

Policy on the Foundation Phase

Introduction

The proposed age range for the Foundation Phase extends from the age of three to the end of year two but at present is only statutory for three to five year olds. Entry into our primary school is at the beginning of the school year in which the children are five.

Our priority is to develop the implementation of the Foundation phase in Early Years and Key Stage 1 through a rolling programme as set out by the Welsh assembly guidelines. By developing a thematic approach across the phase, we will use Foundation Phase methodology alongside NC requirements for Years 1 and 2.

The Foundation Phase is important in its own right, and also in preparing children for later schooling. It is the Early Learning Goals that set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage.

The early-years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- it builds on what our children already know and can do
- it ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged
- it offers 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
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment

Aims and objectives

The curriculum of the Foundation Phase underpins all future learning by promoting and developing:

- personal, social and emotional well-being
- positive attitudes and dispositions towards learning
- social skills
- attention skills and persistence
- language and communication
- reading and writing
- mathematics
- knowledge and understanding of the world
- physical development
- creative development
- Welsh language development

Teaching and learning style

The features of effective teaching and learning in our school are defined in our policy on teaching and learning. They apply to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 or 2.

The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Phase are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents that helps our children to feel secure at school and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn and how this must be reflected in their teaching

- the range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve success by the end of the Foundation Phase
- 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 space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors
- the identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents
- the good relationships between our school and the other educational settings in which the children have been learning before joining our school
- the clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it
- The regular identification of training needs for all adults working at the Foundation Phase

Play

Through play, our children explore and develop the learning experiences that help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up their ideas, learn how to control themselves and begin to understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively both alongside other children and 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

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 we are planning for their learning (see our policy on inclusion).

At the Foundation Phase, we set realistic and challenging expectations keyed to the needs of our children so that most achieve success by the end of year two. Some children progress beyond this point. We help them do this by planning 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.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build on and extend the children's knowledge, experience and interests and develop their self-esteem and confidence
- using a variety of teaching strategies that are based on children's learning needs
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- employing resources that reflect diversity, and that avoid 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 providing support through various intervention procedures, as and when necessary.

- Celebrating success and achievements, with a strong emphasis on praise.
- Valuing and encouraging parent involvement in their children's education.

The Curriculum

Our curriculum for the Foundation Phase reflects the areas of learning identified in the outcomes. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas.

A skills based curriculum has been developed within the early years using 'The framework for children's learning 3-7 year olds in Wales'. Each of the seven areas of development has been broken down and develops over the year.

In order to take account of the two year intake in Nursery, a two year rolling plan of themes is in place. The content will be adapted to suit the children's needs. Regardless of the content, all children will progress through the skills at their individual pace. These topics are flexible while the skills remain constant within the ladder.

Planning

Using the Foundation Phase Framework, the teachers follow the children in creating medium term plans, working closely with all other classroom adults. Topic webs show mid term theme content and anticipated learning outcomes from Nursery through to year 2.

Continuous provision is enhanced according to what the children need and want. Discussions with the children, and observations, inform the teachers and other classroom adults in developing the learning environment and in moving the learning on. The provision is flexible to cater for the children's levels of engagement and interaction. The skills are reinforced throughout the areas at every opportunity and the pupils are made aware of their whole class and individual targets wherever possible. Skills are frequently revisited.

Observations

Observations are an integral part of the learning process. Informal, spontaneous, observations take place throughout the independent/directed learning process, through the use of post it notes, confidential notes and discussions. Planned observations are carried out each week.

Assessment

Assessment is an important and integral part of the FP. If information is gathered regularly, the record will be an invaluable tool to plan for individual progression and evaluate the curriculum offered.

Assessments are made by observing the children in both planned and spontaneous activities.

Assessment is ongoing throughout the structured play. Pupils are catered for as individuals and therefore moved forward at their own pace. Formative assessment is done through the use of post it notes, thought maps, tick lists, formal and informal observations and peer and self assessments. Assessment and observation files are kept to record relevant assessments. Baseline tests are carried out as the children enter school in

Nursery and Reception. Targets against the outcomes are set for in house tracking and annual reports show the annual summative assessment overview.

The role of parents

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We therefore recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school
- opportunities given to the children to spend time with their teacher before starting school
- inviting all parents to an induction visit during the term before their child starts school
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our reception class
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns
- having flexible admission arrangements and allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances
- offering a range of activities, throughout the year, that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents e.g "Positive Parenting" workshops, "Helping your child read" workshops and our StorySack loan library.
- providing various activities that involve parents, i.e. regular communication with home through the home/school reading scheme, class information sheets related to themes and inviting parents to curriculum evenings in order to discuss the kind of work that the children are undertaking
- Inviting parents into the setting to talk about and be interviewed by the children on their family, jobs and pets
- Encouraging parental help, such as supporting the reading carousel, gardening, regular in class support, running of the StorySack library

There is a formal meeting for parents twice a year at which the parents discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Each term there are regular open hours offering parents an opportunity to look at work and displays in the classrooms with their children. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.

Evidence

- ***A sample of books are kept and monitored containing samples of each level while some other work is sent home. They show progression throughout the year***
- Photo files are kept and updated regularly to show examples activities. These are annotated to display skills covered during these activities. Where possible, the children annotate their photographs.
- Subject leaders use opportunities to discuss children's work with them in order to gain further understanding of their learning.
- Class books are made
- Observation files/ notes are kept and monitored.
- Digi Blu, Tuff Cam and tapes are used within some sessions to show examples of learning and are available on 'Storebox' for the use of curriculum leaders
- Thought maps/discussion sheets are kept

- Tick lists/confidential notes

Resources

We plan a stimulating learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer as we believe that this encourages independent learning. Links with the community are cherished.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary in light of changes within the Foundation Phase.

Signed:

Date: