviting parents to attend informal meetings/workshops about areas of the curriculum, such as phonics or reading.
- Sharing regularly the children’s Learning Journey Record with parents/carers and valuing the on-going contributions to this from parents/carers.
- Offering two formal parent/teacher consultation meetings per year at which their child’s progress is discussed as well as termly informal opportunities such as Learning Journey events.
- Sending a written report on their child’s attainment and progress at the end of their time in Foundation Stage.
- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as sharing assemblies, Family forest events, Share-a-story events, Phonics workshop.
- Crucially, all staff in the Foundation Stage aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them and demonstrating their value as people in their own right.

Enabling Environments (Learning Environments)

At Stukeley Meadows Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development – we aim to make sure that school is a place where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. To facilitate this the Foundation Stage Learning Environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely:

- There are specific areas where the children can be active, be quiet, creative etc.
- The Foundation Stage has its own outdoor classroom area as well as its own playground, complete with “jungle”.
- We are also a Forest School which allows us to offer outdoor learning opportunities for doing things in different ways and in different scales than when indoors. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.
- We provide the children with daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision.
- We ensure that play-based learning is highly valued and that 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 fascinations, passions and abilities.
- We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world.
- We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this promotes independent learning.
- We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and are checked regularly.

Learning and Development

Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum centres around 17 Early Learning Goals against which each child is assessed at the end of their Reception year. (see Appendix 1) Within this there are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early years settings as required by statute. All areas of learning and development are equally weighted in terms of significance and focus, and more importantly, they are all inter-connected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. They require a balance of adult led and child initiated activities in order for most children to reach the levels required at the end of EYFS.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and to thrive.

The three **Prime areas** are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas:

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

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Underpinning this curriculum are the three characteristics of effective learning which are reflected in both our teaching, planning and provision. These characteristics are:

Playing and exploring - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’. Through play, our 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.

Active learning - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements. Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions which provides them 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 around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

Teaching and Learning

The features of effective teaching and learning in our school are defined in our policy on teaching and learning. They apply to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 or 2. However, the more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, carers and other settings 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 and learn, 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 by the end of the Foundation Stage 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
- the good relationships between our 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 at the Foundation Stage

Planning

The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Teachers use the national schemes of work, where appropriate, to support their planning for individual children. The planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are from the Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document.

Medium term planning - On a half termly basis the planning is based around themes/topics which act as a vehicle of interest to support the development of key skills as set out in EYFS curriculum.

Short term planning (weekly) – Topics will be explored as part of planned activities within our continuous provision both inside and out as well as in our small group (guided) teaching sessions. There are also planned discrete teacher-led sessions in phonics, maths and reading/writing on a daily basis.

Observation, Assessment and Record Keeping

- Observations - Foundation Stage staff use observations as the basis for planning and on-going assessment. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations then lead the direction of the planning. Relevant and significant observations are recorded in the children's Learning Journeys and will form the evidence for teacher judgements against the Early Learning Goals. These Learning Journeys are shared with families regularly and provide the basis for discussion about their child's progress and development as well as being a working document for teachers as they track that progress throughout the year.
- Assessment - During the first term in Foundation Stage, the teaching team assesses the ability of each child using a baseline test (in line with current government policy). These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. These "tests" will be administered in a thoroughly responsible way that fully supports the well-being of the child and minimises any anxiety that the perception of "testing" might have. Throughout the year each child's progress towards the early learning goals is tracked and updated on a termly basis (at least). We record each child's level of development to be just working towards, comfortably working within or securely working within the Development Matters age-bands.
- Profile – At the end of the final term in Foundation Stage we send a summary of these assessments (called the Profile – a statutory document) to the Local Authority for analysis. The child's next teacher uses this information to help them make plans for the year ahead. We share this information too at parental consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report, which they receive in July.

Safeguarding & Welfare

'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.'
(Statutory Framework for EYFS 2014)

At Stukeley Meadows Primary School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014. This includes the following:

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence
- Promote good health
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so and have undertaken the appropriate checks as required
- Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children

Keeping Safe - 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. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to

protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See Stukeley Meadows' Safeguarding Children Policy).

Medical Needs – We keep a list of all children with specific medical needs eg. eczema, asthma, food allergies etc so that all members of the Foundation Stage team (and lunchtime supervisors) are aware of needs and what medication might be required. Inhalers and ointments will be stored in the classroom in the First Aid Bag, which is kept in a secure place in class, out of the reach of children – all of which will be individually named and specific written permissions obtained from parents in line with school protocols. Epipens where required, are stored in the main school office in a locked cabinet, complete with a photograph of specific child for whom it has been provided and necessary permissions. All support staff are trained in first aid, with at least one being paediatric first aid certified.

Good Health - All children are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as being given the choice of milk. They have access to water at all times.

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, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. In most cases, intimate care is to do with personal hygiene and it is good practise for the school to inform the school nurse of all children requiring intimate care. 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 to give the right support to an individual child. No intimate care is to be given without the express written permission of the parent or guardian of that child in the form of an intimate care plan.

Transition

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle in to their new setting quickly and happily.

Starting Foundation Stage – Parents of all children starting in the next academic year will be invited to a Welcome Meeting in the Summer term to meet their child's new teachers and other key staff and learn more about the Foundation Stage curriculum as well as how to support their child in becoming "school ready." The particulars of the induction process for the September start will also be explained in some detail.

In addition to this, members of the Foundation Stage Teaching team will also visit pre-school settings wherever possible before the end of the summer term to visit the children in a familiar environment and to liaise with key workers to ensure that important information that will facilitate a smooth transition is passed on.

Taster sessions – towards the end of the summer term children and parents can attend an hour long taster session in the Foundation Stage area to help children familiarise themselves with both the adults and the environment ahead of their September start. It also provides another opportunity for parents to talk informally with teachers and to ask questions as necessary.

Home visits - At the start of September prior to starting school, teachers will aim to visit every child and the environment ahead of their September start. It also provides another opportunity for parents to talk informally with teachers and to ask questions as necessary.

Home visits - At the start of September prior to starting school, teachers will aim to visit every child and their family at their home. This helps children to begin to build that familiarity with their teachers which will support the establishment of positive relationships which will underpin their learning throughout the year.

Phased induction – for the first few days of term, children will attend school on a half day basis (mornings or afternoons). In this way, children will adjust to their new setting's routines and expectations without being overwhelmed by a long day. With fewer children in the setting in those early days, it really does allow children and teachers to get to know each other that much better. In the first full week of the Foundation Stage term, all children will begin complete days as a whole class unless teachers or parents/carers consider this not to be in the best interests of the child.

Into Year 1 – As the Foundation Stage draws to a close we work very hard as a school to ensure that children are ready for Year 1 and to minimise the anxiety that change can cause. The Foundation Stage and Year 1 teachers work very closely together throughout the year and decisions about classes are discussed thoroughly. Once classes have been decided, there will be planned opportunities for children to spend time with their new Year 1 teachers towards the end of the summer term – this will consist of several mornings based in their new classroom as well as more informal story swap sessions etc. Parents too will meet the new teachers in a "meet and greet" event in July.