

# Gillespie Primary School



## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy July 2016

# **GILLESPIE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY**

## **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.'*

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. March 2014

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Gillespie we have a Nursery Class for 29 children (24 full-time and 4 part-time) aged 3 to 4 years and a Reception Class for 30 children aged 4 to 5 years. (Where a delayed admission to Reception Class has been agreed by the Local Authority, children can attend the Nursery Class and must start Reception Class at the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday).

We believe that early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives and at Gillespie Primary School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

## **AIMS**

Our aim at Gillespie is to provide children in the EYFS with:

- A happy, positive and fun start to their school life on which to establish the solid foundations for a deep love of learning.
- A sense of confidence, independence and self-esteem within a caring, safe and secure environment.
- A rich and stimulating learning environment both indoors and outdoors with new first-hand experiences that challenge the children to explore.
- A broad and balanced curriculum that reflects children's needs and interests and enables children to develop socially, emotionally, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.
- A range of learning opportunities such as solitary play, independent group play, adult supported play, adult directed learning and discrete teaching.
- A caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.
- Excellent relationships with parents and carers to build strong partnerships in supporting children.

## **OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES**

This policy outlines and uses the four guiding principles for good practice across the EYFS.

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

## **A UNIQUE CHILD**

At Gillespie we recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebrations, circle times and rewards to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

## **Inclusion**

At Gillespie we value all our children as individuals, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, ability or gender. We plan our EYFS curriculum to meet the needs of the individual child, building upon and extending their knowledge, experience and interests. We use resources that reflect and celebrate the cultural and ethnic diversity of the children. We

celebrate bilingualism and recognise that the first language has a continuing and significant role in identity, learning and the acquisition of an additional language.

### **Special Educational Needs**

In the EYFS we believe in early intervention and we provide activities and resources to meet the individual needs of children who need additional support or who have particular needs or disabilities. Children who are identified with a special educational need are monitored carefully and we work closely with parents, our Special Education Needs Coordinator and any outside agency involved with the child, to formulate an effective strategy to meet these needs.

### **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.

We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2014)

### **Transitions**

At Gillespie we recognise that starting school and moving to a different class can be a stressful time for both young children and parents. We therefore carefully plan our transition procedures to ensure that the children settle into their new environment quickly and happily.

#### **Transition to Nursery and Reception**

In the summer term before children start school we hold a meeting at which parents meet their child's new teacher. They are also provided with key information, school and class expectations, information on our EYFS curriculum and advice on how they can help their child.

Children starting Nursery and Reception are invited for a short visit to their new classroom. They can attend this visit with either their parents or with their key worker from the child care setting that they currently attend. This gives the children the opportunity to explore their new environment and meet their new classmates and teachers.

Before children start school, home visits are made to the Nursery and Reception children. This gives the children the security of meeting their teachers in a safe and familiar environment and gives parents the time to ask questions and share knowledge or any concerns they have about their child.

Children's entry to both Nursery and Reception is staggered, with Nursery children gradually increasing their time spent in school. This allows them time to settle and to adjust to new routines and a new environment. It also allows staff to get to know the children in a smaller group and to begin to observe and assess them.

#### **Transition to Key Stage 1**

Throughout the Reception year, children's involvement in whole school life gradually increases, so that they experience whole school events, some assemblies and playtimes. During the summer term, the children meet their new teacher and visit their new class

The Reception and Year 1 teachers meet to discuss the development and learning needs of each child so that the Year 1 teacher can plan effectively for them.

### **POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

At Gillespie we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop a caring, respectful, professional relationship with the children and their families.

#### **Partnership with Parents and Carers**

We recognise the important role that parents play in their child's early education. We seek to involve and interest parents in their child's education by:

- Holding Parent open hours where parents can tour the school and see the EYFS classes in action.

- Home visits, school visits and meetings for new parents, before a child starts in the EYFS, in order for parents to pass on relevant information about their child and for the staff to give information about the school.
- Providing Parents with an EYFS Parent Handbook and signing a Home-School agreement before their child starts the EYFS.
- Regular Parent Consultation meetings in order for parents to find out about their child's progress and look at their child's 'Learning Journey' book.
- Asking parents to contribute to planning for their child's development.
- Keeping parents informed through regular newsletters, termly letters to parents and text messaging.
- Encouraging parents to share books with their child on a regular basis.
- Encouraging parents to help with specific projects or events and by welcoming their support in the classroom.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Sports day, Book week, Special celebrations and performances, Charity fund raising days, International Food evening etc.
- EYFS staff being available at the beginning and end of the day for parents to pass on messages or talk about any concerns.

### **Staff**

The formation of healthy relationships between adults and children is essential in enabling children's well-being now and in their future successes.

At Gillespie, all staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with the children in their care, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

At Gillespie, the class teacher acts as 'Key Person' to all children in their class, supported by the Nursery Nurse and Teaching Assistants.

### **ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS**

At Gillespie we recognise that children learn and develop well in enabling environments in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents. This process begins by practitioners observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning needs, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning within both the indoor and outdoor environment.

