



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Policy Tracker			
Date	Reviewed By:	Role	Approved by the Curriculum and Standards committee
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1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that provides a secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each child
- A close working partnership between staff and 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 [Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) that applies from September 2021](#).

3. Introduction

‘Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential.’ (Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage)

At Gig Mill Primary School we believe that the foundation years are fundamental in ensuring later success; they provide the building blocks to children’s education and as such, we are passionate about getting this right. Irrespective of their starting point, we know that by providing children with a high level of care and support, they can reach key milestones. It is well documented, that children develop the quickest in their first few years of life, which makes the role of an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) practitioner crucial in helping children reach their full potential. This policy sets out the expectations for the EYFS at Gig Mill Primary School underpinning it all will be the four key principles as set out in the EYFS framework: -

- 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 with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- The importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates.

4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2021.

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 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

At Giggles Nursery, it is essential that our very youngest children are provided with a strong foundation in their prime areas of development, so naturally these are a high priority in our nursery provision. We also recognise that language is central to all development, hence this is at the forefront of all our provision across the EYFS. We develop children's communication and language through our progressive core songs and rhymes, and texts. We have several staff who are trained in Early Language programmes right across our EYFS, as a result we are able to identify any children who are finding it difficult to access the curriculum, and then use intervention programmes as appropriate (see section 13 -SEND).

Our EYFS pedagogy and curriculum is a mix of different approaches which encompass the children's interests, our long-term overview, and our progression models. Our long-term overview provides key themes and texts which will help develop, consolidate and deepen the children's knowledge and understanding of different topics across the areas of learning. We also have designed our own progression models which considers the small, incremental steps needed for children to make progress in the 7 curriculum areas.

Just as the role of the EYFS practitioner is pivotal in young children's development, so too is the role of an enabling environment. Children across our EYFS will have access to a well-resourced, stimulating indoor and outdoor environment, which is organised to support the well-planned curriculum, allow maximum independence but also to foster the characteristics of effective learning (playing and exploring; active learning, creative thinking and thinking critically).

5. Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. Staff also consider 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. We know that young children's learning is often at its peak when it is led by their own interests, and therefore on a short-term basis, we factor this into the planning.

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, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

Staff plan rich, first-hand meaningful learning opportunities, including visits to the local area and Forest School sessions.

6. Teaching

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

Our Nursery provision offers children an extended amount of uninterrupted, child-initiated play, in which practitioners can provide an enabling environment and join in sensitively with the play when appropriate. As children enter the summer term in Nursery, there is an increased amount of group work to prepare them for the move to reception.

As children grow older, there are still opportunities for child-initiated play, but there is also increased time spent participating in structured group work. This is always in a developmentally appropriate way and helps support the children in reaching their full potential by the end of the reception year, and prepare them for the more formal learning as they move onto the National Curriculum in Year 1.

7. Assessment

We recognise that the most powerful form of assessment in the EYFS, is the practitioner's knowledge of the child. With this in mind, we believe in providing extended periods of time where staff can interact with the children in a purposeful way. The assessment systems in place are to mark significant moments in a child's development and should not involve unnecessary evidence. These significant moments are documented on Evidence Me – an online learning journey.

At Gig Mill Primary 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. Staff also consider observations shared by parents and/or carers, for example by using Evidence Me.

Development Matters (September 2020) which is used throughout our EYFS, helps to inform practitioners of the typical development of a child at different ages and stages of development, and whilst staff use this as a reference guide, it is by no means used as a checklist for the children.

Through using this guidance, staff can quickly identify any children who are at risk of falling behind and take immediate, remedial action to support.

On entry to every year within the EYFS, the staff will undertake a baseline assessment. This is generated using a variety of different sources, including observations of the child, professional judgement, and reference to Development Matters. This baseline is then used to help shape the provision on offer for that child.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

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

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

If a child has achieved the expected level in all the prime areas along with Literacy and Mathematics, then they will have achieved a **Good Level of Development (GLD)**. This provides a good indication of their readiness to move into Year 1.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters [guidance](#)) and in partnership with other Trust schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority and results are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

8. Working in partnership with parents/carers

Parents/Carers are a child's first educators and developing a strong partnership with them in the Early Years, ensures children get the most from their education. We put lots of measures in place to quickly establish a relationship with our parents/carers (see section 11-Transition). We operate an 'open door' policy in which parents/carers can always speak to a member of staff at the end of every session/day. Alternatively contact with staff can be made via telephoning the school or by email to info@gig-mill.dudley.sch.uk

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. In reception the child's key person will be their class teacher.

Our home/school link is also fostered through our use of online learning journeys (Evidence Me) Parents/carers are actively encouraged to share achievements from home which can then be discussed in school.

Parent/carer workshops feature throughout our EYFS provision. These workshops range in topics and include phonics and reading for example. Over the year there are some set workshops which are covered, but we keep our approach flexible to ensure we can incorporate new workshops which may be topical to a particular cohort of children.

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.

9. Structure and organisation of the EYFS

Gig Mill Reception

Our school admission number for reception is 90, we have qualified teachers who lead these groups. The Local Authority co-ordinates all admissions into Reception, following our admissions policy. During the summer term, prior to starting school, children who will be joining the school in September will be invited into school for taster sessions as part of a transition programme. During the summer term, children in reception will take part in a transition programme to support their move into Year 1 (see section 11 - Transitions)

Start and finish times

Reception:	8:40am-3:20pm
Reception lunchtime:	11:30am until 12:30pm

Giggles Nursery

We have a 26 place nursery and we currently offer 15 hours per child either 8.30-11.30am / 12.20-3.30pm . There is one member of staff for every 13 children and a member of staff who holds Qualified Teacher status.

