

Moss Road Infant Academy



EARLY YEARS POLICY INCLUDING TEACHING AND LEARNING

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 At Askern Moss Road Infant Academy, we fully support that:

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential.'

(Early Years Foundation Stage Framework 2021)

Intention:

Our intention is that our children feel safe and secure at all times, developing creative thinking, independence, high levels of engagement and perseverance. We strive to ensure that every child has a high level of well-being and develops a desire to learn and a love of learning that will stay with them for their entire lives.

Our children are provided with the basic skills needed in order to be confident communicators, readers, writers and mathematicians.

We celebrate the world in which we live, developing children's understanding and awareness of other cultures, beliefs and identities. Most importantly, we teach our children to have respect for themselves and for others.

Implementation:

Inclusion:

Our school and the early years setting embrace and promote inclusion. We respect and recognise the strengths and abilities of all our children. We give the children every opportunity to achieve their full potential, setting realistic but challenging expectations in order to meet the needs of every unique child. We strive to remove any barriers to learning to ensure that all children regardless of background or ability succeed in everything they do.

To promote inclusion we provide:

- A learning environment where all children's interests and ideas are valued
- A safe and stimulating environment of discovery to ensure that learning is effective and purposeful
- Resources which reflect diversity and are free from stereotyping and discrimination
- Activities which are inviting and exciting yet challenging enough for all children
- We closely monitor the progress and development of all the children in our setting to ensure that support is provided when necessary. We liaise with our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and seek support from outside agencies.

2. IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 **Inclusion:**

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opportunity to achieve their full potential, setting realistic but challenging expectations in order to meet the needs of every unique child. We strive to remove any barriers to learning to ensure that all children regardless of background or ability succeed in everything they do.

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3. ALL ABOUT THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE FRAMEWORK 2021

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework 2021 (EYFS) is guided by four main principles which underpin everything we do:

- The unique child – developing capable, resilient, confident and self-assured learners
- Positive relationships – working together to support children to be strong and independent learners
- Enabling environments with teaching and support from adults – where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents and carers of the child
- Learning and development – an acknowledgment that children all learn in different ways and at different rates

We adhere to the EYFS Statutory Framework, which separates the seven areas of learning into three 'prime areas' and four 'specific areas'.

The prime areas are:

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

The four specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Maths
- Understanding the World
- Expressive arts and Design

3.2 THE PRIME AREAS

Communication and Language

We provide children with a language rich, poetry rich, rhyme rich, music rich and story rich environment to enable them to fully develop their communication, speaking, understanding and listening skills and flourish.

We understand that children develop language by hearing it, then by being given lots of opportunities to rehearse it.

Children are explicitly taught key vocabulary linked to the carefully chosen core text of the week. These are displayed in the setting on our 'top ten' word boards. Practitioners refer to

these words during every day activities and observe and assess the children's understanding of them throughout the week.

Key vocabulary is visible throughout the whole setting linked to the area of learning. This vocabulary supports the practitioners in using the correct dialogue when interacting with children and reinforces the children's language acquisition.

In Nursery, the children have a daily 'guided talk' session, which support children's development in this area and allows them to have back and forth conversations with their practitioners and each other. This is to help them become confident talkers and effective listeners.

In Reception, the children build on this during their 'morning meeting' - where they are encouraged to talk about the ideas and interests and listen respectfully to others.

We use Blank's levels of questioning throughout the EYFS as a tool to support comprehension and ensure questions are appropriately challenging. We encourage visitors to come to the school to talk to the children about their jobs/professions to extend the children's knowledge and use of language.

Children identified as needing more support with their communication and language skills participate in the NELI programme. This is a research-based intervention designed to improve the children's narrative, vocabulary and listening skills through small group and one-to-one sessions with a trained teaching assistant.

Physical Development:

We recognise the positive impact on emotional well-being and brain development promoted by physical development.

Children are still developing their gross motor control and major muscle groups and need lots of opportunities to strengthen their bodies.

Children are continually encouraged to be active and also to understand the importance of this for their health.

