

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School

DOCUMENT STATUS

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Legislation

Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage

Aims and Objectives

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to their full potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the framework that provides that assurance.”

This policy seeks to secure consistency in classroom practice and management. It aims to identify ways in which teaching and learning are characterised in order to create a consistent, effective, well managed learning environment, in which the practitioners provide effective early years provision designed around the individual needs of the children. The school ensures that its children experience high standards of learning, development and care, focused on supporting every child to make progress. Equality of opportunity is provided, believing in the concept of lifelong learning and the notion that learning should be rewarding and enjoyable, the foundations of which are established in the Foundation stage through play-based early years provision.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

A Unique Child

At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School, every child is recognised as a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. Children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; praise and encouragement are used and children’s achievements are celebrated to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

The diversity of individuals within the school is valued – there is no discrimination against children because of ‘differences’. All children at Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School are treated fairly, regardless of race, religion or abilities and all children and families are valued within the school.

At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School all children matter. They are given every opportunity to achieve their best. This is done by taking account of the children's range of life experiences when planning their learning.

In the EYFS, realistic and challenging expectations are set that meet the needs of the children. This is achieved by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, 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.

The needs of children are met through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend their 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.

It is important that all children in the school are 'safe'. The aim is to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. Children are provided with choices to help them develop this important life skill. They should be allowed to take risks but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

The school aims to provide the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See Safeguarding Policy.)

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."

At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School, staff are aware that they must comply legally with certain welfare requirements, as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2007. Staff endeavour to:

- Promote the welfare of children

- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose development experiences tailored to meet their needs
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children

Positive Relationships

At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School, it is recognised that children learn to be strong and independent from having secure relationships. Staff aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

Parents are children's first and most enduring educators and their contribution is valued.

The role that parents have played in educating their children is recognised, as well as their future role. This is done through:

- Asking parents about their child before their child starts school as part of the transition process, learning about the child in an 'All About Me' booklet and also holding a parent/setting baseline interview held when the child starts nursery
- The children having the opportunity to spend time in the setting before starting school during the 'Open Day' taster session
- Offering parents daily opportunities to talk about their child and their progress and allowing free access to the child's 'Portfolio'
- Portfolios sent home termly with a report on the child's attainment and parents and the child are encouraged to add their comments
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns and to build up a good relationship with their child's key worker
- Working together on strategies around behaviour and toilet training
- Inviting parents to see what the school does during 'Open Evenings'
- Enjoying and sharing concerts or performances at Christmas
- Arranging a variety of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Christmas parties, educational visits, Forest School sessions, Stay and Play, etc

- Providing opportunities for parents to leave comments relating to the child's achievements in their child's Portfolio and to engage in 'Home Learning Stories'
- Inviting parents to engage in their child's learning through 'Travelling Ted', Story Sacks, Chatter Boxes, Music and Maths bags and Library Books
- Involving parents in activities such as Gardening Club
- Supporting parents in Family Support group meetings and in attending 'Child in Need' meetings and Core Group Meetings

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. In school, each child has a key worker within a key team.

There are good links with 'The Lakes' where some of our children receive additional care. A book passes between the settings, containing any minor information to pass on to parents. We moderate children's achievements with the corresponding Family We also have good transitional links with the receiving schools and we aim to ensure continuity and coherence by sharing information about children's achievements.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Planning within the EYFS includes long-term termly overviews, Programmes of Work, which develop skills and knowledge termly, Continuous Provision plans which are based around the physical learning environment, and STPs which respond immediately to children's interests and abilities and identify next steps in learning. A baseline is completed when children start, which involves sharing information from parents and other settings on a child's development. The Learning Environment is developed to meet needs, and differentiated group times, story times and Adult Directed activities are also carefully planned to meet needs, with the adult role clearly defined and a clear learning objective set and evaluated. Children's learning is taken forward from parent and other involved setting's information and is regularly assessed; the information used to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. All children are screened on entry for their level of speech and language competence and targeted interventions planned to meet needs identified.

