



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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Introduction

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five 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 together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2021

Aims

These aims relate to the four EYFS themes and principles (Statutory Framework for the EYFS, 2021):

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- Importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates

Unique Child

In our school we aim to achieve these aims through:

- A high-quality transition programme that helps staff to get to know the child and their family
- Staff consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child when planning the curriculum
- Every child and family is valued and respected
- Staff engage in high quality adult interactions, which are sensitive and adaptive to the needs of individual children
- Staff support children to develop a positive sense of their own identity and culture
- Staff identify any need for additional support and promptly give extra help, so that these children progress well in their learning
- Staff keep children safe

- Staff promote children's good health including oral health, and well-being

Positive Relationships

- Positive relationships are built on key person relationships in the early years
- Staff establish warm, caring relationships that foster a sense of belonging
- Staff listen regularly to parents and give them clear information about their children's progress
- Parents have the opportunity contribute to assessments
- Staff seek to engage parents to support their child's learning and development at home
- By knowing and understanding all the children and their families, settings can offer extra help to those who need it most
- Staff encourage all parents to chat, play and read with their children
- Positive relationships across the EYFS are consistent in setting clear boundaries
- Staff support children to self-regulate both emotionally and cognitively

Enabling Environments

- Learning environments both inside and out enable successful learning by all children
- The learning environment offers stimulating resources that are relevant to all the children's cultures and communities
- The learning environment offers rich learning opportunities through play and playful teaching
- Learning environments are well planned and organised to promote children's independent learning
- The environment supports children to take risks and explore
- The environment provides challenge and evolves to address children's next steps
- Children are involved in planning and maintaining the environment
- Children have opportunities to access outdoor learning every day

Learning and Development

- Staff listen to the child, parents and other relevant adults then plan, design and implement a curriculum that meets the needs of the children, providing challenging and enjoyable experiences across all areas of learning

- If a child's progress gives cause for concern, staff agree next steps with parents. Staff consider if a child has additional needs or disability and help families to access relevant support
- Staff support children whose home language is not English, adapting the provision when necessary, encouraging the use of their home language in their play and learning and supporting language development at home
- Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity
- The EYFS (educational programmes) provides the curriculum framework that school leaders have built on. The content of the EYFS curriculum is ambitious and well sequenced so that children are ready for the next stage of their education
- Children demonstrate their attitudes and behaviours through the key characteristics of effective learning: playing and exploring, active learning and creative thinking and thinking critically
- Children demonstrate their positive attitudes to learning through high levels of engagement and well being

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning and development, all areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

The Prime Areas

These areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

Early Years Practitioners must support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

Playing and exploring - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

Rich imaginative play provides a basis for good language development and sows the seeds for child development and communication in all areas of the curriculum. In the EYFS, we understand that play is a vital part of the informal and formal curriculum, and that play provision needs to reflect differing needs, interests and cultural backgrounds of individuals.

Active play is promoted so that it supports physical development and healthy lifestyles.

Active learning - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creating and thinking critically - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The Observation, Assessment and Planning cycle lies at the heart of effective early years practice. Assessment plays an important role in helping parents and staff to recognise children's progress, understand their needs and plan future teaching and learning.

The cycle of assessment begins with a baseline assessment when children join the Nursery / Reception class. This is followed by on-going formative observational assessment that helps practitioners to understand children's learning. This understanding then informs curriculum planning and the 'next steps' for the child.

Observations may be recorded in children's individual 'Profiles' or 'Learning Journals.' The Profile also contains information from families and other settings. Families are encouraged to contribute to the profiles through the sharing of home learning and their child's achievements. Families can access their child's Profiles throughout the year, with a final report of children's achievements in the summer term.

Tapestry is used to create a record of a child's experiences, development and learning journey through their early years and primary education. Using photos, videos, and diary entries, a teacher, along with the child's parents or carers, show how the children are growing and developing.

Reception Teachers carry out the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment in the first six weeks of the autumn term. This is a cohort measure and data is not published by the DfE.

