



Welcome to Meadows First School

A Guide to the Early Years Foundation Stage for Parents & Carers

Nursery and Reception are known as 'the Foundation Stage'. Both year groups work closely together to follow the curriculum known as the 'EYFS'. From September 2012 the curriculum has changed and a new framework was introduced – now with **7 Areas of Learning**.

3 of the areas, called **the 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. They are:



Communication and Language (CL)



Physical Development (PD)



Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

The 4 other areas of learning are known as **the specific areas**. These support the prime areas by strengthening and applying skills. They are:



Literacy (L)



Mathematics (M)



Understanding the World (UW)



Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

How the 7 Areas of Learning are taught in Nursery and Reception

Each area of learning is implemented through **planned, purposeful play** and through a mix of **adult-led** and **child-initiated** activity.



Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.

Teaching therefore encourages **playing and exploring** (children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'); **active learning** (children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements); and **creativity and critical thinking** (children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.)

Learning Journals

The children each have a 'Learning Journal' (we use an online programme called 'Tapestry', as well as folders of evidence) where records are kept of their achievement and attainment in the 7 Areas of Learning. These records take the form of photographs, observations, evidence of children's work and, of course, your Parental input. We seek to engage and support parents and carers in guiding the children's development at home and at school.

These Living Diaries are accessible to parents and carers throughout the Foundation Stage – they are passed onto the next year group as they give a detailed picture of the children’s learning journey. The year 1 teachers keep the diaries for the first term and then they are given to parents and carers.

The 7 Areas of Learning

The Prime Areas



Communication and language - involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

How you can help: talk to your child about what (s)he is doing. Ask them where they like to go and what they like to do, ask them to follow simple instructions. Read and talk about stories at bed time!



Physical development - involves providing opportunities for children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

How you can help: encourage your child to go to the toilet by themselves and wash hands afterwards. Talk about healthy food choices and allow them to help with simple food preparation. Go swimming, play football and have trips to the park. Play with construction kits, such as lego connex, or play doh



Personal, social and emotional development 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 their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities

How you can help: play games that involve turn taking and sharing. Talk about feelings – what makes them happy or sad. Encourage and praise all good behaviours and talk to them about feeling proud about themselves when they have achieved something. Establish good routines for bedtime etc.

The Specific Areas



Literacy development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

How you can help: supporting your child with phonics – Read stories every day and talk about them afterwards. Sing nursery rhymes and songs. Practise new sounds learnt at school. Set up a 'mark making area/ writing area at home to role play writing – such as keeping old birthday cards, an office, a shop, builders yard. Allow lots of mark making opportunities with different tools and equipment



Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.

How you can help: count around the house and spot numbers outside. Play with jugs and containers in the bath and have a go with weighing. Find shapes around the house. Give them practical problems to solve, such as sharing out the toast at breakfast time!



Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

How you can help: *talk about events in the past (Birthdays, Christmas etc.) Go out for walks and collect things or talk about the changes in the weather and the seasons. Use technology in the home (dvd players, cd players, laptops). When on holiday talk about different places and people.*



Expressive arts and design 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.

How you can help: *encourage singing and dancing! Set up role play areas and dens outside. Keep 'junk' boxes for model making and ideas. Paint and draw together – you can always use brushes with water outside on hot days for 'painting' on patios! Make a supply of 'salt dough' for model making – keep a look out for any 'art activities' in and around Bromsgrove – they are often free!*

Assessment

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations.

The assessment picture of your child is built up over the year with your input forming a crucial part of the process. We therefore, invite you to come to 'Stay & Play' sessions in order that you can see how the Areas of Learning are taught and explored and that you can also contribute to your child's 'Learning Journals' with 'wow' moments and photographs that you have brought from home.

In Reception, all children are given targets to help move them onto their 'next steps' in learning. These are shared with parents and carers, so that you can help support the learning at home.

At the end of Reception all of the children will have been assessed using the EYFS profile which details the children's achievement against the Early Learning Goals in each of the 7 Areas of Learning, as well as identifying areas for further support. This profile is shared with parents before the children move onto Year One – where the Learning Journey continues!



You can find the **Early Years Foundation Stage** which includes the early learning goals at www.foundationyears.org.uk.

The foundation years' website also includes a range of resources and contacts.