



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy - September 23

Aim

At 'The Mease Spencer Academy' we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children, thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

Our EYFS aims to provide:

- Excellence for all children
- Partnerships between practitioners, parents/ carers and the community.
- Strong and secure personal, social, emotional and educational building blocks which enable children to thrive through school and later life
- Equality for all children, regardless of their start points or backgrounds.
- Robust safeguarding procedures

We adhere to the 'Statutory Framework of the EYFS,' and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings. These are that:

- 1) Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- 2) Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- 3) 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 and/or carers.
- 4) Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

Principles into practice

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS areas of learning, across the seven areas, using play as the fundamental approach which facilitates learning for all children.
- Plan opportunities that build upon, and extend children's knowledge, experience, skills and interests
- Develop the self-esteem and confidence of all children.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, using a wide range of teaching strategies, based on children's learning needs.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers, and within the wider context of the community.
- Plan challenging learning experiences which are bespoke to meet the needs of each individual child, informed by EYFS practitioners' observations and assessments.
- Provide a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children in order to help them learn effectively through activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated. These link intrinsically to the characteristics of effective learning.

- Provide a safe, secure and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is respected and valued.
- Monitor all children's progress and take action to provide support as necessary.
- Have rich and regular dialogue as an EYFS team, ensuring there are no missed opportunities for learning and next step development.

Foundation Stage Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum, which is linked to our REFLECT Curriculum. The learning opportunities we plan derive from the observations of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the areas of learning. The rich daily dialogue from all EYFS practitioners plays a pivotal role in ensuring that planning is purposeful for the children. This enables our children to receive purposeful teaching and learning, with both adults and the environment supporting them with meeting the expected early learning goals (ELG).

All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. The environment and continuous provision facilitates learning around these areas.

There are three areas, the **prime** areas, which are recognised for being crucial components for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building the capacity for children to learn, form relationships and thrive. They are:

- **Communication and Language (CLL)**
- **Physical Development (PD)**
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)**

Children are also supported through the four **specific** areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The **specific** areas are:

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

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which to explore, think creatively and be active. Both the indoor and outdoor environment are designed specifically to ensure that all children are able to play independently and collaboratively, and have the right equipment to do so. The spaces are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are continuing to meet the needs of the children.

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, early years practitioners interact and provide timely intervention to stretch and challenge children further.

Enabling Environments

At 'The Mease Spencer Academy we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development, we aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident and secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. Play based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to self-access and direct their own learning. Our approach focuses on the role of the environment in supporting speaking and listening skills, emotional well-being, physical development and general engagement.

Direct teaching and learning opportunities

Every day, all children will have whole group and small group teaching sessions. We teach daily phonics session using the 'Little Wandle' scheme. All pupils enjoy learning which stems from quality texts and links to a theme for the half term. The texts are used as a stimulus to support learning opportunities. Children participate in daily 15 minutes maths session based on a mastery approach, plus 15 minutes communication, language and literacy session. These regular inputs are planned and inspired from the revised Development Matters framework as a guide. Staff know the children well and are able to pitch the learning appropriately, challenging and extending children where appropriate using questioning. During free-flow play, adults have different roles of either being an observer, co-player or extender. An observer observes, listens and interprets the child's learning. The co-player and extender role offers new challenges and supports pupils as they make links within their learning.

Observation and Assessment

As part of our daily practise, we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations using snapshot observations, Big Book learning journeys and Seesaw. Everyone is encouraged to contribute and discussions take place. Significant observations of children's achievements recognised and recorded and then shared with parents/carers. Parents also consistently contribute to their learning journey through Seesaw to ensure we work collaboratively.

In the Autumn and Spring term, parents are invited to attend a parents evening to discuss their child's learning and development. Within the final term, we provide the parents with a report based on their child's development against each of the Early Learning Goals and the characteristics of their learning. The parents are then given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the teacher in preparation for Year 1.

Each week, the EYFS team meet together to ensure that all the progress and wellbeing needs of the children are being met through professional dialogue focused on data analysis, weekly intervention setting / impact monitoring and standardisation / moderation of evidence and observations to support assessments.

Safety

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks.

Our children are part of the risk assessment procedures. When in FS2, children perform morning checks, with an adult, around the indoor and outdoor environment. They are the 'Risk Rangers.' This encompasses the main features of the EYFS risk assessment, and includes children in the need to keep safe.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at The Mease Spencer Academy, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies. See our separate policies on Equality of Opportunity and Learning Support.

Parents as Partners and the wider context

We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways.

In Reception we welcome parents in every Friday morning for 'Family Friday' where parents are given the opportunity to explore the Reception environment with their child and speak to Class Teachers.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals, with parental permission, to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting.

