



## EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

### 1. Introduction

'Every pupil deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A pupil's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'

*Early Years Foundation Stage Profile - Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012*

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. Pupils join the Reception class in QEGS Primary Phase in the year that they turn five. In partnership with parents and carers we enable the pupils to begin the process of becoming active learners for life. The Early Years Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and also in preparing pupils for later schooling. It is the Early Learning Goals that set out what is expected of most pupils by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

### 2. Aims & Objectives

We aim to support all pupils to become independent and collaborative learners. Across the Foundation Stage, we will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each pupil to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

In QEGS Primary Phase we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the pupils to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each pupil can do, assessing their individual needs and next steps and helping each pupil to progress. We will use a variety of assessment methods including on-going short and long observations, adult and pupil led activities and the use of the Tapestry assessment tool.
- Develop positive relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their pupils.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment, which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual pupil including those who have additional needs.

The early-years education we offer our pupils is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our pupils already know and can do;

- It ensures that no pupil is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young pupils, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment;
- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers and the benefits of sharing both successes and concerns with them.

### **3. Learning and Developing**

The EYFS Curriculum reflects the learning aims and objectives set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in all Early Years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected and none can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our pupils' learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across these areas of learning. They require a balance of adult led and pupil initiated activities in order for pupils to develop effectively and to give them the best chance of obtaining a good level of development at the end of their Reception year.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting pupils' curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The three Prime areas are:

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

Staff will also support pupils in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Pupil development levels are assessed and, as the year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as pupils grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. If a pupil's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the pupil's parents/carers and agree how to support the pupil.

#### **4. Characteristics of Effective Learning**

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- Playing and exploring - pupils will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- Active learning - pupils will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically - we encourage and support pupils to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

#### **5. Planning**

The EYFS Curriculum provides the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. We use the Cornerstones curriculum, which is a project-based curriculum, enabling us to spark pupils' interests, ask questions about the world, and then find the answers through teaching, exploration and collaborative working and problem solving. The planning is based upon themes and/or discrete phonics, maths and other directed teaching. The themes are those that the EYFS team have identified as vehicles of interest to deliver the pupils' next steps in learning and also to respond to the individual needs, achievements and interests of the pupils. We plan first hand experiences and provide opportunities for challenges appropriate to the development of the children.

#### **6. Assessment**

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of pupils in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing pupils to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each pupil reflecting those observations. To ensure we have evidence of a pupil's progress in the EYFS we use a range of strategies, all of which come together in their individual profile. We are proud of our profiles: these are collections of a pupil's work, photos and observations, which create a detailed picture of the pupil. Where appropriate, we include individual next steps for pupils' learning. These next steps are discussed by the EYFS team in informal daily meetings after school and in the planning meetings with the Joint Heads of Primary Phase, these next steps inform planning for the next day and week ahead. Staff have their own mobile device (iPad or Tablet), which is used to capture and note observations and next steps for learning. Parents have access to the profiles, which are stored in the unit, and are encouraged to contribute with significant events that happen at home. The profile is shared with parents throughout the year and the completed document is able to be viewed as a whole, at the end of the year, or if a child leaves our setting.

##### **Baseline Assessments**

Staff assess the pupils during their first few weeks at school to ensure that their learning is personalised and next steps are identified. Records from Nurseries and other Childcare Providers are taken in to consideration alongside parental comments, observations, informal learning interviews, CEM Baseline assessment and staff discussions at EYFS team meetings. A personalised learning programme is then developed for each pupil based on the Development Matters guidance.

## **Ongoing Assessments**

Throughout the EYFS the Form Teacher submits end of term assessment data to the Head, presenting each pupil's development across the seven areas of learning. At the end of Reception the Form teacher assesses each pupil against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) and comments on whether their development within each ELG is either 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding'.

At the end of the final term of a pupil's Reception year we send a summary of these assessments to the LA for analysis. The pupil's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information too at parents' evenings and in the Trinity term report. Parents/carers receive an annual written report that offers comments on their child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the pupil's strengths and developmental needs, and gives details of the general progress. We complete these in the Trinity term and send them to parents/carers before the end of the school year.

## **7. The Learning Environment**

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe pupils learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using pupils' interests as a starting point, we provide them with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. The EYFS learning environment is organised to allow pupils to explore and learn securely and safely indoors and outdoors. The environment is organised into continuous provision areas, where pupils are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside others, as well as on their own. Pupils are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives pupils the opportunity to pursue their interests, adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions.

