



Early Years Policy

Introduction

“All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years 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 provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential. “

EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers, October 2024.

Principles

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

A unique child. We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. We know that children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others. We use praise and encouragement as well as celebration and rewards to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning.	Positive relationships. We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.
Enabling environments with teaching and support from adults. We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. We work hard to create an environment that promotes awe and wonder and work in collaboration with the children to give them ownership of their own learning environment. We work as a unit, allowing the children the opportunity to move freely between both classrooms as well as access our outdoor environment. We keep the environment consistent and provide enhancements to each area, so children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.	Learning and development. Foundation stage is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. Through observations and teacher led activities, we discover the children’s interests and knowledge and use these to inform our assessments. We analyse this information to identify each child’s learning needs. We plan challenging and achievable activities and enhancements to the environment to extend the learning of each child. We embrace the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. We have developed dinosaur characters which embody each characteristic and promote these throughout each half term to encourage positive learning values.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At FIS we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying the secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education. The EYFS for children is from birth to five years of age. All children begin school with a wide variety of experiences and learning and it is the privilege of the adults working in the Foundation Stage to accept the task of building upon that prior learning experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning ensuring that parents and guardians, support staff and the Foundation Team work effectively together to support the learning and development of the children in their charge.



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Aims

It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic wellbeing. The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve these five outcomes. We provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically and intellectually to their full potential. Our curriculum provides no limits or barriers to children's achievements and is designed to ensure children are highly motivated, eager to join in and develop high levels of concentration. We measure the impact of our curriculum on what children know, can remember and do.

At FIS we aim to:

- Provide a safe and challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment that is sensitive to the needs of all children.
- Provide an ambitious, broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond, and meets the needs of all children.
- 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 and carers and value their contributions ensuring that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, gender or ability have the opportunity to reach their potential.
- Provide opportunities whereby children experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.
- Provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs that are inclusive rather than parallel.
- Ensure resources are chosen to meet the children's needs and promote learning.

Learning and development

At Frogmore Infant School we believe:

Learning is most significant when children are:

- Enthused and engaged
- Committed and challenged
- Collaborative and expressive
- Imaginative and creative

Learning is most significant when the curriculum:

- Connects with children's interests
- Has breadth and balance
- Is enquiry/play/discovery based
- Is vibrant and memorable
- Is carefully planned and well taught



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Children in YR follow the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum (EYFS). This is categorised into three prime areas:

- ✓ Communication and language
- ✓ Physical development
- ✓ Personal, Social and emotional development

Additionally there are four specific areas of learning

- ✓ Literacy
- ✓ Maths
- ✓ Understanding the world
- ✓ Expressive art and design.

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is supported by the characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- ✓ Playing and exploring
- ✓ Active learning
- ✓ Creating and thinking critically

