

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

“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 it’s own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

“Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage”, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2008

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Mornington Primary School we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development and as preparation for life. All children begin at Mornington with a variety of experiences and learning. As we have no FS1 setting at Mornington, our children feed from a variety of pre-school establishments, from child minders to playgroups. It is the essential that the practitioners working in reception build upon the prior learning and experiences. This is done through ensuring that parents/carers, support staff and the early years practitioners work together effectively to support children's learning and development. This is achieved by, whenever possible, sharing information with preschools and parents/carers and ensuring that each child’s learning in a continuous journey.

Aims

It is every child’s right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well-being. At Mornington the aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve the five “Every Child Matters” outcomes. The EYFS principles which guide the work of all practitioners are grouped into four distinct but complementary themes: A Unique Child - every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. The commitments are focused around development; inclusion; safety; and health and well-being. Positive Relationships - how children learn to be strong and independent from a base of secure relationships with parents and/or a key person. The commitments are focused around respect; partnership with parents; supporting learning; and the role of the key person. Enabling Environments – states that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children’s development and learning. The commitments are focused around observation, assessment and planning; support for every child; the learning environment; and the wider context – transitions, continuity, and multi-agency working.

Learning and Development- recognises that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates, and that all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter- connected. We aim to provide a broad, balanced, rich and stimulating curriculum and environment which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his/her full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

At Mornington we aim to:

- provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs
- provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond
- provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development
- use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress
- enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self confidence
- work in partnership with parents/guardians and value their contribution
- ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development

Learning and Development

The seven areas of learning and development are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)
- Communication and Language (CL)
- Literacy (Lit)
- Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy (Maths)
- Understanding of the World (UW)
- Physical Development (PD)
- Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

At Mornington we believe these seven areas are equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development. We aim to deliver all the areas through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Planning

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS will be put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning.

There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

•Long Term Planning

At Mornington we see the importance of children guiding the learning through experiences and activities that interest them. We have a yearly overview which forms a framework for our topics however the children are consulted about their current knowledge and lines of enquiry they would like to pursue. These are incorporated in to the planning.

•Medium Term Planning

Each half term we use observations and discussions with the children to establish topics and activities that have a particular interest at that time. We then create a rough outline for the half term. This however can change on a weekly basis, again depending on the children's interests at the time. We use Development Matters and EYFS framework to plan activities and a play based curriculum incorporating the six areas of learning.

•Short Term Planning

We identify specific learning objectives, activities, differentiation, deployment of adults and resources, to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly and day-to-day basis. It allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests and for revision and modification, informed by on-going observational assessment.

Staffing and Organisation

Mornington has a one form entry in foundation with approximately 45 pupils in the unit. We maintain an adult/pupil ratio of 1:15 within the reception year, which is 2 teachers, 1 full time teaching assistant and a care assistant. The teachers liaise with the teaching assistant and care assistant, regularly involving them in planning, preparation and assessment. We are always aiming to improve our teaching skills, knowledge and understanding and so all practitioners are encouraged to participate in local authority network meetings and local cluster group training. At the beginning of the year each child is allocated a key worker. This information is shared with parents. Each week the key worker has between 1 and 3 focus children which they use to collect formative assessment data. This ensures thorough and regular assessment information is collected.

Assessment, recording and monitoring

At Mornington we undertake assessment for learning. We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning, and then make informed decisions about the child's progress. This enables us to plan the next steps to meet their development and learning needs. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process.

Formative assessment

This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations recorded on class assessment sheets,

assessment on entry, other focused assessments e.g. sound/number, annotated examples of work, photographs, and information from parents.

Each child has a 'My Mornington Learning Journey' which is used to collate all of the above formative assessment data.

Summative assessment

The EYFS Profile summarises all of the formative assessment undertaken and makes statements about the child's achievements against thirteen scales. This is recorded on the eyprofile. It summarises children's progress towards the early learning goals.

Learning through play

"Play underpins all development and learning for young children. Most children play spontaneously, although some may need adult support, and it is through play that they develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally"

("Practice guidance for the early years foundation stage", Department for Children, Schools and Families May 2008)

At Mornington we do not make a distinction between work and play. We support children's learning through planned play activities, and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves and through sustained shared thinking and by observing and reflecting on children's spontaneous play.

The Learning Environment

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence.

Activities are planned for both the inside and outside space. The learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas:

role play, book corner, mark making, creative table, sand, water, construction, small world and puzzles. These areas are carefully arranged to encourage quiet areas and more active areas within the learning environment. However children are taught that these skills are not used in isolation, for example the children know that mark making happens in many areas of the classroom not just the mark making area.

Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation. Resources are available and organised for child initiated play.

When parents/guardians and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise.

We aim to develop this by:

- outlining the reception curriculum to parents/guardians during the new parents meetings
- sending home a half termly curriculum flier, informing parents/guardians of the learning that will be taking place at school.
- sending home a weekly 'link letter' informing parents of the learning and activities in FS that week.
- holding a 'meet the teacher' meeting early in the first term to outline how we structure the learning in Foundation Stage and to provide an opportunity for asking questions and sharing information
- operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents/guardians can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner. We have a weekly reading morning every week where parents can come and read with their children and discuss any issues with the key worker.
- inviting parents/guardians to help in our school and to accompany children on school visits
- encouraging parents/guardians to listen to their child read each night and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading diary
- providing an annual written report to parents/guardians in July summarising the child's progress against the early learning goals and EYFS assessment scales.

Equal Opportunities

At Mornington we aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas.

Inclusion

Children with special educational needs will be given support as appropriate to enable them to benefit from the curriculum. This includes children that are more able, and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Additional adult support may be provided for children with special medical needs, thus increasing the adult/pupil ratio. Individual Education Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support, in line with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy. Reception teachers discuss these targets with the child and his/her parents/guardians. Progress is monitored and reviewed every term. For further information see Special Educational Needs Policy.

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Updated April 2018