



The Mead Infant and Nursery School

Early Years Foundation Policy (EYFS)

School name: The Mead Infant and Nursery School

Level of ratification: LGB

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“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

1.Aims

Our aim is to provide a nurturing, inclusive and ambitious Early Years provision that develops the whole child and gives every child the best possible start to their learning journey. Through high-quality play, rich language experiences and strong, trusting relationships, we aim to nurture confident, curious and independent learners who are well-prepared for the next stage of their education and life beyond school.

2.Ethos

At The Mead Infant and Nursery School, our Early Years ethos is rooted in the belief that every child is unique, capable and deserving of a nurturing, joyful and inclusive start to school life. We create an environment where children feel safe, valued and motivated to learn, reflecting the school’s commitment to celebrating individuality, diversity and personal achievement.

Our approach is strongly child-centred. We recognise that child-led play is the most powerful driver of learning, enabling children to follow their curiosity, explore freely and develop deep engagement. Staff are skilled in providing high-quality, responsive interactions that enhance play, extend thinking and move learning forward. Through thoughtful questioning, modelling and sustained shared thinking, adults help children make meaningful connections and develop confidence in their abilities.

We prioritise uninterrupted play, structuring the day to give children the time and space they need to explore, collaborate and become absorbed in their learning. Our learning environment acts as a ‘third teacher’: it is carefully designed, purposeful and rich in possibilities. Resources are open-ended, accessible and reflective of children’s cultures, interests and developmental needs. Continuous provision and enhancements are planned to provide challenge, inspire imagination and promote independence.

We place a strong emphasis on emotional wellbeing, recognising the importance of helping children understand, express and regulate their emotions from the earliest stages. Through nurturing relationships and consistent strategies—such as emotion coaching and supportive language—children learn to develop empathy, resilience and a sense of personal worth.

Our ethos champions independence, collaboration and community. We support children to develop self-help skills, make choices and take ownership of their learning. We work in partnership with families and the wider community to ensure every child is included, supported and given the opportunity to achieve their full potential. Children are

entitled to be treated with respect as unique individuals regardless of gender, race, social background, ability or special educational need.

Through this ethos, we strive to be a centre of excellence for Early Years education, enabling all children at The Mead to flourish academically, socially and emotionally.

3. 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 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 to provide opportunities for 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.

4. Curriculum

The curriculum at The Mead is guided by the **EYFS Framework**, which outlines the *Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning* and the *Seven Areas of Learning and Development*. Our bespoke curriculum is designed to be ambitious, coherent and sequenced, ensuring that children build securely on their knowledge and skills over time.

The Mead's progression trackers map out the planned learning journey from the start of Nursery through to the end of Year Two. They provide a clear, structured pathway that supports progression, continuity and readiness for future learning across all phases. These trackers ensure that each step of the curriculum is meaningful, purposeful and rooted in what children need to know and be able to do next.

Our curriculum places high value on hands-on, experiential learning, recognising that young children learn best through meaningful, active experiences. These opportunities not only deepen understanding but also contribute powerfully to each child's cultural capital, enriching their experiences and broadening their horizons. Through carefully planned activities, visits, visitors, and real-life experiences, we aim to widen children's awareness of the world, nurture curiosity, and inspire awe and wonder.

5.The Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

These describe the ways in which children learn most effectively. The three characteristics are:

- **Playing and exploring** – children investigate, experience things first-hand, and 'have a go'.
- **Active learning** – children concentrate, keep on trying when they encounter challenges, and enjoy their successes.
- **Creating and thinking critically** – children develop their own ideas, make connections, and devise strategies for problem-solving.

6.The Seven Areas of Learning and Development

The seven areas are divided into **Prime** and **Specific** areas.

The *Prime* areas form the essential foundations for all learning, and the *Specific* areas build on and strengthen these foundations.

Prime Areas

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

Specific Areas

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

7.Planning

Children's starting points and needs are the foundation of future planning 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. This means that from their starting points, children develop appropriate skills and knowledge across all 7 areas of learning, including those children identified with barriers achieve well from their starting points.

