



EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Introduction

Evergreen School is a Special Educational Needs school; we currently have 268 pupils on roll (October 2020). We are a Warwickshire County Council maintained all through generic special school we have two sites, our early years provision is in the Deansway Site, Woodloes, Warwick. Our pupils have a range of learning needs and we strive to ensure that all pupils are provided with the very best education, care, facilities and resources to fulfil their potential during their time at Evergreen School & beyond.

Evergreen is a school where the children and their families lie at the heart of everything we do. We truly believe that in order for our children to learn and thrive, they need to feel happy and safe. We adopt an early year's philosophy throughout the roots and branches curriculum with learning through play being at the centre of our provision. We understand that our children progress at their own rate, so have designed our curriculum to ensure that each individual is able to flourish.

Vision	Putting our children, young people and families at the heart of everything we do
Mission	Our children and young people will access deep and positive learning experiences that are tailored to their individual learning needs which will support them to develop the tools to thrive, be happy and have a successful future within the local community.
Ethos	We are defined by our culture of community, happiness and positivity, where our children, young people and families are at the heart of everything we do and each individual feels valued. We also believe in a culture of appreciation and achievement being celebrated at all levels.
Core Values	Community, Happiness, Positivity
These statements underpin our strategic development priorities and leadership decisions.	

Philosophy

At Evergreen School we passionately believe in the Early Years Framework and associated philosophy of learning through play so much so that we use the philosophy of the early years model as our whole school curriculum approach. We believe that all children are entitled to the best educational experiences that can be offered and we recognise that a play based, child-centred curriculum is vital in ensuring outstanding progress for our pupils. We believe that this should be met through a child centred approach where individual needs are provided for through an Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum which is broad, balanced, appropriately differentiated and which provides challenge. We believe children should feel safe and secure and valued as individuals and that they are entitled to be educated in an atmosphere which is positive, stimulating and motivating, where independence and positive attitudes to learning are fostered and where each child is encouraged to reach their full potential regardless of their ethnic, socio – economic background, race, gender or ability.

We believe that it is important to work in partnership with parents and carers and we encourage parents to come into school to join us for our many whole school family events as well as more focused meetings such as progress updates about their child.

Aims

The overarching aim of the Early Years Foundation Stage is to help young children achieve the five '**Every Child Matters**' outcomes of staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being. At Evergreen School we embrace this aim by ensuring our children receive high quality educational experiences to enable them to achieve their full potential.

Our overall aims are based upon putting these principles into practice:

- To provide a happy, caring, safe and secure environment for learning, where warm and secure relationships are developed between children and adults
- To provide a total communication environment where children are enabled to use their preferred method of communication to communicate independently and confidently.

- To provide pupils with the opportunity to participate within a broad, balanced and enriched early years curriculum in line with the statutory framework for the EYFS and the pupils own EHCP outcomes identified.
- To provide opportunities for all pupils to access learning opportunities and experiences appropriate to their stage of development, preferred learning style, interests and needs such as complex needs, sensory impairment and autism.
- To provide personalised learning experiences and programmes for each child incorporating advice from other professionals such as the Speech and Language Therapist, Physiotherapist and Occupational Therapist.
- To provide planned and purposeful learning experiences and opportunities which support learning in a wide range of environments e.g. in the classroom, outdoor area, the wider school environment and in the local community.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to initiate and / or plan their own activities to develop independent learning.
- To build on prior learning by providing activities at a level that is demanding but still within the children's reach
- To ensure all pupils feel valued and secure and to develop their sense of identity, culture and positive self - image
- To provide opportunities for children to experience success and pleasure in learning
- To ensure no child is disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, gender or ability.
- To value the contributions of all parents / carers and other significant adults and support them appropriately. To develop close working relationships with parents / carers
- To foster a close working relationship with other professionals such as the Speech and Language Therapist, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist and Educational Psychologist.
- To ensure effective assessment and recording of pupil progress in all areas of learning and development and to recognise that every child's learning journey is unique to them
- To involve the local community where appropriate to support the children's learning.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based upon four themes:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

At Evergreen School we embrace these principles.

A Unique Child

At Evergreen School we recognise that children have a wide variety of experiences, skills, interests and needs when entering our school, whether this is at Reception or at a later age. Children develop in individual ways, at varying rates and we meet the needs of all our children through planning opportunities that build upon and extend their knowledge, experience and interests and develop their self – esteem and confidence. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise, encouragement and celebrate all achievements, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning. We value the diversity of individuals within the school. All children at Evergreen School are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

Positive relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and that parents / carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with children, their families and with other professionals involved in the care of the children

Providing an enabling environment

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. At Evergreen School this begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning. We provide an environment organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely both indoors and outdoors as well as access to areas within the school such as soft play, sensory room and swimming pool.

