

# Early Years Policy

‘Together we unlock potential and learn for life’



# Moor First School

This policy was approved by the Governing Body of Moor First School at their meeting on:

**Chair of Governors**

**Print:** ..... **Sign:** .....

**Co-Head Teachers:**

**Print:** ..... **Sign:** .....

**Print:** ..... **Sign:** .....

**Practitioners:**

**Print:** ..... **Sign:** .....

**Print:** ..... **Sign:** .....

**Review frequency  
every 3 years**

**Next review: June 2025**

## Introduction

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Moor First School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that it is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

## Aims & Objectives

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At Moor First School we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a 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 enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment, which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child; including those who have additional needs.

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.
- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers.

**The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on four guiding principles that should shape practice in early years settings which are:**

- A Unique Child.
- Positive Relationships.
- Enabling Environments.
- Learning and Development.

### **A Unique Child**

At Moor First School, 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. 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 children to develop a positive attitude to learning. All children at Moor First School are treated fairly, regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. All families are valued within our school.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by considering our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning. We set realistic and challenging expectations, specific to the needs of our children. We do this through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, vocabulary, experiences and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs.
- Providing good models of language and a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively.
- Offering 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 to meet the needs of both boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children from different ethnic groups, and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.
- Monitoring children's progress and acting to provide support as necessary.
- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies (when appropriate) to ensure all children's needs are met.

### **Positive Relationships**

At Moor First School we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Talking to parents/carers before their child starts school and at the induction meeting.
- Providing information about commencing school at Moor First.
- Outlining the school's expectations in the Home-School agreement.
- Inviting parents/carers and children the opportunity to spend time in school for induction visits in the summer.
- Providing an induction meeting for parents/carers to meet with the Co-Headteachers and staff to discuss school routines, expectations and to answer any questions parents/carers may have.

- Holding a parent consultation early in the academic year, to establish how a child is settling into the school environment.
- Operating an open-door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if Foundation staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- Written contact through school newsletters.
- Parents can upload their observations onto Tapestry.
- Sending home newsletters/termly overviews/learning enrichment activities.
- Inviting parents to attend informal meetings about areas of the curriculum, such as phonics, reading, writing and mathematics.
- Sharing regularly the children's Tapestry e-learning journey with parents/carers and valuing the on-going contributions to this from parents/carers.
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the academic year.
- Asking parents to sign a generic permission form for visits, food tasting and photographs etc.
- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as assemblies, looking at work, workshops, Christmas productions and sports day etc.
- Offering opportunities for parents and carers to visit the school on a volunteer basis to assist with the children's learning e.g. listening to readers.
- All staff in the Foundation Stage aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

### **Enabling Environments**

At Moor First School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning, with planned continuous provision. Play-based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff. We plan a learning environment; both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

### **Learning and Developing**

Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early years' settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas. They require a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities, in order for most children to reach the levels required at the end of EYFS. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

### **The Three Prime Areas:**

Communication and Language  
Physical Development  
Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

### **Specific Areas:**

Literacy  
Mathematics  
Understanding the world  
Expressive arts and design

Children's development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, 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 of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child. Children also participate in a daily phonics session, following the Twinkl scheme.

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- Playing and exploring - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves 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 they investigate and solve problems.

- Active learning - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

- Creating and thinking critically - we encourage and support children to have and to develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

### **Planning**

The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. The planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are from the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The planning is based upon themes and the medium-term planning identifies the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals and also for those working beyond.

### **Observations**

Foundation Stage staff use observations as the basis for planning. Staff are skilled at observing children, to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations then lead the direction of the planning. Relevant and significant observations are recorded in the children's Learning Journeys i.e. pupils' books and Tapestry.

### **Assessment**

During the first term, the staff assess the ability of each child, using a baseline test. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children.

Our school tracking enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage and to summarise children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence and through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher, the nursery nurse and other adults, as appropriate. Using Tapestry staff keep records, assessment information and examples of children's work along with work in children's individual books. These progress books contain a wide range of evidence that we share with parents/carers at consultation meetings.

Assessment sheets are updated at the end of each term. This provides a summary sheet for each child, which feeds into the whole-school assessment and tracking process. We record each child's level of development to be 'emerging' or 'expected' according to age groups i.e. within either age 3 or 4, or reception.

The child's next teacher, uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information too at parental consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report. Parents/carers receive an annual written report that offers comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress.

## **Safeguarding & Welfare**

At Moor First School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021.

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence.
- Promote good health.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

### **Keeping Safe**

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on 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. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe, by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards.

Please read our 'Mobile Phone and Camera Toolkit for Early Years Settings' for information and guidance regarding protecting children from harm by ensuring the appropriate management and use of mobile phones and cameras.

### **Good Health**

All children are provided with a healthy snack each day, as well as being given the option of milk. They have access to water at all times.