Tolworth School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

‘Happy Children, Successful Learners’

‘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 experience 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
September 2021

Reviewed and updated by: Kate Mendonca, EYFS Lead & Assistant Head
Date: September ‘23

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.
Next review due: September ‘26

Tolworth School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Intent

At Tolworth School we have carefully designed a broad, balanced and engaging curriculum for our pupils in EYFS. We understand that the EYFS is the first experience of schooling that children and their parents experience, so it is essential that this first interaction is well planned and designed to meet the needs of all our pupils. All children begin school with a wide variety of experiences and learning and it is the role of the adults working in the EYFS to support children to build upon that prior learning.

Effective, communicative relationships with parents and carers is crucial and encourages them to be fully engaged in their child's learning. Through the seven areas of learning, we seek to ensure that our inclusive curriculum offer is engaging and exciting so that all of our children's interests and needs are catered for.

Our curriculum and termly planning is driven by:

- Recognising and planning to celebrate our children's diverse backgrounds
- Recognising children's prior learning, experiences and starting points when entering our school
- Building on children's interests
- Build children's cultural capital through providing first hand learning experiences, a language rich environment and carefully planned specific vocabulary.
- Giving children the knowledge and skills to be ready be for the KS1 curriculum and further learning
- Building resilience and growth mindset
- Supporting our children to become critical and creative thinkers who learn from handling real objects and by experiencing real situations. Enabling children's choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Allowing children time and opportunities to develop socially and emotionally allowing them to form stable relationships both with children and adults.
- Providing a safe, challenging, stimulating and caring environment which meets the needs of all children, an environment that allows children to play, investigate and explore, in order to make sense of the world around them.

Implementation

In our EYFS setting, we meet the requirements set out within the statutory framework. The EYFS principles which guide the work of all the practitioners are grouped into four distinct themes as laid out in the EYFS statutory guidance 2021:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationship
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

We plan within the seven areas of learning. Teaching staff are experts in the curriculum that they teach; this is supported by training, INSET, research and our teaching and learning community. Our curriculum is topic based, which supports children in embedding key learning within other areas of the curriculum and developing higher-level thinking and deeper learning. It is designed to develop the characteristics of effective learning as set out in Development Matters:

1. Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.
2. Active learning – children keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.
3. Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

Children initiated learning is valued and encouraged. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Continuous provision is carefully planned, to ensure it supports a progression in the children's knowledge and skills. Our outdoor environment is equally as important as the indoor provision. Our children can access the whole curriculum outside all year round and access to the provision is available daily.

Working with parents, carers and outside agencies is an essential part of implementing the curriculum successfully. We work with others in a child-centred approach when implementing the curriculum. This may be through advice from outside agencies on how to tailor activities or through working with families to celebrate diversity and planning for this within the curriculum.

Impact

Our families are from a diverse range of backgrounds. Regardless of starting points, we strive for all of our children to reach the Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception, making good progress from their starting points.

The table below shows the comparison between Tolworth School and National, for the percentage of children achieving a good level of development (GLD), with each year showing Tolworth achieving in line or above the national score.

	2021- 2022	**2022 - 2023**
Tolworth School	68%	68%
National	65%	TBC

Assessments

Assessments are used throughout the year allowing us to identify any children who are not making the expected progress; we put in the required interventions to support them to meet these expectations. Teaching and learning is regularly monitored to ensure consistency, excellent teaching and rapid progress is being maintained (drop ins, learning walks, formal observations, discussions, book looks).

Our carefully planned curriculum, opportunities for play based learning, quality first teaching and our consistent use of assessment opportunities supports children with making the required progress.

Our parental and carer involvement is also key at this stage. We are committed to celebrating the successes of our children, the impact of the curriculum and the progress that they make. We do this through 'learning journeys' which capture key moments in the children's learning throughout the year and shows the progress that they make: these are books are regularly shared with parents and carers and they are encouraged to share work from home with school.

About our school

Tolworth School is tucked away behind Tolworth Broadway, on an attractive site, with plenty of green open space providing a calm environment for the children. We are federated with Tolworth Junior School with whom we share the site. We have good links with the other local primary schools, playgroups and nurseries in the local authority. We have made strong links with the settings that feed into our Nursery and Reception classes, especially during the summer term in order to ease transition for children starting our school.

