

John T. Rice Infant and Nursery School

Foundation Stage Policy



FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Introduction

This policy has been written in response to the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) that applies from September 2021](#). It is a description of practice and document of intent throughout the Foundation Stage.

INTENT

Our Curriculum Rationale

At JTR we follow our school's motto of 'Aim high and shine.' In our Early Years Foundation Stage our ambitious and child centred curriculum provides all children with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to be curious, resilient, independent learners. We believe that providing an education that does all of this gives children the best chance to become well-rounded, happy individuals, ready to succeed in an ever-changing world.

We recognise the importance of giving our children the best possible start to their education. This is achieved by planning and implementing teaching and learning opportunities that support them in reaching their full potential and prepares them for the next step in their educational journey. The curriculum is based on the children's interests, topics, continuous provision activities, and focused tasks. Memorable learning experiences allow our children to retain knowledge, apply skills and develop links in their understanding. This is supported by well trained, caring and compassionate staff who see every child as unique. By building positive relationships with the children staff support their individual needs so that they can reach their full potential. Through our broad and balanced curriculum, we also aim to develop children's cultural capital so that they are able to engage with society and understand the importance of being a good UK and global citizen.

In F1 and F2 we prioritise creating a 'language rich' environment through the use of songs, nursery rhymes, stories and providing time for adult/child and peer to peer interaction. We understand high quality adult/child interactions are essential, as is encouraging home learning and the quality of parent/child interactions through activities and reading at home. Highly trained staff in language development ensure that every interaction is positive and progressive, allowing children to flourish and gather words at pace in order to become confident communicators ready for their next stage of learning. We have strong relationships with our parents and encourage families to be a part of school life and their child's learning. Parents receive topic webs to inform them on what their child is learning each half term and to explain how they can support learning at home. We also offer a range of parent workshops to support learning in a variety of subjects. To encourage reading for pleasure parents are invited into school once a week to choose a library book and share it with their child, they can then take this book to read at home. Parents are also encouraged to share their child's achievements at home via our online learning journey.

As a school we recognise the importance of supporting children with their mental health and well-being, this also includes supporting them in being able to self-regulate. We do this through weekly well-being Wednesdays, by reading a range of texts that focus on PSED, a class feelings boards linked to the zones of regulation where children can show how they are feeling and circle times which support PSED. Also, by focusing on communication and language throughout the EYFS we provide children with the language and vocabulary they need to be able to express themselves and talk about their feelings. Our aim is to ensure that by the end of FS children have the tools to self-regulate and manage their feelings in an age-appropriate way.

Aims of the setting

- To provide a caring and supportive environment which recognises each child as a valued member of the group promoting strong self-image and self-esteem.
- To provide children with access to a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them a wide range of knowledge and skills needed to make good progress throughout their school life and beyond.
- To develop a love of learning by delivering a well-planned Early Years curriculum with fun and engaging play activities supported by a variety of high quality resources.
- To encourage children to be independent learners by providing them with a stimulating and challenging learning environment with opportunities to explore and solve problems.
- To encourage children to behave sensibly and considerately, and develop responsibility for oneself and the world around them.
- To respect and broaden children's cultural capital by providing them with a wide range of learning opportunities and experiences linked to their own and others cultures and beliefs.
- To show respect for and understanding of the role of the parents in their child's education by keeping parents/carers fully informed about the curriculum and other aspects of the Foundation Stage.
- To monitor each child's progress in all aspects of learning and identify early difficulties or concerns.
- To support children's mental health and well-being.

Key Principles of Early Years Education

- Staff within the setting to have a secure knowledge of the EYFS curriculum and be able to implement the curriculum requirements effectively. They should have an understanding of how children develop during the early years physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially and provide an environment that enables them to do this.

