



Nicol Mere Primary School

Early Years and Foundation Stage Policy

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1. Legal Framework and Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following legislation, statutory guidance and school policies. It reflects the warm, family-centred ethos of Nicol Mere Primary School whilst ensuring full compliance with national requirements.

EYFS Statutory Framework (current version)

Working Together to Safeguard Children

Keeping Children Safe in Education

Equality Act 2010

SEND Code of Practice

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Behaviour Policy

SEND Policy

Attendance Policy

Online Safety Policy

Health and Safety Policy

2. Vision

At Nicol Mere Primary School, we pride ourselves on giving our children the very best start to their school journey. We recognise every child as an individual and support them to reach their full potential and achieve excellent learning outcomes. Our dedicated team of Early Years practitioners has high expectations and cares deeply about the children in our school, building close, nurturing relationships with children and their families.

We aim to:

- Inspire a lifelong love of learning.
- Ensure that all children feel happy, safe, valued, respected and included.
- Encourage children's confidence, resilience, sense of responsibility and respect for others.
- Develop children's awareness of diversity within the local, national and global community and foster respect for different values, beliefs and customs.
- Provide opportunities for children to develop physically, intellectually, linguistically, emotionally, socially and creatively.
- Promote independence, curiosity and positive attitudes towards learning.
- Work in close partnership with families to ensure the best outcomes for every child.

This vision is delivered through a broad, ambitious curriculum with high quality, challenging learning opportunities that are both child-initiated and adult-led. Our practitioners are always ready to listen, communicate, model, assess, explain, demonstrate, question and carefully support the next steps in each child's learning journey.

Our high-quality learning environment supports children's emotional wellbeing as well as their cognitive development. Calm, welcoming spaces create a strong sense of belonging and a family feel, while high-quality, open-ended resources encourage independence, imagination, communication, problem solving and creativity.

As part of our Nicol Mere family ethos, children are encouraged to develop a strong sense of belonging within school and the wider community. We promote a love of the natural world through outdoor learning experiences and exploration of our environment.

3. Statutory Framework for the EYFS

The school follows the current Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers, published by the Department for Education.

The EYFS is based upon four overarching principles:

A Unique Child

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

Positive Relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

Enabling Environments

Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them build their learning over time.

Learning and Development

Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework supports the education and care of all children, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum based on the EYFS across all seven areas of learning through purposeful play and direct teaching.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Respect and promote the protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act 2010.
- Provide early intervention for children requiring additional support.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers.

- Plan challenging learning experiences informed by observation, assessment and children's interests.
- Provide opportunities for adult-led, child-initiated and adult-supported learning.
- Maintain safe, stimulating and inclusive indoor and outdoor learning environments.

4. Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

Our curriculum encompasses seven areas of learning and development. All areas are important and interconnected.

Prime Areas

The prime areas are particularly important in building the foundations for learning, relationships and lifelong success:

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

The specific areas strengthen and apply the prime areas:

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

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Learning throughout the EYFS is underpinned by the Characteristics of Effective Learning:

Playing and Exploring

Children investigate and experience things and are willing to have a go.

Active Learning

Children concentrate, persist through challenges and enjoy their achievements.

Creating and Thinking Critically

Children develop ideas, make connections and devise strategies for solving problems.

These characteristics support children's development as independent learners and help practitioners understand how children learn most effectively.

We use Development Matters (2021) alongside professional judgement, children's interests, prior learning and individual needs to plan a challenging, inclusive and engaging curriculum.

5. Our Practice

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they can explore, investigate, think creatively and discover the world around them.

We create medium-term plans around carefully selected themes and experiences that support all seven areas of learning. While topics provide a framework for planning, practitioners remain responsive to children's interests and adapt provision accordingly.

Continuous provision is enhanced to support curriculum objectives, literacy, communication, mathematics and children's individual interests. Planning is regularly evaluated to ensure it remains relevant and meets children's next steps in learning.

Children participate in:

- Whole-class teaching
- Small-group learning
- Adult-led activities
- Independent learning opportunities
- Indoor learning experiences
- Outdoor learning experiences

The curriculum is delivered through a play-based approach in line with the EYFS Framework. A balance is maintained between adult-led teaching and child-initiated exploration.

Our extensive outdoor provision is treated as an extension of the classroom. Children have opportunities to investigate the natural world, develop physical skills, solve problems collaboratively and foster an appreciation of the environment.

Practitioners carefully observe children's learning and use high-quality interactions to extend thinking, challenge understanding and support progress.

6. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Supporting children's emotional wellbeing is at the heart of everything we do. We recognise that children learn best when they feel safe, valued, understood and happy.

We help children to:

- Recognise and understand feelings and emotions.
- Develop positive relationships.
- Build resilience and perseverance.
- Regulate their behaviour appropriately.
- Manage conflict and solve problems positively.

- Develop confidence and independence.

Adults use co-regulation strategies, positive role modelling and consistent routines to support children's growing self-regulation skills. We recognise that emotional security is fundamental to successful learning and development.

