



Durham High School

Foundation Stage Policy

This policy applies to Early Years and is published to parents and pupils

Reviewed: September 2022
Next review: September 2023

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage refers to the children of Nursery and Reception age. In our school, children can join the EYFS setting in the term of their third birthday.

Members of Staff in the Foundation Stage

Mrs Hall is Head of the Pre-Prep Department and EYFS teacher.

Mrs Harrison is the teaching assistant in the EYFS setting and supports Mrs Hall.

Specialist Teachers

PE
Music
Yoga

Miss Rachel Cartwright
Dr. Lisa Hardy
Miss Amy Dobson

Aims of the Foundation Stage

Children are our collective future and the foundations for that future are set in the Early Years Foundation Stage. All children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. It is our privilege as Early Years educators to take on the challenging task of building upon that learning and experience in a rich and stimulating environment.

We believe in a holistic approach to learning, which ensures parents and teachers work together to support the child's learning and well-being. At Durham High School we aim to provide a broad, balanced and creative curriculum which will enable each child to develop emotionally, socially, physically and intellectually to her full potential. Each child is unique and is valued as an individual.

Partnership with parents

We recognise that working with parents is of major value and importance in enabling us to provide a happy, caring and stable environment for the children. We aim to form a good relationship with parents so information regarding their child's development, be it academic, social or health related, can be exchanged easily by staff and parents.

The ways in which we try to achieve a strong working relationship with parents are:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts our school.
- Parents and child visiting the setting before starting
- The children having the opportunity to spend time with their teacher/key person before starting nursery or school
- We have a comprehensive Foundation Stage Handbook which provides families with information they may require regarding staffing, curriculum, procedures and routine.
- We offer parents regular opportunities to share information about their children
- Topic plans, Parent Partnership letters, daily routine and weekly forecasts are sent to parents and displayed on the parent's notice boards
- Letters are sent home on a regular basis to keep parents up to date with events happening in school
- We encourage parents to talk to their child's teacher/key person if there are any concerns. The teacher is available on a daily basis for informal discussions. There are formal meetings for Nursery and Reception parents every term at which the teacher and the parent privately discuss the child's progress
- Parents have continuous access to any assessment information held on their child, so that they can be informed of the learning taking place in school

- Individual and group observations carried out using online Tapestry platform are sent to parents immediately upon completion
- We arrange a variety of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents
- We offer a range of activities that support the involvement of parents. We invite parents to Curriculum Workshops and Information Evenings to discuss the kind of activities that the children undertake in The Early Years setting
- Parents are welcome to come into the setting to support us and regularly assist us on educational visits
- Feedback questionnaires are distributed to parents at the end of Autumn and Summer terms and any constructive feedback is addressed and acted upon
- Parents have access to details of the complaints procedure should they wish to express their feelings formally

We believe that the way in which children and parents settle into the Foundation Stage provides the basis on which secure and trusting relationships are built. We aim to ensure that the settling in process is a positive and enjoyable experience.

We will work in partnership with parents to help the child settle in through:

- encouraging parents/carers to visit the Foundation Stage with their child during the weeks before admission is planned
- ensuring parents/carers are given as much information as possible before the child begins
- establishing daily routines
- working with parents/carers to ease the transition from Nursery to Reception stage
- if needed, a graded increase in time spent in Nursery stage will be provided for girls who are taking longer to settle

For the child's first day, we will encourage the child to explore the Nursery environment with their parent/carer present and, where appropriate, to stay for a period of time.

The Foundation Stage Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage profile is the basis for the curriculum in the Foundation Stage and reflects the areas of learning identified by the Early Learning Goals. The experiences that our children meet enable them to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning. This is supported by a caring environment, where they feel valued and in which they can play, learn and succeed.

Meeting the Early Learning Goals is the final step on the Early Years Foundation Stage development ladders. These goals provide the basis for planning through the Foundation Stage. Medium-term planning is completed half-termly and identifies the intended learning for children working towards the Early Learning Goals and beyond. We hope that children will be keen to direct aspects of their learning, so mini-topics based on individual interests and needs as learners will be followed as they arise.