Topics are plotted to ensure careful consideration has been made that all statements in the Progression Trackers are taught. Long term plans are carefully sequenced, plotting out the coverage of curriculum themes and key knowledge 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 the provision, activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. 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.

Staff consider 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 to move a child on in their learning, or staff may need to plan for an enhancement later that day or the next day.

Staff help children achieve their next steps with resilience and independence to ensure they are ready for the next stage of learning and beyond.

8. Teaching and Learning (Pedagogy)

Pedagogy in the Early Years at The Mead is centred on the understanding that learning takes place through a dynamic, interactive process. This interaction may be between:

- an educator and a child or group of children
- a more experienced child and their less experienced peer(s)
- a child and the learning environment

The role of the educator is to apply effective, intentional approaches that positively influence as many of these interactions as possible. High-quality teaching occurs within a range of contexts, including:

- adult-led whole-class or small-group inputs
- focused adult-led or adult-initiated activities
- guided play
- child-led exploration within continuous provision

Play is at the heart of children's learning and development. Through play, children build confidence, develop relationships, explore ideas, set their own goals, and solve problems. Children learn through leading their own play, and through play that is sensitively scaffolded and enriched by skilled adults.

Practitioners use ongoing observation to identify **starting points** and children's **next steps** and determine the most effective ways to teach them. They stimulate interest, respond to individual needs, and guide development through warm, positive, **high-quality interactions**, supported by secure and consistent routines.

As children grow and their level of development increases, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led learning. This prepares them for the increased structure and expectations of Year 1, while maintaining the principles of play, exploration, and active engagement that underpin effective Early Years practice.

9. Assessment

Assessment in the Early Years at The Mead is purposeful, proportionate and rooted in a deep understanding of child development. Its core purpose is to inform teaching, shape the curriculum and ensure that every child receives the support, challenge and experiences they need to make strong progress from their individual starting points.

9.1 Baseline Assessment and Starting Points

When children enter Nursery or Reception, practitioners complete a baseline assessment to establish their unique starting points. This includes a combination of:

- observations of the child at play
- information shared by parents and carers
- interactions that help identify early communication, confidence and wellbeing
- assessment of key developmental skills in the Prime Areas and early literacy and maths
- Data taken from the Reception Baseline Assessment (DFE)

These starting points are crucial in shaping the curriculum and provision. They:

- directly inform short-term and medium-term planning
- highlight gaps in children's early experiences, knowledge or skills
- guide the enhancements needed in continuous provision
- support the identification of children who may need additional intervention or targeted teaching
- ensure that the curriculum is ambitious, responsive and tailored to the needs of each cohort

The curriculum is adapted each year in response to the baseline profile of the cohort, ensuring it meets children where they are and moves them forward with purpose.

9.2 Formative assessment is continuous and woven into daily practice. Practitioners:

- observe children as they play, explore and interact
- where appropriate, record wow moments through the online platform evidence me
- reflect on what children know, understand and can do

- use professional judgement to identify emerging needs and strengths
- respond immediately through high-quality interactions, modelling, questioning and provision enhancements

Formative assessment ensures teaching is responsive. It feeds directly into planning, helping practitioners adjust the learning environment, adult interactions and next steps to ensure all children continue to make progress from their starting points.

9.3 Summative assessments provide a broader overview of progress at key points throughout the year. Practitioners draw on their holistic knowledge of each child to:

- review progress against curriculum objectives and developmental milestones
- evaluate whether children are on track from their starting points
- identify individuals or groups who may need further support or challenge
- contribute to pupil progress meetings and targeted intervention planning
- make accurate final judgements at the end of Reception for the statutory EYFS Profile

Summative assessment strengthens leaders' and practitioners' understanding of cohort priorities and informs ongoing adaptations to the curriculum and provision.