In June, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child and data is submitted to the Local authority. A summary of attainment is shared with parents in an end of year report. The child's next teacher uses this information to plan for the year ahead.

In our school, we work to enable children to achieve a 'Good Level of Development' by the end of the EYFS. We achieve this by:

- Ensuring practitioners access EYFS training and support
- Ensuring that EYFS practice reflects EYFS principles (see above)
- Regularly monitoring quality of teaching and learning
- Regularly monitoring the quality of the learning environment
- Tracking each child's attainment and progress
- Developing and implementing plans which support improvement in the EYFS
- Taking part in internal and Vale Academy Trust ("the Trust") moderation activities to ensure accuracy of judgements

Assessment grids from the Trust are updated 3 times a year including the initial baseline assessment in early October. Two further assessment points are February and then the EYFS data is completed in June. Children from vulnerable groups are monitored closely. Early Years Practitioners draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement to assess whether each child is at the expected level of development. We record each child's level of development to be below, working towards, age related expectations or greater depth. Data is analysed at both school and Trust level and any gaps are identified and addressed.

In our school, curriculum planning follows Long Term, Medium Term and Weekly plans which are based around broad topics or themes. These plans are used by EYFS practitioners as a guide for weekly planning. However, practitioners may alter these in response to the needs, interests and observations of the children.

Welfare requirements

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 that care for them. The Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2021) sets out the safeguarding and welfare requirements for all EYFS settings.

All EYFS Co-ordinators within the Trust complete the Oxfordshire County Council's 'MUSTS' Audit annually to ensure that these requirements are being met effectively. In our school, we:

- Promote the welfare of children
- Promote good health including good oral health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill
- Manage behaviour effectively (see Behaviour Management Policy)
- Ensure that all adults who work with children in a supervised/unsupervised context are suitable to do so
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs. This is supported by the child's assigned Key Person
- Maintain appropriate records, policies and procedures required for safe, efficient management of the Early Years and to meet the needs of the children

The health, safety and wellbeing of all our children are of paramount importance to all of the adults in our school. Our governors and staff, both teaching and non-teaching, fully recognise the contribution they make to safeguarding children.

Healthy Snacks

All children in the EYFS are provided with a healthy snack each day. Children are given the choice of milk or water with their snack. All children have access to water during the day. (Milk, fruit, vegetables and free school meals are provided for all EYFS children by Government schemes.)

Transitions

Effective transitions provide children with the security and support which enables them to be successful and motivated learners. Smooth transitions are achieved through strong partnership working between families, practitioners and leadership teams. Key to smooth transitions is ensuring that children remain the focus of the process. At our school, we work closely with feeder early years settings and colleagues in Year One, to overcome the challenges of the transition process.

Starting in Nursery

There are opportunities for prospective parents/carers and children to attend an Open Evening. On acceptance of a place in Nursery, children will be given the opportunity to visit the Nursery.

Starting in Reception

Parents of all children starting in the Reception class will be invited to an Induction Meeting in the summer term to meet their child's new teachers and other key staff and learn more about the Reception curriculum.

This is an opportunity for staff to:

- Hand out a Welcome Pack
- Explain about uniform, PE kit and school dinners/ free school meals
- Explain about holidays and absences
- Purchase uniform and book bag if requested
- Explain the arrangements for the gradual induction in to reception

New class sessions - The children are given opportunities to come in to school to meet their new class teacher and other children in their class. Arrangements are also made, where possible, for the children's new class teacher to visit them in their current nursery setting (if not part of the school's Nursery).

Starting in Lower School (Year 1) - Throughout the Reception year, each child's involvement in whole school life will have been built upon; many of the teaching and support staff will already be familiar people to them. Children have the opportunity to meet their new class teacher and spend sessions in their new class during the summer term.

Special arrangements are made for children with additional needs to ensure that they are supported to make a smooth transition into their new class.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of those working in the EYFS to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team, EYFS co-ordinator, and the Trust's School Improvement team, will carry out monitoring of EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. The Local Governing Body (LGB) will have oversight of the implementation and effectiveness of this policy.