

Early Year Foundation Stage Policy



Thorn Grove Primary School

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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”

(EYFS Statutory framework sept 2021)

Thorn Grove Primary EYFS Provision

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year and is intended to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life. Our Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children from the age of 3 to 5 years. Our Nursery and Reception class has a full time teacher and a full-time teaching assistant. To ensure best practice and continuity our Foundation Stage classes work closely together and share planning, activities and an outdoor learning environment.

At Thorn Grove, we offer provision for children who are able to start Nursery in the September, January or April intake following their third birthday. Children are also able to join Reception for a place starting in September following their fourth birthday. Applications for school places at Thorn Grove must be made by applying centrally, through the admissions department on the Stockport Council’s website (www.stockport.gov.uk/schooladmissions).

The EYFS Curriculum

There are seven education programmes in the EYFS curriculum, which are all interconnected. There are three prime areas, which are crucial for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for helping their capacity to learn. These are:

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

There are then four specific areas through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. These are:

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

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

A Unique Child

We celebrate the uniqueness of each child by offering personalised learning opportunities and through working closely with families and professionals from other settings who have knowledge of the child. The curriculum and the opportunities we offer are designed to help children develop a positive growth mind-set and awareness of cultural diversity. We recognise that children learn in different ways and at different rates and we accommodate this in the provision we offer.

Inclusion

Our whole school ethos, as well as that of the Foundation Stage, embraces inclusion. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures. 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 and we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, so that children are able to reach their full potential. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We aim to build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence using a variety of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs. We will provide: a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively; a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued; resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping; challenging activities for all children including those whose ability and understanding are advanced. We will monitor children's progress and take action to provide support as necessary. Where a specific need is suspected we will liaise with the Special Educational Needs co-ordinator and seek advice from outside agencies, such as the speech and language service, the educational psychologist and the bi-lingual support services amongst others. We adhere to the Equal Opportunity and Inclusion policies of the school.

Positive Relationships

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 and carers. We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators. We recognise the vital role that parents and carers have played, and will continue to play in educating their children.

- We talk to parents about their child before starting school.
- We offer home visits for the Nursery children and home visits for the Reception children who have not attended our Nursery or a transition visit to the child's existing childcare provider.
- We give children an opportunity to spend time with their new teacher before the term starts through settling in sessions in Nursery and Reception and two transition visits for the children starting in Reception.
- We invite parents and carers to an EYFS induction meeting during the term before their child starts school.
- We hold one-to-one meetings with parents after their child's first half term in school, to discuss the effectiveness of the transition process and their child's learning at home/school.
- We offer parents regular formal and informal opportunities to talk about their child's development through regular Stay and Play' sessions which we hold once every half term. This allows us to share the child's achievements and enjoy their child's learning throughout their EYFS journey.
- Parent workshops are held at regular intervals throughout the year to offer further insight into the teaching methods we use for phonics, writing and maths, including how children can be supported at home.

- At the end of the year we hold an annual 'Family picnic' event to bring all our EYFS families together. This provides an exciting and happy transition between Nursery, Reception and Year 1.
- In the summer term, we provide parents with an annual written report detailing their child's progress. This report also provides parents an opportunity to share their views. You will have ongoing dialogue with parents through google classroom and Tapestry. The children's achievements and learning will be showcased using these platforms. This ensures we have positive interactions with our parents and carers throughout the whole year.
- Children will have weekly tasks that they can complete at home with their parents/carers. This will be one piece of Phonics and a Maths activity. In nursery this could be an activity such as a shared reading task, cutting activity or sharing weekly news.
- We have a lending library for our Nursery children where they take a library book home every week. We also have a number of Communication/play bags for the children to take home.

Enabling Environments

At Thorn Grove Primary School, we recognise that the physical and human environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. We observe the children and assess their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend children's learning.

Observation, assessment and planning is based on each child's ongoing formative assessment. We also have long, medium and short term plans to ensure coverage is equitable but these do change according to the needs of individuals and the interests of the class.