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 equally and understand that they are interconnected. There are seven areas of learning and development that shape education provision in EYFS, three prime areas and four specific areas:

Prime Areas:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

These areas of learning and development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all areas of learning and development are closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centered curriculum which allows children to make lots of links between what they are learning.

Within Evergreen Curriculum Model the Roots Curriculum is delivered to pupils age 3-7 years. This is our Early Years provision, we do not split pupils by year group rather by learning style and SEND need.



In the early years we focus initially on the key skills of communication, physical development and self-care and independence and social and emotional development. This is informed by a developmental perspective. Running alongside this are the cognition and learning elements of the specific areas of the EYFS model.

These areas of learning are the focus for setting personalised learning intentions (MAPP). However, even though these are 'our' intentions we highly encourage each individual child to lead their own learning being intrinsically motivated to learn and excel. We believe that 'play' is a powerful tool to help fulfill this curriculum model of personalisation and high aspirations.

SKILLS DEVELOPED THROUGH PLAY



How children learn (Characteristics of effective learning) is an integral part of our personalised approach to the curriculum at Evergreen School. We use a range of strategies to support

children's learning, taking into account their learning styles and their barriers to learning and how best to overcome them. Teachers review and discuss progress termly with parents and with a senior leader. Together solutions are sought to help unpick the complexities of each individual pupil's learning and progress. We strongly believe in working together with other professionals.

We love to play at Evergreen as we believe this helps our pupils develop a wealth of deep and meaningful lifelong skills, including problem solving, sharing, waiting, creating etc. We strive to offer irresistible meaningful fun learning opportunities that develop the pupils intrinsic motivation to learn and develop at their own rate.

Characteristics of effective learning:

- Playing and exploring – engagement
- Active learning – motivation
- Creating and thinking critically - thinking

At Evergreen School we have adapted the EYFS curriculum to ensure breadth and balance as well as to ensure it is tailored appropriately to meet the very individual needs of our children. We recognise that the characteristics of effective learning are lifelong skills that will have direct impact on pupil progress and lifelong outcomes. We recognise that our pupil's holistic needs must be nurtured as identified by Maslow's Hierarchy of Need. We create an environment where pupils feel respected, valued and liked. We recognise pupils for their effort and ensure that we nurture and support their emotional needs through highly bespoke Individual Support Plans. See behaviour Policy.



Environment

All new pupils are placed in the most suitable class group with great care and consideration given to the child's learning styles, needs, barriers to learning and their motivators. For example, pupils who find transition difficult due to their severe autism may be placed in the ASC hub as this accommodation has its own bathroom and separate entrance allowing pupils to enter their classroom playground direct from the car park drop off point rather than having to filter through crowds at the main entrance. Whereas a pupil who has complex multi-sensory impairment will be placed in a highly specialist classroom that supports their specific barriers to learning.

Ultimately, we have no hard and fast rules on age groups or class size. We use our in-depth knowledge of the child to help place the child in the most appropriate class. The use of displays and visual stimuli plus the access to resources varies greatly from classroom to classroom depending on the pupils in that room. For example, a pupil with Autism may struggle to focus and learn in a cluttered highly stimulating typical early years play environment, this child may benefit from a very bare classroom with limited visual clutter.

In addition to this all EYFS classes have access to the following school accommodation to support all areas of learning:

Approved By: Head Teacher

Approved on: 12/10/20

Review Due: September 2023

- Soft play room
- Sensory Room
- Swimming pool
- Hall and Small Hall
- Kitchen/Cookery Room
- Library
- Group rooms (used for a variety of activities including therapist intervention).
- Outdoor spaces are again bespoke to each class and vary according to pupils' individual needs. We have a forest school site and a wide variety of outdoor playground apparatus such as climbing frames, slides, sheds and swings.

Resources

The classes are equipped with a wide variety of resources to support learning. These resources differ according to the pupils' barriers to learn and learning styles. In some classes the resources are well ordered, clearly visible and accessible to all children, helping to lead towards independence and the children taking responsibility for their own learning. In other classes the resources will be minimal, and the classroom may be set up to develop the Prime areas through specialist teaching approaches such as Attention Autism and making choices using visual symbols to request. For pupils with complex learning difficulties specialist multi-sensory resources are available for example one stop switches to operate cause and effect toys and a touch screen to enable children to access ICT.