Parents and carers are valued partners in the assessment process. We ensure:

- open, regular communication about progress and next steps
- opportunities for parents to share observations from home
- collaborative conversations that build a holistic picture of each child
- shared decision-making around support and provision

By valuing parental insight, assessments become more accurate and reflective of each child's whole learning journey.

9.4 Using Assessment to Inform Practice

Assessment is used thoughtfully and strategically to:

- shape curriculum adaptations in response to cohort needs
- plan meaningful enhancements to continuous provision
- ensure developmental progression across the EYFS
- inform next steps at individual, group and whole-cohort level
- maintain high expectations while ensuring learning remains joyful and child-centred

Assessment at The Mead is not about collecting evidence; it is about understanding children deeply so that the curriculum, environment and interactions are precisely matched to their needs.

9.5 Identifying and Supporting Need

Assessment plays a vital role in the early identification of children who may have additional needs. Practitioners work closely with the SENDCo and families to:

- identify concerns quickly
- implement appropriate targeted strategies or interventions
- monitor progress closely and review the impact of support
- ensure inclusive practice and personalised provision
- seek advice and support from external professionals when needed
- make timely referrals to external agencies to secure additional assessment or specialist support

10. Parent and Carer Partnership

At The Mead Infant and Nursery School, we recognise parents and carers as children's first and most enduring educators. Strong, respectful and collaborative partnerships between home and school are fundamental to children's wellbeing, progress and success throughout the Early Years.

We believe that children thrive when families feel valued, informed and actively involved in their child's learning journey. Our approach is rooted in open communication, mutual trust and shared responsibility.

From the moment a child joins The Mead, we prioritise **strong, trusting relationships** are formed with families

. We ensure that:

- transitions into Nursery and Reception are thoughtfully planned, with opportunities to meet staff, share information and ask questions
- practitioners take time to understand each child's home context, interests, routines and individual needs
- parents and carers feel welcome, listened to and confident in approaching staff at any time

These strong relationships create a secure foundation for successful learning and development.

Supporting Parents

We recognise that parenting is a learning journey too, and we work alongside families to support them with:

- information about child development and the EYFS curriculum
- guidance on how learning can be supported at home
- workshops on early reading, phonics, mathematics and other key areas bespoke to the cohort

- additional support for families who may need extra help, signposting them to external services where appropriate

By supporting parents, we strengthen the learning experience for every child.

11. Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures

At The Mead Infant and Nursery School, the safety, wellbeing and protection of every child is our highest priority. We are fully committed to creating an environment in which children feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and where their voices are heard and their needs are met.

We follow robust safeguarding procedures in accordance with The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Keeping Children Safe in Education, and the school's own Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. All staff understand their responsibility to safeguard children and to act immediately if they have any concerns.

We are committed to ensuring that we:

- promote the welfare of every child through vigilant practice and nurturing relationships
- promote good health, including supporting children to make healthy choices and teaching good hygiene routines (including oral health)
- manage behaviour positively and appropriately, in line with our school's behaviour and emotional regulation approaches
- ensure all adults working with children are suitable, through rigorous safer recruitment processes and ongoing safeguarding training
- maintain a safe, secure and well-organised environment, ensuring that all equipment, resources and furniture are fit for purpose, age-appropriate and regularly risk-assessed
- provide a rich, challenging and enjoyable learning experience that supports children's safety, confidence and independence

12. Health and Wellbeing

We promote children's physical and emotional wellbeing in numerous ways, including:

- providing daily access to water and nutritious fruit/vegetable snacks
- allocating regular time for physical activity both indoors and outdoors
- embedding routines that promote self-care, hygiene and independence
- following clear procedures when a child becomes unwell, has an accident or requires first aid
- maintaining high standards of cleanliness and infection control

Oral health is promoted through planned opportunities that help children develop lifelong healthy habits.

13. Food, Nutrition and Mealtime Safety

At The Mead Infant and Nursery School, we fully meet the statutory requirements for Paediatric First Aid (PFA) as outlined in the EYFS Framework.

