



Early Years Policy

Person responsible: Headteacher
Ratified by the governing body: Summer 2017
Date for review: Summer 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Anne Marie Renshaw'. The signature is written in a cursive style.

Reverend Anne Marie Renshaw
Chair of governors

“Giving top priority to the youngest age group is an investment in the future. They are the seed corn of the future, and their development will determine the fabric of tomorrow’s society.” (Kellner Pringle)

Early Years education requires a holistic approach, encompassing all learning and development and is the basis upon which children can build the rest of their lives. At Messing Primary School, we recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning, however, are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement within well-resourced and stimulating environments to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Messing Primary School. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching adults.

Aims:

At Messing Primary school we aim to:

- recognise that all children are unique and special;
- build on children’s existing knowledge and skills;
- provide a secure and caring environment in which to learn where children feel happy and know that they are valued,
- promote the developing skills, concepts, confidence and independence of each individual child through play-based learning experiences which reflect children’s personal interests and areas of curiosity;
- encourage and develop children’s natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn;
- deliver a broad and balanced curriculum;
- promote independent learning in a range of environments, inside and outside;
- provide opportunities for the social, moral and spiritual development of the children.
- teach children to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways;
- encourage children’s independence and decision-making, supporting them to take risks and to learn through their mistakes
- support children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions that differ to their own.
- create a partnership with parents to support and enhance the development of the children.

Teaching and Learning:

Teaching in the EYFS at Messing Primary School is delivered in accordance with the government’s statutory document ‘The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage’ (March 2017 – Effective April 2017). This document is a principled approach to Early Years education, bringing together children’s welfare, learning and development requirements through four themes: ‘A Unique Child’, ‘Positive Relationships’, ‘Enabling Environments’ and ‘Children Learn in Different Ways and at Different Rates.’

The curriculum is centred on 3 prime areas of learning:

1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

2. Physical Development
3. Communication and Language Development

Activities are supported through four specific areas which strengthen the prime areas.

These are:

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding of the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

Teaching through these seven areas of learning ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum which allows children to make links between what they are learning. Throughout the EYFS, activities are planned to give children learning experiences and opportunities to work towards the Early Learning Goals and to prepare them for the National Curriculum. Teaching and learning takes place within the classroom and outside areas. Within these areas children will participate in a variety of activities, both child-led and adult supported.

How are individual needs supported and developed?

Special Educational Needs

Children with Special Educational Needs, whether they have a specific difficulty or a particular talent in English, have access to the same broadly balanced curriculum as their peers. It is the teacher's role to adapt tasks and activities to the individual needs of each child in his/her class. This should be clearly outlined in the teacher's planning.

Equal opportunities.

We aim to ensure that all pupils regardless of age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, attainment and background, have full access to the English curriculum. Teachers respond to diverse learning needs so that pupils are appropriately supported and challenged to experience success in learning and achieve as high a standard as possible.

As an educationally inclusive school the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of every young person matters. We take into account pupils' varied life experiences and needs, providing equal opportunities for all pupils, whatever their age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, attainment and background, to ensure that every child really does matter.

Planning:

- Topic planning takes place on a half-termly basis. Planning identifies each of the Prime and Specific Areas of Development as identified in the Early Years Outcomes. This ensures that all curriculum areas are covered whenever a topic is planned.
- Weekly planning includes a range of adult focused and child-led activities to give children opportunities to work in each of the learning areas within the classroom and outdoors.
- Whole class, group and individual activities are used to develop skills in all areas of the curriculum, as appropriate.
- The children participate in daily phonics sessions, using materials from Phonics play and Letters and Sounds.

Play:

At Messing Primary School we believe that play, both indoors and outdoors, is the fundamental way in which young children learn. Play is enjoyable and can be challenging. When playing, children behave in different ways. Sometimes, their play will be boisterous; sometimes they will describe and discuss what they are doing, and sometimes they will be quiet and reflective. Through play, children will develop skills across all the Prime and Specific areas of learning, working towards achieving the Early Learning Goals.

In a secure environment with effective adult support, children will be able to:

- explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world;
- practise and build upon concepts, ideas and skills;
- take risks and make mistakes;
- think creatively and imaginatively;
- investigate and solve problems, communicating with others;
- use talk to rehearse their feelings;
- be alone, play alongside or co-operate with others;
- learn to understand the need for rules and practise controlling their impulses;
- express fears in controlled and safe situations to relieve anxious experiences.

Adults in the setting will support play by:

- resourcing stimulating environments;
- planning a mix of adult supported and child-led activities;
- extending and supporting children's spontaneous play;
- extending and developing children's language and communication in their play;
- observing and listening to children's communication and ideas; using these observations to develop play and to inform future planning;
- narrating children's play;
- asking questions.

Assessment:

The Early Years Foundation Stage Target Tracker programme is used for baseline assessments and to monitor progress.

On entry - Within the first half term at school the children will be assessed through a mixture of informal and planned observations, interactions with the child and regular discussions between all staff. These assessments form a "baseline assessment" which is then used to help track pupils progress throughout the year.

Ongoing - Children are observed working independently both indoors and outdoors and are assessed during adult focused activities against the objective for that activity.

Assessments are recorded in different ways

- on planning sheets
- on post it notes
- on individual or group observation recording sheets.

Every child has a Learning Journey for each term and observations are kept in these along with photographs and examples of their achievements and work throughout the year. Parents are also encouraged to contribute to their child's Learning Journeys, sharing achievements from outside school.

Parents as Partners:

At Messing Primary School we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development. So, practitioners endeavour to encourage the regular sharing of information about the children with parents.

We value the role of parents as children's primary educators. Through regular, planned contact with parents and informal chats, practitioners encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes). This supports the practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests.

Parents are kept informed about what is happening at school through regular letters, half termly curriculum updates, informal chats, notes in home/school communication books, formal Parent Consultation sessions in the Autumn and Spring term and an end of year report in the Summer term.

We hold "Stay and Play" sessions during which the parents stay with their child in the classroom working on a variety of activities based on a particular focus for learning. During these sessions parents can look at Learning Journeys with their child.

We also hold Learning Partnership meetings that parents can attend to find out about how they can support their child's learning at home, consolidating and building upon what has been covered at school.

Parents are invited regularly to get involved with school life. There are opportunities for them to attend informal Parent Forum meetings and to support PTA events, along with helping in school by listening to readers or changing library books. Parents may be invited into school on other occasions, such as sharing their experiences related to particular topics, attending Sports Afternoon, or competing in pancake flipping races!

At Messing, we have a friendly open-door approach and practitioners are available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of the day. Parents are welcomed into school and encouraged to discuss any concerns they may have.