### **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

At Gillespie, the Nursery and Reception whole class Yearly Plans are based around the continuous provision and half termly topics. Topics are flexible to ensure we also follow the school themes and local or national events. Where possible, we plan visits or visitors to enhance the learning.

The Weekly Plans are based around the seven areas of learning and incorporate classroom routines and specific tasks Staff use planning as a guide but may alter these in response to their observations of the needs, achievements and interests of the children, in order to inform next steps in learning.

EYFS staff make regular assessments of children's learning and use the information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs, interests and next steps for learning.

Assessment in the EYFS begins with a baseline assessment within the first two weeks of full-time attendance in order to give staff a clear picture of each child's level of development and abilities. This is done through observations of the child in self-initiated activities and adult-led activities. We also use ECAT (Every Child a Talker) assessment tools to monitor children's language development and to identify children who are falling behind in language development in order to put intervention strategies in place early.

The assessment process involves all EYFS staff. Parents are also invited to contribute and record their child's interests, play, talk and general development at home. Observations, both formal and informal, occur during adult-led activities and child-initiated play. These observations and photographic evidence are recorded in children's Individual Learning Profiles and Learning Journey books, which includes information provided by parents and previous settings and contains comments made by the children.

Assessment judgements are formally recorded termly on Target Tracker, a computerised system which allows the teachers to track pupil attainment and progress throughout the year. Assessment judgements are moderated internally by the EYFS staff and EYFS Coordinator. They also moderate with other schools in the Borough on a termly basis. When children move from classes at the end of the school year, parents are given a written report of their child's development.

At the end of Reception, the teacher completes an assessment known as the Early Years Profile. This is based on staff observations and ongoing information provided by parents. Each child's level of development is assessed against the expected levels that a child should reach at the age of five. These are set by the Government and are called the Early Learning Goals. The Reception Parents and Year 1 teacher are given a written summary of each child's progress towards the Early Learning Goals and a short commentary on their skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning.

A summary of these assessments is also sent to the Borough for analysis and this information is shared with the Senior Leadership Team and Governors and is used to plan for the year ahead.

### **Teaching strategies**

We ensure there is a balance of adult guided or led activities and child-initiated activities across the day.

Teaching strategies for adult-led activities include some whole class teaching for short periods, such as shared story, direct teaching, singing, discussions and sharing work and achievements. During child initiated activities the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to the child builds understanding and guides new learning. The adult's role is to observe and extend this play as appropriate and to use Sustained Shared Thinking, where the adult works with a group or individual children, encouraging dialogue using open ended questioning in order to find out the child's ideas and extend their thinking skills.

Staff then use their observations to enhance provision and extend individual learning.

As the child progresses through the EYFS and their development allows, activities guided or led by adults increases in order to prepare for their transition to Year one.

### **The Learning environment**

The EYFS classrooms and shared outdoor area are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. The children have daily access to the outdoor area where ample shelter allows access in all weathers. The children are able to move freely between the indoor and outdoor spaces and there are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classrooms are organised into learning areas, where children are able to find the equipment and resources they need independently. The outdoor area offers opportunities for learning in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active.

## **LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

At Gillespie 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 inter connected.

## **The EYFS Curriculum**

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning and development, three Prime areas and four Specific areas. The Prime areas cover the knowledge and skills which are the foundations for children's school readiness and future progress, and which are applied and reinforced by the four specific areas.

The three Prime areas are:

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

The four Specific areas are:

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

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation and all areas are delivered through a balance of adult guided or led and child initiated activities.

In each area there are Early Learning Goals that summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that all young children should have gained by the end of Reception year.

## **The Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning**

When planning and guiding children's activities and our environment, we consider the different ways in which children learn and incorporate the three Characteristics of effective Teaching and Learning into our practice. These are:

- **Playing and exploring**  
We believe that play is essential for children's development and through play our children make sense of their world, 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.

Staff spend time playing alongside the children. This provides opportunities to model appropriate behaviour, reinforce prior learning, extend learning and make assessments to inform future planning.

- **Active Learning**  
We believe that children need to be provided with people, objects, ideas and events that engage them and involve them 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**  
We encourage and support our children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.  
Children are given opportunities to be creative through all areas of learning. 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.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

It is the responsibility of those working in EYFS to follow the principles stated in this policy.

The Head teacher, SLT and EYFS co-ordinator monitors the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

The EYFS Coordinator regularly meets with the Governing Body Curriculum Committee who provide oversight, support and challenge.

## **EYFS DOCUMENTS**

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

The Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2014

([https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/335504/EYFS\\_framework\\_from\\_1\\_September\\_2014\\_\\_with\\_clarification\\_note.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335504/EYFS_framework_from_1_September_2014__with_clarification_note.pdf))

Acceptable use policy

Child protection policy

Children with medical needs policy

Equalities policy

Health & Safety policy

Intimate care policy

Pupil Premium Policy

Special Educational Needs policy

EYFS Parents Guide 2016

([http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2014/08/EYFS\\_Parents\\_Guide-amended.pdf](http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2014/08/EYFS_Parents_Guide-amended.pdf))