

# GOTHIC MEDE ACADEMY

## EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY



### Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

#### 1. Philosophy

- We believe that each child is unique and should be valued and respected as such, regardless of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, gender or ability.
- We believe in the promotion of each child's intellectual, personal, physical and spiritual development: the development of knowledge, understanding, attitudes, and skills through a broad and balanced range of experiences, activities and opportunities.
- We believe our setting will provide all children with a sound preparation for the rest of their life, a chance to socialise and integrate with other children and adults and to develop independence, motivation, self discipline and a desire and enjoyment of learning.
- In partnership with the family and carers we enable them to begin the process of becoming active learners for life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

#### 2. Aims

##### **We aim to:**

- Enable children to make an effective and happy transition from home, pre-school or nursery to school through effective liaison.
- Ensure equal access and opportunity.
- Provide a safe, secure, challenging and stimulating environment where all children feel valued and respected.
- Provide a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum where all children have the opportunity to develop through directed and spontaneous play, structured activities and direct teaching both indoors and outside.
- Work in partnership with parents in an atmosphere of mutual respect and keep parents informed about the curriculum and their child's progress.
- Build on what individuals already know and understand and encourage a positive attitude and disposition to learn.
- Enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self-confidence
- Provide a solid foundation in the three prime areas and four specific areas of learning through well planned activities so that every child can develop emotionally, socially, physically, creatively, intellectually, spiritually and morally.



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In addition to our Early Years Philosophy and Aims, we also actively promote the school's Vision and Ethos:

Gothic Mede Academy is a values-based school. We are a happy, nurturing and safe school where we can challenge each other to be our best. All the children are given a variety of opportunities and experiences so that they can develop, ready for their next stage in education and for what they will encounter in life.

You will find children and staff who:

- Live the school's values
- Are ambitious, motivated and set goals for themselves
- Take pride in what they do
- Are confident and resilient
- Are empowered to believe that they can achieve
- Have a growth mindset
- Care for each other

We develop children who have:

- A life-long love of learning
- Solid foundations and high achievement in reading, writing and maths
- A balanced range of skills across the curriculum and an understanding of their unique strengths
- Understanding of our local and wider communities
- The ability to listen to others and express themselves clearly and confidently

### **3. General Information**

#### **Nursery**

Children are entitled to a minimum of 15 hours free nursery education from the term after their third birthday. Children can take their 15 hours in one of the following ways:

#### **Option A:**

Monday 8.50am – 3.20pm  
Tuesday 8.50am – 3.20pm  
Wednesday 8.50am – 10.50am

#### **Option B:**

Wednesday 1.20pm – 3.20pm  
Thursday 8.50am – 3.20pm  
Friday 8.50am – 3.20pm



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Acorn School Day:

Mondays/ Tuesdays / Thursdays / Fridays:

8.50	Children enter Acorn Class Fiddly Fingers and self-registration
9.00	Daily routines (Welcome song, weather etc.)
9.10	Teaching Input
9.30	Child initiated learning and focus activities with teacher
11.30	Lunch in Hall
12.00	Playtime
1.00	Registration and Teaching Input
1.20	Child initiated learning and focus activities with teacher
3.00	Story and Songs
3.20	Home time

Wednesdays

8.50/ 1.20	Children enter Acorn Class Fiddly Fingers and self-registration
9.00/ 1.30	Daily routines (Welcome song, weather etc.)
9.10/ 1.40	Teaching Input
9.30 / 2.00	Child initiated learning and library
10.40/ 3.10	Story and Songs
10.50/ 3.20	Home time

Acorn Class also works in partnership with BEST Nurseries where children may be taking up more hours on top of their 15 funded hours.

We have 48 spaces in our Nursery class and can accommodate up to 24 children in any one session. Nursery is staffed by one part-time Class Teacher, two Early Years Practitioners and one Teaching Assistant.

### **Reception**

We can accommodate up to 60 children in Reception who are then split into two classes each with a designated teacher(s). However, staff work in partnership and all staff support all children.

We currently have three fully qualified teachers (two of which share a class) and the equivalent of two Teaching Assistants at any one time. All children start full time in September, unless there is specific need and it has been agreed with the SENDCo and Principal.



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Reception School Day:

8:40	Gates open and children enter school
8:55	Registration
9:00	Maths and Child Initiated Learning
10:00	Assembly (Where appropriate)
10:15	Snack time
10:30	Phonics and Child Initiated Learning
11:30	Lunchtime
12.30	Registration
12.35	Afternoon session – Topic and Child Initiated Learning
2:30	Maths fluency
3:20	School Ends
3:30	Uncollected children taken to School Office

### **4. Planning and Implementation**

Effective practice in the EYFS is built on the following principles: -

- ☐ A unique child
- ☐ Positive relationships
- ☐ Enabling environments
- ☐ Learning and development

#### **A Unique child**

All children should be treated as individuals but they should have equal access to the EYFS curriculum. We help them do this by planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children from different ethnic groups, and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We strongly believe that early identification of special needs is crucial in enabling staff to support the development of each child and fully meet their needs. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage in an open, honest and sensitive manner and we will always seek their support and involvement.

