



Early Years Foundation
Stage Policy

March 2018



Aims

Our EYFS policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- Close partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- That statutory guidance and procedures are embedded within the Early Years department and curriculum to promote early development, achievement and safeguard all young learners within the school.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2017 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). A hard copy of the statutory framework and exemplar materials can be found within the main office in lower school.

The Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017 states four guiding principles which should shape practice in the early years. These are:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured.
- Children can 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.**

At the heart of our Early Years practice at the Phoenix School are the Characteristics of Learning, which are an integral part of our planning, teaching and assessment practices. They are as follows:

- Playing and Exploring
- Active Learning
- Creating and Thinking Critically



Core Principles

At the Phoenix School we strive to meet every child's entitlement to develop a love of learning that will enable them to have the best possible opportunities now and in the future. As such our Early Years department strives to:

- Place our children, their happiness and wellbeing at the forefront our ethos.
- Extend our Early Years curriculum across both Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
- Plan individually each 'area of learning' using a triangulation of subject coordinator 'can we's', development matters and P Level descriptors.
- Deliver an engaging, motivating and bespoke 'context' based curriculum.
- Encourage play in all its forms, including both indoor and outdoor opportunities.
- Plan fully differentiated lessons incorporating circle time, a balance of adult and child led activities and 1:1 opportunities.
- Provide continuous provision within classrooms wherever possible, using resources of a high quality and based around individual need and interest.
- Record ongoing assessment via online 'Learning Journals' and summative termly assessments in our 'Progress Files'.
- Involve families in our planning and aspirations for pupils during termly target settings, yearly home visits and any time parents wish to visit classes
- Support the review of a child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) to ensure it is a developmentally accurate portrayal of the child's needs and SMART, realistically aspirational outcomes are set in a truly collaborative manner.

Play

At the Phoenix school we believe that every person regardless of age, race, gender or disability has the right to play as outlined in the **United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child**,

"The child shall have full opportunity for play and recreation and society and public authorities shall endeavour to respect and promote the enjoyment of this right."

All play is purposeful and it is only truly play for plays sake when the child has chosen what to do, where, when and how to do it. Many of the children at the Phoenix will need a high level of support to access opportunities given to them for example adults will use their expertise and knowledge/ understanding of physical, cognitive and sensory impairment to do this.

As adults we want to be play partners people who are prepared to share physical and mental space with the pupils of our school, but also respect their desire for space or need to play in isolation. We aim to be more playful in our approach and provide positive role models. We acknowledge that play works best when the children know their play partner well and develop a positive and trusting relationship.

As teachers we use play as a tool to support learning but beyond that we want children to play outside the formal curriculum in other words play for plays sake. We aim to work with parents and carers to help them gain understanding and acceptance of the risks and benefits associated with play, we will share our approach to play through target setting and provide training for staff and parents.



Curriculum

In the Early Years Statutory Framework learning and development are categorised into prime and specific areas of learning. At the Phoenix School these areas of learning are:

- Communication and Literacy
- Physical Development Education (PE)
- Personal, Social, Health and Emotional Development (PSHE)

- Numeracy
- Learning about the World
- Creative Arts

These areas of learning form the curriculum for the Phoenix Early Years, including Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The decision to create bespoke areas of learning was made to incorporate the wealth of approaches and learning opportunities provided at the Phoenix. We aim to tailor the EYFS to the needs of our learners, all of whom have severe and/or profound learning difficulties and disabilities.

Planning for the long term curriculum is themed around engaging contexts (see Early Years Curriculum Document) on a two year cycle. Lessons and continuous provision, where appropriate, are planned according to individual pupil interest, accessibility and need by the class teacher. All staff working within a class team are invited to contribute to planning and selecting provision for pupils.

Class teachers set each child individual termly targets for each area of learning on a medium term plan, incorporating IEP targets and priorities from the child's EHCP. The Assistant Head of Early Years undertakes provision mapping yearly for each child in the department, reviewing access to a range of learning opportunities and interventions.

Assessment

On-going formative assessment is at the heart of our effective early years practice. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. From September 2017 the Early Years department have used 'Tapestry' online learning journal as an ongoing assessment tool for recording written and photographic evidence of learning (see appendix A – tapestry).

Summative assessment in the EYFS takes the form of a termly written paragraph assessing progress towards targets for each area of learning, supported by photographic evidence. Annually these assessments feed into a teachers report for the annual review of each child's EHCP.

At the end of the Foundation Stage a pupil profile is completed. This is internally moderated by class team and the Assistant Head of Early Years. We also attend yearly moderation within the Peterborough LA to moderate with Early Years settings across the city, providing evidence for scrutiny and receiving written feedback on our Early Years assessment practices.