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that the Early Learning Goals are achieved by the end of the stage. Some children progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of the girls: those with special educational needs; those who are more able; those with disabilities; children from all social and cultural backgrounds; children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

The Early Years Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

- Personal, social and emotional development;

- Self-Regulation
- Managing Self
- Building Relationships
- Physical Development;
 - Gross Motor Skills
 - Fine Motor Skills
- Communication and Language;
 - Listening, Attention and Understanding
 - Speaking
- Literacy;
 - Comprehension
 - Word Reading
 - Writing
- Mathematics;
 - Number
 - Numerical Patterns
- Understanding the World;
 - Past and Present
 - People, Culture and Communities
 - The Natural World
- Expressive Arts and Design;
 - Creating with Materials
 - Being Imaginative and Expressive

The Characteristics of Effective Learning run through all seven areas of learning and development, representing processes rather than outcomes, providing vital background and context when considering the next stage of development and future learning needs.

- Playing and Exploring
- Active Learning
- Creating and Thinking Critically

The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage 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 understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching
- The range of approaches used that provide varied first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage
- 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 and self-management
- 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, which are regularly shared with parents

- The clear aims for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do
- The regular identification of training needs for all adults working within the Foundation Stage

Assessment

We make continuous assessments of children's learning and use this information to ensure future planning reflects the identified needs. In the Foundation Stage, assessment largely takes the form of observation.

On entry to Nursery, parents complete an 'All About Me' information booklet, giving us a picture of their child, their interests, likes and dislikes. Within Nursery and Reception children's first six weeks, an initial assessment is made. During this time, children are observed in a range of teacher-led and self-initiated contexts to establish their understanding. The children are offered varied experiences during Nursery and Reception allowing for continuous assessment. This feeds into our planning and ultimately the compilation of Profile data which is submitted to Durham LEA during the final term of Reception.

Children's assessment results are continuously available to parents in the form of the child's EYFS Profile located in their name-labelled box. Parents receive a written report in the Summer Term covering all areas of learning and development. Parents also have the opportunity to have a parent consultation each term.

Play in the Foundation Stage

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. Through role-play, the children experience a variety of situations.

We understand that the outdoor environment offers lots of opportunities for children's development.

We appreciate that children need an environment where they have the space and freedom to move around, to be active, to learn, and to make a noise.

We understand that the outdoor environment can work in harmony with the indoor surroundings through extending and complementing experiences for children. We will ensure that we facilitate stimulating learning opportunities for children through merging indoor and outdoor play.

In the EYFS, we realise the importance of physical activity and plan structured activities to achieve our aim. However, we also recognise that unstructured active play is equally important and ensure all children are provided with opportunities to be active and physically challenged in a stimulating and fun-filled environment.

We will endeavour to provide all children with access to the outdoors on a daily basis.

We will ensure that outdoor play will take place in safe, secure and supervised areas.

The outdoor play area will be checked each time it is used to make sure that:

- boundaries and gates are secure and in good repair;

- outdoor equipment and surfaces are safe, suitable and well-maintained;
- a head count is performed during outdoor sessions and when re-entering the building.

When using the outdoor play area, staff have immediate radio contact with other Foundation Stage practitioners.

Children will have access to drinking water at all times.

In hot weather, staff will ensure children are adequately protected from the sun in accordance with the Sun Protection Policy

The Learning Environment and Resources

Children learn best in a stimulating environment where the opportunities for active learning are thoughtful and purposefully provided. We aim to make the environment a place, which should

- be welcoming to children and parents
- be a place where children feel happy, secure and confident
- be stimulating and exciting
- value children's work and display it attractively
- encourage talk and questioning

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning.

We will ensure that high quality care is promoted by providing children with quality play opportunities to extend, enrich and enhance their holistic development.

We will provide children with a broad range of safe, clean, attractive toys, equipment and resources that are age and stage appropriate and sufficiently challenging to meet the needs and interests of all children.

Equipment and resources will be safe and will be regularly checked. We will repair or replace any unsafe, worn out, dirty or damaged equipment.

Equipment and resources will be provided in sufficient quantities for the number of children attending and in accordance with the planning.

We will plan activities using a balance of familiar and unfamiliar equipment to support the development of confidence, independence and self-esteem.

We will promote inclusion and equal opportunities through the provision of relevant resources and equipment.

We will ensure that technology used for photographic purposes (to enhance observations and to document experiences) be school-based and remain on the premises. All mobile phones will be in a clearly named box in a lockable cupboard.

Inclusion in the Foundation Stage

At Durham High 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 each child's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- 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.