

Thrussington C. of E. Primary School.

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy.

2013.

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1. Introduction.

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Thrussington C. of E. Primary School.

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including teaching and non-teaching adults. In the policy, the term 'setting' refers to the Early Years educational provision at Thrussington C. of E. Primary School. This is available to children who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years of age. These children are in the final year of the EYFS. In the National Curriculum this is referred to as the Reception Year. In the policy, the term 'practitioner' refers to the members of staff working with children within the setting.

2. Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

In the EYFS setting at Thrussington C. of E. Primary School, we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential.

We aim to support each child's welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special.
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates - physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.

- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued by the practitioners looking after them.
- Fostering and nurturing children's self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community.
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- Encouraging children's independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes.
- Developing children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions differ to their own.
- Understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development.
- Providing learning experiences in play which reflect children's personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn.
- Providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development.
- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.

3. The Early Years Foundation Stage framework.

Teaching in the EYFS setting at Thrussington C. of E. Primary School is delivered in accordance with the statutory document 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (March 2012). This document is a principled approach to Early Years education, bringing together children's welfare, learning and development requirements through four themes:

'A Unique Child';

'Positive Relationships';

'Enabling Environments' and

'Children Learn in Different Ways and at Different Rates'.

The curriculum is based on three prime areas of learning:

1. Communication and Language.
2. Physical Development and
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development.

Providers must also support activities through four specific areas which strengthen the prime areas. These are:

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding of the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

Educational programmes, which practitioners deliver in the setting, must involve activities and experiences from one of the following seven areas. These are:

1. Communication and Language
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development
4. Literacy
5. Mathematics
6. Understanding of the World
7. Expressive Arts and Design

These Areas of Learning and Development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all Areas of Learning and Development are all closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centered curriculum which allows children to make links between what they are learning. All Areas of Learning and Development are given equal weighting and value.

At Thrussington C. of E. Primary School, we believe that Early Years education is very important. We believe that the EYFS framework allows a natural progression into the National Curriculum at the beginning of Year 1.

4. Active Learning through Play.

At Thrussington C. of E. Primary School, we recognise that young children learn best through when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning through play.

We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of the children's learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide many ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.

In the EYFS setting at Thrussington C. of E. Primary School, practitioners provide structured and unstructured play opportunities inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support children in to discovering, exploring, investigating, developing their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and helping them to make sense of the world around them, as they begin to understand specific concepts. Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding.

In providing these active learning opportunities through play we understand the central position of play within the EYFS framework. This is essentially a play - based curriculum and pedagogy as the provision of play opportunities underpins its delivery within settings.

5. Assessment and Record Keeping.

Ongoing assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of the EYFS setting at Thrussington C. of E. Primary School. Regular, planned and appropriate assessments are made of children's learning and their individual needs. A record of each child's progress in all areas of their learning is kept by retaining and filing their assessment data.

The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including adult - focused activities and child initiated play. Observations take place on a daily basis, serving a diagnostic purpose. Practitioners allow time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children, regularly. They also make spontaneous observations in order to register significant moments of children's learning. Observations are recorded in different formats (e.g. narrative, Learning Journeys, on post-it notes, in whole class grids and photographs). All practitioners, and staff, are involved in observing children.

Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's potential, abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned and facilitated to support children in making progress.

Other methods of assessing children in the EYFS setting include engaging with children in their play, annotating children's written work, talking with children about their task or play and in Learning Journeys.

Learning Journeys record children's progress over the academic year in all Areas of Learning and Development of the EYFS framework. Samples of children's work are gathered, along with photographic evidence and observations. There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child's development using the new Early Years' Foundation Stage Profile (2012). This is updated at least once each term to track individual progress. At the end of the academic year, it provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements. Baseline assessment is carried out using the EYFS Profile during the children's first six weeks on entering the setting. Judgments made on children's development in the Profile are based on practitioners' evidence of children's behaviour observed independently and consistently in their self-initiated activities across all Areas of Learning and Development.