Supporting good oral health is a key element of our EYFS curriculum. We use an educational programme called 'Dental Buddy' from the Oral Health Foundation to explicitly teach our children the importance of a healthy mouth. We work closely with parents delivering each aspect of the programme which is revisited every term including; how to brush your teeth and how often, the importance of a balanced diet and the impact of sugary foods and drinks and what to expect when visiting the dentist. We liaise with the school nurse and other agencies for support and resources and invite visits from dental professionals. Every classroom has an interactive display with resources and books supporting good oral health for the children to explore.

In Nursery and Reception children have open access to the outside area for movement and active learning with some planned sessions for movement play.

Provision is in place indoors and outdoors to encourage the children to develop their core muscle strength, gross motor and fine motor control.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Executive Function and Self-Regulation:

We encourage children to interact respectfully with all adults and other children to improve their confidence and ability to form positive relationships.

Children are always encouraged to respect others, develop social skills, manage their feelings and behave appropriately. This is supported in everything we do, with the practitioners acting as role models.

We have clear boundaries and high expectations and talk to the children about always making the 'right choices'.

We understand that high quality early years provision will help the children to develop their executive function and self-regulation skills. Executive function includes the child's ability to: hold information in their mind, focus their attention, regulate their behaviour and plan what to do next. These abilities contribute to the child's growing ability to self-regulate which involves focussing their thinking, monitor what they are doing and adapt, regulate strong feelings, be patient for what they want and bounce back when things get difficult.

We aim to ensure that the children develop these essential skills in their learning for healthy development through practitioner scaffolding and careful interactions.

Scaffolding might involve recognising the child's feelings and talking this through with them, breaking a task down into smaller components, modelling how to complete a task and attend to it in a systematic way with a goal in mind and rehearse how to focus their attention.

Literacy

In Nursery, children develop a love of stories and we encourage them to make marks in all areas, eventually beginning to copy letters from their name.

Children take a high-quality picture book home to share with their parents/carers which is then changed every week.

Children across the EYFS setting are provided with many exciting opportunities to make marks and write including the use of floor books and a range of stimulating activities both indoors and outdoors to encourage high engagement.

Where possible, reading and writing take place within a meaningful context, often linked to interests and current themes.

Children in Foundation Stage 2 have daily literacy sessions, based on the focus core text. These sessions develop the children's knowledge and love of books, develop vocabulary, and comprehension skills.

These children also have a daily phonics session, following the RWInc phonics programme. The children are grouped according to their reading ability and are closely monitored and assessed to ensure they make the best possible progress.

The children are not asked to read or write beyond their current phonics ability encouraging them to be independent and to feel successful in reading and writing. All F2 children take home a quality picture book to share with an adult at home..

Mathematical Development

In Nursery, we provide children with a balance of adult led group sessions and also time to independently explore numbers, shape, measure and patterns. Provision areas are set up so that children have opportunities to use their mathematical skills in a real context.

Every area of the EYFS setting is carefully thought out to ensure that provision encourages all aspects of mathematical development. In Reception the children have a daily maths session.

We use and adapt the White Rose maths scheme and focus on embedding the foundation skills in maths such as the counting principles and subitising. We use a mixture of whole class, small group and 1-1 sessions to support the children in their mathematical development.

Understanding the World

We want children to be curious and inquisitive about the world in which we live. They have many opportunities to find out about their families, their community, technology, other cultures and beliefs and the world around them.

We follow the Doncaster Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) programme so children develop a good understanding of the different religious festivals that are celebrated throughout the year and daily quiet reflection time is also encouraged. Children make links in their learning as they try to make sense of the world that surrounds them.

Expressive Arts and Design

Children have opportunities to explore and play with a wide range of media and open-ended materials in order to support creative thinking and problem-solving.

We promote the use of recycled materials to ensure that children develop an understanding about how to care for the wider environment, acting as responsible citizens of the future.

Children's curiosity is stimulated as they are encouraged to look closely during observational artwork.

In addition, they have opportunities to experience a range of music, dance, art and role-play and helicopter stories through weekly adult led group sessions.