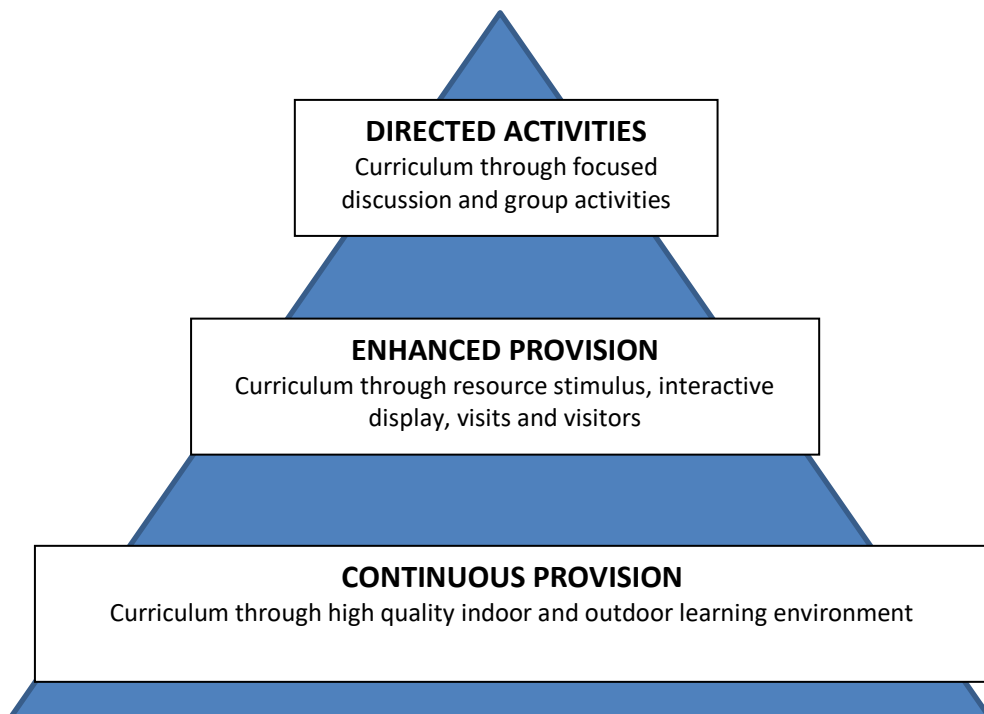
Frogmore Infant School's Curriculum Development Model

A practical, playful approach to learning is delivered through a mixture of planning. We create mini topics based on the needs and interests of our children. We celebrate children's festivals and promote diversity by recognising different customs and challenging stereotypes. We teach children individually, in small groups, in class bases and in whole cohorts. Through a combination of teacher input (directed activities), enhanced provision and continuous provision opportunities, learning is planned to encourage children to develop their learning independently through exploration and challenge.

The *Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning* are at the heart of the Early Years Curriculum and explore the different ways in which children learn. They highlight the importance of playing and learning, active learning and thinking critically. We promote this through our dinosaur characters that we focus on throughout the year. Children relate to the dinosaur personas and work to adopt the learning value they promote. All the learning experiences we plan for the children allow them to utilise and develop these skills. Our learning environments, both inside and outside, are stimulating and exciting, and relevant to the needs and age/stage of our children. Natural backing and resources promote a calm atmosphere conducive to learning, whilst easily accessible resources develop children's ability to access the curriculum independently.



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Effective Continuous Provision

At Frogmore Infant School we believe the continuous learning environment should:

- Have consistency, being carefully planned to inspire awe and wonder Be well organised and presented
- Have open ended resources that are accessible and clearly labelled
- Be supported by adults, not simply be set up and left for the children to enjoy
- Set high expectations for children's play and offer literate and visual stimulus

