

Marsh Green EYFS Policy June 2021

EYFS Policy & Philosophy at Marsh Green Primary School, all teaching staff deliver an EYFS curriculum through immersion in high quality teaching alongside an enriched environment. Our philosophy is to nurture every child's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, developing both skills and confidence as they take their first steps on their own unique journey of lifelong learning.

Intent-

Our curriculum is adaptable and ambitious, it changes in line with our ever changing cohorts to meet their needs and the community they belong to. We aim to motivate and inspire our children through a curriculum that engages and challenges all of our learners. Our curriculum begins with the child and what they already know from their own experiences at home and within our Nursery settings. We plan from what they know and then expose them to new experiences, concepts and knowledge to develop new learning and ideas while consistently planning opportunities to review in order to ensure deep learning is embedded. Our curriculum will focus on three key ideas: One to develop **personal life skills** such as communicating with others, the ability to listen, show empathy, to compromise and to share. The second is to develop **practical life skills** such as using cutlery, riding a bike and looking after others. The third is **learning new skills to enable them to become lifelong learners**, who enjoy coming to school. We aim to make learning fun and enjoyable while still acquiring the skills needed to read, write and solve mathematical problems. All three of these key areas are bespoke to the individual child on their own learning journey and this why our curriculum needs to be adaptable in order to meet the differing needs.

Implementation-

Our curriculum is well planned and provides opportunities for cross curricular links, cultural capital opportunities and new experiences. Each term, we have a focused 'theme' which has been planned to support pupil's long-term memory and ability to link new ideas to previously taught skills and knowledge. Children are immersed in a diet of vocabulary which is high-level and subject specific to further enhance their understanding of their topic as well as providing them with a breadth of language. Each theme has a list of high-quality, focused reading texts which link with a variety of learning areas to further enhance subject knowledge. For each focused theme, teachers plan exciting stimulus' that are used to hook and engage the children in the new learning as well as helping to assess pupils' prior experiences. It also encourages discussion with the children and deepens their knowledge. Our curriculum is delivered through quality-first teaching providing timely feedback to ensure a rapid pace of learning and progress. We provide a language rich and varied learning environment which is rooted in quality interactions between adults and children and their peers, assessment, moderation and monitoring that allows all pupils to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential. Throughout this process, we are constantly re-evaluating our position in our curriculum journey, alongside the latest research and amending our objectives and adapting our approach to match the needs of the

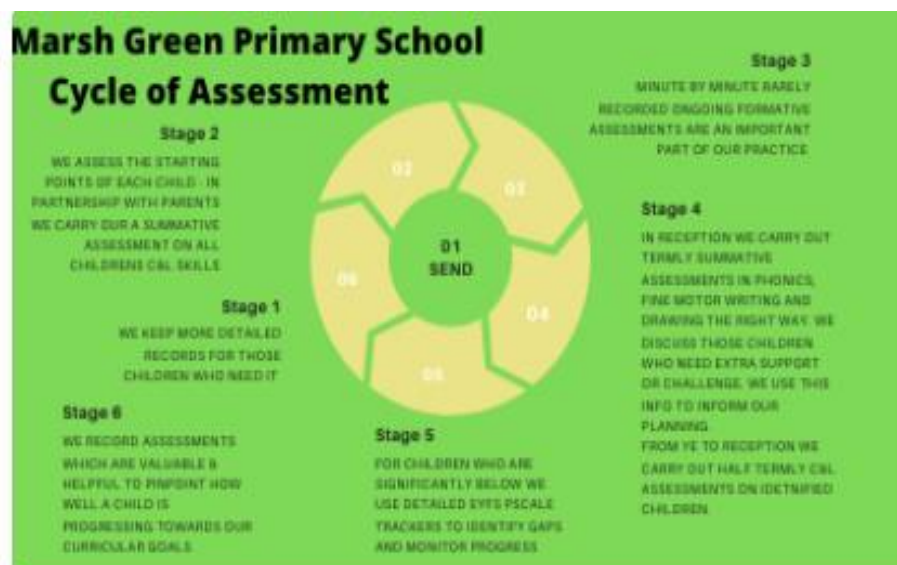
children



IMPACT-

Our curriculum ensures that children are provided with opportunities to build on prior experiences and make connections in their learning through the progression of knowledge and skills. Through the breadth and depth of our curriculum, children are confident and resilient and well equipped for key Stage One. Our curriculum enables children to become enthusiastic learners, curious with a thirst to know more

Assessment-



Within continuous provision our assessment strategy is 3-fold.