6. Planning.

The EYFS framework provides a long term plan to follow by ensuring that all Early Learning Goals are addressed throughout the academic year. The whole school was involved in deciding the termly topics, based on the school's two year topic plan.

Medium term planning is designed with all early years practitioners' involvement and takes into account the individual children's learning and developmental needs.

All Areas of Learning and Development are planned for and available to access within the setting. The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult-focused and child initiated activities indoors. The setting also makes use of the outdoor environment whenever possible. The school has created and developed a Forest School.

Educational visits within the local community and further a field are part of the school's curriculum provision.

7. Parents as Partners.

At Thrussington C. of E. Primary School, we understand the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development. So, practitioners endeavour to encourage the regular sharing of information about children with their parents.

We value the role of parents as children's primary educators and part of our communication process is to use questionnaires and informal conversations at the beginning and end of the day. Practitioners encourage parents to share their understanding and knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes). This supports practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences with regard to the individual's needs and interests.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through regular letters, reading records and conversations at the beginning and end of the day. This process also provides opportunities to suggest how parents can support their children's learning at home; consolidating and building on what has been covered in the setting.

Parents are encouraged to attend parents' evenings during the course of the academic year. The first of these takes place during the Autumn term to allow practitioners and parents to discuss how children have settled

into the setting. A second parents' evening takes place during the Spring term when practitioners will provide feedback on children's learning and development progress.

Other opportunities are provided for practitioners to share children's learning, development and well-being with parents which include: Learning Journeys, end of year reports and Celebration assemblies. The school provides opportunities for parents to become involved in the life of the school, such as educational visits, reading, as well as offering their particular skills (e.g. cooking, art, music) to support children's learning.

The setting has a friendly, open-door ethos and practitioners are available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of the day. Parents are always welcomed into school and are encouraged to discuss general matters and any concerns they might have.

8. Admissions and Induction.

Thrussington C. of E. Primary School provides full-time Early Years education for children in the Reception Year. This is for children who enter school in the September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old. Before they start in the setting, all children are offered a series of visits during the Summer term, the purpose of which is for the children to meet their new practitioners and start to become familiar with the school. Practitioners, with parental permission, will also go to visit the children in their current pre-school settings. The aim of these visits is to support practitioners, children and parents mutual knowledge and understanding in order to make the transition period to Thrussington C. of E. Primary School as smooth as possible. Practitioners, from relevant pre-school settings, are invited to visit the children during subsequent terms.

In the Summer term, preceding the term of their children beginning school, parents are invited into school to meet the setting practitioners. At this meeting Information, regarding the induction process and what goes on in the setting, is shared. Parents of children of the current Reception Class are also invited to speak to parents of the new children. There is also time for informal conversations and parents' questions. School information packs are distributed to parents at this meeting, detailing school routines and expectations.

From September, the school operates a graduated approach to starting school: a variety of half days for the first three weeks, extending each week to incorporate different programmes of the school day before they start full time. This has proved invaluable in the sense that the children have no reservations when they, eventually, do begin full days. They are confident, happy, have already made friends and anticipate school with enthusiasm.

Of course, parents retain the right to keep their children at home until they are of statutory age – five years old.

Every effort is made to make children feel safe, secure and happy. There is a relaxed and open ethos in the setting. Established routines, a calm atmosphere and encouraging talk are examples of some of the strategies practitioners use to maintain children's positive feelings about school.

See the Admissions Policy for more information.

9. Equal Opportunities.

All practitioners at Thrussington C. of E. Primary School have a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring that inclusive practice is delivered in the EYFS setting.

All children, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture or religion, and social circumstances, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development within the EYFS setting at Thrussington C. of E. Primary School.

See the Equal Opportunities Policy for more information.

10. Special Educational Needs.

See the Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy.

Reviewed:

Next review: