



## **MARSHBROOK FIRST SCHOOL AND MARSHMALLOWS**

### **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

### **June 2016**

#### **Aim**

At Marshbrook First School and Marshmallows Nursery we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Marshbrook we have a governor led nursery called Marshmallows for 2 year olds up to Reception age and a single entry Reception class. The majority of children come from our governor run nursery, but we also receive children from other local settings.

As outlined in the EYFS 'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and five have a major impact on their future life chances.'

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

- Every child is a **unique child** who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**

#### **Principles into Practice**

As part of our practice we:

- provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning, using play as the vehicle for learning
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support
- Work in partnership with parents and the within the wider context
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated, supported by the adult
- Have a key person approach to develop close relationships with individual children
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out

## **Foundation Stage Curriculum**

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable all children to make good progress and most to achieve and exceed the early learning goals by the end of Reception.

All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three areas are particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas are the **prime** areas:

**Communication and Language**

**Physical Development**

**Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

Children are also supported through the four **specific** areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

These **specific** areas are:

**Literacy**

**Mathematics**

**Understanding the World**

**Expressive Arts and Design**

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences where children explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

We write long and medium term plans using the EYFS based on a series of topics each of which offers experiences in all seven areas. These plans, alongside observations of the children's interests and next steps inform our short-term weekly planning.

Children have whole class and small group teaching across the EYFS, again covering all seven areas of learning. This increases in the length of time and expectations as they progress through Nursery and Reception. It includes activities such as shared and guided reading and writing and circle time. The children also have a daily phonics session and are grouped depending on the phase they are working on.

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS. 'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities.'

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by adults. During child's play early years practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further.

In planning and guiding children's activities we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect this in our practice.

## **Observation and Assessment**

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's learning and development in all seven areas. This informs our future plans. We also observe and note the **characteristics of effective learning** for each child and make comments in relation to **playing and observing, active learning and creating and thinking critically**. We record our observations in a variety of ways. Significant observations of children's achievements and learning are collated in their own personal learning journey which is shared with the child and parent/ carer. In Reception in the Autumn

and Spring term parents are invited to attend a parents evening to discuss progress and targets. Reports are written at the end of the academic year and provide parents with information on their child's development against each area of learning and the characteristics of their learning. Parents/carers are given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the Early Years Practitioners. In Nursery reports are written at the end of an academic year for children starting Reception and parents meetings are held. Where appropriate 2 year old checks are completed by Marshmallows staff and shared with parents and Health Visitors.

### **Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements**

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure learning environment. We actively promote good health and manage behaviour (see school policy/ Marshmallow's Behaviour policy). As a school we have an effective system in place to ensure that all practitioners are suitably qualified, trained and that are part of a continual programme of professional development. In line with the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements the school and Nursery have a designated child protection officer who provides support and guidance to all staff and on any specific safeguarding issues as required (see school policy).

### **Inclusion**

We value all our children as individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and support them in working towards the Early Learning Goal. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support they need and in doing so work closely with parents and outside agencies.

### **Parents as Partners and the Wider Context**

We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We hold regular half termly open mornings where parents/ carers access the learning environment and activities with their child and find out what and how we have been learning. They also have the opportunity to share their child's learning journey with them. Parents/ carers are encouraged to contribute towards their child's learning journey by completing a 'Wow Moment' for any achievements at home. In Reception home/school reading diaries ensure regular communication. Marshmallows use a liaison sheet for all 2 year olds summarizing their day and have 'link' books for any children attending other settings such as a childminder or other day Nursery.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings/inviting members of the community into our setting.

### **Transition**

Transitions are carefully planned for and given time to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge to child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child. When starting Marshmallows Nursery or Reception class all children are invited to attend induction sessions (play and stay/story sessions) to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. They receive a booklet containing photos and information on our school day. This takes place in the term prior to starting Marshmallows or Reception. Parents/carers are also asked to provide information about their child's learning and developments, likes and dislikes etc.

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Reception and Marshmallows work closely together through the year and have regular activities together such as PE and music. The Reception teacher also regularly visits Nursery to read a story and get to know the children. At the end of Foundation Stage the Year 1 teacher meets with Early Years Staff and discusses each child's development against the Early Learning Goals. Year 1 staff also visit Reception to read a story on a number of occasions in the Summer Term. This supports a smooth transition into Year 1.