

Terra Nova School Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Introduction

The Early Years are a critical stage of development for every child. During this time children develop rapidly physically, socially, intellectually and emotionally. The Early Years Foundation Stage is about building on what children already know and learning key skills such as listening, speaking, concentration, persistence and learning to work together and co operate with other children. It is also about developing early communication, literacy and numeracy skills that will prepare children for Key Stage One.

At Terra Nova School our Early Years Foundation Stage Department consists of a Nursery and two Reception classes, each led by qualified Early Years Teachers and supported by qualified staff.

Admission

Admission takes place from the term in which a child is three years old. Children attend on a flexible basis and there is no minimum session allowance. Sessions are built up by consultation with parents and teachers at the correct time for each individual child.

The school welcomes children in to Reception from other settings. Children are invited to come for taster days before joining and a thorough handover between a pre-school setting and the Reception Class takes place in the shape of professional communication and exchanges of information.

Aims for the Early Years Foundation Stage

The most important element of any school is the people, whether they are pupils, staff, parents or visitors. A welcoming atmosphere is offered to all, in the firm belief that happiness, satisfaction and contentment in any environment leads to improved performance. Importance of the role played by parents as educators of their children is recognised. Every endeavour is made to work closely with parents informing and involving in every aspect of the child's education both academically and socially.

At Terra Nova School we believe that childhood is a time of play, and through play we discover the excitement of learning, the rewards of achievement, and acquire our life skills. With its bright, colourful, well-planned and busy environment, the children are encouraged in the development of skills, attitudes and understanding. This will help them to live full satisfying lives and become confident, useful, active members of a diverse constantly-changing society.

It is through this process that children will work towards, achieve and in many cases exceed the Early Learning Goals.

There can be few more important tasks for a parent than choosing the right school for their child. At school, children should not only become numerate and literate, but also develop a hunger for knowledge and a thirst for learning whether this is in academic areas, sports or arts. Children need to be guided to become independent-learners, to think wisely, be confident, balanced and compassionate while developing

their own particular talents and abilities to the full. Such ideas are best achieved in an environment that is stable, secure and safe but at the same time one which is exciting, stimulating, rewarding and fun. At Terra Nova School there is firm commitment to these principles and the Early Years Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

A Unique Child

At Terra Nova 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 at Terra Nova School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. 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 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.

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.

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 recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Child Protection Policy)

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."

Within our Early Years setting at Terra Nova School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2007. We understand that we are required to:

- 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 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.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

Positive Relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents 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 do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during 'Come and Join in, Taster Sessions' and 'Transfer Afternoons';
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;

- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Nursery and Reception classes and allowing free access to the children's 'Learning Journey' booklets;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents each term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each term and this is supplemented with 'Next Steps' reports at parent/teacher meetings held each term ;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Class assemblies, Sports Day, Concerts etc;
- providing space in the children's 'Learning Journey' booklets for parents to leave comments relating to the children's achievements. 'Wow Factor' certificates are used by parents and they are celebrated in school;
- establishing good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. In Nursery, a key worker system operates. In Reception, the EYFS teachers act as 'Key Persons' to all children within the Reception setting, supported by the Teaching Assistant.
- Celebrating and building on a strong and supportive staff team. This is crucial in creating secure and happy Early Years Nursery and Reception environments. Shared activities and celebrations are a weekly feature in the EYFS setting. Both aspects of the EYFS enjoy 'Foundation Stage Friday'. This is a special time to celebrate achievements with an awards assembly, followed by collaborative learning in all aspects of the Nursery indoor and outdoor environments. EYFS staff meet new intake children and their families and they are invited to school events (Family Fun Days, Christmas productions etc.).

Enabling Environments

At Terra Nova School 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 Plan and Medium Term Plans (MTP's), which are based around half termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning, however the teacher may alter these MTP's in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This will be clearly indicated.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in children's individual 'Learning Journey' booklets. They also contain information provided by parents.

EYFS staff use the eProfile to record judgements against the EYFS Profile. Each child's level of development is recorded against 13 assessment scales derived from the ELG's.

Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELG's and assessment scales. This is discussed in detail at the final parent's evening in the summer term.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classrooms in Nursery and Reception are 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 located equipment and resources independently. The Nursery setting has its 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. Children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. Activities and resources are carefully planned for in order that the children can access outdoors and develop in all 6 areas of learning.

Learning and Development

At Terra Nova 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

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 2. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- 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;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;

Play

“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.”

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. 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.”

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 satisfactions 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.”

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

The EYFS is made up of six areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication, Language and Literacy
- Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World
- Physical Development
- Creative Development

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 Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the Head of Pre-Prep and Nursery, the Head of EYFS and the Early Years staff team to follow the principles stated in this policy.

There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The Head of Pre-Prep and Nursery and Head of EYFS will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.