



EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

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 2021

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to pupils from birth to the end of the year in which they turn 5. In our school, some pupils join us part time in the term after their third birthday (Foundation 1), starting in either September, January or April. Some pupils join us full time at the beginning of the year in which they are five (Foundation 2).

Intent

‘Early Childhood should be an explosion of experience’. Jennie Lindon

We provide our children with an inviting, safe, calm and stimulating learning environment where all pupils have opportunities to learn through play by initiating their own ideas with the continuous provision indoors and outdoors and through adult support, scaffolding and modelling. We support our pupils in developing their relationships with others and give them the skills to be able to interact with their peers and adults. We see children who are happy, highly engaged and motivated in and with their learning. Children have first-hand experiences and practical opportunities, where they can explore and find out more and develop their natural curiosity and vocabulary. We teach children to use their imagination and creativity to develop their thinking through finding their own ways to solve problems and individual approaches to activities. We support children to become independent learners and develop resilience to strive to achieve their full potential, teaching them the skills to ensure their wellbeing now and in the future. We develop vocabulary and teach children skills they need to become confident, fluent readers. We get our children ready for school as well as ensuring our school is ready for our children to allow them a smooth transition into and out of our EYFS. We pride ourselves on developing strong relationships with the children and their parents and carers to ensure we can personalise each child’s learning. We provide children with enjoyable learning experiences that develop a love of learning during their time in EYFS.

Our EYFS curriculum is designed to:

- Raise our aspiration through learning about amazing people and being inspired by finding out about all different talents and occupations and the ways in which we learn how to succeed and set ourselves targets.
- Celebrate diversity through developing our knowledge and awareness of a wide range of people, places, cultures, celebrations, traditions and beliefs to broaden our horizons and learn about the world’s rich tapestry.
- Improve our vocabulary through immersing ourselves in books, having good models of vocabulary and developing our communication and language skills.
- Promote our health and well-being through developing our knowledge and understanding of how to keep fit and healthy and understand our own feelings and how to or who can help us.

Ultimately, our EYFS curriculum gives our children the knowledge and skills to be able to access all aspects of the school curriculum, whilst developing a love of learning.

Implementation

There are four guiding principles that shape the practice of our Early Years Foundation Stage.

- **A Unique Child** – every child is considered ‘unique’ and their individual learning is catered for within our EYFS environment. They learn to develop the characteristics of learning with support from adults to become resilient, capable, confident and self-assured learners.
- **Positive Relationships** – positive relationships are key to every child’s education and it is through these that the children learn to be strong and independent learners, as well as learn to share, care and learn together. We also pride ourselves in developing excellent relationships with parents, understanding their role as first educators of their pupils.
- **Enabling Environments** – a rich, stimulating enabling environment is provided both indoors and outdoors, where children can have long periods of uninterrupted independent learning. We provide a safe and welcoming environment where pupils can develop their emotional skills, independence, self-belief, resilience, respect and a sense of responsibility. Adults respond to children’s individual needs and support them to build their learning over time.

- **Learning and Development** – staff plan activities and experiences for pupils that enable pupils to develop and learn effectively. They take into account individual needs, interest and stage of development and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies where appropriate.

Our EYFS follows the Educational Programmes as outlined in the 2021 Statutory Framework for the EYFS. This includes the Seven Areas of Learning and Development that are equally important and interconnected. The three prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building pupils' capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The Prime Areas are:

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

The Prime Areas are strengthened and applied through the four Specific Areas:

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

In addition to these areas of learning, we strive for our pupils to develop effective Characteristics of Learning which will enable them to become learners for life.

- Playing and Exploring – children will investigate and explore things
- Active Learning – children will concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements
- Creating and Thinking Critically – children will have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

It is the role of the adults in EYFS to support our pupils by:

- Fostering a desire to learn by nurturing active questioning and an awareness of the world around them
- Encouraging pupils to express their thoughts and ideas in a variety of situations
- Helping pupils to become competent speakers and listeners
- Developing confidence by praising success and encouraging effort
- Providing extensive opportunities to learn through play.

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff observe and interact with pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles and these observations are used to shape future planning. Practitioners also take into account observations shared by parents and carers. On entry and at the end of every term, practitioners draw on their knowledge of the children and their own expert professional judgement to state for each aspect if a child is 'working below', 'working towards' or 'working at' the expected standard for their age and stage in their learning journey or if they are working at greater depth.

Within the first six weeks of starting Foundation 2, all pupils undertake the Reception Baseline Assessment by a trained member of staff.

At the end of Foundation 2, the EYFS Profile is completed for all pupils. Parents and carers are also provided with a written summary to report their child's progress during their time in EYFS and against the Early Learning Goals. A dialogue takes place between foundation stage practitioners and Year 1 teachers regarding each child's learning and development and to support a successful transition to Key Stage 1.

Our dedication to inclusive practice means that regardless of their ability, pupils are aided to access learning with the highest possible levels of independence, due to carefully designed tasks. Where necessary, pupils requiring extra help and sensitively supported with minimal disruption to quality first teaching. Our ambition is to narrow the gap between different groups of pupils and to ensure that their life-opportunities are equal, irrespective of background or ability.

Impact

As a result of their EYFS experiences, our pupils are destined to be successful learners, fully prepared for the next stage of their education as they transition into Year 1. Through a balance of rich learning experiences pupils become happy, curious and successful learners who have a passion for books and stories. They are active participants in their own success, taking great pride in their achievements as they learn to fully appreciate the wonder in the world around them through the range of culturally diverse learning opportunities provided. Pupils show curiosity as they explore and adapt their learning environment as they aspire to find out more by persevering with their independence. Children apply their expanding vocabulary to engage in conversation and share their thoughts and ideas. We know that the progress that pupils make in our EYFS, is a result of the enriched play-based exploration, alongside rigorous assessment and high quality teaching.