In our school we offer a single entry 52 place Nursery consisting of 13 morning or afternoon sessions and 13 all day places for children accessing the 30 hours funding. There is also a specialist resourced provision for children with moderate to severe learning difficulties in the Nursery called 'The Lighthouse'. The children accessing 'The Lighthouse' are included as much as possible with the other children in Nursery; they will also receive daily support to work on recommendations from outside agencies. From September 2013 we have offered 8 places within our Nursery for two-year olds (4 in the morning and 4 in the afternoon): this is through the '2-year-old early education entitlement'.

We have a three-form entry Reception and we offer full time places for all Reception aged pupils, regardless of their birth date. The specialist resource provision for children of Reception age is called 'The Harbour' and we provide 3 places for children of this age.

Tolworth Children's Centre is on the same site as Tolworth Infant and Nursery School and provides high quality play and learning to support local families with children under five in a fun, friendly and relaxed environment. The range of children's integrated services on offer includes: Early Years Education and Care, Health Services- Midwifery and Health Visitors, Employment and Adult Education Advice Information, Family Support Services and Law For All (free legal advice). Sessions provided throughout the year include: Toy Library: a session where families can borrow a great selection of high-quality toys for each stage of children's development and Stay and Play: a fun and relaxing session, which is focused on working closely with parents to support and promote their child's development and early learning through play. Tolworth Children's Centre currently has over 900 families registered or affiliated with us.

Our policy for early year's education is based on the four principles of the EYFS, the characteristics of effective learning and the 7 educational programmes. They underpin effective practice in the care, development and learning of young children.

A Unique Child

‘Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured’

We understand and observe each child’s development and learning, assess progress, plan for next steps and identify any need for additional support. We support children to develop a positive sense of their own identity and culture:

- Throughout the child’s first years at Tolworth School (EYFS) they will be provided with learning opportunities that are planned following guidance from the development matters and birth to five documents and are differentiated to meet the needs of individuals and groups of children. All the requirements of the September 2021 Statutory Framework are met.
- When compiling a child’s profile, the Early Years Foundation Stage staff will undertake a number of formal and informal assessments, these may be through observations, tasks and activities, speaking to the child in a group or on a one-to-one basis, through conversations with all adults who spend time with the child/ children at school. The assessments will be recorded in a variety of ways; however, the focus will be on talking and playing with children rather than data collection. Data is inputted into Target Tracker and analysed to track children’s progress and inform next steps.
- Individual interests are identified and followed through our continuous provision; these can be seen developing in the children’s ‘Learning Diaries’.
- Half-termly plans are written which link to the topic. The EYFS topics can be found in the ’Curriculum Map’ and on the school website. The half-termly plans are broken down into the six areas of learning and provide next steps for learning, development matters statements, learning objectives and key questions, experiences and learning content, resources and ICT links, planned visits or visitors.
- Support is given to the children to help them to settle smoothly into their new environment, with a safe and happy transition from home to their new setting.
- Direct teaching and modelling from adults and peers help the children to begin to value different cultures, race, religion and languages.
- A wide range of creative and stimulating materials are provided to support development of fine and gross motor skills.

We value and respect all children and families equally:

We actively promote equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that all children and families feel included, safe and valued through:

- Welcome posters/information leaflets in a range of different home languages.
- Photographs of children learning and the adults that they work with.
- Children’s cultures are reflected wherever possible e.g. through resources, books, role play props, ‘around the world’ display, flags displaying the languages spoken.
- Translators are sought to support families to read newsletters and other important information. These may be school adults and adults from our families.
- All staff promote and model warm and respectful relationships, reinforce positive behaviour and value diversity.

We keep children safe and healthy:

- Children’s self-esteem is nurtured and developed through PSED lessons, interactions with staff and recognition for their achievements across all areas of learning.
- Children are regularly asked to think about safety rules in place e.g. using scissors, playing on more challenging equipment. However, they are also encouraged to take risks e.g. when climbing, balancing etc.
- Meetings are held to ensure a consistent approach for children with challenging behaviour, settling in difficulties or any other area where a child may need support.
- We develop nurturing relationships with all the children in our school; extra nurture groups are provided to support children in developing self-confidence and self-esteem at times when they need it.
- Road safety is taught and put into practice during out of school visits.
- If any member of staff has a concern about a child this is recorded and reported to the Designated Child Protection Lead.
- Healthy eating is promoted; the school holds an annual health and fitness fortnight.
- Oral health is promoted in class and at home. Toothbrushes and information about local dentists are shared with all families.
- All children have access to water throughout the day and a daily fruit snack is provided by the school.
- Food from other cultures is cooked and sampled during the year.
- The environment in school provides quiet spaces indoors and outdoors and has large spaces which allow free movement.

