

## Curriculum Overview

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) makes a crucial contribution to children's early development and learning. We provide children with a rich variety of learning experiences that are appropriate to their needs. EYFS is about developing key learning skills such as listening, speaking, concentrating, persistence and learning to work and co-operate with others in order to develop the foundations for independent learning.

The ways in which children engage with other people and their environment – playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically – underpin learning and development across all areas and support our children as active and motivated learners.

The seven areas of learning and development in the EYFS are organised into the Prime Areas and Specific Areas:

### Prime Areas

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language Development
- Physical Development

### Specific Areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

We recognise the value of play as the principle and most effective method of learning. Play allows for discovery, creativity and problem solving. It is purposeful, absorbing, and open-ended and enables children to communicate with each other. It is the vehicle by which we gain access to the curriculum.

The outdoor environment is also a very special part of the EYFS curriculum. As such it is carefully planned for and available each day. Learning in the EYFS follows the needs, experiences and interests of individual children. Learning is mainly through active, play-based activities indoors and outdoors all the year round.

Observation and assessment is integral to EYFS practice and staff will spend time observing children to identify their needs, interests, progress and next steps. Staff use a range of systems including photographs, post-it notes and samples of work to record children's learning and development.

During the Reception year more emphasis is placed on developing and applying literacy and maths skills so that children are ready to learn in Key Stage 1. At the end of the Reception year children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) and a best fit judgement is made as to whether children are 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding' against the ELGs.

### Curriculum Provision at Mersey Primary Academy (Years 1-6)

Our curriculum is underpinned by the National Curriculum (2014), we enhance this with other opportunities and experiences that make up the wider school curriculum. Learning is always exciting and in a meaningful context for children. Where commonality exists between subjects and aspects, learning is linked and lessons taught using a cross-curricular topic-based approach. Where this is not achievable subjects are taught discretely. The rehearsal and application of basic skills learned in the core curriculum is a driver for the entire curriculum.

We place a strong emphasis on the development of the basic skills necessary to be confident independent learners and successful adults. Children rapidly begin to develop their phonic knowledge and skills and begin to apply this in their

reading and writing in our Reception class and throughout the rest of the academy, based on the needs of each individual child. Phonics sessions are delivered daily in small focused groups that include children from all year groups. At Mersey we follow synthetic phonics - encouraging children to blend and segment letter sounds in order to develop reading and spelling skills.

All children engage in daily English lessons as part of a bespoke writing cycle where they develop their speaking and listening, writing, reading and comprehension skills in addition to developing a command of all aspects of the English language. Maths at Mersey is carefully planned in order to develop children's mathematical understanding. In order to do this teachers work alongside the children in exciting well-paced lessons in order to ensure progress within the lesson is made.

At Mersey Primary Academy we strive to develop a strong sense of moral purpose in addition to a respect and understanding of people who have different characteristics to themselves, whether that be age, disability, gender, race or sexuality. A rigorous, well planned curriculum, delivered by excellent staff in an ethos of care, love and support enables our pupils to be well rounded, empathetic young people who have a thirst for learning and respect for all around them. Religious Education is delivered through the Hull Agreed Syllabus.

Sex and relationship education is taught to all children, mainly in Years 5 and 6 in Key Stage 2. If parents do not want this taught to their child, they can withdraw them from these sessions.

In Year 4 children go swimming and the aim is to ensure that all children learn to swim before they leave the school.

In Year 5 children learn to ride a bicycle correctly, gaining bikeability awards for proficiency.

The curriculum at Mersey Primary Academy aims to:

- Provide a curriculum that meets the needs of all learners
- Inspire a love of learning
- Provide pupils with a safe, supportive, well-ordered and happy learning environment
- Provide learning environments which are stimulating, exciting and challenging both inside and outside of the classroom
- Ensure the academy is caring and inclusive for all children
- Facilitate children's growth into lifelong independent learners through the use of our 5R drivers: Relationships, resilience, resourcefulness, reflectiveness and risk-taking.

#### Other Curriculum Activities and Clubs

The school runs a wide range of activities which enrich the curriculum.

All classes regularly go out of school on educational trips. These trips are linked to the topic that is being studied on a termly basis. For example our most recent topic centres around Hull being the City of Culture – visits will include visiting landmarks around the city.

We also often invite visitors to the school to support the topic work our City of Culture projects have included a resident architect and a resident composer who helped to further widen the learning opportunities for our Key Stage two children. Other regular specialists include: a specialist music teacher, and a performing arts specialist working with various classes within the academy. Occasionally the school will ask parents to make a voluntary contribution towards the costs. The school provides a range of after school clubs for Key Stage 1 and 2 children. These include football, dance, arts and craft and Lego, last term we also had Ben from Hull Kingston Rovers coaching a rugby club.

At Mersey Primary Academy Reading Sessions:

- The weekly timetable should consist of at least two whole class reading sessions and two comprehension sessions
- The final day should be a 'big read' in which the pupils are provided with a cold text, they have not seen before and SATS style questions to apply their understanding of how to answer strands of questioning.
- Speed Read should be completed regularly as pace has been identified as an area for development

The text the children work on in class is meant to challenge the reading skills and is pitched the level above the one they are working on. Children also complete guided reading and one to one reading sessions within our Foundation Stage to develop phonic skills and good reading behaviours.

#### Details of reading schemes

- A book band is a level that can accurately span across different book schemes and is also used to select the books for Guided Reading. It takes into account the child's phonic and comprehension skills.
- To develop their comprehension skills, the children take home a book which is 'at their level' or 'book band'. We currently use the Oxford Reading Tree, Bug Club and Navigator book schemes. The children are expected to set themselves 3 comprehension questions a week based on their reading book, which is marked weekly by the class teacher. Pupil's reading books are changed as regularly as a required.

#### Reading Stars:

- Reading stars is a 1:1 daily reading intervention.
- It targets children's comprehension, spelling, phonics and writing skills. Children learn how to think for themselves as a reader, writer and learner.
- They learn to how to use phonics and comprehension as tools in the service of reading for meaning and pleasure and they progress to use these skills independently.