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Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Introduction

EYFS at Thomson House School takes place in the Reception year (age 4-5 on entry). Entry into Reception is in September at the beginning of the academic school year. All Reception children are encouraged to begin school at the start of the academic year although parents have the right to request a delayed start if they so wish.

This EYFS policy ensures that Thomson House School is fulfilling its legal requirement by following the Childcare Act Section 39 (1) (a) 2006 which states that EYFS providers must ensure that their provision meets the learning and development requirements as specified in the EYFS (Learning and Development Requirements) Order 2007 (amended 2012).

At Thomson House School, we follow the EYFS framework which sets the standards that all Early Years' providers must meet to ensure that the children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life, all rooted in our values of kindness, courage and curiosity. We aim to create an environment where children learn to care for others, approach new challenges with confidence and resilience, and develop a lifelong love of learning and discovery.

The Early Years Foundation Stage profile assessment sets out what is typically expected of most children by the end of the Reception year at school. Thomson House School has developed its own approach to the EYFS Profile assessment based on formative and summative strategies to ensure that teacher judgement is secure.

EYFS Legislation

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2024) sets the standards for learning, development, and care for children from birth to five years old. Thomson House School adheres to this framework to ensure that every child receives high-quality early education and care.

The EYFS is based on four guiding principles:

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments that respond to individual needs and promote strong partnerships between practitioners and parents/carers.
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

These principles underpin all aspects of our EYFS provision.

Aims and objectives

Within Early Years education we offer our children learning that is based on the following principles. We:

- Build on what each child already knows and can do;
- Are inclusive to all groups of learners and individuals, taking into account children's backgrounds, ethnicity, gender, EAL and SEND.
- Provide a rich and stimulating environment, including challenging, exciting and imaginative indoor and outdoor learning environments.
- Provide a wide range of opportunities for independent learning, adult directed learning, adult led learning and child-initiated learning.
- Encourage parents and carers to become involved in their children's learning
- Provide a positive, supportive environment where children feel safe and secure to learn.
- Develop positive attitudes towards learning from an early age.
- Give children a wealth of knowledge based on the Early Years Foundation Stage seven areas of learning.
- Provide an extensive range of opportunities for assessment in well thought out and detailed planning.
- Promote our Thomson House values through daily interactions, learning experiences and play, encouraging children to show kindness towards others, courage in their learning and curiosity about the world around them.

Curriculum in Early Years Foundation Stage

The curriculum of the Early Years Foundation Stage underpins future learning by promoting and developing seven areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication and Language
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Art and Design

The characteristics of effective learning describe factors which play a central role in a child's learning and in becoming an effective learner. They are vital elements of support for the transition process from EYFS to Year 1. The characteristics of learning run through and underpin all seven areas of learning and development, representing processes rather than outcomes. Information describing the child's characteristics of effective learning will provide Year 1 teachers with vital background and context when considering the child's next stage of development and future learning needs.

<u>Playing and exploring – engagement</u>

Finding out and exploring
Playing with what they know
Being willing to 'have a go'

Active learning – motivation

Being involved and concentrating
Keeping trying
Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically – thinking

Having their own ideas
Making links
Choosing ways to do things

These characteristics closely reflect our school values. Children demonstrate curiosity when they explore, investigate and ask questions; courage when they persevere, take risks and are willing to 'have a go'; and kindness when they collaborate, listen to others and contribute positively to their learning community.

The objectives within the EYFS handbook provide the basis for the EYFS curriculum at Thomson House. Our curriculum provides the steps children require to achieve a good level of development by the end of the foundation stage. Medium-term plans are topic based and identify the intended learning outcomes for children during this period. In addition, indoor/outdoor independent learning and adult directed planning are completed on a weekly and daily basis which highlight the objectives for the week, and the vocabulary and resources children will need to achieve these objectives.

The school makes use of learning activities outside the classroom, where a planned programme of appropriate activities takes place at all times of year.

