



# The Meadows Montessori School

## Teaching and Learning Policy

### Primary School

#### **Applies to:**

Primary School, out-of-school care, the after-school clubs, and all other activities provided by the Primary school, inclusive of those outside of normal school hours.

All staff (teaching and support staff), any pupils, the Proprietor and volunteers working in the school.

#### **Availability**

This policy is made available to parents, staff, and pupils by request from the Head of School or school office.

#### **Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement, and audit by the Head of School.

The Head of School will undertake an annual review of this policy and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than one year from the date shown below, or earlier if changes in legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Approved Date – October 2023	Sam Sims
Review Date – October 2024	Head of School

#### **Overview**

This document presents a high-level view of how and what children learn at The Meadows Montessori Primary School (referred to as 'The Meadows' hereafter). It outlines our intentions as primary school, our teaching approach, our curriculum, monitoring, assessment and reporting to parents.

## **Intentions**

At The Meadows, we aim to teach children to grow into positive, responsible individuals, who can work and co-operate with others, while developing knowledge and skills, so that they achieve their true potential. We believe we provide an academically challenging environment which is vibrant, happy, creative, and stimulating.

The curriculum is all the planned activities that are organised to promote learning and personal growth and development.

The curriculum sits within the overall vision of The Meadows Montessori School to provide a school community in which every child can thrive and be prepared for life; for all children to have a lifelong love of learning, be truly independent, intrinsically motivated, secure, responsible, and confident.

## **Teaching – Our Daily Work Cycle**

In all of our classrooms we follow a work cycle both morning and afternoon. This cycle allows children to concentrate and make choices about their work, alongside small group teaching groups for explicit teaching – maths and literacy. Within this work cycle depending on the age of the children, there is freedom of choice within our prepared environment.

### **Dragonflies (3–6-year-olds)**

In this room the environment is set up to allow the children to choose independently from the activities. There are areas for each subject, and these activities change, as the teachers follow the child and observe, planning for their next steps.

### **Grasshoppers (6–9-year-olds) & Fireflies (9–11-year-olds)**

In both these classrooms, there is also a well-planned prepared environment, to support freedom of choice and independent learning. These children work from a journal, which is planned with the teacher and the child. The work on the journal reflects the week before, and also sets out any group lessons the child will have. The children are encouraged to make their own choices from their journal each week. Within the week the children will attend small group lessons for both maths and literacy and may also have 1-1 work with either the teachers or the TA's.

## **Journal Planning**

Learning for each child is determined throughout each week, following observations, informal assessments, and discussions between class teachers. Children have the freedom to manage their own learning and when to complete it; at the same time, teachers are free to support on a one-to-one basis within the main classroom. Often the small group lessons will include some follow-up learning for the children to complete in their own time (during the school day)

## **Maths Teaching**

Our maths curriculum is delivered through our Montessori materials, which ensures appropriate coverage and development of skills throughout the school. Work is built on from class to class, but importantly allows for children to progress according to their ability and need. The high level of Long-Term planning shows the coverage across each class for the school with short term plans responding to the needs of the children within each class on a weekly basis. In each class core maths concepts are continuously taught (4 operations, place value, times tables) alongside topic areas that change half termly.

Children work in small groups in the classes according to need, and these will be identified by the class teacher. They will also work on a 1-1 basis with the teacher at times during the week.

## **Dragonflies**

In Dragonflies maths is taught through many Montessori materials which introduce the early maths concepts in a concrete way. The materials allow the child to discover and explore early number and to be directed by the teacher onto next step challenges by move through concepts at a pace they are able to. Teachers ensure that the child understands the area they are working on, before taking them onto the next step, as this forms a solid foundation.

## **Grasshoppers**

In Grasshoppers the Montessori materials are still used as a concrete demonstration of many concepts. Children will use the materials to support their work as necessary – but are also able to work abstractly when they are ready.

