

*All Mulberry House School Policies are always to be read and considered in conjunction with the Equal Opportunities, Race Equality and Inclusion Policies*

## **CURRICULUM POLICY INCLUDING THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

*This policy applies to all sections of the school:*

- ◆ The Early Years Foundation Stage
- ◆ Key Stage One; The Preparatory Stage
- ◆ Before and after school provision

### **Introduction**

The curriculum of Mulberry House School provides an education that encompasses all areas of learning in preparation for the next stage of school. It is an inclusive education that enables all children to reach their full potential, including those children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature, and management of early years education at our school. It has been written with regard to **The Education Act (2011)**, **The Equality Act (2010)**, and the **Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (SEND 2015)**.

From **September 2025**, we follow the updated **EYFS statutory framework (DfE, 2025)**, which sets out the standards for learning, development, safeguarding, and welfare for children from birth to age five.

Mulberry House School is committed to implementing these statutory requirements to ensure that children are safe, supported, and prepared for the next stage of their education.

### **Responsibility**

The Founder and Directors, in consultation with the Headteacher, teaching staff and parents implement an appropriate EYFS and KS1 curriculum.

### **Aims**

- ◆ We acknowledge, value and develop the experiences and skills that the child has acquired before entering school.
- ◆ We encourage children to explore the world through their senses and with a respect for their environment, natural and manmade world.
- ◆ We promote active learning and resilience in facing new challenges.
- ◆ We encourage children to concentrate and persevere in their own play and during group tasks.
- ◆ We help children in their efforts to establish their own identity and to form positive relationships as citizens of British society.

- ◆ We provide all pupils with opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British Society by developing their values, skills and behaviours to become resilient life learners.
- ◆ We aim to develop in every young person the values, skills and behaviours they will need to get on in life. All children are provided with a rich provision of classroom and extra-curricular activities that develop a range of character attributes, such as resilience and grit, which underpin success in education and employment.
- ◆ We promote independence and resilience.
- ◆ We provide opportunities for personal, social, emotional and economic development in a secure and caring environment which promotes British values.
- ◆ We provide rich and varied opportunities for intellectual development, encouraging an enthusiasm for knowledge and learning, seeing themselves as confident and successful learners.
- ◆ We provide equal access to the whole curriculum for each child regardless of gender, race, religion, Special Educational Needs or disability, sexual orientation, or social group therefore promoting an inclusive ethos.

In this policy **The Early Years Foundation Stage** refers to children age 2 to 5 years. **The Preparatory Stage** is Prep II and Prep III (6-7 years)

### **The educational ethos of The Mulberry House School**

Early Years Education is concerned with the intellectual, social, moral, emotional, aesthetic and physical development of the child. Care and education are inseparable. The involvement of parents and the recognition of their key role in children's development are especially important in the education of very young children. The experience of school complements the experience of home. Most children enter our school as successful learners. They have developed a range of personal and social skills, including the capacity to investigate new ideas and situations, to make choices, to solve problems and to communicate and work with others.

**To this end, the general principle governing the curriculum of the School is that every child shall be entitled to and shall take up a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based and which meets the needs as outlined by our core values and learning philosophy:**

The School provides for all children access to the areas of experience below, through which to develop and exercise their learning skills

- ◆ Aesthetic and Creative - explore, experience, create and express themselves.
- ◆ Ethical - values and relationships.
- ◆ Linguistic - four dimensions of language; listening, reading, speaking and writing.
- ◆ Mathematical - numerical, spatial, scientific and practical.
- ◆ Physical - co-ordination of mind and body, evaluation and improvement of performance as well as basic principles of fitness and health.
- ◆ Scientific - knowledge and understanding, observation, enquiry, forming hypotheses, technology, environment.

- ◆ Technological – organise, store, manipulate, retrieve digital content, including coding as well as planning, developing, and communicating ideas.
- ◆ Human and Social – people and their environment, society and its institutions.
- ◆ Spiritual - values of school, society and religion.

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can do. Our medium term plans show how the principles of the EYFS will be put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning. All staff working in Early Years Foundation Stage are involved in this process. Termly plans are devised to meet the needs of all children including those with an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) and those who are on our Challenge Register.

When planning and guiding what the children learn, our EYFS team reflect on the different rates at which children develop and learn, ensuring that teaching is responsive to individual needs.