7. Assessment

Baseline Assessment

When children begin their journeys at Nicol Mere the children will complete the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). Assessment information is used alongside observations, interactions, discussions with families and professional judgement to identify children's starting points and inform future learning.

Ongoing Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. Practitioners regularly observe children and use evidence gathered from everyday learning experiences to inform planning and identify next steps.

End of Reception Assessment

At the end of Reception, practitioners complete the EYFS Profile.

The Early Learning Goals define the expected level of development for children at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Teachers work collaboratively with senior leaders and Year One staff to make holistic best-fit judgements regarding children's attainment and readiness for Key Stage One.

Children are assessed as either:

- Expected
- Emerging

EYFS Profile data is submitted to the Local Authority and contributes to school self-evaluation and improvement planning.

8. Safety, Safeguarding and Welfare

The safety and welfare of all children is paramount.

The school complies fully with the safeguarding and welfare requirements outlined in the current EYFS Statutory Framework and all related legislation and guidance.

We:

- Promote the welfare and wellbeing of all children.
- Promote healthy lifestyles and positive wellbeing.
- Manage behaviour positively and effectively.
- Ensure all staff are suitable to work with children.

- Maintain a safe and secure learning environment.
- Provide challenging and enjoyable learning opportunities.
- Review risk assessments regularly.
- Follow all safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Nicol Mere Primary School operates robust safer recruitment procedures and maintains rigorous systems to ensure staff suitability.

The school follows its Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy at all times. A designated safeguarding team leads safeguarding practice across the school.

All staff receive regular safeguarding training and use CPOMS to record and report concerns. Staff remain vigilant and understand their responsibility to act immediately if concerns arise.

The school promotes age-appropriate online safety and supports children in developing safe habits when using technology. Staff ensure that digital devices are used appropriately, safely and in line with school policies.

Attendance is carefully monitored and concerns regarding persistent absence are followed up in line with school procedures.

9. Snack and Healthy Living

We promote children's health and wellbeing through:

- Daily fruit snacks.
- Access to milk.
- Access to drinking water throughout the day.
- Physical activity opportunities.
- Outdoor learning experiences.

Several EYFS staff hold Paediatric First Aid qualifications. Snack is prepared adhering to the Government's safer eating guidelines to minimise choking risks and children are supervised at all times whilst eating and drinking by Paediatric first aiders.

10. Inclusion

At Nicol Mere Primary School, we value every child regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, language, family background, ability, gender or need.

We are committed to meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and ensuring equal opportunities for all learners.

We adapt learning experiences to meet children's individual needs and recognise that children learn and develop at different rates.

We:

- Identify additional needs as early as possible.
- Work closely with parents and carers.
- Engage external agencies when required.
- Provide targeted interventions and support.
- Ensure children with SEND can access all aspects of school life.

Children requiring additional support may access individual or small-group interventions, including nurture provision where appropriate.

We also ensure that higher-attaining children are appropriately challenged so that they continue to make strong progress.

11. The Role of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators. We value their contribution and seek to work in partnership to support children's learning and development.

We do this through:

- Information meetings before children start school.
- Individual meetings with families before admission.
- Collection of starting school and family information.
- Readiness for school questionnaires.
- An open-door approach.
- Daily communication with families.
- Class Dojo communication and learning journals.
- Parent consultation meetings.
- Learning workshops.
- Reading records.
- Weekly Reception Round-Up communications.
- Weekly phonics information.
- Mid-year and end-of-year reports.
- Opportunities for parents to contribute to children's learning journeys.

We actively encourage parents to share achievements from home and contribute to their child's learning and development.

We also draw upon community partnerships to enrich children's experiences through visits, visitors and local learning opportunities.

12. Transitions

Successful transitions are carefully planned to ensure continuity of learning, development and care.

Prior to starting school:

- Parents meet staff to discuss children's individual needs and interests.
- Staff visit feeder settings where appropriate.
- Children attend transition sessions and stay-and-play events.
- Transition information is shared with families.
- Class Dojo is established before September to support relationship building.

Transition arrangements support children in becoming familiar with their new environment, adults and routines.

At the end of Reception:

- Teachers meet with Year One staff.
- Assessment information is shared.
- Moderation takes place.
- Children's strengths, needs and next steps are discussed.
- Children spend time in their Year One classroom.
- Additional transition opportunities are provided where needed, particularly for children with SEND.

13. Monitoring of the EYFS

The EYFS Leader is responsible for monitoring:

- Teaching and learning.
- Curriculum provision.
- Assessment.
- Children's progress and outcomes.
- Learning environments.
- Staff development needs.

Findings are shared with senior leaders and relevant staff to support school improvement.

All EYFS staff are expected to maintain up-to-date knowledge of the EYFS Framework and effective early years practice.

Weekly team meetings focus on:

- Planning.
- Assessment.
- Children's progress.
- Intervention needs.
- Professional development.

Training needs are identified through monitoring, appraisal and performance management processes.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner should changes in legislation, statutory guidance or school practice require it.