

Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School
"Nurturing curiosity and inspiring imagination"



2021-22

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

DOCUMENT STATUS

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Legislation

Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 1st September 2021

Approval

Governing body free to delegate to a committee of the governing body, an individual governor or the headteacher

Review

Whenever there are changes to report

Amendments, November 2021

- Update to school aims, p4
- Reference to Early Learning Goals (ELGs), pp 9-10
- Extent of information sharing, p12
- Update frequency for CP plans, p12

Aims and Objectives

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage 31/03/2021 p.5

This policy seeks to secure quality and consistency in classroom management, practice and leadership. It aims to identify ways in which teaching and learning are characterised in order to create a consistent, effective, well managed learning environment where children are kept healthy and safe, and the practitioners provide effective early year's provision designed around the individual needs of the children, ensuring that 'no child gets left behind'. The school works in close partnership with parents/carers to ensure that all children experience high standards of learning, development and care, and focuses on supporting every child to make progress through a play based curriculum, to secure a 'strong foundation' and to be 'school ready'. Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice is ensured, with the belief that learning is rewarding, enjoyable and life-long. This policy also specifies what the school does in order to keep children safe and promote their welfare, in line with government legislation and guidance and the school's safeguarding policy

The school is guided by the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 1st September 2021, and Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (non-statutory guidance).

Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School's EYFS curriculum is based upon four overarching principles:

- 1) Unique child**
- 2) Positive relationships**
- 3) Enabling environments**
- 4) Learning and Development**

1) A Unique Child

At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School, every child is recognised as a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. Children develop in individual ways, and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; praise and encouragement are used and children's achievements are celebrated, no matter how small, in order to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School, the diversity of all individuals within the school is valued – all children matter, and there is no discrimination against children because of their 'differences'. Every child attending the school is treated fairly, regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, cultural or diverse linguistic background, religion or ability, and all children and their families are respected. When planning children's individual learning, staff take into account their prior life experiences and emerging abilities, before providing appropriate, yet challenging learning opportunities with the aim of all children achieving their very best potential.

The needs of all children are met through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend their knowledge, skills, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem, confidence, well-being and involvement
- Using a wide range of specialist and bespoke teaching strategies based on children's individual learning needs and prior experiences
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children, and to help them to learn effectively and efficiently
- Providing a safe, supportive and challenging learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- Planning challenging activities for those children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills
- Assessing and monitoring children's progress, and taking action to provide support if, and when necessary

It is important that all children in the school feel safe, and are kept safe. The aim is to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. Children are provided with choices to help them develop this important life skill. They are encouraged and supported to take risks after being taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

The school aims to provide the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See Safeguarding Policy.)

Welfare

We recognise and appreciate that children learn best when they are physically, emotionally and mentally healthy, when they feel safe and secure, and when their individual needs are met by supporting and nurturing adults with whom they have developed strong attachments and positive relationships.

At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School, staff are aware that they must comply legally with welfare requirements, and as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage, 1st September 2021.

Staff ensure that they:

- Promote the welfare of all children
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill
- Respond to, and manage behaviour effectively and in a manner which is appropriate for each child's stage of development and individual and unique needs
- Ensure all adults who come into contact with children are suitable and safe to do so
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe, stimulating and suitable for purpose, development and experiences and is tailored to meet the child's individual needs
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the individual and emerging needs of the children

Child Protection

At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who is also the Deputy Headteacher, takes lead responsibility for safeguarding children across the setting. In addition, there are also two Deputy DSLs in post, including the Headteacher. All staff attend regular and on-going training, as determined by the government's statutory guidance, and have regard to the statutory guidance: 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', the 'prevent duty guidance for England and Wales' and the government's 'Keeping Children Safe In Education' statutory guidance. In addition, leaders ensure that people looking after children are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their roles. All staff follow the procedures set out in the school's safeguarding policy, ensuring they are alert to any issues in a child's life at home or elsewhere and are able to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity and therefore taking all necessary steps to ensure children are kept safe and well. The DSLs work in close partnership with local services such as Social Care and Early Help and, if it is deemed necessary, timely and appropriate referrals are made to these services.

2 Positive Relationships

At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School, it is understood that children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships and healthy attachments with key adults. Staff aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. Staff listen to the child's 'voice' and adult child interactions are warm, nurturing, understanding and encouraging. Whilst in school, each child has a designated / named key person and in Rainbow Room, each child also has a designated key 'team around the child'.

