

Keswick House Nursery School
The Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

September 2025
(next review September 2026)

The Early Years Foundation Stage covers children from birth to age five. It is a distinct and important stage in its own right and also in the preparation for later schooling. It is in the foundation years that children develop learning attitudes, skills, social integration and personal organisation. Young children need an environment which is safe and secure where they can play, explore, experiment, develop confidence, be curious and learn.

At Keswick House Nursery School we believe that children should experience a broad and balanced curriculum reflecting their individual needs, interests, enthusiasms and individual learning styles. We aim to nurture a sense of personal well-being and a love of learning. Each child is encouraged to reach their full potential regardless of their background, race, gender, creed or ability.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- **A Unique Child**
- **Positive Relationships**
- **Enabling Environments**
- **Learning and Development**

These four guiding themes work together to underpin effective practice in the delivery of the EYFS.

A Unique Child

At The Roche Nursery School we recognise that every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/sharing circle times to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusive Practice

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and all children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. Within our school all children and their families are valued and we believe that all our children matter. We give our children

every opportunity to achieve their potential by taking into account their range of life experiences when planning for their learning. We set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of each individual child.

Keeping Safe

Safety of all children in our care is paramount. We aim to educate children within boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. 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 within our setting.

Health and Well-Being

At Keswick House Nursery School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain Welfare Requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage.

We understand that we are required to:

- 1. Safeguard and promote children's welfare**
- 2. Ensure all adults looking after children are suitable to do so**
- 3. Ensure that the premises, environment and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose**
- 4. Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs**
- 5. Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe and efficient management of the setting**

Positive Relationships

At Keswick House Nursery School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with all children and their families.

Parents as Partners

Parents are children's first educators and we highly value the contribution that parents make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We believe in parental involvement within the setting and encourage parents to take an active part whilst their children are in our care.

Key Person

Although each child has a designated “key teacher” to form a close, trusting and respectful relationship with, all staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

Supporting Learning

We have good links with local schools and annual visits are undertaken by reception class teachers of some of these schools to meet with the children prior to them starting at their new schools. These visits provide the opportunity to discuss individual needs, if consent, has been given by parent, and to observe the children within the nursery setting.

Enabling Environments

At Keswick House Nursery School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children’s development and learning. 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.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

We make regular assessments of children’s learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the key teacher and other staff members as appropriate. These observations are recorded and filed in children’s individual e - profiles (Tapestry) to track their learning journey which will naturally move on with the child into the Reception year and continued. These profiles can also contain information provided by parents and other individuals involved with the child. Parents’ observations are also valuable.

When a child is between two and three we review their progress and parents/carers are given a short written summary of their child’s development in the prime areas of learning. This progress check will identify a child’s strengths and also any areas where the child’s progress is less than expected. If there are significant emerging concerns, or an identified special educational need or disability, practitioners should develop a targeted plan to support the child’s future learning and development involving other professionals.

As well as the 2 to 3 progress check, parents receive written summaries of achievement or report on a termly basis.

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs. All Staff at the Roche School are involved in this effective process.

There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

- 1. Long Term Plan** – yearly
- 2. Medium Term Plan** – termly e.g.
 - *Project Planning*
- 3. Short Term Plans** – daily, weekly, fortnightly e.g.
 - *Weekly Free Flow Plan*
 - *Daily Focused Group Activity Plans*
 - *Focused Free Flow Activity Plan*
 - *Daily Focused Afternoon Planning*
 - *Children's individual targets*

The Learning Environment

The Learning Environment 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 environment is set up in Montessori and Learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The nursery also has access to a large paddock which offers children the opportunity to do things which can be presented in different ways and on different scales. It also offers children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for both the indoors and the outdoors that will help children to develop in all 7 areas of learning. Children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the school day. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation.

Learning and Development

At Keswick House Nursery School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We understand that all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected.

Play and Exploration

Our school is centred around learning through play. Play is the most effective way for children to explore and develop learning experiences, which helps them make sense of the world. They can try out ideas, pretend to be different people and test new information in their own way. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. Through play children gain access to the curriculum, developing confidence, independence and self-discipline. Well-planned and purposeful play, both indoors and outdoors is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and are challenge.

Teaching and Learning

Our overall approach to learning and development is one of commitment, excitement, anticipation and belief in what a child can do but above all based on their interests and the importance of play based activity. We follow the guidelines from the EYFS but in addition we offer a Montessori based curriculum. They complement each other as both are fostering individual and inclusive practice.

The Montessori theory is based greatly on child directed learning in a prepared environment including specific and quite original apparatus. Each piece of apparatus involves hands on learning and allows the children to discover and explore through their experiences. The underlying principles of freedom and independence form an integral part of the Montessori education and this is encouraged throughout the school. The six main areas to Montessori education (Practical Life, Sensorial, Language & Literacy, Mathematics, Cultural, Creative) create a very clear framework to the classroom within which the children have the freedom to explore and learn.

Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between staff and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement
- the understanding that staff have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals through EYFS
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment

- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school.

In planning and guiding the activities for the children, we consider the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

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 satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.

Creative and Critical Thinking

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

Playing and Exploring

Through their play we encourage children to use their senses to explore the world around them and their environment. We encourage children to engage, giving them opportunities to represent their own experiences and following their particular interests. Children are encouraged to take risks and to ‘have a go’ in their daily activities and challenges.

Areas of Learning and Development

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning and development:

Three *prime* areas:

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

Four *specific* areas:

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

The curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage should underpin all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing the seven areas of learning. None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from each others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Policy reviewed September 2023
by Gabriella Emery