



Alverstone Infant School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Related Policies/Guidance • EYFS Framework (2021)

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to describe our Early Years curriculum and show how Alverstone Infant School strives to give each child the best possible start in life.

We have high expectations of all children and we encourage them to develop independence throughout their time in Early Years. We are committed to providing high quality care and education and we aim to provide a wide range of learning experiences. Children's interests, previous experience and needs are carefully considered when planning for their learning.

We strive to build good relationships with parents to secure a strong link between home and school. We use the following key documents to underpin our practice in the Early Years: Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2021), Early Years Foundation Stage Profile handbook (DfE, 2022 handbook) and Development Matters (DfE, 2021).

The EYFS Framework identifies four guiding principles, which we use to shape our practice in school: • 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. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Contents of policy: 1) Structure of Early Years 2) The Curriculum and Characteristics of Effective Learning 3) Teaching and learning 4) Parent partnership 5) Home learning 6) Safeguarding and risk assessments 7) Transition between year groups and other settings 8) Planning and assessment.

1) Structure of Early Years

In Reception, we have two classes, each have a teacher and a teaching assistant. The classes are taught separately for whole-class sessions but the classrooms are opened up during continuous provision. The teachers get to know all of the children and work closely together when planning activities. At the start of the year, all children start full-time straight away unless parents/teachers feel individual children need to attend part-time for the first few days until they settle in.

2) The Curriculum and Characteristics of Effective Learning

We follow the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework (2021). We build on the educational programmes to plan an engaging and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development. The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are important and interconnected. Three areas are crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive. These are known as the prime areas.

There are also four specific areas, through which the prime areas are strengthened and applied. The prime areas are:

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

The specific areas are:

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

Characteristics of Effective Learning: The EYFS Framework identifies three characteristics of effective learning. The curriculum has been developed with these characteristics in mind:

- 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.

During parents' evenings, teachers inform parents of their child's development in relation to the three characteristics of effective learning. At the end of Reception, teachers also provide parents with a written report which includes a commentary on each characteristic. Year 1 teachers are also provided with a report and teachers

meet with them during the Summer term to discuss each child's stage of development and their needs during transition.

3) Teaching and learning

We believe it is essential to have a balance between adult and child-led learning in Early Years. This allows children to practise new skills and take ownership of their learning by applying it in different situations. Carefully planned adult-led activities are important to ensure children learn specific skills and knowledge. During play, they can practise these skills and we can then see how much of this learning children have embedded. Both Reception classes follow daily timetables, which provide set times for adult-led sessions and time for children to learn through continuous provision. Teachers plan for both adult-led and child-led sessions based on children's needs and any gaps in their learning. Staff will make on-going assessments of the progress and attainment of each child and use this information to aid future planning

Learning through play (child-led learning)

Learning through play and practical hands on experiences underpins our approach to teaching and learning in Early Years. Through play, children develop a number of skills such as language, their emotions and creativity, social and intellectual skills. Children are able to able to practise and learn new skills and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Independent learning takes place indoors and outdoors and it is in these different environments that children explore and discover their immediate world. For most children their play/independent learning is natural and spontaneous although some children may need extra help from adults. Adults model and provide time, space and appropriate resources which inspire independent learning opportunities and the imaginations of the children. They observe play and join in when appropriate, watching and listening before intervening. Adults will model, observe, facilitate and extend children's learning. They will often ask children questions about the independent learning in order to develop their language and communication skills. All staff value child-initiated learning and provide safe but challenging environments that support and extend learning and development.

Adult-led learning

Through adult-led activities we can introduce children to new ideas, provide opportunities for them to develop their skills and ensure that they experience all areas of learning in the EYFS. In addition to child-initiated learning, children are provided with daily adult-led sessions. Reception have three main daily teaching sessions. These are normally Phonics, Literacy and Maths. Teachers also plan whole class/group inputs linked to other areas of the curriculum when appropriate. Children also have at least one daily story session. These whole class/group

sessions help to develop vital habits of learning such as learning as a group and taking turns. Teachers plan sessions based on the children's needs and differentiate them accordingly. Children are active learners during these sessions and they are provided with skills, which they can then go and practise independently. Adult-led learning can also take place during continuous provision and indoor and outdoor activities are planned to help address gaps in children's learning.

