

# Meadow Lane Infants School Policy



## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

<b>Last reviewed</b>	<b>September 2014</b>
<b>Review Cycle</b>	<b>1 Year</b>

## MEADOW LANE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

### 'Reach for the Sky and be a Star'

*"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."*

"Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage",  
Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007

At Meadow Lane we take children from up to 21 different pre-school settings and a range of backgrounds. We recognise that all children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. It is the privilege of the practitioners working in the Foundation Stage to build upon that prior learning and experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that parents/carers, support staff and the reception teachers work effectively together to support children's continued learning and development.

This policy describes our aims and how we deliver quality, child centred education in the Foundation Stage where each child develops personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his/her full potential.

At Meadow Lane we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development, however we also believe early childhood is valid in itself, as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

With this in mind we at Meadow Lane aim to ensure that the Foundation Stage is fun filled, brimming with the excitement of learning and flowing with a sense of enjoyment born from achievement. This is underpinned with a strong sense of community and a respect for the world we live in.

We are guided by the "Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage" document (Department for Education 2012) with "Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage".

We believe in the importance of the themes and principles that underpin this guidance and are committed to the Characteristics of Effective Learning which enable children to make the best progress they can in all aspects of the Prime and Specific areas of Learning.

Characteristics of Effective Learning:

- Playing and Exploring
- Active Learning
- Creating and Thinking Critically

Prime Areas:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)
- Physical Development (PD)
- Communication, Language and Literacy (CLL)

Specific Areas:

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

At Meadow Lane we believe the Prime and Specific areas are equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development. We aim to deliver all the areas through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- **A UNIQUE CHILD**

At Meadow Lane School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured. Our aim is to ensure we nurture and develop or strengthen these qualities in our pupils. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. We use a mixture of praise, encouragement, challenge and the modelling of positive learning attitudes and behaviours to enable children continue to be competent learners.

- **POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

“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.”

At Meadow Lane School we aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. If children and their families feel secure and valued then they can be empowered to engage fully in all the learning experiences we offer and will partake in these with enthusiasm and determination.

- **ENABELING ENVIRONMENTS**

At Meadow Lane School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development.

The EYFS space is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. The classrooms are set up so that the children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Each class has access to a veranda area and the Early Years Garden. The outdoor area is invaluable and has an extremely positive effect on the children’s development and learning. Being outdoors offers opportunities for extending, experimenting with, practising and developing the learning that has taken place indoors or for initiating totally new learning. Doing things in different ways and on different scales adds variety and relevance to the children’s learning. The space also allows the children to be physically active and exuberant in their learning.

- **LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

At Meadow Lane 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.

“Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development.”

“Early Years Foundation Stage”,

At Meadow Lane we believe that children’s natural desire to play is an excellent vehicle for development and learning. Through 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. This holistic approach allows for a diversity and interlinking of learning that we believe is key in preparing our children for the ever changing and unknown future that they will inhabit as adults.

## **Aims**

We aim to:

- Provide an environment where children and adults can experience the fun and enjoyment of learning and living.
- Provide an environment that welcomes and celebrates diversity and utilises the strengths and interests of the adults and community to foster understanding and positive life long learning attitudes.
- Provide opportunities that promote and nurture the characteristics of effective learning.
- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development.
- Provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress
- Enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence, self confidence and resilience.
- Work in partnership with Parents/carers and value their contributions

- Ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender, sexuality or ability, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.

### **Policy to Practice:**

Here we briefly outline how we transfer our aims into results. This is not a definitive list of our practices but rather a brief overview that gives a flavour of what our Foundation Stage is like.

### **Planning**

Good planning is very important in making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive; however daring to be flexible is the key to success. Our planning builds on and extends what children know and can do and shows how the principles of the EYFS will be put into practice and the learning goals achieved. Our planning is informed by the observations and assessments we have made of the children. All practitioners who work in reception at Meadow Lane are involved in this process. Planning is undertaken in three stages:

- Long term planning

We have created a framework, which gives structure and coherence to the curriculum. Topics are planned for the year to ensure broad and balanced coverage that allows opportunities to 'spiral' learning.

- Medium Term Planning

Here we focus on a half terms work in more detail and make links between aspects of the curriculum.

- Short Term Planning

We identify specific learning objectives, activities, differentiation, deployment of adults and resources, to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly and day-to-day basis. It allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests and for revision and modification, informed by on-going observational assessment.

(See Curriculum policy for more detail)

### **Staffing and Organisation**

At Meadow Lane we have a one point entry. There are two reception class and one Reception/Year 1 class. We maintain an adult/pupil ratio of 1:15 within the class rooms in the mornings and a similar or improved ratio in the afternoons when the Early Years Garden is in use.

The children have daily opportunities for structured and free-flow play both in the classroom and in the custom built EYFS outdoor area. This time is supported by an adult, who acts as a facilitator to the child's learning. The teacher liaises with the teaching assistant, regularly involving them in planning, preparation and assessment. All practitioners are encouraged to participate in local authority courses, in-service and local cluster group training. All practitioners also conduct and attend in-house training and disseminate new initiatives and ideas to colleagues. We have a particularly dedicated TA team who voluntarily participate in additional in-house development activities and disseminate their learning to the teaching staff.

