

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

“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 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 good future progress through school and life.”

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, September 2021)

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:

- Ensuring that children have a high quality and consistent education, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- Providing a secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly.
- Providing education programmes which involve the delivery of knowledge, skills, activities and experiences for all children that will be built upon in future years and beyond.
- Ensuring that every child works towards the early learning goals developing the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to reach the expected level by the end of the academic year in which they turn five so that they are ready for Year 1.
- We will recognise that every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Understanding the importance of learning and development and that children develop and learn at different rates.
- We will help children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships

- We will provide enabling environments where children can learn and develop well with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time.
- Ensure partnerships between practitioners and with parents and/or carers are purposeful to allow for optimum child development.
- Ensure equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

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' (September 2021). This document is a principled approach to Early Years learning, development, safeguarding and welfare requirements. through four themes:

'A Unique Child', 'Positive Relationships', 'Enabling Environments with teaching and support from adults' and 'Children Learn in Different Ways and at Different Rates.'

The curriculum is centred on 3 prime areas of learning:

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

5. Assessment and Record Keeping

On-entry Baseline Assessment is carried out during the children’s first few weeks upon entering the setting. In addition to this the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a short assessment taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts reception. Judgments are made on children’s development through practitioners’ knowledge, 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. We also complete Summative Tracking Grids against the Early Learning Goals to allow us to intervene and identify further support.

Within the final term of Reception, we provide parents/carers with a copy of their child’s EYFS Profile. The EYFS Profile provides parents and carers with a well-rounded picture of a child’s knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels, and their readiness for year 1. The parents are then given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the Reception teacher in preparation for Year 1.

When forming a judgement about whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, teachers draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement. This is sufficient evidence to assess a child’s individual level of development in relation to each of the ELGs. Sources of written or photographic evidence are not required, and teachers are not required to record evidence. The usual daily classroom practise and quality first teaching will provide a rich base of evidence to make judgements as opposed to collecting additional evidence.

6. Planning

The EYFS framework guides practitioners in the delivery of the curriculum. Development Matters provides a non-statutory curriculum guidance for EYFS and is available to support in the delivery of the EYFS learning and development requirements. It is up to each school to decide how to approach the curriculum but educational programmes will include communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, physical development, literacy mathematics, understanding the world and expressive arts and design. The Early Learning Goals will not be used as a curriculum but to support staff in making holistic, best fit judgements about a child's development, and their readiness for year 1.

In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners will reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately. 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

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

Staff will consider the individual needs, interests, and development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development.

They will ensure a strong foundation for children's development in the three prime areas. The specific areas of learning provide children with a broad curriculum and with opportunities to strengthen and apply the prime areas of learning. A particular focus will be placed upon developing language and extending vocabulary.

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. Practitioners are guided

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. If a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. Staff will consider whether a child may have a special educational need or disability which requires specialist support. So, practitioners endeavour to encourage the regular sharing of information about the children with parents for optimum child development.

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. Tapestry and the class blog are the best way to get up to date information about the children's work and progress.

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 a copy of the EYFS Profile that offers 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

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 or full time depending on the needs of the child and those of the parents/carers. This settling in period will 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. Practitioners also provide additional information about each child’s attainment to help the teacher plan an effective curriculum and make provision for all children.

10. 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 Unity’s Inclusion Policy. Each 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 Unity’s Equality Duty, 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.

11. 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.

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 – _____ for Warmington, Sally Marshall for Titchmarsh and _____ for Nassington. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with



The Unity of Titchmarsh and Warmington Schools



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.

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