



EYFS Teaching and Learning Policy

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Planning, Recording and Assessing Children's Learning and Development
Updated December 2016 Catherine Lawrence

Aims

1. To plan, observe, record, assess and monitor each child's achievement and progress in all areas of learning as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
2. To ensure each child irrespective of gender, race, culture, home background, socio economic status, language or special needs has equal access to the curriculum which helps them to reach their full potential.
3. To ensure curriculum planning, recording and assessing is underpinned by the guiding 4 principles of the EYFS:-

A unique child – every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured.

Positive Relationships – children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/ or a key person.

Enabling Environments – the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.

Learning and Development – children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected.

All aspects of the children's experience at school and nursery are planned, recorded and assessed to help us to ensure that opportunities for learning and development are maximised. This policy helps in ensuring that:

- all children have access to a broad, balanced, relevant, stimulating and differentiated curriculum;
- all children gain relevant, meaningful experiences;
- children operate as self-motivated learners;
- each child has access to the curriculum and makes progress;
- each child has access to the attention of a key person
- all children will have the opportunity to explore a range of experiences, which support learning towards the Early Learning Goals;
- children and families are fully engaged in the process of planning, monitoring and assessing learning and development wherever possible;
- practitioner's time is used productively and enables team members to work effectively with children.

Underpinning Theory

Our aim is to extend each child's current learning by identifying their current level of understanding and planning activities, experiences and explorations that will take them onto the next stage of understanding. We draw on Vygotsky's theory of the 'zone of proximal development' and Bruner's concept of 'scaffolding' to help us to do this.

The zone of proximal development

Vygotsky helps us to understand that when we are planning we need to:

- Identify each child's current level of understanding – that is their current or actual level of development;
- Identify the possible or potential level of development;
- Recognise the gap between the child's actual and potential level of understanding known as the zone of proximal development and to devise interactions and experiences with more experienced learners – children and adults – which enable the child to develop his/ her understanding and skills which bridge the gap.

Scaffolding

- Scaffolding involves adults in providing the support the child needs while s/he is in the zone of proximal development
- In the early stages of learning a new concept or skill the child requires a great deal of support from a more experienced learner.
- As they become more competent the amount of support they need decreases until the point when the child has achieved mastery and is able to function without the support of a more experienced learner
- At this point the practitioner identifies the next zone of proximal development.

Identifying, planning and assessing learning in this way requires:

- Detailed knowledge of each child's current level of understanding and ability
- An understanding of likely developments in understanding and ability related to each area of learning

Sustained Shared Thinking

As identified in the EYFS we recognise that the most effective learning takes place when practitioners support and challenge children's thinking by taking part in the thinking process with them. This means showing genuine interest in the children's interests and ideas, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions which support and extend children's thinking and

helps them to make connections in their learning. Consequently, planning reflects the need for opportunities for children and adults to work together in this way.

The Role of Play

Teaching and Learning in the Early Years primarily takes place through child initiated free flow play and planned adult led play experiences, as well planned play environments and opportunities are the key to meaningful, enjoyable and challenging learning. It offers all children the opportunity to:

- explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world;
- practice and build up ideas, concepts and skills;
- learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules;
- be alone, be alongside others or cooperate as they talk or rehearse their feelings;
- take risks and make mistakes;
- think critically, creatively and imaginatively;
- communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems;
- express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Supporting and Extending Play

As practitioners we offer children a range of play experiences which extend, support and develop their learning. Adults act as “play catalysts” [Bruce 2001] joining in children’s play in order to help them extend into rich, free flow play. However, the aim of this is not to take over the play but to intervene in ways that help children to become as independent in their play as possible. This allows them to “become autonomous learners, who can get on with learning ... They are in control, and able to learn in deep ways in their play.” [Bruce T. *Learning Through Play*, 2001]

Planning

Planning for Learning in the Foundation Stage – EYFS Practice Guidance

‘Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. It enables practitioners to build up knowledge about how individual children learn and make progress. It also provides opportunities for you to think and talk about how to sustain a successful learning environment. This process works best when all practitioners working in the setting are involved.’

Planning

To deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum effectively we need to consider 3 levels of planning:

Planning in Nursery and Reception

Long Term Planning

These plans chart the continuous provision offered through the permanent learning environment (workshop areas and outside zones) and daily routines. They identify the learning opportunities (attitudes, knowledge and skills) that arise from these resources, experiences and activities across the seven areas of learning.

