
Grantham Farm Montessori School

Learning, Development and Academic Progress Policy

Statement of Intent

At Grantham Farm Montessori School, we recognise that children learn in different ways and at different rates and plan for this accordingly. The Montessori ethos we follow at Grantham Farm places the individual interests and skills of each child at the centre of the curriculum. Our aim is to support all children who attend the school to achieve to their fullest potential within their individual capabilities; we do this by empowering and encouraging each child to be the best person they can be.

The Role of the Teacher and the Prepared Environment

We provide a positive learning environment for every child, so they may develop good social skills, strong emotional skills and an appreciation of all aspects of this country's wonderful, diverse and multi-cultural society. We plan learning experiences across the school to ensure that, as far as is practicably possible, there is an equality of opportunity for all children and a celebration of diversity.

At Grantham Farm Montessori School, we maintain a personalised record of every child's development, showing their abilities, progress, interests and areas needing further teaching or parental assistance.

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 throughout their 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 1.

The unique Montessori prepared environment provides a broad and rich curriculum in both The Children's House (2-4 years) and Grantham Farm (4-7 years) classrooms. The didactic materials and curriculum provided ensures that the educational programmes are well planned and resourced to have depth and breadth across the seven areas of learning of the EYFS and the KS1 curriculum. The environment is carefully prepared, reviewed and maintained by the teachers to provide interesting and challenging experiences that meet the needs of all children. Planning is based on a secure knowledge and understanding of how children learn and how to promote the learning and development of young children and what they can and should achieve in order for them to thrive.

We implement the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 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 Work Cycle. We review all aspects of learning and development to ensure a flexible approach is maintained; an approach that responds quickly and effectively to children's learning and developmental needs. We maintain a tailor-made prepared environment based on ongoing observations which inform future planning and draw on children's needs and interests. This is promoted through a balance of child-initiated opportunities, carefully guided by the teachers that gradually lead the child toward independence, and adult led activities to support each child and move their learning forward; this applies both in the indoor and outdoor environments.

The role of the teacher is crucial to the child's learning and development; the teachers in the environment work hard to support all areas of each child's learning, with an emphasis in the early weeks on settling in; as such the role of the key worker is vital to the child's well-being. The Montessori teacher is not the centre of attention in the classroom, presenting information for rote learning; their role is one of a guide and facilitator, introducing carefully prepared activities that meet the child's unique interests, abilities and developmental needs. Montessori teachers lay the foundations for independent learning and their role involves:

- Preparing a broad, rich and stimulating environment

- Making children the centre of learning
- Encouraging children to learn by providing freedom within behavioural expectations in a richly prepared environment
- Observing children so as to always provide the best possible learning experience, recognising the sensitive periods for learning and diverting inappropriate behaviour to meaningful tasks
- Preparing the classrooms by ensuring that all learning materials are presented in an orderly format and that the materials provide appropriate experiences for all the children
- Respecting each child and being aware of one's own behaviour; modelling ongoing respect for all children and their innate desire to learn
- Introducing new materials and supporting each child's ongoing learning after observing each child
- Respect for each child's learning and an understanding that the child's true personality will reveal itself through purposeful activity
- Respect for the child's efforts and need for independence - never disturb a child when s/he is concentrating and giving their best effort to learn and enjoy

"The first essential for the child's development is concentration' The child who concentrates is immensely happy." Dr. Maria Montessori

Assessment of development and Learning

Direct observation is supplemented by a range of other evidence to evaluate the impact that teaching practitioners have on the progress children make in their learning including:

Evidence of assessment that includes the progress of different groups of children:

- Assessment on entry, including parental contributions 'Getting to Know Your Child form'
- Two-year-old progress checks (where applicable) carried out in the month before each child's third birthday
- On-going (formative) assessments, including any parental contributions
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (where applicable) or any other summative assessment when children leave or at the end of their reception year
- Cohort tracking to identify patterns, gaps, strengths and weaknesses in core groups of children: boys/girls, age groups, children with English as a second language, children with SEND, key worker groups
- Reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling tests, as well as maths tests in KS 1 to monitor a child's progress in language, literacy and numeracy.

At Grantham Farm Montessori School we follow the progress of the two to six year old children using a two-fold system consisting of: a digital record, 'My Montessori Child', combined with a manual record to track each child's progress against the EYFS Development Matters descriptors. A child's progress and achievements are recorded in their personal record folder against the EYFS descriptors Development Matters. Individual planning through the Montessori schemes of work ensures each child is supported according to his/her individual needs and the record systems in place reveal any strengths/weakness or gaps in a child's learning. This means we are able to offer targeted support to each child as and when needed. Children's progress is also assessed against our Progress, Recording And Monitoring System (PRAMS) which enables us to monitor each child's progress with termly input and clearly shows progress made and where support and planning may be needed.

Children in the Grantham Farm class are guided toward organising their own learning. Children are free to work alone, in pairs or in small groups. The curriculum is in part teacher led and in part child led; using the Montessori materials to meet the outcomes of the EYFS and broadly follow the KS 1 curriculum. At this stage of a child's development, there is an increasing partnership between the child and the teacher where the child is developing the skill of becoming an independent learner, as this is a skill that needs to be learned and with guidance will flourish. The teacher ensures that all lessons of the curriculum are given and that the child contributes toward the planning of this in his/her work journal. The KS 1 child's progress is recorded in his/her personal learning folder measured against the outcomes of the Montessori and the KS 1 curriculum.

Working together with Parents and Guardians

We acknowledge parents as each child's primary educators and actively encourage parental involvement as outlined in our Parents and Carers as Partners policy. We build strong home links with all parents in order to

enhance and extend children's learning both within the school environment and in the child's home. We do this through our warm and welcoming open door policy, weekly observations that are shared with the parents, parent contributions toward their child's learning and development record through our digital My Montessori Child record keeping system, and parents in school days in the autumn term and parent/teacher meetings in the spring and summer terms.

We share information about the curriculum with parents and signpost them to further support via the following websites:

<https://montessorisociety.org.uk>

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

www.foundationyears.org.uk/

www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/a0068102/early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs

<https://www.gov.uk/education/primary-curriculum-key-stage-1>

August 2017

Review date: August 2020 (or when changes are made to the EYFS/National Curriculum)

Adopted by: Emma Wetherley, Head Teacher