



Early Years and Foundation Stage Policy

Signed
Chair of Governors

Date Reviewed: 24th September 2020

Next Review: September 2022

Introduction

This policy represents our approach to teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and encompasses the overall philosophy of our school approach.

A child's first experiences of school are crucial. The Early Years lay down a foundation that is built on throughout the rest of their learning careers. It is organised to ease the transition from home to school and in such a way that learning takes place through meaningful activity and play. The children's learning and experiences are based upon the areas and guidance found in 'The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework', which sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five years old.

This is achieved through three prime areas:

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

The skills gained in the prime areas are then built upon in the four specific areas:

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

Within these areas we also look to develop social skills and positive attitudes towards learning, linking this learning to our school co-operative values. The development of social skills is of primary importance to us. Without the ability to interact positively with others or work independently, a child's ability to learn effectively in school is reduced.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning which highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are;

1. **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
2. **Active Learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
3. **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is underpinned by four key themes; Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments, which add up to Learning and Development. These provide the basis for all future learning by supporting and developing children's experiences in the seven areas.

This is achieved through the following objectives:

- To provide an environment where children can develop as learners and feel safe, happy and confident to express themselves.
- To provide an environment, both indoors and outside, that is stimulating and encourages the children to pursue their curiosity and become independent learners.
- To provide a curriculum that is broad and balanced.
- To provide experiences that reflect the needs and interests of individual children.
- To work closely with parents and carers to ensure that the introduction to school life is smooth and happy.
- To continuously develop strong links with the child's home and encourage parents'/carers' support throughout their child's learning.

Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Each term the EYFS team produce Unit Overviews which feed into weekly learning units, stating short term goals and a range of activities. Activities are planned to meet children's abilities and are based on previous learning experiences and outcomes. The units that are taught are designed to meet children's interests as well as their academic needs, encouraging their enthusiasms and promoting each child's uniqueness.

The class teachers are responsible for the weekly planning. These plans highlight the main tasks and differentiated activities that the children will undertake, which are offered through a range of adult-led and child-led activities. These plans are shared with all staff in class each week. The Early Years Foundation Stage classes each have a teacher and a teaching assistant. They work very closely together to plan for, assess and teach the children.

Organisation and Play

Learning through play is integral to the Early Years Foundation Stage. Through daily play-based activities, our children explore and develop learning experiences that will help them to make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas on how to control themselves, leading them to understand the need for rules. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems, as well as having opportunities to express fears or review anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

The Reception classes have their own timetables. Each day, children will take part in a range of adult-led focussed activities and are offered a range of child-led activities. There are opportunities for learning to take place both indoors and outdoors.

Assessment and Record Keeping

Within the first half term that children enter Reception classes, on-entry Assessments are carried out, covering the seven learning areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Our children are observed regularly with regard to the learning aims in the weekly planning and the information gathered is used to ensure that future planning reflects the identified needs of all children.

Observations of the children's learning are evidenced by staff using an online platform called Tapestry. A range of evidence including teacher observations, the child's voice,

photographs, videos and samples of children's work are placed onto the child's online learning journey. This can then be viewed by parents and carers by accessing their own child's secure account online. Parents and carers also have an opportunity to add their own observations to their child's account, sharing their learning at home and commenting on observations made by the staff in school. The online learning journeys are updated and reviewed regularly by staff members to allow for the response to the children's learning needs.

Parents and Carers are also invited into the school at regular points to share the learning that takes place. Parents and Carers are invited in the Autumn term and the Spring term to meet with their child's class teacher to discuss progress and to celebrate their child's achievements, and also to raise any concerns or questions there may be. Parents and Carers also receive a report at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage that provides an outline of their child's progress in each of the seven learning areas. The report highlights the child's strengths and developmental needs and comments on the child's general progress.

Special Educational Needs

When teaching staff have concerns about a child's progress, we will have an informal chat with parents/carers to discuss their child and how their needs can be best met. If the concerns continue, the steps stated in the SEND policy will be followed.

Parents/Carers are also encouraged to seek advice from school if they have any concerns about their children.

