



Muswell Hill Primary School Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Reviewed: January 2022
Next review: January 2024

Muswell Hill Primary School is a Rights Respecting School, based upon the UNICEF Convention of the Rights of the Child.

We believe that all children should grow up aware of these rights and respect these rights for themselves and for others. Being a Rights Respecting School underpins policies throughout the school. As policies are reviewed within the cycle they are adapted to demonstrate this. Reviews started in the academic year of 2019/20. The school received the Bronze Award in July 2020 and is currently working towards the Silver Award.

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Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) that applies from September 2021](#).

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. Every child at Muswell Hill Primary School in Early Years will be provided with the best possible start to life with the provision of high quality learning in a safe, healthy and secure environment which will enable them to achieve their full potential in life. Their parent/family/carer will feel valued, be listened to and encouraged to contribute through good parenting to the overall aims and objectives of the Early Years.

The Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum is based on the understanding that children develop rapidly during this stage of their learning – physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. It forms the basis on which children build the rest of their lives and it is not viewed as simply a preparation for the next stage of development. Children in the Foundation Stage learn best through staff providing experiences that build on and extend children's home interests and experiences. Children are influenced by everything in their environment, they use their senses to explore and make sense of the world around them. They learn best through imaginative and meaningful play, which is most productive when inspired by their own interests. At Muswell Hill Primary School we recognize that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions towards learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and believe that every child matters. All children at Muswell Hill Primary School are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. All families are valued within our school.

Structure of the Early Years

At Muswell Hill Primary School, our Early Years provision includes two Reception classes, each with space for 30 children. Our Reception classes each have their own classroom which are connected by a shared outdoor area.

Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2021.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development.

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through **4 specific areas**:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

The Characteristics of Effective Early Learning

The characteristics of effective learning are the factors which play a central role in children's development. They are vital elements which support the transition process from Nursery to Reception and from there into Year One.

- Playing and exploring - engagement
 - Finding out and exploring
 - Playing with what they know
 - Being willing to 'have a go'
- Active learning – motivation
 - Being involved and concentrating
 - Keep trying
 - Enjoying achieving what they set out to do
- Creating and thinking critically – thinking
 - Having their own ideas
 - Making links
 - Choosing ways to do thing

Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate. In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1.

All staff develop children by ensuring challenging, playful opportunities across the 'Prime' and 'Specific' areas of learning and development. The Prime areas begin to develop quickly in response to relationships and experiences, and run through and support learning in all other areas. We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to achieve their full potential. In addition to child-initiated activities and small focus groups with adults in the setting, Reception children participate in daily phonics and Maths sessions. They also read at least once a week with the class teacher. Please see the school's Teaching & Learning policy for more information on whole school approaches to teaching and learning.

Enabling Environments

It is through a stimulating environment and the process of play that children explore, investigate, recreate and understand the world in which they live. Play is a vital component of children's lives and is the medium through which skills can be developed and practised.

Within the EYFS guidance document 'Effective Practice: Outdoor Learning' the key messages are:

- The outdoor environment has unique characteristics and features.
- Outdoor learning has equal value to indoor learning.
- Outdoor learning has a positive impact on children's well-being and development.
- Children need the support of attentive and engaged adults who are enthusiastic about the outdoors and understand the importance of outdoor learning.
- Outdoor learning is enhanced by an environment that is richly resourced with play materials that can be adapted and used in different ways.
- An approach to outdoor learning that considers experiences, rather than equipment, places children at the centre of the provision being made.

At Muswell Hill Primary School we encourage children to learn to make decisions, solve problems and grow in confidence in their own abilities outdoors and they need plenty of time to investigate their outdoor environment purposefully. They are given opportunities to make predictions about what may happen based on their previous play experiences and test out these ideas and theories. We have an attractive outdoor provision that has direct access from both Reception classrooms and we encourage 'freeflow' when possible.

Assessment

At Muswell Hill Primary School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe children to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

Assessment is carried out through observations - both informal and planned. All staff will record examples of spontaneous, independent and consistent learning across a range of contexts. These significant observations are recorded in the children's online Learning Journeys on 'Tapestry'.

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Children are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters [guidance](#)) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Children for whom English is not their home language will engage in activities and first hand experiences that do not depend solely on the English language, their participation will reveal what they know and can do in the security of their home language. As soon as possible, staff will ascertain a child's prior language and any previous education experiences.

(Please note that the Early Learning Goals for Communication, Language and Literacy, Reading and Writing are assessed in English).

Staff will observe the EAL child over time in order to quantify assessments and raise questions with the parents (or a bilingual support assistant/member of staff) to be confident about what the child knows and understands.

The Early Years environment will reflect and celebrate EAL children's cultural and linguistic heritage within its setting where the opportunity arises, for example: celebrating Diwali, Eid, Hannukkah and Christmas

SEND

Developmental and health issues can sometimes be first noticed in Early Years. Any observations recorded by staff would always be discussed with parents/carers and any appropriate multidisciplinary referrals would be made only after consultation with parents/carers.

Equal Opportunities

There are policies and procedures for staff but also in particular for children to promote equality of opportunity, including support for children with special educational needs or disabilities. The main Equal Opportunities principles are as set out in our Policy for Equal Opportunities.

