# The Discovery School Policy for Teaching and Learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage

## Intent

At The Discovery School, we aim to guide and support children’s development, shaping them for life as well as giving them the essential tools for learning. We believe that education in EYFS is about children having the opportunity to solve problems and to be creative in every area of learning, as well as to thrive in the stimulating, exciting and progressive environment provided for them.

We recognise that all children are unique, celebrating and welcoming differences within our school community. Therefore, our curriculum is child centred following the interests and fascinations of the children in the current year group. We are passionate about children leading and engrossing themselves in their learning. We need to embed a language of learning based on the characteristics of effective learning and be ‘the best we can be’. Our whole school approach enables children to understand and talk about their learning experiences using the following words – respect, perseverance, kindness, friendship and honesty.

We recognise the importance of the first year of school and hope to inspire the children to be lifelong learners. We believe that children are individuals and we aim to provide them with the best start to their school journey. We love to learn in a fun, interactive, stimulating way, both indoors and outdoors. We aim to support children as they develop towards being the best they can be.

We intend that pupils:

* Have access to a curriculum informed by The Statutory EYFS and Development Matters.
* Have access to a curriculum that offers children a wide range of opportunities. We work on broadening their experiences providing opportunities to try new things and encouraging them to relish a new challenge.
* Play and explore their surroundings.
* Are actively involved in their learning.
* Are enabled to be creative and think critically.
* Have the skills to be independent and take care of their own needs.
* Have opportunities to develop their sense of wellbeing and the ability to regulate their feelings.
* Have a growth mind-set by taking risks, build resilience and not be afraid to make mistakes.
* Love trying new things and having new experiences.
* Enjoy being part of a community and understand and respect others differences.
* Are enthusiastic and excited about new learning opportunities.
* Are kind and respectful to others.
* Understand the importance of teamwork and how others can help them improve.

**Pedagogy**

Our curriculum is underpinned by Rosenshine’s Principles of Instruction adapted to an Early Years environment.

We believe that to show progress in EYFS children need to be able to know, remember and do more.

Therefore, we have designed a pedagogical approach that enables pupils to:

* Develop knowledge and practise new skills through continuous and enhanced provision.
* Review prior learning and use skills they have learnt to develop new areas of learning.
* Be introduced to new knowledge in small steps so that they can deepen their understanding and independently apply new skills.
* Investigate ‘a big question’ that promotes enquiry.
* Answer and ask questions - we encourage talk to develop their speaking and listening skills.
* Have opportunities for playing, exploring throughout each day, including high quality, scaffolded child-initiated learning.
* Be challenged through adaptive planning, delivery and resources.
* Be continuously assessed through continuous, formative and summative assessments, which involve the children.
* EYFS staff have daily reviews of the children’s learning at the end of each day to inform next steps.

*‘Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.’*

*EYFS Framework 2021*

**Implementation**

Our teaching ensures that teaching and learning:

* Is adapted to the children’s individual developmental needs.
* Builds upon prior learning through daily review and retrieval practice so that it is embedded in their long-term memory.
* Is progressive and builds towards achieving The Early Learning Goals from The Early Years Foundation Stage.
* Uses resources that are progressive and matched to the children’s developmental needs.
* Ensures that children are exposed to and acquire highly effective early reading, phonics and mathematical knowledge and skills.
* Promotes learning matched to the children’s own interests and experiences.
* Enables opportunities for playing, exploring throughout each day, including high quality, scaffolded child-initiated learning.
* Encourages active learning and opportunities to be creative and think critically.
* Has planned teacher directed group or individual work, which deepens knowledge and skills in specific areas of the curriculum.
* Carefully planned to meet all the needs of the children in our cohort.

We ensure that:

* Provision is regularly reviewed and adapted to support and challenge the children’s knowledge and skills and show clear progression.
* Resources are reviewed and changed in line with the children’s emerging developmental needs.
* Make reference to the Year One curriculum to ensure the children’s learning experiences in Year R are effectively broadened and depended, including the most able.
* Learning comprises of direct teacher input, continuous and enhanced provision.
* Organisation of learning takes account of transition into Year R and into Year 1.
* Learning promotes parental engagement.
* Assessment is continuous and incorporates formative and summative assessments which inform our future planning.

