



## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

*Growing together in knowledge, faith and love.*

### Our Vision

Through a positive caring environment, we provide the opportunity for every child to reach their full potential. We embrace Christian values and ensure all children are ready for their next steps.

Within this policy the Early Years is used to describe the Nursery and Reception class covering children from the age of three to five years of age.

“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. As 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, Department of Education, March 2012.

The Early Years must provide every child with a feeling of security, being valued and the confidence to explore new learning. It is unique in that it can set the tone for later school life.

The EYFS is based on four overarching principles:

- 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, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

This Early Years Policy includes the following:

- Aims and Principles
- Planning and organising the curriculum
- Classroom organisation and resources
- Use of whole school resources
- Involving parents
- Language and Literacy supporting children
- Assessment and record keeping
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Transition

## Aims and Principles

- Early Years practitioners ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued.
- To provide a relevant broad curriculum with activities that make sense to the children and are both practical and purposeful.
- To provide opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and those that children play or initiate themselves. Practitioners must consider the individual needs and interest of each child, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience in all areas of learning and development.
- Practitioners acknowledge the holistic nature of young children's learning and natural links will be made between different areas of the curriculum, with the emphasis on learning through play and the importance of developing speaking and listening skills.
- Practitioners must create a learning environment that develops children's imagination and encourages children to explore and express their ideas and feelings.
- Practitioners must respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding development through positive interaction.
- Involve parents and carers.

## Planning and organising the curriculum

The curriculum for the Early Years forms the first stage of our Whole School Curriculum. It covers the children in the Nursery and Reception class.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must provide a framework for planning, teaching and assessing in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are interconnected and are divided into three prime areas and four specific areas.

The three prime areas are:

- **Communication and Language** – children will be given lots of opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence skills in expressing themselves; to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical Development** – children will be provided with opportunities to be active and interactive; to develop their co-ordination, control and movement. Children will be taught the importance of physical activity and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – help children develop a positive sense of themselves and others; forming positive relationships and developed respect for others; develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and have confidence in their own abilities.

The four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

- **Literacy:** children will be taught to link sounds and letters to begin to read and write. Children will be given access to a wide range of reading materials to ignite their interest.
- **Mathematics** – children will be provided with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems, and to describe shapes, spaces and measures.
- **Understanding the World** – Children will make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

- **Expressive Arts and Design** – Children will explore and play with a range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

The Foundations Stage curriculum is an overarching framework that informs all other stages of planning. It shows the range of experiences and learning opportunities that are available whilst the children are in the Early Years. The curriculum is planned through a series of themes that reflect and respond to the children's interests, offering experiences in all areas of the curriculum and which carry equal importance to provide a broad and balanced curriculum with opportunities for play and child-initiated activities. Medium term planning takes the form of a theme based upon the children's interests. It is evaluated weekly to respond to other emerging interests that the children may have. Short term plans select activities and learning objectives from the medium term theme plan as deemed appropriate to meet the needs and interests of the children. Plans are extended and differentiated accordingly. Planning should provide a clear balance between challenging the most able children in some cases to exceed Early Learning Goals whilst recognising that an attempt to implement the more formal work before a child is ready could damage a child's disposition to learn. By the end of the Reception year, the Numeracy and Literacy lessons will be in place in preparation for children entering Year 1.

### **Classroom Organisation and Resources**

The organisation of the classroom reflects the importance that is placed on children learning through play and first-hand experience, developing independence and having opportunities to initiate their own activities.

The Early Years Unit provides the following areas:

- Small world area
- Role play areas
- Small construction
- Sand and water
- Book corner with a range of fiction and non-fiction books
- Writing table with a range of writing resources
- Mark making area with access to a choice of resources
- Performance area for re-telling stories and songs
- Interactive whiteboard
- Creative area with access to a range of different media and materials
- Musical instruments
- Maths area with a range of different resources to use in mathematical investigations
- Outdoor classroom – a safe, fenced area including sand pit, gravel pit, outdoor chalkboard, water area, investigation area, literacy and maths areas, physical space, mud kitchen and den building resources.

The Early Years has a set of boots and waterproof clothing in order to make full use of the outside classroom in all weathers including the school field and garden areas.

## Use of Whole School Resources

The Early Years has the use of:

- The hall for dance, drama, physical education and assemblies.
- The outside field, playground and gardens.
- The story telling room, to re-tell and create their own stories.
- I pads and laptop trolley for use in classrooms.
- Library where children in Reception can take home books.
- Swimming pool where Reception children have a weekly lesson.

