

# Three Rivers Federation

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## Early Years

**This policy was agreed by the Full Governing Body in May 2015**

**It will be reviewed in May 2018**

Signed: *Evelyn Hicks* Chair of Governing Body

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## Early Years' Policy

Early Years' education is the foundation upon which children build the rest of their lives and is an education that encompasses all learning. This policy outlines the aims, principles and strategies for play, teaching and learning in the Early Years at Rockland St Mary and Surlingham Primary Schools at Three Rivers Federation.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies: Teaching and Learning; Single Equality Scheme including Equal Opportunities; SEND; Health and Safety; Feedback and Marking; Assessment; All curriculum policies.

### Aims

At our schools we provide:

- An enabling environment that is well planned and organised and which is safe and secure and provides rich and stimulating experiences.
- Continuous provision that gives opportunities to learn and revisit through active exploration using a wide variety of equipment and materials.
- An individual approach to each child's learning. We recognise the individual needs of children – emotional, social, physical, language acquisition, creative and intellectual and that they develop at different rates and learn in different ways.
- Positive relationships between children and adults.
- Play and recognition of the importance of learning through play in the development of children
- A warm and caring environment, where the children can develop a positive image of themselves.
- An environment, which promotes respect and equal regard for themselves and other people in the world around them.
- An open partnership with Parents/Carers.

### Planning and Organising

At our schools we plan for learning and development in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Development Matters. As we have mixed age classes we work carefully to ensure that our provision is tailored to the age, stage and needs of the children within the class.

Planning will:

- Be clear and concise to provide broad and balanced opportunities and experiences which provide scope for flexibility, differentiation and annotation.
- Be informed by observations of children on what they can do.
- Include a balance of child initiated, adult directed and adult led activities.
- The EYFS also plans for school visits and trips to the local community and surrounding areas and welcomes visitors into the school to share their skills and knowledge. This will give the children first hand, real experiences as a foundation to their learning.

- EYFS classes will have the teaching and support from a full-time Teacher and an Early Years' qualified Teaching Assistant.

### **Teaching and Learning**

- We deliver the EYFS in Reception and also in the transition from Reception into Year 1 and where it is identified that this is in the best interest of a child.
- Teachers and staff at Three Rivers Federation value the role of play at all stages of a child's development and recognise that through play children consolidate the teaching and learning experiences and opportunities they have had.
- Children in the EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside. We support children in using the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning which help us to focus on and understand how children learn. These characteristics are:

#### **By playing and exploring** children are able to:

- \*Find out and show curiosity
- \*Use what they know in their play
- \*Be willing to have a go

#### **Through active learning** children are able to:

- \*Be involved and concentrate
- \*Keep on trying
- \*Enjoy achieving what they set out to do

#### **By creating and thinking critically** children are able to:

- \*Have their own ideas
- \*Use what they already know to do new things
- \*Choose ways to do things and find ways to solve problems.

- Play is planned for through the environment where children can access and select opportunities that interest them and can be revisited. Play is also planned for by setting tasks with clearly specified aims and intentions using a variety of equipment and integrating it into the environment.
  - Communication and Language, Literacy, Mathematics and Phonics skills are taught in a fun, practical way and where possible with context and purpose to real life.
  - We ensure that the activities provide opportunities for children's different learning styles, including visual, auditory and kinaesthetic approaches.
  - Activities will be differentiated, and suitably open ended where appropriate, to cater for a wide range of abilities including SEND, talented and more able children.
  - Making choices and decisions are key factors in the development of children's self-esteem and confidence.
  - All staff work together to create a relaxed happy learning environment where high expectations of positive behaviour are encouraged.
  - The children are encouraged to participate in all activities with a high level of involvement and to become active, independent learners.
  - Children's individual learning and development is recorded in the child's Learning Journal, individual work books or online learning journal.
  - All observations made are linked to the Characteristics of Effective Learning to enable staff to build an accurate picture of the children's learning characteristics.
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## **Partnership with Parents/Carers:**

At Three Rivers Federation we promote an active partnership with parents/carers. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development.

- We offer home visits or initial family meetings to families who accept places in Reception. This provides the opportunity for parents/carers and staff to exchange information.
- We hold an introductory meeting for Reception parents/carers prior to starting, where they are given information about the school day and what to expect when their child starts school. Parents/carers are invited to ask questions. Transition sessions and activities are part of the introduction to school.
- Parents/carers are invited to attend consultations with staff regarding their child's achievements and possible concerns at set times over the year. At the end of the EYFS parents/carers are invited to discuss their child's Foundation Stage Profile.
- Parents/carers have opportunities to talk to staff briefly before the start of the school day. Appointments can be made for issues that require a longer discussion
- Parents are invited to various school events, including Harvest Festival, Christmas concerts, class assemblies, reading cafés, maths activity mornings, sports' day and also to share their child's learning.
- Support and advice from the SENDCo is available for the parents of children with additional and special needs.
- Parents are invited to help in school and at many of our school events.
- School and Federation newsletters are frequently sent home with information and diary dates of future events. Weekly class newsletters ensure parents/carers are well informed about current learning and events and are displayed on the website as well as being glued in home/ school contact books.
- Each child in Reception has a link book, which is used as both a reading record and to exchange messages and information.
- Opportunities for parents/carers to look at work and to contribute to Learning Journals are part of everyday school practice.
- In Reception, parents/carers are invited to attend Maths and Phonics mornings so that they can find out how we teach Mathematics and Phonics within school and how they can support their child at home.
- In Reception children have a 'Home Learning' book, called a Learning Log. It contains a weekly challenge that has been written and stuck in by the class teachers and follows on from what the children have been learning about in school that week.

## **Links with the community and other agencies**

Educational visits to enrich and extend the children's learning experiences will be arranged to places in the local community such as the pet shop or post office as well as the wider area.

- At various times of the year, visitors are invited to talk to the children e.g. veterinary nurse, dentist.
- Support services will be contacted when necessary i.e. speech therapy and psychological services.
- We also value and support transitions from local pre-schools and nurseries. We are developing our partnership with them.

## **Assessment and record keeping**

Assessment in Reception is an ongoing procedure using many techniques e.g. tracking, observations, through drawing, mark making etc., and photographs which are linked to the EYFS and Development Matters, and used to inform the Early Years' Foundation Stage Profile.

- A baseline EYFS profile made for the Reception children in the first 6 weeks of school.
- Dispositions, skills and knowledge are routinely noted during adult directed activities in Reception.
- Discussion with colleagues allows frequent sharing of information about individual children.
- Reception class teachers give each child 'next steps' in their learning and development.
- Each child in Reception has a Learning Story which is a collection of observations, wow moments, photographs and children's creations. This is to show the child's learning and development throughout their time in Reception and as evidence for the EYFSP.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- The Early Years' Foundation Stage has a subject leader.
- The Head Teacher, the Deputy Head Teacher and subject leaders observe and evaluate opportunities and experiences provided for the children.
- The Head Teacher and Senior Leadership team monitor assessment.
- The EYFS profile will be updated regularly throughout the year on a half termly basis using a colour code to enable teachers to track progress.
- The EYFSP will be moderated by the Early Years' team and advice, etc. will be given.

This policy will be monitored by the Standards Committee of the Full Governing Body.

It was agreed by the FGB in May 2015

This policy will be reviewed in May 2018

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