



Early Years at Fleetdown

‘Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.’

‘The EYFS seeks to provide:

- **quality and consistency** in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- **a secure foundation** through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly
- **partnership working** between practitioners and with parents and/or carers
- **equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported’

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage
September 2021

Introduction

At Fleetdown, we believe that every child matters and all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, whilst striving to meet each individual child’s needs. The early development and learning of children is a distinct phase in each child’s life which provides an essential and firm foundation for lifelong learning, health and behaviour. The experiences children have in their early childhood shape their capacity to learn. Therefore, the focus for Fleetdown Primary Academy’s Reception provision is that every child leaving EYFS is equipped with the necessary personal, social and emotional skills, learning behaviours and academic skills to successfully transition independently beyond the phase.

We do this through:

- Providing opportunities for well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors to engage children and support the learning process in a relevant and purposeful way.
- A creative and engaging teaching approach which focuses on the early language and literacy development of children, using high quality children’s literature to develop a love of literacy.
- Providing awe and wonder moments to develop children to become curious and autonomous learners.
- An initial focus on Leuven Scales & Prime Areas of Learning; PSED, CAL and PD to ensure children are emotionally and physically ready to learn.
- Undertaking regular observations which feed into children’s next steps of learning and inform planning to ensure children receive a balanced and broad curriculum.
- Targeted support and challenge for specific areas of Learning; Mathematics and Literacy.
- Early identification of SEND so that those children leave EYFS with ground work in place in order to support transition beyond the phase.

Learning and Development

Early Years Framework

The Foundation Stage curriculum is play-orientated and based on the premise that children learn from first hand experiences.

There are four guiding principles that should shape practice in early years settings. These are

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- children learn and develop well in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates.

Areas of Learning

There are 7 areas of learning and development that shape the curriculum. All are equally important and are interconnected. However, 3 areas, known as the prime areas, are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

Prime areas of learning:

- Communication and Language (Listening, Attention, Understanding and Speaking)
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development. (Self-Regulation, Managing Self and Building Relationships)
- Physical Development (Gross motor skills and Fine motor skills)

Specific areas of learning:

- Literacy (Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing)
- Mathematics (Number and Numerical Patterns)
- Understanding the World (Past and Present, People, Culture and Communities and The Natural World)
- Expressive Arts and Design (Creating with Materials and Being Imaginative and Expressive)

At Fleetdown, we believe The Characteristics of Effective Learning are a key element in the EYFS. They detail the ways in which children should be learning from their environment, experiences and activities. Children should be displaying the characteristics of effective learning every day.

The characteristics are as follows:

- **Playing and Exploring**
- **Active Learning**
- **Creative and Critical Thinking**

At Fleetdown, we deliver all areas of learning through planned and spontaneous purposeful play and a careful balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. The most valuable resource in any setting is the group of adults and the school day is organised to maximise the amount of child-initiated 'free flow' time available whilst ensuring there is sufficient time in the day for adults in the setting to also lead meaningful group and adult-led learning sessions.

During child-initiated learning sessions, the adults in the Early Years environment reflect on the different ways children learn and they work with and alongside the children, scaffolding their learning and encouraging the embedding of skills and knowledge to extend their learning. They 'teach' through modelling, suggesting, providing vocabulary or resources, explaining or encouraging and this supports children to be inquisitive whilst building on their play in a positive and enjoyable way.

Adult-led sessions are taught in small groups and focus on teaching objective led, key skills which have been identified through regular observations of the children in their play, assessments and gap and strength data analysis. Curriculum areas change depending on the needs of the children and adults work alongside the children, scaffolding and extending learning and encouraging the acquisition and embedding of skills and knowledge. Phonics is taught systematically through the Read Write Inc programme. This takes place as part of a whole class activity during the first term and once all sounds have been taught, the children then split into smaller tailored and targeted groups across Reception to ensure they are being taught appropriately to their stage of development across the year.

The Importance of Play

Well planned and spontaneous play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge.

Through play pupils –

- Explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world.
- Practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills.
- Learn how to control impulses and understand the needs for rules.
- Be alone, be alongside others or co-operate as they talk or rehearse their feelings.
- Take risks and make mistakes.
- Think creatively and imaginatively.
- Communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems.

Well-planned play activities will be achieved through:

- Planning and resourcing a challenging environment.
- Supporting children's learning through planned play activities.
- Extending and supporting children's spontaneous play.
- Extending and developing children's language and communication in their play.

At Fleetdown we do not make a distinction between work and play. Providing high quality planned experiences for children's play is an important way for adults to support learning that is both enjoyable and challenging. Children at Fleetdown learn through play activities and staff decide when child-initiated or adult-led activities provide the most effective opportunities to support learning. Adults in the environment support alongside children's play to move thinking and learning to the next level through questioning and partnership learning. This approach allows us to build on children's interests and also allows scope for structured activities to teach specific skills and knowledge.

