



The Apple International School, Dubai

Foundation Stage

Teaching and Learning Policy

1. Rationale

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Teaching and Learning Policy and the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

It sets out how the school's expectations for high-quality teaching and learning are applied within FS1 and FS2, recognising the distinctive developmental needs of young children.

The Foundation Stage provides the foundations for children's future learning. High-quality teaching therefore requires a carefully considered balance between child-centred learning, intentional adult-led teaching, focused-group teaching, guided learning, play and independent application.

Children learn through relationships, interactions, experiences and play. Effective Foundation Stage teaching involves adults observing, listening, modelling, questioning, scaffolding and challenging children while providing opportunities for them to explore, practise and apply their learning independently.

The school recognises that every child is unique and develops at an individual pace. Teachers therefore adapt teaching, interactions, resources and challenge in response to children's developmental needs, prior learning, interests and individual circumstances.

The Foundation Stage follows the principle of consistency in expectations rather than uniformity in practice, ensuring that high-quality teaching is maintained while allowing teachers to respond professionally to the needs of individual children.

2. Aims

The Foundation Stage aims to:

- provide high-quality teaching and learning aligned with the school's Teaching and Learning Policy
- provide a secure, nurturing and inclusive learning environment
- develop children's knowledge, vocabulary, skills and understanding
- provide a purposeful balance of child-centred and adult-led learning
- develop children's communication, thinking and problem-solving skills
- use effective modelling, questioning, scaffolding and challenge
- develop independence, confidence, resilience and positive learning behaviours
- provide meaningful opportunities for children to practise and apply learning
- use indoor and outdoor environments effectively
- respond to children's individual needs and interests
- establish strong foundations for the next stage of education.

3. Foundation Stage Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning in FS1 and FS2 is based on the following principles:

- **Relationships:** children learn best when they feel safe, secure, valued and understood.
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- **Child-centred learning:** children have opportunities to make choices, follow interests, explore, investigate and develop their own ideas.
 - **Intentional teaching:** adults deliberately teach important knowledge, vocabulary, concepts and skills.
 - **Learning through play:** play provides opportunities to explore, practise, apply and extend learning.
 - **Active learning:** children are encouraged to think, communicate, investigate, solve problems and persevere.
 - **Responsive teaching:** teachers adapt teaching in response to what children demonstrate.
 - **Independence:** children are progressively supported to take responsibility for their learning.
 - **Repetition and application:** important learning is revisited and applied in different contexts.
 - **Meaningful experiences:** children make connections between learning and their own experiences.
 - **Purposeful environment:** the learning environment supports exploration, learning and independence.

4. Child-Centred and Adult-Led Learning

The Foundation Stage provides a purposeful balance between:

Child-Centred Learning, Adult-Led Teaching, Focus Group Teaching, Guided Learning, Independent Application

Child-Centred Learning

Children are encouraged to:

- make choices
- follow interests
- explore and investigate
- solve problems
- collaborate
- create
- practise and revisit learning
- apply learning independently.

Adults observe and listen carefully and intervene when their interaction can meaningfully extend learning.

Adult-Led Teaching

Adult-led teaching is used to introduce important knowledge, concepts, vocabulary and skills.

This may include phonics, reading, mathematics, stories, vocabulary, physical development, understanding the world, Arabic, Islamic Education and PSHE.

Adult-led teaching should be purposeful, developmentally appropriate, engaging and interactive.

Focus Group Teaching

Small-group teaching provides targeted opportunities to:

- introduce new learning
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- practise specific skills
 - revisit learning
 - address misconceptions
 - develop vocabulary
 - provide additional support
 - provide additional challenge.

Groups should remain flexible and responsive to children's needs.

5. Adult-Child Interaction

High-quality interaction is central to Foundation Stage teaching.

Adults should:

- listen carefully
- model language and vocabulary
- extend children's responses
- use open-ended questions
- encourage children to explain their thinking
- provide wait time
- build on children's ideas
- encourage prediction and reasoning
- use sustained shared thinking
- provide appropriate scaffolding
- know when to intervene and when to allow children to continue independently.

Questioning should move beyond simple recall and provide opportunities for children to:
Explain, Reason, Predict, Investigate, Apply, Solve Problems, Create

6. Observation, Scaffolding and Challenge

Observation is an important part of responsive teaching.

