



Meadowhead Community Infant School and Nursery

## **EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY**

**“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 learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up”**

**Taken from EYFS Statutory Framework Published March 2021,  
Effective 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021.**

### **Intent**

#### **At Meadowhead Infant and Nursery School we strive to**

- ❖ To give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning;
  - ❖ To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences;
  - ❖ To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop, to the full, socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
  - ❖ To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development;
  - ❖ To encourage children to develop independence within a loving, secure and friendly atmosphere;
  - ❖ To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing;
  - ❖ To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.
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- ❖ Prepare children ready for their next chapter of learning – Nursery to Reception, Reception to Year 1.

### **Inclusion**

Children in Early Years (3-5) will be taught in accordance with the present Teaching and Learning policy. We value the diversity of individuals within the school and tolerate a no discrimination philosophy. All children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or ability. All children and families are valued within our school.

We recognise that all pupils bring different experiences, interests and strengths which influence the way they learn and we encourage all children to succeed and do their best.

At Meadowhead Infant and Nursery school we aim to give each child the opportunity to experience success in their learning and ensure equal opportunities will be extended to all pupils. We encourage children to make their own choices and give reasons for decisions and actions.

We recognise children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others, therefore we praise and encourage as well as celebrate achievements in and out of school.

Those children who are recognised as having SEND will follow the same curriculum as their peers. However, the teaching and learning, if necessary, will be adapted or supported to meet the needs of individual children.

### **Implementation**

At Meadowhead Infant and Nursery school we offer the children a broad and balanced curriculum which follows The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework

[Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

This is delivered using The Development Matters in Early Years [Development Matters - Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk) alongside our own developed and personalised

progressive curriculum. This enables the EY teachers to incorporate the seven areas of learning and development into a stimulating, creative, cross curricular approach, ensuring breadth and depth. The children are actively engaged in working towards the Early Learning Goals. The ELG are made up of three prime areas and four specific areas of learning, within these areas they are broken down into 17 individual aspects which eventually lead towards the ELG.

#### Prime Areas

Communication and Language	Personal, Social, Emotional Development	Physical Development
Listening attention and Understanding	Self Regulation	Gross Motor
Speaking	Managing Self	Fine Motor
	Building Relationships	

#### Specific Areas

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

## **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

The EYFS also includes the Characteristics of Effective Learning. The Nursery and Reception teachers plan activities within the Nursery and Reception classrooms with these in mind. They 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.

The four themes of the EYFS underpin all the guidance. The document 'Development Matters' shows how these themes and the principles that inform them, work together for children in EYFS. They are – a unique child, positive relationships, enabling environments and equal learning and development. None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from others. They are all equally as important and depend on one another. These areas are explored through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities.

We prioritise creating a 'language rich' environment through the use of modelling language, conversations, repetitive nursery rhymes and stories. Our teachers and TA's ensure that interactions are positive and progressive, allowing children to flourish and gather words at pace in order to become confident communicators.

## **Play**

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They 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 experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. We provide children with adult led activities when we are introducing and teaching new skills and knowledge.

## **Teaching**

We include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on.

Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place. This looks quite different in the Nursery and Reception classes. We set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered together on the

carpet as a class. In these slots we focus on our topic work, maths, literacy, phonics, and stories. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still etc... Reading and story play an important part of the day. We want to make sure our children have a love of books and will leave the EYFS with a bank of stories they know well, both traditional and modern classics. We make sure there is always time for whole class story at the end of the day but also that there are many opportunities to enjoy books at other times. Every child is given their own book bag and has a designated day when they will have one-to-one time sharing books with an adult (although it is fine for others to listen too!) or, in Reception, a group reading session.

At Meadowhead Infant and Nursery school children are encouraged to become early readers through enjoyment of books and systematic teach of phonics. We recognise phonics knowledge is key to reading and writing. We carry out daily phonic sessions. The children apply their phonic knowledge throughout the day in and around the environment. We practice speaking and listening throughout the day too.

### **Impact**

When children start in Nursery or Reception we carry out Baseline assessments of each individual child within the first 6 weeks of starting. From these assessments we are able to find the child's starting points and adjust our curriculum accordingly, so learning is focussed on what the children need.

