



Early Years Policy

This policy is applicable to: Melbourne Primary School, part of the Wolds Learning Partnership (WLP)

Version 2

Insert Term and Year: Autumn Term 2022

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Reference Documents:	Statutory Framework for the early years foundation stage https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974907/EYFS_framework_-_March_2021.pdf





Care, Imagine, Believe, Strive, Achieve

Early Years Policy

“Firm foundations.”

We believe that all children deserve an education rich in wonder and memorable experiences that allows children's natural creativity and curiosity to flourish, alongside the purposeful acquisition of skills and knowledge. We believe that an education that does all of this gives children the best chance to become well-rounded, happy individuals, ready to succeed in an ever-changing world.

It is our **intent** to provide children with a nurturing, supportive and safe environment where ALL children receive a creative, inspiring, challenging, and purposeful curriculum, that provides them with the skills to be successful, confident and a life-long learner; by developing their physical, verbal, cognitive and emotional needs whilst embedding a positive attitude to school and learning.

Introduction

The Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In our school, children are admitted to the school in the term after their third birthday (as nursery children), until the end of their reception year (compulsory schooling begins at the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday). All children are entitled to start full time school in the September of the year they will turn five, until this point children are entitled to 15 funded hours or 30 hours if applied for and granted. These can be either all taken at Melbourne Primary School or split with another setting (we split our sessions into 3-hour blocks to fit in with the whole school day). Extra sessions can also be purchased to extend your childcare provision (see schools charging policy), and these are subject to availability. Nursery children can also stay for lunch at school and opt to have a school dinner or bring a pack lunch from home (see schools charging policy). Key Stage 1 begins for our children at the beginning of Year 1. The Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and in preparing children for later schooling.

Aims of the Foundation Stage

As outlined in the 'Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage':

'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.'

At Melbourne Primary School we follow the 'Statutory Framework for early years foundation stage' (2021). Within this framework there are four guiding principles which shape our practice. 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**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/ carers.
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.**

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven curriculum areas, using play as the vehicle for learning.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers.
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment and by the children's own ideas and interests.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated, child-initiated and adult supported.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors.

Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and (sometimes) exceed the Early Learning Goals.

All seven areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive, both in the EYFS and into Key Stage 1. These three areas are the **prime** areas:

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

Children are also supported through the four **specific** areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

Three **characteristics of effective teaching and learning** are:

1. **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
2. **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties.
3. **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they can explore, think creatively and be active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication, and physical development.

We create long term plans based on a series of topics each of which offers experiences in all seven areas of learning.

At the beginning of each topic the children are encouraged to share their ideas for learning experiences. These ideas are then used to inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations which identify areas to focus on.

Religious Education is also taught in the Foundation Stage is taught in accordance with East Riding of Yorkshire Council guidelines. Relation, Health and Sex Education and PSHE are being taught through the Coram 'SCARF' scheme of work.

We always remain flexible to allow for unplanned circumstances and children's responses. Our planning is continually evaluated by all staff to ensure that children's individual 'Next Steps in Learning' and personalised learning needs are met.

Children will engage in whole group and small group activities alongside their independent learning. There are also allocated times for whole class daily 'carpet learning sessions.

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS framework: *'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities.'*

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those which are planned by adults. During children's play, the adults in class interact when appropriate to stretch and challenge them further.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and build these into our practice. We create a stimulating learning environment to encourage children to free flow between inside and outdoors as far as possible.

A Unique Child

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.

Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal. Many may have been to one of the range of pre-school settings that exist. The early year's education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- it builds on what our children already know and can do.
- it ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged.
- it offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children and activity that provides opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors.
- it provides a rich and stimulating environment.

Inclusion in the Foundation Stage

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 future learning.

In the Foundation Stage we have realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. Some children progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of the boys and girls; children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds and children of different ethnic groups.

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 (for example this may involve referral for speech therapy for some of our children).

For further information see our Inclusion, Special Needs Policy.

Safety including Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

The safety and welfare of our children is paramount at Melbourne Primary School. We have robust policies and procedures in place to ensure their safety.

In Nursery and Reception, we provide a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to take risks, follow rules and stay safe. We comply with the welfare requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage and understand that we must:

- Promote the welfare of all children.
- Promote good health.
- Manage behaviour effectively and appropriately.
- Ensure all adults working with children are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the environment is safe, and all equipment and furniture is fit for purpose.
- Ensure all children have a challenging and enjoyable learning experience.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious fruit snacks, access to water throughout the day, allocating significant time for physical development and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

We use class iPads to take photograph of children (for Tapestry observations and assessment purposes) and children must be appropriately dressed in photographs.

