



The Pier Head Preparatory Montessori School

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EYFS Policy

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at The Pier Head Prep School.

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

In the EYFS at The Pier Prep School we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential. We aim to support each child's welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- recognising that all children are unique and special
- understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates
- providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know they are valued by staff looking after them
- fostering and nurturing children's self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community
 - teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways
- encouraging children's independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes
- developing children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously
 - supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions which differ to their own
- understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development
- providing learning experiences which reflect children's interests to encourage and develop their natural desire, excitement and motivation to learn
 - providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development
- providing effective learning opportunities in the whole environment, both inside and outside

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. The overall aims of the EYFS is to help young children achieve the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes of staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and eventually achieving economic well-being. At the Pier Head Prep School we are committed to underpinning our provision with the four themes of the Early Years Foundation Stage in our Reception classes.

1. A unique child

Child development

At The Pier Head Prep School we recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback



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from others; we use specific praise and encouragement, as well as recognition and celebration of children's achievements, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Health and safety

It is important to us that all children at The Pier Head Prep School are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop these important life skills. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards, both within the school and in the wider environment. We encourage a healthy lifestyle including taking part in regular exercise and eating healthy food. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children (see the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy Policy).

Inclusive practice

Children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion, gender or abilities. We regard the diversity of individuals within the school as an asset. All children and families are welcome into our school and made to feel included, safe and valued. In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to be the best they can be and we achieve this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

EAL Provision

The Pier Head Prep School welcomes children for whom English is a second or third language. We provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning, to support language development at home, and to ensure that they also have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English language. We use the following:

- providing language-rich play opportunities
- visual timetable outlining the daily routine
- signs and labels on walls in classrooms and washrooms
- various picture books and books with dual languages
- using visual aids and props to support lessons
- modelling language - teamwork and peer support
- asking simple open-ended questions and allowing time for the child to answer
- songs and story books to support their learning
- French classes
- books, posters, toys and puzzles that reflect positive images of the different ethnicities of children in Britain
- dolls and small world figures that reflect the different ethnic groups



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- using musical instruments and music from around the world; singing songs in different languages
- celebrating scripts and languages of the world by labelling displays in different languages spoken in class
- Using story sacks to create a clear context for stories

Positive relationships

We aim to promote positive relationships between staff, parents and children. Children are taught how to deal with difficult situations and relationships through their daily interactions with adults and other children as well as through specifically planned lessons. All children are greeted as they come into the classroom and have a familiar routine to help them settle quickly. Staff will work with each child either on a one-to-one basis, in a small group or as part of a larger group. All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

Key person

At our school each practitioner has a 'key person' role to children in the EYFS. The key person is the class teacher, supported by teaching assistants. The key person helps to ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. They are also responsible for engaging and supporting parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home and, if appropriate, helping families engage with more specialist support.

Parents as partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise 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 their child starts at school
- giving children the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during 'meet your new teacher' sessions
- inviting all parents to an EYFS information evening at the start of the term their child starts school
- offering parents regular opportunities to discuss their child's progress and allowing informal access to the children's e-profiles
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if they have any concerns



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- organising a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between children, school and parents - class assemblies, charity events, Open Days and Sports Day, etc.
- arranging for parents to contribute to their child's e-profile such as WOW (work of the week) cards
- Parents' evenings are held in the autumn and spring term, where their child's development and progress against the early learning goals is being discussed a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the school year.
- Maintaining strong links with other local nurseries, childcare settings and schools

The head of Early Years (Claire McNally) meets with staff to discuss new intake children. Claire also ensure staff are up to date with all legislation changes. Claire will liase with staff to host coffee mornings so parents can put their point of views across for the setting.

3. Enabling environments

The Learning Environment In the EYFS at The Pier Head Prep School we recognise the importance of a rich learning environment, both inside and outside.

The classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. We also have an enclosed outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on a different scale than when indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access indoors and outdoors that help the children to develop in all 7 areas of learning and development and the children have access throughout between the indoor and outdoor area.

At The Pier Head Prep School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

Educational visits within the local community and further afield are also planned to support children's learning within the classroom.

Observation, assessment and planning

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 already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are 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 needs.

The EYFS framework provides a long-term plan to follow by ensuring that all areas of learning and development are covered throughout the academic year. The whole school is



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involved in deciding the termly topics. Medium term planning is created and takes into account the individual children's learning and developmental needs incorporated with the Montessori Curriculum. All areas of learning and development are planned for and available to access within the setting. Short-term planning is completed on a weekly basis and is flexible enough to respond to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult-focused and child-initiated activities, both indoors and outdoors.

Planning and guided children's activities will reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

The characteristics of effective learning support the child to become a motivated and effective learner. Children will play and explore and 'have a go' at using all available resources, developing their experiences. Children will develop resilience and enjoy achievements through active learning and will make links, explore their ideas and strategies for problem solving through creating and thinking critically.

All staff support the children in developing all of these characteristics through playing alongside children and, where necessary, scaffolding and supporting their play.

Ongoing assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of the Early Years.

The main EYFS assessment method is through staff observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult-focused activities and child-initiated play. Observations take place on a daily basis (both formally and informally). Practitioners make time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. They also make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning. Observations are recorded on the Learning book.

All staff are involved in observing children. Staff use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified, and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress. Other methods of assessing children in the EYFS include engaging alongside children in their play, annotation and focused marking of children's written work, talking with children about their task or play

During the first term at The Pier Head Prep School the teacher assesses the ability of each child using a baseline assessment. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. Progress will be monitored and assessed termly. All assessments and observations can be found on your child individual learning book.

4. Learning and development

The seven areas of learning and development are equally important and interdependent, and this is reflected in our planning for both adult-led and child-initiated learning.

The three prime areas are crucial to develop lifelong learning and to help children form relationships.



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

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas.

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the world
- Expressive art and design

Learning and teaching style

Our policy defines the features of effective learning and teaching in our school. These features apply as much to learning and teaching in the EYFS as they do in Key Stages 1 and 2.

Features that relate specifically to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn and how this affects their teaching
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS
- 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
- encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning and to develop confidence and independence
- support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment
- identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents.

Active learning through play

At The Pier Head Prep School we recognise that young children learn best through play and when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning through play.

We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. Play is a powerful motivator, encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.



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In the Reception classrooms at The Pier Head Prep School staff provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support children to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts.

Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding. In providing these active learning opportunities through play we understand the central position of play within the EYFS framework. This is essentially a play-based curriculum and pedagogy as the provision of play opportunities underpins its delivery within settings.