



# Walter Infant School

## EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

### DOCUMENT HISTORY

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# **Walter Infant School**

## **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

*“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 is the framework that provides that assurance.”*

Source: “Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage”, Department for Education, 2012

The Early Years Foundation Stage Policy will define the organisation and aims for the teaching of children in F1 and F2.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. Walter Infant school aims to provide the highest quality care and education in line with expectations detailed in the Statutory Framework for the early years foundation stage effective from September 2014.

In our school we have a Foundation Stage Unit where children from 3 to 5 years access a play based curriculum based. Our part time F1 children and our full time F2 children share the environment, resources and activities. They are organised into four classes, each with a qualified teacher and suitably trained support staff.

The EYFS is based upon four guiding principles which should shape practice in the Early Years:

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

### **1. A Unique Child**

1.1 At Walter Infant School we recognise that every child is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured. We recognise that children join us at very different stages in development with individual needs; we have rigorous systems and procedures in place to ensure that every child has the opportunity to make good progress in all aspects of the early years foundation stage.

Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; in encouraging children to develop a positive attitude to learning we employ praise and encouragement, good role models, positive reinforcement, and celebration of the children’s successes.

### **1.2 Inclusion**

1.2.1 All children and their families are valued at Walter Infant School; children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities.

- 1.2.2 In our school we believe that all 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 planning for their learning. Refer to the SEN and Inclusion Policy.
- 1.2.3 In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this 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.
- 1.2.4 We meet the needs of all our children through:
- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's 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.
- 1.2.5 It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why the rules exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children.

### **1.3 Welfare**

- 1.3.1 "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."
- 1.3.2 At Walter Infant School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014.

## **2 Positive Relationships**

- 2.1 At Walter Infant School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

### **2.2 Parents as Partners**

- 2.2.1 We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

2.2.2 We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating their children. We do this by:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- the teacher offering to visit all children in their home setting prior to their starting school;
- the children having the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- 'open door policy' at the beginning and end of the school day, inviting parents to come into the classroom to settle their children or talk to their child's class teacher informally;
- offering parents opportunities every term to talk about their child's progress and allowing access to the child's 'Learning Journey' folder;
- inviting parents to attend informal meetings providing information about other areas of the curriculum; e.g Reading, Maths or Phonics.
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Stay and play sessions, Celebration assemblies, Sports days etc;
- inviting parents to share their child's achievements or experiences which are then added to the child's 'Learning Journey' folder.
- formal parent's evening in all terms for the F2 children
- Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.

2.2.3 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.

### **3 Enabling Environments**

3.1 At Walter Infant School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. 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.

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

3.2.1 At our school the planning within the EYFS is based around half termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teachers as a guide for weekly planning; however the teachers may alter the plans in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. Information about the weeks activities can be found on the Learning platform, noticeboards and a note which goes home with every child every week.

3.2.2 We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. A baseline assessment of the children will be completed when they join either F1 or F2. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in children's individual 'Learning Journey' folder.

3.2.3 At Walter Infant School, we use an assessment tool to record judgements against the EYFS Profile at the end of the EYFS. Each child's level of development is

recorded against the Early Learning Goals (“ELGs”). The levels of development are described as Emerging, Expected or Exceeding.

3.2.4 Children are defined as having reached a good level of development (GLD) at the end of the EYFS if they have achieved at least the expected level in the prime areas of learning and in the specific areas of mathematics and literacy.

3.2.5 Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELGs and assessment scales. We give a reasonable opportunity for the parents to discuss these judgements with the FS practitioners.

### **3.3 The Learning Environment**

3.3.1 The FS area 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 FS unit is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The FS unit has its own enclosed outdoor area. 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. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help them to develop in all areas of learning specified in the Statutory guidance for the EYFS.

## **4 Learning and Development**

4.1 At Walter Infant School 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.

### **4.2 Teaching and Learning Style**

4.2.1 Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 1. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our 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 explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout 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;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;

- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;

### **4.3 Characteristics of Effective Learning**

The characteristics of effective learning describe the factors which play a central role in a child's learning and in becoming an effective learner. The characteristics of effective learning run through and underpin all seven areas of learning and development, representing processes rather than outcomes.

Parents will be informed of how their child demonstrates the three key characteristics of effective learning.

- Playing and exploring – engagement
- Active Learning – motivation
- Creating and thinking critically – thinking

#### **4.3.1 Playing and Exploring**

“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.”

4.3.2 Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise 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.

#### **4.3.3 Active Learning**

4.3.4 “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.”

4.3.5 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.

#### **4.3.6 Creativity and Critical Thinking**

4.3.7 “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.”

4.3.8 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.

#### **4.4 Areas of Learning and Development**

There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are “prime areas,” and four “specific areas.”

The prime areas are: Communication and language, Physical development, Personal, social and emotional development.

The specific areas are: Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding of the world and Expressive arts and design.

4.4.1 Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents and other settings, children’s development levels are assessed. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. However, if a child’s progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child’s parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child.

### **5 Monitoring and review**

- 5.1 It is the responsibility of the EYFS practitioners to follow the principles stated in this policy.
- 5.2 There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.