



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

“All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.” (Introduction from the Statutory Framework for EYFS 2024)

1 Introduction

- 1.1** The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to 5. In our school, most children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. Compulsory schooling begins at the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday and parents of children who are Summer born (born between 1st April and 31st August) may request deferred entry to begin in Reception the following year.

Key Stage 1 begins for our children at the beginning of Year 1. The Early Years Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and in preparing children for later schooling. The Early Learning Goals set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage.

- 1.2** Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal. Many have been to one of a range of settings that exist in our community. The Early Years education we offer is underpinned by 4 guiding principles, as laid out in the 2024 'Statutory framework guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage':

- *Every child is unique and is constantly learning.* We build on what our children know and can do.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships. Our staff provide exemplary role models for the children.
- *Children learn and develop well in enabling environments.* Our staff support children by responding to their individual interests and needs.
- *Children develop and learn at different rates.* We offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and no child is excluded or disadvantaged.

2 Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

- 2.1** The curriculum of the EYFS underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's learning in the following 3 prime areas:

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

and in the 4 specific areas:

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

3 Learning and teaching style

3.1 Our policy on learning and teaching defines the features of effective learning and teaching in our school. These features apply to learning and teaching in the Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stages 1 & 2. We follow an enquiry-led approach to the curriculum and children in FS2 are introduced to the 'States of Being'. This means that as they move throughout the school, they have an understanding of what it means to be an: author, mathematician, scientist, philosopher, artist, scientist, engineer, athlete, musician, and geographer.

Children are introduced early on to the characteristics of Effective Learning: playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically. (*Early Years Statutory Framework*). Foundation Stage children follow the whole school policy where they are taught to be learners that are: Resilient, resourceful, reflective and that show good reciprocity (known as the 4 R's) They are also encouraged to identify 'next steps' in their learning in line with the school's marking policy.

3.2 The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement. This includes a robust induction programme offered to children and including parents when their children first start at school.
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are regularly shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school; e.g. induction visits, contact made by Foundation Stage Coordinator with pre- schools and other Early Years settings.
- the clear aims for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do;
- the regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Foundation Stage.

4 Play in the EYFS

- 4.1** Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

5 Inclusion in the EYFS

- 5.1** In the Early Years Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that many achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage and make expected or accelerated progress to get to this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of all children and groups: boys and girls, children with a special educational need or disability, children who are identified as AG&T, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

- 5.2** We meet the needs of all our children through:
- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
 - using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
 - providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
 - providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
 - using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
 - planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
 - Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary. This involves carefully planned additional group and individual sessions, which form part of the 'Provision map' (see SEND policy).

6 The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum

- 6.1** The curriculum for the Foundation Stage in our school reflects the areas of learning identified in the 'Early Years Foundation Stage framework,' which became statutory in 2021 and is updated yearly. The experiences that our children meet often enable them to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning.
- 6.2** The Early Learning Goals prepare children to become effective learners in Key Stage One. The balance at the end of Foundation stage gradually shifts toward more adult-led learning, to help children prepare for more formal learning in Year One. Importantly, this is a 2-way process and in order to aid transition into Key Stage One, the first term of Year One has aspects of the Early Years curriculum, in particular to support children still working on the Early Learning Goals. Indeed, where possible, the principles of learning in the Early Years is carried on into Year One, throughout the year. The Year One classrooms have

- access to a shared outdoor area in the same way the children in EYFS do and the classroom provides 'continuous provision' during the transition period.
- 6.3** The 'EYFS framework' provides the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. The Long term plan gives an overview of content coverage across the year. Our medium term plan is completed termly and identifies the main objectives for children working towards the Early Learning Goals. Weekly plans show details of how these objectives are taught and assessed.

7 Assessment

- 7.1** The National 'baseline' assessment became statutory in Autumn 2021 and is carried out with children on a 1:1 basis by the class teacher within the first few weeks of school. It helps to inform our 'on-entry' data which is stored on 'Insight' and is analysed during October, February and July.

We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of observation, in addition to some recorded learning, where appropriate. This process involves all adults working with the children and parental contributions. Some observations are planned in and focus on what a child can do during child-initiated learning. Importantly, changes to the EYFS framework highlight the need to prioritise being with the children:

"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 Framework 2021)

At the end of the Foundation Stage, we complete the National Foundation Stage Profile when children are assessed as working within the 'emerging' or 'expected' levels, in relation to the Early Learning Goals. The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels, and their readiness for year One.

- 7.2** All evidence, including photographs is collated in an individual Learning Journey which tracks the progress of a child in all areas. Since 2017 the school has used Tapestry, an online system, as the main way of documenting Child-initiated evidence. The observations are printed throughout the year and are added to individual books, to form a Physical Learning Journey. Parents have online access to Tapestry and can read and contribute to observations throughout the year. Parents can also contribute to the process by sending in, amongst other things, completed 'wow moments' from achievements at home. The book is available to see during parents evening twice a year.
- The class' enquiries are evidenced through shared floor books, showing the process of: 'engage, immerse, practise and challenge' as the steps to completing an enquiry. These books are then passed on as the children move through the Infants, to help them with their 'reflective' learning power, looking back at what they have learnt previously and building on that learning. This helps children to 'learn more' and 'remember more.'

- 7.3** Parents receive an annual report that offers comments on the characteristics of each child's learning. It also highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress in all 7 areas of learning. This informs parents of whether their child is working at the 'emerging' or 'expected' level within each goal. We complete these in June and send them to parents in July. For children who speak English as a second language, practitioners will endeavour to explore the child's skills in the home language with parents and carers where appropriate.

8 The role of parents

- 8.1** We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- Individual visits to the classroom for parents and their child prior to their starting school;
- the teacher/Foundation Stage Co-ordinator making contact with key workers, either through visits or over the phone;
- the children having the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- online assessment in the form of 'Tapestry' that is available for parents to view and interact with throughout the year;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Foundation Stage classes;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents during the Autumn and Spring terms at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress during the Summer term, and are offered a meeting to discuss any issues;
- having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents to feel secure, and by allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
- arranging a variety of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;
- offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents. There is regular communication with home through the child's school reading diary. We invite parents to curriculum evenings, including an autumn talk on reading and home learning, to discuss the kind of work that the children undertake in the Foundation Stage class.

9 Resources

- 9.1** We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. Outdoor learning is seen as being as important as indoor learning and all year round children undertake weekly outdoor sessions in the school grounds and trips out in the local environment, in

all weathers. They become familiar with the school grounds and the immediate environment around our school.

10 Monitoring and Review

- 10.1** The monitoring of the standards of children's work and of the quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is the responsibility of the Foundation Stage Lead and the Headteacher. The work of the lead learner also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of the Foundation Stage Curriculum, being informed about current developments in the Foundation Stage, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the Foundation Stage in school.

Signed: Mel Eyers-Gibbs

Date: June 2024

Next Review date: June 2026

Signed: Mark Wilson (Chair of Governors)

Date: June 2024