

Early Years Policy
Reviewed January 2020

Intent

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Robsack Wood we are proud to offer an Early Years Village which is a campus approach to education where children are fully supported through their journey. This begins with children from 3 months within our nursery, then children may choose to move to our Reception classes in the academic year after they have turned 4 (currently compulsory schooling begins the term after they have become 5).

We believe The Foundation Stage is a unique phase in a child's life and is crucial to successful future learning. Through this policy we aim to ensure a consistent approach where parents, carers, teachers and practitioners work together to give children the best possible start.

The EYFS aims to develop independent, confident, successful learners who accept challenge and take evaluated risks. There is a high focus on developing pupils' moral, spiritual, social and cultural understanding. We encourage empathy and understanding of the impact of pupil's behaviour on others whilst ensuring all pupils maintain high esteem.

Our curriculum is broad, balanced and led by the needs and interests of our pupils. We give opportunities for pupils to build upon the skills they have to shape knowledge and skills knowledge and skills for their future learning.

Implementation

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the statutory framework which sets standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well; and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children are ready for school; and stimulates the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the foundation for good future progress through school and life. All children within Robsack Wood Nursery and Reception classes work within this framework.

It details four key principles which shape our practice;

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

A Unique Child:-

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We understand that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates and join us on their own learning path. All children are included and valued equally.

Settling in and Transition

In our nursery we offer “Settling in Sessions” where children get to know their Key Person, explore the new environment and meet other children. Parents share important information around needs, interests and routines. This is achieved both through discussion and completing “Getting to Know You booklets.”

In a similar way transitions between age phases are carefully planned, supported with social and photograph stories and enhanced to meet individual needs. An additional transition programme is provided for children who enter our Reception classes from other settings. This consists of three visits and includes a session over lunch time

Inclusion in the Foundation Stage - Special Educational Needs and Disability

All children and their families are valued at Robsack Wood. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their full potential and planning is in response to the observed needs of all groups and abilities

Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child.

Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and further support can be accessed through the Nursery Teacher/SENCO and Academy Inclusion Team which includes a Speech and Language Therapist.

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children so that they make good progress from their starting points. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. In order to accommodate the individual’s particular learning style provision will be planned wherever possible in a multi-sensory way so that the various experiences can be accessed by all in the spirit of inclusion.

We meet the needs of all our children 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.

Pupil Premium

We ensure that we quickly identify children who are entitled to both Pupil Premium and Early Years Pupil Premium. Through baseline assessment we ascertain in which areas children are attaining and how we can further support through resources, expertise or intervention. Progress is rigorously monitored and tracked.

See also SEND Local Offer

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."

Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014

At Robsack Wood all children have the right to feel and be safe. The safety of our children is paramount. We encourage the children to take risks in a safe learning environment by helping them to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children

Within the Early Years we ensure that our current practice and provision complies with the welfare requirements as stated in the Ofsted Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage.

Our team works collaboratively to;

- Promote the welfare and safeguarding 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 that the premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.

Positive Relationships:-

At Robsack Wood we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. Families are given clear guidance on the staff they will meet and their role in the setting.

Key Persons

To enable children to make secure attachments to practitioners and to develop positive relationships, we operate a Co-Key Person system in the nursery, in Reception classes, the Class Teachers take on this role. This allows two practitioners to work in partnership to implement an effective Key Person system which ensures strong relationships with high quality communication and support through the range of attendance patterns. Where possible, children are allocated into family groupings.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We encourage parents through:

- Comprehensive settling in and transition programmes including drop in sessions at transition points.
- Arranging a range of activities such as Celebration Afternoons and Open Morning throughout the year that encourage collaboration.
- Formal meetings for parents/carers three times a year at which the Class Teacher/Key Person and the parent/carer discuss the child's progress. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress in the final year of Nursery and the end of Reception.
- Inviting all parents/carers to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school.
- Providing drop in sessions where the teacher, parents/carers and child can meet before they start school.
- Having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents/carers to become settled and allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances.
- Arranging for children to have a staggered start to school, over the first week so that the teacher can welcome each child individually to our academy.
- Providing parents/carers and opportunity to celebrate their child's learning and development by completing "Tree Toppers" which inform planning and provision.
- By providing a quiet and confidential area where parents/carers are able to discuss any concerns between children, the academy and parents/carers.

