

Introduction It is important that the first encounter our young children and their parent/carer have with school is a positive and happy experience. It is our intention to create a high quality teaching and learning environment throughout our Foundation Stage, both indoors and outdoors, that is well-structured, purposeful, interesting and challenging. Outdoor play is an integral part of the foundation curriculum and is an essential part of the child's daily environment and life, not an option or an extra. It is crucial to the child's health and physical development.

'The best classroom and richest cupboard is roofed only by the sky.' (Margaret McMillan, 1925)

"Outdoor learning is a crucial element of the EYFS Framework. Being outdoors has a positive impact on children's sense of well-being and development. It offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It gives children first-hand contact with weather, seasons and the natural world. Outdoor environments offer children freedom to explore, use their senses, take risks and be physically active and exuberant. Outdoor learning is fun!"

FoundationYears.org (see also Enabling Environments, The Outdoor Environment, Development Matters, DFE)

'Children can learn to make decisions, solve problems and grow in confidence in their own abilities outdoors and they need plenty of time to investigate their outdoor environment purposefully. They will make predictions about what may happen based on their previous play experiences and test out these ideas and theories.' (EYFS Outdoors 2007)

Principles and Aims

- To recognise that the seven areas of learning ~ personal, social and emotional development; communication and language; physical development; mathematical; understanding the world; expressive arts and design; literacy ~ form the basis of the early years curriculum and are fundamental to the total development of the child, socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually and can be developed and supported through effective outdoor play.
- To provide real life outdoor experiences appropriate to the child's stage of development, using the Early Years Profile, Early Learning Goals (ELG) and the Early Years Outcomes and Development Matters to support planning and assessment.
- To create a positive outdoor learning environment which is safe for children to solve problems, take risks, discuss, debate and be challenged.
- To ensure that learning outside supports the development of healthy and active lifestyles by offering children opportunities for physical activity, freedom and movement, and promoting a sense of well-being.
- To organise outdoor provision where children have the opportunity to reflect, repeat and refine their work on a small and large scale independently or collaboratively within a well structured outdoor environment. To provide children with the freedom to ask their own questions, think critically and develop their imagination and independent ideas through high quality resources and enhancements.
- To experience first-hand the natural environment, including seasonal changes, weather and climate and other environmental issues. To promote awe and wonder of the world. To encourage children to take care of and be responsible for the environment they live in.
- To work collaboratively as a foundation team in planning and sharing expertise to support an effective outdoor area. To observe and assess learning through the outdoor environment.

Teaching and Learning Across the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are given opportunity to access the outdoors at all times and in all weathers through a free-flow approach to the timetable. Pupils will be provided with appropriate clothing and equipment based on the weather and outdoor conditions. The outdoor environment will only be unavailable during focused carpet time and if the environment or weather is unsafe to work due to daily risk assessment checks.

Outdoor provision is organised in a similar way to indoor provision, using a continuous and enhanced provision approach. It is organised with designated areas of provision which allow for continuous provision. The continuous provision is set up the same each day and is labelled ensuring that children can independently access and tidy away the equipment. These areas can be enhanced to support the children's interests and/or topics. The enhancements in outdoor play are heavily led by the child's interests.

By organising in such a way, children have the opportunity to repeat and refine their work on a small and large scale within a structured outdoor environment. This also encourages them to develop their independent ideas through the enhancements added. However the outdoor environment has unique characteristics and features. The outdoor environment will offer more freedom and space to move, and will inspire different movement from the indoor environment. It provides opportunities to work on a larger scale with larger equipment such as crates, guttering and physical equipment. The outdoors also provides real life and first hand experiences that the indoor environment cannot, such as the opportunity to experience all weather conditions, seasonal changes, living things and their habitats. Children use the equipment to develop hand/eye coordination, co-operative play and gross motor skills.

The Role of The Adult The role of the adult outdoors is crucial. Effective adult intervention, support and challenge during play will help to ensure that pupils make good progress across the ages and stages of development. All staff within the EYFS are responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of outdoor learning and will intervene when necessary to direct and support play. Staff will ensure there is an adequate adult: pupil ratio at all times outdoors. They will act accordingly to make sure that the outdoor area is safe at all times. Adults will act as role models for pupils, for example they will ensure they also have appropriate clothing for all weathers. Adults will also ensure that equipment is correctly and safely stored and organised using the outdoor sheds and container.

Health and Safety (please see outdoor provision risk assessments) All staff within the EYFS are responsible for carrying out a daily risk assessment before setting up the outdoor provision. Staff must consider the weather conditions at all times. Any decisions and actions taken must then be communicated to all EYFS staff. Reasonable adjustments will be made due to health and safety checks, e.g. in some weather conditions it will be necessary that pupils are appropriately dressed before accessing some areas of provision. Staff must ensure that there is always an adequate adult: pupil ratio when working in the outdoors. Pupils are provided with all the necessary equipment to stay safe and warm outdoors e.g. waterproofs and gloves and parents are also encouraged to provide suitable outdoor clothing. Rules and expectations for the outdoor area are agreed and set by all members of the EYFS team. These rules and agreements are shared with all pupils and are clearly displayed within the setting. A risk assessment will take place for each area of outdoor provision, which are then reviewed on a yearly basis and agreed by all EYFS staff.

Assessment and Recording through the Outdoors Assessment occurs daily and incidental observations are recorded. Observations take place in the outdoor area across all areas of the EYFS, which are then used to inform teacher judgements regarding individual EYFS profile and will further inform planning. Observation sheets will be recorded on a daily basis to monitor the children's interests and schemas. These are a point of reference for the next outdoor session to extend and support the children's learning and development. Observation sheets are also discussed during EYFS team meetings to ensure consistency and continuity.

Staff CPD EYFS staff work co-operatively together, sharing experiences and expertise. EYFS meetings and discussions will take place where planning, policies and practices are shared and discussed. A rota for outdoor play is in place to ensure all staff have the opportunity to work outdoors. All the EYFS staff play a vital role in the collecting of evidence through observations towards the Early Years Foundation Profile. Outdoor observation kits ensure that staff have access to labels, observation sheets and an outdoor camera to ensure that there is always an adequate adult: pupil ratio when working alongside children in the outdoor area.

Equal opportunities All teaching and learning opportunities will take account of the range of abilities of the children in the Upper Foundation Stage class. Work will be differentiated and adapted wherever possible. All activities will be available to both genders. There will be a positive approach to the awareness of other cultures and the upholding of British values.

Inclusion Outdoor play must support inclusion and meet the needs of individuals, offering a diverse range of play-based experiences. The policy will be applied to all pupils. We welcome our general responsibilities under the Disability Equality Duty by promoting equal opportunities, eliminating discrimination and improving access

to learning for disabled people. In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA 2006 we will make reasonable adjustments to ensure all stakeholders understand and can follow this policy. We will actively seek to remove any barriers to learning and participation that may hinder or exclude individuals or groups of pupils.

Monitoring and review This policy is monitored by the Headteacher, who reports to governors about the effectiveness of the policy on request. It will be reviewed appropriate to new legislation or to the needs of the school.

Signed
Headteacher

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Chair of Governors