



Walter Infant School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

'To be the best I can be'

Walter Infant School is an equitable, safe, secure and happy place to learn; our children grow as individuals in a stimulating and exciting environment which values respect, kindness, honesty, empathy and resilience.

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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.”

“The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.”

Source: Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage – Mandatory from September 2017

1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure that:

- all our children are able to access a broad and balanced curriculum that provides them with a wide range of knowledge and skills they need to be successful
- we have quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- we develop close partnerships between practitioners and our families; working together to provide the best start to our children’s education
- every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

We have five specific values which focus our behaviours for everyone: empathy, resilience, kindness, honesty and respect. All of our children are entitled to be treated in a way which fosters inclusion, individuality and equity. We are a fully inclusive school.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [2017 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\)](#).

3. Structure of the EYFS

At Walter Infant School and Nursery the EYFS is organised into 2 year groups comprising of a nursery class of 3 and 4 years olds referred to as Foundation 1 (F1) and three reception classes of 4 and 5 years olds referred to as Foundation 2 (F2) classes. The F1 class has 52 places, offering both 15 hours and 30 hours per week. The class is led by a qualified teacher supported by an Early Years Practitioner (EYP) and a Learning Support Assistant (LSA).

The F2 classes are led by qualified teachers, supported by an EYP or a LSA. There are 30 children in each class.

The Foundation Stage is led by The Foundation Stage Leader who is part of the Senior Leadership Team at Walter Infant School and Nursery.

4. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2017 statutory framework of the EYFS.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year (F2).

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

4.1 A Unique child

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebrating the children's achievements. We encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

We meet the needs of all our children by:

- being fully inclusive:
- 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
- allowing children to take guided risks and be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards

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.

All children and their families are valued at Walter Infant School and Nursery; our children are treated as individuals and have equal access to continuous provision and adult led activities. All our children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities.

4.2 Positive Relationships

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children by interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the EYFS teachers act as a '**key person**' to the children in their class; supported by the Teaching Assistants. Our practitioners meet regularly with the other schools in our cluster group to share good practice and discuss current issues: we welcome students and colleagues from other settings to visit to observe our practice.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between our practitioners and our families.

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 they join us
- offering to visit all children in their home setting prior to them starting school
- providing 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
- fostering an '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
- inviting parents to attend informal meetings providing information about areas of the curriculum; for example, reading, mathematics or phonics
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns
- arranging a variety of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: for example, 'Stay and Play' sessions, Celebration Assemblies, Sports Days
- inviting parents to share their child's achievements or experiences which are then added to the child's 'Learning Journey' folder
- offering parents opportunities every term to talk about their child's progress and allowing access to the child's 'Learning Journey' folder

Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year and are invited in to discuss the report and share their views.

4.3 Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observation we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs, before meticulously planning meaningful, challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

The areas within the Foundation Stage are organised to allow children to learn through exploration and investigation; the children are encouraged to access equipment and resources independently. The EYFS has an outside classroom and large garden; being outside offers the children further opportunities to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. The children can flow freely between the inside and outside spaces, encountering adult led and child initiated opportunities from the different areas of development from the EYFS Curriculum.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The Planning within the EYFS is based around themes; these plans are used by the EYFS teachers as a guide for weekly planning; however the teacher may alter these in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. We plan for literacy activities based on high quality children's texts and use real life experiences to inspire learning.

We make regular assessments of the children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in a variety of ways and used to inform the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP).

Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG). The children will be assessed as:

1. Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')
2. Meeting expected levels of development
3. Exceeding expected levels

4.4 Learning and Development

We recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and have their own learning styles. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are often linked.

The Teaching and Learning policy applies to both Key Stage 1 and the EYFS, 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
- Teachers understand how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching
- The range of approaches used that provide first-hand meaningful experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions,
- 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
- 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
- The good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school

Characteristics of Effective Learning

In planning and guiding children's activities we reflect on the different ways that children learn: the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

Play & Exploring

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They have the opportunity to practise skills, develop ideas and think creatively alongside other children as well as individually. The children communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They have the opportunity to re-enact school experiences in their own way.

Active Learning

Active learning occurs when children are engaged and we have developed our curriculum and environment to support this. Our children develop resilience to keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and are able to enjoy and acknowledge achievements;

Creativity and Thinking Critically

Children should be given opportunity 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 questions. Children can access most resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Areas of Learning

Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in Early Years settings:

These are made up of three prime areas of learning:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**, covering Making relationships; Self-confidence and self-awareness; Managing feelings and behaviour
- **Physical Development**, covering Moving and handling; Health and self-care
- **Communication and Language**, covering Listening and attention; Understanding; Speaking

Staff will also support children in **four specific areas**, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

- **Literacy**: covering Reading; Writing and Phonics
- **Mathematics**: covering Numbers; Shape, space and measure
- **Understanding the World**: covering People and communities; The World; Technology
- **Expressive Arts & Design**: covering Exploring and using media and materials; Being imaginative

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 an 80:20 balance of child initiated and adult led activities. Through play and practical experiences, children learn about the world and their place in it. They learn through first hand experiences, talk, books, artefacts and equipment. We set realistic, yet challenging, expectations that meet the needs of all our children.

5. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our Safeguarding Policy. We understand that we are required 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
- Carry out risk assessments
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and 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
- Regularly update staff on safeguarding issues
- Ensure staff have annual appraisals as part of Performance Management

6. Monitoring arrangements

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

This policy will be reviewed by the Foundation Stage Leader every two years.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board for approval.

7. Further reading

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- The Teaching and Learning Policy
- The Mathematics Policy
- The English Policy
- The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies
- The SEND Policy
- The Anti-Bullying and Equality Policy