- Staff to build positive relationships with children, ensuring that all children feel included, secure and valued and that no child should be excluded because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability.
- Staff to acknowledge the stage of each child's development and plan the curriculum accordingly.
- Staff to encourage parents, wherever possible, to share in their child's learning and become involved in all aspects of school life.
- The Early Years curriculum to be carefully planned, building on the child's existing knowledge and skills development. It should be based on the Characteristics of Effective Learning (Playing and exploring - engagement; Active learning - motivation; Creating and thinking critically - thinking)
- The learning environment to be stimulating and well organised, both inside and outside, providing valuable experiences for the children to explore, experiment, plan and make decisions for themselves.

IMPLEMENTATION

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is organised into 3 Prime Areas:

1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development.
2. Physical development.
3. Communication and Language

and 4 Specific Areas:

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

- Within each of the 7 Areas of Learning and Development, the Early Learning Goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage.
The 'Development Matters in the EYFS' document is used to support staff in creating a broad and balanced curriculum which focuses on child development.
- The Prime Areas of Learning and Development are continuous throughout the Foundation Stage and the Specific Areas are planned for specifically within the school's Curriculum.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS framework sets out the Characteristics of Effective Learning as:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and critical thinking

We utilise the principles of sustained shared thinking in order to enhance the characteristics of effective learning.

Planning

- At John T. Rice our themed planning requires teachers to build on what children already know. Every Half Term contains a “Wow experience” either in school or a visit out of school. In the Foundation Stage this also includes plans for the continuous provision both indoors and outdoors.
- Our long term planning is based on a two year planning cycle with a different theme each half term and a planned in ‘wow’.
- The Foundation Stage teams meet half termly to complete the medium term planning. To ensure that the topics provide adequate coverage and progression through Foundation 1 and 2.
- Class teachers have the responsibility for creating their own weekly planning based on the needs and interests of the children using assessment for learning.
- Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child’s emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through high quality, positive interactions.
- Staff recognise differing abilities and attitudes of the children within the Foundation Stage setting and adaptations for these is highlighted in the short term planning.

Organisation of the learning environment

We aim to ensure that our indoor and outdoor learning environments are of high quality and enable the children to develop the confidence to learn and explore in a safe, secure and challenging way. We ensure that our learning environments are communication friendly spaces through the provision we provide supported by the engagement and interactions of adults with the children. The indoor and outdoor environments are well planned and resourced to include the 7 Areas of Learning and Development. Some areas are enhanced and their focus changes according to the themes and the children’s interests and developmental needs.

Partnership with parents/carers

At John T Rice we value the role of parents/carers as a child's primary educator and we endeavour to engage parents in their child's education as much as we can. We aim to form close link with parents/carers throughout the Foundation Stage as follows:-

- A meeting for parents/carers of new children prior to entry to Foundation Stage (F1), when 'Welcome' booklets are given out and there is an opportunity to meet staff and look around the Foundation setting.
- Two accompanied visits are made to introduce the child/parent (or carer) to the Foundation (F1) routine.
- 'Stay and play' sessions for parents and children starting F1 and F2.
- The term before the children move to full time (F2), the children visit their new class and stay for their first lunchtime.
- Meet the teacher session at the beginning of F2 to provide parents with an overview of the curriculum, expectations for the end of the year, how phonics is taught and how they can support their child's learning at home. It also provides parents with an opportunity to discuss any concerns or ask questions to their child's class teacher.
- Termly Curriculum mornings and weekly 'Open door' reading sessions for parents and children (F1 & F2)
- Parents' meetings to discuss the child's progress and future targets are held at regular intervals during the Foundation Stage.
- Tapestry is used to share children's memorable moments at school with parents and for parents to share their child's achievements at home with the FS staff.
- An 'open door' policy which allows parents to engage with staff as and when they feel they need to.

IMPACT

Assessment, Recording and Reporting to parents/carers

Ongoing formative assessment is at the centre of effective early years practise. All practitioners within the EYFS observe children as they engage in their learning. These observations are recorded through Tapestry to build an online profile of each child.

