

The Grove Primary School

We care, share, play and learn

EYFS Policy

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Change History

Version	Date	Description
1.0	04/09/2023	Annual Review
2.0	16/02/2024	Updated in line with information from the Local Authority
3.0	13/03/2025	Annual Review
4.0	14/09/26	Annual review and in line with statutory updates

Related Documents/Policies

References	Title
Safeguarding policies and procedures	See Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See Health and Safety Policy
Administering medicine	See Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See Health and Safety Policy
Procedure for checking and identifying of visitors	See Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See Complaints Policy

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Rationale

Our Early Years Curriculum is child centred and is founded on certain beliefs, which reflect the whole curriculum:

- Young children learn best from firsthand experience.
- Children have individual needs and talents.
- Children's independence should be fostered.
- Children need to acquire basic skills.
- Our aim is to provide the children with a secure environment where they feel valued and confident.

We strive for their first experience of school to develop a positive attitude towards education and provide a foundation for their lifelong learning.

"Children are born ready, able, and eager to learn. They actively reach out to interact with other people, and in the world around them. Development is not an automatic process, however, It depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments."

Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2012

Children at this stage are entitled to provision which supports and extends their knowledge, understanding, skills and confidence. Early Years experience should build on what children already know, can do, and should encourage a positive outlook. We acknowledge that children bring differing experiences, interests, competencies, and knowledge to their early learning which defines their 'starting points'.

Our aims are as follows:

- To promote positive attitudes and dispositions to learning; an enthusiasm for knowledge, and a confidence in their ability to be successful learners.
- To enhance social skills, by providing opportunities that enable them to learn how to cooperate and work harmoniously alongside and with each other and listen to each other.
- To promote attention skills and persistence: their capacity to concentrate on their own play or group tasks.
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Underpinning Principles

At The Grove Primary School, we believe that children have a right:

- To feel warm, comfortable, and welcome.
- To an environment which is clean, lively, and stimulating.
- To structure and order within their day.
- To feel safe, secure, confident, and valued.
- To make choices and to develop independence.
- To have special adults who will care for them.
- To have a balanced range of activities.
- To use materials and resources which are clean, well-cared for and safe.
- To have time to practise new skills and to try things out to develop their resilience.
- To have their successes celebrated.
- To have space to move around.

Provision for children within the foundation stage acknowledges these basic rights and ensures that:

- All our EYFS staff are paediatric first aid trained.
- In accordance with statutory requirements, all new employees, students, and volunteers (including supervised volunteers) must undergo enhanced criminal record checks, and a new employee must not commence employment before their criminal records check has been received. Staff also share an ongoing responsibility to disclose any relevant information that could affect their suitability to work with children.
- Staff understand that children develop rapidly during the early years – physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially.
- All children feel included, secure, and valued.
- Early years' experience builds on what children already know and can do.
- No pupil is excluded or disadvantaged, and inclusive provision is carefully tailored to support diverse learning needs, including pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Special Educational Needs (SEN).
- Parents and practitioners work hand in hand together.
- The setting adheres strictly to explicit safer-sleep requirements. Staff regularly review sleep and rest procedures, monitor equipment (such as cots and mattresses), ensure correct positioning of young children, and maintain rigorous, documented sleep checks and active supervision.
- In accordance with Department for Education (DfE) guidance, screen use within the EYFS is carefully managed. Screens are never used simply to occupy pupils; where screens are utilised, they have a clear educational purpose, support teaching and learning, and align fully with government guidelines.

- The curriculum is carefully structured.
- There are opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and those that they plan or initiate themselves.
- Practitioners can observe and respond appropriately to children to further their next steps of learning.
- Well-planned, purposeful activity and appropriate intervention by staff are used to engage children in the learning process.
- Rich and stimulating experiences are provided within a learning environment, which is well planned and well organised.
- Practitioners are concerned with the holistic development of every pupil and are vigilant for indications of problems related to health, emotional wellbeing, abuse, learning, and social interaction. Safeguarding procedures strictly adhere to the updated threshold requiring any allegations of 'harm' (rather than serious harm) by anyone living, working, or looking after children at the premises to be reported immediately to the DSL and relevant authorities.
- In line with current legislation, banned breeds of dogs are strictly prohibited and cannot be kept or be present at any time on the school premises where registered early years childcare is provided.

Approach to Early Years Learning and Teaching

We aim to provide a well-planned and well-organised environment that gives children rich and stimulating experiences, through a carefully structured curriculum. We use Development Matters and Birth to Five to help us plan, assess and teach. We take into account Characteristics of Effective Learning, which move through all areas of learning, playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically.

In the Early Years, the role of the adult will be to support children's development by providing a stimulating learning environment with a wide range of interesting materials for children to explore and experiment, to teach skills and techniques and to value children's individual efforts. Using displays we can show children just how much we value their achievements. Children gain a great sense of pride through seeing their work carefully displayed and seeing photographs of themselves engaged in learning. We value the learning process as highly as we value the end result.