1. Observation throughout 'continuous provision', observation forms a fundamental aspect of the pedagogy of EYFS at Marsh Green primary. **"Young children demonstrate language, mathematics, science, creativity, physicality – sometimes all within one activity – and the task of the practitioner is to make sense of what is seen, to recognise any significant steps in learning that may have taken place and to identify where help and support are needed to make further progress"** Jan Dubiel, 2014

Observation and responding to children's thinking inform our planning of experiences and opportunities, how we create our environment for thinking, the strategies the adults use to extend learning (modelling, scaffolding, questioning, discussion, shared sustained thinking) and how we capitalise knowledge of children's interests to ensure high levels of engagement. All adults record 'Wow!' moments - when a child does or says something that demonstrates progress or skill in a particular area. The majority of observations are noted within the practitioners knowledge of the children and how to support them in their moment of learning. Each term we aim to focus on each individual child at least once, building up a picture of a child's progress so far.

2. The 'Leuven Scales' - used each half term, alongside the use of observation as an assessment tool. The pioneering work of Professor Ferre Laevers (1980s) helps us to understand how focused and comfortable the children are in our setting. The scales of well-being and involvement act as a measure of deep learning and of the effectiveness of the learning environment. This has an empowering impact on our planning and can help to develop the huge potential of the children.

The 5-point scale measures:

Well Being refers to feeling at ease, being spontaneous and free of emotional tensions and is crucial to good mental health. It is linked to self confidence, a good degree of self-esteem and resilience.

The Leuven Scale for Well-being

Level	Well-being	Signals
1	Extremely low	The child clearly shows signs of discomfort such as crying or screaming. They may look dejected, sad, frightened or angry. The child does not respond to the environment, avoids contact and is withdrawn. The child may behave aggressively, hurting him/ herself or others.
2	Low	The posture, facial expression and actions indicate that the child does not feel at ease. However, the signals are less explicit than under level 1 or the sense of discomfort is not expressed the whole time.
3	Moderate	The child has a neutral posture. Facial expression and posture show little or no emotion. There are no signs indicating sadness or pleasure, comfort or discomfort.
4	High	The child shows obvious signs of satisfaction (as listed under level 5). However, these signals are not constantly present with the same intensity.
5	Extremely high	The child looks happy and cheerful, smiles, cries out with pleasure. They may be lively and full of energy. Actions can be spontaneous and expressive. The child may talk to him/herself, play with sounds, hum, sing. The child appears relaxed and does not show any signs of stress or tension. He/she is open and accessible to the environment. The child expressed self-confidence and self-assurance.

Involvement refers to being intensely engaged in activities and is a necessary condition for deep level learning and development.

The Leuven Scale for Involvement

Level	Well-being	Signals
1	Extremely low	Activity is simple, repetitive and passive. The child seems absent and displays no energy. They may stare into space or look around to see what others are doing.
2	Low	Frequently interrupted activity. The child will be engaged in the activity for some of the time they are observed, but there will be moments of non-activity when they will stare into space, or be distracted by what is going on around.
3	Moderate	Mainly continuous activity. The child is busy with the activity but at a fairly routine level and there are few signs of real involvement. They make some progress with what they are doing but don't show much energy and concentration and can be easily distracted.
4	High	Continuous activity with intense moments. They child's activity has intense moments and at all times they seem involved. They are not easily distracted.
5	Extremely high	The child shows continuous and intense activity revealing the greatest involvement. They are concentrated, creative, energetic and persistent throughout nearly all the observed period.

3. Summative Assessments

In addition to the continuous cycle of observation and formative assessment which informs each child's next steps, summative assessments are carried out for phonic development, the stable order principle in number and an assessment of each child's stage of development for each of the 7 areas of learning. These take place termly if needed and informs planning of subsequent teaching and learning, we will use the 'Sounds Write - Diagnostic Test'.

The role of the adult:

Research shows that progress will be significantly enhanced by the effective support and role models of adults within a high-quality learning environment. At Marsh Green the role of the adult particularly during continuous provision is based upon the work of Marion Dowling and her book on supporting sustained shared thinking (2005). Within our setting interactions between children and adults will look like this:

- Tuning in to what is happening or a child's thinking.
- Showing genuine interest.
- Respecting children's own decisions and choices.
- Inviting children to elaborate.
- Recapping on what has happened so far.
- Offering personal experience.
- Clarifying ideas.
- Reminding

Using specific praise e.g. that is a good idea because...