Assessment within the EYFS is achieved through observation. These observations are recorded in children's portfolios and through 'post its' to inform Key Workers of learning evidenced by others during different activities of the day. Portfolios also contain information from parents with regard to their child's interests, thoughts about nursery, and home activities. At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School, all information on each child is collated to use the EYFS Learning and Development Practice Guidance to record judgements on the child's 'Record of Achievement'. This is shown to parents termly. Opportunities for parents are given to discuss their child with the key worker and staff report to the parents each term on their child's progress

and learning. Information from the Record of Achievement is processed into a data package and gaps in learning identified. The Continuous Provision (CP) is changed to meet needs identified from this identification and learning targeted for different cohorts of children and for individual need where identified.

Targeted Intervention

Staff are committed to ensuring that all children in school make good progress. All children are screened for speech and language ability on entry and termly thereafter, with planned daily intervention employed which is directed at speaking, understanding, English as an Additional Language (EAL) and listening and attention skills. Differentiated adult-directed groups for mathematical understanding, auditory and visual skills, phonological awareness and story understanding are built into the daily routine. This ensures that all children, from less able through to more able, receive targeted learning, according to need. CP plans are adapted fortnightly to reflect the needs of less able and more able children. Each key person is responsible for a group of children who meet for group time at the start of the day. This allows them to target and build a strong relationship with their key children and provides opportunity to develop Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) skills, to build close friendships, develop understanding of rules and routines, to look at special objects or talk about special events and to introduce features of the learning environment.

Enabling Environments

At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School, the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Teaching and learning can be at its strongest when delivered through child initiated play. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning and to develop their independence.

The Learning Environment

At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School, the environment is crucial in supporting children's learning in EYFS. The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently and where resources are available to meet different stages of development and learning needs. Resources are regularly replenished and well planned enhancements are set up where and when needed.

Children's interests and development needs are met by reviewing the CP plans fortnightly and enhancements placed to meet the needs of the children. They have a vast and rich outdoor area, including an outstanding woodland area for Forest School. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. Activities and resources are planned for the children to access outdoors, helping them to develop in all six areas of learning. There is also an outstanding woodland area for Forest School, with trained Forest School Leaders which enable a rich learning experience for all children.

At Sandy lane Nursery School, it is recognised that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. All areas of learning and development are equally valued and staff understand that they are inter connected.

Teaching and Learning Style

The school's policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in school. It is acknowledged that children learn in many different ways and are at different stages in their development. The key features of this policy are:

- The partnership between staff and parents, so that children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- The understanding that teachers 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 explanation, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- The carefully planned curriculum that help children work towards the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) throughout the EYFS;
- 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.

Staff ensure that children develop secure relationships with their key person, have clear routines, healthy snacks and drinks, clear boundaries and child centred learning based on individual needs of the children in a play-based environment. Staff employ effective teaching and learning strategies, including ensuring appropriately planned activities, appropriate resources, skilful interaction, well managed behaviour strategies, having fun, role modelling, employing speaking and language strategies

and modelling writing and mathematical skills in a variety of situations. We build towards the children gaining as much independence as possible and build up a 'plan, do, review' approach throughout the year; encouraging children to become creative, critical and sustained thinkers and to be foremost in their own learning.

In the Rainbow Rooms, supported learning is developed on an individual basis and in small group, structured activities.

Play

"Children's play reflects their wide-ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play, children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development." Through play, children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice 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.

Active Learning

"Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods."

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

"When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions."

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of three core areas of learning:

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

and specific areas of learning:

- Mathematical Development
- Literacy
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. In each area, there are ELGs that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. Teachers and support staff are set targets through their Professional Development which are fed from the School Improvement Plan to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are monitored and taught rigorously.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of all the practitioners to follow the principles stated in this policy. Practitioners will be expected to discuss and make presentations at staff meetings and to the governor's curriculum committee. These governors will provide feedback to the school governing body as a whole, raising any issues that require discussion.

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and teachers will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.