Early Years Foundation Stage Philosophy

Our ethos

At Queen's Park Primary School, we feel strongly that our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) should act to respect the humanity of our youngest students and that therefore we have a duty to protect their right to be children. In an educational setting, this means that we must recognise the reality of the biology of learning at such a young age; that we must honour the ways in which young children actually learn -- that is to say, holistically and, primarily, through self-motivated play. In the words of Fred Rogers, "...for children, play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood." Therefore, the majority of our timetable in the EYFS is devoted to free choice play time. Though this play is carefully supported and furthered by adults, we are mindful that we must allow adequate space and time for children to take true and active control over their own learning and that we must provide many opportunities for re-visitation of concepts and experiences over time.

Within the setting, visitors should expect to see kind, confident, independent learners who are able to build positive relationships with others as they problem solve, negotiate and work cooperatively. Children will choose activities based on a plan to achieve their own or collaborative goals for their play. They will utilise ideas and materials from various learning strands and areas in working toward those goals and will be able to articulate their intentions and processes with increasing fluency. Children will make active connections between their learning and lived experiences. They will tell stories and share ideas, listening to one another and building short, sustained bursts of concentration. Children will take care of themselves, for example, helping themselves to fruit or a drink, and so developing independent and healthy habits. They will take managed risks in trying new activities, sometimes with the support or encouragement of others.

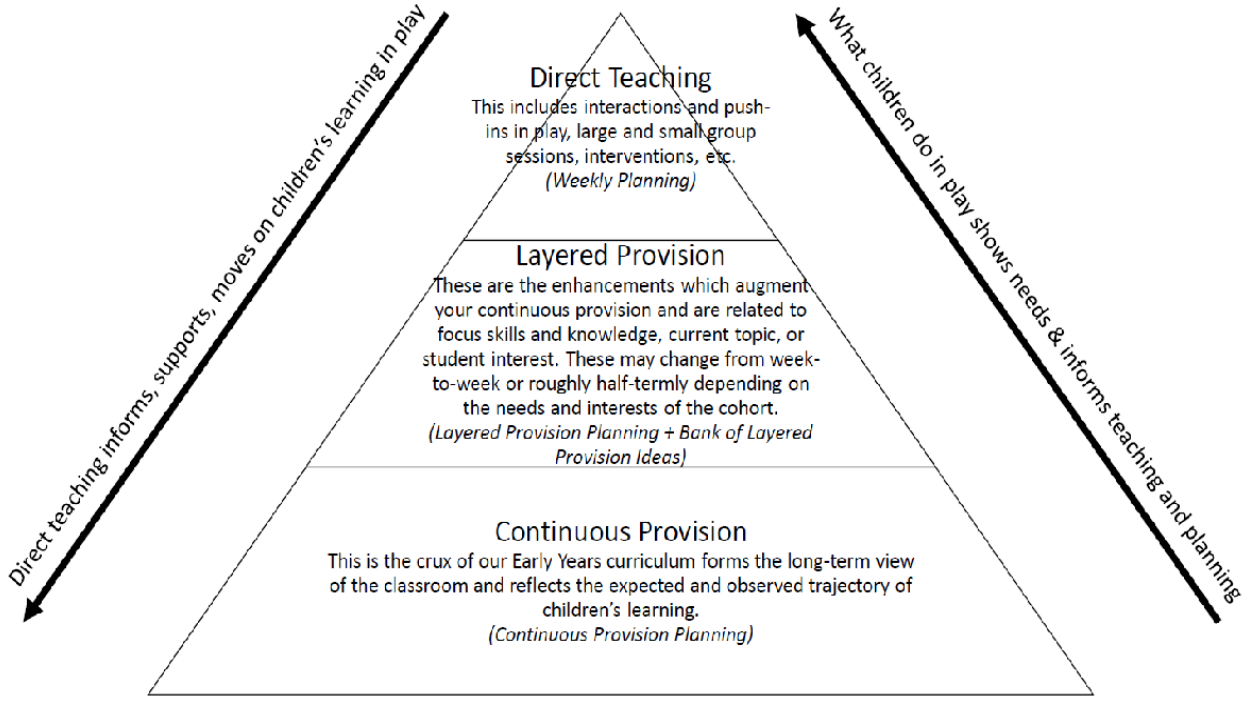
At Queen's Park Primary School, we recognise how important partnerships with parents are. These partnerships help practitioners engage and support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. In addition to this, these partnerships allow children to feel safe and secure and make transitions throughout the school smooth. In Nursery and Reception parents are able to come into the classroom in the morning to settle their child and practitioners are available for any questions they may have. In Reception we hold a 'stay and play' session once a week for parents to come and play in the classroom with their child and their friends.

