Morpeth First School

Goosehill

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

 2019

**Introduction**

Early childhood is the time during which children develop key skills and build foundations upon which their futures are built. At Morpeth First School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, it is equally important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

The EYFS for children is from birth to five years of age. All children begin school with a wide variety of experiences and learning and it is the privilege of the adults working in the foundation stage to accept the task of building upon that prior learning experience. This is achieved through an holistic approach to learning ensuring that parents and guardians, support staff and the Foundation Stage team work effectively together to support the learning and development of all children within the Early Years and beyond.

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfill their 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.”

* “Early Years Foundation Stage Profile”

Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012

**Principles**

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

* · **A unique child.** We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and independent. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement as well as celebration and rewards to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning.
* · **Positive relationships.** We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. We recognise that children with good personal, social and emotional skills are more likely to achieve and to succeed in all aspects of life.
* · **Enabling environments.** We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. We ensure that the environment is safe, inclusive and welcoming. Through observations we assess the children’s interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and meaningful experiences to extend their learning.
* · **Learning and development.** The Early Years classrooms and outdoor learning areas are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. Planning and assessment are intrinsically linked and developed to ensure that a balance of child-initiated and adult-led learning is taking place. Children are encouraged to strive for their goals, no matter how big or small, through fun, meaningful and relevant learning experiences.

**Aims**

Every child is entitled to grow up safe and healthy, to enjoy life, to achieve, to make a positive contribution and to achieve economic wellbeing. It is the aim of the EYFS to help young children achieve these five outcomes and this once again reinforces the importance of the best possible start in life.

At Morpeth First School we work tirelessly to develop and provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential. We see and value each child as an individual and our approaches to teaching enable children to learn at their own rate, whilst ensuring that they are challenged and supported to achieve to the best of their ability.

At Morpeth First School, we aim to:

· Provide an inclusive, safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment

· Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that ensures that children are able to access both educational and life experiences from the Early Years and beyond. This includes the ability to access the National Curriculum in place throughout the school

· Start with ‘what the child can do’ and assess children regularly in order to value and develop each child’s skills and attributes with a view to developing the whole child to the best of their ability

· Encourage independence and self-value from the earliest age, providing children with a range of experiences enabling them to utilise their knowledge and skills for a range of purposes

· Work closely with parents and guardians and value their contributions ensuring that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background,  learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, access and enjoy an inclusive and meaningful early education

· Ensure that all children enjoy their time at school, starting with a secure and valuable relationship with learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage

**Learning and Development**

At Morpeth First School, our curriculum enables the child to learn and develop skills, attributes and understanding in these areas of learning:

The prime areas are:

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

 The specific areas are:

* Literacy
* Mathematics
* Understanding the World
* Expressive Art and Design

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is through:

* Playing and exploring.
* Active learning.
* Creating and thinking critically.

Throughout the EYFS we plan activities to allow children to work towards the Early Learning Goals and prepare them for the National Curriculum. Learning opportunities are differentiated and are constantly evaluated to determine their suitability for challenging, extending and supporting children in their learning and development. Children may access learning opportunities independently and with adults in order to ensure that the learning remains meaningful and valuable.

At Morpeth First School we believe that independent learning through play, balanced with learning through guided play and adult-led activities, allows children to develop skills throughout all Areas of Learning.

In a secure environment with effective adult support, children will be able to,

* Explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them to understand the world
* Rehearse and develop concepts, ideas and skills
* Develop a sense of self-control and understand the role of rules
* Be alone, be with others, or cooperate as they talk to express and explore their needs and feelings
* Take risks and make mistakes that they can learn from
* Be creative and imaginative
* Communicate with others to explore, investigate and solve problems
* Express feelings safe in the knowledge that their feelings are valid and will be respected

Adults within the EYFS support learning by:

* Planning meaningful activities and resourcing the environment to stimulate and interest children
* Extending, challenging and supporting learning through planned play
* Extending and supporting child-initiated play
* Develop language and communication skills through a range of activities
* Consider the needs and stages of the children when planning activities or developing play
* Talking with the children during play and planned activities
* Asking questions and giving children the tools to find answers

**Observation, Assessment and Planning**

Excellent planning is the key to making children’s learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning has the principles of the EYFS at heart and ensures that these principles are constantly and consistently put into practice. Topics are planned on a yearly cycle so that children will experience activities within each topic as they progress through the EYFS. Medium term topic planning takes place each half term and is linked closely to the long-term plan, which outlines the Early Years outcomes. This ensures that all curriculum areas are covered thoroughly whenever a topic is planned. Short term planning is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs, as well as progress within Circle Times and focused teaching sessions.