At the Discovery School, we acknowledge the fact that children join our school community with a range of different experiences. We aim to build on these through a balanced curriculum of adult directed and play-based activities, supported by knowledgeable adults who are sensitive to each individual child’s learning needs and capabilities. We understand that a positive start to school life can provide a stable basis for successful learning in later life.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based upon seven key features of effective practice:

1. The best for every child.
2. High quality care
3. The curriculum: what we want the children to learn
4. Pedagogy: helping children to learn
5. Assessment: checking what children have learnt
6. Self-regulation and executive function
7. Partnership with parents

Our curriculum follows the Early Years Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021).

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974907/EYFS_framework_-_March_2021.pdf>

This document specifies the requirements for learning and development in the EYFS and provides the prime and specific areas of learning we must cover in our curriculum.

Through our knowledge of each child and formative assessments, the EYFS team plan exciting and engaging activities that will move the children’s learning forward. This may involve following a class theme where we take advantage of cross-curricular links in order to combine transferable skills and develop a wide-ranging vocabulary, which underpins the children’s learning. This may also include following individual children’s interests and making the most of those focused moments where the teaching and learning can be maximised in a one to one way with teacher and child.

Teachers use a blend of whole class, adult directed and child-initiated activities, dependant on the nature and needs of the class. We look forward at the start of a year to see where the class will lead us.

To ensure we offer the children the best quality education we focus our teaching and learning environments on the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning which are:

1. Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’
2. Active learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
3. Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

Children in EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active and thinking critically and creatively and this takes place both indoors and in our outdoor area. Children plan their own learning and teachers ensure that there are challenging opportunities for all areas of learning both inside and outside. These usually link to what the children have been learning to deepen their knowledge and skills and be ready to move onto the next stage in their development.

The learning environments at The Discovery School are enabling and supportive and provision is frequently reviewed. Our learning environments are designed through continuous and enhanced provision. All provision is carefully planned to ensure children's skills are individually developed and learning opportunities are personalised to ensure every child makes excellent progress in their learning journey. Our environments change regularly as the children’s knowledge and skills develop.

At The Discovery School, we use the seven areas of learning to shape our teaching and learning:

**Prime areas: Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

 **Communication and language**

 **Physical Development**

**Specific areas: Literacy**

 **Mathematics**

 **Understanding the world**

 **Expressive Arts and Design**

Although each area is important in its own right, we believe that all areas are inter-connected. We deliver learning for all the areas through playful experiences with a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. Adults interact with children in a purposeful way to strengthen and support learning in each of the seven areas. The resources available in the provision also support learning in each of these areas.

**Tapestry and the Journal of Discovery**

At The Discovery School, we use the online learning journal called, ‘Tapestry’ to upload the children’s learning journey and link it to the EYFS curriculum. For the children’s work, we create it into ‘The Journal of Discovery’ in which the children’s progression of knowledge and skills is evident.

The EYFS team collect children’s learning through work completed in their journal of discovery, observations, photos and videos, which are shared with parents using the Tapestry online system. Through this, parents can engage with their child’s learning regularly and can contribute to their learning journey at home. Parents are very active and love to use Tapestry to record the milestones children make at home during the year and to see what their child has been experiencing at school.

## Assessment

Assessment in the Foundation Stage occurs daily through adult interactions and observations with children. Evidence of achievements and activities are recorded using photographs and notes on Tapestry. Children’s work is documented in their ‘Journal of Discovery’. Termly whole school assessments take place in Literacy, Mathematics and Phonics in-line with the policies for these subject areas. All assessments made are only if necessary so they do not take adults away from scaffolding children’s learning.

Three times a year informed judgements are made using professional judgements on child development and the age checkpoints from The Development Matters. This information is then used to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessments are fed back to parents through parent consultations and any additional meetings if necessary.

## Health and Safety

Daily risk assessments are carried out by Foundation Stage Leader (or a Foundation Stage Teacher in the leader’s absence) for the EYFS Outside Area. We carefully follow an EYFS personalised risk assessment. These risks assessments are created each year using children’s voice.

Any health and safety concerns are voiced at SLT meetings or during learning walks, and then referred to the appropriate person in school for rectifying in line with the school Health and Safety Policy. Guidance on Health and Safety is taken from the EYFS Statutory Guidance, Development Matters and Be Safe documents. Risk assessments are undertaken for any trips, visitors coming in, and specific activities beyond our usual routine.

