



RE: September 2021 – EYFS Reforms - Observations, Assessment and Planning

Dear Parents and Carers,

From September 2021, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is changing. As part of these changes, we will be making some adjustments to the way we observe, assess and plan for your children.

What is the EYFS?

The EYFS is the statutory Early Years curriculum. This is mandatory for all schools, settings and childminders to follow from birth up to the end of reception. The EYFS sets out our legal obligations regarding things like adult:child ratios, suitable people, safeguarding and welfare, staff qualifications, and learning and development.

What's changing?

- *Most of the changes are regarding Learning and Development, with some minor adjustments to Safeguarding and Welfare.*
- *Fundamentally, what we teach children is very similar, albeit worded differently.*
- *The new framework also specifically talks about the pressures of Early Years staff and wants to remove unnecessary paperwork requirements which result in time spent away from the children. It says the following: "Assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement and should not be required to prove this through collection of physical evidence." – EYFS 2021*

Changes to Safeguarding and Welfare

- *The changes to Safeguarding and Welfare are largely wording based. For example "Local Safeguarding Children's Board" has been changed to "Local Safeguarding Partners" to reflect some recent change in structure.*
- *A requirement for promoting the good oral health of children has been added.*
- *A specific requirement for promoting staff and children's online safety has been added. This reflects the technological advances we have made since the EYFS was last reformed in 2012.*

Changes to Learning and Development – Educational Programmes

- *The Educational Programmes lead up to the Early Learning Goals – a description of what we want children to know by the end of Reception.*
- *These are divided in to 7 areas of learning. The 'Prime' areas form the basis for all learning, and the 'Specific' areas build on those skills and broaden children's understanding, experiences and knowledge. In nursery, we always focus on the Prime areas in the first instance as they*

really do form the foundation for everything else.

- The 7 areas are divided down in to ‘aspects’ (like subheadings). The ‘aspects’ are changing as follows:

Current EYFS (2012)		New EYFS (2021)
Prime Areas		Prime Areas
Personal, Social, Emotional Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Relationships • Managing Feelings & Behaviour • Self Confidence & Self Awareness 	→	Personal, Social, Emotional Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self Regulation • Managing Self • Building Relationships
Communication and Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening and Attention • Understanding • Speaking 		Communication and Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening, Attention and Understanding • Speaking
Physical Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving and Handling • Health and Self Care 		Physical Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gross Motor Skills • Fine Motor Skills
Specific Areas		Specific Areas
Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Writing 	→	Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehension • Word Reading • Writing
Mathematics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers • Shape, Space and Measure 		Mathematics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number • Numerical Patterns
Understanding the World <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and Communities • The World • Technology 		Understanding the World <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past and Present • People, Culture and Communities • The Natural World
Expressive Arts and Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring and Using Media and Materials • Being Imaginative 		Expressive Arts and Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating with Materials • Being Imaginative and Expressive

Please be aware that these headings are those of the Early Learning Goals for the end of Reception. In nursery we focus on learning the early skills that set children up to achieve these. For example, we focus on social and emotional development, build our gross and fine motor skills, mark making, excitement for learning, conversation skill, interest in books and print, strong sense of self and so on which eventually lead to mastery of reading, writing and all of the other fantastic things your child will learn as they grow and develop.

All of the learning we do at The Learning Meadow and most of the learning in reception should be through quality, active play. “Teaching in the early years should not be taken to imply a “top down” or formal way of working. It is a broad term that covers the many different ways in which adults help young children learn. It includes their interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities. communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring

ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating and setting challenges”- Ofsted.

What does all of this mean at The Learning Meadow?

“Assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement and should not be required to prove this through collection of physical evidence.” – EYFS 2021

These changes and the removal of the requirement for a lot of evidence based tracking means that we are making some adjustments to the way we observe, assess and plan at The Learning Meadow.

The team here work hard to ensure they know your children extremely well, we use ‘in the moment planning to inform our practice and children are allocated weekly slots as focus children. We then document ‘teachable moments’, where a teacher makes a difference to that child’s learning. In the moment planning needs highly skilled, experienced practitioners and The Learning Meadow strive to ensure all our practitioners are innovative and forward thinking. All of these things are done by using our understanding of child development and our knowledge of your child as an individual person, as well as continual professional development for all staff.

At the moment, we produce written observations, often with a photo which are sent to you through Eylog, tagged as a memorable moment. These observations can be lengthy, time consuming and require staff to spend time away from doing what they do best every day. Up until now it has been a requirement for us to produce evidence based tracking. Now this requirement has been removed, we have decided to use our Practitioners’ time more effectively. These memorable moments will now be uploaded with only a photo, we recognise this is the most important aspect of the observation for parents to see and want to continue with this and so we may upload more. This does not mean your children isn’t learning, having fun and making friends, they absolutely will be, we are just making the conscious effort that practitioners time is spent interacting, engaging and extending rather than documenting. The biggest impact for any child’s development is the adult input, role modelling, explaining, facilitating, showing, demonstrating, exploring ideas, questioning and recalling.

We still want to keep parents up to date with their children’s learning and development, and still value the parental partnerships we are proud of. Nothing in our practice with the children or parents is changing, just the way we track and assess is.

- Upon entry an induction will take place where an ‘all about me form’ is completed to gather knowledge about your child’s interests, family and other useful information. This is then fed back during a team meeting so all the staff know how to best support, interact and engage with your child in the best way to promote life long learning skills.

- Within the first six weeks of your child attending with us we will complete a starting point assessment of prime areas only. This will give us a clear picture of any gaps and how we can quickly, in partnerships with parents, support them to close.
- We will continue to upload photos as memorable moments onto Eylog.
- Once a term your child will have their turn as focus child. This means we will be seeking your child out to share teachable moments and make a difference to that child's learning. There will be a document emailed home for you to fill in to give us a 'home' perspective of your child. These documents will then be assessed and uploaded onto Eylog along with a tracking insight of your child's learning.
- We will continue to complete the 2 Year Progress Check. This is a statutory progress check to be completed between 24 and 35 months.
- If at any point there are concerns with your child's development, we will of course discuss this with you at the earliest opportunity and devise a plan of how to support this.
- At least three parents meetings a year will be offered to parents, and a flexible approach will be used if parents require more opportunities to meet and discuss.
- When your child goes to school, we will continue to produce Transition Documents to support this.

Curriculum guidance we will be using at The Learning Meadow include, but are not limited to:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/988004/Development_Matters.pdf

<https://www.birthto5matters.org.uk>

We want you as parents to know we welcome this reform, it emphasises to us that our curriculum and the way we plan already meets the needs for all our children to thrive and we as a team are very excited for this new academic year.

Should you have any questions, concerns, or queries please don't hesitate to contact me

Many thanks

Dawn

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