

POLAM HALL JUNIOR SCHOOL

Foundation Stage Policy

(Revised September 2009)

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INTRODUCTION

The needs of young children are complex and it is difficult to separate their need for care and support from their need for learning.

Since learning is a social experience children are learning through interacting with each other and with adults who care for and educate them.

Partnership between home and school is of great importance. Parents/carers are the first educators of the child and it is through them we find out much about the child's abilities and their previous experiences which are, of course, crucial foundations to build on.

Young children may have similar basic needs but, at the same time, each child is uniquely different. In the Foundation Stage our aim is to develop self-confidence, self esteem, curiosity and independence both in everyday tasks and in attitudes to work.

They are learning from their environment all the time. Working areas are set up in such a way that they will learn a variety of specific skills, develop independence and foster a caring attitude to fellow pupils and the resources they use. Materials and equipment are of good quality, accessible and well presented to enable them to learn independence in choosing and replacing materials they need. Thoughtful arrangement of activities enriches the value of their play and ensures equal opportunities for all in the process.

BASIC ORGANISATION

The school contacts parents/carers to arrange a visit to Early Steps Foundation Stage so that the teacher, parent/carer and child can spend time together.

The Foundation Stage comprises or foundation one (3-4yrs) and foundation two (4-5yrs) with each stage working independently when appropriate and together at other times. During each session in nursery children have the choice of a large number of working areas. They often learn more effectively when choosing their own activities and each working area promotes the development of particular skills and abilities.

Structured activities particularly designed to meet the Early Learning Goals laid down by the Department for Education and Employment are provided to ensure the children receive a broad and balanced curriculum. Throughout their time in the Foundation Stage they are encouraged to work independently and co-operatively in small groups and also to participate in whole group situations.

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As children progress to foundation two, their day will at times be of a more structured nature, reinforcing and extending previous knowledge gained. Self-initiated tasks are still an essential part of the learning process, however, and a variety of resources are provided to support this. Their experiences of school life is also widened, having P.E with the school specialist, attending all assemblies, being part of the school council, and the chance to be a friendship monitor.

Parents/carers receive regular information about forthcoming events, school news and children's achievements etc., by the weekly newsletter sent home with their child or via email.

The school does not work in isolation, having links with other agencies when necessary to ensure the children's welfare, e.g. social workers, child psychologists and speech and language units.

Children attending Early Steps Foundation Stage are expected to have high standards of behaviour. There is a set of basic rules and children are expected to adhere to these in their daily school routines. A discipline policy implemented throughout the school, involving pupils, staff and parents/carers at various levels will support this.

THE CURRICULUM

The curriculum provides activities designed to promote the intellectual, personal, social, physical and spiritual development of all children. It includes not only planned and child initiated learning, but also features quality of relationships, values and a concern for equality of opportunity.

The children follow the 'Early Years Foundation Stage' guidelines, which target - six specific areas of learning which provide a solid foundation for later achievement. These are -Personal and Social Development, Communication ,Language and Literacy, Problem Solving Reasoning and Numeracy, Knowledge and Understanding of the World, Creative Development and Physical Development.

Children, however, progress at different rates. Those whose achievements exceed the Early Goals are challenged by work derived from the Infant Curriculum. Other children will require continued support to achieve all, or some, of the Early Goals after entering compulsory education. When planning the curriculum, the Early Years' Team ensures that the four elements of learning are incorporated into learning programmes for all abilities.

KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is acquired as children develop and extend their awareness. It must be built upon to gain more knowledge.

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SKILLS

Skills differ in their complexity. A special ability or competence is needed to perform a task or activity. Skills which are important in the development of young children include:

- communication
- observation
- investigation
- problem solving
- physical and practical
- creative and imaginative
- numerical
- personal
- social

CONCEPTS

Concepts are the means by which children are able to make sense of the world around them and rely heavily on first-hand experience as the source and language as means of interpretation.

ATTITUDES

The curriculum as a whole, and how it is delivered, plays a prominent part in promoting the development of attitudes. Children's attitudes are affected by their total environment.

The school encourages a positive approach to learning focusing on children's abilities, not *inabilities*. This is done by implementing a merit system which is positive behaviour, good attitudes and good working habits.

Monitoring and evaluation is an integral part of the process. A variety of strategies are used to ensure that children are thoroughly assessed. These are outlined in more detail in the school's assessment, recording and reporting policy.

THE ROLE OF THE ADULT

The young child is vulnerable and dependent. The quality of the relationship between children and adults is a key factor in learning and development.

The Early Years team has a range of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Their up to date training enables them to respect the rights and meet the needs of all children. Members aim to provide:

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- Clear aims, objectives and values.
- A welcoming, positive learning environment, encouraging a variety of learning situations.
- Opportunities to interact with children to support and develop their learning
- A monitoring process to evaluate children's learning and therefore inform future planning.

Parents/carers are informed of their child's progress on a regular basis by means of informal chats, consultation evenings and an annual written report. The aim is to foster a good relationship between staff and parents/carers and value the contribution they make towards school life.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Early Years Team is committed to keeping up to date with current education initiatives by furthering their professional development and expertise through courses and team meetings.