Classroom practice and the role of staff

Children enter Evergreen School with an Educational Health Care Plan that highlights the pupil's barriers to learning and also the provision needed to meet that child needs. Our school wide system of planning for individual needs directly links to the individual child's EHCP. End of key stage outcomes and short steps are transferred onto a one-page yearly plan which is shared with all the staff working with the class. This gives all staff clarity of the intent of the curriculum for that child.

The adults in the room observe the children over the initial first six weeks. This helps the staff to have a real understanding of the pupil's interests, learning schemas and also identify any physical, sensory or communication needs. Staff robustly record any incidents of behaviour and reflect on what may have been the trigger (See behaviour policy). With all this information the class teacher can then further understand the pupils needs and learning style / barriers to learning and thus signpost support in a timely manner. The class team follow the child's interest to scaffold their learning and also entice the child into irresistible learning activities led by the adult such as creative play, sensory fun or Attention Autism.

The pupils learning journey and progress is directly linked to the child's Educational Health Care Plan. Progress is tracked with precise accuracy by Mapping and Assessing Personalised progress (MAPP) in a robust & effective way. MAPP is used across the whole school.

Class timetables are constructed around the principle that every moment of the school day is a learning opportunity. Each aspect of school life is a planned learning experience and linked to personalised curriculum targets or the pupils EHCP.

In the early years we organise the day to provide an appropriate balance between the following: -

- Child Initiated Activities - children make choices from within the learning environment to meet his/her outcome for learning through the child's own interest and motivation to learn.

- Adult Initiated Activities- practitioners provide the resources/language to scaffold, extend, stimulate and consolidate learning through a fun highly motivating activity.
- Adult Directed Activities – Children engage in appropriately timed and staffed planned activities to learn a specific skills / achieve Personalised Learning Intentions (MAPP)

We recognise the importance of children’s play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts. In providing these active learning opportunities through play we understand the central position of play within the EYFS framework. This is essentially a play-based curriculum and pedagogy as the provision of play opportunities underpins its delivery.

With pupils who have barriers to their learning, such as physical, sensory or emotional challenges then the adult directed activities may be increased or decreased accordingly. Each child is **unique** and each child’s learning will be tailored to ensure that they are happy, safe and motivated to learn and succeed at Evergreen School.

A highly personalised skill development journey is begun where we appreciate that our pupils learn in a variety of ways. Children develop their skills using a range of processes:

- Experience and exploration
- Making choices / decisions
- Listening
- Questioning
- Role play
- Problem solving
- Repetition
- Modelling (this may be observing an adult carry out an activity or through being offered appropriate support such as hand under hand)

To ensure equality of access to appropriate learning opportunities a variety of strategies are used by staff

- Look, listen and note
- Setting clear and consistent boundaries
- Home visits to establish relationships with parent / carer, child and school
- Regular contact with families and sharing information with parents / carers
- Liaison with other professionals
- Close links for transitions between class groups to ensure continuity and progression
- Provision of an integrated curriculum inside and outside the EYFS classes
- Ensuring an appropriate balance between child – initiated and adult – led activities
- Ensuring individual learning styles and needs are catered for, for example children with a sensory impairment, complex needs, autism etc.
- Direct teaching strategies e.g. PECS, TEACCH, Attention Autism

We believe that play, both indoors and outdoors, is the fundamental way in which young children learn. Through play children will be developing skills across all areas of learning. Children at Evergreen School may demonstrate very early play skills, repetitive or rigid play and require a range of strategies to support them to develop the breadth of their skills and to ‘move’ their play on. Through play in a secure environment with effective adult support, children will be able to:

- Explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world
- Practise and build up concepts, ideas and skills
- Learn how to control impulses and understand the need for boundaries
- Be alone, be alongside others and co-operate as they engage in play
- Take risks and make mistakes
- Communicate with others using their preferred method of communication
- Express fears to relieve anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations

Adults in the setting will support play by:

- Planning and resourcing a stimulating and appropriate learning environment which caters for the needs of the group as a whole as well as the individuals within the group
- Supporting children's learning through planned play
- Extending and supporting children's spontaneous play
- Extending and developing children's communication in their play
- Listening to all forms of children's communication and their ideas and taking these into account when developing play and to inform planning
- Narrating children's play
- Modelling play
- Asking questions about play
- Enabling individuals to access play activities, for example through appropriate positioning of child / resources and level of support

Transition- Starting at Evergreen

Admissions to Evergreen school is via the WCC admissions process. Once WCC has requested a place at Evergreen school, a member of staff from Evergreen will visit the child to see if the child's needs can be met and that there is a suitable class for the child at Evergreen.

