

September 2021 – EYFS Reforms – Observations, Assessment and Planning



Dear Parents and Carers,

As of September 2021, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is changing. As part of these changes, we will be making some adjustments to the way we observe, assess and plan for your children.

What is the EYFS?

The EYFS is the statutory Early Years curriculum. This is mandatory for all schools, settings and childminders to follow from birth up to the end of reception. The EYFS sets out our legal obligations regarding things like adult: child ratios, suitable people, safeguarding and welfare, staff qualifications, and learning and development.

What's changing?

- Most of the changes are regarding Learning and Development, with some minor adjustments to Safeguarding and Welfare.
- Fundamentally, what we teach children is very similar, albeit worded differently.
- The new framework also specifically talks about the pressures of Early Years staff and wants to remove unnecessary paperwork requirements which result in time spent away from the children. It says the following:

“Assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement and should not be required to prove this through collection of physical evidence.” – EYFS 2021

Changes to Safeguarding and Welfare

- The changes to Safeguarding and Welfare are largely wording based. For example “Local Safeguarding Children’s Board” has been changed to “Local Safeguarding Partners” to reflect some recent change in structure.
- A requirement for promoting the good oral health of children has been added.
- A specific requirement for promoting staff and children’s online safety has been added. This reflects the technological advances we have made since the EYFS was last reformed in 2012.

Changes to Learning and Development – Educational Programmes

Marsh Gibbon Preschool have decided to use the Birth to 5 Matters guidance. It is a non-statutory guidance which we will use to support our implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which sets out the legal requirements for delivering education for children from birth to 5 years old in England. Building on previous non-statutory guidance for the EYFS, it has been updated to reflect the research evidence and meet the needs of practitioners today. It outlines the foundations of good practice and offers information and guidance for us to consider how the Principles of the EYFS can be brought to life in our setting. New sections on play, characteristics of effective learning, and self-regulation are designed to help practitioners to reflect on and develop our own pedagogy.

You can download or buy a copy of the guidance here:

[Download or buy a copy – Birth To 5 Matters](#)

- Birth to 5 Matters guidance lead up to the Early Learning Goals – a description of what we want children to know by the end of Reception.
- The guidance is divided in to 7 areas of learning. The ‘**Prime**’ areas form the basis for all learning, and the ‘**Specific**’ areas build on those skills and broaden children’s understanding, experiences and knowledge. In preschool, we always focus on the Prime areas in the first instance as they really do form the foundation for everything else.
- The 7 areas are divided down in to ‘aspects’ (like subheadings).
- The ‘aspects’ are changing as follows:

Current EYFS (2012)		New EYFS (2021) Birth to 5 Matters Guidance
Prime Areas		Prime Areas
Personal, Social, Emotional Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Relationships • Managing Feelings & Behaviour • Self Confidence & Self Awareness 	→	Personal, Social, Emotional Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Relationships • Sense of Self • Understanding Emotions
Communication and Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening and Attention • Understanding • Speaking 		Communication and Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening and Attention • Understanding • Speaking
Physical Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving and Handling • Health and Self Care 		Physical Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving and Handling • Health and Self Care
Specific Areas		Specific Areas
Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Writing 	→	Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Writing
Mathematics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers • Shape, Space and Measure 		Mathematics
Understanding the World <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and Communities • The World • Technology 		Understanding the World <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and Communities • The World • Technology
Expressive Arts and Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring and Using Media and Materials • Being Imaginative 		Expressive Arts and Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating with Materials • Being Imaginative and Expressive

