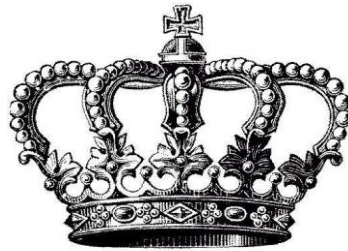


QUEEN'S DRIVE INFANT SCHOOL



EARLY YEARS POLICY

February 2024

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EARLY YEARS POLICY
November 2021

Introduction

'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.'

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile - Department for Children, Schools and Families

We believe that early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives and at Queens Drive Infant School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

Transition to school

Before the children start school, we try to get to know as much as we can about the children in order to ensure that we can facilitate their needs and continue their learning journey. Some of the way we do this include: -

- Nursery visits and/or phone calls
- Home visits (Zoom calls during COVID-19)
- Stay and Play sessions held at school
- Transition meetings – for those with SEND

We work closely with our feeder nurseries to ensure they can also support the transition to school by providing school uniform for their role play and transition booklets with photos of school and staff.

All children start school on a part time basis which enables staff and children to get to know each other.

Baseline

During the children's first few weeks in school the teachers will observe the children and record what they can do independently across all areas of learning. These assessments will be used as a starting point. They are used to plan for the children's next steps and track progress from the beginning to the end of the year.

We will also carry out a statutory Reception baseline which will be used by the government to work out the progress made by the cohort from Reception to Year 6.

INTENT

At Queens Drive Infant School, we strive to give our youngest children the best possible start to their education, we aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners, as well as resilient and ambitious. We will do this by:

- Creating and enabling environments which stimulate the children to communicate, explore and challenge themselves
- Creating positive relationships, giving children the support and encouragement, they need to flourish and feel happy and safe.
- Encouraging independence so that children can access all of the opportunities on offer
- Encourage and teach children about the importance of being healthy (including the importance of oral health)
- Planning short topics which stimulate the children's interest about the world around them and give them an introduction to the topics and vocabulary covered in KS1
- Focusing on basic skills so that children can access the full and future curriculums
- Developing children's vocabulary and communication skills, using a range of research-based strategies, effective interactions and real items of interest e.g. photos
- Using core books and songs linked to topics or areas of interest to develop a love of books and literature.
- Provide children with experiences they may not have had through well-planned in-school experiences, visitors to school and external trips (local and further)
- Working closely with parents to share successes and concerns.
- Developing children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through well-planned assemblies, positive interactions and enabling environments.

We have diverse cohorts, with many different languages represented. We work hard to ensure all children are represented and individually valued as we have the opportunity to celebrate their beliefs and cultures. We are located in an area of high deprivation and use the EYFS budget to ensure all children have access to high quality resources and experiences which they might not otherwise have. Children eligible to the pupil premium grant have a high profile and are regularly assessed to ensure they make good progress.

IMPLEMENTATION

The EYFS Curriculum

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in all early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected and none can be delivered in isolation from others.

Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across these areas of learning. They require a balance of adult led and child initiated activities in order for children to develop effectively and to give them the best chance of obtaining a good level of development at the end of their reception year.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, from relationships and thrive.

The three prime areas are:

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

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive arts and design

Through our teaching, continuous provision, environments and interactions we develop each of the children's Characteristics of Effective learning:

Playing and exploring – children will have the opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go

Active Learning – children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.

Creating and thinking critically – We encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

We teach daily phonics lessons using Read Write Inc. as we teach each new sound it is added to the children home learning book, this helps to keep parents informed about what we are learning and the importance of good attendance.

Planning

The Early Years team have developed a long-term plan which details the topics usually covered each year, we adapt this based on the children's interests, national/international events and the children's developmental needs. We link books to each topic (see the long-term plan) and usually use at least one fiction and 1 non-fiction book per topic.

Topic plans show objectives, provision and direct teaching which teachers then match/adapt to the needs of their own class on a weekly plan.

We also have themes that run throughout the year such as our local environment, keeping healthy and safe and seasonal change and growth.

Class and year group assemblies are planned around topics and RE units and are representative of the children within our school community.

We implement the EYFS curriculum and our visions for the children by: -

- Creating and enabling environments which stimulate the children to communicate, explore and challenge themselves

- Creating positive relationships, giving children the support and encouragement they need to flourish and feel happy and safe.
- Encouraging independence so that children can access all the opportunities on offer
- Planning topics which stimulate the children's interest about the world around them and give them an introduction to the topics and vocabulary covered in KS1
- Focusing on basic skills so that children can access the full and future curriculums
- Developing children's vocabulary and communication skills, using a range of research-based strategies, effective interactions and real items of interest e.g. photos
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- Working closely with parents to share successes and concerns.
- Developing children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through well-planned assemblies, positive interactions and enabling environments.

The learning Environment

The children are organised into three classes of 30 children, each class has its own toilet and cloakroom as well as its own outdoor space, which allows all of our children to explore and learn in a safe, well organised environment.

Teachers ensure that all children have access to both the inside and the outside environment throughout the day with a mixture of child initiated and adult directed activities, this means there is a maximum of 15 children in a learning area at any one time.