## **Fireflies**

The use of materials decreases as the children become able to work in the abstract. Journal work set for the individual child enables the teacher to challenge and stretch the learning, but also allows there to be time re-enforce concepts.

## **Assessment of Progress in Maths**

Each child has an individual plan for their learning which is discussed with the class teacher on a weekly basis. This ensures that they move on appropriately through the curriculum, and also encourages the child to be involved in their own progress and marking of their work. Many of the activities available in each room contain a built in 'control of error' which allows the child to self correct and/or assess their own progress.

The children are given feedback, usually at the time of the work being completed. This feedback is then used to inform their next work.

## **Literacy Teaching**

As with Maths, Literacy is taught initially using Montessori materials as part of our daily workcycle. Within the workcycle, phonic lessons, spelling, reading, and writing will be carried out. Children may work in small groups or on a 1-1 with the teacher. In all classrooms children are heard reading on a 1-1.

Our literacy teaching supports children to become confident, verbal communicators. Our English teaching encourages reading out loud, storytelling, talking to others, and sharing information.

## **Approaches to Reading**

At The Meadows we strive to create an appropriate text-rich environment, where the texts are current and in place for a purpose. We aim for most children to read to an adult at least once a week – and in our Dragonfly class, this is usually twice a week. The children also hear a class book read to them by the teachers on a weekly basis. They are encouraged to read books from home as well as different text types. Our school library is open to all, and the children may borrow a book if they would like to. Within our Great Lesson work, we strive to make all text that the children are using for research work, text that they can read and understand – to ensure that they can then work independently with their work. We continually replenish our bookshelves, so that reading material is current new and exciting and geared towards the interests of our children. Children may request certain books and suggest why other may enjoy them.

Children are initially taught to read by using our Montessori phonics materials and the Dandelion reading scheme. When they become more fluent, we use a mixture of Oxford reading scheme and other banded books. When the children become fluent readers, they choose books themselves by browsing independently – although this choice is always supported by a TA or class teacher to ensure that they have chosen the right comprehension level.

Guided reading takes place in both Grasshoppers and Fireflies within the work cycle in small groups. This encourages reading out loud and allows time for deeper understanding of text.

All our children are encouraged to share books as well as to read to themselves. In both Dragonflies and Grasshoppers, they are encouraged to take their reading books home to share with parents / carers. In Fireflies there is time within the school day for free reading – and children may still take-home books to share at home if they wish too. Reading comprehension is taught across all classes.

## **Approaches to writing, spelling, handwriting, grammar, and composition.**

Spelling is taught through our Montessori materials initially in Dragonflies and continuing to follow a structured phonic approach into Grasshoppers. This approach also includes high frequency words for each class. In Fireflies, spellings are taught in small groups, or on a 1-1 if more support is required.

We follow the Montessori scope and sequence for teaching grammar, and this is carefully planned through each classroom. Children develop the vocabulary necessary to talk about their writing and appreciate the authorial choices made within the writing they are reading. They understand different ways that sentences can be structured to achieve a desired impact and are able to make intelligent choices when composing their own work based upon this learning.

Children are encouraged to write as soon as they join us at school in our Dragonfly class. Using our Montessori materials, we provide many activities which support the development of the pincer grip, therefore providing building blocks for appropriate posture and pencil grip. We teach cursive letter formation, leading onto joining their handwriting as soon as they are able. Children are expected to use their handwriting skills across the curriculum. Shared, guided and independent writing takes place as part of our work cycle.

Each classroom will have a literacy theme for a half term. This ensures that across the school year different types of writing are taught.

We encourage all children to write creatively and give many opportunities for them to 'just write.' These writing sessions are there to encourage children to write freely and without any direct editing at the time of writing. Sometimes, this writing is written and edited at a later time, but the purpose of this creative writing is for the children to develop an ability to write with imagination and creativity, and for this to be freely.

