Avishayes Primary School
& Early Years Centre
Foundation Stage Policy

Responsibility:	**Governors**
Reviewed:	**November 2023**
Next review date:	**November 2025**
Key legislation:	**Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage September 2021**

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. Key Stage 1 begins for our children at the beginning of Year 1. The Early Years Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and in preparing children for later schooling. The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage sets out learning and development and welfare requirements.

Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage practice is shaped by four overarching principles:

A unique child: every child who is constantly learning from birth can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Positive Relationships: children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.

Enabling Environments: the environment, along with teaching and support from adults, plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.

Learning and Development: children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected.

These four principles then link into the **'Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning'** on which the children are observed so practitioners best know how to support a child's individual learning style and provide a stimulating curriculum.
The three Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning are:

- Playing and Exploring
- Active Learning
- Creating and Thinking Critically

Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal. Many have been to one of a range of settings. The EYFS education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- to build on what our children already know and can do;
- to ensure that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- to provide a rich and stimulating environment both indoors and out.

Practitioners across the Foundation Stage at Avishayes take on the task of building upon prior learning experiences. This is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that parents and carers and all Foundation Stage staff work effectively to support children's learning and development.

The Curriculum

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage forms the basis for all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children through the seven areas of learning:

There are three Prime Areas and these underpin the specific areas of learning.

Communication and Language

- Listening, Attention and Understanding
- Speaking

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Self-Regulation
- Managing Self
- Building Relationships

Physical Development

- Gross Motor Skills
- Fine Motor Skills

There are four Specific Areas of learning.

Literacy

- Comprehension
- Word Reading

- Writing

Mathematics
- Number
- Numerical Patterns

Understanding the World
- Past and Present
- People, Culture and Communities
- The Natural World

Expressive Arts and Design
- Creating with Materials
- Being Imaginative and Expressive

Each year we reflect on our current cohort and plan for the particular needs and interests. We plan exciting and relevant enquiries and stimuli to broaden their interests, skills knowledge and understanding.

We are aware of the progression the children need to make from starting nursery, through Reception and on into Year One.

We value children's personal cultures and experiences and plan exciting activities and opportunities to broaden their knowledge and enrich their learning. First hand experiences are planned to teach and support the children to overcome obstacles and tackle challenges.

Coverage of the curriculum is planned carefully and we pay attention to each of the strands. We ensure by the end of the year each strand has the coverage needed to ensure children progress towards the Early Learning Goals and beyond.

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage in our school is based on the seven areas of learning and development suggestions from the document Development Matters. The experiences that our children meet often enable them to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning.

The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. To work towards these, we refer to the government document Development Matters.

Teaching and Learning

We consider good practice in the Foundation Stage to include:
- a partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using child-initiated planning to engage children and support their sense of natural curiosity and enthusiasm to learn;
- extending and developing play and communication;

- 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, supportive and enabling learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- reading and vocabulary is valued and we have a culture where children gain a love for books and stories and develop their vocabulary. Children are read to frequently each day and are given the opportunity to talk on subjects of interest to develop and extend the vocabulary and language. Children are taught to read with a systematic phonics approach using the FFT phonics scheme. Children are assessed regularly to ensure their learning matches their ability and the reading books sent home are also in line with their skill level;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary and sharing this information with parents;
- the regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Foundation Stage;

These are features of good practice that may extend beyond the EYFS.

Play in the Foundation Stage

Play underpins the delivery of the EYFS. Through play our children explore, develop and represent learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills and learn codes of behaviour which help them interact with others. They learn to take risks and make mistakes. They have the opportunity to think creatively and imaginatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express emotions and re-live experiences in controlled and safe situations. Children will have opportunities to play inside and outside. Where children do not play spontaneously they will be supported by adults. Adults will support and extend the play of all children by questioning, scaffolding, challenging and playing alongside children. Within child-initiated play adults follow the relevant documents and guidance to teach children's individual next steps and ensure they progress.

Behaviour Management

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

Inclusion in the Foundation Stage

In our school we believe that all 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. Meeting the needs of all children lies at the heart of the EYFS. In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of:

- boys and girls
- children special educational needs
- children with disabilities
- gifted and talented children/more able
- children from all social and cultural backgrounds
- children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds
- pupil premium children

In addition to the good practice detailed above, we meet the needs of all our children through:

- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping

monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary. This may involve using outside agencies (e.g. speech therapists) for some of our children.