Pupils moving into our School are then supported through the following transition procedure:

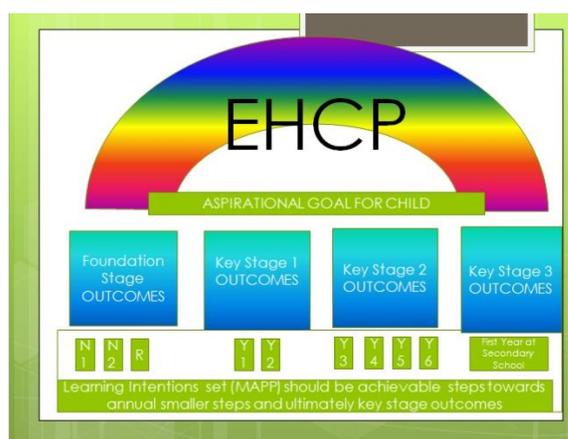
- Prior to starting at Evergreen school, a senior leader / transition co-ordinator will visit the pupil in their current setting and compile a pupil passport of the child. This helps Evergreen allocate a suitable learning environment / classroom and class teacher.
- The class teacher will then make a home visit and support the parents to compile a parent input pupil passport.
- Parents/Carers are invited into school for coffee and chat.
- Pupil and Parents/Carers are invited in for a variety of play-based visit such as Forest School, Sensory Room and outdoor play.
- Evergreen staff will ensure we have excellent communication with the other professionals and work together to support transition from nursery or home to starting school. Once we have gathered all the essential information, we work with parents on what they believe would be the best process for their child's start at Evergreen.

Assessment, Record Keeping and Reporting to Parents / Carers

On starting school all new pupils are observed for the first six weeks using both planned and unplanned observations. This information helps deepen the teachers / team's knowledge of the child's unique interests, learning styles, barriers to learning and their interests. These observations may also highlight any other interventions needed such as sensory needs or support managing their behaviour.

Along with the above gathered information the child's EHCP (which incorporates Multi-disciplinary advice) is a fundamental part of the process of planning for a highly bespoke curriculum that is tailored to each unique child. Within a year of the EHCP being written an annual review will be held. Parents and all professionals involved with the child will be asked to prepare a report and attend the meeting. MDT and parents will review progress for the child against the short steps on the EHCP. New aspirational yearly short steps will be written and agreed by all involved with the child's education, health and care for the coming year.

Within the first half term (six weeks) of starting school the class teacher will have developed termly learning intentions (MAPP) which will be monitored according to the school wide assessment system. The learning intentions will be categorised into the four SEND areas. The intentions for learning will be skills linked directly to the child's EHCP annual short steps. We believe that the aspirational outcomes set by MDT at the beginning of the child's schooling are the best starting point for planning a bespoke curriculum that has its main goal of 'independence and life-long learning'. Thus, ensuring every child, every day will thrive and learn what is suitable and relevant for them as individuals.



Formative Assessment

The termly learning intentions are reviewed daily / weekly and formative assessment reports are collated and shared in many ways. See diagram below for how we gather evidence and assess on a day to day basis.



Parents are kept up to date on a daily basis, either through informal conversations as they bring / collect their children or through the online daily diary system 'Class Dojo'. Teachers share photographs and video daily/weekly. We also encourage parents to share photographs and videos of learning and engagement at home which we then use as part of our formative assessment.

We are extremely proud of the rapid progress pupils make once starting Evergreen. We are passionate about catching all elements of progress as we recognise that pupils are learning and embedding skills throughout their day/night. We love to celebrate achievements that are unplanned learning intentions, and these are captured as WOW moments. Parents are asked to share with the class teacher any WOW moments achieved at home so we can collaboratively work together to embed deep learning that is generalised and maintained over time.

Each pupils progress will be evidenced in their Learning Journey which follows their development throughout their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage One and beyond. The Learning Journey is made up from observations of progress from both adult led and child led learning. As the curriculum is bespoke to each child so will the learning evidence be bespoke, as a minimum it will include MAPP data analysis of Learning intention progress (including observations), 'WOW' moments, certificates, photographs and samples of work.

Staff may also telephone parents to discuss any issues as and when they arise. Our school recognises that parents are the first and most important educator of their child and we wish to work in close collaboration with them. We welcome requests from parents outside of this termly meeting to discuss issues as and when they arrive.

Summative Assessment

At the end of each term the formative assessment information is gathered together to inform a summary of progress and to inform next steps for learning intentions. A review of termly learning intentions will be sent to parents highlighting what the next steps are. Parents will then have a formal opportunity to meet with the class teacher or class team to further discuss this progress and suggested next steps.