Medium Term Planning – Seasonal Themes/Settling In/ Enquiry based learning

The medium term planning takes the form of seasonal themes and reflects settling-in, the seasons and time of year, the major festivals and celebrations, favourite stories and the interests of the children. It ensures that all areas and aspects of the curriculum are experienced over the year and identifies learning possibilities (attitudes, knowledge and skills) within each area of learning. These plans are intended to be guidelines and have the flexibility to respond to children's changing needs and interests. They are reviewed regularly in order to respond to what children have learned in previous terms and to ensure a rich and balanced curriculum. The initial 6 weeks of the Autumn term are planned settling-in periods which teach and enable children to use the environment autonomously and induct them into the routines of the setting. This provides an underpinning structure for the children's learning and development. Where children join the setting outside of these times, especially moving into our toddler rom from the baby room and into the nursery class from the toddler room planning for transition and settling in is incorporated into weekly planning for these children.

In order to deepen children's learning experiences we plan on a medium term basis using enquiry based learning. This builds on the Reggio Emilia approach to Early Learning where children are able to pose questions and investigate the answers. This enables children to feel in charge of their own learning. Inquiry-based approaches to learning harness children's spirit of investigation, creating an interesting, engaging and meaningful curriculum that uses children's interests and questions as a starting point for effective learning. This approach supports children to develop the characteristics of effective learning identified in the EYFS. These are essential components in effective learning not only in the Early Years but in life.

Teaching and learning in Nursery and Reception also incorporates philosophical play as part of our whole school teaching of Philosophy for Children.

Short Term Planning

There are three types of short term planning in use:

- **Weekly Focus Children Plans - Needs and Interests:** As part of the weekly planning, practitioners identify the interests, learning and development needs of the focus children. This includes identifying how the children learn including the characteristics of effective learning. Suggested activities, resources and experiences are identified that will support children to move on to the next step in their learning. All practitioners are alert to these learning priorities and support children to work towards them in the moment in their play. Each session is reviewed at the end of each day. This means that each child is offered the experiences s/he needs to access the curriculum fully and ensures a responsive approach to the curriculum for the individual child based on observation of his/her needs and interests. It provides continuity and extension through evaluating the success of the activities offered which inform the planning for the next day. This takes place in nursery/ reception teams at the end of each day. Where appropriate the SENCO may support practitioners in their planning for specific children's needs, for example where a child has a SEN support plan.
- **Learning Environment Plans:** These plans detail activities and resources to be provided throughout the indoor and outdoor learning environment. They enable us to respond to an individual child or group of children's interests or needs and children's self initiated play on a day to day basis. Through observing and supporting children's play we can assess the learning which takes place and make plans to consolidate, extend and revisit it during the end of day review meeting. The learning environment will be planned to reflect, extend and consolidate learning experiences from planned activities and those observed in child initiated play. The environment should be planned to offer challenge at appropriate levels for different groups of children as reflected in the identified next steps. Some areas of the provision may be left for children to choose which materials or resources they want as with accessible provision, children will choose what is appropriate to their agenda.
- **Weekly Group Time Plans:** These planned group sessions for letters and sounds (phonics), mathematics and core texts (including guided reading and writing in Reception) ensure that the children have equal access to daily focused group sessions on literacy and maths. Children need extended periods of time to play and pursue their interests. These sessions are, therefore, planned for times of day, which do not interrupt activities, experiences and learning that are already taking place.

Planning for Children Under 3

Long Term Planning

We recognize that provision for children from birth to three needs to be organised slightly differently. Well resourced and maintained continuous provision for our younger children includes:

- Sensory exploration including treasure baskets or heuristic play
- Resources that support schematic play
- Creative and imaginative play
- sand and water play
- dancing and physical activities including transporting
- mark-making opportunities
- home corner/ doll play (domestic play)
- malleable/ messy play
- books/props/puppets
- singing and music
- sorting play including filling/emptying
- outdoor experiences and visits

We recognize the importance of predictable and well planned routines for young children to support their development and well being. These include:

- The start of the session including registration/ “handover” time for children from parents/carers to the keyperson
- snack and meal times
- handwashing and toilet/ nappy-changing routines
- tidy-up time
- story, singing and circle times
- The end of the session/ “handover” from the keyperson to parent/carer

Medium Term Planning

Medium Term planning for children under 3 is designed to be flexible and responsive to children’s changing needs and interests. It reflects settling-in and planned visits and events such as birthdays and celebrations that are meaningful to the children. Planning is responsive to children’s developmental and learning needs and focuses primarily on the interests of the children. The continuous provision will change to reflect the children’s identified needs and interests.

