



# Merchant Taylors' School

Ambition | Character | Excellence

## EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) CURRICULUM

---

*“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”*

(‘Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage’ March 2017)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) covers the development of children from birth to the end of their Reception Year. The overarching aim of the EYFS is to ensure that 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.

We follow the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

- 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**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers;
- **children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.**

### A Unique Child

At MTPS we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We know that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by their school and home environments and we begin to build links with their families.

We observe how each child learns to gain an understanding of the characteristics they develop in order to become effective learners. We use questioning, praise and encouragement to develop a positive attitude to learning and high self-esteem.

During their first year at school, the children are introduced to the learning habits. They are taught to be observant, investigative, curious, determined, imaginative, adventurous, co-operative and to use reasoning. Children begin to understand the concept of the growth mindset. They are taught that they can 'grow their brains' so that they understand that everyone can learn with practice and effort. The children are taught how to learn and how to become successful learners.

In our school we believe that all our children matter and help all our children to achieve their best. This includes boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. We set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.

We also aim to:

- use a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- provide a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- provide a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- use resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- plan challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitor children's progress and take action to provide support.

It is important to us that all children are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children.

*(See Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy)*

### **Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and Special Needs**

The Early Years Foundation Stage is taught in accordance with the present policy for Equal Opportunities. Children are encouraged to develop a positive attitude towards people of different ethnic groups, cultures, beliefs, gender and ability. We support the belief that everyone is unique in their own right and act upon it.

Ramps, a lift and a disabled toilet are available within the school to cater for children with physical disabilities.

Our curriculum respects a child's ethnic faith and cultural heritage, and the special needs of each child, by ensuring that these areas are covered within our indoor and outdoor activities, circle time and assemblies, visitors, role play, books and positive images.

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that we identify and help those children in our care with additional educational needs including gifted children. We liaise with the school's SENCO to identify next steps in learning in partnership with the parents.

*(See SEND Policy and Equal Opportunities Policy)*

### **Positive Relationships**

Children learn to be strong independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

### **Parents as Partners**

Parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We do this by:

- gathering information from parents about their child as their child starts our school;

- inviting the children to spend an afternoon with their teacher in the classroom before starting at school;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- encouraging parents to attend parents evenings in the first two terms to discuss their child's progress;
- providing parents with a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- encouraging parents to contribute observations and comment on their child's progress at the end of each half term in their child's Learning Diary book;
- sharing our approach to the teaching of phonics and reading;
- inviting parents to a curriculum workshop where key information is explained;
- sharing our curriculum aims each term and providing some suggestions for parents to engage with at home;
- inviting parents to our 'Stay and Play' sessions.

Staff develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. We encourage parents to talk to the child's key person – their class teacher, if there are any concerns.

(See *Working in Partnership with Parents Policy*)

### **Enabling Environments**

The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

### **The Learning Environment**

The setting is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The unit is set up to help the children to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It presents the children with opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning.

### ***Learning and Development***

Children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected.

### **Areas of Learning**

Children learn skills, acquire new knowledge and demonstrate their understanding through the seven areas of learning and development.

The *prime* areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development

- Personal, social and emotional development.

The *specific* areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the world and
- Expressive arts and design

The prime areas are those most essential for a child's healthy development and future learning. As they grow, these skills will support the child as they extend their development in the specific areas. None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities.

The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are already implicitly embedded in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

We welcome parents' involvement in their children's education, for example through frequent discussions (formal and informal), their contribution to the EYFS Profile, and by providing photographs and information about their children's home life, which we can build upon at school.

The personal development of each child is very important to us and opportunities to help our children in this are threaded through our entire school programme, ethos and our everyday work. Examples include celebration days, community fundraising, school plays and concerts, and the involvement of parents and the local community in the school. The curriculum is reviewed annually to ensure that it remains fresh and up-to-date.

### **Curriculum Planning: An Overview**

The seven areas of learning support, foster, promote and develop children's learning and development. At MTGS we plan for the seven areas taking into account the children's interests, needs, abilities and diversity as well as current events and broad topics. These are delivered through topics and themes which can differ each year to meet the needs of each cohort.

- **Communication and language development** involves giving children opportunities to experience a language-rich environment in which to develop their confidence and skill in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop 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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.

- **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.
- **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 thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

### **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

At MTGS we place the individual child at the centre of our planning. This is achieved through detailed observation and assessment. This observation and on-going formative assessment is at the heart of effective early years practise.

We achieve this through:

- observing children as they act and interact in their play, everyday activities, child initiated activities and planned activities, and learning about what the child does at home;
- observing what children can do, and identifying their stage on their developmental pathway;
- considering ways to support the child to strengthen and deepen their current learning and development;
- considering the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in our care. This information is then effectively used to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development.

The EYFS requires us to undertake summative assessments in which staff review children's progress and share a summary with parents at the end of the foundation stage through the EYFS Profile.

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, we complete the EYFS profile for each child. The profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a clear picture of a child's development, knowledge, understanding and abilities, as well as their progress against expected levels. It furthermore prepares Year One teachers for individual children's readiness, needs and next steps. The teacher will determine whether the child is meeting the expected levels, exceeding them or below expected levels of development. The child's level of development is assessed against the seventeen Early Learning Goals.

In compliance with Early Years regulations parents may have access to developmental records about their child.

### **Teaching and Learning Style**

- We use a range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication.
- A carefully planned curriculum helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS.
- Children take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities.
- Children are encouraged to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management.

- Learning needs are supported with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space and equipment.
- We identify progress and future learning needs of children through observations.

## **Play**

*“Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development.”*

Through play our children develop and explore a develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. The adults model play and play sensitively with the children fitting in with their plans and ideas. The children are encouraged to try new activities and judge risks for themselves. We talk to them about how we get better at things through effort and practice and that we can all learn when things go wrong. They practice and build up ideas learning how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own.

## **Active Learning**

*“Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.”*

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

## **Creativity and Critical Thinking**

*“When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, the discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.”*

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the unit to extend their learning.

## **Monitoring and review**

The EYFS team regularly discuss EYFS practice, providing feedback to the EYFS leader and the Head, raising any issues that require discussion.