



Walter Infant School and Nursery

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

'To be the best I can be'

Walter Infant School is an equitable, safe, secure and happy place to learn; our children grow as individuals in a stimulating and exciting environment which values respect, kindness, honesty, empathy and resilience.

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Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2024

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.

The EYFS sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The EYFS is about what children learn, as well as how they learn. Effective practice is a mix of different approaches. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other and through adult-guided learning.

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- Quality and consistency in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind.*
- A secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly.*
- Partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.*
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported*

Early Years foundation stage statutory framework – for group and school based providers 2023

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for group and school based providers is applied to all group and school based early years providers in England. This is the statutory guidance followed at Walter Infant school and Nursery for our Foundation Stage children (aged 3 – 5). Alongside this we use Development Matters to guide our planning and provision. Development Matters is a non statutory document developed by a range of professionals across early years. It is guidance to support those working in early childhood education when implementing the requirements of the statutory framework for the EYFS.

The Early Years Foundation Stage at Walter Infant School and Nursery consists of two-year groups – Foundation Stage One (Robin F1) and Foundation Stage Two (F2). F1 is our nursery class which consists of 3 and 4 year old children and has up to 52 places, offering both 15 hours and 30 hours per week. F1 is led by a qualified teacher and an Early Years Practitioner with additional support from a Learning

Support Assistant. F2 consists of three reception classes of 30 4 and 5 year old children. Each class is led by a qualified teacher and supported by a Learning Support Assistant or Early Years Practitioner. The Foundation Stage is led by the Foundation Stage Leader who is part of the Senior Leadership Team at Walter Infant School and Nursery.

1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure that:

- All children at Walter Infant School and Nursery have access to our ‘BIG Curriculum for Little People’, a broad and balanced curriculum that excites and motivates them to want to know more
- Children know, understand and demonstrate our five core values: Respect, Honesty, Empathy, Kindness and Resilience
- Children gain the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in the future and their next stage of education
- Teaching and learning is consistently high quality so that every child makes good progress
- Close partnerships between families and practitioners are developed to ensure the best possible start to education is provided for every child
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity

2. Legislation

This policy is based on the requirements set out in the Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage – published 8th December 2023, effective 4th January 2024.

3. The EYFS framework

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A unique child – every child is unique, constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Positive relationships – enable children to be strong, and independent
- Enabling environments – allow children to develop and learn with support from adults who respond to individual needs and interests and work in partnership with parents
- Learning and developing – understanding our children develop and learn at different rates and an awareness of the characteristics of effective teaching and learning to best support children’s learning and development.

3.1 A Unique child

At Walter Infant School and Nursery, 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.

All children and their families are valued at Walter Infant School and Nursery. We encourage all children to be the best they can be, treating every child as an individual and encouraging them to achieve their personal best. All children have equal access to the continuous provision and this is adapted to meet the needs of the individual child as well as following their interests. Identification of Special Educational Needs early on is important to ensure the needs of the children are met and the correct support can be put into place early on. Any concerns are discussed with parents or carers, as well as gaining support from outside agencies in line with our SEND policy.

We meet the needs of all our children by:

- being a fully inclusive school
- planning opportunities that develop 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 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
- monitoring pupil's progress and providing support and challenge when needed
- providing a safe environment that enables children to explore whilst managing risks with increasing independence

3.2 Positive Relationships

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. At Walter Infant School and Nursery all staff aim to develop good relationships with all children through positive interactions and taking time to get to know each individual child. These positive relationships reflect our core values which are modelled and promoted by all staff. The EYFS class teacher acts as a **'key person'** for the children in their class, supported by the Learning Support Assistant or EYP. All EYFS staff meet weekly, discussing the needs of the children, planning and assessment through observations. EYFS staff also meet with practitioners from other schools for training, to share good practice and discuss updates relevant to Early Years.

Parents as Partners

At Walter Infant School and Nursery we recognise and value the important role parents or carers have played so far, and their future role in educating their children. Children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between our practitioners and our families.

We do this by:

- talking to parents about their child before they join us
- asking parents to complete an 'All About Me' booklet with their child before starting school
- providing a visit to school for children and parents to meet their teacher and Learning Support Assistant
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before the child starts school, with an opportunity to meet the teacher
- fostering an 'open door policy' at the beginning and end of the school day to talk to their child's teacher informally
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns or changes that could impact the child
- providing information about the areas of the curriculum through parent meetings and on our school website
- sending out our Curriculum Intent at the beginning of each new half term
- inviting parents in to school for a variety of activities such as Christmas singing, Stay and Play sessions and Sports Day
- inviting parents to share their child's achievements or experiences with the class (including when taking the class bear home for Star of the Week)
- offering Parent Consultations every term to discuss child's progress, sharing literacy books, maths books. Learning Journeys (F1 only) and class floor books.
- end of year written report on child's attainment and the opportunity to discuss

Before starting at Walter Infant School and Nursery we also liaise with any previous childcare settings to ensure the smoothest transition into Foundation Stage possible.

3.3 Enabling Environments

At Walter Infant School and Nursery, we aim to create an exciting and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident and secure to explore, investigate and develop and learn new skills. Our learning environment is set up with a range of activities providing opportunities for children to learn and develop in all areas of learning within the EYFS as well as promoting independence through self-selecting and accessing resources. Children have the opportunity to learn inside and outside through child initiated and adult led activities. The environment is carefully organised to enable high-quality play and interactions.

Planning for the learning environment is informed by previous assessments of the children's developmental needs, the children's interests and making meaningful links to the topic with which the learning is themed around. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other, and through guided learning and direct teaching. Practitioners make time and space for children to invent their own play as well as adult led activities. They join in to sensitively support and extend children's learning.

3.4 Learning and Development

At Walter Infant School and Nursery we recognise that children are powerful learners and believe every child can make progress in their learning, with the right help. Children learn and develop in different ways and so a variety of different approaches are used in line with our *Teaching and Learning Policy 2023*.

When planning and guiding what the children learn, we also ensure that the different ways children learn are reflected upon and the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are embedded. They 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

There are seven areas of learning and development, three prime areas and four specific areas.

The Prime areas are:

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

The Specific areas are:

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

On entry to Foundation Stage Two, children will complete the statutory Reception Baseline assessment which is reported to the Department for Education. This assessment is used as a starting point to measure progress from the beginning of school (F2/Reception) until the end of primary school.

Practitioners will also carefully observe and assess children, using this information to inform planning, next steps and also identify any additional support a child might need.

Transition into Year 1

During the summer term final assessments are made and each child is assessed against the Early Learning Goals in each area of development. The assessments

show whether a child is at the expected level of development or whether they are working towards the expected level of development (emerging). This is shared with parents as well as with the Year 1 team. Transition meetings are held between F2 teachers and Year 1 teachers in the Summer term as well as opportunities for children to meet their new teacher and see their new classroom. During transition meetings, F2 teachers will share the assessments they have made against each area of development as well as information on the child such as friendship groups, interests and anything they feel might help make the transition a smooth and positive one.

4. Safeguarding

At Walter Infant School and Nursery, we understand the safeguarding and welfare requirements stated in the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and the necessary steps that must be taken to keep children safe and well. Our *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2023* – is followed by all members of staff and volunteers. Annual Safeguarding training is completed by all staff, as well as regular updates and alerts to any changes regarding safeguarding.

5. Further reading

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- The Teaching and Learning Policy
- The Mathematics Policy
- The English Policy
- The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies
- The SEND Policy
- The Anti-Bullying and Equality Policy