



## Freethorpe Primary and Nursery School Early Years' Policy

Freethorpe Community Primary and Nursery School's aim is to create a whole school and community nursery provision in the heart of our school, where the learning and development opportunities on offer are a balance between child initiated self-exploration, guided learning and developing and learning through play. Our school offers a strong sense of community and provides a warm and nurturing environment. There is an excellent child adult ratio, in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage ratios, to ensure the children are getting the best possible care at this important stage of their learning journey.

Early Years' education is the foundation upon which children build the rest of their lives and is an education that encompasses all learning. This policy outlines the aims, principles and strategies for play, teaching and learning in the Early Years' at Freethorpe Primary and Nursery School.

### Aims

At Freethorpe Primary and Nursery School we provide:

- An enabling environment that is well planned and organised and which is safe and secure and provides rich and stimulating experiences.
- Continuous provision that gives opportunities to learn and revisit through active exploration using a wide variety of equipment and materials.
- An individual approach to each child's learning. We recognise the individual needs of children – emotional, social, physical, language acquisition, creative and intellectual and that they develop at different rates and learn in different ways.
- Positive relationships between children and adults.
- Play and recognition of the importance of learning through play in the development of children.
- A warm and caring environment, where the children can develop a positive image of themselves.
- An environment, which promotes respect and equal regard for themselves and other people in the world around them.
- An open partnership with parents/carers.

### Planning and Organising

At Freethorpe Primary and Nursery School we plan for learning and development in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Planning is:

- Written by the class teachers/Nursery Staff following discussion with all of the Early Years Foundation Stage Team.
- Clear and concise to provide broad and balanced opportunities and experiences which provide scope for flexibility, differentiation and annotation.
- Informed by observations of children on what they can do.
- Created to include a balance of child initiated, adult directed and adult led activities.

The EYFS also plans for school visits and trips to the local community and surrounding areas and welcomes visitors into the school to share their skills and knowledge. This will give the children first hand, real experiences as a foundation to their learning.

- **Entry to Nursery** - Where places allow, children can enter the nursery at an appropriate point for transition following their 2nd birthday.

- **The Nursery Day** - The day is organised into 2 x 3 hour sessions, lunch provision is also offered; extended hours provision is also on offer.
- **Entry to Reception** – Children can start school on a full time basis from the September following their 4th birthday, providing they have been allocated a school place. You also have the right to delay your child's start date (known as deferred entry), until later in the school year, but not beyond the beginning of the term after they turn 5 and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year in April. Your child may also start part time later in the school year, but not beyond the beginning of the term after they turn 5 – for further information regarding deferred entry, please contact Norfolk County Council Admissions team
- **Home visits** - In Reception the children have a slightly delayed entry in September due to the schools' desire to offer home visits as part of the transition into the Reception Class.
- **Staggered Entry to Nursery** - Nursery sessions can be staggered to allow children the opportunity to develop confidence within the setting.
- **Ratios** - In Nursery the minimum adult ratio will be 1-8 for 3/4 year old children and 1-4 for 2 year olds.
- **Nursery Staffing** - Our Nursery has a Room Manager, plus staff with relevant qualifications and experience for working with children in the Foundation Stage.
- **Reception Staffing** - Our Reception Class has an Early Years qualified teacher and support staff with Early Years Professional Qualification as well as support from other suitable experienced staff.

### Teaching and Learning

We currently use the Early Years Foundation Stage in Nursery and Reception and also, where appropriate for pupils in the transition from Reception into Year 1.

Teachers and staff at Freethorpe Primary and Nursery School value the role of play at all stages of a child's development and recognise that through play children consolidate the teaching and learning experiences and opportunities they have had. Key to the ethos at Freethorpe Primary and Nursery School, as in all phases across the school, is that the children actively lead their own development, for our Foundation Stage pupils we encourage active learning in a supportive space which allows them to develop their own interests and excitement about the World, whilst engaging with other children, developing their individual personal and social skills.

We support children in using the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. Children in the EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active in their learning, and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside. These 3 characteristics of effective learning help us to focus on and understand how children learn.

Below shows the characteristics of learning and gives examples of the way in which children learn and what they learn.