- ◆ **Schemes of work** are used throughout the school for core and foundation subjects, including Maths, English, Science, Art, Design and Technology, Religious Education (SEAL), and PSHEE.
- ◆ **British values** of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance are embedded throughout the curriculum, supporting children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.
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## **EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE CURRICULUM FOR 2- 5 YEAR OLDS**

The curriculum at Mulberry House School consists of a range of planned and spontaneous learning experiences, which children enjoy during their time with us. We follow the guidance set out in the **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, September 2025)**, which supports us in planning activities designed to lay secure foundations for each child's future learning.

Between the ages of 2 and 5, the curriculum is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage. At Mulberry House School, we believe that the seven areas of learning and development are interconnected and together support a rounded approach to child development.

We aim to deliver all areas of learning through **planned, purposeful play**, ensuring a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. This approach enables children to develop curiosity, independence, and resilience, while also meeting statutory requirements for safeguarding, welfare, and educational progress.

## **Teacher Led**

A set learning objective is planned for, and lessons are taught to help children achieve that specific learning objective. Children's work is assessed and feedback given to help the children develop and improve.

## **Child Initiated**

Child Initiated activities enable children to demonstrate prior learning, what they have understood and test and consolidate their thinking. Observing children initiating their own learning helps teachers plan for the next steps for learning.

## **Assessment for Learning**

To establish that children are secure in their learning, evidence of learning is primarily taken during Child-Initiated lessons broadly 80% child initiated to 20% teacher led. Teachers can help guide the child through open-ended questions and extending the children's natural line of enquiry. The learning environment should enable them to express and demonstrate their understanding of their world, including the application of literacy skills, maths concepts and the expression of their own sense of self.

The principles of the EYFS are based on play; children learn through doing, exploring and playing with others, exploring inside and outside.

In the final term of the Reception year, the EYFS profile is completed for each child. This provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded summary of every child's development and learning achievements and the readiness for Year 1. Children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals (ELG) by the class teachers - who uses practitioners' knowledge and professional judgement of the child to make a 'best fit' judgement. The children are assessed as achieving a 1 or 2 against each areas of the EYFS curriculum:

- 1 = Emerging ELG - not yet meeting the expected levels
- 2 = Expected ELG - meeting the expected levels of development

Year 1 teachers must be given a copy of the Profile report, enabling a dialogue between Reception and Year 1 practitioners which will assist in the planning of learning in the next academic year.

## **Prime Areas**

### **Physical Development:**

This is concerned with developing skills of physical control, co-ordination, movement and manipulation through daily routines, planned activities, and inside and outside play. We help children gain confidence in what they can do, and feel the positive benefits of being healthy and active indoors and outside.

We provide opportunities which allow the children to develop knowledge and understanding of how our bodies work, of health and hygiene, of the need for safety, of how to improve fine motor skills (e.g. drawing, cutting, cooking), and of how to move with confidence and increasing control.

## **Personal, Social, Emotional Development:**

This area of learning is concerned with emotional wellbeing, knowing who you are and where you fit in. It is also about the children's views of themselves – their self-esteem – and of their relationships with others. Children are naturally interested in other people. We offer children opportunities to develop their understanding about relationships, feelings and needs, of acceptable social behaviour, of right and wrong, about the world around them – the lives and people in our community and wider world and the diversity of cultures (e.g. different customs and festivals). We encourage the children to be independent, confident and resourceful, encouraging them to show respect for others'.

## **Communication and Language:**

It is through language that children begin to learn and understand the world around them. Language, both spoken and written, enables children to explain themselves, interact with others and organise their thinking. We offer children many opportunities to speak and listen, and to express their ideas in pictures and words. We develop their knowledge and understanding that print conveys meaning, by the rich variety of stories and poetry they are exposed to.

## **Specific Areas**

### **Literacy:**

Involves teaching children to identify and link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write, having access to a variety of interesting and exciting resources.

### **Mathematics, including Numeracy, and Shape, Space & Measure:**

Using mathematical concepts and language in everyday play and activities forms the foundations on which mathematical understanding is based. We offer children opportunities to develop a knowledge and understanding of number, space and shape, pattern, symmetry and positional relationships, and of measures (time, weight, length, capacity). First-hand experience of natural and everyday materials, develop basic ideas in sorting, counting, sequencing, measuring and comparing.

### **Understanding the World:**

This area of learning is concerned with helping children to make sense of their world. Learning about themselves and the world around them helps children to develop enquiring minds and skills of observation, prediction, problem solving and experimentation and a sense of community.

We provide opportunities to find out about past and present events in their own lives, explore their environment, and learn about other living things. Children develop knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties, of why things happen and how things work, of designing and making, using tools and equipment, and using information technology to support their work.

### **Expressive Arts & Design:**

Children learn through all their senses. They need time to explore and experiment with ideas and materials, to develop their own ideas and be imaginative, to observe carefully and develop their ability to use a variety of tools and techniques.

