

## The Unity of Titchmarsh and Warmington Schools

### **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

**“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to achieve their full potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance.”**

#### **(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage)**

#### **1. Introduction**

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. It is not just a preparation for the next stage but is vitally important in itself. For young children there is no distinction between work and play.

Learning for young children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the foundation stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through playing and talking.

#### **2. Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

In EYFS we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential.

We aim to support each child’s welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special.
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates - physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued.
- Fostering and nurturing children’s self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community.

Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.

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- Encouraging children's independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes.
  - Developing children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions differ to their own.
- Understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development.
  - Providing learning experiences in play which reflect children's personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn.
  - Providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development.
  - Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.

### **3. The Early Years Foundation Stage framework**

Teaching in the EYFS is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory document 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (March 2014). This document is a principled approach to Early Years education, bringing together children's welfare, learning and development requirements through four themes:

'A Unique Child', 'Positive Relationships', 'Enabling Environments' and 'Children Learn in Different Ways and at Different Rates.'

The curriculum is centred on 3 prime areas of learning:

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

Providers must also support activities through four specific areas which strengthen the prime areas. These are:

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

These Areas of Learning and Development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development

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stands in isolation from the others as all Areas of Learning and Development are all closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centered curriculum which allows children to make lots of links between what they are learning. All Areas of Learning and Development are given equal weighting and value.

### **4. Active Learning through Play**

We organise the day to provide a balance between the following:-

- Child initiated Activities - children make choices from within the learning environment to meet his/her outcome for learning.
- Adult Initiated Activities- practitioners provide the resources to stimulate and consolidate learning.
- Adult Directed Activities – Children engage in planned activities to meet specific learning outcomes.

We recognise that young children learn best when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning through play.

We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.

In providing these active learning opportunities through play we understand the central position of play within the EYFS framework. This is essentially a play based curriculum and pedagogy as the provision of play opportunities underpins its delivery.

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### **5. Assessment and Record Keeping**

On-entry Baseline Assessment is carried out during the children's first few weeks upon entering the setting. Judgments are made on children's development through practitioners' evidence, observed independently and consistently in their self-initiated activities across the whole curriculum. This will give teachers and schools a clearer picture of each child's initial skill. The baseline assessment is then shared and discussed with Parents/Carers to ensure we have an accurate assessment of each child.

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways. Everyone is encouraged to contribute and discussions take place. Significant observations of children's achievements are collated in their own Interactive Learning Journey, which are shared with parents online.

Within the final term of Reception, we provide the parent's with a report based on their child's development against each of the Early Learning Goals and the characteristics of their learning. The parents are then given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the Reception teacher in preparation for Year 1.

### **6. Planning**

The EYFS framework provides a long term plan to follow by ensuring that all Early Learning Goals are covered throughout the academic year.

Medium term planning is created and takes into account the individual children's learning and developmental needs.

All Areas of Learning and Development are planned for and available to access within the setting. The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult focused and child initiated activities indoors. The setting also makes use of the outdoor environment whenever possible.

### **7. Parents as Partners**

We recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development. So, practitioners endeavour to encourage the regular sharing of information about the children with parents.

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We value the role of parents as children's primary educators. We encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes). This supports practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through regular letters, home/ school books and informal chatting at the beginning and end of the day. This also gives suggestions of how parents can support their children's learning at home; consolidating and building on what has been covered in the setting. Class newsletters are also sent home on a half termly basis.

Parents are invited to attend parents' evenings during the course of the academic year where practitioners will feedback on children's learning and development progress.

Parents receive an annual report that offers brief comments on each child's progress. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these in June and send them to parents in early July each year.

Parents are also invited to get involved with school life. There are opportunities for them to help with activities such as educational visits and reading, as well as offering their particular skills (e.g. cooking, art, music) to support children's learning. Parents may be invited into the setting on other occasions such as class assemblies where children show them their work and special events such as 'Sports Day' or 'Open Week'.

The setting has a friendly, open-doors ethos and practitioners are available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of the day. Parents are always welcomed into school and encouraged to discuss and concerns they might have.

## **8. Admissions and Induction**

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We provide full-time Early Years education for children in the Reception Year. This is for children who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old.

Before they start in the setting, all children are offered a series of come and join in sessions during the summer term. The purpose of these initial visits is for the children to meet their new practitioners and start to become familiar with the setting environment. Practitioners will also go to visit the children in their current pre-school settings and at home. The aim of these visits is to support practitioners develop their knowledge and understanding of each child in order to make the transition period to school as smooth as possible.

In the summer term parents are invited into school to meet the setting practitioners. At this meeting information regarding the induction process and what goes on in the setting is shared. There is also time for informal chat and parents' questions. Information packs will be distributed to parents at this meeting, detailing school routines and expectations. Induction packs for children to complete with parents will also be given out as another way to support practitioners' knowledge and understanding of each individual child.

From September children attend the setting part-time for the first two weeks, to allow the children to feel safe, secure and happy. During this period we ask for a parent/carer to be available to attend the setting, to support with transitional issues. This period of being 'on call' may be extended dependent on the child's wellbeing. There is a relaxed and open ethos in the setting and encouraging talk are some of the strategies practitioners use to maintain children's positive feelings about school.

If it is felt that extending a particular child's part-time hours would benefit that child the part time hours may be extended for that child after discussions between the parents/carers and the teacher.

### **9. Transition to year 1**

The EYFS practitioners and Year 1 teacher discuss and expand on the information presented in the EYFS profile. In particular, the characteristic of effective learning narratives gives teachers significant details about each child's learning and development.

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Practitioners also provide additional information about each child's attainment to help the teacher plan an effective curriculum and make provision for all children.

### **9. Inclusion and Equal Opportunities**

Children with special educational needs will be supported as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes children that are more able and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Individual Education Plans/ Personalised Learning Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support commensurate with the school's Inclusion Policy. The school's SEN Co-ordinator is responsible for providing additional information and advice to staff and parents and for arranging external intervention and support as necessary.

In line with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, we will provide all children, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability with equal access to all aspects of school life to ensure that every child is valued as an individual. All staff are role models and are aware of the influence they have in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical attitudes.

### **10. Safety**

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent 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, following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Tapestry have developed a robust security policy that guarantees all the data on the site is owned by the school and subject to school policies regarding e-safety and data protection. Parents and staff of the school are asked to sign to say they will not share any photographs from the journals to and keep their login and passwords secure.

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Please see our separate policies and procedures on E- Safety, Health and Safety, Child Protection, Illness and Injury.

### **11. Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teacher to follow the principles stated in this policy. There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion. The Executive Head teacher and subject coordinator will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

C. Flavell

(EYFS Co-ordinator)