

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Thornhill Lees CE (VC) Infant and Nursery School



'At Thornhill Lees we celebrate our faith diversity and provide a safe environment where our children are happy to learn. We are kind, caring and respectful to others. We aim to inspire future generations of our school and community to become lifelong learners.'

Last reviewed on:	April 2024
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Next review due by:	April 2026
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EYFS – Intent, Implementation and Impact

In our EYFS we have a 2 Year Old Provision (AM and PM), Nursery (AM and PM) and 3 Reception classes.

Intent

At Thornhill Lees Infant and Nursery School we place great value on the development of children as individuals and providing them with the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to prepare them for the challenges in Key Stage One and beyond. Our aim in the EYFS is to build strong foundations for future learning. This means our children can go on to be active citizens in society and be happy and curious life-long learners.

Our curriculum is made up of the cultural capital, ensuring our children gain the knowledge, skills and understanding they require for success throughout their lives. This is done by emphasising learning through the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning (Play and Exploration, Active Learning and Creative and Critical Thinking).

Many of our children start school well below national expectations for their age and a high proportion come from disadvantaged backgrounds and with complex needs. Many of the children who attend our school also have EAL. Teaching the children how to speak and listen and meet the high expectations for behaviour, is where the children's learning begins. We prioritise Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication and Language in the Nursery curriculum. We strive for all children make good or better progress from their individual starting points.

We understand that building secure relationships with children and families at this early stage is key to understanding how we can get the most from learning opportunities for all children.

Our enabling environments and warm, skillful adult interactions support the children as they begin to link learning to their play and exploration. As the children move into Reception, we continue to have high expectations of the children and support them to further develop a love of reading, writing and number. This is delivered through a holistic curriculum which maximises opportunities for meaningful cross-curricular links and learning experiences as well as promoting the unique child by offering extended periods of play and sustained, shared thinking following children's interests and ideas. We value imagination and creativity and seek to create a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning through a vibrant continuous indoor and outdoor provision.

Implementation

Throughout the EYFS at Thornhill Lees Infant and Nursery School, we provide teaching and learning experiences tailored to the Early Years Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, updated September 2021.

The four guiding principles which shape our practice are:

- Every child is **a unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- Children **develop and learn** in different ways and at different rates.

We have a curriculum that is child-centered and is based upon the children's needs as well as topics which engage the children. Active learning is key, to ensure children are motivated and interested to learn. The EYFS staff take time to get to know the children, their interests and likes, to plan for their learning. All areas of learning and development in the EYFS are given equal importance and children are provided with a broad, balanced and progressive curriculum.

The 7 areas of learning and development in the EYFS:

Prime Areas

Communication & Language

Physical Development

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Specific Areas

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design

Planning is flexible, so that a child's unique interests and needs are supported. In the 2 Year Old Provision, the staff focus predominantly on developing the Prime Areas of learning and Development.

There is a balance of child initiated and adult led learning in all year groups. All EYFS classes have continuous provision learning environments inside and out to support the children in their self-chosen play. This means that children are using and developing taught skills throughout the year on a daily basis. Continuous provision practice and principles are essential in the EYFS and support children to develop key life skills such as independence, innovation, creativity, enquiry, analysis and problem solving.

During the school day, children have opportunities to work independently, work collaboratively with their friends and with members of staff.

Daily guided activities are also planned to cover different areas of the EYFS curriculum and allow children to develop their next steps in learning. Through observation and discussion, areas of need and next steps are identified for all children to ensure good progress is made. There are also a range of stimulating and engaging activities which the children can access independently and a variety of opportunities for child-initiated play. In planning and guiding children's activities we reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice. Staff in the EYFS make regular observations of the children's learning to ensure their next steps are met. These are collected and shared with parents, in each child's online Evidence Me Learning Journey. Parents can also contribute 'out of school' news and achievements which provides us with a well-rounded picture of the children. We regularly assess where the children are, using 'Development Matters' and then ensure our planning, adult interactions and learning environments; including continuous provision, support children to reach their next steps. We will include interventions for groups or individuals if and when necessary.

