



QUEENSWAY SCHOOL

Early Years Policy

Rationale

At Queensway School and Nursery we aim to nurture all children to strive to be the best they can be. We believe that the Early Years Foundation Stage is crucial in securing solid foundations for a child's future education. It is our intent to inspire and ignite a life long love of learning in every child. We believe that children thrive in an environment rich in wonder and memorable experiences which allows children's natural creativity and curiosity to flourish, alongside the purposeful acquisition of skills and knowledge. We aim for all our children to develop physically, verbally, cognitively and emotionally whilst embedding a positive attitude. We know that our children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with varied life experiences and we aim to plan teaching and learning opportunities accordingly to ensure that all children reach their full potential.

Aims

This 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
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that applies from October 2024.

Structure of EYFS

Our Early Years provision comprises of one Nursery class and two Reception Classes. Our Nursery caters for children aged between 3-4 years old. Children are eligible for a place the term after their third birthday. Places are available to children with both 15 and 30 hours funding.

- 15 hours am sessions 8.30am – 11.30am
- 15 hours pm sessions 12pm – 3pm
- 30 hours sessions – 9am – 3pm.

If availability permits, parents of children with 15 hours funding can pay for their child to stay for lunch or the full day.

- Cost is £3.30 to stay for lunch 11.30am – 12.30pm. Children can either bring a packed lunch or pay an additional £2.30 for hot meal.
- Cost of additional morning or afternoon session is £10.50 per day.

Leadership

The role of designated Early Years leader

The leader needs to have a passion for and be a champion for Early Years provision. They need to ensure that they continue to develop their own understanding and expertise, keeping up with any new initiatives. To lead the area and achieve maximum impact, the leader will regularly complete these tasks:

- Planning scrutinies
- Learning walks
- Moderation at assessment points
- Working alongside staff with focus groups of children
- Supporting staff with planning
- Ensuring that the appropriate support is in place where issues have been identified in progress or attainment
- Delivering CPD to both teachers and TAs in an environment where all staff are valued and feel confident to share their own ideas and experiences
- Liaising with subject leaders to ensure that all leaders have a strong understanding of what their subject looks like in early years and vice versa
- Managing the Early years budget
- Feeding back to staff from Partnership meetings or CPD they have attended
- Analysing data at the 3 assessment points and any interim assessment points
- Writing reports for the Quality of Education committee of Governors
- Sharing and sign posting teachers to high quality resources

Curriculum

Our Early Years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from October 2024.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

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

Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working in Nursery are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

In our Early Years, we follow a topic based curriculum, as per Queensway's Long Term Plan. However, we also plan time in throughout the year to allow staff to follow children's specific interests, motivations or needs. In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

Staff use the Birth to Five Matters guidance to help support them plan effectively in order to deliver the statutory framework.

Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a combination of adult-led and child-initiated activities both inside and outside. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through nurturing, positive interaction.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning underpin all our learning activities and these principles are explicitly taught to the children throughout the year by the use of characters such as 'Never Give up Nemo' and 'Concentrating Kitty.' Through regular discussions, children are encouraged to talk about their learning and recognise what it was that helped them to succeed.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more structured learning, ready for year 1.

Assessment

At Queensway, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. EYFS staff use an online learning journal called Evidence Me to record observations of children's learning. Evidence usually includes photographs or video clips and may be of individuals or groups of children. Children's language is recorded whenever possible as this gives insight into a child's thinking, understanding and language development. Adults link observations to different areas of learning and characteristics of effective learning. In line with the intentions of the statutory framework for Early Years 2024, staff are not expected to record lots of evidence for each child.

Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers. Parents are actively encouraged to upload evidence from home on an ongoing basis as these observations are invaluable in helping practitioners build a well-rounded picture and understanding of children's individual development. They also provide great discussion points between staff and children.

Staff update our internal assessment tracking four times a year: Baseline, December, February and June. Staff record which range from Birth to Five that a child is working in using a 'best fit' judgement. The focus being on whether a child is on track or not on track.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels (emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the Local Authority.

Working with parents

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers. We appreciate the role that parents have played and their future role in educating the children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before they start nursery or school and throughout their journey with us.
- Visiting all children in their home setting or arranging a meet the teacher appointment within our setting prior to starting school or nursery.
- The children have the opportunity to come into school to spend time in the environment and get to know their teacher as part of the transition arrangements in the Summer term.
- Being invited to a transition morning or afternoon for a stay and play session before starting Nursery.
- Sending each parents induction materials about EYFS at Queensway and what their child's Reception and Nursery journey will look like.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to discuss their child's progress in the class before and after school sessions or any concerns either the teacher or parent may have.
- Keeping parents and/or carers up to date with their child's progress and development via Evidence Me, Google classrooms, parent meetings and end of year reports.
- The EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the Early Years by talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth
- The importance of visiting the Dentist every six months
- How to adopt a good brushing technique

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Head Teacher and the Quality of Education Committee. Any alterations that come from this review will be discussed and ratified by the full Governing Body.

Chair of Quality of Education Date

Head TeacherDate