Our outdoors provision offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the pupils the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. At QEGS we believe it is important that adults take an active role in 'pupil initiated play' through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between 'pupil initiated play' and adult led activities is very important to us.

## **8. Transition**

Starting school can be a difficult time for young pupils; we therefore plan this time carefully to support pupils with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible and they are able to settle in to their new class quickly and happily. In Reception pupils are invited to a taster session before their official start date. Staff are on hand to meet and greet parents/carers with pupils and answer any questions they might have.

Parents/carers of all children entering Reception will be invited to an Induction Meeting in the Trinity term before they join in order to meet their child's new teachers and other key staff.

This is an opportunity for staff to:

- To go through the Primary Phase Handbook
- Explain about uniform, PE kit and school lunches

- Explain about holidays and absences
- Answer any questions parents/carers might have about starting school
- Explain the arrangements for starting school in September
- Talk to the parents/carers about the school and Government expectations at the end of the EYFS.

Prior to pupils joining Reception, our staff undertake home visits for our new families, to ensure we introduce ourselves to the pupils, gain an insight into pupils' likes and dislikes through an informal chat and answer any questions the pupils or parents/carers may have. When pupils begin their Reception year in the September, we find that it is best for all pupils to start at the same time. We encourage parents/carers to bring their children for full days from day one and we actively encourage independence, aiming for pupils to come into class independently. Throughout the Reception year we aim to build up pupils involvement in whole school life helping them to become familiar with many of the teaching and support staff working in other classes. Pupils will have taken part in the weekly achievement assembly, as well as sharing the lunch hall with the other pupils.

## **9. Safeguarding & Welfare**

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

*Statutory Framework for EYFS 2017*

At QEGS, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014.

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where pupils can grow in confidence;
- Promote good health;
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the pupil's stage of development and individual needs;
- To ensure that all adults who look after the pupils, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so;
- Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for;
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the pupils.

It is important to us that all pupils in the school are 'safe'. We educate pupils on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. Pupils are taught our school values and we provide pupils with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage pupils to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and

psychological well-being of all pupils. (Further information can be found in the whole school safeguarding policy)

## **10. Partnership with parents and carers**

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents/carers have played, and their future role, in supporting the pupils. We do this through:

- talking to parents/carers and giving the pupils the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school;
- providing access to Primary Phase information via our school website;
- inviting all parents/carers to an induction meeting during the term before pupils begin school in order to detail how we aim to work with their child;
- encouraging parents/carers to talk to the pupil's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents/carers twice a year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the pupil's progress in private. Parents/Carers receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between pupil, school and parents/carers: trips, stay and play sessions, rhyme and story time sessions, school visits and charitable events;
- written contact through home school diary as well as the acknowledgement that parents/carers can ring, email or speak to the teachers;
- sending home pupil information sheets, asking parents/carers to share suggestions, comments about their child's likes, dislikes or concerns.
- posting information on Class Dojo to celebrate pupils' work and progress;

## **11. Healthy Eating**

All pupils are provided with a balanced school meal for their lunch. Pupils are given a choice of meal, which is balanced and eaten together with their peers and KS1 in the main school dining hall.

Pupils within EYFS and KS1 have access to fruit provided by the government during the school day. If parents/carers wish to send additional snacks they must be healthy with no added sugar. We also have an option for parents/carers to pay £1 per week for their child to have a warm snack such as toast, crumpets. These are provided by the catering team and are served to the pupils at approximately 10:00am.

Pupils under the age of five are entitled to free school milk and, once they turn 5, parents/carers can opt into receiving Coolmilk for a fee. More information can be found at [www.coolmilk.com](http://www.coolmilk.com)

We also ask pupils to bring a named water bottle to school, which they can access throughout the day.

## **12. Intimate Care**

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most pupils are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a pupil's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping

their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. We actively encourage parents/carers to start helping their child become independent with these tasks as soon as they start in Nursery. Every pupil has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff and parents/carers work in partnership to give the right support to an individual pupil.

### **Monitoring and review**

The EYFS teachers and staff will follow the principles in the policy.

This policy is monitored by the Joint Heads of Primary Phase. It is reviewed annually.

Updated by Mrs H Southworth: 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018

Approved by Board of Governors: 24<sup>th</sup> September 2018