

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 its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know that provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the framework that provides that assurance.”

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At QEGS Infant School, children join the Reception class in the year that they turn five. In partnership with parents and carers we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life. The Early Years Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and also in preparing children for later schooling. It is the Early Learning Goals that set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

We endeavour to ensure that children “learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.” We aim to support children in their learning through “teaching and experiences that give children the broad range of skills that provide the right foundation for good progress through school and in life.” (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2012)

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A unique child – developing resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals.
- Positive relationships – supporting the child in becoming strong and independent.
- Enabling environments – where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/guardians and the child.
- Learning and developing – an acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates

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, at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal. Many have been learning in one of the various educational settings that exist in our community. The early-years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- it builds on what our children already know and can do;
- it ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;



- it offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- it provides a rich and stimulating environment.

Inclusion/Special Educational Needs (SEN)

- We value the diversity of individuals within the Infant School and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children and their families are valued.
- In the Infant School we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking into account our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning
- In the EYFS in the Infant School, we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We liaise closely with all relevant professionals in order to provide early support for those children and their families who need it.
- Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/guardians at an early stage and the school's Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) is called upon for further information and advice. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the school's policy for SEN.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whatever their age and stage of development;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

In order to accommodate the individual's particular learning style lessons will be planned wherever possible in a multi-sensory way so that the various activities will cater for all pupils in the spirit of inclusion.

Positive Relationships

At QEGS Infant School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. We recognise the welfare requirements for the EYFS to:

- Promote the welfare of children
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill



- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- Ensure all adults in the setting are trained and suitable to work there.
- Ensure the setting and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose and that risk assessments are ongoing.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe, efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of children.

Supporting Learning

Effective teaching approaches will be secure where we:

- Engage and stimulate the learner
- Allow for regular review of progress towards learning outcomes
- Vary what we provide to match children's needs
- Maximise opportunities to explore in a whole group, small group, pair, individually and independently

Routines are an important way that children feel secure and can make sense of all the opportunities offered throughout their time in the Infant School

This includes self-registration, signs and timetables, snack-time, small group time and whole group story or circle time. Children will use continuous provision throughout their day and will also be supported through adult – led activities.

Key Person

In the Reception Classes at QEGS Infant School, each child has a named key person (their class teacher). The key person builds confidence, gives children opportunities to express their thinking and use their initiative. We believe children learn and develop effectively when the key person provides:

- First-hand experiences
- Individual and collaborative learning experiences
- Appropriate pace
- An environment where children can take risks
- Innovative delivery
- Clear expectations
- Opportunities to review and reflect
- Thinking time
- Thorough preparation and organisation
- Activities building on prior learning
- Open-ended, thought provoking challenging questions
- Support for children with differing needs
- Support for parents/guardians

All staff involved with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage aim to develop good and warm relationships, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen.

"The best kind of teacher is one who helps you do what you couldn't do for yourself but doesn't do it for you"

(Child aged 8, quoted in "Teaching Children to think" by Robert Fisher, Nelson Thornes 1990)

Parents/Guardians as Partners

We recognise that parents/guardians are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in supporting the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents/guardians about their children and giving the children the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during 'squirrel' (visit) sessions;
- providing access to the Infant and whole school's prospectus and website;
- inviting all parents/guardians to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school in order to detail how we aim to work with their child;
- encouraging parents/guardians to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents/guardians twice a year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private. Parents/guardians receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: trips, stay and play sessions, school visits, school plays TEA events, charitable events;
- providing parents/guardians an opportunity to celebrate their child's learning and development by completing "wow" moments which inform planning and provision;
- written contact through home school diary as well as the acknowledgement that parents/guardians can ring/ e-mail the teachers at any time.
- sending home a weekly information sheet, detailing planned activities and how they might help their child at home.
- providing information for a monthly newsletter containing articles and photographs of the Infant School children.
- including the parents/guardians in the topic planning process at the start of each half term.
- providing a quiet and confidential area where parents/guardians are able to discuss any concerns.

Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning before planning challenging, but achievable, activities and experiences to extend their learning and development. Assessment of their achievements will ensure they make the appropriate progress. It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to guide and support children to help them understand the need for rules and how to make fair decisions. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children (see child protection including safeguarding policy).



Observation is crucial to planning an appropriately challenging and exciting curriculum. The recording of observations will be practicable, organised and well-managed. Observations are recorded in children's individual 'Learning Journeys' via Orbit used on our iPads. They also contain information provided by the practitioner, parents/guardians and other professionals. Next steps are identified and judgements can be made regarding the child's achievements.

Planning meetings are held frequently to enable all staff to contribute towards learning and development, based on their observations. Children also play an important part in planning their own learning through Assessment for Learning (AFL) and consultation, particularly when 'new' themes are being formulated so that personalised learning is paramount.

The EYFS learning environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely indoors and outdoors. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The environment is organised into continuous provision areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Our outdoors provision 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.

Learning and Development

Teachers and teaching assistants implement the EYFS curriculum in two reception classes of maximum class sizes of 28 children. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Practice Guidance details the development matters which are adhered to. In the Infant School, we have themes appropriate to our cohort of children and the community to which they belong. Continuous provision plans also form the basis of long term planning.

