

GREAT COATES VILLAGE NURSERY SCHOOL

POLICY FOR

UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD

Reviewed every 3 years.
Summer term 2020
To be reviewed Summer term 2023

Understanding the World has a linked Governor.

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the World is the area of the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance which focuses on enabling children to explore and investigate in order to learn about their own environment and how it relates to the wider community and the world. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of Understanding the World in our school.

The policy reflects the consensus of opinion of the whole teaching staff and has been drawn up as a result of the implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Document in September 2008 and subsequently the revised EYFS Sept 2012.

The Governors initially approved this policy at their meeting in the Spring Term 2009.

The implementation of this policy is a requirement and the responsibility of the whole staff, in order to achieve the agreed objectives.

1. What Understanding the World means for the Children

Understanding the World involves guiding children to make sense of their physical worlds and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment. *(Extract from the revised EYFS 2012).*

‘Babies and children find out about the world through exploration and from a variety of sources, including their families and friends, the media and through what they see and hear.’

‘Babies and children need regular opportunities to learn about different ways of life, to be given accurate information and to develop positive and caring attitudes towards others.’

‘Children should be helped to learn to respect and value all people and learn to avoid misapprehensions and negative attitudes towards others when they develop their Knowledge and Understanding of the World.’

‘Children should be involved in the practical applications of their knowledge and skills which will promote self-esteem through allowing them to make decisions about what to investigate.’
(Extract from Learning & Development cards in EYFS 2008)

2. Aims

To establish firm foundations for the children to learn about their community and the wider world through the provision of quality experiences in a stimulating and secure environment.

3. Entitlement

All children will have access to: -

- ❖ A curriculum, which encompasses all areas of Understanding the World, and which is relevant and appropriate to the development of the individual child's needs in each of the specific areas (see below).
- ❖ An atmosphere of love and caring where young children will feel secure, valued and confident, and where motivation, eagerness and enthusiasm to learn are fostered and encouraged.
- ❖ An environment organised with due regard to the health and safety of young children as well as providing opportunity for exploration, play and activities in all areas of the curriculum.
- ❖ Well-planned activities for each aspect of Understanding the World, which are appropriate to their stage of development. These will extend and develop their skills, knowledge and understanding, in preparation for the next stage of their school life.

Each child is viewed as an individual with specific needs being met in an appropriate manner and with individuality being encouraged. Independence is fostered and each child is encouraged to reach his/her full potential in this area of the curriculum.

4. Implementation

a) **Organisation**

Our philosophy is based on developing confidence and self-esteem by providing an approach, which is geared to the specific needs of young children. Emphasis is on first hand experiences which view talk and play as important media for learning, and which build on what the child can already do, and what he/she already knows and understands, in all areas of learning. We organise the children's learning and move them forward in their development through one-to-one interaction, input at small group time, as well as whole class and whole school approach when appropriate. It is our intention to encourage self-discipline and independence. In preparing young children for life skills it is important that they learn to be independent and able to find appropriate resources for an activity, to carry out the activity and to clear away afterwards. The organisation and layout of the classroom is therefore very important. In order to develop the skills, concepts, attitudes, knowledge and understanding of young children we need to follow the sound framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance for Understanding the World and aim to meet the children's needs in each element of this particular area of learning. The elements are as follows:

- ❖ **People and Communities** – is about how children begin to know about their own family, friends and special events, past and present, relevant to their own lives or those of their families. It is also about enabling them to experience other people's cultures in order to understand and celebrate the similarities and differences between them in a diverse society.
- ❖ **The World** – is about how children become aware of, interested in and find out about their local area, the natural world and the changes that take place over time. It is also about enabling them to know and understand what they like and dislike about the environment.
- ❖ **Technology** – is about how children find out about and learn how to use appropriate information technology such as computers and programmable toys that support their learning. The children will be encouraged to find out about and identify uses of technology in their everyday lives. They will be taught the necessary skills to enable them to use programmable toys, computers, interactive white boards/clever touch screen and a variety of software which will develop their Information Technology skills and support their learning in each of the other six areas.

b) Delivery

The learning experiences of children in their early years form a good, broad foundation for developing their education. How children learn, their attitude to learning and the building up of self-disciplined learning are equally as important as what they learn. Therefore, it is the role of all early years' educators to nurture their eagerness and positive attitude to learning. In order to achieve this we must give particular attention to the following:

Positive Relationships:

- ❖ Use parents' and carers' knowledge to extend children's experiences of the world.
- ❖ Help children become aware of, explore and question differences in gender, ethnicity, language, religion, culture, special educational needs and disability issues.
- ❖ Support children with sensory impairment by providing supplementary experiences and information to enhance their learning about the world around them.