**By playing and exploring** children are able to:

- Find out and exploring
- Use what they know in their play
- Be willing to have a go

**Through active learning** children are able to:

- Be involved and concentrate
- Keep on trying
- Enjoy achieving what they set out to do

**By creating and thinking critically** children are able to:

- Have their own ideas

- Use what they already know to do new things
- Choose ways to do things and find ways to solve problems.
- Play is planned for through the environment where children can access and select opportunities that interest them and can be revisited. Play is also planned for by setting tasks with clearly specified aims and intentions using a variety of equipment and integrating it into the environment.
- We plan our environment so that children take risks and surpass expectations when they have clear routines and boundaries combined with supportive staff and an enabling environment.
- Communication and Language, Literacy, Mathematics and Phonics skills are taught in a fun, practical way and where possible with context and purpose to real life.
- We ensure that the activities provide opportunities for children's different learning approaches
- Activities will be differentiated to cater for a wide range of abilities including those with special or additional needs (SEND) as well as more able children.
- Making choices and decisions are key factors in the development of children's self-esteem and confidence.
- All staff work together to create a relaxed happy learning environment where high expectations of positive behaviour are encouraged.
- The children are encouraged to participate in all activities with a high level of involvement and to become active, independent learners.
- Children's individual Learning and development is recorded in the child's Learning Journey to form the EYFS profile.

#### **Partnership with Parents/Carers:**

At Freethorpe Primary and Nursery School we promote a real partnership with parents/carers. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development. Our school team of teachers and Nursery Staff are here to make sure that the Foundation Stage is a safe, caring and nurturing environment. We work together to make sure that every child's individual needs are met. This is done best in a partnership, with parents, carers, children, staff and the whole community.

- Registration forms are to be completed for every child by their parent/carer.
- We ask to see children's birth certificates on their first day of nursery.
- Documents including registration and admission forms, signed consent forms, and correspondence concerning the child or family, reports or minutes from meetings concerning the child from other agencies, an ongoing record of relevant contact with parents, and observations by staff on any confidential matter involving the child, such as developmental concerns or child protection matters are stored in a lockable cabinet.
- We invite prospective new parents in to visit us, where they are given information about the nursery including a welcome pack and registration forms.
- We hold an introductory meeting for Reception parents/carers prior to starting, where they are given information about the school day and what to expect when their child starts school. Parents/carers are invited to ask questions.
- We ensure all parents are included – that may mean we have different strategies for involving fathers or parents who work or live apart from their children.
- We consult with all parents to find out what works best for them.
- We ensure ongoing dialogue with parents to improve our knowledge of the needs of their children and to support their families.
- We inform all parents about how the nursery is run and its policies through access to written information and through regular informal communication. We check to ensure parents understand the information that is given to them.

- We provide opportunities for parents to contribute their own skills, knowledge and interests to the activities at school.
- We welcome the contributions of parents, in whatever form these may take.
- We offer home visits to families who accept places in our Reception Class. This provides the opportunity for parents/carers and staff to exchange information.
- Parents/carers are invited to attend termly consultations with staff regarding their child's achievements and possible concerns. In Nursery parents/carers are invited to attend consultations with the Key Staff also during each term. Opportunities to regularly come into school are planned by the Early Years Staff, for profile/Learning Journey sharing and to look at learning alongside the children.
- At the end of the EYFS parents/carers are invited to discuss their child's Foundation Stage Profile outcomes.
- We inform all parents of the systems for registering queries, complaints or suggestions and check to ensure these are understood. All parents have access to our written complaints procedure

#### **Day to Day and regular contact opportunities:**

- Daily contact is available for short matters through face to face to face discussions and communication books; appointments needing longer period of discussion can be arranged.
- In Nursery all parents/carers can also talk to staff at the start and end of Nursery sessions. In Reception parents/carers have opportunities to talk to staff before the start of the school day and at 3.30pm.
- Parents are invited to various school events, including Christmas concerts, open afternoons, sharing sessions and sports day and also to share their child's learning journey.
- Support and advice from the SENCo (Rosie Maunder) is available for the parents of children with additional and special needs.
- Parents are invited to help in school and at many of our school events.
- Our Friends Group – Friends of Freethorpe School committee work hard to provide fund raising activities e.g. Christmas fetes, Barbecues etc.
- News letters are frequently sent home with information and diary dates of future events. Parentmail is used to keep parents updated.
- Each child in Nursery and Reception has a communication book, which is used to exchange messages and information. The Red Reading Folder is also used in Reception for sharing reading experiences and how well children are doing, phonic knowledge and high frequency words – staff discuss this with parents during Home Visits.
- In Nursery and Reception parents/carers are invited to come and look at their child's Learning Journey on set dates, approximately each half term. The Learning Journeys are also available at any other time by request. Parents/carers are encouraged to add their own comments and observations, so that they can contribute information about their child's learning and development.
- In Nursery and Reception observations of each child are completed every half term. This information is added to the school tracking system, Target Tracker and the outcomes from these are shared with parents at Parents' Evening.
- In Reception children have some ideas sent home for engaging parents with their child's learning. These are sent home weekly and the ideas follow on from what the children have been learning about in school that week.

#### **Links with the community and other agencies**

- Educational visits to enrich and extend the children's learning experiences will be arranged to places in the local community such as the church or post office as well as the wider area.

