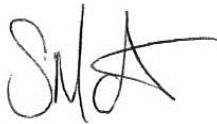


## Plymouth Nursery Schools Federation



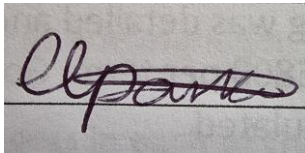
## Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Curriculum Policy

Head of School:



Dated 11/10/23

Chair of Governors



Dated 11/10/23

Review date- October 2023

To be Reviewed- October 2026

## **EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) AND CURRICULUM POLICY**

### **Aims**

This policy is intended to support and encourage staff in meeting the statutory requirements and in the delivery of high quality experiences for children's learning and development. It is written in light of the publication of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and in the context of our vision for the provision of high quality play and learning experiences for all children.

*“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfill their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five 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 together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.*

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage pg 5 DFE 2023)

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year.

Four guiding principles within the EYFS shape our practice at Plymouth Nursery Schools Federation:

- 1) Every child is a **unique child**
- 2) Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- 3) Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**
- 4) Children **develop and learn** in different ways and at different rates

### **A Unique Child**

#### **Child Development**

At Plymouth Nursery Schools Federation, 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 times to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

#### **Inclusive Practice**

We value the diversity of individuals within our school and believe that all children have an equal right to succeed. All children and their families are valued at our school, irrespective of the background or circumstances. 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 we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of 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.

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

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- 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 contributions of all children are valued
- Assigning a key person to each child who makes links with children's home experiences through parents/carers
- 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.

### **Keeping safe**

It is important to us that all children are safe and feel safe within our school community. We help children become familiar with safety, boundaries, rules and limits and help them to understand why these exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Our children will 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."*  
(Statutory Framework for the EYFS pg. 21 DFE 2023)

At Plymouth Nursery Schools Federation, we understand that we are legally required to comply with the *Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements* as stated in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2023. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children
- Secure the keyperson role and meet the age-appropriate ratios
- Provide healthy snacks and encourage healthy meals
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill or have an accident
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so
- Ensure all staff have access to regular CPD (Continuous Professional Development) and supervision
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- 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 the children.

### **Health and Well-being**

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 tastes and 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 area indoors and places outdoors where children can relax alongside space for vigorous free movements.

### **Positive Relationships**

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#### **Respecting Each Other**

At Plymouth Nursery Schools Federation, we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent through forming secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

#### **Parents as Partners**

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

- Talking to parents about their child before they start in our school
- The children having the opportunity to spend time with staff prior to starting as part of transition
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's development and progress and allowing free access to their children's Learning Journal
- Encouraging parents to talk to their child's key person about any concerns they may have
- Offering various activities throughout the year that involve parents and carers in the life of school for example, 'stay and play' sessions and community events
- Encouraging parents to contribute towards their child's Learning Journey
- Supporting parents and carers whose first language is one other than English

#### **Supporting Learning**

Effective teaching approaches will be secure where we:

- Actively and respectfully listen to what the children have to tell us whatever their current or preferred communication system
- Engage and stimulate our young learners
- Plan for their learning using their interests as our starting points
- Allow for regular review of progress towards learning outcomes
- Vary what we provide to match children's needs
- Maximize opportunities to explore in a whole group, small group, paired, individual and independently

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

Our routine is structured yet flexible. We have small group time and whole group time and opportunities for singing and story-telling in different groups. Children will use free play, continuous provision indoor and outdoor throughout their day and will also be supported through adult-led activities.

#### **Key Person**

At Plymouth Nursery Schools Federation each child has a key person. 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:

- Warm and consistent relationships with clear expectations
- 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

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- Activities building on prior learning
- Open-ended, thought provoking challenging questions
- Support for children with differing needs
- Support for parents and carers.

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)

### **Enabling Environments**

#### **Observation, Assessment and Planning and Supporting Every Child**

At Plymouth Nursery Schools Federation, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s learning and development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, 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.

Observation is key to planning an appropriately challenging and exciting curriculum. The recording of observations is practicable, organised and well-managed. Observations are recorded in children’s individual ‘Learning Journeys’. They also contain information provided by the practitioner, parents and other professionals where appropriate. Next steps are identified and judgements can be made regarding the child’s achievements.

Planning for provision is ongoing, and all staff have the opportunity to contribute their observations and ideas to ensure that teaching and learning activities are child-led. Children 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.