Admissions and settling-in

At Muswell Hill Primary School children are admitted into Reception in the September following their fourth birthday.

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible. Although we do not have a Nursery, the Early Years practitioners visit many of local pre-school settings and meet with key workers to discuss individual children. We encourage pre-school settings to pass on any useful information such as children's special books and development matters booklets. Places are allocated to the two Reception classes, Red and Ruby based on number of siblings, age and gender to create a broad, inclusive mix of children in both classes.

Prior to the child's start date, parents/carers are invited to an Induction Meeting in July. Here the parents are given a presentation about the school and an information booklet to take home along with various other materials linked to early years. They also have the opportunity to meet their child's teacher and nursery nurse. In addition to this, each new child is invited for an afternoon's play session to meet their teacher and nursery nurse as well as visiting the setting for the first time and meeting other children who will be joining the same class.

In September before the children begin the settling in period, parents are invited to an individual 15-minute meeting with the class teacher and nursery nurse. This is to discuss their child's likes and dislikes and any medical issues or allergies.

Muswell Hill Primary School has a staggered entry procedure in the Autumn Term. This takes place over a three-week period.

We do not have a nursery and children come to Muswell Hill Primary from a variety of different nurseries and provisions - childminders, home schooling, playgroups and for others, no early experiences.

Experience has shown that the three-week period helps greatly in settling the children, giving them time to get used to their new environment and to get to know the staff team and the other 29 children in their class, whilst learning to navigate the lunch hall and playground with 59 other Reception children who share their setting. It also enables us to get to know the individual child and to confidently carry out the statutory EYFS baseline assessment for them in week 4.

When children join the school in September the following procedures apply:

- During the first few days/week depending on when term starts, teachers meet individually with each parent
- During the second week, each child attends for one day as part of a group of six
- During the third week, children attend daily for either a morning or afternoon session as part of a group of 15.
- During the fourth week and thereafter, children attend for the full school day unless the class teacher and parents or guardians agree that it is not in the best interests of an individual child.

The school also holds parent consultations in the second half of the Autumn term to establish how children are settling into the school environment.

Working with parents/carers

At Muswell Hill Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident, and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. We know that parents / carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their children's education.

The school operates an open-door policy for parents / carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if Reception staff have any concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.

We hold meetings each term to discuss children's progress and to set targets for future development. Nursery nurses also attend these meetings so that they can contribute towards conversations regarding children in their group. Once the children have settled in, we encourage parents to come in and participate in activities such as cooking and support staff and children on class trips.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Key person

It is a statutory requirement for each child to be assigned a key person. In our Reception classes the nursery nurses and class teachers share this role. This helps to ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. The key persons play an essential role in observing the child and setting next steps. This is shared with all practitioners in the classroom environment to ensure consistency and to help inform future planning. The teams work closely together and there are times when children might be assigned to their 'key worker' e.g. computing sessions, story times, some focus activities but overall the statutory role is shared.

Safeguarding and welfare

'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.' (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2021)

At Muswell Hill Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) that applies from September 2021](#).

The school's Safeguarding Policy and procedures are in line with the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) and have regard to the Government's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and follow Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021. (KCSIC 2021).

Good health

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by for example by talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth

Children are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as being given the choice of milk. They have access to water at all times.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

Intimate care

"Intimate Care" is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage

of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. In most cases, intimate care is to do with personal hygiene. Parental consent is sought (see Intimate Care Policy).

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child. Please refer to the Intimate Care Policy for guidance given to practitioners.

Permissions

Parents are asked to sign generic permission forms for school visits, food tasting and photographs etc.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

All existing staff, new staff, helpers will be DBS checked before being allowed to come into contact with children.

Staff

All staff will receive the appropriate induction training which includes: roles and responsibilities, emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection, equality and health and safety issues. Any training needs will be identified through regular staff appraisals and staff having contact with children and families will be adequately supervised.

First Aid

A member of staff who holds an approved, current **paediatric** first aid certificate will always be present on the premises or during outings. They will ensure that the first aid box has the appropriate contents and maintain a written record of any accidents. They will ensure that the parent or carer is informed of any accident on the same day it occurs or as soon as is reasonably practicable thereafter.

Appendix 1: List of statutory policies and procedures in EYFS

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See Health and Safety policy
Administering medicines policy	See Supporting Children with Medical Conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See Health and Safety policy
Procedure for checking the identity 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

For specific details about possible related practice refer to the following policies:

- Behaviour and Anti-bullying
- Teaching and Learning
- Special Educational Needs
- Equal Opportunities
- Intimate Care policy

Procedures for policy monitoring and dissemination

All members of staff and governors will have access to and receive this policy. It is the responsibility of those working in Reception to follow the principals stated in this policy. The Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher will carry out monitoring on EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. The Phase Leader for EYFS will support and monitor the quality of provision in line with the school's School Development and Improvement Plan. They will meet teachers regularly to discuss the provision and curriculum and are accountable for the quality of teaching and learning.

A copy of this policy is available on the school website or parents/carers can request a copy from the school office. This policy has been approved by the Governing Body and the School Leadership Team and it will be reviewed in line with the curriculum policy schedule.

People responsible

Amanda Howells (Headteacher)
 Suzy Fotheringham (Assistant Headteacher)
 Lucy Sykes (Early Years Phase Lead)