Positive Relationships

'Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships'

We aim to build positive relationships which are:

Warm and loving, and foster a sense of belonging, sensitive and responsive to child's needs, feelings and interest and supportive of the child's own efforts and independence. Clear boundaries should be set in a stimulating environment:

- Our school team is well-trained in tuning in to children and providing the best possible care and learning.
- Communication is supported through visual timetables and Makaton signing.
- Regular team meetings are held in the school to plan and talk about any issues and build upon strengths and good practice.
- We have an open-door policy and value parent's knowledge of their children, sometimes making adjustments for individual children to help their settling in/learning.
- Children's PSED is supported through structured and adult framed activities and any children having difficulties forming relationships are supported through social skills groups.

Early Years staff at Tolworth School acknowledge that parents are the first educators of their children, and have a wealth of information to share with the school.

- Nursery and Reception parents are encouraged to talk to staff on a daily basis if they have any questions or concerns.
- Welcome meetings take place in June/July before children start school to meet the teacher, visit the classroom and discuss policies and procedures.
- In the autumn term there are parents meeting for Reception and KS1 children. In the spring and summer terms there are meetings for all parents whose children attend the school – this provides the opportunity to discuss the children's learning, behaviour, friendships, children's work and progress and set next step targets.
- Stay and play sessions are provided in Nursery and Reception
- Regular opportunities are given for children to share their learning diaries with their parents.
- Positive links are established by inviting parents into school to assist with cooking, languages, computers, games, reading, creative activities, visits etc.
- Parents make valuable contributions to their children's learning diaries and 'wow moments'. They are also encouraged to write comments in the children's reading records which reinforces communication between teachers and parents, especially working parents.

Relationships should be built between the child and a key person:

- The key person is the children's class teacher and they have responsibility for their care, learning and development in the school.
- Key workers are an adult who develops a genuine bond and close relationship with a child and this may be a teaching assistant, nursery nurse or learning support assistant.

Enabling Environments

'Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers'

We are committed to offering:

Stimulating resources relevant to all the children's cultures and communities, rich learning opportunities through play and playful teaching that support for children to take risks and explore:

- We provide a carefully planned language rich environment to support the children's learning and development.
- We plan a balanced, inclusive curriculum, catering for all children. It is important that children should work in a friendly, relaxed atmosphere to ensure they are not afraid to have a go at taking risks and are happy to learn from their mistakes.
- We have a well-ordered and stimulating environment both indoors and outside with specific areas to promote different aspects of learning. Our continuous provision offers children a constant environment that is safe for them to explore whilst challenging their learning.
- Resources, equipment and materials are well organised and clearly labelled to develop children's independence.
- The outdoor classroom provides large equipment and resources that give opportunities for large scale development. This supports the children's physical development and encourages them to be physically active.

The environment supports every child's learning through planned experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable

- Children with SEND have their needs identified in collaboration with the SEND Leader, outside agencies are involved when required. Termly targets are put into place to support these children and work is differentiated accordingly. If a child begins to cause concern this is discussed with the SEND leader and they are put on the SEND register if needed, targets are put into place and they are carefully monitored. Some areas of SEND are identified before entry to school, via their previous setting and a communication passport may be made for these children.
- At Tolworth School we have a 'Specialist Resourced Provision' for children who have moderate to severe learning difficulties; this comprises of the Harbour (for Reception and KS1 children) and the Lighthouse (for Nursery children).
- Transition from Nursery to Reception and Reception to Year One is carefully planned to ensure continuity for the children across each year. Information is shared with staff and parents in order to support children best.
- The local area is used regularly to support learning e.g. autumn walk to the fishponds, walk to the post box, visits to the laundrette, trip to the farm…
- Members of the community regularly visit the school to share their expertise e.g dentist, nurse, police etc…
- We have a full time Children and Family Co-ordinator that supports families with a range of different areas including housing, mental health difficulties etc…
- Additional support for children and their families is available through our Children's Centre. Services available include: Early Years Education and Care, Health Services- Midwifery and Health Visitors, Employment and Adult Education Advice Information, Family Support Services and Law For All.

