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## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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Responsible Person	Ali Lacey, EYFS Lead
Dated	May 2019
Date of next review	May 2020

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## **Introduction**

*“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.”*

*(Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, 2017)*

At Madginford Primary School, we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. We strongly believe that the EYFS is the foundation upon which children build the rest of their lives.

The EYFS applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Madginford Primary School, we have three classes of Reception age children within the EYFS: each class has a full-time teacher who is supported by a team of Teaching Assistants. To ensure best practice and continuity, all our foundation stage classes work closely together and share planning, activities and a wide and varied learning environment. Children are given the opportunity to start school in the September following their fourth birthday; they attend school on a part time basis for the first two weeks and then attend full-time after that.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

## **A Unique Child**

At Madginford Primary School, we recognise that every child is a unique child who is constantly learning; each child has the potential to develop into a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and 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 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 any perceived differences. All children at Madginford Primary 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
- 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 are allowed to take risks, but these are taught alongside how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. There are a number of related school documents including the Safeguarding Policy and Health and Safety 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.”*

At Madginford Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with particular welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2017. 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 developmental 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 of these requirements.

## **Positive Relationships**

At Madginford Primary School, we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent through secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. Our well qualified and skilled staff ensure that the best possible outcomes are achieved for our children.

### **Parents as Partners**

We recognise that parents are a child's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution that they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children.

We do this through:

- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school. Parents have opportunities to meet other support staff and agencies, e.g. School Nurse, SENCO, Midday meal providers, PTFA, FLO
- talking to parents and children individually during home visits, in a more informal and relaxed environment where sensitive issues can be discussed if appropriate
- the teachers visiting as many of the children in their pre-school setting prior to their starting school, discussing the Record of Transfer with each child's key worker. If visits are not possible, then the teachers will discuss each child with their current key worker through a telephone conversation. Any concerns raised about individual children during this conversation will be followed up by a visit to the pre-school
- the parents and children having the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during a stay and play session as well as a new entrant picnic
- the children from local pre-schools are invited in for a stay and play session with staff from their current setting
- a pre-school group (Little Pippins) is run throughout the year where children and their families can come and socialise together
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. We do this in a number of ways – by offering parents daily opportunities to talk about their child, either in the morning at drop off time or after school, and by sharing information through a Home School contact book
- the use of our online learning journal Tapestry. Parents have the opportunity to see and comment upon what their child is learning at school as well as being able to upload any learning that their child has done at home. We have found this to be an effective way of increasing communication between home and school
- arranging a formal meeting for parents at specific times during the year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between children, school and parents, such as stay and play sessions, curriculum workshops, class assemblies, sports day, etc.

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. At our school the EYFS teacher acts a 'Key Person' to all the children in their class, supported by the Teaching Assistants and Midday Meal Supervisors. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, for them to become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the children and to build a relationship with their parents.

## **Enabling Environments**

At Madginford Primary School we recognise that the environment also 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. We use the school grounds and facilities regularly to provide outdoor learning opportunities both for child initiated and teacher directed activities.

## **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

The Planning within the EYFS is led by the children's progression through Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (2012). These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning: however, the teacher may alter these in response to the needs, achievements and interests of the children.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. In the EYFS this takes the form of observation of daily activities and events. These observations evidence learning that is spontaneous, independent and consistent. Judgements take account of a range of perspectives – the child's, the parents and carers and adults in school.

These observations are recorded through the use of Tapestry, the children's individual online Learning Journals. These, alongside the EYFS staff's knowledge and professional judgement of the children, are used to make judgements for the EYFS Profile at the end of Reception.

At Madginford Primary School, we use Insight to assess and monitor the children's progress. This is completed five times a year and is used to plan and track pupil's development in the Early Years. Data from Insight is shared with the Senior Leadership Team and Governors as part of the School Pupil Progress Review target and tracking programme.

The EYFS Profile is based on the ongoing observations of the three prime areas, four specific areas and the three characteristics of effective learning. It consists of a level descriptor of the level of attainment in relation to the 17 Early Learning Goals and a short narrative of how the child demonstrates the three characteristics of effective learning. Within the final term of the EYFS, a written summary of this is provided to parents.

## **The Learning Environment**

The EYFS classrooms 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 classrooms are set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS area also incorporates a wide and diverse outdoor environment: this has a positive effect on the children's learning and development by providing opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access the outdoors and woodland areas that provide learning opportunities in all areas of learning.

## **Learning and Development**

At Madginford Primary 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 Stages 1 and 2.

Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, ensuring 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 to extend/develop play and speech 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 upon 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

## **Areas of Learning**

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape educational provision in all early years' settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected and none can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across all of these areas of learning.

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. These are:

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

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

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

Learning is delivered mainly through a play-based approach with a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. Throughout the foundation stage our long, medium and short-term plans ensure that each child has the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area at the appropriate developmental level. Our long-term planning ensures coverage so that all children have opportunities to work towards and achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. We follow a half termly topic-based approach which allows flexibility to ensure that both children's needs and interests are taken into account.

## Play

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the EYFS. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. In doing so we can provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning and to help them make sense of the world. Children have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

## Characteristics of Effective learning

The Statutory Framework for the EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning, and the EYFS teachers plan activities with these in mind. The three characteristics of effective learning underpin learning and development across all areas and support the children to remain effective and motivated learners. The characteristics highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are:

- **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- **Active Learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.



## **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy.

There are named Governors with responsibility for the EYFS. They will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the whole Governing Body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The Headteacher, SENCO and subject coordinators will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

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(Role)

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(Date)