- At various times of the year, visitors are invited to talk to the children e.g. a doctor, dentist.
- Support services will be contacted when necessary i.e. speech therapy and psychological services.

### **Assessment and record keeping**

Assessment in Nursery and Reception is an on-going procedure using many techniques and are used to inform the Early Years' Foundation Stage Profile.

- Baseline information about how well a child is able to learn, engage and how confident they already are as a learner against the EYFS profile statements is made within the first 6 weeks for the Reception and Nursery children.
- In Nursery between the ages of 27-30 months, The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requires that parents and carers must be supplied with a short written summary of their child's development in the three prime learning and development areas of the EYFS: Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Physical Development; and Communication and Language. This is known as the 2 yr progress check. Parents are asked to share this check with their health visitor at the time of the child's development check as part of the 'shared review'.
- Dispositions, skills and knowledge are routinely noted during adult directed activities in Nursery and Reception.
- Discussion with colleagues allows frequent sharing of information about individual children – information about all children is tracked using the Essex LA Target Tracker.
- In Nursery and Reception class teachers give each child 'next steps' in their learning and development. These are shared with parents/carers every term.
- Each Nursery child has a Learning Journey where observations, photographs and wow moments are collated. It is designed to show a child's learning and progress and the information gathered is used to assess the child's stage of development.
- This information is passed on to Reception teacher to continue to show the child's learning and development throughout their time in Reception and as evidence for the EYFSP.
- The Learning journey's sent home to parents/carers at the end of the children's Reception year.

### **Strategies and Staff Development**

- The EYFS Teachers and Teaching Assistants have opportunities to refresh and develop their skills through relevant training in school and through courses provided by the Local Authority.
- The school works closely with students studying a range of child care courses. Students will be given a guide to working with children. They will be briefed with clear learning objectives before taking part in an activity with children.
- Support is given to both newly qualified and newly appointed staff. The former will have the help of a mentor and both will have guidance from a well-being mentor.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- The Early Years' Foundation Stage has an Area Leader – Megan Davies, the Reception Teacher
- The head teacher, the Assistant head teachers and area leaders observe and evaluate opportunities and experiences provided for the children – links are made with the schools partner school Fleggburgh Primary School to support observations.
- The head teacher, with the Foundation Stage Lead Teacher, Megan Davies monitor assessment.
- The Reception class teacher will evaluate maths, language and literacy regularly and make changes for future reference.
- The EYFS profile will be updated regularly throughout the year.

- The EYFSP will be moderated by the headteacher and leadership team as well as both schools in the Partnership moderating together and within the cluster. The school actively seeks opportunities for external moderation of standards in the Early Years.

### **Nursery Key Person and Settling in**

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the setting and to feel secure and comfortable with staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with the nursery.

We aim to make Freethorpe Nursery a welcoming place where children settle quickly and easily because consideration has been given to the individual needs and circumstances of children and their families. The key person role is set out in the Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each setting must offer a key person for each child. The procedures set out a model for developing a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children.

- We allocate a key person before the child starts.
- The key person is responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into our setting.
- The key person offers unconditional regard for the child and is non-judgemental.
- The key person works with the parent to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning.
- The key person acts as the key contact for the parents and has links with other carers involved with the child, such as a childminder, and co-ordinates the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers.
- A key person is responsible for developmental records, including the learning and development progress check at the age of two years old and for sharing information on a regular basis with the child's parents to keep those records up-to-date, reflecting the full picture of the child in our setting and at home.
- The key person encourages positive relationships between children in her/his key group, spending time with them as a group each day.
- We promote the role of the key person as the basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children.

### **Settling-in**

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our welcome pack), and individual meetings with parents. During the half-term before a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit the nursery.
- We allocate a key person to each child and his/her family before she/he starts to attend; the key person welcomes and looks after the child and his/her parents at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.
- We use pre-start visits and the first session at which a child attends to explain and complete with his/her parents the child's registration records.
- When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with his/her parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into the nursery.
- We have an expectation that the parent, carer or close relative, will stay for most of the session during the first week, gradually taking time away from their child, increasing this as and when the child is able to cope.
- Younger children may take longer to settle in, as will children who have not previously spent time away from home. Children who have had a period of absence may also need their parent to be on hand to re-settle them.

- When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when.
- We recognise that some children will settle more readily than others but that some children who appear to settle rapidly are not ready to be left. We expect that the parent will honour the commitment to stay possibly longer, until their child can stay happily without them.
- We do not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them to settle any quicker. We believe that a child's distress will prevent them from learning and gaining the best from the nursery.
- We reserve the right not to accept a child into the nursery without a parent or carer if the child finds it distressing to be left. This is especially the case with very young children.

**This policy was created to reflect changes in the school age range (2-11) – October 2015, to include wider Nursery Provision, in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework – To be Reviewed Summer 2018**