

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



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REVIEWED BY: Executive Headteacher/ Head of School

APPROVED BY: Local Governing Body

Introduction

There are four main purposes to this policy:

- To establish an entitlement for all children in the EYFS with equality of opportunity.
- To establish expectations for all staff working with children in the EYFS to ensure quality and consistency.
- To state the school's approaches to the EYFS curriculum in order to promote parents' and carers' understanding of the curriculum.
- To promote continuity and coherence across the EYFS.

The importance of the Foundation Stage

1. 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.

2. The EYFS sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

3. The EYFS is about what children learn, as well as how they learn. Effective practice is a mix of different approaches. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other and through adult-guided learning.

(Early Years Foundation Stage Framework- For Group and School-Based Providers. January 2024).

Expectations

For most children, the end of the Reception year will be the end of the Foundation Stage, when the expectation is that children will achieve the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs). Although the Early Learning Goals are intended for children at the end of Reception. Younger children will be provided with experiences which will support them in reaching the goals at the appropriate time, in line with Development Matters 2023. A priority will be placed on each individual child's unique needs, interest and stage of development.

The aims of the EYFS curriculum and how these contribute to the school's aims

EYFS Principles

The EYFS principles which guide the work of all practitioners are grouped into four distinct but complementary themes:

A Unique Child

Positive Relationships

Enabling Environments

Learning and Development

Effective practice in the EYFS is built on these four guiding themes. They provide a context for the requirements and describe how practitioners should support the development, learning and care of young children. This policy outlines how we meet each of the four themes.

1. A Unique Child

We recognise that every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from parents/carers and practitioners; we use appropriate levels of challenge, praise and encouragement and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

2. Positive Relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We value the importance of positive relationships and believe they are vital for adults to sensitively respond to children's needs, feelings and interests. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. This positive ethos is at the heart of the EYFS at Stokesay. It is extremely important that the children feel happy and comfortable within the setting; where they are constantly supported and encouraged. The children's achievements are recognised and celebrated. This ethos allows for and encourages problem

solving, resilience, curiosity and high levels of engagement. All adults recognise the importance of developing a strong, positive, trusting relationship with each child, knowing each of them as an individual.

3. Enabling Environments

We recognise that the learning environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Resources and areas of learning are set out in such a way which encourages children to make independent and considered choices during their play. Children learn and develop well in enabling environments because they respond to their individual need.

4. Learning and Development

We recognise that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. We aim to cater for all children by providing an inclusive setting.

Curriculum

The school aims to ensure that the curriculum for the EYFS underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's skills across the 7 areas of learning and by supporting them to develop characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The 7 areas of learning are split into Prime and Specific areas.

The Prime areas:

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

The Specific areas:

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

Provision

Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play but by also by being exposed to new experiences through the enhanced provision. Enhanced provision is topic based. It is carefully planned for children to ensure that they can access all 7 areas of the EYFS within the indoor and outdoor environment.

Practitioners must respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. The teachers and teaching assistants support and develop the children in their learning, focusing upon the child's interests and taking opportunities to support and extend their learning in a meaningful context. Play is a child's work, we follow their personal exploration and natural inquisitiveness to extend and develop learning opportunities

Our ultimate aim is to help and guide the children to become independent, enquiring and evaluative learners. Through the use of half-termly topics we take account of children's interests, prior experiences and the skills they need to develop, in order to fully engage them in their learning.

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

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

(Early Years Foundation Stage Framework- For Group and School-Based Providers. January 2024).

Learning and Teaching

Children participate in whole class, small group and individual activities. In order to promote effective learning, the teaching will provide opportunities and experiences for children to:

- Have access to a wide range of opportunities and experiences which will allow them to explore, investigate, discover, create, practise, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their knowledge skills and understanding.
- Initiate activities that promote learning and enable them to learn from one another; have time to explore ideas and interest in depth.
- Feel secure in order to become confident and independent learners; make links to other areas of learning.
- Undertake creative and imaginative play activities that promote the development and use of language.

The staff will:

- Work in partnership with parents and carers.
- Use their strong, positive relationships with children to consider how to best support and extend their learning within their play.
- Promote children's learning through planned experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable.
- Teach skills and knowledge.
- Understand that children learn in different ways and at a different pace to each other.
- Use rich and varied language to help children develop linguistic structures for thinking.
- Use both indoor and outdoor provision to maximise opportunities for children's learning.

Inclusion

Planning will meet the needs of both boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children with disabilities, children from all social, cultural and religious backgrounds, children from different ethnic groups including travellers, refugees and asylum seekers and children from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

It is the school's intention to provide:

- A safe secure learning environment in which all children are valued.
- A wide range of opportunities to motivate support and develop.
- Planned opportunities that build on and extend children's knowledge.
- For those children with special educational needs, the focus will be on removing barriers to learning for children. Children's learning difficulties will be identified at an early stage and teaching will be adapted to enable for pupils to strive.
- Respond quickly to areas of difficulty. This will involve working closely with parents and developing an effective strategy to meet these needs. This may involve working with staff from other agencies in drawing up individual education plans.