Pedagogy

Our pedagogy has child-initiated play at its heart. Experienced adults teach children during their play to extend their learning and knowledge. We observe carefully, and enhance the learning whenever we spot a 'teachable moment'. Our observations, interactions and outcomes are recorded afterwards.

Children are born with a natural desire to explore and learn and practitioners can support them in this. We do this by creating an enabling environment (both physical and emotional) and through the relationships and interactions that the children experience.

We also directly teach children through small focused group activities across all 7 areas of learning. Whole class lessons in maths and phonics take place daily to teach children the skills that they can practice and consolidate in their own play.

Assessment

Rigorous assessments enable staff to focus on and teach specific areas or groups of children to narrow the gaps in learning.

We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. Our planning of specific enquiry activities and our continuous provision in free flow learning supports the assessment process. Adults can clearly see what the children know and what next steps need to be scaffolded, challenged and taught within their play. These are then recorded and tracked for future planning and assessment purposes.

Observations of children may be based on planned focus activities, or during continuous provision or by recording a spontaneous, significant achievement for a particular child. These will be recorded on Class Dojo (online learning journey) and/or paper assessment records.

These observations form the basis for recording achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Staff are aware that most of the observations undertaken will be of spontaneous child led activities as these are a good indicator of achievement.

We use the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile to monitor achievement. We update the Profile 4 times a year and use this to set targets for future learning. Within the first 6 weeks of the Autumn Term we undertake an on-entry assessments which are used to track and monitor children's attainment and progress.

In Reception this includes, though is not limited to, the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) which is recorded and stored electronically in this government administered program.

We compare our baseline data to later assessments and analyse this to identify patterns of attainment within the relevant cohort of children. We use this information to modify the teaching programme in Foundation Stage and to support and extend individuals and groups in their future. We use the information in the Profile as a basis for sharing information and targets with parents.

Our recording of evidence has changed from September 2021. There is no requirement for a copious paper trail and assessment should be based on the practitioners' knowledge of the children in their classes.
We have taken the phrase 'Remark on the Remarkable' as to what will be recorded on Class Dojo.

"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, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement and should not be required to prove this through collection of physical evidence."
Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage; Assessment; p18

The role of Parents/Carers

We believe that all parents/carers 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. We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school. We do this through our Nursery 'Stay and Play' and Reception whole school transition sessions. These take place in the term before the child starts school. Reception parents have the opportunity to visit the school on the 'Meet the Staff session' in the summer term;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our school;
- encouraging parents to talk to their child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents in the Autumn Term and the Spring Term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress during the Summer Term;
- parents are also invited to Open Afternoons to join in with various learning experiences in a range of subjects;

- parents are connected to Class Dojo so they can read and contribute to their child's learning journey;
- having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents to become secure, and by allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
- arranging for children to start school at a manageable pace. In Reception children start part time at first to ensure a smooth transition. This can be extended with agreement of parents and the school if necessary;
- encouraging the involvement of parents through newsletters, invitations to join class activities and sessions exploring the curriculum, e.g. phonics workshop.

Transitions into the EYFS, between Nursery and Reception, and into Key Stage One

Before children start in Nursery or Reception a member of the relevant team visits all the nurseries, child minders and other Early Years providers to support transitions into the class. This enable conversations to take place with the child's key worker and for observations of the child to take place in a setting where they are comfortable and settled.
For Reception these visits will take place in Summer 2; for Nursery these visits will take place in Summer 2, then Autumn 2 and Spring 2 for starters in the Spring and Summer terms.

For children starting in Nursery, in the first week of each term new starters undertake a 'Stay and Play' session. These are for one hour when children and parents/carers stay together. This happens three times per year - at the start of each term.
For children starting in Reception, on the whole school transition day all children from any setting spend two hours in the morning session in the Reception classroom.
These sessions, in both Nursery and Reception, give an opportunity for the children to get to know the staff and the learning environment as well as other children.

Before children start in Reception, a 'Meet the Staff' session is organised for parents to gain information about Reception and all relevant school information, what they need to know and how to get their child ready for school. It is also an opportunity to ask any questions they may have.

More formal learning is introduced in the last few weeks of Reception to reflect the learning and more formal organisation in Year 1.

At each transition, meetings take place between the relevant teachers to share information and so support transitions for all children.

Resources

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We also encourage children to select their own resources to complete activities and tasks.