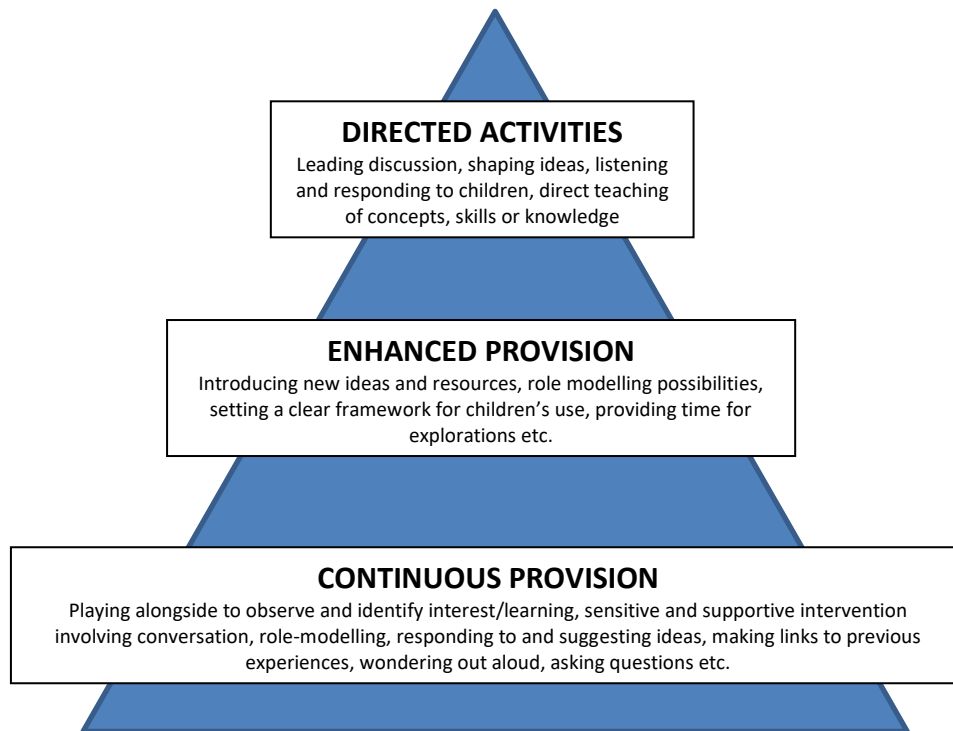
The Outdoor Environment

The outdoor environment is not a replication of the indoor environment. It provides for louder/messier/large scale/natural experiences and play.



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Role of the adult



Teaching and play are not seen as separate endeavours- In every playful encounter adults are teaching. They make important decisions about the resources to use/questions to ask. They think carefully about their physical behaviours, the language to use and the environments to create. These constant, everyday decisions are recognised as teaching.

Teaching incorporates all of the ways that adults help young children to learn- the interplay between adults and children is seen as a continuum, with adults making constant decisions about the level of formality, structure and dependence that would promote the best possible learning.

Approaches to early reading – we ensure dedicated time each day to teaching communication, language and literacy. We believe that short, sharply focused teaching sessions, together with frequent opportunity to apply learning across all other activities, allow the rapid development of literacy skills.



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What would you see/hear the adult doing?	What would you see/hear the child doing?	What could this look like in practice?
Modelling new language, skills, knowledge, techniques, problem solving and questioning vocabulary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using modelled language, using and applying the new language, skills, knowledge and techniques in their own activities. They can apply problem solving techniques to all areas of the curriculum and raise own questions. Children use technical, topic specific vocabulary. 	A child wants to make a robot but is finding it tricky to attach the arms. The adult talks about different ways it could be joined and encourages the child to think about the benefits of each. They use questions to engage the child in the problem solving together. The adult uses the opportunities to reinforce language such as join, stick, attach, cardboard, plastic, paper etc.
Responding to children's interests by engaging with the child in their play. Follow the child's interests and lead.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children share their ideas with enthusiasm active engagement. Children actively seek adults or peer to share experiences with. Children take risks, challenges themselves and others. Children show curiosity and interest about objects and events. 	A child comes in buzzing about minibeasts that they have found in the garden at home. The adult listens carefully to what the child has said, asks open ended questions to find out more information. The adult follows the child's own levels of enquiry or suggests ideas to take their learning further e.g. going to the library/using the internet to collect more information, going to a minibeast hunt at school etc.
Provide effective feedback. Checking children's understanding, identifying misconceptions and providing clear explanations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children demonstrate perseverance. Children have raised self-esteem and motivation. Children adapt their work following interactions. 	A child has made a shield and comes to share it with you. The adult praises the child and asks questions to prompt the child to say what they have done well, what they found difficult etc. The adult shows interest in the child's achievements. The adult then asks if there is any way to make it better or suggest ways to improve it i.e. how could you add a handle?
Using positive body language that shows the child that you are interested in them and respect their ideas. The adult changes their voice and reflects children's enthusiasm and passion back to them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children will be motivated and want to share their ideas. Children will feed off the adult's enthusiasm and demonstrate greater perseverance and increased participation in the task. 	A child asks if we can make a wormery. The adult smiles and is enthusiastic and wants to pursue the activity. They seek out other children excitedly to share the experience. The activity extends for a longer period of time than it would without intervention and includes a greater number of children. The child may then continue and pursue this activity in a different session independently.