The vast majority of our children receive care and education by only attending Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School. In the event of a child attending an additional setting or being cared for by a child minder we share information between providers and moderate children's achievements and progress jointly. We also have good transitional links with the receiving schools and we aim to ensure continuity and coherence by sharing information about children's achievements and progress. In addition teachers from receiving schools are invited in to nursery to meet the child in an environment they are familiar and comfortable in, this is also an opportunity for teachers to share information about the child.

Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School is described as a 'flagship nursery' for the local authority and we are the only specialist SEND nursery provision within the local area. Staff work in close partnership with outside agencies, such as Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, Consultant Community Paediatricians, Specialist Teachers for children with sensory impairment and Educational Psychologists, many of whom regularly visit children in the setting in order to provide specialist support and guidance, assessments, specific therapy plans and to provide children with the care they need.

3 Enabling environments

At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Teaching and learning can be at its strongest when delivered through child led play. Staff begin by observing the children and monitoring and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences in order to extend the children's learning and to develop their independence. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents, and at Sandy Lane we recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators. The vital role that parents have played in already educating their children is respected and valued, as well as their future role. This is done through:

- Undertaking home visits prior to children starting at nursery, in order to meet the child in their most comfortable environment, meet with the child's parents and/or family and to find out as much as possible about the child before they begin attending school
- The children and their families being invited to spend time within the school environment, before starting school, during an 'open evening' and taster sessions
- Staff showing respect for parents and forming trusting relationships so that parents feel comfortable to approach practitioners, in order to share information about their child
- Offering parents opportunities to talk informally at drop off and pick up times, and/or formally about their child and the progress they are making

- Sharing any achievements the child may have made with parents through Tapestry Journal, the school's online/electronic learning journal
- Encouraging parents to comment on any images and observations posted on Tapestry Journal by staff, and inviting parents to share images of significant events so that any achievements can be celebrated with the children in nursery, as well as at home
- Working together on specific learning and development targets such as toileting, 'ditch the dummy', and SEND strategies
- Enjoying and sharing concerts or performances at Christmas and throughout the year
- Arranging a variety of activities and workshops throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: parties, educational visits, Forest School sessions, Stay and Play, exploratory cooking, gardening club, reading together sessions, etc
- Inviting parents on trips out, and to concerts or productions
- Encouraging parents to take an interest in, and to support learning at home by engaging in home learning activities or through 'Travelling Ted', Story Sacks, Chatter Boxes, Music and Maths bags and Library Books
- Providing parents with regular opportunities to engage in reviews of their child's progress, through termly 'VIP weeks'
- Encouraging parents of children with SEND to jointly plan specific targets and to engage in regular reviews of progress
- Ensuring parents/carers are supported through challenging times
- Offering support to parents in meetings which involve a range of agencies, such as Early Help meetings, Social Care meetings and/or team around the child meetings, which involve health and other outside agencies
- Inviting parents to attend transition to school meetings with the named school, and supporting parents in advance of these meetings so that they are able to consider information which they may want to share, and questions they may want to ask
- Encouraging parents to engage in parental consultations
- Encouraging parents to become active members of the school's governing body

At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School, we believe that the practitioner is the greatest resource of all, however we also appreciate how important the physical environment is in supporting children's learning. Each classroom is organised to allow children to explore and to learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and can rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently and where resources are available to meet different stages of development and learning needs. Resources are regularly replenished and well planned enhancements are set up where and when needed.

Children's interests and development needs are met by regularly reviewing the continuous provision plans and enhancements placed to meet the needs of the children. The environment consists of a vast and rich outdoor area, including an outstanding woodland area for Forest School, with trained forest school leaders which enable a rich learning experience for all children. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. Activities and resources are planned for the children to access outdoors, helping them to develop across all seven areas of learning. The children have regular access to 'essential experiences' outside of the nursery setting, which they may not have chance to experience at home, through the use of our own nursery mini bus. Children are taken on seasonal excursions, such as pumpkin picking, feeding the ducks, Christmas tree picking and farm visits in the spring. As well as planned excursions the children are also invited on days out related to local community events, their own interests or the popular interests in nursery in order to spark further interests, extend learning and provide an opportunity that cannot be replicated within nursery.

Staff also provide a wide range of interesting and unusual 'provocations' or 'stimulations' within the classroom that are linked to the 'essential experiences', which are new and unfamiliar to the children, providing them with wonderful and stimulating experiences which provoke curiosity and interest and the development of new language, creativity and thinking skills.