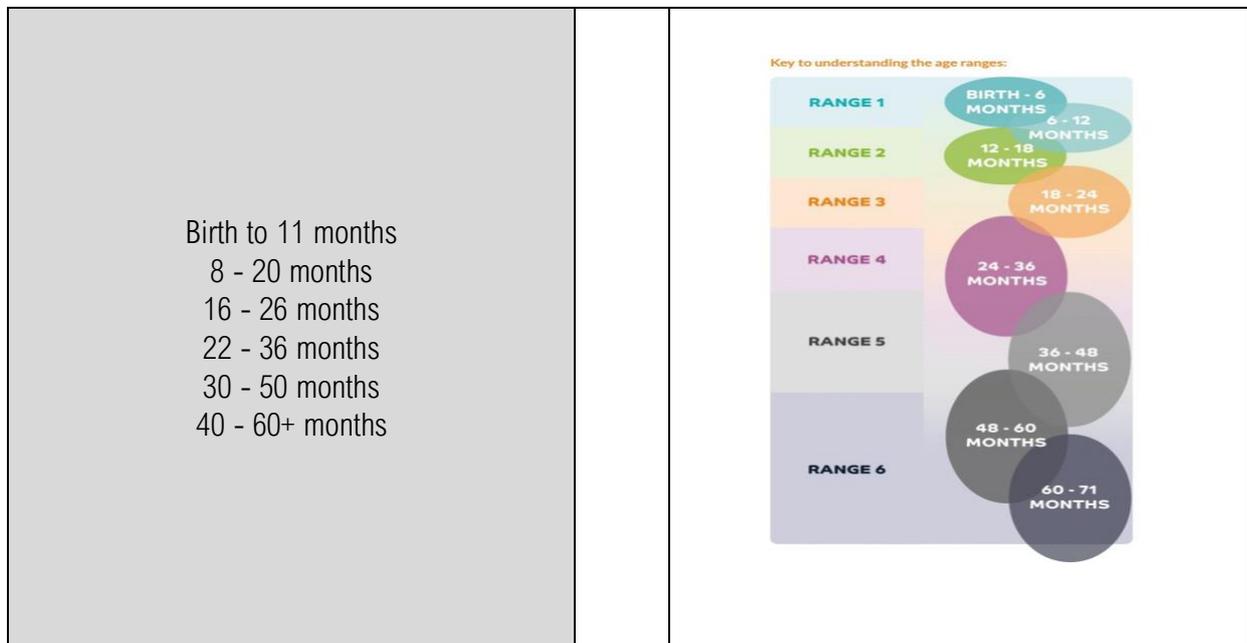
Please be aware that these headings are those of the Early Learning Goals for the end of Reception. In pre-school, we focus on learning the early skills that set children up to achieve these. For example, we build our gross and fine motor skills, mark making, excitement for learning, conversation skill, interest in books and print, strong sense of self and so on which eventually lead to mastery of reading, writing and all of the other fantastic things your child will learn as they grow and develop. All of the learning we do here, and most of the learning in reception is through quality, active play.

“Teaching in the early years should not be taken to imply a “top down” or formal way of working. It is a broad term that covers the many different ways in which adults help young children learn. It includes their interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities. communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating and setting challenges”- Ofsted.

Another visible change to the guidance is the age ranges used alongside the goals, please see below. These new ‘Ranges’ will be used when we assess the children and identifying whether we believe each child is working to their expected age and stage in line with the birth to 5 Matters guidance. These ranges will be valuable when identifying gaps in development and will assist us in accessing outside help to support their learning and development e.g. speech and language therapy, occupational health etc.

Current EYFS (2012)		New EYFS (2021) Birth to 5 Matters Guidance
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What does all of this mean at Marsh Gibbon Preschool?

These changes and the removal of the requirement for a lot of evidence based tracking means that we are making some adjustments to the way we observe, assess and plan.

The team at Marsh Gibbon Preschool work hard to ensure they know your children extremely well, we observe the children's play, development and interests, we assess what they know and what we want them to learn and then we plan activities and provision which will extend their development. We aim to teach the children something new and/or help to improve upon the skills they are already mastering. All of this is done by using our understanding of child development and our knowledge of your child as an individual person.

We will continue to provide snap shot observations of the children's learning in their learning journals to display their achievements and progression throughout their time at preschool with us, however we will make more of an emphasis on these being 'in the moment' and not weekly 'must haves' as the EYFS is encouraging us to move away from paperwork and put the importance of the keyworker knowing their child without having to refer back to correspondences. We do not believe in lengthy, time consuming observations that require staff to spend time away from doing what they do best every day and feel that this works best for us. Up until now it has been a requirement for practitioners to produce evidence based tracking involving termly assessments and next steps, however now that this requirement has been removed, we have decided to use our practitioners' time more effectively and change these documents to ongoing/working documents that will be used yearly instead of termly. However our 2 year checks remain a requirement, so these will continue for our 2 year olds. We ultimately want to be spending the most time with the children.

We still want to keep parents up to date with their children's learning and development, and give you snapshots of their preschool day, so we plan to offer the following:

- We will continue to upload photos to our Class DoJo app and Facebook page.
- Each term (**Autumn, Spring and Summer**), we will send you a development summary for your child. This will tell you what we have been learning, what we've been enjoying, talk about their wellbeing and whether their development is as expected or if there is anything we need to work on supported by the Birth to 5 Matters non statutory guidance document, we may use additional documents if they are of benefit to your child, such as if they have additional needs or are learning English as an additional language.
- We will continue to complete the 2 Year Progress Check. This is a statutory progress check to be completed between 24 and 35 months.
- When your child goes to school, we will continue to produce Transition Documents to support this.

Should you have any questions, concerns or queries, please don't hesitate to contact the preschool for support.