Teaching and Learning within EYFS

At THS we are continually developing teaching and learning within EYFS and aim to provide each and every child with a well-balanced, stimulating and meaningful learning experience that nurtures kindness, builds courage and inspires curiosity.

We do this by:

- Providing children with a safe and nurturing environment in which they feel safe and secure to learn.
- The regular identification of training needs for all adults working in the EYFS; a range of INSETs within school and through the Trust's and borough's CPD programme to develop the understanding that Teachers and Assistant Teachers have of how children in early years develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching; a carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the objectives by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage; well-planned medium term plans and weekly planning based around the seven early learning goals.
- Regular monitoring of our work to evaluate its impact on pupils' progress and their wider social, personal and emotional development.
- Continuous monitoring of records, observations and focus tasks outcomes to provide feedback for teachers so that they can identify next stages of learning and improve their practice.

- Peer observations across EYFS and Key Stage 1 to develop a better understanding of the curriculum in different year groups, share teaching skills and good practice and enable EYFS practitioners to ensure pupils are ready for Year 1.
- Regular lesson observations and learning walks by leadership and those with subject responsibilities to ensure consistency, share good practice and to provide feedback to promote school improvement.
- Encouraging the partnership between teachers and parents/carers that helps our children to progress in all areas of the curriculum and helps them to feel secure at school and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement.
- Providing home learning opportunities which are appropriate for the age group and engaging for both parent and child.
- Providing supporting and interactive learning environments which provide extensive learning opportunities for children.
- Establishing good relationships between our school and the other educational settings in which the children have been learning before joining our school.

Role of the Practitioner in EYFS

All EYFS staff play a vital role in creating and sustaining an environment where children are motivated to explore and learn. Practitioners:

- Model and promote the school's values of kindness, courage and curiosity through relationships, learning interactions and the wider classroom culture.
- Observe, listen, and respond sensitively to children's ideas and interactions.
- Extend learning through high-quality questioning and conversation.
- Plan enhancements to continuous provision, both indoors and outdoors, that promote curiosity, creativity, and problem-solving.
- Identify and record next steps for each child through ongoing observation and reflection.
- Work collaboratively with parents, carers, and external professionals to ensure consistent support for every child.

Inclusion at the Foundation Stage

We believe that all our children matter and that every child should experience a culture of kindness, where they feel valued and respected, the courage to be themselves and take on new challenges, and opportunities to develop curiosity about the world and people around them. We give them every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of their wide-ranging life experiences when we plan for their learning.

Within Early Years Foundation Stage, we have realistic but high expectations that challenge the children so that every child achieves to their best of their ability. We help them do this by planning to meet the individual needs of every child as well as the needs of different groups of learners. These include boys and girls, children with SEND, children from all social and cultural backgrounds including those entitled to free school meals, children from different ethnic groups and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build on and extend the children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.

- Using a variety of teaching strategies that are based on children's learning needs.
- Providing opportunities to develop self-regulation strategies.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support all children, and to help them to learn effectively.
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment, in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Employing resources that reflect diversity, and that avoid discrimination and stereotyping.
- Planning differentiated activities that challenge all children, their educational needs and cater for their ability.
- Monitoring children's progress and providing support where necessary (such as speech therapy, 1:1 support, working with the Educational Psychologist).
- Identifying and informing the SENDCo of any concerns, seeking advice where necessary.
- Identifying groups of learners within our setting and ensuring that all groups and individuals are planned for effectively and make good progress.
- Regular data analysis carried out by the leadership of the school, which enables us to identify individual needs and groups of learners' needs.

Assessment

Assessment in EYFS is a vital tool to identify the learning needs of individual children and groups, informing planning and next steps to support progress and attainment. We use the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) handbook, a nationally recognised assessment framework, alongside Development Matters (2021) and Birth to 5 Matters as non-statutory guidance to support curriculum planning and professional judgement across the seven areas of learning and developmental age-related goals.