Assessment at the Foundation Stage also includes the following:-

- STA Reception Baseline Assessment is carried out within the first 6 weeks of the child's entry to F2
- Throughout FS online tracking (Scholar Pack) is used which is based on the EYFS Development Matters (2021) and is reported on at the end of each term.
- Termly pupil progress meetings with team leaders allow staff to record any concerns they may have about a child's learning and development and how they are addressing these concerns.
- EYFS Profile is completed at the end of the year and shared with parents. Pupils are assessed against the 17 ELG's, indicating whether they are 'meeting expected levels of development' or 'not yet reaching expected levels of development' (emerging). The profile is moderated internally and externally with our EYFS collaboration team to ensure consistent and accurate assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.
- Online profile (Tapestry) for each individual child including photographs and observations
- Parent /Teacher interviews including discussion of children's targets (at the end of F1 and Autumn / Spring term during F2)
- End of F1 report to parents
- End of Foundation Stage written report to parents/carers which includes the characteristics of effective learning.

Additional Information

Health and Safety

An annual inspection of the school is carried out by the Governing Body, the school Health and Safety Representative and the Head Teacher in accordance with the school Health and Safety Policy.

Transition to KS1

- Visits are made by the full time children at the end of the Foundation Stage to their new class.
- Story swap sessions where children go to their new class for a story once a week during the Summer term.
- Transition meetings with class teachers to discuss each individual child.
- All records are passed to the Key Stage 1 teacher.

Admission and Induction Procedures

A meeting is arranged for parents/carers of F1 children to be admitted during the term after their third birthday (subject to places being available).

Two accompanied visits of one hour are made with the children and they are admitted the following day.

The summer term prior to the year they become five (F2), the children visit their new class and stay for their first lunchtime. They are then admitted as full-time children in September.

Links with other agencies

When it becomes necessary to contact other agencies in Health or Education regarding individual children, this will be outlined in the child's Pupil Support Plan.

Links with the community are made through educational visits (e.g. visits to local allotment, library etc.) and visitors to school (e.g. police officer, firefighters)

Links with the Children's Centre are made through staff attending 'Enjoy and Achieve' meetings

Staff support and encourage students, and liaise with college staff.

Complaints Procedure

Initially parents/carers should contact the Foundation Teachers regarding any complaints or concerns. Depending upon the nature of the concern an appointment can always be made at the end of the day to ensure confidentiality.

In certain cases, parents/carers may prefer to speak directly to the Head Teacher (see Complaints Procedure).

Assuring Quality

Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning takes place through classroom observations some of which are linked to staff appraisal.

Priorities are closely linked to the School Development Plan.

During Foundation Stage planning meetings, staff have the opportunity to evaluate the previous learning, considering areas such as:-

- Effectiveness of teaching methods
- Management of areas within the setting
- Children's attainment

Equal Opportunities

At John T. Rice Infant School we are aware of the need for equality of access for all children. Our staff believe strongly in creating equal opportunities for all children and work to this aim. We introduce and build upon the children's awareness of equal opportunities including the development of respect and understanding of multi-cultural, gender and S.E.N. issues.

John. T. Rice Infants is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity in line with the Equality Act 2010. We aim to reduce disadvantages, discrimination and inequalities of opportunity, and promote diversity in terms of our pupils, our workforce and the community in which we work.

We will assist our pupils in achieving to their very best potential. Where pupils experience barriers to their success, we will work with them to address these in a sensitive and sympathetic way. We will teach our pupils the importance of equality and what forms discrimination can take and the impact discrimination can have.

We will not discriminate on any of the grounds listed below (known as the Protected Characteristics) save where such discrimination is permitted by law. The Protected Characteristics that apply to schools are:

- Age (in relation to staff only);
- Disability;
- Gender re-assignment;
- Marriage and civil partnership (in relation to staff only);
- Pregnancy and Maternity;
- Race;
- Religion Faith or Belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual orientation.

This policy was agreed by staff and the Governing Body. This policy was reviewed in Autumn 2024 will be reviewed again in Autumn 2026.