In addition to the school’s Health & Safety Policy:

* Fresh drinking water is available at all times
* Every child will be offered a piece of fruit during break time and is offered free milk until they reach the age of five.
* Trained first aiders across every class.

**Parental Involvement**

Parents are actively encouraged to engage with the school and we operate an ‘open door’ policy. EYFS staff are available at the school gate in the morning and after school.

In EYFS, we hold regular ‘stay and play’ sessions for family members so they can come into school with their child. We also invite parents in for special occasions or to celebrate children’s work. Parents receive a termly EYFS newsletter, which keeps them up to date with what their child will be learning.

Across the year, we offer a range of workshops delivered by the class teachers to support the parents understanding of subjects such as Phonics, Reading and Maths. These give the parents the information they need to support their child is learning and help them understand how these subjects are taught and delivered at our school.

## Transition from pre-school to school

At the Discovery School children join us in the EYFS normally in the September after they turn four on a part time basis, leading into full-time schooling by the end of the third week of this term. This phased start to school ensures that children get the best possible start as teachers are able to get know children and introduce them into the environment in smaller groups of 15 children. It also provides the EYFS team with opportunities to visit children and parents in their homes, ensuring a more solid understanding of the needs of each child. At the time of writing this policy, the school offers ninety Foundation Stage places organised into three classes of thirty.

During the summer term prior to a child’s entry into the Reception year, the following procedures are in place to ensure successful transition:

* Parents are invited to a talk to ensure they know about school procedures and school readiness.
* Parents and children receive their own transition booklets with information unique to their class. Children receive a personalised book all about our school.
* Parents are invited to a ‘Nibbles’ evening to get to know the PTA (FODS), to chat to teachers in an informal environment and to get to know other parents.
* The children are invited to three separate visits to their EYFS class.  Parents are welcomed to the first session, and encouraged to let their child be independent at the second session. However, we do want a child’s first experiences of school to be positive, therefore parents are welcomed if their child is feeling anxious.
* Teachers from The Discovery School visit the majority of new children in their pre-school settings twice.
* Home visits will take place in September as the children join school.
* Children will begin school in September with a phased start that begins with half days for two weeks, followed by half days with a lunch visit, then full time at the end of week 3.

**Impact**

## By the end of the children’s time in EYFS, they will have met The Early Learning Goals stated in The Early Years Foundation Stage and they will have the key knowledge and skills to move on to the next stage in their education.

The children will:

* Feel confident and happy to move onto Year 1.
* Be able to use their prior knowledge and skills to access The National Curriculum.
* Be resilient and use their growth mindset skills to persevere with their new experiences.
* Develop knowledge and skills that they can apply to everyday life and future learning.

## Transition from EYFS to Year 1

The impact of the EYFS curriculum is reflected in having well rounded, happy and confident children transitioning into Year 1.

During the final term in the EYFS, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child’s knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels. The Profile includes on-going observation, all relevant records held by the setting, discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

Each child’s level of development is assessed against the Early Learning Goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, exceeding expected levels, or if they have not yet reached expected levels (‘emerging’). We aim to exceed the National and Local Authority data for children achieving Good Level of Development. Almost all our children make more than the expected steps progress from their starting points.

The Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report and a meeting takes place between teachers to talk through the child’s skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. Year 1 teachers visit EYFS classes throughout the Summer Term to observe children in their EYFS learning environment so that relationships can be formed. This informs constructive dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child’s stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1. Children also have a transition day where they experience a day in their new Year 1 classroom with their new teacher and teaching assistant, which takes place at the end of the Summer Term.

The judgements of our school are moderated with other schools and the EYFS Coordinator is an SLE for Early Years and leads moderating events in other schools. This means judgements are secure and consistent with government guidelines. The EYFS coordinator also takes a lead in Local Authority moderating events which the school also attends.

The teaching and pedagogy are reviewed and evaluated regularly through monthly team meetings with Year 1. These have an agenda and actions which are then reviewed in the following meeting. We ensure that the areas we discuss and develop are reflected in changes and developments in our classroom practice.

The Early Years provision features in all areas of the School Development Plan and has a rigorous plan for development each year. This is monitored and evaluated by the EYFS Lead and the Head teacher.