Melbourne Primary School has robust systems in place to ensure that all practitioners who have regular contact with children are suitable for their role.

The EYFS staff hold the Paediatric First aid qualification, which is a statutory requirement of the EYFS.

The Child Protection Policy is in place to ensure the safety of all stakeholders at Melbourne Primary School. Backing up this policy is a dedicated safeguarding lead and deputy. Staff have access to the 'CPOMS' safeguarding system to log any concerns regarding any aspects of safeguarding and behaviour. All staff are vigilant in reporting concerns.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability, or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals.

We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents/carers and outside agencies. We have regular discussions with our SENCo if we have any concerns about children in the setting.

Positive Relationships

At Melbourne Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong, independent and build secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

The Role of Parents

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parent's have played, and their future role, in educating their children. A successful partnership needs to be a two- way flow of information, knowledge, and expertise. We do this through:

- talking to parents/careers during home-visits about their child before their child starts in our school.

- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school.
- operating an "open door policy". Whereby staff are available at the beginning and end of the day to talk to parents and carers on an informal basis. If further time is needed to discuss particular issues an appointment can be arranged at a mutually convenient time. We also provide a quiet and confidential area where parents can discuss any concerns.
- sharing information about the curriculum through meetings, sending newsletters/ knowledge organisers home about topics; displays, class and general boards sharing plans and other school and community information. We also have a weekly class newsletter which we email weekly.
- arranging a variety of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school, and parents: stay and play sessions, celebration assemblies, school visits, parent partnership sessions.
- offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents, i.e., welcome meetings and phonics workshops.
- encourage parents/ careers to share accounts of their child's development and "magic moments" through their "Home book" and adding photographs onto their child's Tapestry online learning journey.
- there are two formal meetings per year (Autumn and Spring Term) at which time the class teachers and parent discuss the child's achievements and together discuss next steps for development.
- providing an annual written report to parents/careers in July summarising the child's progress against the early learning goals
- 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. In our unit, each child has a key pastoral adult.

Enabling Environment / Resources

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning.

Teaching and Learning

Features of good practice in our Foundation Stage 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 a good understanding of how children develop and learn, and 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 achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.
- 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 regularly shared with parents.
- the good relationships between our school and other settings that our children experience prior to entering the Foundation Unit.
- the clear aims for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do.
- the regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Foundation Stage.

Assessment

We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of observation and teacher's professional judgements, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. Assessments are recorded in individual pupil profiles, and these take the form of an electronic learning journey which we invite parents to join so they have full access of their children's observations and assessments.

Parent consultations are held twice a year (Autumn and Spring) when parents have the opportunity to discuss individual pupil targets. In the Summer Term, parents receive an end of Foundation Stage report that offers brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress and we send these to parents in July.

Transitions

From Pre-school /Feeder settings

In the term prior to a child's entry into the Foundation unit, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition.

- Parents are offered a home visit, the term before their child starts at Melbourne Primary School. During this visit staff will visit the child at home and get to know them in a familiar environment. During this visit, children receive a book bag (purchased by the Friends of School). The bag will contain a welcome pack with an "all about me" booklet, which we ask you to complete and return to the school. It is used to support transition and to inform planning.
- The children are then invited to two separate visits to their Foundation Unit. Parents are welcome to accompany their child during these visits and stay if you want, as we appreciate each child responds to new situations differently.
- Members of staff from Melbourne will send out liaison sheets to feeder settings and make contact where appropriate.
- Teachers will visit or have conversations with feeder settings where possible.
- Children requiring extra support will have additional visits regardless of their setting. Often these children will have been identified as requiring additional support or are part of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process.

From Reception Class to Key Stage 1

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff, and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile includes on-going observation, all relevant records held by the setting, discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1. At Melbourne, the Foundation Stage children meet the Year 1 teacher (and other members of the wider school community) during assembly, playtime, school productions and other whole school activities during the year. The reception children meet their Year 1 teacher for transition week in the final half term.

This policy was developed during the Autumn term 2012 and updated Autumn 2021.
To be reviewed Autumn term 2022.

Please note that due to Covid-19 we have had to make changes this academic year to ensure the safety of all children, staff, and parents.

Signed _____ Date _____ (Co-ordinator)

Signed _____ Date _____ (Governor)

Signed _____ Date _____ (Head teacher)