We support children in developing a knowledge and understanding of texture, colour and shape, of drawing and painting, of musical forms and rhythm, and of imaginative play, drama and dance.

## CURRICULUM FOR 6 AND 7 YEAR OLDS

Once children reach statutory school age, teaching and learning are guided by the National Curriculum. Particular attention is given to the core subjects:

- ◆ **Mathematics:** Using and applying mathematics, number, multiplication and division, geometry, measurement, fractions, position and direction, and statistics.
- ◆ **English:** Spoken language, reading, writing (including composition), spelling, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation, comprehension, and handwriting.
- ◆ **Science:** Experimental and investigative science, working scientifically, life processes and living things, plants, animals (including humans), light, sound, seasonal changes, everyday materials and their properties, and physical processes.
- ◆ **Personal, Social, Health, Emotional and Economic Education (PSHEE), including Citizenship:** Developing confidence, social and financial responsibility, good relationships and respect for others, and a healthy, safer lifestyle.

In addition to the core subjects, the timetable also includes geography, history, art and design, music (including individual recorder tuition), dance and drama, physical education (including swimming in the Summer Term), religious education, computing, Spanish, and Mandarin.

All National Curriculum subjects provide opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- ◆ Pupils' spiritual development involves the growth of their sense of self, their unique potential, their understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, and their will to achieve.
- ◆ Pupils' moral development involves pupils acquiring an understanding of the difference between right and wrong and of moral conflict, a respect for other faiths, encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Equality Act. We expect children to show concern for others and to do what is right. They are able and willing to reflect on the consequences of their actions and learn how to forgive themselves and others.
- ◆ Pupils' social development involves pupils acquiring an understanding of the responsibilities and rights of being members of families and communities (local, national and global), and an ability to relate to others and to work with others for the common good. They display a sense of belonging and an increasing willingness to participate.
- ◆ Pupils' cultural development involves pupils acquiring an understanding of cultural traditions and ability to appreciate and respond to a variety of aesthetic experiences. They acquire a respect for their own culture and that of others, an interest in others' ways of doing things and curiosity and respect of their differences.

Pupils learn, practise, combine, develop and refine a wide range of skills in their work across the National Curriculum. Some of these skills are subject specific (painting in art and design), some are common to several subjects (enquiry skills in science, history and geography).

## **Key Skills**

Six skill areas are described as key skills because they help learners to improve their learning and performance in education, work and life. These key skills are embedded in the National Curriculum. The key skills are; Communication, Application of number, working with others, improving own learning and performance, Problem solving and Computing.

### **Communication**

The key skill of communication includes speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Skills in speaking and listening encompass the ability to communicate effectively for different audiences, to listen attentively, understand, and respond appropriately to others, and to participate constructively in group discussions. Skills in reading and writing include the ability to read fluently across a range of literary and non-fiction texts, including digital sources, to reflect critically on what is read, and to write fluently for a variety of purposes and audiences, with the capacity to evaluate and refine their own and others' writing. Opportunities for developing these skills are provided explicitly through English and are embedded across the wider curriculum, with particular attention to digital literacy, inclusivity, and the needs of pupils with SEND or EHC plans.

### **Application of number**

The key skill of application of number includes developing a range of mental calculation skills and the ability to apply them within a variety of contexts. Skills include developing the understanding and use of mathematical language related to numbers and calculations in order to process data, solve increasingly complex problems and explain the reasoning used. Pupils need to be able to apply calculation skills and the understanding of number to problems in other National Curriculum subjects and to real-life situations. Opportunities for developing this key skill are provided explicitly in mathematics.

### **Computing**

The key skill of Computing encompasses the ability to use a wide range of information sources and digital tools to find, analyse, interpret, evaluate, and present information for a variety of purposes. At Mulberry House School, children are encouraged to develop critical and informed judgment about when and how to use Computing effectively, whether for accessing information, solving problems, or engaging in creative and expressive work. This includes enquiry and decision-making skills, information-processing and creative thinking, as well as the ability to review, modify, and evaluate work produced using Computing. In line with the September 2025 curriculum updates, children are also taught to use technology safely and responsibly, to understand the role of artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, and to build resilience in digital environments. Opportunities to develop these skills are provided explicitly through the subject of Computing and are embedded across the wider curriculum, ensuring that pupils apply digital literacy in meaningful and secure contexts.