Learning and Development

'Children develop and learn in different ways. We teach children by ensuring challenging, playful opportunities across the prime and specific areas of learning'

Areas of learning and development

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of Learning and Development. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three areas (prime areas) are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These areas are:

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

Additionally, there are four specific areas of learning *through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.* These are:

- **Literacy**
- **Mathematics**
- **Understanding the world**
- **Expressive arts and design**

The children in our EYFS will have clear learning objectives planned for all the areas of learning and will learn through a variety of strategies such as direct teaching, exploratory play and investigative work and continuous provision. There is a strong focus on language development and the teaching of early reading. During the Foundation Stage children take part in activities planned from 'Development Matters' and 'Birth to 5', these experiences will help them progress towards the Early Learning Goals which they should achieve by the end of Reception.

Characteristics of effective learning

The ways in which a child engages with other people and their environment – playing and exploring, active learning , and creating and thinking critically – underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner; these are the characteristics of effective learning.

In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately.

Playing and exploration

Play is highly valued in our school and can be seen through:

- Providing materials, situations and experiences that will stimulate children's play both indoors and outside.
- Creating an environment and ethos that allows children to develop at their own pace.
- Actively promoting the value of play amongst parents, children and staff.

Active learning

We encourage active learning by:

- Providing an environment to stimulate active learning.
- Providing opportunities for good quality indoor and outdoor learning.
- Celebrating and reflecting on each child's unique learning journey.
- Allowing children time to follow their interests and become engrossed in their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

We aim to support children to think creatively by:

- Providing open ended activities for children.
- Ensuring a balance of child-initiated, independently accessed and adult-led activities.
- Delivering teaching and learning creatively across the curriculum.
- Responding to children's individual play preferences by offering them resources which will stimulate them to make further creative connections.

Admissions and Entry

Parents can apply for a '2-year-old early education entitlement' place (2:15) from when their child turns 2. Specific criteria apply and parents can send an application themselves or be referred by a professional. We currently only take 2-year olds in September, if a parent wishes to take up their entitlement sooner we can signpost them to other 2:15 settings with 3 intakes per year.

Parents apply for a Nursery or Reception place during the autumn term prior to their child's September start date. The parents send their application forms to the borough with their choices of settings. The borough will allocate the children a place in a school and advise the parents and schools of the decision.

We offer 30 hours funded places for our Nursery children. Specific criteria apply and eligibility can be check online. We offer one intake for our Nursery to coincide with the start of the school year, in September.

Prior to the date that the application needs to be complete, there will be opportunities for parents to visit the school, meet the Headteacher or Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and ask questions. Once a child has been offered a place in the school Nursery, Tolworth Two's or Reception classes and the place has been accepted by the parents, the following arrangements are made:

Before Tolworth Two's Intake

- Links with feeder Children's Centres and playgroups are made prior to the children starting.
- Parents and children are offered the opportunity to spend a session time at Nursery during an open session to familiarise themselves with both the environment and the staff.
- Parents are given all relevant school forms to complete giving essential information about their child (these are held in the school office).
- Children are given a start date and two settling in dates; one with their parent and one without. These dates are flexible and should a child need more time to settle then this can be arranged.

Before Nursery Intake

- Links with feeder playgroups are made prior to the children starting the Nursery.
- Children are offered the opportunity to spend a session at Nursery during an open session to familiarise themselves with both the environment and the staff.
- Parents are given all relevant school forms to complete giving essential information about their child (these are held in the school office).
- Children are given a start date, which is slightly staggered to allow all children the chance to settle.

Before Reception Intake

- In the autumn term (one year prior to children starting in the Reception class), the Headteacher talks to potential new parents and gives them a tour around the school, where they are able to see the school in action and ask members of staff and children about the school.
- The parents are invited to a meeting in the summer term to visit the school. The Headteacher talks about intake procedures and parents have an informal chat with the teachers. The Friends of Tolworth School (FOTS) are invited to introduce themselves and their roles in the school.
- Parents of the children who did not attend Tolworth Nursery are given all relevant forms (these are held in the school office).
- In the summer term prior to a child starting in the Reception class, the children are invited to the school for a session to meet each other and the Reception staff. This includes the children who already attend the school Nursery. A second session for the children to visit is offered at the start of the autumn term.
- All Nursery records and relevant information regarding the children entering the school are passed on as soon as possible.