As part of our safeguarding and welfare responsibilities, The Mead Infant and Nursery School promotes children's health and wellbeing through safe and positive approaches to food and nutrition. In line with the school's **Food and Nutrition Policy** and the EYFS welfare requirements, we ensure that all food and drink provided is healthy, balanced and appropriate for young children.

The school is a **nut-free environment**, and all allergy, dietary and cultural needs are clearly recorded and shared with staff to ensure children's safety. Mealtimes are calm, well-supervised and supportive. Staff model positive eating habits, encourage independence, and follow safe food practices such as ensuring drinking water is available, cutting foods that pose choking risks and responding promptly to any medical or dietary concerns.

To support consistency between home and school, **parents are provided with clear guidance** including a **Healthy Packed Lunch Guide**, a **Food Choking Hazard Guide**, and **portion size information**. These resources help families make informed, safe and nutritious food choices for their children.

These measures ensure that mealtimes contribute positively to children's health, safety, development and overall wellbeing as part of our wider safeguarding approach.

14. School Readiness and Transitions

At The Mead Infant and Nursery School, we recognise that strong transitions and close partnership with families are essential for children's wellbeing, confidence and success. Our approach ensures that all children are supported emotionally, socially and developmentally as they move into Nursery, Reception and Year One. We work closely with parents, previous settings and external professionals to ensure every transition is calm, positive and responsive to children's individual needs.

14.1 School Readiness

At The Mead, school readiness is understood as a shared partnership between school and families. We believe that children thrive when parents and carers feel informed, supported and confident in helping their child develop the everyday skills that make starting school a positive experience. Our approach is guided by our School Readiness Guidance for parents, which highlights simple, developmentally appropriate skills that can be nurtured through home routines and support.

We support parents by:

- sharing clear, practical guidance on the skills that help children settle confidently (e.g., toileting)

- promoting daily opportunities for early communication, storytelling, singing and imaginative play
- offering advice on healthy routines such as sleep, physical activity, oral health and managing screen time
- signposting families to trusted resources, Early Years professionals and support services
- providing opportunities for parents to discuss concerns, developmental needs or additional support their child may require

We recognise that each child develops at their own pace, and some will need more support than others. By working together with parents, we ensure that every child feels emotionally and practically ready for their next stage of learning.

14.2 Transitions into Nursery

Transition into Nursery is carefully planned to help children feel secure and confident from the very start. The process includes:

- Information gathering from previous nurseries, preschools and childminders
- Stay and Play sessions in the summer term for children to explore the environment with a familiar adult
- Home visits at the end of the summer term to build relationships in a familiar setting
- Class visits at the start of the autumn term to support a gradual settling-in process
- Welcome meetings for parents at the end of the summer term and start of autumn
- One Page Profiles, completed by parents, providing key information about the child's interests, motivations and needs

These steps ensure that staff have a deep understanding of each child before they start, helping to create a secure and nurturing transition.

14.3 Transitions into Reception

Transition into Reception builds on children's experiences in Nursery and supports new children joining from a range of settings. The process includes:

- Information gathering from previous nurseries, preschools and childminders
- Class visits at the end of the summer term for children to meet staff and explore their new environment
- Home visits for children new to the school, supporting relationship-building and personalised understanding
- Telephone calls for children who already attend The Mead, ensuring continuity and up-to-date information
- A Welcome Meeting for Reception parents at the end of the summer term
- One Page Profiles, submitted by parents, to help staff plan effective support

These measures help children settle quickly and confidently into school life.

Transitions Within School (Nursery → Reception, Reception → Year 1)

Internal transitions are planned thoughtfully to ensure consistency, continuity and a smooth learning journey. This includes:

- Sharing data, assessments and individual support plans between staff
- Transition meetings between current and next-year teachers at the end of the academic year
- Move-Up Day, where children spend time in their new classrooms with their new teachers
- Opportunities to explore new learning environments and routines
- Additional transition support for children who may need extra reassurance or a personalised plan

These steps ensure that every child moves into their next year group feeling supported, confident and ready for the challenges ahead and staff are prepared, informed and able to plan accordingly.