#### **Long Term Planning**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Development Matters Guidance is used in the planning processes. In our school we have themes appropriate to our cohort of children and the community to which they belong. These will include seasonal and festival-based inputs that support the themes that arise from the children’s own interests. Continuous provision plans also form the basis of long-term planning.

#### **Medium Term Planning**

Planning can run for a few weeks, month or half termly and is based on the needs and interests of the children for all areas of learning and development. Planning details the proposed learning outcomes to be focused upon and gives an overview of possible enhancements to continuous provision, the adult focused activities, resources, display and visits/visitors to school. Often themes are used as a vehicle for delivery.

#### **Short Term Planning**








This is written weekly and details adult-focused and child-initiated learning experiences on a daily basis. It outlines effective learning for children and will detail prompts for staff linked to observation as well as key language/questions and resources.

Evaluations and next steps determine our planning for subsequent weeks. Planning for, and with, other agencies is also incorporated where possible and appropriate. Where appropriate, reference will be made on short term planning for children with Special Educational Needs or disability linked to their Individual Education Plan (IEP) or for Looked After Children (LAC) linked to their Personal Education Plan (PEP) where appropriate. For children who have a

first language other than English links to bi-lingual support or visual strategies will also be made using specific strategies.

**Our Curriculum Goals**

Our curriculum goals are things that we want all children to be able to know or do by the time they leave our schools. They have been designed through professional discussion, observation of children’s play and learning, and consultation with parents. We understand that each child is unique and will learn and develop in different ways and at different rates and our play-based curriculum is designed to help all children thrive and to enjoy their learning during their time with us. Our 10 curriculum goals are:

	<b>Communication</b> I will be confident at communicating my wants, needs and ideas to those around me.
	<b>Self-Regulation and Well-being</b> I will be able to talk about my emotions and respond appropriately to the emotions of others.
	<b>Social</b> I will be able to make friends and join other children in play.
	<b>Physical</b> I will confidently move in a range of different ways e.g., to complete a simple obstacle course.
	<b>Maths</b> I will be able to join in number songs and confidently <u>count up</u> to 10 objects or actions in play and in ‘real life’ scenarios.
	<b>Literacy and Early Writing</b> I will be able to recognise and write my own name.
	<b>Storytelling and Early Reading</b> I will be able to retell some of my favourite stories.
	<b>The World</b> I will know how to look after the world around me and will be able to plant and grow a seed or bulb.
	<b>Expression</b> I will be able to use different media to express my ideas <u>e.g.</u> creating a picture, a dance, a story, a 3D model or a piece of music.
	<b>Attitudes to Learning</b> I will persevere when I face a challenge, trying different ideas to solve a problem.

Each curriculum goal has a corresponding 'progression pathway' that outlines key developmental milestones and what we will do to support learning in each area. More information about our individual progression pathways can be viewed on our websites at:

[Ham Drive Nursery School and Day Care - Our Curriculum Goals](#)

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### **Seven Key Features of Effective Practice**

At Plymouth Nursery Schools Federation we recognise the importance of the ‘Seven key features of effective practice’ outlined in the Development Matters guidance 2021. These are:

- 1) The best for every child
- 2) High-quality care
- 3) The curriculum: what we want children to learn
- 4) Pedagogy: helping children to learn
- 5) Assessment: checking what children have learnt
- 6) Self-regulation and executive function
- 7) Partnership with parents

Full details of each of these key features can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/development-matters--2>

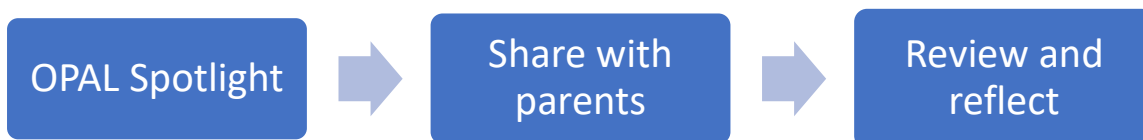
### **Assessment**

Our assessments are based primarily on observations of children in their free-play. Key observations of children’s learning and any examples of their ‘work’ are recorded in individual ‘learning journeys’. These observations inform whole team planning and help individual practitioners to monitor children’s progress against the age related expectations outlined in the EYFS Development Matters guidance.

At the Plymouth Nursery Schools Federation we use the OPAL model of observation and assessment. OPAL stands for ‘Observation of Play and Learning’ and was developed by the Barnet Early Years Alliance (BEYA). OPAL works on the basis of having very simple, six-monthly child developmental milestones, which we use to monitor children’s development. The observations and assessments that we make are called ‘spotlights’. Each child will have two ‘spotlight’ points in the year.

