

# Great Tew Primary Foundation Stage Policy

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Great Tew, children start in the reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. Key Stage 1 begins for our children at the beginning of Year 1. The Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and in preparing children for later schooling. The Early Learning Goals set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage.
- 1.2 Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal both at home and/or in the range of settings that many have attended locally. The early years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:
- it acknowledges that every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning
  - it appreciates that children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
  - it builds on what our observations and discussions tell us what the children already know and can do
  - it ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
  - it offers a structure for learning that provides for the learning styles and learning rates of all children, with a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children and activity that provides opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
  - it provides a rich and stimulating, enabling environment.

## 2 Aims of the Foundation Stage

- 2.1 The curriculum of the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's learning and development across 7 key areas and 17 Early Learning Goals as set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years' Foundation Stage:

i	language and communication	)
ii	physical development	) – Prime Areas
iii	personal, social and emotional wellbeing	)
iv	literacy – letters, sounds, reading and writing	)
v	mathematics, reasoning and problem solving	)
vi	knowledge and understanding of the world	) – Specific Areas
vii	expressive arts and design	)

## 3 Teaching and learning style

- 3.1 At Great Tew 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 Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 1 and 2.

- 3.2** The more specific features of good teaching and learning that relate to the Foundation Stage at Great Tew 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 carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage, that builds upon and extends their knowledge, experience and interests, and develops their self-esteem and confidence
  - the identification of children's interests and abilities using evidence from observations together with information supplied by parents
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- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend these interests, develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities and provide opportunities to motivate and support them and to help them to learn effectively.
  - the provision for planned and purposeful play and for a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities
  - the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management in a safe and supporting learning environment in which their contributions are valued;
  - the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
  - the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children using evidence from observations, which are regularly shared with parents;
  - use of 'Happy Days' strategy and a range of other initiatives designed to encourage both parents and children to structure future learning needs and to contribute to the Foundation Stage Profiles.
  - the regular monitoring of children's progress, taking action to provide support as necessary;
  - the regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Foundation Stage.
  - The moderation of assessment with other schools and with the Local Authority, to ensure consistency of standards.
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- 3.3** When planning and guiding children's activities, careful consideration is given to the different ways that children learn. These "Characteristics of Learning" underpin all seven areas of learning and development:
- **playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
  - **active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements;
  - **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

## **4 Play in the Foundation Stage**

- 4.1** 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.

## **5 Inclusion in the Foundation Stage**

- 5.1** In our school we believe that all our 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 (see our policy on Special Educational Needs).
- 5.2** In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. Some children progress beyond this point. 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.

## **6 The Foundation Stage curriculum**

- 6.1** The curriculum for the Foundation Stage in our school reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals.
- 6.2** Children receive a daily, discrete maths input.
- 6.3** The children follow the 'Letters and Sounds' Scheme which runs discretely. It teaches phonics and reading skills in a systematic way that is sensitive to a range of different learning styles.
- 6.4** Development Matters provides the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Our medium term planning is completed half-termly and identifies the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals, and for those working towards the Year 1 curriculum.
- 6.5** There is a strong working relationship between the staff and children throughout the Foundation Stage, links are made wherever possible at the planning phase for children to work together and share experiences with Pre-School. This includes regular shared story and outdoor times, festivals and celebrations, creative activities.

## **7 Assessment**

- 7.1** We make a range of observational assessments of children in the Foundation Stage, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs and interests. The children's Learning Journeys include long and short observations, photo evidence, and samples of work from both child initiated and adult led activities.
- 7.2** During the children's first half-term in the reception class, the teacher assesses the ability of each child and we analyse this information ourselves and use it to modify the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. We share this information with parents at the parents evening in November.
- 7.3** The teacher completes the assessment again at February half term and at the end of the child's reception year and records each child's attainment band against the 17 Early Learning Goals. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information with parents in their child's end of year report
- 7.4** The teacher also provides a written report on how each child learns across the 7 areas of learning and development, as described in the Characteristics of Effective Learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress.

## **8 The role of parents**

- 8.1** At Great Tew we engage with parents by;
- Visiting the child in their home in the first weeks of term.
  - ensuring the children have 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;
  - offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our reception class;
  - encouraging parents to talk more informally to the child's teacher or key person at parents meetings in November and March if there are any concerns.
  - arranging activities throughout the year to encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;
  - offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents. There is regular communication with home through the child's home-school diary. Parents take part in regular 'Happy Days' discussions with the teacher to help identify their child's interests and future learning needs
  - encouraging them to contribute to the planning of activities and sharing skills with both children and other parents
  - coming into the setting to work and play with children
  - valuing contributions to their child's Foundation Stage Profile

## **9 Monitoring & Review**

The Foundation Stage Coordinator will monitor the implementation of this policy throughout the year and will report annually on its success to the curriculum committee. The committee will report to the full Governing Body.