3.3 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE LEARNING

We provide a balance in our space for adult interaction, adult instruction and play; including free play, group play and parallel play. We acknowledge that play is a vehicle for learning, where our children are able to express themselves in a developmentally appropriate way. The provision we create and our teaching and interactions allow for exploration. We provide lots of opportunities for children to explore, investigate, interpret and be curious.

The characteristics of effective learning are:-

- Playing and exploring– children investigate, experience things and 'have a go'.
- Active learning– children concentrate and persevere when they encounter a problem.
- Creating and thinking critically– children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Structure in our EYFS Unit

Our Nursery operates a morning session and has 26 places available for children aged three and above. The sessions runs from 8:45am until 11:45am.

There is one Foundation Stage Class in our Early Years setting and the school day begins at 8.45am and ends at 3.15pm.

Our EYFS Curriculum

The curriculum is our top level plan of everything that we want our children to learn.

We believe that the child's experience must always be central to the thinking of every EYFS practitioner in our setting.

Our curriculum is carefully sequenced to enable children to build on their learning over time.

We understand that young children's learning is most powerful when it is driven by their interests so our planning is flexible.

We understand that depth in early learning is much more important than planning lots of things in a superficial way.

Our Early Year's curriculum starts with the child and their experiences in their family and immediate environment so learning is meaningful. Our curriculum is designed to help to ensure that every child keeps up. It is led from high quality texts supported by high quality continuous provision. Communication and language underpins our curriculum. It also ensures that children take part in additional rich, challenging and open-ended activities. Some children will experience curriculum content at a greater depth. Other children will experience carefully planned and regular extra targeted intervention so they don't fall behind the majority.

An example of our planning and review cycle:

1. Gather Key information	What we have noticed about children's interests and what parents/carers have told us.
2. Consider and think	Noticing what children already know and what they can do. Deciding what we want children to learn next. Introducing rich new ideas and cultural experiences.
3. Plan	Helping children to learn through adult interaction, adult instruction and play. We decide what specific vocabulary will be introduced to children and what scaffolding and open ended questions will help children to develop their thinking.
4. Act	Helping the children to learn by organising the activities and equipment to maximise learning. Adults ensure that children understand and can do what has been intended.
5. Review	Allow plenty of time by giving children regular opportunities to practise and repeat their learning. Planning is always kept under review as some children will need extra help to keep up. Others will benefit from additional experiences to deepen their learning.

The importance of play:

Play is an essential part of our EYFS curriculum. This includes:

- Play which is child-led: freely engaged in and enjoyed by children
- Play which is sensitively supported and extended by adults
- Play which is guided towards specific educational outcomes.

High quality play is supported in our EYFS setting by providing children with a well organised environment which responds to children's interests, and which widens those interests by introducing children to new materials, experiences, activities and artistic expressions.

We understand that young children benefit from a balanced curriculum which includes teaching that has been planned ahead and also allows for spontaneous learning.

In Nursery, children have well planned daily adult led group times with specific learning opportunities for mathematics, literacy, letters and sounds, music, PSED, oral health and helicopter stories.

In Foundation Stage 2, additional to the children's daily literacy, maths and phonics sessions the children have PSED sessions following the JIGSAW programme, helicopter stories to

develop their communication and language and narrative skills, weekly RE and music sessions and handwriting sessions.

Our five themes which run throughout the year ensure that children have a broad and balanced curriculum. The themes are as follows;

The Changing Year – observing seasonal changes, Colours Around Us – experimenting with and learning about colour.

Colours Around Us – experimenting with and learning about colour,

All About Me – learning about ourselves, how to express our interests and fascinations.

The Natural World – developing a love of nature and learning how to care for and be responsible for the environment.

Let's Celebrate – celebrating many different religious festivals and cultural events throughout the year.