Entry Procedures and Routines

We aim to make the children's transition into school as smooth and as we can:

- In Reception in the autumn term, there is a phased entry into school. No more than 8 - 10 children arrive new on the same day, allowing the teacher and support staff to get to know the children well. The class builds up in numbers with full admission within approximately one week. Entry into Nursery is staggered over three days.
- All children will attend school in the autumn term, with all children staying full time from when they begin. Only in exceptional circumstances will a child attend Reception on a part time basis.
- Nursery and Reception are timetabled to use all the different areas of the school. In addition, Nursery and Reception have their own outdoor areas and equipment. Children with special educational needs join in all activities with support when needed.
- Reception children are introduced to the main playground at different times from the rest of the school. This gives them the opportunity to become familiar with the space, discuss games available and any rules that apply. All children in the school have the same lunchtime and this helps to build up supportive relationships with the older children. The playgrounds always have many familiar adults supporting and playing with the children. In addition, Year 6 play leaders support in the playground to play with the children.

Staffing

The Nursery class is staffed by one teacher, a nursery nurse and two teaching assistants. An additional NNEB is appointed for the Specialist Resourced Provision. Tolworth Two's has a lead practitioner who is NNEB trained, this covers the required 1:4 ratio. The Reception classes are each staffed by a teacher and a nursery nurse or teaching assistant. All Early Years Foundation Stage staff at Tolworth School aim to work as a team, with effective relationships based on good communication, consultation and mutual decision-making.

Inclusive Education

In line with the school's equal opportunities policy, we will provide all children, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, gender or abilities with equal access to all aspects of school life to ensure that every child is valued as an individual and reaches their potential. All staff are role models and are aware of the influence they have in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical attitudes.

Meeting the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

At Tolworth School we ensure that we are safeguarding and promoting children's welfare by appointing suitable people to work with the children, including volunteers, that have undergone a CRB check. We provide suitable well-organised premises and environment with safe age-appropriate equipment. This ensures that every child receives a safe, enjoyable, challenging learning and development experience tailored to meet their needs. All documentation and records are kept up-to date to assist in the safe and efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children, we ensure that we comply with all the legal requirements set out in the EYFS Statutory Guidance.

Intimate Care

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out any procedure regarding personal hygiene that most children of their age are able to carry out for themselves. However, depending on a child's stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. We would inform the parents if their child required frequent intimate care. Infrequent intimate care is explained to parents on collection of their child. Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting these needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child.

- ***Intimate Care Policy available upon request***

Paediatric First Aid

To meet the legal requirements all staff have had basic first aid training and 4 of our TA's have been trained to become Paediatric First Aiders. We will ensure that a Paediatric First aider will always accompany a Nursery or Reception class on a school visit.

Health and Safety

Great care is taken to provide a safe and secure environment for the children. Equipment is checked twice a year by the school's Health & Safety Co-ordinator and Early Years staff make regular checks on smaller equipment used more frequently.

The children are encouraged to eat healthily; fresh fruit or raw vegetables are provided for a morning snack. Examples of a healthy lunch box are provided, however, if food is inappropriate, parents are approached by the teacher to discuss this. Oral health is promoted and toothbrushes are sent home with all Nursery and Reception aged children.

In the Nursery, minor cuts and bruises are dealt with by the Nursery staff. More serious injuries, particularly to the head have to be recorded in the accident book. If necessary the child's parents are contacted and asked to take the child home. In Reception children's minor injuries are dealt with by the class teacher, any more serious injuries are dealt with by staff who have first aid training.

In case of illness, both in Nursery and Reception, parents are phoned and asked to take the child home.

Conclusion

"The early childhood curriculum is constructed from three different elements. First it concerns the child and processes and structures with the child. Secondly it deals with knowledge: knowledge the child already has; and knowledge the child will acquire competently but with imagination. Thirdly, it brings the child and knowledge together, appropriately and relevantly, using the environment of people, objects or material provision, places and events. The key to early childhood curriculum is to observe, support and extend". Early childhood education by Tina Bruce pg 65