



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Author of policy: Donna Farr

Date approved by Governors: 17th November 2023

Date of renewal: November 2025

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Matchborough First School Academy we offer Nursery provision and Reception provision.

Children can start Nursery the term after their third birthday and children are admitted to Reception in the September following their fourth birthday.

At Matchborough First School Academy we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development, but also the value it has as preparation for life.

Aims

We believe that the foundation stage is such an important stage of a child's education. We want the children to enjoy their schooling experience from day one to ensure they develop a life-long love of learning.

We aim for the children in Early Years to be:

- Happy, secure and to feel safe.
- Independent, self-assured risk takers.
- Confident and Resilient.
- Excited and motivated to learn.
- Socially strong and able to form positive relationships.

At Matchborough First School Academy, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe and stimulating environment for the children as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- Embed a learning ethos that allows choice and decision making which will foster independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive provision, which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on four themes:

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

A Unique Child

At Matchborough First School Academy we strive for every child to be a competent learner who can be resilient, 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. We value the diversity of individuals within the school and believe that every child matters. All children at Matchborough First School Academy are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. All families are valued within our school. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities.

At the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations keyed to the needs of our children. We do this 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 learn effectively.
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Employing resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- Planning challenging activities to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.
- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress.

Positive Relationships

At Matchborough First School Academy we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Inviting parents/carers and children to have lunch (Rec) and a stay and play (Nur) session at school as part of an induction process so we are able to begin the partnership between them and us.
- Providing an induction meeting for Reception parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss school routines, expectations and to answer any questions parents/carers may have.
- Arranging, where possible, visits by the teacher to children in their childcare provision prior to them starting school.
- Providing a handbook of information about the school along with a home-school agreement of expectations of both parties.
- Giving children the opportunity to spend time in Reception Class for an induction visit before starting school.
- Holding a Parent's Evening early in the academic year to establish how children are settling into the school environment.
- Operating an open-door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns.
- Written contact through a school newsletters and website.
- Sending home 'Proud Clouds' slips designed to enable parents to record outstanding achievements.
- Providing and publishing a Learning Leaflet detailing the areas of learning and the overarching theme of the half-term as well as ideas of home learning opportunities.
- Using Tapestry online learning journal as a means of communicating children's learning and experiences with parents as well as parents being able to contribute home learning. (Nursery)
- sending a written report on child's attainment and progress at the end of reception.

Inviting parents to a range of activities throughout the school year to encourage specific collaboration between child, school and parents such as class assembly, 'An hour in Italy.' 'Father's Forest Day', 'Mother's Day High Tea',

Enabling Environments

At Matchborough First School Academy we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged.

Both the Nursery and Reception classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. Children have access to both inside and outside learning areas across the day; this has a positive effect on the children's development. Play-based learning is paramount, and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff.

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

Learning and Developing

The EYFS Curriculum – Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. There are seven areas of learning and development that shape our provision in Early Years. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas. We deliver a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities in order to meet the levels required at the end of EYFS.

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. 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

Teaching and Learning

Our approach to learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage at Matchborough First School Academy is active, practical and hands-on. Children learn best through play, where they can explore, discover, experiment and practise skills and extend their knowledge, whilst developing positive attitudes to learning. They become confident learners, happy and willing to try new challenges.

Development Matters statements and The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Each half term we have a theme for learning and use a variety of books and themes as a vehicle for learning. We plan for continuous and extended provision both inside and outside that links to the learning intention. We plan for class topic lessons as well as adult led focus activities. Phonics is planned using the systematic scheme of Monster Phonics. We follow the White Rose Hub Maths scheme.

Each week the children will take part in a PE lesson where the focus will be on fundamental gross motor skills. Every week the children will take part in a morning of outside learning (Muddy Monday, Tree Top Tuesday and Forest Friday).

As practitioners we recognise the need for the children to learn at their own rate, to do what comes naturally to them, to follow their interests and to experience activities indoors and outside and to move freely between the two areas.

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- **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

We use three characters to represent the characteristics of effective learning, they are:

- Elgar the Exploring Elephant
- Ash the Active Alligator
- Chris the Creative Chameleon

Through these characters, and the key words and phrases linked to them we ensure children understand different learning styles. Through observations we can identify how the children learn and also teach them new ways of approaching their learning.

Observations and Assessment

During the first term in Reception, the teachers assess the ability of each child using a combination of observations and a formal baseline assessment. The information gained from this gives us an indication of each individual's starting point and where the children's next steps are as well as shaping the curriculum to meet the needs of the cohort. We make regular assessments of children's learning using this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formative and summative assessment. Summative Assessment is completed termly following a checkpoint system linked to our curriculum. This involves both the teacher and other adults who have knowledge of the children.

Children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals at the end of the year and this information is shared with parents and Year 1 staff to aid a smooth transition.

Safeguarding & Welfare

At Matchborough First School Academy, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2023.

- 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, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.
- Keeping Safe - 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 children. (See Safeguarding Children Policy).
- Good Health - All children are offered a piece of fruit each day as well as being given the choice of milk. They have access to water at all times. We advise parents of healthy lunchboxes as well as giving children the choice of hot dinner.
- Intimate Care - "Intimate" care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for

example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. In most cases, intimate care is to do with personal hygiene, and it is good practise for the school to monitor the frequency of this and talk with parents if the frequency increases. Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child.

It is the responsibility of those working in Early Years to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Headteacher and EYFS co-ordinator will carry out monitoring on EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. The Curriculum Committee of The Governing Body will also be part of this process.