4 Learning and Development

"There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years' settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected." Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage 31/03/2021, p.7.

At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School, it is recognised that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We shape our curriculum based upon the seven areas of learning and development, as specified in the statutory guidance for the EYFS, which include both prime areas and specific areas:

We believe the three **prime areas of development**, ie, i) Communication and Language; ii) Physical Development; and iii) Personal, Social and Emotional Development, are particularly important for building a foundation and for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for forming relationships and thriving. In more detail, the prime areas encompass the following:

i) Communication and Language

- Listening, Attention and Understanding
- Speaking

ii) Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Self-Regulation
- Managing Self
- Building Relationships

iii) Physical Development

- Gross Motor Skills
- Fine Motor Skills

The prime areas of development are further strengthened and applied through the four **specific areas of development**, ie, i) Literacy; ii) Mathematics; iii) Understanding the World; and iv) Expressive Arts and Design.

At Sandy Lane, all areas of learning and development are equally valued and staff understand that they are inter connected. None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend upon each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of 'in the moment' teaching, adult-led and child-initiated activities. Teachers and support staff are set targets through their Professional Development which are fed from the School Improvement Plan to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are monitored and taught rigorously.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

At Sandy Lane, planning within the EYFS includes long-term curriculum overviews which are sequential, and show the intended skills and knowledge as well as progression across all stages of development, medium term plans and short term weekly plans. Staff also follow the principle of 'In the Moment Planning' (IMP) responding to children's interests and addressing their next steps for learning through quality interactions and interventions. Evidence of 'In the moment planning' is demonstrated through children's formal observations as part of their VIP weeks.

Upon entry to nursery, information provided by parents and other settings (if appropriate) is used to feed into a baseline assessment of the child's development. The Learning Environment is reviewed and further developed in order to meet the needs of the child/children, and differentiated group times, story times and adult directed activities are also carefully planned in line with the child's current stage of development, with the adult role clearly planned, and a clear learning objective set and evaluated. Children's learning continues to be taken forward from parents and other involved settings', and information and is regularly assessed; the information used to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

All children are screened on entry for their level of speech and language competence and targeted interventions planned to meet needs identified. Assessment within the EYFS is achieved through observation. These observations are recorded on the school's online journal, Tapestry Journal, to inform practitioners of learning evidenced by others during different activities of the day. Staff also ensure any achievements made by the child, no matter how small are celebrated and recorded on the online journal with the aim of parents being fully involved in their child's education.

To ensure that each child is observed, and their progress is appropriately monitored, each child must have an opportunity to be a VIP for one week during each term, where key workers and staff must pay extra attention to that child's activities and achievements. After the first initial VIP week teachers/practitioners will then plan next steps. These are related to the areas of development. The next steps are then followed up through additional support during their sessions, and if necessary appropriate interventions are put in place and parents are also be offered support in the form of tailored home learning activities and home learning bags. Children's progress is then reviewed during the next VIP week with the aim of children always being supported in their development and encouraged to progress.

Children's progress and development is tracked as 'on track' or 'not on track', as is outlined within the statutory guidance. This information is shared with parents, and with schools at the point of transition. We also share this information with the local authority.

Children with complex and additional SEND needs are assessed using the B Squared assessment tool, which allows for smaller steps to be identified and celebrated.

Progress check at age two

At Sandy Lane, and within our provision for children aged two years, staff formally review the child's progress in the form of the 'Progress Check'. Parents are provided with a short written summary of their child's development which details strengths, progress being made within the three prime areas and any areas where the child's progress is less than expected. The report also notes suggested activities which parents can implement at home. If any concerns are identified, then a personal plan is devised in conjunction with parents. Parents are encouraged to share the summary with other relevant professionals such as health visitors, or practitioners in joint settings or when transferring to new settings. As outlined in the EYFS statutory guidance, where possible, and with parental consent, the progress check and the Healthy Child Programme (used by health partners) will be used to inform each other and support integrated working.

Targeted Intervention

Staff are committed to ensuring that all children in school make, at least good progress and endeavour to ensure children make exceptional progress, at best. All children are screened for speech and language ability on entry and termly thereafter, with planned daily interventions employed which is directed at speaking, understanding, 'English as an Additional Language' (EAL) and listening and attention skills.

Differentiated adult-directed groups for literacy and mathematical understanding, auditory and visual skills, phonological awareness and story understanding are built into the daily routine, for example through dialogic book talk. This ensures that all children, from less able through to more able, receive targeted learning, according to need.

