



THE
**CREATIVE
LEARNING**
PARTNERSHIP TRUST



Early Years Policy

Approved by: Elizabeth Bradbury

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Thursfield Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Introduction

At Thursfield, we provide children with a concept-led, knowledge-rich curriculum that has no limits or barriers to their achievements, regardless of background, circumstance, or need. Within our Early Years, we provide a solid foundation for the curriculum, allowing children to fill up their suitcase before beginning their Thursfield journey with their “Ticket to Anywhere.”

Using our school motto, “We Care, We Share, We Dare to Dream,” we ensure that each of the seven key features of effective practice are met within our Early Years.

We Care

We understand that starting school can be a big step for little people. We provide high-quality care to ensure that children settle within their new environment. The prime areas of learning are central to our everyday teaching, ensuring that all children are ready to take their next steps towards learning.

Our effective practitioners provide the best for every child, ensuring that all children are given an equal chance to succeed, regardless of their starting point. We narrow the gap for our disadvantaged children through our high-quality care and curriculum.

We Share

We develop strong, respectful partnerships with parents through effective transition, regular communication, and high engagement. We use Tapestry, an online journal, to allow both school and home to share and celebrate achievements and learning.

We use assessment to understand what each child can do and how we can deepen or extend their learning. We share these successes with parents, governors, and the children.

We Dare to Dream

Our carefully planned, ambitious curriculum allows children to build on their knowledge and experiences over time. It is bursting with language, which is consistently modelled, and new vocabulary is taught to encourage rich language development.

Effective pedagogy is a mix of different approaches, from play to observation to guided learning. We carefully organise an enabling environment which provides a balance of high-quality play experiences and effective guided learning. As the children progress through Early Years, the need for more guided learning increases, which aids their transition to Key Stage 1.

We promote the development of self-regulation and executive function, allowing regular opportunities for children to focus their thinking, persist, and plan.

Our Early Years team provides a nurturing and safe environment which supports our ambitious, coherently planned, sequenced curriculum. Resources are carefully chosen to meet the needs of all children and to promote learning. Children are given time to discuss and explore new learning, with regular opportunities to communicate effectively with each other and staff.

Books are carefully chosen to introduce new ideas, concepts and vocabulary. When reading, staff read in a way that excites and engages, promoting a love of reading and literature. Children are taught to read and write through expert teaching of a systematic, synthetic phonics programme (Little Wandle); children practise reading through books which match their phonic knowledge.

Each of the seven areas of learning have been carefully planned to allow children to build on prior knowledge and experiences throughout their Early Years journey. Each area allows children to progress through our curriculum, developing in-depth knowledge and key skills to fill their suitcase at the end of Reception, achieve the Early Learning Goals, and be ready to continue on their Thursfield journey with their "Ticket to Anywhere."

Within each of the seven areas, key texts, vocabulary, and curriculum goals are highlighted to allow staff and parents to understand expectations and ensure all children are making progress. We understand that children's development and progress are not always linear; staff have expert knowledge to understand each child's personal next steps.

We carefully plan the environment and enhancements, using ongoing staff assessment to drive this. Through constant communication, all staff can confidently talk about what has been provided and why.

A Unique Child

Child Development

We aim to provide children in the Foundation Stage at Thursfield with positive early experiences that build upon what children already know, through being sensitive to their needs, communication and learning style interests, and individual stage of development.

Inclusive Practice

We recognise that children and their families have a right to be treated equally and fairly. Adults promote equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice.

Keeping Safe

When parents entrust their child into our care, they must feel that their child is safe. We involve children in developing the boundaries which will help them to keep safe.

We have secure grounds, entrances, and exits. Parents are requested to let us know who will be collecting their child at the end of the day; children are only released to that person. All staff have been assessed as being 'suitable' to work with children and staff-to-children ratios are met.

Health and Well-being

We actively promote good health and oral hygiene through offering healthy school meals. Children have access to fresh drinking water, milk, and fruit each day.

We offer a balance of activities — time to be quiet and rest, as well as opportunities for large physical activity. We enable children to become aware of their bodies, personal hygiene, and to make healthy choices.

Positive Relationships

Respecting Each Other

We have a caring, professional team of staff who show respect towards each other and the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise and value the role of parents. We aim to provide a welcoming atmosphere from the family's first visit to Thursfield.

Our transition and induction process begins before application with open evenings and events for prospective parents. Our induction programme includes tours of the school, meetings with the Foundation Stage team and Headteacher, and opportunities to share information about routines, first days, and individual needs.

Parents are invited into our setting for stay-and-play sessions, workshops, and discussions about their child's progress. We communicate effectively through our open-door policy, Tapestry, and regular parent consultation evenings.

Supporting Learning

We aim to build strong relationships with the children through listening and observing them to support, encourage, and extend their learning further. Staff are suitably qualified and regularly access training to update their professional development.

Key Person

Each child is assigned a key person. In Reception, the class teacher acts as the key person as they are the consistent adult in the team. This continuity helps to meet individual needs and build relationships with parents and children.

Enabling Environments

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Assessment provides staff with the knowledge of each child to plan appropriate learning experiences. Practitioners use professional judgement to assess progress.

When a child is between two and three years old, practitioners review their development against the prime areas and provide a brief summary of strengths and areas for development.

Reception teachers complete the EYFS Profile at the end of the year, sharing outcomes with parents and Year 1 teachers. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development or not yet reaching them.

Supporting Every Child

We recognise that children are on a learning journey that starts well before they enter Reception. The transition process enables the class teacher to liaise with nursery practitioners to discuss each child's interests, talents, and individual needs.

The Learning Environment

We aim to provide a learning environment that welcomes children and gives them confidence to explore and learn both inside and outside.

Children are encouraged to access equipment independently and take responsibility for returning it when finished. The outdoor environment promotes gross motor development, measured risk-taking, and challenge.

Our forest area and weekly welly walks enable children to have first-hand experiences of the natural world across all four seasons. Thursfield is an all-weather school, and our outdoor provision allows children to extend and enhance their learning within their local environment.

The Wider Context

To achieve the Every Child Matters outcomes — being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, and achieving economic well-being — staff communicate with any agencies involved with children and families.

This begins with transition and induction, bringing together information from previous settings and listening to parents. Staff also consider wraparound care provision, trips to local places of interest, and visits from community members.

At the end of the Foundation Stage, children begin transition to Year 1, meeting their new teacher and becoming familiar with their new learning environment.

Learning and Development

Playing and Exploring

We value the importance of play for children's development; play and exploration are how children make sense of the world around them. Skilled practitioners support and extend children's learning through play, ensuring it remains purposeful and engaging.

Active Learning

We want children to become resilient and independent learners who take control of their knowledge. They are encouraged to follow their interests and fascinations through challenges and learning activities that develop decision-making and thinking skills.

Creating and Thinking Critically

We encourage children to extend their thoughts and ask questions by providing opportunities to make connections in their learning. High-quality, stimulating resources and experiences promote creativity, curiosity, and critical thinking.

Areas of Learning and Development

The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises seven areas of learning and development. All areas are interconnected and equally important.

The three prime areas are “particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving.” (Statutory Framework for the EYFS, 2024)

Prime Areas

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

The four specific areas strengthen and apply the prime areas:

- Literacy
 - Mathematics
 - Understanding the World
 - Expressive Arts and Design
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Conclusion

This policy is specific to the Early Years Foundation Stage. Whole school policies are also relevant to children in the Foundation Stage.