Assessment is based on a combination of:

- Observations of child-initiated activities at school
- Evidence from home
- Teacher-directed tasks with summative assessment points throughout the year for a specific goal.

Key Assessment Types and Processes

Assessment	Purpose	Timing & Frequency	Key Features
Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)	Establish starting point for measuring progress in literacy, communication, language, and early maths	Within first 6 weeks of Reception	Practitioner-led, informed by Development Matters, statutory requirement.
Ongoing Observations & Continuous Assessment	Monitor progress and attainment across learning areas. Use of Leuven scale to assess well-being and engagement.	Throughout the year; half-termly focus.	Observations focus on characteristics of effective learning (Autumn), prime areas (Spring), and specific areas (Summer); recorded

			via a Thomson House created Teams form.
Focus Tasks	Assess specific learning objectives weekly to inform targeted teaching	Weekly	Teachers assess if children meet, exceed, or need support on objectives; interventions planned accordingly
Moderation	Ensure accuracy and consistency of teacher judgements	Termly and annually	Includes internal, Trust-wide, borough-level, and cross-school moderation and training

Process Overview

- Baseline assessments are completed as soon as possible, no later than the first half term, including during home visits.
- Observations and evidence collection inform progress monitoring and next steps planning.
- Data is shared with parents termly and with Year 1 teachers to support smooth transitions.
- Moderation activities ensure robust and reliable teacher assessments.
- Final EYFSP data is analysed by the borough and shared with parents in end-of-year reports.

Planning in EYFS

Effective planning ensures that all children experience a balanced curriculum which is responsive to their interests, development, and individual learning needs.

Plan Type	Purpose and Content	Frequency
Long-Term Plans	Set out the overall vision and progression across the year; link to the EYFS areas of learning and Development Matters objectives.	Annual
Medium-Term Plans	Topic-based, identifying key learning outcomes, vocabulary, and intended progression across the half term.	Half-termly
Short-Term / Weekly Plans	Detail adult-led and child-initiated learning activities, success criteria, and adaptations for individual children.	Weekly
Individual Planning	Tailored provision for children with specific interests, learning styles, or additional needs.	As required

Planning is evaluated regularly and adjusted based on assessments and observations.

The role of parents and carers

We believe that all parents and carers have an important role to play in the education of their children. We therefore recognise their role by:

- Visits by the teacher to all children in their home setting prior to them starting school.
- Some visits by the teacher to children's nurseries prior to them starting school.
- Offering parents and carers regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress through an open-door policy and through Parent/Teacher meetings.

- Encouraging them to support their child in home learning activities.
- Encouraging parents and carers to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- Offering a range of activities supported by FOTH, throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and home.
- Providing various activities that involve parents and carers such as inviting parents and carers to curriculum meetings, SEND meetings in order to discuss the kind of work that the children are undertaking in class and how they can continue to work with their child at home.
- Parents receive an annual written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the school year.

Nutrition in Early Years Provision

At Thomson House, we recognise that good nutrition is fundamental to the health, well-being, and development of our youngest pupils. Our commitment to kindness, curiosity, and courage extends to fostering healthy lifestyles that support children's physical growth, cognitive development, and readiness to learn. Our approach to nutrition is outlined below:

- Healthy and Balanced Food: We provide and encourage a variety of nutritious foods and drinks that meet national standards for early years settings, promoting balanced diets rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and hydration.
- Individual Dietary Needs: We carefully manage allergies, intolerances, cultural, and religious dietary requirements to ensure all pupils are safe and included. Parents and carers are actively involved in sharing relevant information to support this.
- Positive Mealtime Environment: Mealtimes and snacks are structured to be calm, social, and enjoyable occasions where children are encouraged to develop independence and positive attitudes towards food.
- Parental Partnership: We work closely with families to share information, guidance, and support around healthy eating habits, recognising the important role of home environments in children's nutrition.
- Promoting Independence: We encourage children to develop self-feeding skills and make healthy choices, fostering confidence and resilience in their personal care.