Curriculum

The EYFS at Queen's Park follows the statutory framework set by the Department for Education to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.

We also use the non-statutory 'Development Matters' guidelines as a foundational framework in our setting. There is a strong emphasis placed on the three prime, or fundamental, areas of learning: Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Communication and Language; and Physical Development. Four further areas of learning "grow out of" the primes and include essential skills and knowledge; these specific areas are: Literacy; Mathematics; Understanding the World; and Expressive Arts and Design. Underpinning all areas, both prime and specific, are the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning', that is, the ways in which children engage with others and with their environments. These characteristics are: Playing and Exploring; Active Learning; Creating and Thinking Critically.

Our curriculum rests on the following framework:



As shown, the environment and the provision therein are foundational to our curriculum. Our Nursery and Reception classes have been carefully planned to provide a secure but challenging environment for children to learn and develop. As noted, we place particular value on the importance of fostering children's independence and self-motivation to learn. In order to facilitate this, all EYFS classrooms have open shelves and baskets stocked with well-considered resources that are continuously accessible and ready for use. This enables children to engage in open-ended learning, exploration, and investigation throughout their own unique learning journeys. The ways in which children interact and engage within our environment then informs our planning and direct teaching, which in turn supports and moves on children's learning in their play.

We believe that real-world experiences give children the most meaningful learning opportunities and increase motivation and engagement. For this reason, selected topics are flexible depending on individual and cohort funds of knowledge and interests, and these are frequently rooted in children's lived experiences, including their senses of wellbeing and awareness of emotions, family and animal studies, seasonal investigations, holiday celebrations, and so on.

Term	Nursery	Reception
Autumn 1	*Concept: All about me* - Settling in - All about me - Families	*Concept: All about me* - Settling in - All about me - Families - The world around me: seasonal changes (autumn)
Autumn 2	*Concept: All about me* - Settling in - All about me - Families - Celebrations (Diwali, Hannukah, Christmas) - The world around me: seasonal changes (autumn)	*Concept: All about me* - Settling in - All about me - Families - Celebrations (Diwali, Hannukah, Christmas) - The world around me: seasonal changes (autumn & winter)
Spring 1	*Concept: Looking closely and investigating* - Animals (penguins) - Seasonal changes (winter)	*Concept: Sustainability and the environment* - Animals (bears) - Transport - Seasonal changes (winter)
Spring 2	*Concept: Looking closely and investigating* - Minibeasts - Celebrations/Events (Pancake Day, Earth Day, Mother's Day, Easter) - Seasonal changes (spring)	*Concept: Sustainability and the environment* - Animals - Transport - Recycling - Celebrations/Events (Pancake Day, Earth Day, Mother's Day, Easter) - The environment around me: seasonal changes (spring)
Summer 1	*Concept: Growing and changes over time* - Plants - Celebrations/Events (Earth Day) - Seasonal changes (spring/summer)	*Concept: Growing and changes over time* - Plants - Celebrations/Events (Earth Day) - Seasonal changes (spring/summer)
Summer 2	*Concept: Growing and changes over time* - Lifecycles - Transition to Reception - Celebrations/Events (Father's Day, Ramadan, Eid) - Seasonal changes (summer)	*Concept: Growing and changes over time* - Lifecycles - Transition to Year 1 - Celebrations/Events (Father's Day, Ramadan, Eid) - Seasonal changes (summer)

As a school with a high intake of English language learners, we also seek to make communication, language, and literacy cornerstones of learning in the EYFS. Therefore, reading and shared enjoyment

of books lie at the heart of our curriculum. We have a selection of Key Authors that children will become familiar with and revisit throughout both years and our short-term planning is structured around carefully linked high quality picture books and non-fiction texts. Each term children will learn a traditional tale in depth, using Talk for Writing approaches and will have the opportunity to orally tell their own stories (Helicopter Stories).

Term	Nursery	Reception
Autumn	Traditional Nursery Rhymes	Little Red Riding Hood
Spring	The Gingerbread Man	Goldilocks and the Three Bears
Summer	The Enormous Turnip	Jack and the Beanstalk

To support children to become more empowered learners we have selected some texts that clearly demonstrate some of the key Characteristics of Effective Learning that will be re-read and discussed regularly.