Teachers observe children to identify:

- what they know and can do
- emerging understanding
- misconceptions
- interests
- language development
- independence
- areas requiring support
- opportunities for further challenge.

Teachers use observational notes, photographs, children's work and appropriate annotations to record significant learning moments where these contribute to understanding and improving teaching.

Observation informs the next steps in teaching:
Observe → Respond → Teach → Observe Again

Scaffolding

Teachers provide appropriate support through:

- modelling
- prompts
- questioning
- visual support
- vocabulary
- demonstrations
- guided practice.

Support is gradually reduced as children become more confident and independent.

Challenge

Challenge should deepen children's thinking rather than simply increase the amount of work.

Teachers provide opportunities for children to:

- explain;
- reason;
- predict;
- investigate;
- solve problems;
- make connections;
- apply learning in new contexts.

7. Continuous Provision and Learning Environment

Continuous provision is an extension of teaching and should provide meaningful opportunities for children to revisit, practise and apply learning.

Teachers intentionally plan and enhance provision to promote:

- exploration
- vocabulary
- problem-solving
- creativity
- collaboration
- independence
- application of learning.

The indoor and outdoor environment should be welcoming, purposeful, accessible, inclusive and appropriately challenging.

8. Planning and Responsive Teaching

Planning should identify:

- the intended learning
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- prior learning
 - key knowledge and vocabulary
 - opportunities for modelling
 - questioning and scaffolding
 - appropriate challenge
 - opportunities for independent application
 - opportunities within continuous provision.

Planning should remain responsive. Teachers should adapt their planned teaching according to children's responses and observed needs.

9. Inclusion

All children are entitled to high-quality teaching and appropriate challenge.

Teachers adapt teaching and provision to meet the needs of:

- multilingual learners
- Students of Determination
- children requiring additional support
- children requiring greater challenge.

Adaptations may include changes to resources, grouping, language, scaffolding, adult support and level of challenge while maintaining high expectations.

10. Professional Development and Teacher Support

Foundation Stage professional development is aligned with the school's professional learning systems and priorities.

Teacher development is supported through:

- CPD
- Buddy System
- Mentoring
- Coaching
- Learning Walks
- Drop-ins
- Peer Observations
- Model Lessons / Team Teaching
- Formal Observations

These approaches provide opportunities for teachers to reflect on practice, share effective strategies, receive feedback and develop identified areas for improvement.

Mentoring and coaching are used particularly where areas for development are identified through learning walks, drop-ins, peer or formal observations.

The emphasis is on professional growth, collaboration and continuous improvement.

11. ASCENT

Foundation Stage teaching and learning forms part of the school's whole-school ASCENT – All Students Creatively Engaged in New-age Teaching process.

ASCENT is the school's structured and graduated system for reflecting on teaching and learning practices and identifying areas for improvement. The whole-school ASCENT process considers areas including student achievement, teaching practices, inclusion, parent communication, technology/distance learning and innovation.

Foundation Stage staff participate in the school's ASCENT cycle and use the outcomes to inform:

- professional development
- teaching priorities
- coaching and mentoring
- collaborative practice
- Foundation Stage improvement planning.

The Foundation Stage does not create a separate ASCENT process; it contributes to and follows the school's established whole-school system.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation

The quality of Foundation Stage teaching and learning is monitored in accordance with the school's Teaching and Learning Policy.

Evidence may include:

- classroom observations
- learning walks and drop-ins
- peer observations
- formal observations
- children's work and learning
- observational notes and annotations
- planning
- learning environment
- adult-child interactions
- professional dialogue
- children's voice
- parent feedback.

These approaches are consistent with the school's established teaching and learning evaluation processes, which include classroom observations, learning walks/drop-ins, work scrutiny, moderation, discussion with students and planning monitoring.

Monitoring should focus on the quality and impact of teaching and learning, rather than compliance or excessive documentation.

13. Parents and Guardians

Parents are valued partners in children's learning.

The school will engage parents through:

- orientation
- workshops
- parent meetings
- regular communication
- sharing learning experiences
- coffee mornings where appropriate
- school communication platforms.

Parents are encouraged to support:

- regular attendance
- reading
- communication and language development
- independence
- positive attitudes towards learning
- healthy routines
- learning through everyday experiences.