Working in Partnership with Families

We place highly the benefits of working in partnership with families and these relationships have a huge impact on the effectiveness of our Early Years department. We value our families and endeavour to actively maintain these by sharing information, ideas, expertise and our knowledge within our team and with parents, carers, colleagues and other professionals. Many of our child arrive at school via school transport so we are committed to finding multiple ways of effectively communicating with families, sharing successes and being available for families to contact.

Each child will have a pastoral teaching assistant who will fulfil the role of their 'key person'. This role entails an in-depth knowledge of the child's individual needs, contributing to their ongoing assessment, and building a strong relationship with the child's family. Children will have an 'All About Me' profile which outlines the individual's important information, communication skills, learning behaviours and preferences for all staff working within the class.

We work with families in the following ways:

- Daily reporting via home school communication books.
- Phone calls as needed to communicate information and share successes.
- Termly target setting meetings, two formal appointments in school per year and one home visit per year.
- Family learning projects; where parents and carers can come to school to take part in weekly sessions such as cooking or gardening for example, with their child.
- Termly whole school coffee mornings with class groups and smaller family support groups half termly.
- Annual review of the child's EHCP, supported by school staff.
- Support to complete paperwork or access services for their child via our Family Liaison Officers, including support in languages other than English.

Transitions

Planning for a smooth and thorough transition starts as soon as possible following our school being named on a child's EHCP as per LA admissions guidance. At the Phoenix School we have created good links with schools and pre-schools across the city and endeavour to build new relationships with pre-school establishments to ensure the effective hand over of transition information.

To ensure the best possible transition we:

- Value the parent as the first educator of their child
- Arrange a home visit by the class teacher or assistant head to meet the child and their family and to gather information and to tell the parent about our school.
- Additionally we arrange for our Parent Liaison team to meet with the family to complete admissions paperwork and help families with completing any health or transport applications appropriate. This can be in the form of a home visit or meeting at school as per the parent's wishes.
- Make contact with the child's current education setting and arrange a visit to share information and see the child in setting if appropriate / possible.
- Complete a new to school Pupil Profile following the completion of the two to three visits above, which will form the basis of the child's 'All About Me' profile.



- Arrange with the family some appropriate times for the child to visit their new class (where available) or a suitable alternative building up to transition half days. The number and frequency of these will be decided on an individual basis, according to the child's needs.
- Use written information sent by pre-schools and the child's EHCP to inform early planning.
- Provide an individualised start date (if not at the beginning of the year).

Monitoring

This policy and information report will be reviewed by the Assistant Head of Early Years every 3 years. It will also be updated if any changes to the statutory guidance are made during the year. It will be approved by the governor representative for Early Years.

Links

This policy links to our policies on:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equal Opportunities
- Behaviour
- Accessibility Plan
- Complaints Procedure
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions

Written by:

Assistant Head of Early Years

Date: March 2018

Approved by:

Governor

Next review due by: March 2021



Appendix A – Tapestry

Procedure

The Phoenix School ensures that all children in Early Years have an online learning journal which records photos, observations, comments and assessments, in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage, to build up a record of each child's achievements throughout each year. This evidence is used alongside their Progress Files which track each child's individual progress throughout their school careers.

- The Phoenix School use an online Learning Journal system (Tapestry), allowing staff to access the information from any computer via a personal, password-protected login.
- Staff access allows input of new observations, photos and assessments or amendment of existing observations and photos.
- Parent's cannot currently access the online tapestry and receive a hard copy each term of their child's learning journal.
- Observations recorded into the Tapestry system may be validated by a manager before being added to the child's Learning Journal.
- Parents are asked to sign a consent form giving permission for their child's image to appear in other children's journals, and to protect images of other children that may appear in any photos contained in their child's journal.
- The journal is started once the child has started Reception. During the first term, entries will be made more frequently as staff get to know the children.
- New observational entries to a child's journal will usually be uploaded within two weeks of the observation being made. Observations and updates to the journal may not occur every day that the child attends.
- In all written observations, other children are referred to by first name only.

Safeguarding

The Tapestry online Learning Journal system is hosted on secure dedicated servers based in the UK. The server host takes security very seriously, both online and physically. You will notice that the 'https' prefix in the website address denotes that it is a 'secure' site. Media taken using the school's assessment iPads will be uploaded into Tapestry and then deleted from the iPad periodically.

Access to information stored on Tapestry can only be gained by unique user I.D. and password. Parents do not have online access to the learning journal. Once a child leaves the Phoenix School, a request will be made for their data to be deleted. After 30 days the data will be irreversibly deleted. If a member of staff leaves the Phoenix School, their access to Tapestry will be revoked immediately and their details deleted from the system. Parents must NOT upload any media from Tapestry onto social media sites.

Staff may access Tapestry at home via their school laptop and secure login. Staff must ensure they do not save photographs from Tapestry onto their own personal laptop/tablets. Staff must ensure they log out once they have finished and must not share their access with anyone in their family.