All Early Years staff are involved in this process and we regularly give the children opportunities to talk about their achievements and next steps, particularly in the area of Personal, Social and Emotional Development. Planning within the EYFS is based as much around the children’s interests as possible and always has high but realistic and differentiated expected outcomes in order to ensure excellent progress.

Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of a range of observations made by any adults within the team as appropriate. These observations are recorded using notes, photographs, videos and children’s own work, and are used to inform all stakeholders (staff, outside agencies, children, parents and guardians, the Senior Leadership Team and governors). Parents and other stakeholders are regularly invited to contribute to ‘Learning Journey’ files for each child, and along with in-house observations, the Learning Journeys inform planning, teaching, further assessment and future improvements. Assessments are ongoing but are more formally recorded and tracked by teachers each term. This ensures that children have few gaps, and where gaps emerge or where children are exceeding targets, appropriate measures or extensions are put in place quickly to ensure continued excellent progress for each child. Parents and guardians are invited to two formal Parents’ Evenings, regular viewings of their child’s Learning Journey, and one final optional review at the end of the year following the publishing of children’s reports, which include the levels of development achieved by the children following final assessments made in the final term of Reception.

Parents and guardians are also regularly informed of the progress of their children and are made aware of where the children need to be in order to reach a ‘Good Level of Development’.

**Learning Through Play**

At Morpeth First School, in the EYFS children learn through planned play activities and staff will decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. As the children move through the EYFS they will access a range of learning opportunities, which will become more formal as they near readiness for Year 1. However, play and skills-based learning is at the heart of the EYFS and staff endeavor to ensure that children are able to learn through enjoyable, meaningful activities, which they are given the confidence to believe that they can access successfully.

**The Induction Process**

At Morpeth First School we believe that a successful transition process will ease children into their new classes or settings and ensure that they feel safe, secure, welcome and confident. This will increase the chance of the children settling quickly and therefore will ensure that every child is able to access learning opportunities from the first moments of their education.

Children new to Nursery are invited to visit with their parents and there are close links with pre-school settings to ensure good communication and transition processes.

Children entering Reception have several opportunities to spend time in Reception through open mornings and afternoons and transition days prior to the Summer holidays. On entering Reception, children are given the opportunity to attend full time or to start with either morning or afternoon sessions and gradually build up to full days during their second week.

Transition to Year One follows a similar pattern with children visiting their new Year One classes for transition days and projects during the Summer Term .

**Home and School Links**

We recognise that parents and carers are a child’s first and most enduring educators and we aim for the schools and parents and carers to work closely in the Foundation unit. This can have a very positive impact on a child’s development but relies on a two-way flow of information and knowledge.

We will develop this working relationship between the school and parents and carers as follows:

· We hold a ‘New to Reception’ evening prior to the children starting Reception where parents and carers are given information about school routines, expectations and the Early Years Curriculum.

· We hold a parent consultation early in the year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment.

· We make the planning and learning opportunities overt to parents and carers through weekly emailed newsletters.

· We invite parents and carers to discuss any concerns with us after school and invite parents and carers in to volunteer in the classroom providing they are DBS cleared.

· We conduct workshops for parents and carers to enable them to be familiar with the teaching methods used in school to make it easier to support them at home.

-During the year we invite parents and guardians to visit the school to work alongside their child in family learning workshops, community afternoons, informal coffee mornings and parent assemblies.

**Intimate Care**

“Intimate” care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child’s age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. In most cases, intimate care is to do with personal hygiene and it is good practice for the school to inform the school nurse of all children requiring regular intimate care.

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child.

No intimate care is to be given without the express written permission of the parent or guardian of that child and all parents and guardians will be asked to provide that permission when their child joins the Foundation unit at Morpeth First School.

Please see our ‘Intimate Care Policy’ for further information and clarification.

**Inclusion and Equal Opportunities**

Children with special educational needs will be supported as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes children that are more able and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Individual Learning Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support commensurate with the school’s Special Educational Needs Policy. The school’s SEN Co-ordinator is responsible for providing additional information and advice to staff and parents and for arranging external intervention and support as necessary.

In line with the school’s Equal Opportunities Policy, we will provide all children, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability with equal access to all aspects of school life to ensure that every child is valued as an individual. All staff are role models and are aware of the influence they have in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical attitudes.

At Morpeth First School we strive to provide the best start in education for our very youngest children, regardless of their individual needs, skills and interests.