Our topic-based approach focuses on promoting the development of children's language skills. This embeds reading for pleasure, immersing children in literary experiences they may not have at home. We use texts to open up a multitude of learning opportunities and children are led through a series of discussions and engaging and creative experiences through this approach.

Enabling Environments in the EYFS

Our aim at Fleetdown is to provide real life opportunities for children through stimulating, exciting and thought-provoking provision both inside and outside. We recognise that the environment plays a key role in both supporting and extending children's learning and development. The learning environment in EYFS is organised in such a way that the children are inspired to learn and classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely, safely and independently. Learning outside is as important as the learning that takes place indoors. Being outdoors provides opportunities for doing activities in different ways and on different scales compared with indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active. We believe that our environments must be conducive to learning, allowing our children space and time to interact within the learning and teaching process and we aim to create and maintain highly stimulating and engaging environments where resources and clearly designed areas of continuous provision have been established. These can then be enhanced and developed throughout the year, depending on the needs of each individual class.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

On-going assessment is at the heart of our practice at Fleetdown. We make regular assessments of children's learning and consider the cohort and the specific needs of that group of children, using this information to adapt our planning regularly to ensure we meet the needs of all pupils across EYFS.

In September 2021, the government introduced a new statutory baseline assessment which is delivered within the first 6 weeks of a child starting reception. The baseline will be used to create school-level progress measured for primary schools which will show the progress pupils make from reception until the end of key stage 2.

Alongside this assessment, we complete a school level baseline assessment which focuses on the prime areas of learning. Our baseline assessment will be compiled through observations and conversations with the children and we will then use this evidence to inform future planning.

Assessment in the Early Years also takes on the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. Staff continue to observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are then used to shape future planning. Observations are recorded using Tapestry – an online learning journal which enables parents and carers to upload their own photographs and videos to contribute to their child's learning journey. This strengthens links between home and school.

We hold regular meetings for parents to discuss and share their child's progress at school and home, and have an open-door policy at Fleetdown which means we encourage parents and carers to come in to see us with any concerns they may have.

The Development Matters statements are used to track the age band that the child is working at and to identify any children who are not meeting their developmental milestones. Any concerns are then discussed with parents and carers and if necessary, support from our SENCO will be sought.

To ensure teacher judgements are consistent, both in-house and external moderation is completed and the EYFS team have regular discussions around each child in our setting.

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

This final assessment is shared with parents and/or carers in an end of year report.

Parents as Partners

Fleetdown recognises that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. We acknowledge 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 and carers have played, and their future role, in educating their children and believe communication between home and school is vital.

- We invite all parents and carers to a welcome meeting during the term before their child starts school.
- We visit all children at home to meet them in a safe environment, allowing us the opportunity to speak to the child and parents.
- We offer parents and carers regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress and allow free access to their child's Tapestry online learning journal.
- We have an open-door policy and parents and carers are able to ask questions and discuss their child at the beginning and end of the day.
- We provide parent planning each week in Reception, beginning in Term 2 to enable parents and carers the opportunity to find out what their child is learning each week and how they can support their child at home.
- We arrange a variety of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents such as reading mornings, sports day, a bedtime reading event and trips to our local country park.
- Parents and carers receive a report on their child's attainment at the end of the school year.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

Welfare

The Galaxy Trust aims to protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of all children.

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

It is important to us that all children in the Foundation Stage are safe. We aim to educate children about behavioural boundaries and school rules to enable them to make appropriate choices. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. Children are encouraged to bring in sun cream during spells of hot weather. The school encourages the use of sun hats and provides waterproofs for outdoor messy play. Continuous access to fresh drinking water is provided along with a fruit snack and milk.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding within the Early Years Foundation Stage forms part of the whole school safeguarding policy. Procedures that are in place for the whole school apply to EYFS. Safeguarding training takes place annually as organised by The Galaxy Trust safeguarding lead. New child protection issues are addressed as appropriate. All staff new to EYFS will receive an induction and safeguarding training as appropriate. They are trained to use My Concern effectively and are required to undergo regular refresher or update training throughout the year as advised the designated safeguarding leader. The Early Years Leader is also a deputy Designated Safeguarding Leader within the school.

Supervision

All EYFS staff are provided with appropriate supervision in accordance with the statutory requirements of Early Years Foundation Stage 2014.

Supervision ensures that:

- All staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- All staff have the opportunity to discuss any issues, particularly concerning children's development or wellbeing.
- All staff can confidently identify solutions to address issues as they arise (including safe guarding as a routine item for discussion).
- All staff are able to create an environment where all members of staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role.
- All staff have regular reviews of their own practice to ensure they improve over time and they can receive coaching and mentoring as needed.

Transition

When a child sets off for their first day at school, 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.

Transition will be successful if:

- Practitioners know each child, including interests and needs.

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

At Fleetdown, we have developed a thorough transition programme that begins with Reception and continues on to Year 1.

Monitoring Arrangements

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy. The head of school, and senior leadership team will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. There is a named Trustee responsible for the EYFS. This trustee has opportunities to observe EYFS practice and provide feedback to the whole Board of Trustees, raising any issues that require discussion.