



Knowsley Central School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Reviewed by: Paul Lambert **Date:** September 2020

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Next review due by: September 2021 (Annually)

Within this document the term Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is used to describe the children who are in Nursery and Early Years classes within Knowsley Central School.

Introduction

‘ 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 chances.’

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage – DfE 2014

At Knowsley Central 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 are committed to Early Years and believe it is essential that children who enter both nursery and reception receive their full entitlement. The Early Years curriculum and the opportunities and experiences that it provides, forms a firm basis on which all subsequent learning is built. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning techniques that enable children to become confident and gain greater independence. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and carers as well as other professionals to enable each child to reach their potential.

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practices 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/carers.
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**

Aim

At Knowsley Central we support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We provide a balanced and personalised curriculum that will enable each child to develop socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

We aim to:

- Provide smooth transition periods which create a strong start to their school life in which they can establish a solid foundation on which to expand and foster a love of learning.
- Provide a curriculum which is adapted to the children’s developmental needs and allows them to make progress relating to their different abilities.

- 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 to set in place a firm foundation for future learning in Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- Utilise and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress
- Work closely with partners, particularly Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy to address complex needs effectively.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is tailored to the requirements of each individual.
- Support children in building relationships with their teachers, classmates as well as staff and pupils in the wider school environment.
- Encourage independence and self help skills in a friendly and nurturing atmosphere.

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 and sensory plans, with a specific focus on language and communication and physical development.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those who require additional support.
- Plan and deliver 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 led with support from an adult.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment outdoors and in.

Foundation Stage Curriculum

In our Early Years we plan a curriculum based around activities and topics that motivate and engage our children as well as challenging them. This curriculum covers the seven areas of learning to ensure that children gain a range of skills and experiences.

The EYFS curriculum includes seven areas of learning and development which shapes the EYFS provision, all of which are seen as important and interconnected. None of these areas

can be delivered in isolation from the others. The learning opportunities we provide, aim to develop competency across each area and this is done so through a combination of planned and natural activities.

Three areas are particularly crucial for developing children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and building their capacity to learn and develop relationships.

These prime areas are:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal , Social and Emotional Development

Children are also supported through the four specific areas below. The prime areas are explored and strengthened through these areas.

The specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Expressive Art & Design
- Understanding the World

The Curriculum and Play

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'. Learning to access appropriate play, both indoors and outdoors, is an important part of our EYFS curriculum. We believe that children learn best from activities that motivate and inspire them. Employing the children's interest as a starting point ensures that activities and resources can be prepared to ensure that the children are motivated to explore and engage. They have opportunities to think creatively, critically and build upon prior learning and experience at their own pace. Play offers children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and encourage those around them to do so also. The children learn to communicate, negotiate, share and investigate and where appropriate, they

are encouraged to answer questions. We strongly believe that it is of great importance that adults are active within the children's play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play to achieve a balanced experience.

At Knowsley Central, adults support play by:

- Playing and resourcing a stimulating environment
- Supporting children's learning through planned play
- Extending and supporting spontaneous play
- Listening to all forms of the children's communication and their ideas and taking these into account when planning activities and the environment.
- Narrating children's play to develop ideas, vocabulary and language skills.
- Asking differentiated questions, taking into account the children's Blank Levels.

During each session, we ensure that children have opportunities to pursue and explore their own interests as well as opportunities to access sensory provision and adult led activities. We use these opportunities to develop the children's communication skills, based upon their personalised targets. 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 have created an environment to meet the needs of the children and, where appropriate, free flow is used and children can access our outdoor area. Planned opportunities to learn and explore our outside space are incorporated throughout the year and linked to our topics as well as the children's personal interest.

At Knowsley Central we ensure that our environment and the delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- **Playing and exploring** – children investigate, experience 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.

Environment

At Knowsley Central we recognise the key role that the learning environment plays in supporting and extending a child's overall development. The children have daily access to indoor and outdoor provision. The classroom environment is set up to provide the children with experiences and support in all seven areas of learning. The classroom is set up to provide children with opportunities to access, small world, reading materials, mark making, sensory resources, water area, physical development tasks, construction and maths and literacy resources. There is also a communication wall, PECS books area and choose boards in various places around the room.

