Learning and Development Policy

Grass Roots Nursery Group

1. Purpose

This policy outlines how Grass Roots Nursery Group delivers a high-quality early years curriculum in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). It sets out the principles, structures, and professional practices that underpin learning and development across our settings.

This is a practitioner-facing document. A parent-friendly overview of children's learning experiences is provided separately in our **Early Learning Opportunities Statement**.

2. Statutory Responsibilities (EYFS)

Our curriculum and practice reflect the statutory requirements of the EYFS, including:

- Learning and Development Requirements
- Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning
- Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements
- Meeting individual needs and promoting inclusion
- Ensuring children learn through a balance of child-initiated and adult-guided experiences

These responsibilities guide our curriculum design, assessment processes, and daily practice.

3. Our Approach

Practitioners at Grass Roots Nursery Group are expected to:

- understand how children learn and apply the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning
- build warm, secure relationships that support confidence, curiosity, and resilience
- use high-quality interactions to extend children's thinking, language, and understanding
- observe children closely to identify their interests, strengths, and next steps
- plan responsively, using professional judgement rather than excessive documentation
- create enabling environments that promote independence, exploration, and deep engagement
- ensure all children can access learning through inclusive, individualised practice
- provide appropriate challenge for children showing advanced skills, strong learning dispositions, or rapid development in particular areas
- work in partnership with parents to share insights and support learning at home
- reflect on their practice and engage in ongoing professional development

Leaders support staff through coaching, supervision, and reflective dialogue to maintain high standards of practice.

4. Curriculum Approach

Our curriculum is designed to ensure that all children:

- experience a broad, ambitious, and well-sequenced early years curriculum
- develop secure foundations across all areas of learning
- make progress from their individual starting points
- build the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for future learning
- feel emotionally secure, confident, and ready to engage

The curriculum supports children showing advanced skills by offering opportunities for deeper exploration, problem-solving, and extension within developmentally appropriate practice.

5. Key Principles

Individualised Learning

Children develop at different rates. Practitioners use professional judgement, observation, and knowledge of child development to tailor learning to each child's needs, including those who show advanced skills in particular areas.

Coherence and Progression

Staff understand how learning builds over time. They plan experiences that connect prior knowledge to new learning, ensuring progression across the EYFS.

High-Quality Interactions

Practitioners use modelling, questioning, sustained shared thinking, and rich language to deepen children's learning and extend their thinking — including for children who require additional challenge.

Enabling Environments

Our environments are intentionally planned to promote independence, exploration, and deep-level engagement. Resources are accessible, open-ended, and responsive to children's interests and skill development.

Partnership with Parents

We work collaboratively with parents and carers, sharing insights and supporting learning at home. Parents' knowledge of their child informs our understanding and planning.

6. EYFS Areas of Learning

We follow the EYFS statutory framework, which sets the standards for learning, development, and care from birth to five.

Prime Areas

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

Specific Areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Our curriculum ensures children experience all seven areas in a balanced, meaningful way.

7. Delivering the Curriculum

Key Person System

Each child has a key person who builds a secure relationship with them and their family. This supports emotional wellbeing and enables personalised learning.

Observation and Assessment

Assessment is continuous, proportionate, and rooted in professional knowledge. Practitioners observe children in play, interactions, and routines to understand what they know and what they need next — including identifying children who show advanced skills or rapid development.

Planning for Learning

Planning is flexible and responsive. Practitioners use observations, children's interests, and developmental knowledge to shape learning opportunities that are purposeful and engaging. This includes planning for children who require additional challenge.

Play-Based Pedagogy

Play is central to learning. Practitioners create opportunities for exploration, problem-solving, creativity, and collaboration through both child-initiated and adult-guided experiences.

Professional Development

We invest in staff training, coaching, and reflective practice to ensure practitioners have the knowledge and confidence to deliver the curriculum effectively.

8. Inclusion and Additional Needs

SEND

We provide inclusive practice and tailored support for children with SEND, working closely with families and external professionals. Adjustments are made to ensure all children can access learning.

Children Showing Advanced Skills

We recognise that some children demonstrate advanced skills or rapid development in particular areas. These children are supported through:

- deeper-level learning opportunities
- open-ended resources
- rich language and concept development
- sustained shared thinking
- responsive, differentiated interactions

Individual plans are only created if a child requires support beyond high-quality, inclusive provision.

Equality and Diversity

We promote equality of opportunity and ensure our curriculum reflects and values diverse experiences, cultures, and identities.

9. Evaluating the Quality of Education

We monitor the effectiveness of our curriculum through:

- observations of practice
- discussions with children and families
- monitoring children's progress over time
- staff reflection and professional dialogue
- evaluation of environments and provision

This includes ensuring that children showing advanced skills continue to be challenged appropriately.

10. Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- **Quality Provision Policy**

- **Inclusion and SEND Policy**
- **Learning Journey Policy**
- **Child Protection and Safeguarding**
- **Promoting Positive Behaviour**
- **Key Person System**
- **Equality and Inclusion Policy**
- **Health and Safety Policy and Procedures**

These policies work together to ensure children experience a high-quality, inclusive early years education.

11. Review Cycle

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required due to changes in legislation, EYFS guidance, or best practice.