



NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME JUNIOR SCHOOL

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage – DfE 2017

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In the foundation classes (Nursery and Reception), high quality, well resourced, integrated early education makes a positive contribution to this distinct stage in a child’s development with the key learning skills of listening, speaking, concentration, persistence, co-operation, literacy and numeracy. Rich stimulating and appropriate experiences will provide each child with opportunities to develop these skills, their competencies and their thinking to the best of their ability across all areas of learning.

Children can start Nursery at any time of the year, subject to availability. The earliest being the beginning of the term in which they turn three (rising threes). The children can also join the Reception class in the school year in which they are five.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- **A Unique Child**
- **Positive Relationships**
- **Enabling Environments**
- **Learning and Development**

1. A Unique Child

At Newcastle-under-Lyme Junior 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 are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or ability. 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 meet their needs 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 recognize and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of all children. (*See whole School Safeguarding Children Policy.*)

Safeguarding and 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." (The EYFS Framework 2017).

At Newcastle-under-Lyme Junior School we understand that we are required to legally comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the 'Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2017'. To meet the requirements we:

- 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 all staff are trained to understand the safeguarding policy and procedure;
- have sufficient staff trained in pediatric first aid;
- 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 efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

2. Positive Relationships

At Newcastle-under-Lyme Junior 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 acknowledge that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We appreciate the role that parents have played in the past and are doing presently. We do this through a range of different ways, including:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our Nursery;
- allowing children the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school/nursery.
- inviting all Reception parents to an induction meeting
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- During the course of the school year, there are two Parents' Evenings for every year group, (currently during the autumn and spring terms), and a meeting for Nursery children.
- All parents receive an end of term report in the autumn and summer terms;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: class assemblies, sports day, etc;
- regular newsletters.

All staff involved with the EYFS develop good relationships with the children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school, Reception teachers act as a 'key person' to all children in their class, supported by the Teaching Assistant(s). In the Nursery each child has a base group with a designated Key Person.

Our onsite Nursery provides an excellent opportunity for continuity of learning through play and regular consultations take place with the Reception team.

3. Enabling Environments

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.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The planning within the EYFS follows the schools' Long Term and Medium Term Plans. These plans are used by the EYFS as a guide for weekly planning; however the teacher may alter these plans 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 through observation and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation to inform the EYFS Profile. Each child's level of development will be assessed against the Early Learning Goals. Newcastle-under-Lyme Junior School ensures that all children attending the EYFS setting have a personal Learning Journey which records photos, observations and comments, in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage, to build up a record of each child's achievements during their time with us. It will also show children's developmental progress through the different age bands of the EYFS. We use an online Learning Journey System (Tapestry), allowing staff and parents to access and add to the information from any computer via a personal, password-protected login. This information will then be passed on to Year 1 teachers to assist with the planning and activities.

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 classes have their 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 opportunities to explore use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors, that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning.

4. Learning and Development

At Newcastle-under-Lyme Junior 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 inter-connected.

Teaching and Learning Style

In line with our expectations of effective teaching and learning in the Junior School, the following features apply to teaching in the EYFS, just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 1 and 2:

- 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.

Play

“Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems and relate to others.” (EYFS Framework)

Through planned, purposeful play as well as child led play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise 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

“Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.” (EYFS Framework)

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

“When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.” (EYFS Framework)

Children should be given opportunity 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 and development

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning, comprising three prime areas and four specific areas:

The prime areas are:

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

The four specific areas are:

- 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 ELGs that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of all staff teaching in the EYFS to follow the principles stated in this policy.

The Headteacher, Assistant Head of Pre Prep and Nursery Manager will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the school monitoring schedule.

Signed:

Date:

Review Date: By September 2021

