

Ermington Primary School

Early



Years

Foundation Stage Policy

Septemeber 2023

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1 Aims

The aims of the Foundation class at Ermington Primary School is to provide a safe and secure learning environment which inspires, excites and stimulates the children's learning, in both child initiated activities and adult led opportunities. The welcoming staff aim for communicative and warm relationships with parents, carers and children, where the positive impact of both home and school life is valued. We really value the contribution that parents make to children's learning and wellbeing.

2 Starting at Ermington Primary School

Children join Ermington Primary in the September after their fourth birthday. Primary school places are allocated in the term before they start in the September and parents and carers are notified in April based on the Local Authority's admission policy. A welcome letter is sent out to parents once the school have been notified of successful applications which include a welcome pack providing key information about our school.

At Ermington, we offer a series of opportunities for parents and their children to meet the staff and familiarise themselves with the school and routines before their child begins. The school has positive links with the Ermington pre-school, which is located next door. During the summer term, the Foundation class teacher visits the pre-school on several occasions to build relationships with the future Ermington Foundation children. There are also specified dates for open afternoons within the classroom, where the children who are starting in September can play in their new environment and build connections with other children and staff. We also provide the children with a transition book, which includes photos of staff and the school environment. We really value the transition phase for each individual child attending our school.

In July, parents are invited to a welcome meeting where tours of the school are provided and key members of staff are available for parents to meet. Important information is also shared which will help to prepare for the upcoming transition. Following this, the class teacher and the SENDCO conduct home visits providing an opportunity to meet the child in a familiar environment and share further information with parents.

Upon starting in September, there is the option to attend through a staggered entry over a short period. There is the option to attend for a half day (not including lunch) and later a half day (including lunch). Of course, we welcome children to attend full time.

Throughout September and October, parents are invited to a meeting with the class teacher to discuss progress and wellbeing within the first few weeks of school. We also provide a phonics meeting for parents, where the phonics scheme (Read Write Inc) is outlined and suggestions for how parents can support their child's reading and writing is provided.

3 The Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2023. This document states that learning and development takes place when children have the opportunity to interact in positive relationships in enabling environments. At the end of the year the children will be assessed against the seventeen Statutory Early Learning Goals. The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. However, 3 areas, known as the prime areas, are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. We focus on these prime areas when the children start school, so that they develop the resilience and determination to succeed within the specific areas of learning and development.

Prime Areas:

Communication and Language Development

This involves giving children opportunities to experience a range of rich language; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; to become comfortable using interesting and new vocabulary and to speak and listen in a range of situations, enjoying a range of high quality texts. Children are taught to use a variety of sentence structures in their talk to support later literacy skills.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

This involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage emotions; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities as well as develop resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

Physical Development

This involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, strength, control, and movement. Gross Motor skills provide the foundation for healthy bodies and social and emotional wellbeing. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand eye coordination which is linked to early literacy.

Specific Areas:

Mathematics

This involves providing children with opportunities to develop the ability to count confidently and develop a deep understanding of numbers to 10, the relationships between these numbers and corresponding number bonds. Frequent opportunities for children to build and apply their understanding are provided to support the children's deeper understanding and vocabulary development. Children are given time to explore spatial reasoning across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures.

Literacy

This involves providing the foundations for children to have a lifelong love of reading. Literacy gives children frequent and varied opportunities to explore a wide range of exciting and enriching texts (stories, poems, non-fiction texts and songs). Reading consists of two main elements; word reading and comprehension. Comprehension development starts from birth, where children are exposed to texts to support their understanding of the world around them. Skills involved in word reading are taught through developing children's ability in linking sounds to letters and to begin to read and write. Children use their confidence in the prime area of Communication and Language to begin to write a sentence constructed in a variety of ways.

Understanding the World

This involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe, compare and find out about people, cultures, places and the environment. Children will also be given opportunities to compare and contrast their own lives with the lives of their friends and the lives of those in the past.

