



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2024-2025

Our Ethos/ Vision

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile - Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012

The Early Years Foundation stage is from birth to five. At Millhouse we have a Nursery class and three form entry Reception year group. Our Nursery has one intake in September for children who are three. Our Nursery offers a mixture of full time and part time sessions.

We have five teachers across our Early Years Department and eight LSA's.

Aims and Objectives

We aim to support all children to become resilient and independent children with a curiosity and love for learning. We want our children to wonder about the world around them. Across our Foundation Stage, we will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At Millhouse Primary School, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.

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- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and next steps and helping each child to progress. Observations
- Develop positive relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

The early-years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do;
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment;
- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers and the benefits of sharing both successes and concerns with them.

Learning and developing

Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the learning aims and objectives set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and the supporting document Development matters.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in all Early Years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected and none can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences and environment enable them to develop competency and skill across these areas of learning. They require a balance of adult led and child initiated activities in order for children to develop effectively and to give them the best chance of obtaining a good level of development at the end of their Reception Year. 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.

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The three prime areas are:

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

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Children's development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- Playing and exploring - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- Active learning - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Planning

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and Development matters provides the basis for planning throughout our Nursery and Reception.

Each half term has a theme or topic to encourage children to wonder about the world around them. The themes / topics are those that the EYFS team have identified as

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vehicles of interest to deliver the children's next steps in learning and also to respond to the individual needs, achievements and interests of the children. These are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are relevant to the needs of the cohort.

In addition to the topic learning the children follow the phonics program Supersonic Phonic friends and have daily sessions. We begin with Phase 1 in our Nursery with a focus on Aspects 1.2 and 3. We begin our Reception phonics with Phase 1 and then move onto Phase 2, 3 and 4. This ensures that all children have a firm foundation in phonics before we introduce graphemes.

Our Literacy curriculum is covered through Rhyme Time, Sharing high quality text and Drawing club. The drawing club allows children to develop a wide vocabulary and a love of story telling. Children begin the year mark making and drawings and by the end of the year they will be writing simple stories.

In Nursery we use White Rose Maths and the children progress to daily maths sessions by the end of the year. In Reception we use NCETM mastering maths and White Rose maths and the children have daily maths sessions.

Assessment

During the first term, the EYFS team work together to assess the ability of each pupil in Nursery and Reception using observations and activities. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual and/or groups of children. The children in Reception also complete the National Baseline assessment.

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to track the attainment of the end of the pupils' Foundation Stage, and to summarise their progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

We record each child's level of development against the 17 areas of learning as achieved or not achieved. Observations and assessment of each individual pupil is ongoing with the information gained being used to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. The EYFS team have weekly planning meetings to discuss each child and the ways we will adapt the provision to address their learning and any needs identified.

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At the end of a pupil's Reception Year we send a summary of these assessments to the LA for analysis. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information too at parental consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report. Parents receive an annual written report that offers comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and developmental needs, and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these in the Summer term and send them to parents before the end of the school year.

The Learning Environment

Our EYFS areas are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. We have taken elements from the Early Excellence team in Essex in our classroom practice which allows children to explore more freely rather than provide set activities for the children. The children have access to both the inside and the outside environment at various points in the day which is known to have a positive effect on the children's development.

In Nursery the children have access to a large, enclosed outdoor area with access to sand, water, role play, bikes, mud kitchen, storytelling area, sensory area and climbing equipment. Activities are also set up on tuff trays each day which cover a range of the curriculum. The Nursery now has a garden area to engage children in learning about how things grow. The garden is also a fantastic resource for learning about the natural world and is used for planned opportunities and spontaneous moments of discovery.

In Reception the children have access to an outdoor area attached to the classrooms and also the large playground with the fort and grass areas. Within these spaces the children have access to sand, water, writing opportunities, construction, bikes, climbing equipment and role play. Spending time outdoors offers opportunities for exploring and learning things differently to when pupils are indoors and gives things a different perspective. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active. Our reception children are encouraged to notice changes in the natural environment such as ice forming, leaves falling from the trees. These are planned into the curriculum and we have extensive school grounds to explore further.

Transition

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle in to their new class quickly and happily. In both Nursery and Reception children are invited to a taster session before their

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official start date. Staff are on hand to meet and greet parents with their children and answer any questions they might have. Towards the end of the year, as children are getting ready to join school full time, the team will encourage more independence.

Parents of all children entering their Reception Year in the next Academic Year will either be invited to an Induction Meeting in the Summer Term to meet their child's new teachers and other key staff. This is an opportunity for staff to:

- To go through the school handbook
- Explain about uniform, PE kit and school dinners/ free school meals
- Explain about holidays and absences
- Answer any questions parents might have about starting school
- Explain the arrangements for starting school in September
- Talk to the parents about the school and Government expectations at the end of the EYFS.

When children begin both Nursery and Reception we start our settling sessions with staggered starts. The Reception entry is over the first week of the new term and then they attend full time. Parents can contact us if they feel this is too quick for their child and discuss the arrangements.

Throughout the Reception Year we aim to build up their involvement in whole school life helping them to become familiar with many of the teaching and support staff working in other classes. They will have taken part in the weekly singing assembly as well as sharing the lunchtime hall with the other pupils.

Parental Involvement

We work in partnership with parents from an early stage to ensure that we get a well rounded picture of their child's development. Homework and our Millhouse Milestones encourage parents to take an active role in their child's education. Parents are encouraged to use Tapestry to share things about their child's development and achievements with us. We use Tapestry to share moments with parents and it is one of the ways we keep parents informed. Parents are offered a variety of opportunities to come into school to learn more about the Foundation Stage curriculum and be part of their child's development; these include workshops around phonics and maths, Nativity plays, reading mornings, visits to the library and sports days. Parents evenings are held in the Autumn and Spring and reports are sent home in the Summer. However, we encourage parents to come to us with any concerns throughout the year.

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Safeguarding

At Millhouse Primary School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2020

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (More information can be found in the school's safeguarding policy)

Healthy Eating

All children, in Nursery and Reception, are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as being given the choice of a drink - milk and water. We ask that children bring in their own water bottles so they can access these throughout the day. School dinners are provided for free for all children in Reception and menus are available on the school website. We also ask Nursery parents for a small voluntary contribution to buy extra fruit or a snack that is additional to the fruit provided by the government. This is to encourage pupils to try a range of foods.

Intimate Care

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. We actively encourage parents to start helping their children become independent with these tasks as soon as they start in Nursery. Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff and parents work in partnership to give the right support to an individual child. We have an intimate care policy and this is shared with parents.

Monitoring and Review

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It is the responsibility of those working with Nursery and Reception pupils to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Executive Headteacher (Mr G.Allen), The Heads of school (Mrs D.McGarry) (Mrs J.Haken) and EYFS lead (Mrs Nugent) will monitor EYFS provision as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. This policy will be reviewed in July 2025 or earlier if circumstances require it.