The school's SENDCo is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary.



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### Positive Relationships

At GMA we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. We recognise that parents/guardians are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/guardians and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. We feel a successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise and so we aim to provide a variety of opportunities to support this.

### Enabling Environments

At GMA we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Activities are planned for both the inside and outside environment. Children have the opportunity to use the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the day to provide challenge across the three prime areas and four specific areas of learning.

Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Observations of individuals and groups of children ensure that practitioners are aware of children's needs and progress. These are recorded and influence future planning and provision.

There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

#### Long Term Planning

In Nursery and Reception, we currently organise the curriculum through agreed half termly topics over the period of the academic year. Topics have been planned that are broad, open, interesting and stimulating to children and based on their own experiences. These are reviewed regularly and are subject to change as appropriate. They enable us to ensure we deliver a balanced curriculum with clear progression of skills and allow us to take into account the need of other children who come to us from other settings. Some areas are taught discretely. These include Maths, Phonics, Handwriting, PE, Music and elements of PSED.

#### Medium Term Planning

We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each term. Assessment opportunities, activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified. We plan stimulating activities using the Early Years Outcomes and the Early Learning Goals as a basis.

#### Short Term Planning

Detailed weekly and daily plans are used to ensure that learning outcomes are covered thoroughly and demonstrate clear progression. Objectives for structured activities and direct teaching are laid out clearly. Evaluation is ongoing and is used to inform future plans and improve what we do. The weekly plan is also informed through ongoing observation of child initiated or spontaneous activity and planned play opportunities (indoors and outdoors). This allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests and for revision and modification of plans. There will be



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opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and also to initiate their own learning.

Reception children use the school hall and playground for P.E, they have access to Chrome books on a daily basis and they visit the school library once a week. Acorn children occasionally use the school hall for P.E and visit the school library once a week. Reception and Nursery children all have access to separate enclosed indoor and outdoor areas which are used to develop all areas of learning throughout the year.

### Learning and Development

We recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development and understand that they are interconnected.

Effective learning and teaching is supported through:

- The partnership between staff and parents that helps our children to feel secure at school and to develop a sense of wellbeing and achievement;
- The understanding that staff have knowledge of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching;
- The range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication;
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;
- 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 space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors, including the effective use of ICT;
- The identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs.

### Areas of Learning and Development

The EYFS 2021 is made up of the three prime areas:

Communication and Language

Physical Development

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

and four specific areas of learning:

Literacy

Mathematical Development



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Understanding of the World  
Expressive Arts and Design

While these areas provide a framework for the early years curriculum, young children's learning does not easily divide up into distinct areas. A particular experience may develop learning over several of the areas at any one time. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

There are opportunities for the children to learn through the three Characteristics of Effective Learning:

Playing and exploring – engagement

Active learning – motivation

Creating and thinking critically - thinking

### Play and Exploration

At GMA we are aware that children need time to become engrossed in activities and often do not make a distinction between work and play. We support children's learning through planned play activities, through observation of child-initiated or adult-led play activities and then provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves and modeling by example.

## **5. Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

Assessments will be made on each child's progress and development in relation to the Early Years Outcomes. The children will be assessed against the age bands throughout Nursery and Reception and then against the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Reception Year.

Assessment *for* learning (formative) and assessment *of* learning (summative) will both play an important part in creating a record of children's progress, attainment and learning needs. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process. Assessment *for* learning will inform planning and will provide information on what is the next step to promote every child's achievement and progress. It may take the form of anecdotal and focused narrative observations, other targeted assessments, annotated examples of work, photographs, and information from parents. We use Tapestry, an online learning journal, to record our observations of children and to show how the adult has moved the child's learning on. In addition to this, we keep a folder for each child which contains work they have produced in class.



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Assessment of learning will enable us to measure attainment and help us raise important questions to improve our own performance as well as going towards creating a summary for the Foundation Stage Profile at the end of the Reception Year. The profile is a nationally employed assessment tool. It is informed by the formative assessments undertaken and makes statements about the child's achievements against seventeen early learning goals. It summarises children's progress towards these goals and the children will be assessed as 'emerging' or 'expected' against each of the seventeen Early Learning Goals at the end of the Reception year. The Foundation Stage Profile provides important information for Year 1 teachers. During the year, Nursery and Reception teachers use Target Tracker to assess the children against the age bands every half term. This enables them to monitor progress of groups of learners. This information is discussed every half term at a 'Pupil Progress' meeting with members of the SLT.