We also carefully select high quality core texts which encompass all the topics and themes we feel are essential to the children's learning and development which are carefully sequenced with the KS1 staff to ensure progression.#

In addition to this, the children have a weekly poem/rhyme which they learn to support them in building their early literacy skills by hearing how words can be moved and stretched to rhyme. The core texts are read to the children every day over a two-week period and vocabulary is specifically chosen from them, teaching children the meanings of these new words and modelling how to use them in context in the EYFS setting. ***For further information, see our EYFS curriculum maps for nursery and reception.***

Following children's interests

Adults in the setting identify children's particular interests by observing and listening to the children and through regular conversations with parents. These interests are recorded in our floor books and learning journey file for parents and staff to freely access. The practitioners think of ways to extend learning and develop the interest further through questioning, providing stimulating resources linked to the interest and responding to the children in their play.

4. IMPACT

4.1 PARENTS AS PARTNERS AND FOCUS CHILDREN

We recognise that it is important for parents and carers and the adults in our early years setting to have a strong and respectful partnership. This sets the scene for children to thrive in early years. This involves listening to our parents and carers, giving them clear information about their child's progress.

We understand that the help that parents give their children at home has a very significant impact on the child's learning.

We support this through:

- Talking to parents/carers during home visits prior to the child starting school,
- Our core texts are read by the teachers and uploaded onto our school app 'Seesaw' for children and parents to enjoy at home including a list of the activities that the children will be engaging in each week with photographs for the parents and children to see.

- Giving the children an opportunity to spend time with their teacher during visits/stay and play sessions before starting in our school.
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting before the child starts in our school. This involves information on how we aim to work with their child, particularly in relation to how we support children's learning and development in the prime and specific areas.
- Parents are regularly encouraged to look at the school Twitter page @mossroadacad where weekly photographs are uploaded to show the children engaged in their learning. We also encourage parents/carers to use the school Seesaw app which shows an online journal of the weekly activities, key words we are learning and a recording of the core text being read by one of the teachers. This also allows parents/carers to communicate and share directly with us progress and achievements their child has achieved at home.
- Every child is observed closely once every term by all the practitioners in the setting. These are our '**focus children**'. Parents/carers are sent a letter home explaining that we will be observing their child and are invited to visit the settling or have a telephone conversation to discuss how their child is progressing in all seven areas of development and what their next steps will be. The meetings are organised and led by the class teacher. They are also encouraged to share with us what their child has been doing at home, building a more rounded assessment of the child. We use this opportunity to provide the parents/carers with the opportunity to celebrate their child's learning with us which is then used to inform further planning and provision. The observation records are shared with the parents/carers and kept in a 'learning journey' file freely accessible to them at any time.
- We arrange a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents e.g. sharing the learning days, stay and play sessions, stay and read together sessions and EYFS celebrations and performances. We also encourage our parents to visit if they have a profession that links to the children's interests to talk with them about it.
- We ensure that a quiet and confidential area of the setting is available for meeting with parents/carers and also to support them if they need to discuss any issues regarding their child.
- Increasing the knowledge of parents/carers to support them and their child at home in areas of development such as phonics, early maths and reading.
- In Reception the parents are invited to termly parent's evenings where they can talk in detail to their child's teacher about their achievements and progress and how they can support this at home.

Key person systems:

The teacher is the key person, supported by other members of staff. It is ultimately the teacher's responsibility to maintain the paperwork and to take ownership of the class and the progress of ALL the children. Any group times should be shared and rotated between the teacher and support staff so that all children achieve a consistent quality of teaching.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment:

We use the planning and review cycle outlined in Julien Greniers' Working with the revised Early Years Foundation Stage: Principles into Practice. **See information on 'Our EYFS Curriculum' for more information.** We start the year by observing children in their play and communicating with parents/carers to make assessments in all areas of development linked to the skills and outcomes from Development Matters.

Every child has an assessment book where outcomes and skills achieved are highlighted every half term to monitor and assess progress in physical development, mathematical development, literacy and communication and language.

We use our professional judgement and our knowledge of the child to assess their progress in the other three areas of development. This then informs our next steps for the child. We consider how to extend the child's learning linked to our core text, taking into account wherever possible, interests and fascinations. Appropriate activities are then planned, ensuring that there are opportunities to support the characteristics of effective learning.