## Working with others

The key skill of working with others includes the ability to contribute effectively to small group and whole-class discussions, and to collaborate in meeting shared challenges. In order to work successfully with others, pupils must develop social skills alongside a growing awareness and understanding of the needs of others. All subjects provide opportunities for pupils to co-operate and work productively in both formal and informal settings, to appreciate the experiences of others, to consider different perspectives, and to benefit from what their peers think, say, and do.

## Improving own learning and performance

The key skill of improving one's own learning and performance involves pupils reflecting on and critically evaluating their work and what they have learnt, and identifying ways to enhance their learning and progress. Pupils are encouraged to identify the purposes of learning, reflect on the processes involved, assess their progress, recognise obstacles or problems, and plan strategies to overcome them. All subjects provide opportunities for pupils to review their own work and discuss ways to improve their learning, in line with the principles of **Assessment for Learning**.

We track children's progress from entry to the school at age 2 until they leave us at age 4 or 7, ensuring that assessment is continuous, meaningful, and supportive of individual development. For children with an **Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan**, parents and teachers work closely to ensure the child is accessing the curriculum, that appropriate interventions are in place, and that their effectiveness is regularly evaluated and monitored. In line with statutory requirements, children with EHC plans or additional needs must have their progress recorded in the **EYFS Profile**, with adaptations made where necessary to reflect individual circumstances.

## Problem solving

The key skill of problem solving involves pupils developing the skills and strategies that will help them to solve the problems they face in learning and in life. Problem solving includes the skills of identifying and understanding a problem, planning ways to solve a problem, monitoring progress in tackling a problem and reviewing solutions to problems. All subjects provide pupils with opportunities to respond to the challenge of problems and to plan, test, modify and review the progress needed to achieve particular outcomes.

## Thinking skills

By using thinking skills pupils can focus on 'knowing how' as well as 'knowing what' – learning how to learn. The school uses Edward de Bono hats, Blooms Taxonomy and our Mindset mascots in following thinking skills to complement the key skills that are embedded in the National Curriculum.

- ◆ **Information-processing skills** – These enable pupils to locate and collect relevant information, to sort, classify, sequence, compare and contrast, and to analyse part/whole relationships.
- ◆ **Reasoning skills** – These enable pupils to give reasons for opinions and actions, to draw inferences and make deductions, to use precise language to explain what they think, and to make judgements and decisions informed by reasons or evidence.

- ◆ **Enquiry skills** – These enable pupils to ask relevant questions, to pose and define problems, to plan what to do and how to research, to predict outcomes and anticipate consequences, and to test conclusions and improve ideas.
- ◆ **Creative thinking skills** – These enable pupils to generate and extend ideas, to suggest hypotheses, to apply imagination, and to look for alternative innovative outcomes.
- ◆ **Evaluation skills** – These enable pupils to evaluate information, to judge the value of what they read, hear and do, to develop criteria for judging the value of their own and others' work or ideas, and to have confidence in their judgements.

## The Curriculum

In planning the curriculum, we follow the Early Years Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum. For each class group we have a **long-term plan** as a guide for whole groups of children using the aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the level descriptions within the National Curriculum. These help us ensure that all children make appropriate progress and have the opportunity to progress throughout their time with us. Included in the long-term plan are half termly or termly projects, which cover a range of broad themes. A theme that focuses on maths and language activities will later be balanced with one that offers rich opportunities for creative and scientific exploration. The **medium term plan** consists of these projects broken down into specific activities and for the 6 and 7 year olds a detailed outline of Maths and English covered in a term. **Short term planning** is drawn up a week in advance but reviewed daily as the activities are completed. The learning intentions are clearly identified and take into account children's needs and interests and previous experiences, as well as the need for curriculum balance.

Through discussion staff make sure that there is a balance of adult focused activities and things children can access independently; that there are visual, auditory and kinaesthetic experiences on offer to meet different learning styles; they discuss how activities can be adapted to suit different levels of attainment; and they identify opportunities for making assessments and observations of children's learning. The medium term plan is a working document and it can be changed and modified day by day according to children's interests and unplanned events. We see it as a guide set in jelly rather than concrete. Each day staff jot down evaluations and these together with our observations and assessments feed in the review of the medium term plan, so that we can see whether or not our plans are working and adjust accordingly.

## The Learning

During their time at The Mulberry House children are taking the first steps in their schooling. The learning experience must reflect their stage of development to ensure maximum benefit. Children have access to both the inside and the outside environment at various points in the day which is known to have a positive effect on the children's development. The Mulberry House School pupils have their own outdoor area with sand or water, bikes, writing opportunities, mud kitchen, construction and role play. Spending time outdoors offers opportunities for exploring and learning things differently to when pupils are indoors and gives things a different perspective. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. All areas of the curriculum can be explored outside.

