

Thorn Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



This document outlines the philosophy, aims and principles of early years teaching and learning in Reception at Thorn Primary School. The document underpins practice in all areas of provision.

“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. 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” document (Department for Children Schools and Families, 2024).

All children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. It is the privilege of the practitioners working in reception to take on the task of building upon that prior learning and experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that parents/carers, support staff and the reception teachers work effectively together to support children’s learning and development.

Intent

Every child has the right to grow up safe and healthy enabling them to make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being. At Thorn the overarching aim of EYFS is to help young children achieve the five “Every Child Matters” outcomes through a principled approach.

EYFS Principles

Effective practice in the EYFS is built on the following four guided themes, which are broken down into four commitments describing how the commitments can be put into practice.

- A unique child
- Positive relationships
- Enabling environments
- Learning and development

Implementation

Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment, which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs.

Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond.

Provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development.

Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress. Enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self-confidence. Work in

partnership with parents/guardians and value their contributions ensuring that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability.

Provide opportunities whereby children experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.

Provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs, which are inclusive rather than parallel.

Staffing and Organisation.

There is one unit with forty-five places and within the unit there are learning spaces that are designed to support all aspects of learning and development. All staff work as a team and meet both informally and formally at least once a week in order to plan effective provision, prepare resources and review assessments for the EYFS Unit.

Supervision for EYFS Staff

Supervision is a legal requirement for EYFS staff – in the revised EYFS Statutory Framework (2021) Supervision of staff becomes a **‘must’** rather than the **‘should’** it was in the previous EYFS (2012). This was following a Serious Case Review linked to Little Ted’s Nursery in 2010. It further states that supervision should provide opportunities for staff to:

- **discuss any issues** – particularly concerning children’s development or well-being;
- **identify solutions** to address issues as they arise; and
- **receive coaching to improve** their personal effectiveness At Thorn Primary School, we provide structured supervision to all staff every half term. In addition, all members of staff can request a meeting at any time to discuss any issue linked to safeguarding. This is in addition to their responsibilities under the school’s safeguarding policies.

Induction:

We aim to make the entry into school as smooth as possible, enabling the children to feel secure and happy in their new environment. The majority of our children have accessed Early Years provision in Bacup Nursery and other local settings. In the summer term staff visit the nurseries to observe the children at play and introduce themselves. We liaise with nursery staff to discuss prospective pupils and enhance our background knowledge, highlighting any children with specific needs. This information then feeds into the individual baseline assessments.

Parents/carers are invited to a meeting to welcome them to Thorn Primary School and meet staff, visit the EYFS unit and tour the school. Through this meeting the school’s expectations and routines are communicated. The induction process and reception curriculum are also introduced. The school brochure and necessary documentation are given to parents/carers. The children are invited to spend two afternoons in school during the summer term to familiarise them with the environment and meet all the staff.

Children begin attending the EYFS classroom full-time from September. During the first few weeks, they undertake the statutory baseline assessments. The children become familiar with the classroom rules and routines, helping them feel secure and confident in their new environment. At the same time, practitioners take the opportunity to get to know each child individually and establish positive,

trusting relationships.

Learning and Development

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life. The early learning goals and the educational programmes are set out in the "Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage" document (Department for Children Schools and Families, 2024).

The seven areas of learning and development are split into prime areas and specific area:

Prime Areas

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

ELG-Self-Regulation

ELG-Managing Self

ELG-Building Relationships

Communication and Language

ELG-Listening, Attention and Understanding

ELG-Speaking

Physical Development

ELG-Gross Motor Skills

ELG-Fine Motor Skills

Specific Areas

Literacy

ELG-Comprehension

ELG-Word Reading

ELG-Writing

Mathematics

ELG-Number

ELG-Numerical Patterns

Understanding the World

ELG-Past and Present

ELG-People, Culture and Communities

ELG-The Natural World

Expressive Arts and Design

ELG-Creating and Materials

ELG-Being Imaginative and Expressive

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must also reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements

- creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

At Thorn we believe all areas are equally important in order to promote the development of the 'whole child'. We aim to deliver all the areas through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Learning through Play

"Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn and explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults"

Development Matters 2024

We do not make a distinction between work and play. We support children's learning through planned play activities and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves and modelling by example.

The Learning Environment

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore and learn through first-hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident and are challenged to develop their independence. Activities are planned for both the inside and outside; children have the freedom to move between the indoor and the outdoor classrooms throughout the school day. The learning environment is divided into a range of quality continuous provision areas that enhance children's well-being, involvement and skills across the areas of learning and development. The permanent areas are enhanced by changing resources or adult intervention include role play, reading, mark making, computers, creative, malleable, sand, water, construction, small world and workshop. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation. There is a very large outdoor area with a water station, mud kitchen, small world area and large construction area. There are planters housing sensory and textured plants, a Trim Trail to promote physical development and a Drama Arena to encourage speaking and listening activities.

Impact

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice and is always informed by observation we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs. All practitioners who work in reception at Thorn are involved in this effective process. The Planning within the EYFS is based around half termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teachers as a guide for weekly planning but the teacher may alter these in response to the achievements and interests of the children.

The children are assessed within the first six weeks of entering school using the reception baseline. Feeder nurseries provide tracking sheets on areas of learning and development to support an initial

baseline. Throughout the year pupils are taught in small groups and receive daily activities in reading, writing, phonics and maths. The wider curriculum is taught through provision enhancements, high quality texts and weekly topic sessions. Teachers participate in regular in-house moderation meetings. This provides an external quality assurance and validation of our teacher assessments. Within the final term of the EYFS a written report and a summary of the assessment scales and characteristics of learning are reported to parents or carers.

The quality of the curriculum is monitored by the Head Teacher and subject leaders through regular lesson observations, pupil interviews, planning and book scrutiny. The Head Teacher analyses EYFS data in conjunction with the EYFS co-ordinator striving to raise standards and set challenging targets for the children as they move into year one. We engage in ongoing professional development to improve our teaching skills, knowledge and understanding. All practitioners are encouraged to participate in LEA courses, in-service and local cluster group training. Practitioners also conduct and attend in-house training and disseminate new initiatives, ideas and teaching methods to colleagues.

Home/School Links

We recognise that parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise.

We aim to develop this by:

- outlining the curriculum to parents/guardians during the new parents meeting in June enabling them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home.
- sending home a half-termly topic web, informing parents/guardians of the learning that will be taking place at school with targets that can be supported at home to enhance learning
- holding parent/carers meetings to outline the reading, writing, phonics and maths programmes and to provide an opportunity for asking questions
- operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner
- encouraging parents/carers to use the CVC word cards that are sent home to support their child to blend so they can quickly access reading books
- encouraging parents/carers to listen to their child read each night and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading diary.
- encourage parents to read their child's free-reader and change it on a regular basis to ensure their child is immersed in high quality texts that containing a breadth of vocabulary
- home-school books are sent home every Friday informing parents/guardians about the learning that has taken place that week. A small activity will be sent home to complete with your child, supporting the theme work we have been exploring that week.
- discussing the children's progress at parent's evenings and writing a report and EYFS profile summary at the end of the year containing a detailed report about the characteristics of learning
- Invite parents to attend Christmas, easter and summer workshops that allow them to come into school and work alongside their child on a variety of craft activities.

Inclusion

We aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. Practitioners, as role models,

are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas.

Children with special educational needs will be given support as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes children that are more able, and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities.

Individual Education Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support, in line with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy. Reception teachers discuss these targets with the child and his/her parent/carer. Progress is monitored and reviewed formally every term. The schools SEN co-ordinator is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary.