

What is Foundation Stage?

The Foundation Stage Is the first stage of the National Curriculum focusing on the distinct needs children aged 3 to the end of the reception year in primary school. The Foundation Stage is delivered in a range of settings. These include pre-school groups, early years centres, accredited childminders in networks approved to deliver early education, nursery and reception classes in primary schools, nursery schools and private nurseries.

Foundation Stage learning has six learning areas;

These are:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- communication, language and literacy
- mathematical development
- knowledge and understanding of the world
- physical development, and
- creative development

Each learning are has early learning goals. These set out the skills, understanding, knowledge and attitudes which it is hoped children will reach or exceed by the end of the Foundation Stage. Children will be at different stages of progress towards these goals depending on their age stage of development. Stepping stones describe children's typical progress towards these goals from age three to the of the Foundation Stage. Of Course children are individual and not all will fit into this typical pattern of progress. Staff understand this and take this into account when planning activities and experiences.

Happy children become willing learners

This period of life is really important both in its own right but also in the preparing children for later learning. From the age of three to five, children grow, develop and learn rapidly. Most children go through the same stages but each child is different. They choose their friends and develop in their own preferred ways of learning.

Children aged three, four and five are constantly encountering new experiences which they will try to understand. As they do so they explore the world around them, ask questions, extend their skills, develop their confidence and build on what they already know. Well planned play is central to childrens learning in the Foundation Stage. That way learning is both challenging and fun.

The indoor and outdoor 'classrooms' are organised to give children plenty of space to move around, to work on the floor and on table tops, individually and in smaller and larger groups. Resources are well0organised and labelled so that children know where to find what they need and can be independent. This means adults can spend more time joining in with children's learning, extending their language and thinking and helping them to make progress.

The role of the adult is crucial in supporting children's learning through planned play and extending and developing children's spontaneous play. Through this supported play children can explore, develop and use their curiosity and imagination to help them make sense of the world in a secure environment. They practise skills, build up ideas and concepts, think creatively and imaginatively and communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

Giving Children opportunities to learn,
become independent and feel confident.

Adults working in the Foundation Stage plan a wide range of opportunities for children to learn both indoors and outdoors. What they plan should be based on what children already know about and can do. It should recognise children's different interests and needs. Sometimes adults will plan activities to do with particular groups based on their learning needs and interests. Sometimes they will plan time and resources for children to initiate and develop their own learning.

Both provide opportunities for children to learn to work together and share resources and the attention of adults.

Although the Foundation Stage curriculum is organised into six areas of learning, one experience may help develop a number of competences, skills and concepts across several of these areas. For example, in hospital role-play social, physical, language and literacy skills can be developed. This role-play also gives children the opportunity to learn more about different people in the world around them and be prepared for new experiences. Staff will ensure that every child engages in a wide enough range of activities so that all six areas of learning are covered in the course of time.