Organisation

The learning environment in and out of doors will be planned effectively to meet the requirements of all areas of learning. It will be organised into areas, but also allow for overlap as children lead their learning, meaning that opportunities are found within but not restricted to each area. Open ended resources will be used to encourage and develop creativity promote endless possibilities.

The areas will include:

- Attractive and comfortable places to read.
- Sand with a variety of equipment.
- Water with a variety of equipment.
- Mathematical and scientific equipment.
- A writing area with a variety of paper and tools to mark, make or write
- A role play area; linked to the current topic.
- A variety of creative media such as paint, collage, junk materials; malleable materials and equipment.
- Small world play areas focused on fantasy and real-life scenarios.
- A variety of outdoor play equipment which allows children to develop skills across all 7 areas of learning.

All areas will be attractive and suitably resourced so that children are encouraged to use them and engage in purposeful, challenging activities with or without the presence of an adult. Enhancements will be made to provision in response to children's needs, the current topic and interests.

Resources will be organised in such a way that children are enabled to make informed choices, select independently what they need and take responsibility for clearing away.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The planning within the EYFS follows the government document Early Years Outcomes as well as the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile document and takes account of the Development Matter guidance. We also use the Hamilton Trust Foundation alongside Maths Mastery planning documents to support planning for maths.

Development Matters is used to map out a long- and medium-term plans and to support weekly planning. As part of our daily practice, we observe and assess children's learning. Adults will observe what an individual child or group of children is doing and will help develop their knowledge and understanding by asking them questions, providing information, or demonstrating a skill. Adults will use these opportunities to provide next steps in the moment, based on the adult's relationship with and knowledge of the child. This teaching means that the new knowledge or skill is immediately useful and meaningful to the child and is therefore more likely to be retained and used independently in the future. It ensures that the children are taught new skills and information at the appropriate level for them. Observations and interactions also inform future plans, enables us to address next steps and ensures we provide for children effectively. We record weekly group observations on Tapestry to share with parents what children have learnt that week. Children in Nursery have a Learning Journey in which they complete a weekly activity linked to one of the 7 areas. Children in Reception have a Literacy and Maths book. teacher's knowledge of the child alongside the evidence is used to inform termly assessments and also to complete the EYFSP (Early Years Foundation Stage Profile), a statutory requirement at the end of Reception. The data is analysed and used for planning interventions and informing future teaching.

Within the summer term, a report for parents is provided with a commentary on children's attainment, progress and characteristics of effective teaching and learning. Data is then analysed to look for patterns and trends. Information about individual children is then shared with Year 1 staff to ensure smooth transition. We encourage all parties to contribute to discussions, assessment and children's learning. Parents are encouraged to contribute on Tapestry by recording their own child's significant 'learning moments' outside of school.

Assessment opportunities will be identified in planning and opportunities will be provided for:

- skilful observations of children.
- working in partnership with parents.
- evaluating the quality of provision and practitioners' training needs.
- ensuring baseline assessment and termly assessments are informed by observation, discussion and evaluation and in line with policy.

Baseline Assessment

Our approach to baseline assessment is designed to enable us to get an accurate picture of each child. Assessments are completed on entry (when the child has settled, usually within the first 6 weeks), these inform us of the child's starting point and allow adults to plan appropriately to support the child's learning. Many of the children in our Reception cohort have already attended our setting in Nursery and therefore final summer term assessments within the setting can inform our baseline. Parent/carer contributions as well as contributions from other settings are also used to inform baseline. Reception children also carry out the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment. The RBA is an assessment that consists of short task-based language, communication and Literacy and maths activities. Pupils use practical resources to complete these tasks and teachers will record the results on a laptop, computer, or tablet. It is used to track and compare pupils' attainment from the beginning of Reception to the end of KS2. Schools are required to carry out the assessment within the first 6 weeks of pupils starting reception. Using both the Reception Baseline Assessment, observations and teacher judgement, teachers will plan next steps to scaffold pupils' learning. The Reception Baseline Assessment report and next steps will be shared with parents.

Leadership and Management

Priorities relating to the EYFS will be identified in the school improvement plan as appropriate. Relevant staff training and development needs will be outlined in the school improvement plan. It is expected that all staff and governors are aware of the requirements of the Foundation Stage and the importance of the key stage in relation to the children's learning and its impact on raising standards across the school.

Learning Outdoors

Emphasis is placed on ensuring that the outdoor learning environment contributes to all areas of learning. All children will be encouraged to take part in the full range of outdoor experiences and

provided opportunities to access outside on a daily basis. As indoors, resources outdoors will enable children to be independent and lead learning through play. Our environment allows outdoor activities for all weathers. We have a woodland area on site which the children access weekly. We strongly believe in the importance of opportunities for outdoor learning.