14. Role of Governors

Governors support and monitor the school's approach to teaching and learning.

They will:

- monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning systems
- support appropriate professional development
- ensure appropriate resources and learning environments
- review Foundation Stage improvement priorities
- consider reports from school leaders.

15. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if required by changes to:

- statutory EYFS requirements
- the school's Teaching and Learning Policy
- KHDA expectations
- school improvement priorities
- Foundation Stage pedagogy or practice.

The Foundation Stage Teaching and Learning Policy will remain aligned with the whole-school policy while reflecting the distinctive needs of young children.

1st Cycle	
September	• Peer and self-evaluation. Teachers can compare if their self-assessment is resonating with that of their peers.
September - October	• Model lessons/team teaching will be delivered in each department to demonstrate the elements of Good to Outstanding lessons. • Mentoring and coaching of teachers will be done based on the areas identified via drop-ins and lesson observation feedbacks. • Scrutiny of the Student's work and feedbacks.
October-November	• Formal lesson observations and work scrutiny
January	• Peer and self-evaluation. Teachers can compare if their self-assessment is resonating with that of their peers and the formal lesson observation feedback.
January-February	• Model lessons/team teaching will be delivered in each department to demonstrate the elements of Good to Outstanding lessons. • Mentoring and coaching of teachers will be done based on the areas identified via drop-ins and lesson observation feedback. • Scrutiny of the Student's work and feedback.
February	• Formal lesson observations and work scrutiny
3rd Cycle	
April	• Peer and self-evaluation. Teachers can compare if their self-assessment is resonating with that of their peers and the formal lesson observation feedback.
April-May	• Model lessons/team teaching will be delivered in each department to demonstrate the elements of Good to Outstanding lessons. • Mentoring and coaching of teachers will be done based on the areas identified via drop-ins and lesson observation feedbacks. • Scrutiny of the Student's work and feedbacks.
May	• Formal lesson observations and work scrutiny

Below is a table which elaborates on what outstanding teaching and learning looks like at Apple International School, in line with the KHDA inspection framework currently in place.

Teaching	Planning	The best planning will show clear evidence of well-planned course content that ensures structured progression (4.1.2). Individual lessons will be imaginative, with time and resources being used creatively to enable all groups of students to learn successfully (3.1.2). Such planning will also show clear evidence of expert subject knowledge and pedagogy (3.1.1).
	Delivery	The best teaching will develop knowledge, skills and understanding (4.1.1) and nurture interests and aspirations. In the best lessons, teachers will have high expectations of all groups of students and therefore provide very challenging work and excellent support (3.1.4) including highly appropriate SEN / G&T intervention (5.2.4). Ongoing opportunities (including homework) for students to become resourceful, innovative and creative will be embedded as routine (2.3.3).
Learning	Learning Skills / AO	Evidence of the highest quality learning taking place will be identified when students demonstrate knowledge, skills and understanding above curriculum standards (1.1.3) and make better than expected progress in relation to appropriate learning objectives (1.2.2). The best use of 'Learning Skills' / AO will embed critical thinking and problem-solving skills as intrinsic features of learning (1.3.4) so that students consistently make meaningful connections (1.3.3). The best questioning will challenge students' thinking and promote insightful responses, and teachers will engage in dialogue to involve students in insightful discussions and reflection (3.1.1).
	Environment	The best learning environment will enable students to focus well (1.3.2) and interact and collaborate very effectively (1.3.2). Interactions between pupils / pupils and teachers will be very respectful and considerate (2.1.3) including consistent and fair use of praise, sanctions and rewards following the agreed systems and policies (5.2.1).
Progress	Assessment	The best measures of students' academic progress will be through internal assessment that is coherent, consistent and provides valid, reliable and comprehensive information (3.2.1). The most skilful and effective use of assessment information will influence teaching in order to optimise the progress of all groups of students (3.2.4) and will be rigorous enough to enable accurate identification of students with SEN / who are G&T (5.2.3).
	Feedback	The best feedback to students will be comprehensive and constructive showing in-depth knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of individuals (3.2.5) with written reports being equally comprehensive in conveying achievements, areas for improvement and next steps in learning (6.3.3).

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Executive Principal

The Apple International School, Dubai

Enacted and enforced: The 15th of January 2014

Reviewed Annually

Last date of Review: The 30th of May 2026