## Involving Parents

Parents/Carers are the child's' first and most enduring educators. When Parents/Carers and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

- Outlining how the EYFS is being delivered to parents/carers during the Meet the Teacher meetings held at the start of term, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home and how they can access more information.
- Curriculum letters are sent home periodically to keep parents informed of their child's current curriculum and learning needs, with an outline of activities which could be undertaken at home to support this.
- Operating an open door policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner, and also to view children's work.
- Sharing progress at school through annotated photographs and observations in the online Learning Journeys where parents can view them at home easily. Parents/carers are also encouraged to contribute to the learning journeys adding photos and videos of their home experiences too.
- Inviting parents/carers to help in the Early Years unit to help within the school and to accompany children on school visits.
- In the Autumn term there will be a coffee afternoon to explain the curriculum, with a particular focus on phonics and reading, and to share ideas on how parents can be involved. Further parent workshops will be scheduled throughout the year focusing on different curriculum areas giving parents/carers practical activities that they can complete at home.
- Discussing individual next steps and progress with parents/carers at parents evening in the Autumn and Spring terms.
- Providing an interim next step report at the end of the Autumn and Spring Terms and an annual written report to parents/carers in July summarising the child's progress. For Reception child this will be against the Early Learning Goals and EYFS assessment scales.
- All parents will be invited to join the PTA, which exists to facilitate social occasions so that families can get to know one another and feel part of the school, to raise money to provide extras that enhance the education of all children in school and to contribute to the ethos of the school by providing support e.g. special occasions by organising refreshments and making new comers feel welcome.
- Two newsletters each half term will be sent home to parents/carers informing them of the children's learning, information and relevant dates specifically for the EYFS. These will also be posted on the schools website and facebook page so that parents can access them.
- Opportunities will be provided for parents/carers to come into school to join in with the EYFS for special events e.g. seasonal walks, teddy bears picnic

## **Language and Literacy Support**

- Nursery children are encouraged to borrow books from the class to take home, so that they can participate in the whole school reading challenge.
- Within the Early years, children have access to the online reading programme Active Learn where the children can access books online. In addition, it checks their comprehension and understanding of the text. Children can also access Active Learn during school using the school Ipads.
- Parents are invited in every Wednesday morning to read with their child as part of promoting the love of reading across the school.
- In Reception Phase 2 phonics are implemented following Letters and sounds with support from an online programme 'Phonics Bug.' These are timetabled daily from the Autumn term in order to learn new sounds helping children to learn to read and write. The children will be streamed with Year 1 from the spring term.
- Nursery start introducing Phase 1 phonics to children focussing on different aspects including rhymes, listening games, songs and initial sounds.
- Reception will bring home reading books to support the sounds and words that they have learnt during their phonics sessions, which parents/carers are encouraged to repeat at home to consolidate their learning.

## **Assessment and Recording**

Our assessment of pupil progress through the EYFS is based on regular and close observations as well as questioning, listening and discussion with individual children. In this way, we are able to make professional judgements about what children have learnt as well as through the activities children have completed. Annotated photographs and observations are placed into each child's individual online Learning Journey. We involve all adults who come into contact with the child and regard parents as especially important in this respect. We therefore want to ensure that parents are able to contribute to the assessment process through an ongoing dialogue between home and school, including online access to their child's Learning Journey. On entry to school we make initial assessments of what children already know, understand and can do. On a half-termly basis we track each child's progress against the phases of development in the Development Matters document (September 2012). Each child's progress will also be discussed in data meetings with the Head Teacher.

## **Transition**

### **From Pre-school settings**

During the summer term prior to a child's entry into the Reception year, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition

- Parents are invited to five Starting School sessions where they meet the Early Years Lead, Head teacher, SENCO, Literacy and Maths Lead giving them a greater understanding of the school procedures, routines and a feel for the school.
- During the summer term parents are asked to complete an entry profile and a separate 'all about me' child entry profile.
- The children are invited to a series of transition sessions in the reception class including staying for the lunch in the hall and playtime in the playground.
- The key worker/s makes visits to the pre-school settings. This enables us to gather essential information about the children to aid the transition process.

### **From Reception Class to Key Stage 1**

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1.

Each child's level of development is assessed against the Early Learning Goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in areas of strength and areas for development. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1. We meet with the year one teacher to discuss the "next steps" for each child in their learning. Our aim is that they are secure, confident and excited about moving on.

This policy was prepared by Sarah Correnti

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