### **Cross Curricular Writing**

Teachers will always take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links. This happens naturally as our children access the Great Lessons. This way we see that the children can practice and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through the English curriculum to all areas of the curriculum.

### **Assessment and Target Setting**

Each child has an individual plan for their learning which is discussed (in Grasshoppers and Fireflies) with the class teacher on a weekly basis. This ensures that they move on appropriately through the curriculum, but also encourages the child to be involved in their own assessment and marking of their work. Many of the activities available in each room contain a built in 'control of error' which allows the child to self correct and/or assess their own progress. Our environment continually supports a mind-set of self challenge and intrinsic motivation.

Our children are given feedback, usually at the time of the work being completed. This feedback is then used to inform their next work. This means that they are continually reflecting on what they are doing and supports them progressing and moving forward.

Writing and Reading is tracked through statements which describe the journeys that children may in order to become literate. The purpose of these scales is to support the understanding of what progression looks like in reading and writing. These scales are a progression journey - not a linear sequence of targets that children need to reach in order to move to the next phase. This allows us to document children's very different learning styles within a common framework and in turn allows us to plan for the varying needs of individual children.

## Great Lesson Teaching

At the beginning of each half term, the whole school comes together for the telling of the Great Lesson. These lessons are told over a cycle of a school year and then learning through the story develops in each classroom depending on age of the children.

### Dragonflies

In Dragonflies the class teacher will choose the main theme of the Great Lesson learning – depending on the children in the class and their interests.

### Grasshoppers

In Grasshoppers the class teachers choose an overall topic for the children to explore, for each Great Lesson. This is on a timetable over 3 years – to ensure a good coverage of the cultural subjects. Key Lessons are delivered to the whole class, to provoke and interest and encourage the children to find out more.

### Fireflies

In Fireflies, an overall topic is chosen, but the children can make their own way through the topic, choosing things they are interested in and would like to find out about. By Fireflies, if the child has been with us since reception, then they have a good understanding of the main story and the foundations from both Dragonflies and Grasshoppers, so they can often go deeper and broader with their interests. Key Lessons are delivered on a Monday – to provoke an interest in less obvious themes.

Great Lesson work is carried out throughout the day in all classrooms. It is interwoven into the children's individual work.

At a high level of long-term planning, the diagrams below show the main areas of learning for each Great Lesson.



## **The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

The Foundation Stage curriculum is organised into seven areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Physical Development
- Expressive Arts and Design

We believe learning is holistic and none of the mentioned areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. One experience may prove children with opportunities to develop a range of competencies, skills, and concepts across several areas of learning. Each area of learning works towards a number of relevant Early Learning Goals, which most children are expected to achieve by the end of the Foundation stage.

Our school fully supports the principle that young children learn through active experience, and by engaging a variety of well-planned activities.

### **Inclusion**

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in all subjects, according to their individual abilities. We will identify which pupils are underachieving and take steps to improve their attainment. Gifted children will be identified, and suitable learning challenges provided. Underachieving pupils are identified, and our SENCO will then work with them and appropriate support either on a 1-1 with her or support for the class teacher to deliver in the classroom.

Our curriculum is well planned for each class and ensures that pupils of all abilities, including those with SEND needs, are able to acquire knowledge and understanding develop and practise new skills and make progress in a range of areas of learning. Where a pupil has an EHCP we make provision to meet the requirements set out in the statement. We design our curriculum to ensure that it is broad, well balanced and covers all the required areas of learning. We modify our curriculum and teaching to meet the needs of individuals and groups including our gifted and talented, disabled or those with a special educational need.

Further information can be found in our SEND policy.

### **Friday Teaching**

As part of the overall curriculum on Fridays our children are given the opportunity to work as part of the whole school. The subjects covered on Fridays are wide and varied and offer a unique way of children to learn with many different groups. Areas covered as part of the curriculum on Fridays include DT, History, Music, Art, Outdoor education, map work and Geography, first aid and Survival Skills.