Children starting in FS2

To ensure a smooth and happy transition into our school setting, staff will firstly visit the family home. This is an opportunity for parents/ carers to share information with staff, and for the school staff to observe the child in his/he own setting. This also allows us to start building strong and positive links with home. When the child's place has been confirmed and the start date provided, children (and parents/carers) are invited to attend some immersive drop-in sessions. Children enrolling during FS2 are welcome to spend some time in the setting with a parent/carer, prior to them attending independently. Staff will meet with parents/carers so that information can be shared and positive relationships are established.

If a child is enrolled for starting in Year 1, where possible, we invite them to attend our transition fortnight, which is at the end of the summer term. Parents/carers will be invited to attend an informal meeting which provides key information, an opportunity to meet all the staff, discuss routines and ask question. We do this to ensure pupils have a successful start to their school life.

Transition to Key Stage 1 (Year 1)

Moving up into a new phase of school life needs to be carefully planned. The children transitioning need to feel safe and secure with the changes, and parents/carers need clear information and support during this time. At The Mease, we take transition seriously and consider the needs of all people involved. The transition into Year 1 from FS2 begins at the start of the summer term and includes fun, practical and informal procedures for everyone involved (Appendix 2).

Appendix 1

Observer

- ◊ Observing
- ◊ Listening
- ◊ Interpreting



Co - player

- ◊ Modelling
- ◊ Playing alongside
- ◊ Offering suggestions
- ◊ Responding sensitively
- ◊ Initiating with care!



Extender

- ◊ Discussing ideas
- ◊ Sharing thinking
- ◊ Modelling new skills
- ◊ Asking open questions
- ◊ Being an informed extender
- ◊ Instigating ideas & thoughts
- ◊ Supporting children as they make links in learning
- ◊ Making possibilities evident
- ◊ Introducing new ideas & resources
- ◊ Offering challenges & provocations



Starting FS2		
Children	Parents	Teachers
Pupils are invited to join us for during our transition events during the summer term.	Parents/carers will receive invitations to a Welcome Event.	FS2 teacher to obtain previous records from other EYFS settings. Liaise with school SENDCo and other agencies if needed.
Children take part in an immersive 'Take one' project to capture their love of learning.	A Welcome Event will be held by the EYFS leader and Principal. Key information will be provided plus the opportunity for parents to visit the class.	Ensure the first 'transition session' provides the opportunity for parents/carers to stay and play with their children to ensure a smooth transition to school life.
Children start to develop positive relationship with the teachers in FS2.	The Principal will visit families: an opportunity to begin to build relationships with the families and to collate all the information needed to ensure a smooth start.	Create an immersive, welcoming and positive environment to welcome pupils during their 'visit sessions'.
	Parents/carers have opportunity to liaise with their child's teacher during transition events.	Build positive relationships and have active learning opportunities during a 2 week transition process at the end of the Summer term.
	At The Mease, we have an open door policy to ensure parents/carers have the opportunity to discuss their child's holistic development at any point.	Plan for academic continuity. This is achieved through ensuring that the whole school REFLECT curriculum is evident through the immersive environment and linked to the class texts.

FS2 – Year 1		
Children	Parents	Teachers
Have regular opportunities to take part in teaching and learning in Year 1. All children spend 10 minutes per week in Year 1 to experience this setting. This starts from Summer 1.	Invited into school at least twice per half term during the Summer term so that staff can informally discuss next steps / transition process with them.	Plan for academic continuity. This is achieved through ensuring that the whole school GROW curriculum is evident through the immersive environment and linked to the class text.
Meet their ‘*Buddy’ and spend time during whole school morning break playing with them on the whole school playground. *Their Buddy will be in Year 3 during the Summer term.	Come to a ‘Next steps for my child’ informal parent/ carers gathering before the end of Summer 1 to share actions and ask questions together.	The text used for teaching and learning opportunities is used for 2 weeks during Summer term. During Autumn and Spring a different text is used on a weekly basis.
From Summer 1, children take home half termly homework project books, consistently linking the expectations to the whole school policy.	Immerse in the Year 1 classroom during the 2 week transition period and meet the Year 1 staff.	FS2 plan adult led learning tasks which incorporate teaching strategies used in Y1. This exposes the children to the format and reflective learning discussions.
Become independent around school, for example, clearing their own plates and cups in the dining hall after lunch.	Attend a Year 1 meeting (two sessions hosted to ensure parents/carers can attend. One AM and one PM) with Year 1 staff, Principal and SENDCo, who share the Year 1 curriculum and expectations, including attendance.	Year 1 staff are invited to spend at least one full day per half term (Summer Term) in the children’s current environment to take part in play based learning and make observations.
Spend a day on an out of school learning experience, for all children (linking to the class book/s).		Build positive relationships and have active learning opportunities during a 2 week transition process at the end of the Summer term.