Enabling Environments:

- ❖ Create a stimulating environment that offers a range of activities which will encourage children's interest and curiosity, both indoors and outdoors.
- ❖ Make effective use of outdoors, including the local neighbourhood.
- ❖ Use correct terms so that, for example, children will enjoy naming a chrysalis if the practitioner uses its correct name.
- ❖ Pose carefully framed open ended questions, such as "How can we.....?" Or "What would happen if....?"

Learning and Development:

- ❖ Plan activities based on first-hand experiences that encourage exploration, experimentation, observation, problem solving, prediction, critical thinking, decision-making and discussion.
- ❖ Teach skills and knowledge in the context of practical activities, for example, learning about the characteristics of liquids and solids, by involving children in melting chocolate or cooking eggs.
- ❖ Encourage children to tell each other what they have found out, to speculate on future findings or to describe their experiences. This enables them to rehearse and reflect upon their knowledge and to practise new vocabulary.
- ❖ Support children in using a range of ICT to include cameras, photocopiers, CD players, tape recorders and programmable toys in addition to computers.
- ❖ Give children accurate information which challenges cultural, racial, social and gender stereotypes.

Practitioners ensure that there is a balance of activities which reflect each specific element within Understanding the World. In the main, activities will be planned around the children's interests and experiences, though there may be occasions when an adult may plan an activity for all children to access simply to ensure coverage. All activities will be carefully planned and differentiated as relevant according to the children's stage of development and their individual learning needs. In addition, they will introduce relevant skills and concepts which will prepare the children for the next stage of their learning and development.

The safe use of equipment, which is well ordered and easily accessible, is taught and the idea of a safe environment is promoted in all groups.

5. Special Educational Needs

We ensure that all children, including those with special educational needs, have access to a range of activities, resources and experiences that will help them to make maximum progress within all areas of learning and development. The children's rate of progress will vary, as will individual achievement therefore staff will plan activities to ensure that all children have opportunity to reach their full potential. We must be aware of the particular needs of all our children so that we can plan and assess to ensure progression and continuity.

6. Planning & Assessment

Planning will detail the learning opportunities for Understanding the World which may be introduced by the Key Persons, be enhancements to the continuous provision, spontaneous opportunities instigated by the children or a mix of all three.

Parents have an important role to play in the assessment process. They are invited to attend weekly 'Stay and Play' sessions with their child during the term before their admission which enables them to learn more about the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are asked to complete a 'profile' about their child's achievements before admission to the Nursery and are also given a Home to Nursery Sharing book which they can use to share information about their child on a regular basis.

The Stay & Play sessions also enable Key Persons to begin to gather all-important evidence to support baseline assessments, which are completed within the first two weeks after the child's admission date. Baseline assessments enable us to assess the child's stage of learning and development and thus form a starting point for future teaching and learning. Key Persons will continue to gather evidence, to support the children's progress, throughout their time at the Nursery, using the '2Simple' online system. Summative assessments are completed two/three weeks after admission and once every term thereafter. This information is shared with parents at our termly Parents meetings.

7. Background Information

This policy was informed by reference to the Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance 2008 and the revised Early Years Foundation Stage 2012.

8. Policy Review and Evaluation

The Co-ordinator will review the policy and discuss any amendments with all staff on a bi-annual basis. Any changes will be presented to the governors at the appropriate meeting.

Policy prepared Autumn 2008 to meet requirements of EYFS

Date policy agreed...February 2009

C. Penszor Co-ordinator

Review Record

- ❖ Policy reviewed and agreed by Governing Body at **Spring Term 2 meeting 19/03/10**
No changes made.
- ❖ Policy reviewed and agreed by Governing Body at **Spring Term 2 meeting 27/03/13**
Changes made to reflect the amendments within the revise EYFS Sept 12
- ❖ Policy reviewed and agreed by Governing Body at **Summer Term 2 meeting 2016.**
Changes made – Lizzie Garnett, the new Co-ordinator and Nicola Riley the new Governor.
- ❖ Policy reviewed & accepted by the Governing Body at the **Sum Term meeting 28/6/17.**
Slight grammatical changes made.
- ❖ Policy updated January 2019. Reference to staff Co-ordinator removed.
- ❖ Policy updated April 2019. Linked Governor changed to Sophie Nicolaou.
- ❖ Policy updated March 2020. Reference to named linked Governor removed.
- ❖ Policy reviewed & agreed by the Pupil Outcomes Committee during an email exchange (due to Covid-19) **July 2020.**
No changes made.