

# NANTWICH PRIMARY ACADEMY & NURSERY

PRINCIPAL – Sue Spence

## Early Year Foundation Stage Policy



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<p>Approved by:</p>
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# **Nantwich Primary Academy and Nursery Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

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## **Effective Early Years education**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. This policy outlines the provision Nantwich Primary Academy and Nursery offers to all its pupils aged three to five years. The Foundation Stage has its own framework and is therefore treated as a separate key stage. Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all areas of learning and development. Foundation stage 1 (FS1) refers to Nursery and Foundation Stage 2 (FS2) refers to Reception.

This policy outlines the intent, nature and management of the EYFS at Nantwich Primary Academy and Nursery. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all practitioners working in the EYFS setting. At Nantwich Primary Academy and Nursery, we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start to their school life and effective learning and development for young children requires high quality care and education by all practitioners.

At Nantwich Primary Academy and Nursery, we want all children to be engaged in the learning process and for their learning to be relevant and purposeful. We believe children develop rapidly during the early years; physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially and that play, both indoors and outdoors, is an ideal vehicle for young children's learning and development. Play based activities help children to explore, investigate, communicate and make sense of the world around them. Children are naturally inquisitive and curious; therefore we aim to provide a stimulating and focused environment. All children in the Foundation stage should feel included, secure and valued and no child should be disadvantaged.

### **Intent**

At Nantwich Primary Academy and Nursery, we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children therefore giving them the strong foundation for their future. We aim to ensure that all our children develop into independent and lifelong learners.

“When we succeed in giving every child the best start in their early years, we give them what they need today. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow.” (Development Matters, Sept 2020, revised July 2021).

- To provide a secure, safe, caring and stimulating environment
- To ensure that all children are valued
- To build on what the children already know and develop a positive attitude and enjoyment of learning
- To provide a range of opportunities to learn through direct experience, enquiry and active exploration, in the classroom and outdoors, using a wide variety of resources
- To encourage independence and confidence
- To value and respect the role parents and carers have and to work together in partnership

## **Foundation Stage Curriculum**

Nursery and Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the EYFS document.

The EYFS is based on seven key features of effective practice as outlined in Development Matters 2020 (revised July 2021).

- The best for every child
- High-quality care
- The curriculum: what we want children to learn
- Pedagogy: helping children to learn
- Assessment: checking what children have learnt
- Self-regulation and executive function
- Partnership with parents

As part of our best practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Provide early intervention for those who need additional support.
- Work in partnership with parents and, where needed, external agencies and professionals
- Plan challenging learning experiences for all our children, based on the individual needs of the child.
- Provide opportunities for our children to engage in adult led learning and self-initiated learning.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors.
- Plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observations of children's needs, interests and stages of development across the seven areas of learning.
- Deliver a broad and balanced education where learning is sequential so that the children learn and remember one thing before they move on to the next.

## **EYFS Areas of Learning**

The EYFS is made up of prime and specific areas of learning. The three prime areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving.

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

The four specific areas of learning are:

- Literacy
- Maths
- Understanding the World

- Expressive Arts and Design

All seven areas of learning and development are important and interconnected. In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately.

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.

The four guiding principles which shape practice in our EYFS at Nantwich Primary Academy and Nursery are:

- **A unique child**

We believe every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

- **Positive relationships**

We believe children learn to be strong and independent as a result of having secure relationships with parents and/or a key person. In a school environment this person will be a key worker or/class teacher/teaching assistant. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with children and their families.

- **Enabling environments**

The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. In our Foundation Stage, classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, quiet, creative, messy etc. The Foundation Stage classroom has defined areas of learning, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The foundation stage has an enclosed outdoor area and children are able to free-flow between indoor and outdoor spaces. Being outdoor offers the children opportunities of exploring and investigating in different ways and on a bigger scale. They are able to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active.

- **Learning and development**

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates; all areas of learning and development are equally important and interconnecting.