Throughout Nursery and Reception children are assessed regularly to ensure next steps in their learning are planned for and that children make good progress. We upload our assessments half termly onto Insight Tracking which is the whole school tracking system.

### **Visits and visitors**

The part that visits and visitors play in the curriculum is given great emphasis, even in the Early Years. We aim to build up to three visits in the Summer Term; these can range from a visit to the local Farm to travelling to the seaside, for example.

Visitors also really enhance a topic and we like to have 'experts' coming in to talk to the children, a doctor for example. We often ask parents if they are able (and brave enough!) to share knowledge or a skill, be it cooking, how to bath a baby, painting mehndi patterns on hands or playing guitar.

### **Classroom organisation**

Our Early Years classrooms have defined areas with resources to ensure children can access them easily. Each classroom is set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning. Classrooms are set out accordingly to meet the needs of all children. Each half term the teachers all meet and do a Gap/Strength analysis. This highlights where weaknesses are and this then informs the provision of the learning environment. A variety of activities are planned for and set up in the different areas each day. The adults use all areas of the learning environment to move children's learning forward.

The outdoor area is an important part of the classroom with many children choosing to learn outside for much of the day.

We ensure that what we provide outside is not a replica of inside, but is completely different to target different skills in Nursery, physical activity often dominates, with climbing, running, cycling and other active games being key. The Reception class has a smaller outdoor area so often have more physical play during lunch time, P.E. and occasional extra sessions on the Infant playground.

Each child has their own labelled peg in the cloakroom. We encourage children to take responsibility for keeping their coat safely in one place!

### **Role of staff and key person**

The class teacher is the named key person for each child in the setting in Reception and in nursery they children are split between the teacher and TA. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs and to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. All adults within the Early Years setting actively seek to form positive respectful relationships with the children in their care. The formation of healthy relationships between adults and children is essential in enabling children's well-being now and their future successes.

There are rare occasions when significant adults cannot be in the class and we aim to be consistent in who covers these absences.

### **Partnership with parents and carers**

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting. As well as the Nursery and Reception visit days we offer a Meet the Teacher session at the beginning of the school year and offer parenting workshops and other sessions for parents.

When a child gains a place at Meadowhead Infant School and Nursery we ask them to attend a session at the school alongside all other children who will be starting and with their parents. We give each family an 'All About Me' booklet to complete with their child over the summer and this document is the first piece in their portfolio. Over the first few days at the school we encourage parents and carers to stay for as long as they wish in the classroom to ensure the transition to the school goes smoothly. We have a staggered entry into Nursery and a quicker entry into Reception.

Parents are invited to attend a Parents' Meeting each term and teachers are available most mornings and evenings to talk and to discuss more urgent matters.

### **Health & safety and safeguarding**

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. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2021) and there is a section in our school Safeguarding Policy that directly refers to practice in the EYFS.

It is important to note that members of staff do not use their mobile phones or personal handset devices in the classroom and are prohibited from taking photographs with their personal handsets.

All children in Nursery have a daily healthy snack and are given the opportunity to have a free lunch from Reception. Children may bring in their own healthy packed lunch if they prefer.

We have a kitchen in the Nursery which no child is allowed to enter.

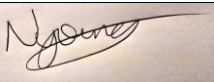
We take all accidents seriously and always log and phone home immediately if a child bangs their head. We have cold compresses stored in the Nursery and Staffroom freezer.

We encourage all children to start school without nappies but will support any children struggling with this. We acknowledge that young children often have 'accidents' (i.e. wet themselves!) and have stocks of spare clothes and change anyone who needs it. We ask parents to help keep our stocks of clothes high by returning anything their child has borrowed. Children are changed in the open area outside the toilets. In nursery we ask that all children keep a kit bag in nursery with wipes and a change of clothes.

Oral hygiene is actively promoted across nursery and reception with children being signposted to a dentist, parents informed about the impact of dummies and bottles have on children's teeth and speech. We work alongside the school nurse and BwD in this area.

All large climbing equipment is checked by our site officer and fire alarms are held regularly in line with whole school policy. There is an annual external check of equipment.

We have separate policies for medicine in school and off-site visits.

Adopted/Ratified:	January 2025
Review Frequency:	1 Year
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Signed (Chair of Governors)	
Signed (Headteacher)	