Outdoor learning

Outdoor learning is a fundamental part of the Early Years and it has a positive impact on children's development. Being outdoors offers children the freedom to explore, use their senses and be physically active. It also offers opportunities to do things in different ways and on different scales compared to indoors. Our outdoor environment provides a range of resources and activities for children to explore and we try to ensure each of the curriculum areas are incorporated into the outdoor environment each day. Reception have their own outdoor areas and they either have free-flow access or timetabled sessions inside and outside. Each area has a range of learning opportunities including a mud kitchen, role play/stage area, balancing equipment, large-scale construction, wheeled vehicles, water play and literacy and maths opportunities. Outdoors is both a teaching and learning environment, where there is a balance of child led and adult-led learning. The outdoor area is comprehensively risk assessed and staff complete daily checks.

4) Parent partnership

Parents play a key role in children's development and it is essential for us to have a strong partnership with parents to ensure each child reaches their full potential. We encourage parents to make contributions and share information about their child's learning and development. We also regularly share information on children's progress and next steps in learning. We regularly invite parents in for workshops, or stay and play sessions to ensure they feel valued and develop good relationships with staff members. We do this through:

- Having informal conversations at the start and end of the day
- Providing regular advice on home learning (see section 5)
- Organising a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: performances, sports day, stay and play sessions, etc.
- Uploading observations to Tapestry so that parents can see how their child is learning at school
- Asking parents to upload their own observations to Tapestry or write them on a post it
 - Holding parents' evenings twice per year
- Sending out an end of year report
- Sending out a year group newsletter each half term with information on topics etc.

- Holding welcome meetings at the start of the year for all parents.

5) Home learning

We value the importance of home learning and all teachers work closely with parents/carers to ensure they feel confident supporting children's learning at home. At each parents' evening, teachers provide activity suggestions for parents to use at home to meet their child's targets. We also provide set regular homework/activities for parents to complete with their children. During the first half term, children will receive their home reading book and parents will be expected to read/share the story with them for 10-20 minutes each day.

6) Safeguarding and risk assessments

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our whole school Safeguarding policy which can be found on our school website. These have been read by all staff members and are reviewed frequently. Staff in Early Years perform daily checks of the environment to ensure it is safe.

7) Transition between year groups and other settings.

Reception to Year 1

Reception children make use of the whole school facilities such as the hall and KS1 playground to ensure the children are confident and well prepared for moving around the main school building. Playing out with the KS1 children at lunchtime also prepares them for mixing with older children.

In the final Summer term, the Reception classes visit the Year 1 classrooms regularly and take part in activities with a Year 1 teacher. This helps them get to know the environment and routines before September. The children also spend the morning with their Year 1 teacher during the final week of term. The Year 1 teachers are provided with time to observe the children in the Reception environment. At the end of each school year, teachers meet to share information on each child with their new class teacher including their knowledge, understanding, achievements and end of year assessment data. This ensures all teachers have a well-rounded picture of the children prior to the new school year. Teachers are also provided with copies of end of year reports for the children in their new class.

8) Planning.

We use half-termly topics in as a starting point to learn new things and fire children's imaginations. Our long-term plans show the topics we usually follow but they are flexible to ensure we also follow the children's interests, school themes or National events. Each half term the staff meet to plan the next topic and choose enhancements based on children's needs. The long-term plans also show how we cover other areas of the EYFS curriculum. Staff plan in more detail on a weekly basis and teachers in each year group work together to plan lessons based on children's

needs. We have weekly planning for Literacy, Maths and Phonics sessions. In Reception, teachers also plan class/group sessions for Expressive Arts & Design, PSED and Understanding the World. All areas of the curriculum are also covered through continuous provision. Reception children also have PE lessons. Continuous Provision planning shows children's learning challenges and enhancements that will be provided.

Literacy is planned around quality texts as we find this is the best way to engage children. At the start of each text, we plan 'hooks' to provide an exciting start to the sequence of lessons. In Maths Reception use the White Rose materials but adapt them to suit the children's needs.

9) Assessment.

Assessment is essential to ensuring children make progress. As stated in the EYFS Framework (2021), '*ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process*'. Our accurate assessment relies on us getting to know our children well and understanding their achievement and interests. Practitioners draw on their knowledge of a child to make a professional judgement about their stage of development. The EYFS Framework does not require physical evidence to be kept for each child but some evidence is kept if teachers feel it will support their assessment of a child. Discussions with parents and carers also supports teachers with their assessments. During the first few weeks of the academic year, teachers assess the ability of each child using a baseline assessment. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. The children are assessed on an ongoing basis and their levels are recorded at the end of each term in addition to the baseline assessment. At the end of the Reception year, we record each child's level of development against the 17 Early Learning goals as Emerging or Expected. We do not report an Exceeding judgement to the Local Authority but as a school we do identify children who are working beyond the EYFS.

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