## **Observations, Assessment and Planning**

At Nantwich Primary Academy and Nursery children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first hand experiences, in which children can explore, think creatively and are active. We provide a well-balanced curriculum and our planning ensures that each child has the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area of the EYFS. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful activities and through a mix of adult led and child-initiated learning.

### **Observations**

The Early Years Foundation Stage practitioners use observations as the basis for planning and assessment where the primary focus is to understand each child in our setting. Practitioners are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests, what we want them to learn and their next steps for learning but we also trust that they 'know' our children because of the time they spend with them as well as their own expert professional judgement.

Both formal and informal observations of the children then lead the direction of the adult led and enhanced planning of the continuous provision in the learning environment. Relevant and significant observations are recorded onto each child's online learning journey through their individual portfolio on Class Dojo.

Home observations are also encouraged using ClassDojo as we believe that parents also have a pivotal role in enhancing and promoting the learning at home.

### **Assessments**

- Children entering Nursery and Reception are observed during their first weeks to provide baseline information. A WellComm language screening is also completed.
- Children in Reception complete the 'Reception Baseline Assessment' within six weeks of starting school; the assessment measures a child's early maths, literacy, communication and language skills.
- Professional discussions take place regularly and EYFS staff share their knowledge of children's learning, development and attainment. These discussions inform timetables, environment and planning to ensure that our curriculum is ambitious for all learners
- At the end of the EYFS, the EYFS profile is completed for each child. Staff draw upon their knowledge of the child and their own expert judgment. Children are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals indicating whether they have met the expected level of development or are 'emerging' and not yet reaching expected levels. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.
- Assessment conversations take place internally and in partnership with local schools and St, Bart's Multi-Academy trust to ensure consistent judgments.
- Parents are kept up to date with their child's progress and development through termly parent meetings and an end of year report stating children's

attainment and their characteristics of effective learning.

- Profile data is discussed with Year 1 teachers so that they can continue to help the children achieve their full potential and transition is supported.

Ongoing assessments undertaken by staff provide opportunities to identify any concerns about children's progress and this is discussed with parents and/or carers to agree on how best to support the child. Children identified as requiring additional support, including a special educational need or disability are monitored by school staff and the SENCO. Additional advice may be sought from external agencies and professionals e.g. speech and language therapy service.

## **Teaching**

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for their next stage of education. Timetables are set for each year group and are adapted based upon the needs of the cohort.

## **Communication and Language**

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. At Nantwich Primary Academy and Nursery, we feel that the number and quality of the conversations children have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction books, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, storytelling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

For children whose home language is not English, all staff take reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning, supporting their language development at home. We also ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English language during the EYFS, ensuring children are ready to benefit from the opportunities available to them when they begin year 1.

## **Admissions**

At Nantwich Primary Academy and Nursery, children start in FS1 the term after their third birthday. Applications for places are made through the school office. Applications for places in FS2 are made through Cheshire East school admissions service.

## **Transition**

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. Nantwich Primary Academy and Nursery is part of the Nantwich Education Partnership which holds an annual EYFS transition event; this allows feeder settings and schools to share information about children and take part in CPD to ensure an effective transition into school. EYFS staff will also visit children in their feeder settings in the term before they start in FS2.

All children and families starting at Nantwich Primary Academy and Nursery, receive a welcome booklet, photographs of the staff and a child-friendly social story. Children are invited for transition days and families are shown around the school. Each child's transition is considered individually to ensure a smooth transition.

In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals and the Characteristics of Learning for each child in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. Reception children spend time with the Year 1 teachers and are supported by buddies to transition onto the main playground.

## **Organisation of classes**

All staff within EYFS strive to develop excellent relationships with all children by interacting positively and taking time to listen. Our environment enables close attachments between children and practitioners. Attachment provides a sense of security so that children can become confident, independent and capable learners. In FS1 we offer 26 full-time places for both 15- and 30-hours funding (reviewed termly). FS2 has up to 30 children.