Snack arrangements

Children in the EYFS are provided with a carton of milk and a piece of fresh fruit funded by a government initiative. There is always fresh water available for the children. If parents/carers would prefer, they can provide their child with a piece of fruit and a bottle of water from home. In line with the school's healthy eating policy, this must only be plain water, although Reception children are permitted to bring squash for their drink at lunchtime. Any staff who are involved with the handling and preparation of food, hold a relevant food hygiene qualification.

Children in nursery and reception access their snack in a café type system. The fruit, milk and water are prepared and then children freely access this during child-initiated play time. This promotes independence and develops the children's social skills.

9. Admissions procedure

Reception admissions at Gig Mill Primary School are in line with our Admissions Policy which can be found on our school website. Parents/carers have the right to request deferred entry for their child into Reception. In this case, they have the right to retain a place offered and request that their child be admitted to the reception class during the academic year or the term in which the child reaches compulsory school age. Parents/carers can also request that their child takes up the place part-time until their child reaches compulsory school age. If a parent is considering this option, then we would

advise that they speak to the EYFS lead/Assistant Head of School /Head of School to discuss this further.

Nursery admissions- Parent/carers requesting a nursery place are required to complete the appropriate paperwork which is available from the school office. Parents/carers can state their preference in terms of a morning or afternoon place, but the fulfilment of this cannot be guaranteed. The phase leader will allocate places using the Local Authority guidelines. Children will then undertake a graduated start.

We support parents/carers in the application process for Early Years Pupil Premium, which is a government scheme that enables the school to claim additional funding for children who meet the set criteria. Parents/carers are provided with this paperwork as part of the induction process.

Currently, all children up to the end of KS1 are entitled to a free school meal under the government initiative. However, there is additional funding for children who meet the set criteria, this provides additional enrichment and learning opportunities for pupils. Similarly, parents/carers are provided with this paperwork as part of the induction process and staff support parents/carers with this process.

11. Transition

At Gig Mill Primary School we have an extensive, carefully planned, transition programme in place to support all children in the EYFS. However, we recognise every child as being a unique child and we will always tailor our approach to meet the needs of individual children. Throughout each stage of the transition process, staff will meet to discuss the incoming cohort, their achievements and starting points. Aside from this, our other arrangements are outlined below: -

Nursery- A home visit is organised to see the child in the setting where they are most comfortable. Key information is shared with the parents/carers about the setting and it provides them with the opportunity to ask questions. This is then followed by a short introductory visit, usually lasting an hour. The purpose of this visit is for the child to familiarise themselves with the environment and their key worker. The parent/carer will stay with their child for the full hour. Following this visit, the time would gradually increase according to the individual child's needs, until they are attending for the full session.

Reception- Our first stage to induct a new reception cohort is an induction presentation with the EYFS lead and Head of School who shares key information about the school with the new parents/carers. The children who move from our nursery up to reception, have regular visits to their new classroom during the summer term. If a child comes from an outside setting (i.e. private nursery or childminder), then the reception teachers visit them in their current setting. Not only does this enable the teacher to start to build a relationship with the child, but they can also complete a handover of information with the child's current key worker. Alongside this, a set of visits are planned to allow the child to familiarise themselves with their new classroom.

Reception to Year 1- Reception staff meet with the Year 1 staff to discuss children's outcomes in the Early Learning Goals, which provides them with an indication of each child's stage of development

and learning needs and helps them plan the Year 1 curriculum to meet these needs. During the summer term, reception children will meet their new teacher and spend some time in their new classrooms. Staff also use the children's learning journeys as a vehicle to discuss their achievements in reception and build a relationship with them.

12. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Our EYFS safeguarding procedures are in line with school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. In addition to this, staff within the EYFS have regular supervision meetings with the EYFS phase leader. This provides staff with an opportunity to discuss any issues, identify solutions to address issues that arise and receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness. In addition, staff are given the opportunity to talk about their personal career interests which are then matched to training opportunities.

All children within the EYFS are assigned a key worker and parents/carers are notified of this as part of the induction process. Their role is to build a strong relationship with the child and ensure the child's individual needs are being met. This key worker will also develop a strong relationship with the child's parents/carers.

Due to the nature of the curriculum in Early Years, risk assessments are an integral part of the everyday practice. Whilst a yearly risk assessment is completed for the large outdoor equipment and any electrical equipment, daily risk assessments also take place. The intention of these is to identify any immediate risks both indoors and outdoors which could cause harm to the children and take appropriate action to minimise or eliminate these risks. If a significant risk is found, staff inform the phase leader and site manager.

All staff who bring a personal mobile phone into school are expected to keep these within a locked cupboard within the classroom, and in line with the school's online safety policy, only use these in designated areas within school and only in the absence of pupils e.g. – the school staff room or a school office. Mobile phones are prohibited from use in the classroom.

It is an expectation that all staff caring for children within our EYFS are able to fulfil their job role. If any staff are taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children, those practitioners should seek medical advice. Any staff who need medication on the school site, must keep this securely stored in a locked cupboard.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth

13. SEND

In the EYFS, like the rest of the school, we are committed to offering an inclusive curriculum and care to ensure the best possible outcomes for all our children, whatever their needs or abilities. We also recognise the importance and impact of early intervention, which is why our Early Years practitioners are expected to flag any concerns as soon as they arise. We have a designated SENDCo, who is fully involved in this process and parents/carers are kept informed at every stage.

We ensure that our staff are trained in a range of intervention programmes, including but not exclusive to, TalkBoost and Wellcomm. Each intervention programme has a set criteria for screening and the intervention is completed based on these results.

For more information on SEND, refer to SEND Policy.

14. Monitoring arrangements

This policy is agreed and reviewed by the boards Curriculum and Standards committee.