Parents as partners

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents/carers have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Providing information sessions for parents/carers before starting at the setting.
- Inviting parents and their children into Nursery for a drop-in session.
- Sharing weekly, group updates via Tapestry of the children's learning and encouraging them to share and celebrate achievements outside of school.
- Sharing Reception Baseline Assessment data with parents.
- Sharing children's next steps in their learning which school have devised, based on assessments.
- Offering parents' evenings in the autumn and spring terms at which the teacher and the parent/carer discuss the child's progress.
- Providing parents/carers with a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- Facilitating a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents/carers: sharing assemblies, outdoor learning, Sports day, family reading sessions, workshop opportunities to support parents when helping their child at home.
- Sharing regular updates about our learning on the school website.
- Regularly sharing things we have been doing in class on our school website's news feed.
- Encouraging parents/carers to communicate and approach EYFS staff, as and when needed, when dropping off and collecting children.
- Sharing a weekly observation of what both Nursery and Reception have been learning each week, with photos and planning.
- Sharing weekly challenges and activities linked to prior and current learning to allow for parent to support their child at home.

Information for Parents and Carers

We ensure that parents/carers have the following made available through: documents on our school website, workshops, induction meetings and letters sent home:

- How the EYFS is delivered.
- How to support learning at home.
- How we provide for all children (inclusion) Policies and Procedures.
- Staffing.

Professionals as Partners

We recognise the importance of working closely alongside other professionals in order to fully support our children and their families from birth.

We do this through:

- Developing communication with settings our children have previously attended.
- Working alongside health professionals e.g. health visitors.
- Working alongside specialised services.
- Making referrals and liaising closely with the Shropshire speech and language therapy team.

Community links

We believe that building links with the community are beneficial in promoting children's learning. We actively seek out opportunities to work with the local community. The children enjoy the monthly Open the Book Assembly from the local church. We also make connections between our topics and the local community, for instance a visit from the vet and first responders during our All About Me topic.

Welfare and Safeguarding

"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 understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework- For Group and School-Based Providers. January 2024.

We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, good hygiene and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure staffing arrangements and adult to children ratios are organised to ensure safety and to meet the needs of the children.
- Ensure that staff are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their role.
- Ensure that staff follow procedures when storing personal equipment such as mobile phones.
- Ensure visitors and parent helpers wear appropriate ID badges.
- Ensure outdoor and indoor spaces, furniture, equipment and toys, are safe and suitable for their purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Child Protection

All staff must ensure they are alert to any issues for concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere. They must ensure they fully understand and follow the procedures outlined in the school Child Protection Policy and attend training organised by the school. All staff must ensure that they have read the Keeping Children Safe in Education document.

Medication

If staff are taking any medication they must seek medical advice to ensure it will not impair their ability to look after children properly. Staff medication on the premises must be securely stored and out of reach of children, at all times.

Any child requiring medication will only have this administered if it can be done so according to School Policy. No medication can be administered without a prescription from a doctor or pharmacist. Similarly, children requiring their inhaler at school can only have this administered in line with School Policy.

First Aid

Whole school policy must be followed. Any administering of first aid to a child in the EYFS requires a written record for staff and parent/carer. Any head injury requires a written record for staff and parent/carer in addition to a phone-call parent/carer as soon as possible. At least one member of staff who has a current paediatric first aid certificate must be on the premise at all times when children are present and accompany children on outings.

Managing Behaviour

Whole school policy must be followed. All staff must ensure they are fully aware of the expectations and complete any records required by the policy. Behavioural incidents are recorded in line with the behaviour policy.

Staff Qualifications, training and skills

All staff will be appropriately qualified and are encouraged and supported to further develop their expertise through courses provided by: the LA, other agencies, attending conferences, joining working groups, networking with others and professional reading. In addition, informal meetings are held with EYFS staff and specific CPD needs of staff are planned by the EYFS leader. All staff are involved in annual performance management meetings in order to help them continuously appraise their performance and engage in activities to develop their skills.

Admissions

We follow Shropshire Local Authority's admissions policy for allocating places. We have places for 30 Reception pupils. Admission to our Reception classes must be applied for by completing the Local Authority's application form. Our child: staff ratios always meet the requirements for pupils in a Reception class, as set out in the EYFS Statutory Guidance 2022.

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned to ensure we meet the needs of each individual child. We recognise that transition is not a one off event but a significant process in each child's life. We invite parents in with their children to have a look and spend time in our EYFS classroom. We invite children to come into our Nursery and Reception for taster sessions. We ask parents to complete a questionnaire about their children for us to gain a better insight into children's current needs and interests, to enable us to best support pupils. At the end of Reception the Reception teacher and year 1 teacher meet to discuss pupils to ensure that there is an easy transition from EYFS to KS1.

Complaints

Any complaint should be dealt with by following the Trust Complaints Policy.

Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body plays a valuable role in supporting, monitoring and reviewing the learning and teaching policy. In particular they:

- Support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources efficiently and effectively.
- Ensure that the school premises are best used to support successful learning and teaching; monitor how effective learning and teaching strategies are in terms of raising children's achievement and attainment.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the school's learning and teaching policy through the school's self-review processes.
- Ensure that the school is meeting its regulatory and legal requirements. The Foundation Phase link governor is Unjum Hussain.

Monitoring and Review

We are aware of the need to review the school Learning and Teaching policy regularly so that we can take account of new initiatives, changes in the curriculum, staff changes, developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school.