Staff in the EYFS spend lots of time interacting with the children and observing their play; these are then used to inform them of children's current learning and next steps towards reaching their Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception. Wow moments of the children's learning are recorded by teachers and teaching assistants working with the child. They are gathered on an app called Tapestry and shared with parents. Parents have the opportunity to comment on their child's achievements and they can also add their own wow moments of their child at home. This in turn informs and feeds into the judgements made on each child at the end of the year whilst also creating a lovely memory book for the parents to treasure.

The Learning Environment

Our learning environments are organised to enthuse children to explore and learn securely and safely. The Nursery and Reception classrooms are arranged into continuous provision areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Our outdoor environment is equally important and vital in offering children the opportunity to develop a healthy and active lifestyle whilst exploring, discovering and promoting a sense of well-being through freedom and movement. We positively encourage independent learning and allow children to approach challenge at their own level. Resources in our learning areas are carefully planned to help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning. The children's achievements are always valued and the children are encouraged to display their work on the class wow walls. Working walls are also used to support the children's learning.

Displays

Our displays support a positive learning environment and include stimulating, interactive wall displays, evidence of children's interests e.g. items made at home etc, photographs of children and are displayed at child height where possible. The environment will be rich in print. Signs and symbols will be multilingual, dual language books will be available, words will be used in displays to increase children's vocabulary. Displays will demonstrate children's individual representations and will therefore not all look the same. Children will have the opportunity to label and display their own work. Display in the EYFS will value the process above the product.

The Wider Context

Thorn Grove is a truly unique mainstream primary school. It is unique because situated within it, is a small Educational Resource Base for Deaf pupils. The parents/carers of these students have chosen a sign bilingual approach for the education of their child. The Deaf Base, which is resourced and managed by Stockport Sensory Support Service, caters for a small number of pupils who live within the Stockport Borough. The students that attend The Deaf Base are very much part of the school community and access where possible our mainstream provision.

Thorn Grove is very fortunate to have a team of very skilled dedicated professionals who work hard to ensure that children enjoy coming to school and that they are working hard each day to achieve their dreams.

We also work closely with outside agencies to support children's development. Where appropriate we involve health and social care professionals, family support workers and other members of the local community. We have a diverse school and we actively promote community cohesion. We enthusiastically engage in moderation meetings with other local schools with a view to securing agreed academic judgements. This helps immensely when accepting children from different settings with assessment data that is now accurate and reliable. The link with these schools also helps us to strengthen the continuity for families who join us.

Learning and Development

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 interconnected.

Through our teaching and learning we ensure that children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement. Our practitioners understand how children develop and learn, and consider this when they plan teaching opportunities.

We offer children first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play. Our carefully planned curriculum helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS.

We enable children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities. Children are encouraged to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management. Learning is supported by appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment. We identify progress and future learning needs of children through observations and making regular assessments on each child.

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage. 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.

The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning in the Early Years are:

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

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they can explore, think creatively and be active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

Transition Practices

Transitions (children new to nursery or moving from one class to another) are carefully planned for and time is given to ensure the continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and child-minders. Children attend introductory sessions to Nursery/Reception to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. Parents receive a Welcome Pack and questionnaire linked to their child's personal interests.

In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

Home Visits

- Prior to any child being welcomed into our school the first point of contact will be made, with both parents and child, in the home
- A home visit will be made shortly before the child is due to start Nursery and for those children new to Reception, who have not attended our Nursery their nursery setting will be visited Two members of staff will make the visit.
- The visit will give the staff the opportunity to meet all parents/carers and child in comfortable and secure surroundings
- If home visits are not possible arrangements will be made for the family to meet in school.
- Meetings will be used, not only to get to know parents and child, but additionally to explain routines, times etc and to answer any questions that may be asked of the Nursery or the school. They will enable staff to interact with the child and provide him/her with a reference point for when they do eventually formally start Nursery or Reception
- Meetings will give an opportunity for both parents and school to discuss mutual expectations or support that may be offered
- The opportunity will be available to arrange Nursery/Reception visits prior to starting. Parents and child will visit together to enable smooth settling procedures
- Communication will be encouraged between settings where children attend before or after school clubs or day care settings

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 we adhere to the school's safeguarding policy.

