



## **Gedney Church End and Lutton St Nicholas Federated Primary Schools**

### **Foundation Stage Policy**

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## **Introduction**

Within the Federation, all children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. Compulsory schooling begins at the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday. Key Stage 1 begins for our children as we develop the pupils' ability to observe, learn and record from the world about them. The Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and in preparing children for later schooling. The Early Learning Goals set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Children joining the Federation have already learned a great deal. Many have been to one of a range of settings that exist in our community. The early years' education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- to build on what our children already know and can do;
- to ensure that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- to offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- to provide a rich and stimulating environment.

## **Aims of the Foundation Stage**

The curriculum of the Early Years Foundation Stage underpins all future learning. The Federation aims to support, foster, promote and develop children's:

*Prime Area of Learning: Communication, Language and Movement*

1. Listening and attention
2. Understanding
3. Speaking

*Prime Area of Learning: Physical Development*

4. Moving and handling
5. Health and self-care

*Prime Area of Learning: Personal, Social and Emotional Development*

6. Self-confidence and self-awareness
7. Managing feelings and behaviour
8. Making relationships

*Specific Area of Learning: Literacy*

9. Reading
10. Writing

*Specific Area of Learning: Mathematics*

11. Numbers
12. Shape, space and measures

*Specific Area of Learning: Understanding of the World*

13. People and communities
14. The world
15. Technology

*Specific Area of Learning: Expressive Arts and Design*

16. Exploring and using media and materials
17. Being imaginative

### **Teaching and Learning**

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning within the Federation. The more general features of good practice in the Federation that relate to the 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 and teaching assistants 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 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 a range of observations, which are regularly shared with parents;
- 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.

### **Play in the Foundation Stage**

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and

solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

### **Inclusion in the Foundation Stage**

Within our Federation, 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 Foundation Stage we will set 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 will progress beyond this point. We will achieve this by planning to meet the needs of girls and boys, 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 will 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. This involves speech therapy for some of our children.

### **The Foundation Stage Curriculum**

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas Prime and Specific area of learning. These are divided into 17 Early Learning Goals (see above). An Early Learning Goal is a statement of what achievement should look like at the end of the Foundation Stage. The experiences that our children meet often enable them to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning.

### **Assessment**

Throughout the Foundation Stage, as part of the learning and teaching process, we will assess each child's development in relation to the Early Learning Goals that form part of the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. These assessments will be made on the basis of our accumulating observations and knowledge of the whole child. The Foundation Stage profile sums up that knowledge. Within the Federation, the profile will be completed throughout the year to track individual achievements and agree next learning steps in the autumn, spring and summer terms.

To document our children's progress through the Foundation Stage, all children will be allocated a Tapestry Profile. Tapestry is a secure online profile that can be accessed by practitioners and parents alike. Evidence can be in many different forms including written observations, sound files, digital images or film-clips. Early in the new academic year, parents of pupils in the Foundation Stage are invited to an evening meeting where the Tapestry Profiles are demonstrated, logins established and questions answered.

As part of our work with feeder pre-schools, practitioners will seek to establish the use of Tapestry Profiles for pupils in the first year of the Foundation Stage. This is an important consideration because transition information can more easily be managed and this helps us to gain a very clear understanding of our learners before they enrol in September.

Practitioners assess on a continuous basis but this has to be based on robust information transfer from feeder pre-schools and the accurate use of a Reception Baseline. For the first time this year, both schools have subscribed to the national baseline programme, selecting Early Excellence Baseline Assessment (EExBA) as the preferred method. Central to this approach is the deployment of the Leuven scales for engagement and well-being. EExBA will not be administered until all children have shown high levels in both scales.

Month-on-month assessments are collated by practitioners and these show the targets and the rate of progress for all pupils against the 17 Early Learning Goals. Targets relate to the developmental stages that children pass through at either an emerging, expected or exceeding level.

The Foundation Stage profile will form the basis for reports to parents, and a written report will be given out at the end of the year which shows progress made during the year and gives targets for improvement. Against each of the 17 Early Learning Goals, an attainment statement will be issued in terms of whether or not the child has finished the year at an emerging, expected or exceeding level.

## **The Role of Parents**

We believe that all parents have the most important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating their children. We will continue to develop this partnership through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our Federation;
- giving the children the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our reception class;
- to fully engage with the Tapestry Profiles, which will allow us to develop some of the learning experiences that have been created for the children at home
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There will be formal meetings for parents at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private. Parents will receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.

## **Induction Procedures**

There is a wealth of research that confirms the importance of effective induction into the Reception Year. Our practitioners fully recognise that if a child experiences high levels of engagement and well-being prior to starting in September, their capacity for learning will be considerably enhanced.

Given the catchments and physical space available at both schools in our federation, this process has to be handled a little differently, as follows:

### *Gedney Church End*

All Reception pupils will be offered a taught session for 2 mornings per week just after the summer half term. These will follow the guiding principles of the Foundation Stage and at the end of each session, all of the children will have made something to take home.

During the penultimate week of term, parents will be invited to a presentation that is led by the Head Teacher, that covers curriculum and the day-to-day requirements of starting at school. Practical matters will also be taken care of including school transport, school uniform, permissions, governance and fundraising.

Practitioners will ensure that at least one pre-school visit is made and this will take place during the second half of the summer term. This is a very valuable opportunity for us to see the children working effectively within an environment they are familiar with and also giving them time to meet the adults who will be important to them when they enrol.

As older children start back at school in the middle of the first week in September, Reception pupils will normally start at the beginning of the first full week. During these couple of days, practitioners will visit children at home where a core focus can be placed on seeing the children in an environment that they feel most comfortable in. There will also be an opportunity for parents to engage with practitioners and this has proved to be beneficial, particularly when some of the more sensitive issues have been covered including health-care needs.

Finally, all of the children will be invited to attend at school on a full-time basis. If parents decide that this is a little too much, we will respect their rights accordingly. At no stage will a reduced timetable be offered, which is fully in-line with statutory guidance.

### *Lutton St. Nicholas*

As with Gedney Church End, pre-school and home-visits are made by practitioners but a staged approach tends to be utilised, as the school is often subscribed. The stages are as follows:

1. Morning visit to the setting where parents are invited to stay with their children. All key staff, including the Head Teacher, will also be available, and initial observations will be carried out to ensure that they begin to settle and engage. Prior to this, it is expected that pre-school visits will have taken place as this will ensure that the children have already met key staff who will be working with them on the day.
2. Morning visit to the setting where parents are invited to join the Head Teacher in the hall for tea and coffee. This represents a graded approach to them leaving the children in the setting on their own but they can rapidly return, if the need should arise. During this time, the curriculum presentation detailed above will be offered to the parents from Lutton St. Nicholas as well.
3. Morning visit to the setting but this time the parents will be encouraged to leave them with key staff. Later, they will return where a school lunch will be provided and the whole of the school community can eat together.

### **Resources**

We will plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We will use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We will encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. All resourcing will be subject to an annual review and the budget will be used to ensure that children can access high quality natural resources throughout the calendar year.

### **Signed by the Head Teacher**

**Ratified by Governors:**      January 2010

**Last updated:**                      January 2016