Planned activities should provide for:

- ◆ More concrete than theoretical experiences through practical and first hand activities.
- ◆ A range of learning styles.
- ◆ Reflection and talk to reinforce understanding.
- ◆ The development of skills and extension of knowledge.
- ◆ The use and application of knowledge, skills and understanding in familiar and new situations.
- ◆ Differentiation for children at different stages and levels of development.
- ◆ A range of child-led activities to inform staff of learning behaviour and understanding.

## Teaching and Learning Methods and Styles

- ◆ **Hands-on learning** - opportunities to experiment and discover through practical activities.
- ◆ **Workshops** - structured sessions that encourage focused exploration of a topic or skill.
- ◆ **Demonstrations** - modelling techniques or processes to support understanding.
- ◆ **Role modelling** - staff exemplify positive behaviours and attitudes for children to emulate.
- ◆ **Peer assessment** - children reflect on and provide feedback to one another.
- ◆ **Collaborative learning** - working together to solve problems and share ideas.
- ◆ **Free choice activities** - opportunities for children to select tasks that interest them.
- ◆ **Individual learning** - personalised tasks to meet specific needs.
- ◆ **Pair work** - developing cooperation and communication skills in twos.
- ◆ **Small group work** - targeted support and collaborative projects.
- ◆ **Large group activities** - whole-class learning experiences.
- ◆ **Teacher-led sessions** - direct instruction and guided learning.
- ◆ **Adult-supported learning** - scaffolding provided by staff to extend children's understanding.
- ◆ **Peer-led activities** - children take the lead in guiding learning.
- ◆ **Peer-supported learning** - children assist and encourage one another.
- ◆ **Continuous provision** - enabling children to access resources and activities independently throughout the day.

## The Role of Adults

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle in to their new class quickly and happily.

All adults, including parents, involved with Early Years have something valuable to offer. The quality of relationships among the adults involved in the work directly influences children's learning and attitudes.

Parents should be encouraged to participate as partners in supporting their children's development. Their potential contribution needs to be fully recognised and acknowledged both by the parents themselves and by staff.

The educators who work with children should:

- ◆ Ensure children communicate their thoughts, ideas and needs and are listened to.
- ◆ Be involved in direct teaching.
- ◆ Ensure children have and take opportunities for learning.
- ◆ Plan defined objectives for learning.
- ◆ Provide a stimulating environment, both inside and out.
- ◆ Use space and equipment to good effect.
- ◆ Ensure a high level of involvement by the children, i.e. they listen, concentrate and persevere with activities.
- ◆ Effectively monitor and develop children's social development.
- ◆ Frequently and regularly feedback to parents, formally and informally.

## Assessment

Members of staff working in Early Years require an extensive knowledge of how children learn. This knowledge must be applied creatively to maximise the learning opportunities available through the activities prepared.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes place through a combination of formal and informal observations, teacher knowledge of the pupils, and photographic evidence. Assessments are completed regularly and may involve both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement.

Opportunities are created to observe closely and assess children's learning in order to:

- ◆ Inform the planning of future work.
- ◆ Ensure that special educational needs are identified and supported appropriately, in conjunction with Individual Education Plans (see SEND policy for further details).
- ◆ Provide a clear and substantial evaluation of each child's stage of development. This evaluation is shared with parents and forms part of transition planning when the child moves to the next class. End-of-year reports summarise each child's attainment at the end of the academic year.
- ◆ Record progress through the **Progress Check at age 2** and the **EYFS Profile** at the end of Reception. Reception teachers must share EYFS Profile reports with Year 1 teachers to support continuity of learning and inform planning for the next academic year.
- ◆ Children with **EHC plans** or additional needs must have their progress recorded in the EYFS Profile, with adaptations where necessary.
- ◆ Encourage parents and children to share, discuss, and celebrate achievements throughout the year.
- ◆ Monitor provision for children identified on the Challenge Register.
- ◆ Contribute to the overall evaluation of the quality of planned and prepared learning experiences.

At Mulberry House School, we assess children in a variety of ways throughout their time with us, ensuring that assessment is meaningful, supportive, and aligned with statutory requirements.

## **Evaluation**

Children's progress will be continually monitored, with teaching methods, materials, and activities adapted as necessary to support the needs of individual children and groups. Staff will use their professional judgment, alongside observations and knowledge of the pupils, to inform planning and assessment without unnecessary evidence collection. Regular meetings will be held to evaluate and review policy and practice, ensuring compliance with EYFS statutory requirements, safeguarding expectations, and a strong focus on literacy, numeracy, and inclusion.