Inclusion in the Early Years Foundation Stage

In our school we believe that every child matters and we aim to give each child every opportunity to achieve their potential. We do this in the Early Years Foundation Stage by setting realistic goals and challenging expectations that meet each child's needs, taking into account their life experiences and interests. We plan to meet the needs of all children, promoting every child's uniqueness.

By planning our activities to meet all our children's needs, we aim for the majority of our children to achieve Expected levels in all seventeen Early Learning Goals as set out in the Development Matters document by the end of the Reception year.

The Role of Parents and Carers

We believe that all parents and carers have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the vital role that they have already played in their child's life and actively encourage working in partnership with us in educating the children. We promote this partnership in the following ways:

- Providing Tapestry accounts to view and contribute to their child's online learning journey.
- Inviting parents and carers to a meeting with school staff in the Summer before the children start Reception in the September.

- Providing details of our termly units of work.
- Providing opportunities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between school, child and parents/carers.
- Regularly communicating via the school Reading Record and newsletters.
- Offering an 'Open Door' policy if parents and carers feel they need to discuss any matters or express any concerns about their child.
- Invitation to our 'Open Evening' to view their child's work and discuss their progress. This takes place in the Summer term.
- Invitation to consultations to discuss progress and celebrations in the Autumn and Spring terms.
- Providing an end of year report, outlining their child's achievements and highlighting areas for future progress.
- Holding workshops to aid parents and carers supporting their child's learning
- Events for parents and carers to come into school to see how their child learns in school.

During times of Pandemic Lockdown, Early Years education provision aligns with the rest of the school with telephone calls home and communication via Google Classroom. In addition to this, on Google Classroom, Reception will also upload regular play-based optional activities with which families are encouraged to engage. These activities link to the curriculum and are additional to the English, Maths, Foundation and Phonics lessons already uploaded.

Parents and carers are encouraged to upload the activities to Tapestry where a member of staff will be able to comment on the post to communicate with both the parent and child.

Parents and carers are also encouraged to upload anything additional that they are doing to Tapestry and that they would like to share with staff. This can be used to maintain communication between home and the school and will be acknowledged by a member of staff.

Transition from Nursery to Reception

When the children first start school in the Reception class, they will complete a carefully planned induction period. This consists of a variety of activities aimed to ensure a smooth transition for each child into school. Children are invited into school for a morning session in July to meet the class teacher and their class peers. Before each new pupil begins school in September, a member of staff will visit each Nursery setting to meet the children in their current setting and discuss with the child's key worker. Home visits will also occur before the children begin in September.

The first week of Reception will consist of one morning in school then on the second and third session involving staying in school up to and including lunch, followed by full time attendance from then on. This arrangement suits the majority of children, although a longer transition period is arranged for children who need a little more time.

Transition from Reception to Key Stage 1

In the half term before the children move up to Key Stage 1, they visit a Year One for a class swap session similar to the Nursery to Reception transition. In the last term of Reception, the children also start a lunch time transition, where they mix with Year One and Two children in the KS1 playground. These opportunities allow for the children to familiarise themselves with their new teacher, other children, their new classroom and different routines, ensuring a smoother transition in the following term.

In the week the children leave the Reception class, all relevant assessments and records are passed on to the Key Stage 1 teacher before the children begin in Year One. This includes the completed Early Years Foundation Stage Profiles, Phonics assessments, Reading Records and any work books that have been started. This enables the Year One teacher to start planning for when the children begin the following term.

The Year One and Reception Team work very closely during these weeks to ensure planning meets the needs of the individual children. The structure of a Year One day is transitioned throughout the year to ensure children's individual needs are met during their time in Year One, whilst also making sure children continue to make good progress and are ready to transition to Year Two.

In the case of a child having special needs, such as having medical requirements, a meeting would take place between the Reception and Year One teacher in the week the child leaves the Reception class. This would enable the Reception teacher to fully inform the Year One teacher of all background information and necessary requirements.

Health & Safety

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance and we adhere to the school's safeguarding policy.

Our children aged under 5 receive free milk and all children have access to fresh water and free fruit from the Government scheme. Reception children who stay for lunch are eligible for free school meals or can choose to bring in a healthy packed lunch.

Each foundation stage classroom has access to their own toileting facilities and we teach the children the importance of hygiene, hand washing techniques and throughout the year we plan activities to give children experiences of a range of healthy food.