We are a healthy school and our children under 5 receive free milk. All children have access to fresh water and free fruit from a Government scheme. The children in Reception are all eligible for free school meals or can choose to bring in a healthy packed lunch.

Both nursery and reception classrooms have access to the toileting facilities and we teach the children the importance of hygiene, hand washing techniques and the importance of oral health and throughout the year we plan cooking activities to give children experiences of a range of healthy food.

In addition, the school has the following child protection policies and procedures:

In relation to the use of mobile phones within the early years setting we will ensure:

- Parents and carers are asked to switch off mobile phones if they are coming into the early years setting and leave the setting if they need to use their mobile;
- Parents are generally prohibited from taking any photographs of children in the early years setting, however for special events such as school performances, may do so on the understanding that the images are not posted onto social media sites or otherwise shared, and providing there are no objections from any other parents attending whose children are taking part in the event;
- Staff seek parental permission to take photographs of the children, which must be linked to teaching the curriculum and that they use school equipment only for this purpose;
- Staff switch off personal mobile phones in the Early Years setting and use them only during breaks outside the setting.

Early Years Pupil Premium

We will endeavour to identify our least advantaged pupils and inform parents or carers of their opportunity to apply for their child's entitlement to extra funding in school. All extra funding we receive will be used to support areas in which we identify that the child will best benefit. We will track children's progress to ensure that they are making good progress and to ensure that support is adjusted to target specific areas as the child develops.

Ratios

The school will ensure that staff levels within the Early Years setting comply with statutory guidance and can meet the needs of the children, provide suitable levels of supervision and keep them safe. Children will be kept within sight and hearing at all times. The EYFS Leader will oversee all EYFS provision.

- There will be at least one member of staff for every 13 children
- Classes will be led by a qualified teacher supported by suitably qualified support staff.

The EYFS Leader will make sure that;

- There are correct adult to child ratios at all times
- At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid certificate will be on the premises at all times when children are present
- Risks have been assessed carefully before carrying out any practical activities or trips

Assessment

At Thorn Grove, every child undertakes a baseline assessment on entry to Nursery and Reception within the first 3 – 6 weeks. In Reception, the children are assessed using the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment. This is used in addition to the class teacher's own assessments made through observations of the children. This is reviewed termly as part of our School Assessment procedure.

Throughout Early Years, the children's knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements are assessed and tracked using the developmental stages set out in the document 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)' as a guide. As part of our daily practice we observe, interact and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. Our assessment depends on us getting to know our children and, to this end, we gather information from a range of sources; observations of the children in play, in adult-led activities, through discussions with parents and carers and through talking to the children. This evidence helps us build up a picture of children's strengths and achievements and to help us to plan for children's next steps in learning.

The Early Years Foundation Profile

The EYFS profile assessment must be carried out in the final term of Reception in which a child reaches age 5, and no later than 1 July in that term.

The main purpose of the EYFS profile is to provide a reliable, valid and accurate assessment of individual children at the end of the EYFS.

EYFS profile data is used to:

- inform parents about their child's development against the ELGs and the characteristics of their learning
- support a smooth transition to key stage 1 (KS1) by informing the professional dialogue between EYFS and KS1 teachers
- help year 1 teachers plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children

The EYFS profile provides an accurate national data set relating to levels of child development at the end of the EYFS. The DfE uses this to monitor changes in levels of children's development and their readiness for the next phase of their education both nationally and locally.

In the final term of Reception, teachers must review information from all sources to make a judgement for each child, for each ELG. The judgement must say whether the child's learning and development is:

- best described by the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS (expected)
- not yet at the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS (emerging)

This profile data is the statutory data that is sent to the Local Authority and used to help schools benchmark and identify improvements. Parents/carers will be given information of their child's achievements in a written report at the end of the Summer term.

Monitoring of the EYFS

We are committed to providing the best possible experiences for our children. The EYFS Leader is responsible for monitoring provision, teaching and learning and children's progress. Information is shared with the Headteacher and SLT as appropriate, so any necessary actions can be taken. All adults in our EYFS team have a key role in children's learning and development. Therefore, they are required to be knowledgeable and skilled in the EYFS curriculum. Any training needs for existing or new members of staff are identified and addressed as part of performance management targets