Short Term Planning

"Practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively, and become ready for school. It is expected that 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." Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage - Department for Education 2012.

To support children's development appropriately we focus primarily on the Prime Areas of Physical Development, Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication and Language when planning for children under three. These are fundamental and work together and support development in all other areas.

Each session is planned for and reviewed at the end of each day. This means that each child is offered the experiences s/he needs to access the curriculum fully and ensures a responsive approach to the curriculum for the individual child based on observation of his/her needs and interests. It provides continuity and extension through evaluating the success of the activities offered which inform the planning for the next day. These plans detail activities and resources to be provided throughout the indoor and outdoor learning environment. They enable us to respond to an individual child or group of children's interests or needs and children's self initiated play on a day to day basis. Through observing and supporting children's play we can assess the learning which takes place and make plans to consolidate, extend and revisit it during the end of day review meeting.

Where appropriate the SENCO may support practitioners in their planning for specific children's needs, for example where a child has an Education, Health and Care plan.

Other Key Points

- In recognition of the fact that children's learning takes place not only within the school day information should be shared with and input sought from parents and carers in order to help identify and address a child's needs more fully.

- To enable child centered learning to take place effectively plans must be flexible. We need to be prepared to change or postpone plans in order to respond with immediacy to an observed interest or need.
- The children need lots of opportunities to reinforce learning and as a consequence 'next steps' in planning may not always mean 'moving forward'. Experiences at a similar level, with a similar objective in different contexts will need to be planned for understanding to become fully embedded.
- It is important to consider the prior experiences of the children when planning. Learning experiences need to be rooted in a meaningful context and reflect the diverse culture and home life of the children.

Assessment for Learning

Children's Learning Journals

In Moreland Primary School and Children's Centre we monitor children's learning continuously. All information on children's progress in learning through to the Early Learning Goals is recorded in their Tapestry Learning Journal. This enables us to collect and display evidence of children's learning. Tapestry is an electronic system for recording observations of children and recording their progress through the Development Matters and against the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Parents are able to log on to their child's journal at home to upload pictures or comment on their child's learning.

What should the Learning Journal contain?

Each record should contain:

- Observations – narrative and short with identified next steps
- Annotated Photographs
- Annotated Videos
- Photo samples of children's work
- A record of the child's voice and reflection on their experiences
- Assessments against Development Matters
- Assessments on the Characteristics of Early Learning

Learning Journals

The Learning Journal belongs primarily to the child. It is put together collaboratively with input from the child, their family and the child's key worker. The learning journal is not a just a record of a child's development and progress in learning at school and at home but is intended more as a reflection of their life, experiences, ideas and interests. This is recorded primarily through photographs but also through drawings, the children's writing/mark making and other creations. These are annotated by the child, their family or key worker using the child's words where possible.

Learning Journals can support in providing evidence of children's learning and development and as an assessment tool. It helps to build up a picture of children's achievements and helps practitioners to identify children's needs and learning priorities. They are an important way of involving both children and families in this process. They provide children with the opportunity for self

reflection and the visual nature of the learning journal allows children to engage with and gain ownership of their learning. It gives them the opportunity to share their achievements with others. A child's family are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning journal, to reflect and recognize that children's learning is intrinsically linked with their home life. This can provide Practitioners with an insight into a child's home life and family traditions and consequently, a better understanding of their emotional and learning needs.

Assessment Files

In addition each class teacher/ room leader keeps an assessment file with information about the class and individual children. This includes the following:

Individual Child Information

- Home Visit "All About Me" forms.
- Initial Settling Plan
- Settling in Review
- Termly Review Records with an overview of progress through Development Matters and identified learning priorities (to be completed with parents and parents meetings)
- Parent/ Carer view

Whole Class/ Group Information

- Class/ Group list
- Whole class termly tracking
- Analysis of progress

Monitoring Children's Learning

Children's learning is monitored in a number of ways:

- **Narrative observations** – these are longer observations which cover things such as context, what the child does/ says, why the observation is significant, what it says about the child's learning, interests and needs and the involvement levels of the child.

