

The Mead Infant and Nursery School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy



Proud to Belong

This Policy was adopted by The Governing Body and is reviewed every two years.

Reviewed every 2 years by: R. Pioli and Governing Body in Spring Term 2022

Next Review: Autumn 1 2023

“Development can only take place when children are actively involved, when they are occupied with a high, non-stop degree of concentration, when they are interested, when they give themselves completely, when they use all their mental abilities to invent and make new things and when this gives them a high degree of satisfaction and pleasure”. Ferre Laevers

Aims

- That children are excited and motivated to learn through their environment and interactions with adults and children.
- Children have high levels of wellbeing and involvement so that they achieve their potential, showing resilience and determination.
- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the wide range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

Ethos

The approach to teaching and learning within the Early Years setting at The Mead Infant and Nursery School is strongly child centered.

- The school recognises that child led play is the most powerful tool when interacting and exploring.
- The school embraces children’s natural curiosity, which is enhanced by quality interactions and thoughtful next steps in play. The maximum learning will take place when children are highly motivated and engaged. Staff are skilled and coached in their interactions and how to enhance play to extend learning and move children on.
- The school sees the need for uninterrupted play, structuring the day thoughtfully, allowing for maximum time to explore and play.
- The school considers the learning environment to be like a third teacher, providing possibilities, challenges and opportunities rather than a low-level consolidation of an existing skill. The environment reflects children’s interests, cultures and needs. Quality, open-ended resources are carefully positioned, at child height, through continuous provision and enhancements to extend learning.
- An early start in understanding and talking about emotions is of utmost importance at The Mead Infant and Nursery school.
- Through a child-centered approach, the school recognises the importance of enabling children to become independent in their play and self-care in order to be able to facilitate their own learning and manage themselves through the day.

The Learning environment

The indoor and outdoor learning environments are of equal importance at The Mead Infant and Nursery School. All areas of learning are reflected in both the inside and outside areas, considering how staff can best use both spaces in order to provide the best learning opportunities for all children. Constant areas include construction, small world, creative, writing, maths, playdough, water, fine motor, reading, role play, while also providing opportunities for reading and writing/ mark making across all areas. The outdoor area is carefully resourced for larger scale play, more physical activity and sensory play, while also catering for all areas of learning in order to provide opportunities to outdoor learners. The outdoor learning environment is easily accessed and available to children for most of the day.

Areas of the learning environment are constant and reflect the curriculum needs.

The environment in the Nursery and Reception classes are carefully planned for through a continuous provision. These resources and areas will remain much the same for as long as the resources are appropriate for the children, after careful considerations and assessments of the children's needs. Resources are clearly labelled to support independence and an ethos of caring for our resources and environment.

Resources in the continuous provision become progressively challenging from the start of Nursery to the end of Reception. Throughout the year, the progression of resources, topics, and the needs and interests of children, are carefully explored by the EYFS team to ensure repetition and progression are considered. Interests and needs are followed, through enhancing provision and carefully moving learning on.

Curriculum

The curriculum is guided by the EYFS Framework, which consists of the 'Characteristics of teaching and learning and 7 areas of learning and development.

The Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

These describe behaviours children use in order to learn.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- active learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

The seven areas of learning and development

The seven areas of learning are split into the 'Prime' areas and 'Specific' areas.

Prime areas of development and learning lay vital foundations in the early years. The three Prime areas describe universal core aspects of early child development.

Prime areas	Specific areas
Personal, social and emotional Development	Literacy
Communication and Language	Mathematics
Physical Development	Understanding the World
	Expressive arts and design

Learning through play

Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play, which is guided by adults.

Through careful observation, practitioners decide what the next steps are in a child's learning and the most effective ways to teach it. Practitioners must stimulate children's interests, responding to each child's needs and guiding their development through warm, positive interactions coupled with secure routines for play and learning.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1.

Reading

A love of reading and becoming engaged readers is known to be one of the most important ways to improve life chances. Staff highlight the key and incidental vocabulary found in books and use these as teaching points called 'Goldilocks words' and 'Word collector' words.

At The Mead Infant and Nursery School, the EYFS curriculum is based around stories and carefully chosen key texts. These simple, repetitive key texts that are explored and enjoyed at the start of Nursery, become longer and more complex on the EYFS journey, where children start to read independently.

Once children start in the Reception year, 'reading practice' happens three times a week with staff. All staff have training in Little Wandle Letter's and Sounds. Reading Practice Books carefully matched so children can read fluently and independently.

The range of books on offer to children in the EYFS is also carefully considered and adapted regularly to ensure children are challenged and interested. Books reflect different cultures and ethnicities, and characters reflect the children in the class. Stories play an important part of the day. Staff make sure there is always time for whole class story but also that there are many opportunities to enjoy books at other times in many areas of the environment.

Writing

Staff have been trained across the EYFS in the early skills that successful writers need to practise.

Staff provide endless opportunities to strengthen gross and fine motor skills, watching carefully for children who need support in how to strengthen muscles in their arms and hands before holding a pencil correctly and comfortably.

Language and vocabulary are understood to be another essential pathway into early writing. Children need to be able to form their sentences correctly and have ambitious vocabulary in order to be successful writers. Staff work hard to engage the children in their writing in all areas of the learning environment.

Maths

On entering the EYFS, teachers use a wide range of resources and strategies to explore mathematical learning, such as stories, songs, nursery rhymes, imaginative play and continuous provision.

Continuous provision enables children to follow areas that interest them and to explore independently areas of mathematics. Adults working in the continuous provision have a good knowledge of where each child is in their mathematical learning and how to challenge them to the next step.

During a week, teaching will include whole class activities and group focused adult led activities. Mathematics activities (both teacher and child-led or initiated) are available daily, both indoors and outdoors.