Where children are recognised as needing extra support in their development, personal plans are devised in conjunction with parents and outside agencies, where appropriate, taking into account any therapy plans or specialist advice. Targeted mathematical interventions are offered in smaller groups or one to one activities. Specific and targeted TEACCH activities are planned for SEND children, and these take place daily. CP plans are adapted fortnightly to reflect the needs of less able and more able children. Each key person is responsible for a group of children who meet for group times at the start of the day. This allows them to target and build a strong relationship with their key children and provides opportunity to develop attention and listening skills, personal, social and emotional development (PSED), to build close friendships, develop understanding of rules and routines, to look at special objects, provocations or stimulus, or to talk about special events and to introduce features of the learning environment.

All children are screened and 'rag' (red, amber, green) rated for wellbeing and involvement, which is recognised in every observation that is uploaded to Tapestry in order to plan appropriate interventions, and for some to monitor further, and if necessary to report to the DSL. Targeted interventions are always followed up with discussions with parents and additional support for parents is offered, if necessary. In order to ensure a strong partnership between home and nursery, children are offered tailored home learning resources to further support with interventions taking place within nursery.

Teaching and Learning Style

The school's policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning within school. It is acknowledged that children learn in many different ways and that they are at different stages in their development. The key features of this policy are:

- The partnership between staff and parents, so that children feel secure at school and develop a good sense of well-being and achievement
- The understanding that teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of how children develop and learn, and how teachers adapt their pedagogy to ensure the needs of individual children are met
- The range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanation, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication
- The carefully planned and sequential curriculum that builds upon the skills and knowledge children acquire at home and throughout nursery, in order to be 'school ready' and subsequently helping children to work towards achieving the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) at the end of Reception
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests, and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence, executive functioning, self-regulation and self-management

Staff ensure that children develop secure and trusting relationships with their key person and key staff, have clear routines, offer healthy snacks and drinks, ensure clear boundaries and child centred learning based on the individual needs of the children within a play-based learning environment. Staff employ effective teaching and learning strategies, including appropriately planned activities, appropriate resources, skilful and targeted interactions, well managed behaviour strategies, engage children in shared fun and enjoyment, role model, employ speaking and language strategies and model writing and mathematical skills in a variety of situations. We build towards the children gaining as much independence as possible and build up a 'plan, do, review' approach so that children are able to become creative, critical and sustained thinkers, and to be foremost in their own learning by the time they leave Sandy Lane.

For children with complex and additional SEND needs, supported learning is developed on an individual basis, and in small groups through carefully planned adult led learning activities and 'in the moment' teaching.

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

'Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults'. Statutory Guidance September 2021

At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School, we recognise the importance of the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning, as set out in the statutory guidance for the EYFS and base our pedagogical approaches upon these.

Playing and Exploring

“Children are powerful learners. Every child can make progress in their learning, with the right help. Effective pedagogy is a mix of different approaches. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other, and through guided learning and direct teaching. Practitioners carefully organise enabling environments for high-quality play. Sometimes, they make time and space available for children to invent their own play. Sometimes, they join in to sensitively support and extend children’s learning.” Development Matters, DoE, 2020, p.6

At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School, children are encouraged and supported to ‘have a go’, and to explore and develop learning experiences which help them make sense of the world. They are encouraged to investigate using all of their senses. They practice and build up ideas and learn how to self-regulate and recognise and understand the need for rules. Children are provided with opportunities to think creatively alongside other children, as well as on their own. Staff scaffold children’s communication with others so that they are able to investigate and solve problems collaboratively. Children are supported to express their fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active Learning

As described by the characteristics of effective learning, active learning is achieved when “children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.” Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage 31/03/2021, p.16

All staff are aware that ‘active learning’ occurs when children are motivated and interested. At Sandy Lane children are encouraged to develop independence and control over their learning and as children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. We believe this is crucial to becoming ‘life-long’ learners and provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

“Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.” Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage 31/03/2021, p.16

At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School, we provide children with opportunities to be creative through all areas of learning, and not just through the arts. Adults support

children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend and embed their learning.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of all the practitioners to follow the principles stated in this policy. Practitioners will be expected to discuss and make presentations at staff meetings and to the governor's curriculum committee. These governors will provide feedback to the school governing body as a whole, raising any issues that require discussion.

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and teachers will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.