The Mill Nursery

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Aim

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 learners. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and carers to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

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 age 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 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/ carers. Children are challenged and engage in playful activities across both prime and specific areas of learning. 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 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,
- Have a key person approach to develop close relationships with individual children
- Provide a secure and safe free flow learning environment

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 the children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals.

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

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.

These three areas are the prime areas:

Communication and Language

Physical Development

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

It is imperative that these prime areas are at the forefront of early development to enable the specific areas to develop at a later stage

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

The specific areas are:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design

Acknowledging how children learn is hugely important thus **ensuring the characteristics of successful learning are incorporated in daily practises.** Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which children play, explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

Practitioners working with the youngest children in Nursery will focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively, and become ready for school. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through the Early Years at our nursery and grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Children have whole group and age related small group times which increase as they progress through the EYFS with times for regular phonics session using ‘Letters and Sounds’, teaching aspects of Mathematics and Literacy, including shared reading and writing.

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 the adults. During children’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 these in our practice.

We create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and out.

Observation and Assessment

When the child joins nursery a baseline assessment is completed by parents to highlight where their children are attaining in the prime areas of 'Developmental Matters' on coloured paper. This information is shared with the keyworker. The keyworker will then complete a baseline assessment against 'Development Matters' (usually after the first six weeks or a regular period of attendance).

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. One long observation with accompanying photographs is written every half term on each child. The long observation should provide enough evidence to highlight most areas of development against the 'Development Matters' assessment document each term. Practitioner 'best fit' judgements can be made against any other areas that are not covered in the long observations that term. Observations of children's achievements are collated in the child's personal learning journey, which are shared with parents at the end of each term. These on-going observations are used to inform the collation of summative assessment within the developmental bands. The child's progress is reviewed termly and is discussed with parents. As part of our termly assessment every key worker will complete an assessment grid that illustrates the individual child's progress in all areas of learning. These progress grids will be centrally stored and the information for each cohort of children will be evaluated.

We supply parents and carers with a written summary of every child's development when they are between 24 and 36 months old (two year old check). This progress check allows practitioners to identify which children need additional support. Lead practitioners use the ECAT child monitoring tool to assess the developmental level of children's speech, language and communication.

In the Summer term a report is written for those transferring to school and this is shared with the parents also. This information is sent to the child's school. Parents retain their child's learning journey and share it with their child's school.

Planning takes place every week with the lead practitioner. Children's interests that have been noted throughout the week are fed into the basic provision for the following week and are incorporated in the small group activities where possible. Interests from home are added to the basic provision and are incorporated in the weekly small group times too. Forest school and dance sessions include the weekly learning agendas that are threaded through the basic planning and small group times for all children.

As part of our shared voices programme two A4 photos of a child will be sent home each year with a view to sharing the learning with parents who will then comment on the child's responses to the photograph and return it to nursery and added to the child's learning journey.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at our nursery and school, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and

exceed the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies. See our separate policies on Equality of Opportunity and Learning Support**.**

Parents as Partners and the wider context

We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways – see our notice board/shared voices. We have a parent partnership group that meets termly with senior members of staff sharing ideas within our nursery practice.

A school readiness programme is set up inviting preschool parents to share what their child will be experiencing within the EYFS, Letters and Sounds and preparing their child for school life.

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 possible.

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. We have a governor who is linked to the nursery and FS2 class thus developing a vital link.

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and childminders. Children attend introductory sessions to Nursery/school to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. Children in Nursery enter at different times in the year.

Policy endorsement

Signed by

Name

Position

Date