All staff working in the EYFS are well trained and skilled to help every child achieve the best possible outcomes. All requirements in relation to workforce training and responsibilities as specified in the 2024 EYFS Statutory handbook are met.

## **Partnership with parents, carers and families**

We wholeheartedly value and respect the contribution and knowledge of all parents, carers and families as we recognise that these are children's first and most enduring educators and that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning.



All parents are encouraged to attend parent meetings, open days and special school-based events such as 'Discover and Do' sessions.

ClassDojo is used to provide parents with information and we offer an open door policy for parents with any queries.

### **Safeguarding and Intimate care**

*See Safeguarding, Safe Touch and Intimate care policies*

'Children learn best when they are healthy, safe, secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them (DFE, 2024).

We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021' statutory guidance and adhere to the Academy's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

### **Positive Behaviour**

*See Positive Behaviour Policy*

At Nantwich primary Academy and Nursery positive behaviour is expected and encouraged. All staff in the EYFS promote our school rules. We operate a reward system using ClassDojo and praise good behaviour and attitudes. Age-appropriate strategies are used to develop a safe and secure environment for learning.

### **Health and safety**

*See Health and Safety and Safeguarding Policies*

All reasonable measures are taken to ensure the safety of all children in the foundation stage.

We are a healthy school and participate in the free fruit and milk for under-fives scheme. For our Reception children we provide the universal free school meal. We cater for those children who have special dietary requirements and have robust systems in place ensuring that all children receive the correct meal. Fresh water is readily available for all children and we encourage children to bring in water bottles with water only. Children are taught the importance of keeping clean and washing their hands correctly.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years through our curriculum, for example by talking to children about the effects of eating too many sweet things and the importance of brushing your teeth. We also teach E-safety across our EYFS in age-appropriate ways.

## **Sleeping**

Staff must ensure the safety of children when sleeping in a setting as set out in January 2024 - EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers.

EYFS framework states: *Sleeping children must be frequently checked to ensure that they are safe. Being safe includes ensuring that cots and bedding are in good condition and suited to the age of the child, and that babies are placed down to sleep safely in line with the latest government safety guidance: Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) - NHS (www.nhs.uk). Practitioners may also find it helpful to read NHS advice on safety of sleeping children: Reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) – NHS.*

To ensure staff keep all children safe when sleeping in setting staff will:

- Complete 10-minute checks on children who are asleep in setting and have a written record of all checks
- Ensure children are comfortable, safe and not using a bottle to reduce the risk of choking
- Ensure at all times the children's dignity, wellbeing and safety are promoted
- Staff will create a positive culture around sleeping and communication with parents regarding a child's sleep needs
- Signpost families to further information or services regarding sleep and bedtime routines when required

Parent responsibility includes:

- Sharing key sleep information with staff prior to entering the EYFS setting
- Sharing any updates on sleep patterns at home. For example, more sleeping during daytime hours or struggles with sleeping at home during the night
- Continual open and honest communication with key workers and EYFS staff

Sleep Checks should include:

- Checking a child while sleeping should involve:
- Placing a hand on their chest to check they are breathing or putting the back of their hand near to the child's mouth to feel for breath
- Ensuring that each child is well
- Ensuring that each child is not too hot or too cold - Ensuring that all sheets or blankets are not wrapped around the child.

## **Inclusion**

*See Inclusion, Equal Opportunities and SEND policies*

We value all of our children as individuals at Nantwich Primary Academy and Nursery, 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 at their own pace so that most of our children achieve 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. All children will receive quality first teaching on a daily basis and activities will be differentiated accordingly. In addition to this, where children have been identified as having a specific need, intervention programmes will be implemented. Teachers and Teaching Assistants plan programmes together and where needed in liaison with our SENCO. (Please refer to the Academy's 'SEND Policy' for greater detail).

**Date:** September 2023 (amendments made following update to statutory EYFS guidance in January 2024)

**Review Date:** September 2024