By embedding these principles within our Early Years provision, Thomson House ensures that every child is supported to thrive physically, socially, and emotionally, in line with our vision to nurture well-rounded individuals prepared to make a positive impact.

Welfare of Pupils

We comply with all Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements set out within the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, including requirements relating to safeguarding, staff qualifications, paediatric first aid, supervision, health, medicines, accidents, ratios and premises.

At least one person who holds a current full Paediatric First Aid certificate is always on the premises and available when children are present including on visits outside of school.

Reception classes are staffed in accordance with EYFS statutory requirements and local academy trust expectations. Staffing levels are reviewed to ensure children are adequately supervised and supported in all learning environments.

Thomson House School complies with its Behaviour Policy. All safeguarding and child protection concerns will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and procedures followed in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

We recognise that physical contact between staff and children may be appropriate and necessary in certain situations. *Safe touch* refers to physical contact that is nurturing, respectful, and in the best interests of the child. It can help children to feel safe, valued, and cared for, particularly when they are distressed or need physical reassurance.

Safe touch may include:

- Comforting a child who is hurt, upset, or distressed (for example, a hug, a hand on the shoulder or holding a hand).
- Guiding a child away from danger (for example, gently holding an arm or hand).
- Offering brief physical reassurance or celebration (for example, a high five or gentle pat on the back).
- Assisting with personal care, in accordance with the school's Intimate Care Policy and with the child's consent and dignity maintained at all times.

Safe touch must always be age-appropriate, child-led where possible, and in response to an identified need. Staff must use professional judgement, remain sensitive to individual children's preferences and backgrounds, and avoid physical contact that could be misinterpreted.

Physical intervention is permitted only when necessary to prevent injury to a child, another person, or to prevent serious damage to property. Such intervention must always be reasonable and proportionate, and the incident must be recorded and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Local Academy Committee (LAC) on the same day. Parents will be informed on the same day or as soon a reasonably practicable.

All staff receive safeguarding and safe handling training as part of their induction and ongoing professional development.

Parents/Carers working with young children:

- All parents/carers that work with children on a 1:1 basis are required to have a DBS check.
- If a DBS check is not obtained parents/carers must always stay with a member of staff whilst in the school. This includes time spent on school trips.
- Parents/carers must not take photographs of any child.

Transition into Reception

We recognise that starting school is a major milestone in a child's life. Our transition procedures aim to make this a positive and secure experience by:

- Offering home visits and opportunities for children to meet staff prior to starting.
- Holding parent information sessions to explain routines and expectations.
- Providing 'stay and play' sessions and a staggered start to help children settle gradually.
- Liaising with previous settings and parents to gather information about each child's interests, strengths, and needs.

These practices ensure that every child feels safe, welcomed and ready to learn from the outset, supporting them to develop the confidence, curiosity and positive relationships that underpin life at Thomson House.

Transition to Year 1

Towards the end of the Reception year, the teachers will begin to prepare the children for the more formal education which they will receive in Year 1.

We do this by:

- Gradually moving the timetable in the summer term to one more akin to that of Y1.
- Scheduling a 'Meet the Teacher' day towards the end of the summer term, when all classes will spend part of the day with their new teacher in their new classroom.
- Presenting to parents the expectations for a child in Year 1, the differences in timetable, homework and learning.
- Allowing time for the teachers of the existing classes to 'handover' to the Year 1 teachers, giving information on family background, learning styles, friendship groups, academic ability, progress achieved through the year etc.
- Ensuring we have an open-door policy for any concerns the parents and/or children may have.

Mobile phones

The use of personal mobile phones and cameras is prohibited in EYFS areas during school activities. Images of children may only be taken using authorised school devices (iPads) in accordance with the school's safeguarding and data protection procedures.

Monitoring and review

This policy is monitored by the LAC and will be reviewed at least annually.

Related Policies and Documents

This policy should be read alongside the following Thomson House School policies and documents:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection and Online Safety Policies

Date of Policy: November 2026

Date to be reviewed: November 2027