Key workers should aim to make 1 narrative observation on each key child per half term. There should be a balance of observations from each of the 7 Areas of Learning with a focus first on the Prime Areas moving to the Specific Areas as children gain in competence. A narrative observation may cover more than one area of learning due to the integrated nature of the curriculum.

After making a narrative observation Key Persons should use the information to identify a child's needs, interests and next steps in learning for the child. Next steps may move learning forward or may identify areas that need reinforcement in order for understanding to become firmly embedded. Key persons should identify activities that will enable this to take place. These can then be fed into weekly planning at the daily review meetings

- **Short observations** - Sometimes you may want to record a short observation or make a quick note of something significant. The observation should be dated and next steps identified.
- **Annotated Photographs and videos** – Photographs and videos can be taken of children and used as evidence of learning. These pictures/ clips may be of children involved in activity, something temporary they have created such as a construction or a sample of work. Photographs should be dated and accompanied by a short annotation explaining the context and learning. Significant next steps can also be identified.
- **Samples of work** – These can be collected as evidence of learning. They should be dated and (if necessary) accompanied by a short annotation. If a child wants to take their work home then a photograph can be taken of it and used instead (see above).

Staff should aim to collect at least one observation/ piece of evidence in each Area of Learning every term. This amounts to at least one observation for each child per week.

N.B. All staff are encouraged to make observations of children's learning.

Focus Children

To ensure that all children are being monitored equally over the year we operate a cyclical process whereby children are targeted for observation and assessment at least 3 times throughout the year. Each team decides each week on focus children. All team members gather observations, photographs and samples of work for those children over a two week period. Parents and children's views are also sought at this time. This information is then used to identify these children's needs, interests and learning priorities and to inform planning for the following two weeks. This planning will include focused opportunities to develop and address those needs, interests and learning priorities identified.

Termly Review Meetings

Practitioners hold a termly review meeting where they discuss these children, identify the Development Matters stage they are working at in each of the 7

areas of the curriculum including their learning priorities for the next term. The Key Person then arranges a meeting with the children's parents/carers to discuss the review and learning priorities for each child. The child and the parents/carers views are also recorded.

Other Monitoring Formats

- **Initial Assessment and Settling Review Meeting** – During a child's first half term at school an initial assessment is completed by the class teacher (in consultation with the key person) against Development Matters. A settling review meeting is held with parents/carers to discuss how their child has settled into the new environment and daily routines of the nursery/ reception.

Assessing Children's Learning

- **Recording achievement against the Curriculum** – The key person and class teacher/ room leader uses the evidence they have collected to assess whether a child is progressing through development matters to the Early Learning Goals as laid out in the Learning and Development Section of the EYFS. They also record evidence of children's Characteristics of Effective Learning. This information is collated each term after the half term to monitor children's progress.
- **Recording achievement against the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile** - Throughout Reception Practitioners gather information and observations in order to make judgments about the progress each child is making towards the Profile Statements. At the end of Reception the class teachers complete the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile for each child. *For each Early Learning Goal, practitioners must judge whether a child is meeting the level of development (expected), exceeding this level (exceeding), or not yet reaching this level (emerging). This completed EYFS Profile must include a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning.* (Profile Handbook 2014)

The EYFS Progress Check at Age 2

All children in our setting between the ages of 2 and 3 will have a statutory progress check of their development. The EYFS requires that parents and carers must be supplied with a short written summary of their child's development in the three prime learning and development areas of the EYFS: Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Physical Development; and Communication and Language; when the child is aged between 24-36 months.

The aims of this progress check are to:

- Review a child's development in the three prime areas of the EYFS;
- Ensure that parents have a clear picture of their child's development;
- Enable practitioners to understand the child's needs and plan activities to meet them in setting;
- Enable parents to understand the child's needs and, with support from practitioners, enhance development at home;
- Note areas where a child is progressing well and identify any areas where progress is less than expected; and
- Describe actions the provider intends to take to address any developmental concerns (including working with other professionals where appropriate).