In Nursery, we concentrate initially on the prime areas to ensure that children have strong foundations in their learning. We focus on the children's language development, offering extra support and targeted intervention where needed. We work with parents/carers to support their child in having good oral health and we give them our full support with toilet training and hand washing to foster independence in relation to self-care skills. We build on these firm foundations in Reception developing the children's reading, writing and maths skills as well as their knowledge of the world.

Supporting the children's communication, language, personal, social and emotional development is central to everything we do in our setting. Children take part in whole class activities, adult led group activities and independent play. During adult led group sessions, teachers plan a broad range of learning opportunities, which stem from our curriculum themes, core texts, interests and the learning of new skills.

During independent play, both indoors and outdoors, children are supported by high quality interactions from adults in order to extend their learning. This may be through facilitating a process, modelling the correct use of language or using open ended questioning.

The children also have floor books accessible in key areas which is used to record mark making, self-reflections, children's dialogue and photographs of their learning.

In Nursery every child has their own individual display board where their wow moments and achievements are celebrated. This includes mark making, paintings, collages, photographs and dialogue recorded.

Every child is a focus child at least three times a year where they are closely observed by all adults in the setting in all seven areas of development. Parents/carers are then invited to discuss their child's progress and next steps with the class teacher/s. ***See parents as partners and focus children for more information.***

A summative assessment is recorded on O Track for each child, in each area of learning, at the beginning of every half term in nursery and at the end of each half term in reception. We update our data termly in order to establish progress, strengths and areas for development. In response to this data we plan support and interventions to the children that need to catch up. This varies from year to year depending on the cohort and individual needs. In depth analysis is carried out towards the end of the year to analyse progress and attainment of individuals and key groups. Pupil progress meetings are held in order to ensure that every child's needs are being met and that their progress and attainment is closely tracked to inform future targets.

Individual reports are written for all children that will be leaving Nursery and Reception at the end of each academic year. Parents/carers are invited to discuss the report. At the end of the Reception year, the EYFSP is completed, clearly stating if the child has met the ELG or is not yet meeting the ELG. This, along with the report, is used to provide transition information for the next teacher.

4.2 TRANSITION TO NURSERY AND RECEPTION

When a child sets off for their first day at school, we believe they should be full of positive emotions; excitement, confidence and happiness. This happens if they know exactly where they are going, who will be there, what they will be able to do when they get there and how long they will be staying there. A successful transition means the child settles quickly into school, learning and developing from day one. Practitioners welcome a class of children and these children are settled, confident and ready to learn.

We understand that transition will be successful if:

1. Practitioners know each child, including their interests and needs
2. The school is able to meet these interests and needs
3. Practitioners have formed a relationship with each family
4. Children know the practitioners
5. Children are familiar and happy with their new school environment, its routines and expectations.
6. Children have met and made friends with some of the other children who will be in their class.

Play sessions and transition meetings in school:

EYFS staff organise for children from our Nursery to visit Reception and play for an hour at a time during the final summer term. We also have regular 'story swap' sessions to help the children to become more familiar with their new teachers yet feel comfortable in their current environment.

For children from outside the school, we invite them (with a parent) to come and join in with a free-flow session in Reception. This allows the children a chance to explore their new class and to meet some of the staff and children that will be coming to school with them. EYFS staff meet to discuss each child in detail and discuss their individual needs. Extra arrangements are also made for our SEND children.

Home visits: At the end of each term staff carry out home visits and make final preparations to the class environment. This visit is crucial as the starting point for building a relationship with the families, a time to exchange information and a further opportunity to gain a better understanding of the children. Staff work with previous settings where possible to gain information about the child. We also work together with parents, previous settings and staff for our SEND children ensuring a smooth transition into our setting.

Preparing the environment: Staff prepare the environment to ensure that every child will have a wide choice of activities that are familiar to them and also that routines and expectations are established from day one. For example, coat pegs, self-registration, resource storage and labels must all be ready so that routines are established from the first day.

APPENDIX A NAME OF APPENDIX

Put forms, lists, additional information in the Appendices. Use the Headings to split them. Should be one page, don't have more than one per page.