### **Assessment, recording and monitoring**

At the start of the year we use an 'in-house' base-line assessment which includes a focus on the Characteristics of Effective Learning. Throughout the year we use many forms of assessment to inform our planning and to track individual development. Assessment and recording may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations, baseline assessment, other focused assessments e.g. sound/number, annotated examples of work, photographs, video and information from parents. We also encourage self and peer assessment. Each child has a 'Development Record' in which this evidence is stored. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process and all assessments help to inform the completion of each child's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Profile which is kept electronically. At the end of the year the Profile is used to summarise the child's achievements in relation to the Early Learning Goals as described in the Statutory Framework.

The Head Teacher and EYFS leader monitor teaching and learning across the Foundation Stage and analyse the EYFS Profile data in conjunction with the assessment co-ordinator.

### **The Learning Environment**

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming, culturally relevant, stimulating and celebratory learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence.

The learning environment provides: role play, book corner, writing area, numeracy area, listening centre, computer, creative/malleable, sand/water, construction, small world and puzzles. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own learning activities.

### **Liaison with pre-school settings**

At Meadow Lane we have good links with our local pre-school providers (approx 15-21 of them dependant on the cohort). Where appropriate and possible the main 'feeder' pre-schools (8 approximately) are invited to CPD opportunities and community events. The Meadow Lane FS Leader has shared good practice with our key pre-schools to nurture continuity of provision. This is an on-going task.

### **Transition from pre-school settings to Meadow Lane**

The process of transition happens in the Summer Term and consists of:

- Statutory forms sent to parents/Carers of prospective children.
- The FS Leader and/or other staff members visit all the Pre Schools to meet the prospective Meadow Lane children and to gather initial information from the Key Workers.
- The Pre Schools then bring the children for an initial visit to Meadow Lane.
- The children visit Meadow Lane for 3 sessions with their carers. At this time the HT gives an induction talk to carers. All children are given their own, personalised induction book, 'My New School'.
- Children start on half days for a week and then enter school full time.
- In week 2 Class Teachers give induction talk to parents related to daily class routines.
- In week 3/4 FS Leader gives a talk on 'Letters and Sounds'.
- Parents asked for feedback on the induction process.

For greater detail on induction see 'Transition Policy'

### **Reception to Year 1 Transition**

The Reception and Year 1 teachers have worked together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible.

At Meadow Lane:

- The Reception children meet year 1 teachers during assembly, playtime and other whole school activities during the reception year
- Individual EYFS Profile summaries are passed on to year 1 teachers
- An EYFS Profile end of year group summary is passed on to year 1 teachers
- The Reception and year 1 teachers meet to discuss the individual needs of children in July
- The Reception children visit their new year 1 class and teacher for a series of story times and visits/activities in the Summer Term.
- Year 1 children have access to The Early Years Garden for some afternoon sessions.

### **Home/School Links**

We recognise that Parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. We recognise and value the role that parents/carers have in educating their children and know that when home and school work together in unison this has a very positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

- Developing professional but relaxed relationships with Parents/carers that engender trust and openness.
- Operating an "open door" policy, whereby Parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner
- Inviting Parents/carers to help in the reception class or other classes in the school and to accompany children on school visits
- Encouraging Parents/carers to listen to their child read each night, and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading diary
- Discussing children's progress with Parents/carers at parents' evening.
- Providing an annual written report to Parents/carers in July summarising the child's progress against the early learning goals and EYFS assessment scales. The child's 'Development Record' is given to carers at this time as part of the report.
- Holding child/parent open days and workshops to enable parents to work alongside their children.
- Holding a variety of social events such Christmas Fayre, Grandparents Morning and the Family Picnic.

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and celebrate 'differences'. All children and their families are valued within our school.

At Meadow Lane we aim to provide all pupils and adults, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender, sexuality or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. All staff are aware of the influence of adults in promoting and modelling positive attitudes and understand the need to challenge stereotyped ideas or misguided thinking. For further information see the Equality Policy.

**Inclusion**

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 and individual needs when planning for their learning. In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations. Children with special educational needs will be given support as appropriate to enable them to benefit from the curriculum. This includes children that are more able, and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities.

Additional adult support may be provided for children with special educational or medical Needs. Effective liaison between outside agencies, the SENCO, support staff, teachers and midday staff is key to effective provision. Individual Education Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support, in line with the school's Inclusion Policy. We have high expectations of all children. For further information see Inclusion Policy.

**Safeguarding**

In the Foundation Stage we are particularly vigilant as we recognize that very young children are less able to be cognisant about their 'rights' and to express their experiences. Staff are all aware of safeguarding procedures and the school and LA policy is adhered to. Please refer to the Child Protection Policy.

**Health and Safety**

It is important to us that all children in the school are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We believe that children should be allowed to take risks, manage risks and be taught to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children. (See Child Protection and Safeguarding policies)

Please refer to 'Health and Safety' Policy with specific reference being made to Risk Assessment and Medical needs (First Aid Training).

In the Foundation Stage the Class Teacher is the 'Key Person' for the children in their class unless the child has personally chosen otherwise or there has been a specific need to do this. (It is recognised that children often make these choices known through their actions rather than direct verbal requests).

**Monitoring and Review**

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored and evaluated by the Headteacher, Governors and EYFS leader, and will be reviewed on an annual basis.

EYFS governor – Becky Thomas and Joanne Waldram

Head teacher: Joanne Revill

EYFS Co-ordinator: Rachel Darke

Date: July 2014

Staff reviewed: September 2014

Date ratified: October 2014

Date for review: September 2015

Signed : ..... Head teacher

..... Chair of SDC committee