The SLT use these ‘spotlight’ assessments to analyse children’s attainment and progress and will discuss this with children’s Key Persons, either individually or as part of a designated staff meeting.

OPAL follows a simple, three step cycle:



During a child’s final term at the setting their final ‘spotlight’ will form the basis of a summary assessment of their achievements, learning and progress in nursery. This will be shared with parents and a copy of the assessment will be sent to the child’s new school (where permission has been given by the child’s parents to share this).

### **The Learning Environment**

A high quality environment is key to our success. It is the shared responsibility of staff and children to care for the environment, both indoors and outdoors. Staff take pride in developing areas of continuous provision and displays which enhance and broaden opportunities.

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

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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 our children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.

We are committed to providing high quality continuous provision. Areas are established and maintained, audited and resources replenished regularly. Resources are labelled and organised to aid self-selection and our provision reflects the cultures and community that we serve. Risk assessments, where appropriate, are in place and areas are print rich.

**The Wider Context**

We recognise that children’s social, emotional and educational needs are central to any transition from home to setting, within one setting or from setting to setting. We communicate with other settings and with parents/carers to ensure that children’s needs are met. Information is shared in order that there is continuity in their learning and development.

Visits are undertaken by all key people to meet with the children prior to them starting in school. These visits provide the opportunity to discuss individual needs and to meet the children within the home environment. We have good links with local schools and early years settings and during the Summer term in particular we have the opportunity for reciprocal visits for both staff and children.

Staff may work with other multi-agency professionals. Our aim is for all key partners to communicate well and put the children and their families’ needs first. Staff know the local area well and use this knowledge to plan the children’s learning.

**Learning and Development – Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning**

When planning any activity or experience we consider the characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

**Playing and exploring**

**Active Learning**

**Creating and thinking critically**

At Plymouth Nursery Schools Federation, we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. They develop their skills through a variety of processes. These include:

- Investigation
- Experimentation
- Listening
- Observing
- Talking and discussing
- Asking questions
- Practical exploration and role play
- Retrieving information
- Imagining
- Repetition
- Problem solving
- Making choices and decision-making

We use the ‘Characteristics of Effective Learning’ to shape our practices; in observing, interacting and planning provision. We provide opportunities for children to become engaged, motivated and to think critically.

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas, and learn how to control their behaviour and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as

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they investigate and solve problems. They can express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. This happens best when children have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides our children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning. Children's learning is extended through accessing resources freely and being allowed to move them around our setting.

Children are given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning and development, not just through the arts. Staff support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open-ended questions.

### **Areas of Learning and Development**

The EYFS is consists of seven areas of learning and development. This is divided into 3 'prime areas' and 4 'specific areas'.

#### **The three prime areas are:**

- 1) Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- 2) Communication and Language
- 3) Physical Development

#### **The four specific areas are:**

- 1) Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy
- 2) Literacy
- 3) Understanding of the World
- 4) Expressive Arts and Design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult focused and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS (end of the reception year).

Children are taught how to use all resources safely through focused activities. The adult's role within continuous provision areas encourages our children to interact with resources and the environment with care and respect; and with regard for health and safety. We offer a range of resources both natural and man-made. We have a range of multi-sensory, multi-cultural and non-stereotypical resources which are reviewed and replenished regularly.

### **Leadership and Accountability**

The Head of School and CEO ensure that local and national initiatives and directives are appropriately responded to and provided for in liaison with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), reporting regularly to the Governing Body. Self-evaluation is important to us and we use multiple reflective approaches to inform our school improvement plan (SIP) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD). We have a termly cycle for self-evaluation in place which ensures that we are constantly monitoring the quality of what we do.

We review our practice and provision frequently which then informs our school improvement plan.

Internal mechanisms regarding monitoring quality include:

- observations of teaching
- peer observations
- data analysis
- performance management and appraisal
- consultations
- action planning and target setting
- staff discussions

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- policy review

Monitoring takes place through the SLT, Governing Body Meetings, appraisals, performance management meetings and through Ofsted inspections. We evaluate as a staff and SLT with parents/carers, our multi-agency partners and the community.

**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 and to priorities identified in the SDP. We have systems in place to cascade this information with others and ascertain the impact of the training on our provision.

N.B. This EYFS Policy reflects the ethos, values and practices of all our school policies.  
All relevant legislation and guidance has been adhered to in developing this policy.

**Agreed and minuted at a meeting of the governing body on 11/10/23**