Parents will receive a written report of their child's attainment twice a year, in January and July. The report highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress. In Reception, the summer term reports also includes the children's EYFSP results. In the autumn and spring terms parents have the opportunity to discuss children's progress at Parent Consultations. We also have an 'open door' policy and encourage parents to discuss any concerns they may have about their child's progress.

#### **Moderation**

Every term the Nursery and Reception teachers and the Early Years Practitioners meet to moderate the assessment judgements they make about the children. Children who are under achieving are highlighted as well as those who are working above the expected standard in most areas of development. It is also a time for teachers to see where they are lacking evidence and observations in certain areas and for certain children, therefore being able to adapt their planning accordingly. The Principal and Vice Principal examine the EYFS Profile data and the Foundation Stage Leader notes any trends or areas of success or development. The findings are then used to help to inform the next year's development plan.

Each year at least one Reception teacher attends moderation training, with other schools, to check consistency of leveling.

Nursery and Reception teachers are also members of a local cluster group where Early Years teachers from other local lower schools meet every term to moderate our assessments of children. Nursery and Reception teachers are also part of an Early Years Cluster group in Arlesey where all Early Years Settings in Arlesey meet once a term.





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### **6. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Early Years Leader will write a yearly action plan which is incorporated into the school improvement plan outlining areas of need and development.

The Early Years Leader identifies any training needs and either delivers in house training, seeks support from SLEs or finds external training.

The Early Years Leader will keep all members of staff up to date on educational matters and relevant training and courses as they become available.

A member of SLT and the Early Years Leader carry out two observations a year of teaching staff in Nursery and Reception, as well as learning walks and drop in observations.

The Foundation Stage Leader regularly evaluates the effectiveness of the quality of observations in the children's learning journals, including how staff have moved the children's learning on.

### **7. Involving Parents and Carers**

The Foundation Stage team strongly believe that developing an effective working partnership with parents/carers has a positive impact on children's development and learning. We value parents/carers by:

- Showing respect and understanding for the role of parents/carers as children's first and most enduring educator;
- Encouraging parents/carers to share accounts of their child's development and any concerns they may have and take action to support where appropriate;
- Providing a welcoming environment by being approachable and friendly;
- Establishing an atmosphere of trust and confidence;
- Inviting parents/carers to regular planned events such as Open Evening to share information about our school;
- By being available at the beginning and end of the day to talk to parents/carers on an informal basis. If further time is needed to discuss particular issues an appointment can be arranged at a mutually convenient time;
- Sharing information about the curriculum through meetings e.g. Phonics Workshop for parent/carers, sending newsletters/leaflets home about topics, displays, Tapestry and the school website and Facebook page;
- Inviting parents in for half termly opportunities where they can observe part of a lesson to see methods and strategies we use to teach children;



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- Parent consultations take place in the autumn and spring terms to share children's achievements and together discuss next steps for development;
- Parents are able to view their child's learning journal on Tapestry and are actively encouraged to contribute, noting achievements their child has made at home;
- Encouraging home school links through support with the home school reading programme and fortnightly Literacy and Maths homework in Reception;
- Inviting parents/carers into the classroom to share expertise/interests and time to work with and help the children and staff in a variety of ways;
- Providing opportunities for parents/carers to attend social events with children and staff e.g. Christmas fayre, Summer fayre, Mother's Day breakfast, Father's Day breakfast;
- Invitations to assemblies and other whole school events;
- Inviting them to become involved in the parent/carer/staff group called the "Parents and Friends of Gothic Mede" (PFGM) which supports the school in fund raising and organises social events for adults and children.

#### **8. Transition**

Teachers work very closely with parents and feeder settings / parents to provide opportunities to ensure a seamless transition for children into Nursery and Reception. These include:

##### **Transition into Nursery**

- Whole school Open Evening;
- Transfer forms are passed on from the child's previous Nursery / Pre-School which informs the teacher's knowledge of each child's strengths and areas for development;
- Meet and Play sessions which enable staff to get to know the child and speak to the parents / carers about their child's strengths, areas for development and individual needs;
- Opportunities for the children to visit Nursery for a taster session before they start;
- Meetings for parents at the start of the year to find out about routines etc.

##### **Transition into Reception**

- Whole school Open Evening;
- Meetings for parents before their child start school to find out about the transition process etc;
- Teachers visiting the children at their Nursery / Pre-School the term before they start school;
- Discussions with the children's keyworker at their Nursery / Pre-School to find out about each child's strengths and areas for development;
- Opportunities for the children to visit school for two mornings / afternoons, including a lunch on one occasion, the term before they start school;



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- Questionnaires for parents to complete which helps us to find out more about each child's family situation, interests, strengths, areas for development and any other important information;
- A task to complete over the summer holiday in preparation for starting school;
- A 'Meet the Teacher' session in early September to inform parents about routines and expectations.

Author and Date

Written by: Nicola Davis– February 2017

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Ratified by governors:

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