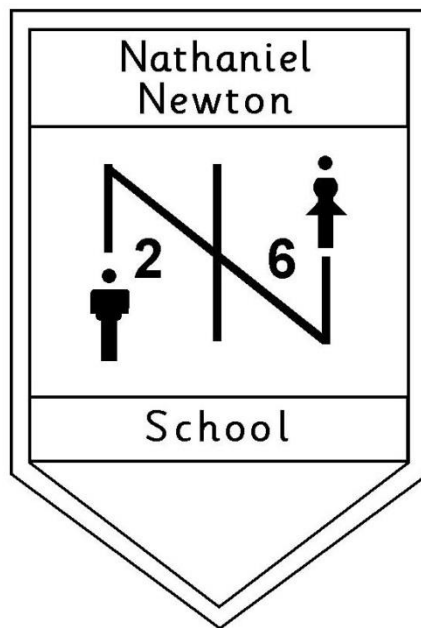


Nathaniel Newton Infant School



Early Years Policy

Introduction

“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.”

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage)

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.

Aims of our setting

The underlying principles of early years education at Nathaniel Newton Infant School are:

- recognising that all children are unique and special
- understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying times – physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally
- providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued
- teaching children to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways
- encouraging children to be independent and motivated learners
- adult focused, adult initiated and child initiated learning are equally valued, with activities based on first hand experiences whenever possible
- observation and assessment is used to ensure future activities relate to the next step needed to extend learning or provide practise with development of skills
- the learning environment, both indoor and outdoor is carefully planned and organised to optimise learning potential, through play, exploration and experimentation
- adult interaction with children is highly valued as a tool to consolidate and extend learning and build self-esteem

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

Teaching in the EYFS is delivered in accordance with the government’s statutory document ‘The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage’ (March 2012)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year.

At Nathaniel Newton Infant School we are committed to underpinning our provision with the four themes of the Early Years Foundation Stage in our Reception Classes:

- ☐ A Unique Child
- ☐ Positive Relationships
- ☐ Enabling Environments
- ☐ Learning and Development

There are seven areas of Learning and Development which are interconnected. Three areas (the prime areas) are crucial to develop lifelong learning and to help children form relationships:

- ☐ **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** - children develop confidence and self-esteem, learn how to manage feelings and respect others
- ☐ **Communication and Language** – children have opportunities to speak and listen in a range of situations and experience a rich language environment
- ☐ **Physical Development** – children have opportunities to be active and develop coordination (both gross motor and fine motor); they learn about healthy choices

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

- ☐ **Literacy** – involves children learning how letters link to the sounds and begin to read and write
- ☐ **Mathematics** – children have opportunities to develop counting and calculation skills, to use numbers in everyday activities and recognise and describe shapes and measures
- ☐ **Understanding the World** – children have opportunities to find out about people and communities, the environment and technology
- ☐ **Expressive Arts and Design** – involves exploring feelings and ideas through music, dance, role play and design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Through play and practical experiences children learn about the world and their place in it. They learn through first hand experiences, talk, books and equipment. We set realistic yet challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children.

Learning through play

At Nathaniel Newton Infant School we recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of their 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. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.

At Nathaniel Newton Infant School we provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support children to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help 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.

It is important to us that children experience success, have fun and enjoy themselves whilst learning.

Organisation of learning and teaching

Staff

The staff work very closely as a team, consisting of experienced teachers and teaching assistants. The children are divided into three classes each with a maximum of thirty children. Each class has its own teacher and teaching assistant.

Staff work within an ethos of mutual observation to enable sharing of good practice. All team members are encouraged to extend and improve their own professional development through regular school and INSET training.

Environment

The teaching and learning environment is organised into three interconnected classrooms and an outside area. The outside area has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. Children use the whole of the Reception area during the week, although each class has its own clearly defined classroom. The school hall is used for indoor PE lessons and assemblies. The computer suite and library are also used by the children. Children eat their lunch in the school hall.

Assessment and record keeping

Baseline assessment is carried out using Development Matters Age Bands during the children's first few weeks at school. We use our professional judgement to assess the age band children are working 'within' across the areas of learning.