15. SEND, Inclusion and Supporting Children with Barriers to Learning

At The Mead Infant and Nursery School, we are committed to providing an inclusive, nurturing and ambitious Early Years environment that meets the needs of **all children**. This includes children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) and those who may experience **barriers to learning**, such as social disadvantage, communication and language delays, emotional or behavioural needs, EAL, attendance difficulties or vulnerabilities related to home circumstances. We recognise that barriers can take many forms and that early identification, high-quality support and equitable access to the curriculum are essential to ensuring every child thrives. Our aim is to ensure all children feel a strong sense of belonging, can participate fully, and make progress across all areas of learning and development.

15.1 Inclusive Practice

Inclusive practice is central to all teaching and provision in the Early Years. We ensure that:

- all children are welcomed, valued and respected, with individuality and diversity celebrated
- the curriculum is ambitious for every child, with adaptations made where required to support full access
- the learning environment is carefully planned to remove barriers and promote independence, exploration and success
- high-quality interactions support language development, emotional wellbeing and engagement
- diversity and difference are reflected positively in daily provision and resources

Our inclusive ethos ensures that every child is supported to achieve their full potential.

15.2 Identifying Needs Early

Early identification is key to effective support. Practitioners:

- use observations, assessments and conversations with families to identify emerging needs promptly
- monitor progress carefully across all areas of learning
- gather information from previous early years settings to build a full picture of each child
- recognise that some children may have multiple or complex needs
- discuss concerns sensitively with parents and seek advice when needed

Early recognition allows timely support that prevents difficulties from becoming more significant over time.

15.3 Working with the SENDCo

The SENDCo works closely with staff and families to ensure high-quality provision for children with additional needs. This includes:

- supporting staff with identifying needs and planning appropriate strategies
- leading the graduated approach (assess–plan–do–review) to ensure support is targeted and effective
- coordinating additional interventions and reasonable adjustments
- liaising with external agencies to secure specialist advice or assessment
- developing and reviewing Individual Support Plans where needed
- providing guidance and training to staff

This collaborative approach ensures that support is tailored, consistent and regularly reviewed.

15.4 Adapting Teaching and Provision

We use a graduated approach to adapt provision based on individual needs. Adaptations may include:

- targeted small-group or one-to-one support
- visual aids, timetables, now/next boards and communication tools
- sensory supports or access to regulation spaces
- enhanced adult modelling, repetition and scaffolding
- differentiated expectations and pacing
- personalised enhancements to continuous provision
- strategies recommended by specialist professionals

These adjustments ensure that all children can access a rich, well-sequenced and meaningful curriculum.

15.6 Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers

Strong relationships with families are at the heart of meeting children's needs. We:

- value parents as experts on their child
- build positive, trusting relationships from the outset
- communicate openly, regularly and sensitively
- involve parents fully in identifying needs, planning support and reviewing progress
- offer guidance, reassurance and signposting where appropriate

Working together ensures consistent support across home and school.

15.7 Transitions for Children with SEND or Barriers to Learning

Transitions can be particularly significant for children with SEND or additional vulnerabilities. We ensure that transitions are thoughtful, structured and supportive. This includes:

- detailed handover between current and next-year staff
- sharing assessments, support plans and strategies
- opportunities for children to visit their new classrooms and meet new staff
- personalised transition plans or visual booklets where helpful
- additional settling sessions or adult support where needed
- close communication with families throughout

These measures help children move confidently and smoothly into their next stage of learning.

16. Equal Opportunities and High Expectations

The Mead is committed to equity and high expectations for every child. We ensure that:

- all children access a broad, ambitious curriculum
- barriers to learning are identified and addressed early
- adaptations enable children to participate in all aspects of school life
- children build independence, confidence and resilience
- progress is acknowledged from each child's unique starting point

Our inclusive approach ensures that every child at The Mead is supported to grow, succeed and flourish.

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
Food and Nutrition Policy
Use of Mobile phones and devices