Observation, assessment and planning

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning of activities and the environment reflects the identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observations and this involves the teacher and class LSAs. These observations are recorded where appropriate. Each half term, children's progress against all seven areas of the EYFS and FIS's curriculum progression of skills is assessed to inform our future planning cycle. There are two formal parent/teacher meetings throughout the year. At the end of Reception, a written report is made for each child and sent home to parents/carers who can then come to talk about their child's progress with the teacher.

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 already do. Our planning shows that the principles of EYFS are 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 needs. All staff who work in the Foundation Stage are involved in this process. These plans are used by the EYFS team as a guide for weekly planning. However, we may alter these in response to the needs of the children.



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The induction process

As part of our transition, staff go out to meet children who attend local nurseries/play groups to make a first point of contact. They find out about children's likes and dislikes and preferred ways of working through conversations with nursery staff and the children. Teachers leave social stories including photographs of the school, the classrooms and the teachers for nursery staff to share with the children. Teachers continue to work in partnership with nursery staff, gathering assessment information to support transition. Children are invited to attend Play Sessions in school during summer term before they start school. Parents/carers are invited to school for a meeting with the Head Teacher and Reception Teachers. They find out about school routines and expectations and staff are available to answer any questions. All families are offered a home visit with the class teacher and class LSA before children start school. During the summer holidays, teachers share regular stories, activities and ideas for different ways to help at home to prepare children for the transition to school.

Home and school links

We recognise that parents and carers are a child's first and most enduring educators and we aim for the school and parents and carers to work closely together. This can have a very positive impact on a child's development but relies on a two way flow of information and knowledge.

- We will develop this working relationship between school and parents and carers as follows:
- We will outline the school's expectations and curriculum offer on the school website.
- We will hold parent consultation meetings twice times per year to discuss progress and how the child is settling in.
- We will publish our themes for each term on our website and send half termly to parents via email or paper copy.
- We will operate an open door policy that will allow parents and carers to discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner. Conversely if Foundation staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- We will conduct workshops for parents and carers to enable them to be familiar with the teaching methods used in school to make it easier to emulate them at home.
- There are opportunities for parents and carers to visit school on a volunteer basis to assist with the children's learning.

Intimate care

This is any care that involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However depending on the age and stage of a child's development, they may need some support, for example, dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear and clothes following an accident.

Parents/carers inform staff of those children likely to require such care and a discussion takes place regarding how their needs can be met as closely in school as they would be met at home.

Parents/carers provide clean clothing and are informed when a child has needed such care.

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child.

Privacy is maintained as far as possible and staff are always encouraged to change a child in the presence of another member of staff. Intimate care is given to children who need it in line with our school policy.



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Inclusion and equal opportunities

Children with special educational needs are supported as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes children that are more able and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Individual education plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support commensurate with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy.

Measuring impact

At Frogmore Infant School we measure the impact of the EYFS curriculum by the extent to which:

- Children develop detailed knowledge and skills across the seven areas of learning in an age-appropriate way.
- Children develop their vocabulary and use it across the EYFS curriculum. Children develop their vocabulary and understanding of language across the seven areas of learning.
- By the end of Reception, children use their knowledge of phonics to read accurately and with increasing speed and fluency, reading at least within green book band.
- Children are ready for the next stage of education, especially Year 1 in school, meeting early learning goals in EYFS curriculum.
- By the end of Reception, children have the personal, physical and social skills they need to succeed in the next stage of their education.
- Children enjoy, listen attentively and respond with comprehension to familiar stories, rhymes and songs that are appropriate to their age and stage of development.
- Children demonstrate their positive attitudes to learning through high levels of curiosity, concentration and enjoyment. They listen intently and respond positively to adults and each other.
- Children are developing their resilience to setbacks and take pride in their achievements.
- Children are beginning to manage their own feelings and behaviour, understanding how these have an impact on others. They are developing a sense of right from wrong.