As the year progresses, children are monitored on their development and progress. The main EYFS assessment method is through staff observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child initiated play. Observations take place on a daily basis (both formally and informally). Staff make time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. They also make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning. Observations are recorded on the children's online learning journal on Tapestry. All staff are involved in observing children. Staff use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children.

Other methods of assessing children include engaging alongside children in their play, annotation of 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 year we will assess the children against the EYFS Profile Early Learning Goals, stating whether they are EMERGING, EXPECTING or EXCEEDING.

Parents as partners

At Nathaniel Newton Infant School we recognise 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. We acknowledge this partnership with a home-school agreement that all parents are encouraged to sign when their child enters school. Before admission to school, parents are offered the opportunity of a home visit from Early Years staff.

We value the role of parents as children's primary educators. Staff encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes). This supports staff in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through regular letters, reading records and informal chatting at the beginning and end of the day. This also gives suggestions of how parents can support their children's learning at home; consolidating and building on what has been covered in school. Whole school newsletters are also sent home fortnightly.

Parents are invited to attend parents' evenings during the course of the academic year. The first of these takes place during the Autumn term to allow staff and parents to discuss how children have settled into the setting. Another parent's evening takes place during the Spring term where staff will feedback on children's learning and development progress. A report is sent out at the end of the Summer term and parents are invited into school to discuss this report if they wish.

Other opportunities for staff to share children's learning, development and well-being with parents include Learning Journeys, end of year reports and Celebration assemblies where children's achievements are recognised.

Parents are also invited to various assemblies and functions throughout the year e.g. maths afternoon, junk modelling sessions.

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 encouraged to discuss any concerns they might have.

We have an active Parent Teacher Association (PTA). New parents are encouraged to support their activities and meet representatives during New Parents Evening.

Admissions and induction

We believe that a happy and emotionally secure start to a child's education is essential to their future success.

Children are admitted in the September after their fourth birthday. On completion of home visits, children attend two full days during the first week. After this time children may attend full time if considered to be desirable by both parents and the school. Parents are welcome to remain in school with their child if they feel this is necessary for their child to adjust to their new environment.

Before they start in school, all children are offered a series of visits during the Summer term. The purpose of these initial visits is for the children to meet their new teacher and start to become familiar with the setting environment.

Most children attend at least one pre-school setting. Close liaison with these settings and transfer records ensure we build upon the child's existing learning experiences.

In the Summer term parents are invited into school to meet the EYFS staff. At this meeting information regarding the induction process and what goes on in the school is shared. There is also time for informal chat and parents' questions. School information packs will be distributed to parents at this meeting, detailing school routines and expectations.

Equal opportunities

We believe that no child should be excluded or disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability. We plan to ensure that those who have particular needs or disabilities are given the support they need to access the curriculum in line with whole school policies for special educational needs, behaviour and multicultural education.

Special Educational Needs

Care is taken to assess the needs of each child. Should a child have any special need the parent will be informed at an early stage. The arrangements for each child are managed and monitored by the class teacher, with support from the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (Mrs Taroni) Group and individual help is provided within the school where possible. We have links with the school nurse and outside agencies to ensure that the needs of each child are met. Parents will always be informed if an outside agency is assisting us to support their child.

Medical Needs

We keep a note of any medical needs, allergies, children who need inhalers, epi-pens in the school office so everyone is aware of the individual needs. Parents are asked to inform us of any foods their children are allergic to.

The school health team regularly visit the school to complete medical assessments with children as they become five years old.

All staff have received first aid at work training and two members of staff in Reception are trained in paediatric first aid.

Transition to Year One

There are opportunities for children to get to know their new teachers. There is a day in July when children visit their new class and there are occasions when the Year One teachers visit the children in their current classroom.

We feel that when children first enter Year One in September, there should be an initial focus on children's personal, social and emotional development, some children settle more quickly than others and staff need to be flexible and allow for this in planning. Introductions to sessions should ensure that children are not sitting on the carpet listening for longer than 10 minutes. The layout of the Year One classroom should include space and resources so that children can undertake continuous provision e.g. sand play, role play etc.

Written by Tracey Doherty

This policy was approved by the governing body on: 8th March 2018

To be reviewed: September 2020