

Pirbright Village Primary School



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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1. Early Years Foundation Stage

All children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. It is the privilege of the practitioners working in reception to take on the task of building upon that prior learning and experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that parents/guardians, support staff and the reception teachers work effectively together to support children's learning and development.

2. Principles

There are four guiding principles which shape the practice in our school. 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**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers; and
- children **develop and learn** in different ways and 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.

3. Unique Child

At Pirbright Village Primary School we aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his/her full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration assemblies to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

4. Inclusion

In our school, we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all our children.

We 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;
- Teaching through objective-led planning to ensure all children are engaged and reach their full potential through their interests;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

5. Positive Relationships

At Pirbright Village Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent to form secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. We also recognise the role that parents and carers play, and their future role, in educating their children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents or carers about their child before their child starts in our school, including offering home visits
- Visiting the children in their pre-school setting prior to their starting school (where possible).
- Giving children the opportunity to spend time with their teacher and future classmates before starting school
- Inviting all parents and carers to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school
- Offering parents and carers regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in reception
- Offering parents the chance to find out more about their child's learning through information workshops
- Encouraging parents and carers to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents.

6. Learning and Development

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in the rest of the school (see whole school Teaching and Learning Policy).

Throughout their time in the Reception Year our children partake in an ambitious curriculum which is designed in a sequential way to ensure progress towards our end of reception curriculum goals and reflects guidance from Development Matters (2023)

Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. Staff enhance play and extend as needed to further extend individual learning. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a balance of adult-led and child-led activity. It is also important to highlight that our plans are flexible to allow us to respond quickly to children's new interests and/or needs.

Within the EYFS there are seven areas of learning and development. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the prime areas, are:

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

We also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- literacy;
- mathematics;
- understanding of the world; and
- expressive arts and design.

7. Learning Through Play

“Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development.”

(“Early Years Foundation Stage”, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007)

In the EYFS at Pirbright Village Primary School we do not make a distinction between learning and play. We support children’s learning through planned play activities, and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children’s learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves and modelling by example.

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn 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. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

8. The Learning Environment

“A rich and varied environment supports children’s learning and development. It gives them the confidence to explore and learn in secure and safe, yet challenging, indoor and outdoor spaces.”

(“Early Years Foundation Stage”, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007)

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. Resources are organised to develop children’s skills in personal interaction and exploration and are linked to current assessment data. Resources are carefully selected to meet the development needs of the children in order to enhance potential for new learning and consolidate prior learning. Resources are dressed/displayed to reflect children’s interests – enabling discovery, investigation and exploration.

Activities are planned for both the inside and outside; children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the school day. The learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas which are carefully arranged to encourage quiet areas and more active areas within the learning environment.

The EYFS classrooms have their own enclosed outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children’s development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all 7 areas of learning.

Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation. Self-selection of resources and equipment is encouraged and promoted inside and outside of the classroom.

9. Observation, Assessment and Planning

Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and follows children’s interests. Planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure we follow their current interests and experiences.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. Progress is recorded by observing and assessing children using a combination of written observations, photos, parental views and samples of work. Assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, staff should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement and are not required to prove this through excessive collection of physical evidence.

Within the first six weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). Further school based assessment will be carried out during the first half term of the child's first term at school. This provides a benchmark by which the child's progress is monitored. Each term, staff will assess pupils to see if they are on track to meet the Curriculum goals and Early Learning Goals at the end of the year. Interventions and additional support through quality first teaching and enabling environments will be put into place quickly.

At the end of the summer term, each child's progress is assessed against the 17 Goals of the EYFS Profile. It is based on ongoing observation and assessment in the three prime and four specific areas of learning. A copy of each child's Profile report, together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key Characteristics of Effective Learning is passed on to the child's next teacher. The Characteristics of Effective learning are:

- playing and exploring
- active learning
- creating and thinking critically

These will inform a dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assist when planning activities in Year 1.