

Great Smeaton Academy Primary

School Early Years Policy

We continue to develop a curriculum that is rooted in a creativity that gives the children the opportunities to learn through a range of teaching and learning styles across the year. Each curriculum policy reflects this and leads to our vision that we will **Create, Discover and Succeed** together. We will do this by:

- Connecting: seeing relationships and combining in new ways
- Risking: having the self-confidence and freedom to fail and keep trying
- Envisaging: being original and imaginative about what might be
- Analysing: asking critical and challenging
- Thinking: taking time for reflection and soft thinking
- Interacting: sharing ideas and collaborating
- Varying: testing options and trying different
- Elaborating: exploring, fiddling, doing the unnecessary

Tell me and I forget,

Show me and I remember,

Involve me and I understand

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.” - Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012.

In the Early Years at Great Smeaton Academy we strive to maintain a secure, caring and stimulating environment in which children are encouraged to have respect for themselves and each other. Through their learning, children are given the opportunity to develop individuality and responsibility, and are challenged to achieve their full potential.

Aims

-  To give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning;
-  To provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond.
-  To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop, to the full their social, physical, intellectual and emotional skills and qualities.
-  To work in partnership with parents and carers and value their contributions
-  To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.
-  To provide opportunities for children to develop their communication, linguistic, investigative and problem solving skills through interaction with adults and other children. To promote children’s imagination in play through stimulating resources and activities within the inside and outside classrooms.
-  To provide a range and balance of child initiated, adult initiated and adult focused activities indoors and outdoors.

The Curriculum

Learning experiences are planned for both indoor and out and are linked together through topic work which encompasses seven areas of learning.

The '**Prime Areas**' of learning, (building links to the 'Specific Areas' below) are

-  Communication and Language
-  Personal, Social and Emotional
-  Development Physical Development

The '**Specific Areas**' of learning, focussed on equally alongside the Prime Areas within Reception, are

-  Literacy
-  Mathematics
-  Understanding the World
-  Expressive Arts and Design

The indoor environment will have:-

Labeled areas for:-

Creative area, investigation area, malleable materials area, mark making/writing area, construction area, small world area, mathematics area, role play, ICT provision/computer area, quiet reading corner, sand and water play.

The outdoor environment will have:-

Provision for:-

Creative opportunities, exploring and investigating, small world play, writing/mark making opportunities, mathematical opportunities, role play, quiet area, physical play areas, including wheeled toys, large scale sand and water play.

The teaching and learning is carefully planned in all of these areas. The curriculum is organised to follow the interests of the children. It is an active and fun environment with play having a high priority. Our children have access to both an indoor and outdoor area. They access all the provision areas in the classroom and the outdoor area daily and we continually enhance and develop these areas to maximise the children's independent learning experiences.

In Early Years reading is taught initially through Jolly Phonics and Letters and Sounds. We work with children as a group and on a one to one basis with reading and phonics. In Mathematics children are taught to become confident and competent in learning and using key skills that is incorporated into their play based learning.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning and activities are planned with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics 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.

Teaching Strategies

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities throughout the day. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some cases, the adult will ask a child to complete a task or game with them; at other times the adult will participate in a child's game, extending it where possible.

By the Summer term in Reception, the children will experience many more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to Year One.

Play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classroom. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, children are provided with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world.

They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play.

Teaching

Teaching is carefully planned with a balance of adult led experiences for children that include structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. A timetable with set routines is followed each day.

Time is set aside each day when the children come together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a class. In these slots the focus is on topic work, maths, literacy skills, phonics, and stories.

These sessions help to develop effective habits that enhance their learning:

learning as a group,
listening to the teacher,
taking turns to answer,
sitting still etc.

It is also in these times that Reception and KS1 children will work together.

Reading

Reading and story, play an important part of the day.

Children are encouraged to have a love of books and will leave the EYFS with a bank of stories they know well including both traditional and modern classics. Time is always made available for whole class story at the end of the day alongside many opportunities to enjoy books at other times.

Every child is given their own reading book and has designated dedicated time when they will have one-to-one time sharing books with an adult and a group guided reading session. Children take work home in wallets in the Spring and Summer terms which, in addition to reading books, include word cards and tricky word sets which follow the Letters and Sounds scheme and link to the phase the child is working at. Spellings are also sent home in the Summer term.

Planning

We believe children need to be given a starting point for new learning new things

We have a three year topic cycle so that children continually engage and are excited new topics during their three years in Class One. These range from a topic on Dinosaurs to Minibeasts and Traditional Tales. The topics are flexible to ensure we also follow the children's interests, school themes and local or national events e.g. the Olympics.

Assessment

As each child enters the Foundation Stage we use our professional judgement to assess the age band children are working 'within' across the EYFS 17 areas of learning.

Within six weeks of the child starting they will be given a 'baseline' assessment.
Expected Standards for Foundation Stage are:

Reception

40-60 months = In line with ARE (Age Related Expectations)
30-50 months = Below ARE
Any other lower age band below = Significantly below ARE

Formative Assessment

As the year progresses children's progress is monitored to include their development and progress in all areas of development. Examples of children's learning, showing their individual level and stage of development are built up throughout the year. Provision is made for these observations and assessments through experience and play. Progress is recorded by observing and assessing children either using hand written observations, staff notes or by use ipad software.

Assessment Cycle

Baseline Assessment - Reception – October - February and July

Summative data

At the end of the year we will assess the Reception Class children against the EYFS Profile Early Learning Goals, stating whether they are EMERGING, EXPECTING or EXCEEDING.

Parents

Regular assessments are made of children's learning and these are used to ensure future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of long, short and recorded observations involving the teacher and other adults as appropriate and are recorded using the 2simple app on our ipad.

Puppets are used and sent home and children are encouraged to write and take photographs during this time to send back in the children's Learning Journeys.

Reception children have a 'Look what I've been doing book' which is used to put photographs in of the children at school each week for parents to write comments in. Parents are encouraged to write and stick photographs of children's evening and weekend activities and achievements in the book