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning and development.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development.

The specific areas are

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the world and
- Expressive arts and design

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/ The prime areas begin to develop quickly in response to relationships and /  
/ experiences, and run through and support learning in all other areas... The specific /  
/ areas include essential skills and knowledge. They grow out of the prime areas and /  
/ provide important contexts for learning." (Development Matters in the Early Years /  
/ Foundation Stage)  
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All of these areas of learning are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other.



Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents and other settings, children’s development level is assessed. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. However, if a child’s progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child’s parents and/or guardians and agree how to support the child. This may also include a discussion with the SENCO in order to access Special Educational Needs support.

At QEGS Infant School:

“Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is used as an essential part children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. There is an on-going judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child’s emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.”
(Statutory Framework for EYFS 2012)

Guided children’s activities will be planned to reflect, in their practice, the different ways that children learn.

At QEGS Infant School we support children in using the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These are;

- **playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’;

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/ Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and pre-occupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development.”  
/ (Principles into Practice Card 4.1 from the EYFS DCSF. Crown 2007)  
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- **active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements;

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/ “Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.”  
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- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

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/ “When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better
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understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.”

(Taken from statutory framework for the EYFS 2012)

Equal Opportunities

All members of the school are treated as individuals. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity and the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse and multi-faith society.

Health and Safety

It is important to us that all children are and feel 'safe'. We help children become familiar with safety, boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical, emotional and psychological well-being of all children. (See our Safeguarding Policy)

“Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.”

(Practice Guidance for the EYFS)

At QEGS Infant School, there are clear procedures for assessing risk (see whole school risk assessment policy) which includes procedures for keeping children safe during outings and for any aspects of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment. In addition to this, in the safeguarding and child protection policies, there is detailed information and procedures to ensure the safety of the children.

Children's health is an integral part of their emotional, mental, social, environmental and spiritual well-being. We promote healthy snacks and offer foods from different cultures to develop their taste preferences. Activities relating to the food cycle are interwoven in planning e.g. planting seeds, gathering preparing and eating! We ensure that children can rest during the day and have a designated quiet areas indoors and places outdoors where children can relax alongside space for vigorous free movements.

In line with the EYFS statutory framework 2012, at QEGS Infant School we implement;

- A whole school policy making sure that there are systems in place to ensure that medicines and the systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medication are kept up to date. All Infant School staff hold first aid certificates and training is provided for staff where the administration of medicine requires medical or technical knowledge. Prescription medicines are administered to a child only where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child's parent and/or carer. At QEGS Infant School “a written record is kept each time a medicine is administered to a child and informs the child's parents and/or carers on the same day.” Only prescribed medicine is given by the designated adult in school. (Statutory framework for EYFS 2012)
- Fresh drinking water is to be available at all times
- Children's' dietary needs are to be recorded and acted upon when required



- A first aid box is to be accessible at all times and a record of accidents and injuries is kept.
- A health and safety policy and procedures which cover identifying, reporting and dealing with accidents, hazards and faulty equipment.
- A fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy
- A safeguarding policy stating how mobile phones and cameras are to be used and stored securely whilst children are in the setting. Cameras that are used in school must not be used for staff own personal use.

Baseline Assessments

Staff assess the children during their first few weeks at school to ensure that their learning is personalised and next steps are identified. Records from Nurseries and other Childcare Providers are taken in to consideration alongside parental comments, observations of the children, informal 'learning interviews' with the children, CEM Baseline assessment and staff discussions at EYFS team meetings. A personalised learning programme is then developed for each child based on the Development Matters guidance.

Transition (See separate policy) From Pre-school /Feeder settings

During the summer term prior to a child's entry into the Reception, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition

- New families joining QEGS are asked for a home visit to establish links and ask/answer any initial questions about the school and meet some members of our team.
- During the summer parents are encouraged to complete an "All about me" booklet with their child. It is used during the Michaelmas Term to support transition and to inform planning.
- The children are invited to attend visits in their reception class during June.
- Members of staff from QEGS Infant School aim to make visits to some feeder settings where possible. The number of visits will depend on the child's needs and how much information gathering is required in order to support the child's transition.

From Reception Class to Key Stage 1

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile includes on-going observation, all relevant records held by the setting, discussions with parents /guardians and any other adults whom the teacher, parent/guardian judges can offer a useful contribution.

Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). Parents/guardians and Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.



Continuous Professional Development

We are committed to all staff accessing Continuous Professional Development. Individual training will be chosen or identified based on individual's interests or remits, linked to appraisal or performance management and in response to Ofsted inspections and national/local initiatives. We have systems in place to cascade this information with others and ascertain the impact of the training on our provision.

Monitoring and review

The EYFS teachers and staff will follow the principles in the policy. This policy is monitored by the Head of Infant School, and will be reviewed in two years, or earlier if necessary.

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| Reviewed: | July 2016 |
| Approved by Board of Governors: | August 2016 |

To be reviewed in July 2017