All classrooms have a variety of well organised continuous provision which is enhanced with topic related resources and books stored centrally.

Communication and language is always a priority area, so we have ensured that both indoor and outside learning environments have communication friendly spaces.

Like the rest of the school we use Word Aware to teach new vocabulary that will help the children access the learning opportunities. This is taught as part of the whole class input at the beginning of each session.

Early Reading and Writing

Wanting and being able to read is our aim for all children.

We encourage a love of books and stories by linking books to our topics and activities, sharing core books, lending children books from our library, Write Stuff stories and sending home books matched closely to their current phonics ability. Songs and poems are also planned in to each topic and learnt by heart.

All children have a daily Read Write Inc session matched to their current ability, set 2 sounds are taught as soon as the children start full time school. Children who do not pick up the new sound are given Pinny time to ensure they keep up and prepare them for the next session. Teachers plan cross curricular activities to reinforce the taught sound.

Daily sounds/words are added to the children's home learning books which are taken home on a daily basis. Once teaching of Set 1 sounds is complete, homework moves to Seesaw (our online

learning platform). We also send home a reading book matched to the children's current reading ability and a lending library book which they can share with their families.

We give huge importance to children's communication and language skills and believe this is the key to children becoming well-rounded readers and writers. Teachers plan and deliver daily Write Stuff sessions which initially focus on spoken language and introduction to new vocabulary. These Write Stuff sessions are taught using a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts as well as nursery rhymes.

Teaching

When teaching topic-related work and Mathematics, teachers use the Teaching Backwards methods. Teaching Backwards enables teachers to pre-assess children and plan in-the-moment learning which caters to their different needs. It also encourages children to think about their own learning as well as challenge their thinking. During lessons, teachers will:

- Pre-assess children's knowledge and understanding
- Teach (considering their pre-assessments), showing children the goal and encourage them to think of how to get there.
- Cater to the different needs of the children
- Observe children as they learn
- Give feedback and challenges

Playtime

All children have a morning playtime in the main playground after phonics this allows the children to get used to the space and resources with known adults, it helps to prepare them for the lunch time routine.

Safeguarding and welfare

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have a positive relationships with the adults caring for them.

(Statutory Framework for EYFS 2021)

At Queen's Drive Infant School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the statutory framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021: -

*To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence;

*Promote good health;

*Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs;

* To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so;

*Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for;

*Maintain records (using CPOMS), policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children

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. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well – being of all the children. (More information can be found in the school's safeguarding policy)

Healthy Eating (including Oral Health)

All children are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as choice of a drink of water or milk. The children are encouraged to bring water bottles into school every day.

Universal infant school meals are provided for all children in reception and menus are sent out fortnightly for parents online via parent mail.

As part of our curriculum we make a range of healthy foods with the children and also incorporate important health messages into story cafes.

We understand the importance of Oral health and promote this through regular contact with parents as well as well planned activities and where possible visits/visitors.

IMPACT AND MONITORING

Assessment

After the first few weeks of school, all children have a speech and language assessment (Silver shoe). The SEND HLTA carries out the assessment and ensures that any next steps are identified/shared. Children who are identified as requiring extra support for example, naming objects, will take part in a daily word aware intervention program.

Children develop, consolidate and deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills across all areas through a mixture of child-initiated and child-led activities. By watching and interacting with the children, staff identify the children's next step and use this as a basis for their planning.

Children's development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

If a child's progress in any of the areas of learning gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how best to support the child both in school and at home (Initial Concerns forms are completed if necessary). This would then be reviewed with the parents/other staff after 6-8 weeks. Parents are encouraged to attend school events including story cafes and showcases where they can see their child engaging with the curriculum, talk to staff and see their child's work.

Each class teacher writes a weekly plan to meet the needs of individuals and groups of children within their class based on a team topic plan. Regular team meetings allow teachers to moderate and quality assure their judgements as well as sharing good practice.

Assessment in the foundation stage takes the form of observations and teacher and teacher assistant knowledge of the pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants make relevant and appropriate amounts of observations which are recorded on Seesaw. We take the view that it is crucial for teachers and teaching assistants to interact with children as they play and to move their learning on in-the-moment.

Teachers assess whether children are expected every term and use these to support groups of learners or those at risk of falling behind. Regular pupil progress meetings are held to ensure all children are making at least good progress, plan next steps and organise the necessary support and or provision.

RWI phonics assessments are carried out at least every 6 weeks.

We use online learning journals which parents can view at any time. The learning journals contain short observations, photos and examples of the children's work.

At the end of the year the teacher writes a report on each child's attainment and achievements, this includes the three characteristics of learning and whether they are Emerging or Expected in each area of learning. This information is communicated to parents in each child's school report and is also used by the year 1 teachers to plan ahead and ensure individual needs are met.

Monitoring of Early Years

The EYFS phase leader is responsible for monitoring the curriculum and learning in the EYFS along with writing actions plans and budgeting. Standards are monitored by the SLT and governors. Data analysis of standards takes place each term to plan overall next steps and interventions for groups of learners. Gaps in learning are picked up in pupil progress meetings and addressed by the Early years team. Different aspects of the curriculum are also monitored by the relevant subject leads across the school to ensure continuity and progression into KS1.