



MARSHBROOK FIRST SCHOOL AND MARSHMALLOWS Early Years Foundation Stage Policy September 2024

Aim

At Marshbrook 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. We value the individual child and work alongside parents, other agencies and professionals to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Marshbrook we have a governor-led nursery for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds (Marshmallows) and a single-entry Reception class. Most children enter our Reception class from our governor-led Nursery, but we also receive children from other local settings.

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 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 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 and/or carers
- **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 and direct teaching 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 a 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, supported by the adult.
- Have a key person approach to develop close relationships with individual children.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out.

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 interconnected.

Three areas are particularly important 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

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

These **specific** areas are:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences where they explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development. We plan weekly enhancements in all seven areas to support the continuous provision and learning, these enhancements are based on the children's interests and their next steps. The enhancements remain flexible for unplanned circumstances of children's responses, interests and current affairs.

Children have whole group and small group times which increases as they progress through the EYFS with times for a daily phonics session, a daily number sense session, teaching aspects of Literacy and Mathematics, including shared and guided 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 adults. During a child's play early years practitioners interact to demonstrate, stretch and challenge children further.

In planning and guiding children's activities we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and their characteristics of learning and reflect this in our practice.

We reflect the 'whole school/academy approach to Visible Learning by trying to make learning as 'visible' as possible to the children. In Nursery children's next steps are visible and show individual progress towards a goal. Next steps are identified for all children across our Foundation Stage. Children are encouraged to have a positive attitude to learning, to be curious and ask questions, to want to succeed and persevere, to seek and respond to feedback, to collaborate and to begin to know what to do if they are stuck.

Observation and Assessment

As part of our daily practice, we observe and assess children's learning and development in all seven areas. This informs our future plans. We also observe the **characteristics of effective learning** for each child and in relation to **playing and observing, active learning, creating and thinking critically**. In the Autumn and Spring term Nursery and Reception parents/carers are invited to attend a parents evening to discuss progress and targets. Nursery parents of school starters are offered a parents meeting in the Summer term to discuss school 'readiness'. Reports are written at the end of the academic year and provide parents with information on their child's development against each area of learning. Parents/carers are given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the Nursery and Reception practitioners.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure learning environment and promote positive attitudes and behavior (see school behavior policy). We actively promote good health, teaching the children about healthy eating and healthy lifestyles and oral hygiene. As a school we have an effective system in place to ensure that all practitioners are suitably qualified, trained and that are part of a continual programme of professional development. In line with the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements the school has a designated child protection officer who provides support and guidance to all staff on any specific safeguarding issues as required (see school policy).

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals, 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 supports them in working towards the Early Learning Goal. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support they need and in doing so work closely with parents and outside agencies. Any children who are not 'on track' to meet developmental milestones or age-related expectations are identified and additional support given where appropriate.

Parents as Partners and the Wider Context

We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents and carers as we recognise that, together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We hold regular half termly open mornings where parents/ carers access the learning environment and activities with their child. In Reception home/school reading diaries and both Reception and Nursery use 'Class Dojo' to ensure regular communication. Parents/carers are encouraged to contribute towards their child's learning journey by adding photos and comments to their portfolios on Class Dojo. During the first term, Reception children will join the rest of the school for a Celebration Assembly, where certificates and medals from hobbies can be presented.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support. We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting.

Transition

Transitions are carefully planned for and given time to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child. Children are invited to attend induction sessions to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. They receive a booklet containing photos and information on our school day. This takes place in the Summer Term before starting in Reception. Parents/ carers are also invited to meet Early Years Practitioners to discuss their child's learning and developments, likes and dislikes etc. At the end of Nursery, the Nursery staff and Reception teacher meet to discuss each child's development and 'school readiness'. Similarly, Reception and Year 1 staff meet to discuss individual children and their development towards the Early Learning Goals. Reception and Year 1 staff also visit Nursery/Reception to read a story on several occasions in the Summer Term. This supports a smooth transition between year groups.

To be reviewed: September 2025