Accordingly, the curriculum in the foundation stage will be based on the Early Learning Goals, which set out clearly what most children are expected to achieve before they leave Early Years at the end of Reception.

Prime areas of learning are:

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

Specific Areas of learning are:

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

Assessments

Within the first half term on entering Early Years, a teacher assessment is undertaken with the child. This establishes a starting point to inform our planning and to track progress. In Reception, all children will be assessed using the Government Statutory baseline on entry. Outcomes of the assessments are available for parents to see if they wish. Assessments are used to inform curriculum planning and target setting for individual children. Assessment information is collected as an integral part of the teaching and learning process. A written report is prepared at the end of Nursery and the end of Reception year which forms the agenda for a formal discussion. This is held in the second half of the summer term. Informal discussions about children's progress are welcomed through parent meetings, or you can speak to staff before school 8am or after school 3.15pm.

Parents/Liaison

We highly value the involvement of parents and carers as the main teacher for their child. Parents are encouraged and invited to:

- Discuss any issues or concerns with the adults in the class. They are available at the beginning and end of sessions and can arrange for parents/carers to make an appointment to see them if they need to discuss something further.
- Stay and Learn sessions, to discuss and observe how the children learn and see how their child is progressing in Early Years.
- Regular parents' drop-in sessions and meetings (half termly and termly)

Information for parents is provided through regular newsletters, Tapestry posts, the school website and Facebook page. Regular contact is also maintained through each Reception child's reading home/schoolbook.

Organisation

On entry to Early Years, children are allocated a house team. Parents/Carers will receive a letter to inform them which house team they are in. Each morning, all children go to their entrance. Children start by doing a physical activity to develop their fine and gross motor skills. Reception is then split into groups to start their phonics, and Nursery may be split into groups to cover various areas of learning. All children can then access the areas of provision both indoors and out and choose what they would like to do. Adult led activities are also going on during this time.

Children who attend afternoon Nursery are greeted by two members of the Early Years team. Children sit in a group and sing songs or listen to a story before choosing what they would like to play with.

The children will be organised in different ways for teaching ranging from whole class to individual. The classroom is arranged to provide the children with easy access to materials and resources to develop their skills and independence. We also offer opportunities for children to learn outdoors in all areas of the curriculum.

Admissions

Children are admitted to the Early Years according to Durham County Admissions Policy and considering children's Special Educational Needs. The school works closely with all professional agencies working with families who may be able to identify any children with a specific need and identified needs will be shared with the parents/carers if a priority place is being considered. The admissions procedure is as follows:

- Before entry to Early Years (at age 2 for pre-school or 3 for nursery), an application form must be completed by the parent/carer. A receipt of application form slip is issued to the parent/carer and completed application forms are filed in chronological order.
- Lists are prepared for the children to be admitted on or as near to their 3rd birthday as possible. Preschool children will be offered in accordance with their code the term after their 2nd birthday or as close to their 2nd birthday,
- A letter is sent to the parent/carer via email offering a place and visit dates. Each visit date is 1 hour long or 45 minutes for preschool. On entry at three years old, children are usually allocated a session place. During the child's first visit, parents/carers are given the opportunity to ask any questions as well as given paperwork to be completed.
- Settling-in sessions are tailored specifically to meet the individual needs of each pupil. These sessions are designed to ensure a smooth transition, allowing pupils to acclimatise to the environment at their own pace. Each child is supported through personalised activities and interactions that cater to their unique preferences and comfort levels. This bespoke approach ensures that every pupil feels valued and secure as they begin their journey in the setting.
- We would expect all children to be toilet trained when they start Nursery. If a child is not toilet-trained, staff will work with parents to promote independent toilet using skills. Parent/Carers are advised to inform staff of any difficulties with toilet training or medical problems. If a child has a medical condition, then a medical plan may need to be drawn between home, school, and the school nurse.
- Parent/Carers are asked to complete a form giving relevant information and contact numbers and are asked to inform staff of any changes of address or mobile telephone numbers etc.

Transition to Reception

Children in our Nursery transfer to many primary schools. Staff from these schools visit our school to meet the children. As our Early Years provides education from both nursery and reception children, the transition to the next stage is exceptionally smooth if a child remains in our reception class.

Parents are invited to attend a meeting prior to their children entering Reception stage. In this meeting, parents find out about life in Reception and what to expect. Reception age children who have not attended nursery with us also have this opportunity. Year 6 buddies are allocated to the reception children to help support them during their time in the lunch hall as well as outside on the playground.

In the Autumn term, the parents are also invited to a meeting to discuss ways to support their child's learning, where Read, Write Inc and reading are explained to them. It provides children with an opportunity to liaise with their child's teacher and ask any questions that they may have.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of the Policy

The policy will be reviewed annually by the Early Years Lead and team and reported to the Governing Body. It is linked to other policies and is available always should parents wish to read it.