We want our children to be independent in accessing quality play-based experiences that encourage them to notice, question and wonder. The children learn by playing and exploring, being active, and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside. Our outdoor areas are used all year round and in most weather conditions.

When planning for children's learning and development needs, the Characteristics of Effective Learning are at the heart. These are:

- **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and have a go.
- **Active Learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

To support our wider curriculum, we provide regular opportunities for parents and carers to come into school and work with their child, share their work and celebrate successes. We keep parents informed and we meet regularly with them to ensure children's transition into school and through the EYFS is happy and allows them to reach their potential with the support needed. This includes transition days, nursery or home visits, stay and play sessions, parent workshops, Evidence Me online, reports and parent consultations, as well as more frequent informal communication and an open-door policy to suit individual families.

We also support the transition into Key Stage 1 for both children and parents. We prepare children for Year 1 with visits to their new class, meeting the teacher and ensuring the environments are similar at the end of EYFS and the start of Year 1.

Impact

We strive to ensure that our children's progress across the EYFS curriculum is good or better from their varied starting points. We also strive for children to reach the Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception. Evidence in children's learning journeys support all areas of the EYFS curriculum.

The impact of our curriculum is measured by assessment procedures which allow us to measure outcomes against all schools nationally. We monitor the percentage of children achieving age related expectations throughout the academic year and put supportive interventions in place if and when needed. Class teachers use observations to make formative assessments which inform future planning and ensure that all children build on their current knowledge and skills at a good pace. Summative assessment compares children attainment to age related expectations using ages and stages in Development Matters. This is tracked using the Evidence Me system. Discussions between the Early Years Lead, SENDCo and teachers ensure rates of progress are at least good for all children, including vulnerable groups such as those with SEND, disadvantaged or summer born children. Our assessment judgements have been moderated both in school and within the local Early Years Support Network.

The impact of our curriculum will also be measured by how effectively it helps our children develop into well rounded individuals who embody our values and carry with them the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will make them lifelong learners and valuable future citizens. We endeavor for children to be Key Stage 1 ready and have our school values embedded by the time they leave Reception, preparing them for their future.

Effective communication between the EYFS and KS1 is crucial to achieve effective transition for children and to plan accordingly for the next stage of the children's learning journey.

1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- Close partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [2021 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\)](#).

3. Structure of the EYFS

2 Year Old Provision – 15 place morning and afternoon sessional care (15 hours funded)

There are also some 2 Year Old parents who pay for their place (£10 per session / £50 per week), as they do not qualify for 2 Year Old funding.

3 Year Old Nursery – 39 place morning and afternoon sessional care (15 hours funded)

Reception – Attend for the school day 8.45am – 3.15pm

4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2021 statutory framework of the EYFS.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

4.1 Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

4.2 Teaching

Planning within the EYFS is based around themes which have stemmed from the seasons, celebrations, key knowledge, skills and texts that our staff have identified for each age group, and children's own interests. Teachers plan all areas of learning weekly. EYFS Year Group Teams meet weekly to plan learning opportunities in response to the children's needs, achievements and interests.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1.

5. Assessment

At Thornhill Lees CE (VC) Infant and Nursery School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Practitioners also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers. Throughout the EYFS, children's learning and observations are recorded on Evidence Me (online learning journal), which parents can view and contribute to. Progress is tracked using the Development Matters age and stage bands. Observation and assessment feeds into Teacher's future planning for the children.

At the end of the EYFS (Reception), staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Exceeding expected levels or,
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are then shared with parents and/or carers.

6. Working with parents

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

We have Parents Meetings twice a year (during the Autumn and Spring Terms). This is an opportunity for parents to meet with their child's class teacher and discuss their progress in school.

Written reports about the children's learning and development are sent out on transition from 2 year old to 3 year old Nursery; on transition from 3 year old Nursery to Reception, and in July of their Reception year.

7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our school Safeguarding and Child Protection policies.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by staff every 2 years.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.