Many of the children in Knowsley Central's EYFS class are on the Autistic Spectrum or have significant social communication difficulties and have sensory processing difficulties. Many children with Autism can experience difficulties with the world, including 'unfriendly' environments. If the child perceives their environment as distressing, this may prevent them accessing it to any extent. This can lead to disengagement and so we have been particularly sensitive to this when setting up our class. We have taken a low stimulus approach, using calm colours, limited displays and ensuring that the class is clear when children are expected to work in a group or engage in a focussed activity. This approach aims to reduce anxiety and promote concentration. The environment is to be kept clean and clutter free as possible throughout the school day. This approach also applies to smells, temperature and lighting. We are very fortunate to have a Sensory Circuit attached to our classroom, offering children activities to alert, organise and relax. As well as this, children have access to the school's sensory room for calming activities. This also provides excellent opportunities for Intensive Interaction activities to take place in a calm and quiet space.

Assessment, Observation and Planning

Pupils are assessed using P Scale assessments and the Early Years Outcomes. These are used as an ongoing tool to plot progress and plan targets. The assessments are completed shortly after a pupil enters the setting and at the end of each term. The Early Years Outcomes are completed and used to inform medium and short term planning. A baseline assessment is completed within the first half term for all reception aged pupils. The baseline assessment is completed in addition to the teacher's assessment. Both the baseline assessment and the teacher's assessment are combined to generate an accurate picture of the child's strengths and areas for development. The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is completed at the end of the Reception year.

To ensure evidence of progress, it is part of our daily practice to observe and assess children's development to inform our future planning. Assessments are completed through a mixture of formal and informal observations and interactions with the children. We record our observations in a variety of ways. Significant observations of children's achievements are collated in an online Learning Journal, which allows us to electronically share children's progress in an instant throughout the school week. Children's communication and language progress is recorded as well as behaviour, sensory development and engagement in programmes such as Attention Autism and Intensive Interaction. Parent engagement is highly encouraged and has increased tremendously since the introduction of the online Learning Journal. This effective record keeping enables us to share a wide range of information with parents during parents evening and annual reviews.

Topics are planned on a yearly cycle to ensure that a personalised approach is achieved and to allow for new approaches or topics to be taken into account. Children experience a wide range of material during their time in the EYFS and this includes cultural and spiritual celebrations. Topic planning takes place on a term by term basis and is taken into account when completing medium term plans. Medium term planning identifies a general learning focus and targets for the class which is underpinned by the Prime and Specific areas as identified in the Early Years Outcomes. This ensures that all curriculum areas are covered.

Short term planning is completed on a weekly basis. The short term plans break down the targets identified in the medium term plans into achievable targets. They are informed by pupil's observations and assessments and include appropriate objectives, learning experiences and activities. All planning is subject to change and is used as a working document, reflecting progress and the interests of the pupils.

Safety

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risk where appropriate. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety throughout school.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at Knowsley Central, 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 at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and make good progress from their starting points. To support our pupil's individual needs, we ensure that we provide the appropriate support that they need and, in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies.

Parents as Partners in 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 through the use of the online Learning Journal and participation in partnership work opportunities. This enables our parents/carers to participate confidently in their child's education.

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and time is given to ensure the continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective liaison with teaching staff, parents and partner schools if appropriate.

Prior to new pupils joining Knowsley Central's EYFS, a representative from the school will meet with parents, carers and current school or nursery staff. These meetings are designed to be an open forum to ask questions and share information relating to Knowsley Central School and our EYFS provision. At the meeting, the parent/ carer will be given a Knowsley Central information pack that includes an 'All About Me' booklet to be completed prior to the child starting school. It is also an opportunity for the school representative and the parents/ carer to begin to build a pupil profile which will later be used to inform teaching and learning.

For those children who remain at Knowsley Central, the EYFS teacher will meet with appropriate agencies to share expertise and to ensure that individualised needs are met. Teachers will meet in the summer term to discuss the child they are 'handing over'. This is an opportunity to share the child's academic abilities, specific needs and any relevant family information or safeguarding issues, whilst bearing in mind confidentiality at all times. The child will be offered taster sessions where they can meet their new teacher, class support team, class

mates and spend time in their new learning environment. This aims to reduce anxiety and prepare the child for a smooth start to the new academic year.

In Year One we aim to plan and deliver lessons appropriately, in keeping with the school's wider teaching and learning policy. Learning activities should be active, appropriately challenging and delivered effectively, taking into account a range of learning styles. There are some guided principles that are felt by the school to be important as a child enters Year One:

- The start of the day should mirror practice in reception class
- There should be an initial focus on PSED
- There should be a strong focus on communication
- The layout in the Year 1 classroom should still allow for continuous provision activities to take place