- Offering an alternative viewpoint.
- Speculating/ using 'I wonder if...'

The definition of teaching in the Early Years as stated by OFSTED (2015):

"Teaching should not be taken to imply a 'top down' or formal way of working. It is a broad term which covers the many ways in which adults help young children learn. It includes their interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities: communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating and setting challenges."

It takes account of the equipment they provide and the attention to the physical environment as well as the structure and routines of the day that establish expectations, including personal and individual routines and timetables. Integral to teaching is how practitioners assess what children know, understand and can do as well as take account of their interests and dispositions to learning (characteristics of effective learning), and use this information to plan children's next steps in

learning and monitor their progress.

'Interact, don't interfere'

"A key role of the early childhood educator is to sustain children's thinking and follow the momentum of their learning." Julie Fisher, 2016.

The role of the environment

The importance of each adult to support progression is crucial however, we equally understand that in times when a child is on their own independent learning journey the environment plays a significant role in development.

"When it comes to what we have and where we have it, then nothing should be left to chance"
Alistair Bryce-Clegg, 2015.

At Marsh Green each area of the classroom is informed by assessment. As the needs of the children change, as they grow and develop and as their interests change, so does their learning space. Using resources that are open ended encourage creativity, imagination and high order thinking skills. For example, the creative area may contain ribbon, lace, pine cones or lolly sticks. Outside role play is de-constructed with access to logs, planks, sheets and tyres. These resources can become anything and have unlimited potential. Our timetable allows for long uninterrupted periods of continuous provision that allow the children time to reach a deep level of involvement as they engage, play, investigate and talk.



Weaving throughout the EYFS curriculum at Marsh Green are three Characteristics of Effective Learning.

- playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, encouraging 'have a go' attitude
- active learning - children concentrate, 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

These elements underpin how we reflect on each child's development and adjust our practice accordingly. Supporting children in their individual learning behaviour and observing the context of children's play is essential. **"What children learn is important, but how children learn is even more important if they are to become learners in today's society."** Helen Moylett *How Children Learn*, Nancy Stewart (2011)

Parent Engagement-

Parents are the first and most important influence on their child's development and future outcomes. Children have two main educators in their lives - their parents and their teachers. Therefore, the

school and the parents all have crucial roles to play. The impact on a child's education is greater if parents and schools work in partnership. At Marsh Green, parents are invited to be involved in every step of a child's journey in education. Beginning with a pre-starting school meeting, followed up with setting/home visits and the invitation for their child to attend several 'transition' sessions before the Autumn term commences.

We use 'Class Dojo' to celebrate progress made by each child, share learning and information with parents on an ongoing basis. Text, images and videos can be uploaded by parents to share learning and experiences from home via PC, tablet or our mobile app - anywhere there's an online connection. Throughout the year families are invited to 'Stay and Play' sessions in the EYFS classroom along with many whole school events e.g. parent café, art exhibitions, family festival, assemblies etc. We pride ourselves on building positive relationships with the families of Marsh Green. Creating a **'triangle of trust'** (Elfer et al.) between children, parents and practitioners.

We understand that when parents relinquish part of the care and teaching of their child to the staff in our setting it is a big step. We create an environment that is conducive to interactions where all feelings can be taken into account. A warm welcome each day often leads to a deeper knowledge and understanding of each child and their family. As stated earlier, **"it is knowing the child and family that opens up endless possibilities for interactions that deepen the emotional bonds between a practitioner and a child, and lead, in turn, to educational opportunities to support and extend learning."** (Fisher, 2016) These relationships will be deepened and supported by our school pastoral team.

At Marsh Green we:

1. Tailor practice to the needs of our children - the child is at the centre of our practice. We have a clear vision of what we want to achieve for the children in our care, and these clear goals inform all areas of our practice.
2. Invest in skilled and experienced staff - that support children to reach their full potential.
3. Operate an open and reflective culture - our culture is driven by continuous improvement. We seek out other settings and professionals to learn from, share and reflect practice. We recognise the knowledge and expertise of our own staff and value open discussion and staff consultation; and embedded within our school is a culture of self-evaluation as a means of driving continuous improvement.

**We are a school with heart, creating learners for life.
Marsh Green Staff**