

Curriculum, Learning, Development and Academic Progress Policy

Statement of Intent

At Grantham Farm Montessori School we promote the learning, development and personal growth of all children in our care. We recognise that each child is an individual and our highly qualified staff consider their needs, interests and development to provide a rich Montessori Learning Programme and plan a challenging and enjoyable experience across the seven areas of learning and development of the EYFS in our nursery class and Year R. We provide a broad and rich learning experience for our Years 1 and 2 pupils, applying Montessori principles and practice to teach the Key Stage 1 National Curriculum core subjects and a Montessori programme for the foundation subjects. Our staff guide and plan what children learn, reflecting on the different rates at which children develop, and adjust practice appropriately. Our aim is to support all children attending the school to attain their maximum potential within their individual capabilities.

Values and Implementation

We provide a positive, inclusive environment for every child, so that they may develop good social skills and an appreciation of all aspects of this country's rich, multi-cultural society. Our Montessori values and philosophy ensure that all children are valued as individuals and treated with respect. Teachers model good communication and social skills, emotional understanding and respect for others. Children absorb these values and learn expected behaviours, social skills and attitudes. We plan learning experiences to ensure, as far as is practicably possible, there is equality of opportunity for all children and a celebration of diversity.

We maintain a personalised record of every child's development, showing their interests, abilities, progress and any areas requiring further support.

For children whose home language is not English, we will take reasonable steps to:

- Provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning and support their language development at home; and
- Ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English language during the EYFS, ensuring that children are ready to benefit from the opportunities available to them when they begin year one.

We ensure that the Montessori Educational Programmes we provide are well planned and resourced to have depth and breadth across the seven areas of learning of the EYFS and the core and foundation subjects of the KS1 curriculum. The programmes provide interesting and challenging experiences that meet the needs of all children in both our Children's House Class (2 – 4 years old) and Grantham Farm Class (4 – 7 years old Years R, 1 & 2). Planning is based on a secure knowledge and understanding of Montessori pedagogy and child development theory in how to promote the learning and development of young children and what they can achieve.

We understand that a curiosity about and a love of nature are intrinsic to the growing child. The school garden and surrounding area is seen as an extension to the classrooms where learning opportunities are abundant. We seek to foster a love of nature in every child and a deep respect and sense of awe and wonder for the world we live in. Eco-topics are embedded in the Montessori philosophy and in everyday life at the school, both indoors and out.

“The land is where our roots are. The children must be taught to feel and live in harmony with the Earth.” Dr Maria Montessori, Own Handbook, 1914

We implement the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** Curriculum set by the Department for Education that sets standards to ensure all children learn and develop well. We support and enhance children’s learning and development holistically through the Montessori didactic materials and play-based activities that support the young learner in the first plane of development. We review all aspects of learning and development and ensure a flexible approach is maintained, applying observation skills and an understanding of child development theories; this enables us to respond appropriately to children’s learning and developmental needs. We provide learning activities based on our observations of each child, which inform future planning and draw on children’s needs and interests. This is promoted through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated opportunities both indoors and outdoors.

Key Stage 1: At this second plane of development, children continue to have an intrinsic desire to learn. They are brimming with ideas and have an innumerable number of questions to which they are seeking answers. Our broad and well-balanced teaching at this level supports the child’s thirst for knowledge, providing a framework for learning across the National Curriculum subjects as well as natural windows of opportunity for every child to follow his or her interests. This ensures that the child’s intrinsic learning needs are met and allows teachers and school leaders to ensure that every child is progressing at an expected level.

We provide learning across the National Curriculum subjects of English, Maths, Science, History, Geography, Art, Music, religious education and Physical Education.

We use long, medium and short term planning to allow maximum flexibility and plentiful opportunities for pupils to further their knowledge and understanding. The key is to provide individualised, child-led, teacher guided learning within a framework timetable. We do this through:

- Timetabled, individualised teaching of the core subjects English and mathematics.
- Timetabled teaching of the core subject science. Timetabled teaching of the foundation cultural subjects (history, geography, art and design, music and religious education), and timetabled teaching of physical education.
- All learning follows the combined Montessori and Key Stage 1 curricula where a framework is taught and opportunities for deeper, individualised learning exploration are provided.
- We place an emphasis on cross-curricular learning across all subjects to facilitate the child’s ability to make connections between these topics and to deepen understanding.

Our overall aim is to equip children to:

- Ask perceptive questions
- Think critically
- Weigh evidence
- Develop perspective and judgement

“...for the child is interested in everything... A global vision of cosmic events fascinates the child whose interest will soon remain fixed on one particular part, as a starting point for more intensive studies. As all parts are related, they will be scrutinized sooner or later. Thus the way leads from the whole via the parts back to the whole.”

Maria Montessori, unpublished lecture; University of Amsterdam, 1950

We acknowledge parents as primary educators and encourage parental involvement as outlined in our Parents and Carers as Partners policy. We build strong home links in order to enhance and extend children’s learning both within the school environment and in the child’s home and have regular meetings with parents to keep them up to date with their child’s progress. We share information about the curricula with parents and signpost them to further support via the following websites:

- [Montessori Society](#)
- [EYFS curriculum](#)
- [Key Stage 1 curriculum](#)
- [Association Montessori Internationale](#)

Assessment and Monitoring Impact

Assessment is an integral part of our practice, we carry out ongoing formative assessment through daily observations and ensure that this does not take us away from interacting with the children.

Summative assessment is carried out by key workers and teachers at set points of the year including:

- Assessment on entry to the school either into the nursery or primary class (starting point), including parental contributions gathered from starter forms and a starting point assessment on My Montessori Child.
- End of term review and progress assessment when each child’s records are updated against Development Matters (EYFS children) or the Key Stage 1 curriculum (years 1 and 2 pupils). Learning and development gaps are identified and next steps set.
- Assessment at the point of transition from the nursery to primary class. End of year data is used as a starting point for the next academic year. A meeting is held between the child’s key worker and the primary class teacher.
- Progress check at age two (where applicable).
- Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (where applicable) or any other summative assessment e.g. when children transitions to a new group or leaves the school.
- End of academic year report for Key Stage 1 pupils.

The Head of School is responsible for the intent and implementation of the learning, development and academic progress policy, ensuring that it is effectively practised in the school. The impact as well as long-term and short-term planning are monitored throughout the school by the senior leadership team. Staff also are involved in peer-mentoring and individual staff are offered professional development as required.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the school	Date for review
August 2023	E. Wetherley	August 2024