Expressive Arts and Design

This involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

(Adapted from Statutory Framework 2023)

Learning and development are underpinned through characteristics which support them in becoming effective and motivated learners, known as the Characteristics of Effective Learning. These areas are Playing and Exploring, Active Learning and Creating and Thinking Critically.

4 Assessment in the Early Years

As children begin in Foundation, they undertake a Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) providing staff with valuable information about the strengths of the child and their next steps in learning. This is combined with information received from the child's previous preschool setting to begin to build a

picture of the child as a learner. Once this has been completed all further assessments will be carried out in line with the WESt assessment structure using Development Matters, building evidence towards the Statutory Early Learning Goals.

Each child will have their own skills book which allows staff to monitor progress within literacy and maths. The class also has a shared floorbook, which we call our class story book; it tells the story of our learning journey through the Foundation year. We share this floorbook as a class each week to recap previous learning and practise our communication and interaction skills. The floorbook is also shared during open afternoons, where the children can share their learning journey with parents and carers.

At the end of the year the class teacher will assess all children in Foundation against the Statutory Early Learning Goals, reviewing evidence and observations seen in each area throughout the year. A judgement will be made as to whether the child has achieved the Early Learning Goal or is continuing to work towards it. Ultimately, we aim to develop children who are engaged in learning and who are ready to access the National Curriculum which begins in Year 1.

5 The Learning Environment

The Foundation learning environment is organised into a classroom, a calm room and an outside area which includes a covered decking. The learning environments are arranged so that they are exciting and open-ended for the children to explore and play. The learning spaces have designated areas of learning to promote the different areas of the curriculum including a writing area, mathematics area, creative area, garden, mud kitchen and much more! During the day, the children have small periods of time where they are taught as a class. During the rest of the day, they access an assortment of provision in a free flow environment which links to the learning but also provides the children with opportunity to explore and extend their learning.

6 Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is strongly encouraged and welcomed at Ermington Primary. We promote positive relationships between staff, parents and children as soon as the children are provided with a place at our school.

Prospective parents and pupils are invited to attend tours of the school before deciding to apply for a place with us. Once a place is allocated for a child, regular opportunities are provided for children and parents to get to know the school and key members of staff before children start in September. More information regarding this process can be found in the 'Starting at Ermington' section of this policy.

At appropriate times during the year, parents are invited into school to take part in activities with their child. In Foundation we have a 'Bedtime Stories' event, where the staff will share a variety of

stories with the children, while they listen, join in and share biscuits and a hot chocolate. Parents also have the opportunity to watch their child perform in events, including the Christmas Nativity. We also welcome parents that would like to volunteer within the school. After receiving a DBS for the school, parents are welcome to support children with their reading, or bring a skillset to the classroom. We also welcome parents who wish to share part of their job, culture, religion or passion. The children are always inspired and excited by a new, friendly face!

7 Reporting to Parents

At Ermington we adopt an open door policy where parents are warmly encouraged to communicate with staff either during the morning as they bring their children to school or after school while collecting them. If a longer meeting is required then parents are asked to arrange an appointment with staff at a mutually convenient time. Each child is provided with a Reading Record when they are ready to start reading their first book. These books are a great way for parents and staff to communicate regarding the child's reading needs.

Additionally, parents have the opportunity to meet with teachers during parent teacher consultations twice a year. At the end of the year, a written report is provided for parents informing them of their child's strengths and outcomes linked to the Statutory Early Learning Goals.

8 Transition into Year 1

During the child's summer term in Foundation, transition will begin for their move to Year 1. The Year 1 teacher will have many opportunities to get to know the pupils in their new class during informal visits to the children's classroom. At Ermington, we value our community of staff and children; we work closely together to ensure that all staff know how to meet the needs of each child at the school to ensure a smooth transition.

The children will also visit their new classroom to familiarise themselves with their new setting. Initially in September, the Year 1 curriculum closely matches the provision that the children currently have in Foundation to support a successful transition. At Ermington Primary, we value the importance of a successful transition to promote confident children who are ready to progress with their learning and development.