



William Law C E Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Policy shared with staff on [by email/staff briefing]

Policy confirmed by the Governing Body of William Law CE Primary School on:

Date: 25th May 2023

Signature:

Policy to be reviewed on: May 2026

This policy is written in line with the Christian values and ethos of our school



William Law CE Primary School

Policy for Early Years Foundation Stage

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.

'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.' DfE September 2021

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (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 broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for future good progress through school and life.

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- quality and consistency in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- a secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly.
- partnership working between practitioners and with parents and /or carers.
- equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

The EYFS specifies requirements for learning and development and for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The learning and development requirements cover:

- the areas of learning and development which must shape activities and experiences (educational programmes) for children in all early years settings.
- the early learning goals that providers must help children work towards (the knowledge, skills and understanding children should have at the end of the academic year in which they turn five).
- assessment arrangements for measuring progress (and requirements for reporting to parents and/or carers).

The safeguarding and welfare requirements cover the steps that providers must take to keep children safe and promote their welfare.

Overarching principles

Four guiding principles should shape practice in early years settings. These are:

- 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 relationship 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).

The areas of learning and development

There are seven areas of learning and development that must set educational programmes in early years settings. All areas of learning are important and inter-connected.

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

These are the three prime areas:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development

Providers must also 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.

Educational programmes

Educational programmes must involve activities and experiences for children, as set out under each of the areas of learning.

Communication and Language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively with stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

Physical Development

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor control skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

Literacy

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

Mathematics

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding – such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting – children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, ‘have a go’, talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

Understanding the World

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children’s personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children’s vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children’s artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

Inclusion

All children and their families are valued within our school. We value the diversity of individuals within the school. All children at William Law CE Primary are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or stage of learning. In the early years the children begin to learn to take responsibility for their learning and begin to understand the concept of challenge.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. Planning for children with additional needs is in line with the Special Educational Needs & Disability policy.

In the EYFS we have realistic and challenging expectations and meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests and develop their self-esteem and confidence through a creative curriculum and learning environment
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- providing a wide range of opportunities and environments to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which each child's contribution is valued
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary

It is vital that all children in the school are safe. Through PSHRE teaching we provide children with opportunities to help them develop the skills they need to keep themselves safe. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards both in the real and virtual world.

Positive Relationships

All practitioners involved within the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively to them and taking time to listen to them. At our school, each Reception Teacher acts as a 'key person' to all children in the class, supported by the Teaching Assistant.

With a large cohort of children, we draw from an average of 25 pre-school settings each year, from across the city. We work hard to ensure a smooth transition for every child joining our school. Prior to starting school each child is visited at their pre-school by a member of the reception team. Staff and children from the pre-schools closest to the school are also invited into school during the summer term to play in the reception classrooms.

Parents as Partners

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children.

At William Law CE Primary School we recognise that children learn to be confident and independent through the development of secure relationships. We develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

We recognise the important role parents play in educating the children. We do this by:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- The teacher and teaching assistant visit children in their home setting prior to them starting school;
- The children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school;
- Inviting all parents to two induction meetings during the term before their child starts school and attending a social evening in the first term their child starts school;
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress. There is a formal meeting for parents in the Autumn and Spring terms, where the teacher and the parents and/or carers meet to discuss their child's progress. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year. There are also opportunities for informal conversations to take place between parents and or/carers and their child's teacher, especially at the end of each day or, for those parents and/or carers who are unable to collect, by phone.
- Informing them of the topics to be covered each term and providing them with suggestions as to how they can be involved and what they can do to support this learning.
- Inviting parents to attend 'stay and play' sessions throughout the year;
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- Using an online journal, currently Tapestry, to enable parents to share key events and celebrate their child's achievements; these help us to build up a complete picture of each child's learning.

Enabling Environments

At William Law CE Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. The indoor and outdoor environments provide opportunities for children to play and explore their own interests. Stimulating, accessible and open-ended resources can be used, moved and combined by the children in a variety of ways. As well as giving the children chance to initiate their own learning, careful planning and resourcing enables children to apply their knowledge from adult led activities; enhancements are made to the provision over the course of the week to reflect learning that has taken place. Activities are planned based on children's next steps in learning, in order to stretch and challenge their learning and development.

Planning and Teaching

Activities and experiences are planned for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, 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.

Planning is sequential and the school curriculum document provides a yearly overview for each area of learning and ensures coverage of the curriculum. Medium term plans set the learning intentions for the half term and again cover all areas of learning.

Children have whole class and small group teaching inputs which increase as they progress through the EYFS. Phonics lessons, using the Little Wandle scheme, are delivered daily, alongside maths sessions. These follow the White Rose schemes of learning and the NCETM Mastering Numbering programme. Children participate in three, small group guided reading sessions each week. English lessons follow the Talk for Writing teaching structure, with a daily whole class session. Alongside these adult-led activities, children have time and space to engage in their own child initiated activities and those planned by the adults. During their play, practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further. As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

Play

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. The adults model and play sensitively with the children, fitting in with their plans and ideas. The children are encouraged to try new activities and judge risks for themselves. We talk about how we can get better at things through time and effort and that we can all learn when things go wrong. They practise and build up ideas, learning how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understanding their needs and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development progress. It involves practitioners knowing children's levels of achievement and interests, and then shaping teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, teachers will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment. Phonics assessments are completed half-termly.

Over the course of the year, the children's learning and development is assessed in relation to the Development Matters statements and Early Learning Goals. These assessments are made termly and provide opportunity for practitioners to reflect on each child's learning

journey and to plan appropriate next steps. Practitioners draw on their knowledge of the children, gained through observations, discussions and questioning and use their own expert judgement, as well as evidence of children's adult led and independent learning. It is crucial that assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor excessive paperwork. By the end of their Reception year, the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Report will provide a way of summarising their achievements.

Safety

Children's safety and welfare is paramount, daily risk assessments of the outdoor area are completed by EYFS staff. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risk. We adhere to the school and trust policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety. We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food through our rolling snack programme, and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

This policy links to our whole school policies on:

Curriculum

SEND

Relationships and Sex

Equal Opportunities

Safeguarding