The check will

- Be completed by the child's key person;
- Arise from observational ongoing assessments carried out as part of everyday practice in the setting;
- Be based on the skills, knowledge, understanding and behavior that the child demonstrates consistently and independently;
- Take account of the views and contributions of the child's parents/carers;
- Take into account the views of other practitioners, and where relevant, professionals working with the child;
- Enable children to contribute actively to the process.

How do we use this information about children's learning?

We use the information we have collated to inform our planning. Key persons use daily and weekly planning and review meetings to feed in their observations and assessments to the class planning. Activities are also evaluated at the daily meetings (see planning document). With such a clear picture of each child's interests, achievements and learning needs we are able to plan experiences and offer opportunities that will reinforce and extend learning for the individual child within a class context.

The information from the On Entry Assessments and the development matters assessments is analysed to help give us a clearer picture of any gaps in provision, areas or aspects that need additional focus or individual or groups of children that need additional support. We meet termly with Early Years practitioners from nearby schools in order to help us to moderate and ensure consistency in our judgements.

How do we involve the children in assessing their own learning?

Children are constantly involved in assessing their learning through talking about what they are doing and things they have created. Asking children questions

such as what did you enjoy about that activity, what can you do that you couldn't do before, how did you make it, what do you like about what you have made, how could you make it better, does it do what you wanted/ expected it to do, etc. engages them in thinking about the learning that has taken place and encourages them to evaluate in a way that is accessible to young children.

In addition children are invited to share with their group things they have created or talk about things they have done. The children are encouraged to comment on, ask questions and make (polite) suggestions about their own and others creations and ideas.

The children's Learning Journals are used to support them to reflect on their own learning. It gives them the opportunity to remember, think about, discuss and evaluate pieces they have created, activities and events they have taken part in, discoveries they have made and interests they have developed.

When they are a focus child, the children are asked (when appropriate to their age) what activities they enjoy, which resources they like to play with and what their interests are and their opinions recorded. This information contributes to planning for children's needs and interests.

How are parents involved in assessment and monitoring?

Parents are involved in assessing and monitoring their children throughout their time in the EYFS.

Before their child starts Babies, Toddlers, Nursery or Reception each family is visited by their Key Person and another member of the team for a 'Home Visit'. This is an opportunity for the child and his/ her family to meet their key person and to talk about their child's needs and interests and to raise any concerns they may have. Through playing with the child and talking with the family we are able to make an initial informal assessment of each child's needs.

Once a child has started at Moreland parents have regular contact with their child's Key Person and class teacher/ room leader. Their Key Person is often available for a short chat at the beginning and end of the school day where parents and carers can find out what their child has been doing, inform the Key Person about a child's experiences out of school or developing interests and raise any concerns they might have. This informal contact ensures an open dialogue between home and school and provides valuable insight into a child's learning for both families and Practitioners.

More structured parent's meetings are arranged each term (see above). These give the Key Person and parents an opportunity to discuss children's progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. Parents are able to discuss with the Key Person/ class teacher their child's learning priorities for the following

term. Parents are given advice and ideas on how they can support their child's development and learning both at home and in school and Parents and Carers have the opportunity to share information about the child's interests and experiences outside of school.

Parents, carers and families are encouraged to make contributions to the children's Learning Journals. This gives them another avenue through which to share their knowledge of their child and their family experiences, make links between home and school and to communicate with the child's key worker.

When their child is the focus child parents are asked to complete a form detailing their opinions on their children's needs, interests and learning priorities. This information is used to support planning.

What systems are in place to identify and support children with Special Educational Needs?

We recognise the importance of identifying special educational needs as early as possible in order that children are given the appropriate support from the time they start school. Half termly Children and Families meetings, half termly SEN Review/ Progress Meetings and SEN support plans ensure the needs of children with additional needs are supported. Please refer to the Inclusion Policy for a detailed explanation of the system in place.

What happens when the child leaves the EYFS?

The Child's Learning Journal and information from the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile are passed onto the child's Year 1 teacher. (Profiles of children who move to another school either during nursery or at Reception will have assessment information included in their transfer information.) They will give the new teacher a clear picture of how the children's learning has progressed during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage and help to identify the level they are currently working at. The teacher will also be able to see areas where the child may need extra support or areas in which they are working above the level usually expected of a child of that age. This information helps ensure smooth transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1. Please refer to the Transition Policy for more information.