Within the Foundation Stage, mathematics is very practical and often is cross-curricular and teaching is carefully plotted out to ensure coverage of mathematical themes. Once children start in the Reception year, teachers plan using the 'White Rose Maths scheme.

Phonics

At the Mead Infant and Nursery School, staff use the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds'. From the very start of their time in Nursery children tune into sounds all around. Exploring environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, body percussion, voice sounds, rhyme and rhythm, initial sounds, alliteration, and blending and segmenting. A phonics area linked to the aspect the children are exploring is based in the reading area to allow children to practice in continuous provision.

From the very start of the Reception year, phonics lessons are taught daily. All staff have training in Little Wandle Letter's and Sounds. The main characteristics of these lessons are:

- direct teaching in frequent, short bursts
- consistency of approach
- secure, systematic progression in phonics learning
- maintaining pace of learning
- providing repeated practice
- application of phonics using matched decodable books
- early identification of children at risk of falling behind, linked to the provision of effective keep-up support.

Planning

To ensure children make outstanding progress, it is the school's intention to take into consideration their starting points and needs as they begin their learning journey.

The school aims to fill the gaps in experiences, skills and knowledge children may have missed out on in their early years through an exciting curriculum. Children are enticed into the new topic through Sensational starters and Fabulous Finishers.

At the Mead Infant and Nursery School, topics are plotted through the EYFS to ensure careful consideration has been made that all statements in the Progression Trackers are taught. Long term plans plot out the coverage of curriculum themes that are to be taught and explored in each area of learning. These are then fed into Medium term plans where more detail of activities and enhancements are noted. Staff understand the importance to be flexible when planning and this may mean moving away from planned topics to ensure engagement and interest.

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas. As children grow older and move into the reception year, there should be a greater focus on teaching the essential skills and knowledge in the specific areas of learning. This will help children to prepare for year 1. (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2021)

Staff take into account the individual needs, interests, and stages of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. This might mean that enhancements are made to the play on the spot in order to move a child on in their learning, or staff may need to plan for an enhancement later on that day or the next day.

The school aims to help children achieve their next steps with resilience and independence. Children are entitled to be treated with respect as unique individuals regardless of gender, race, social background, ability or special educational need.

Continuous Provision

The curriculum is also covered through progressively challenging continuous provision from the start of Nursery to the end of Reception. Interests and needs are followed through enhancing provision and carefully moving learning on. From the start of Nursery staff support the children in being able to access the provision with as much independence as possible- in their choices of play, how to access the resources on offer and how to make the space ready for the next child by tidying up, using the clear visuals. Throughout the year the progression of resources, topics and the needs and interests of children are carefully explored by the foundation stage team as a unit to ensure repetition and progression are considered.

Assessment

Ongoing Assessment

At The Mead Infant and Nursery School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, recognising 'Wow' moments of significant importance. Observations are made of the children on the online platform 'Evidence me'. These observations are used to consider next steps for children's learning and to shape future planning and enhancements in continuous provision. Observations shared by parents and/or carers are gratefully received and considered as evidence also.

Assessment points

Assessment points through the year enable teachers to reflect as to whether children are 'on track' whether they need extra support to meet the 'on track' descriptor. This highlights cohorts of children needing extra support or areas that need more attention.

Reception Baseline Assessment

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts Reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

EYFS Profile

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child. The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Partnership with parents

The school recognises that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

Before children start at The Mead Infant and Nursery School, staff take time to get to know the children and families through home visits, class visits and 'All about me' forms.

Parents are invited to contribute to the observations on the school's online platform 'Evidence me' where learning at home can create a bigger picture of the child. Observations are shared with parents on a regular basis throughout the year.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. EYFS Parent consultations helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities. These take place twice a year and reports are written and feedback is received at the end of the academic year from parents.

Staff welcome parents into school to help with learning. For example, staff take time to learn about the different cultures of the children in their classes and enrich learning by asking parents in to support our learning about their celebrations, such as Diwali.

Keeping Children Safe

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 school promotes good oral health, as well as good health in general in the Early Years.

Staff follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance. Procedures and practices are also set out in the School's Safeguarding Policy.

Healthy Eating

Staff promote healthy eating at school and provide free fruit and milk which children are able to help themselves to throughout the day.

Toileting

Staff encourage all children to start Nursery without nappies but will support any children struggling with this. All the EYFS classrooms have clean and well cared-for toilet facilities. Children are supported to use the toilet independently, but staff acknowledge that young children often have 'accidents'. Where necessary staff work with families to implementing a toileting plan. There are stocks of spare clothes and staff will change anyone who needs it. Parents are asked to help keep the stocks of clothes high by returning anything their child has borrowed. Children are changed in the open area of the toilets, outside the cubicles. All staff are aware and work in line with the Intimate Care policy.

Special Educational Needs

EYFS staff follow the school's Special Educational Needs Policy. Any concerns about a child's

development are discussed at an early stage with the school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCo) and parents are consulted. Similarly, parents are strongly encouraged to share any concerns they may have with regard to their child's development.

Links with other school policies:

Safeguarding Policy
Statement of Procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff
Low Level Concerns Policy
Staff Behaviour Policy / Code of Conduct
Whistleblowing
Well Being Policy
Intimate care Policy
Administration of medicines
Medical Conditions policy
Infection Control Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Allegations against staff
Anti-bullying
Behaviour Policy
Equality Policy
E-Safety, including staff use of mobile phones
Health & Safety
Infection Control Policy
Parental Concerns/Complaints
Positive Touch
Curriculum Policy
PSHE
Recruitment and Selection
EYFS Risk Assessment
COVID Risk Assessment
School Attendance
Relationships and Sex Education, which includes the new statutory guidance 2019