- Encouraging parents/carers to attend workshops around the curriculum and supporting at home.
- Sharing curriculum plans on our website that covers aspects that we will teach during that term, offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents/carers through 'Dear Parents' letters
- Regular updates through social media and email

Enabling Environments:-

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up to provide development within all area.

Free flow

We operate a free flow approach which includes indoor and outdoor spaces and when possible across the age phases. In this way children can access a range of self-directed challenges alongside structured adult led learning experiences.

Learning spaces are clearly defined and resources are easily accessible so that children can develop as independent learners by following their own schemas and fascinations.

We recognise the importance of open ended experiences to promote purposeful and challenging play. Practitioners observe and extend this play as appropriate, use inspiring language to promote Sustained Shared Thinking. They further use these observations to enhance provision and extend individual learning.

Outdoor Woodland Learning

The EYFS Forest School practitioner plans and leads a programme currently for children aged two and upwards in woodland attached to the academy. Younger children have the opportunity to explore and visit other areas on our site including the field and animal enclosures.

Learning and Development:-

We recognise that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. At Robsack Wood we understand that young children achieve well when learning is engaging and well matched to their interests and previous learning. Learning is often play based with increasing challenge and expectations as a child develops.

Curriculum

There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are “prime areas,” and four “specific areas.”

The prime areas are

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development.

The specific areas are

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

The Prime Areas are essential for fostering early learning skills and are promoted heavily through our planning and provision. Successful mastery of these skills supports children to achieve well in Specific Areas of Learning.

Curriculum Mapping is in place to promote a wide ranging curriculum where children are challenged with new experiences. It is made up of a range of broad themes called Learning Journeys. These are often linked to seasonal changes whilst being flexible to respond to observed needs and current interests.

Across all of these are we promote Characteristics of Effective Learning where children develop their abilities to play and explore, take an active role in their learning and think creatively. We observe and monitor progress with these skills and report these to parents.

Assessment

“Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children’s progress, understand their needs and to plan activities and support”

Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014

The Development Matters Bands and Early Learning Goals provide the basis for assessment throughout the Foundation Stage. Children are quickly assessed at their entry point to the Foundation Stage to establish a baseline. Progress is monitored and tracked consistently through shared Electronic Learning Stories and a linked tracking system.

Practitioners, teachers and teaching assistants make regular assessments of children’s learning and these high quality observations are key to the assessment and planning cycle. Next Steps are planned in response to these and shared with parents.

There are several summative assessment points throughout the Foundation Stage.

- ☐ Two Year Old Progress Checks in conjunction with Health Visitor and parents
- ☐ Children entering Reception are observed carefully and a baseline collected in the first 3 weeks of term.
- ☐ A Good Level of Development measure is made at the end of the Reception Year

Letters and Sounds/ Phonics

Listening and attention skills are developed right from the beginning of the Foundation Stage. Later Phase 1 of the Letters and Sounds Phonic Programme begins in the nursery. This is a daily programme of interactive experiences that promote phonological awareness and key skills for reading and spelling. Further phonics continue throughout the Foundation Stage and into Key Stage 1

See Academy Phonics Policy

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See Academy Phonics Policy

Home Learning

At Robsack Wood, we understand the impact of high quality liaison between home and school and strive to ensure that our pupils are keen to learn at every opportunity. For this reason, we believe that the extension of learning out of the classroom, including the provision of home learning, is a vital addition to a child’s learning.

For our younger children Key Persons may suggest ways to support at home in particular areas of learning. Ideas for learning experiences at home are offered weekly on our Dear Parents letters, alongside an outline of what the children have been learning that week at the academy or nursery.

In addition to this, in the Reception Classes, children are offered a grid of a range of experiences to be completed at home. Regular reading is encouraged at home and this should be recorded in a Reading Journal.

See Academy Home Learning Policy

British Values

The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are embedded in the Early Years Foundation Stage. We actively seek to promote these values through modelling behaviour, challenging stereotypes and ensuring that our children receive a rich and varied curriculum.

When appropriate we demonstrate democracy in action, and support the decisions that children make and ensure they are given opportunities to develop enquiring minds in an atmosphere where questions are valued. We provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities

We allow children to explore the language of feelings and responsibility, reflect on their differences and understand we are free to have different opinions.

Policy Status and Review

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