



Wantage CE Primary School
Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Last reviewed: September 2024

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Owner: Headteacher

Approver: Board of Directors

Category: Public

Type: Local

Introduction

“All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years 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 provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.” Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2023

Aims

These aims relate to the four EYFS themes and principles (Statutory Framework for the EYFS, 2023):

- 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 partnership 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, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Unique Child

At Wantage CE Primary School, we:

- Keep children safe
- Provide a high-quality transition programme that helps staff to get to know the child and their family
- Consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child when planning the curriculum
- Value and respect each child and their family
- Engage in high quality adult interactions, which are sensitive and adaptive to the needs of individual children
- Support children in developing a positive sense of their own identity and culture
- Identify any need for additional support and promptly give extra help, so that all children progress well in their learning
- Promote children’s good health including oral health, and well-being.

Positive Relationships

At Wantage CE Primary School, we:

- Build positive relationships using a key person approach in the Early Years
- Establish warm, caring relationships that foster a sense of belonging
- Listen to parents and give them clear information about their children's progress
- Provide opportunities for parents to contribute to their child's learning journal
- Seek to engage parents to support their child's learning and development at home
- Offer extra help to families who need it
- Support children to self-regulate both emotionally and cognitively.

Enabling Environments

At Wantage CE Primary School, we:

- Provide learning environments both inside and out which promote successful learning by all children
- Offer stimulating resources that are relevant to all the children's cultures and communities
- Offer rich learning opportunities through play and playful teaching
- Plan and organise learning environments which promote children's independent learning
- Encourage children to take risks and explore
- Provide challenges and opportunities for children to work towards their next steps
- Involve the children in planning and maintaining the environment
- Provide opportunities for outdoor learning every day.

Learning and Development

At Wantage CE Primary School, we:

- Design and implement a curriculum that meets the needs of the children, providing challenging and enjoyable experiences across all areas of learning
- Work with parents in identifying and supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities and help families to access relevant support
- Provide a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity to deliver the EYFS curriculum
- Support children whose home language is not English, adapting the provision when necessary, encouraging the use of their home language in their play and learning and supporting language development at home
- Encourage children to demonstrate their attitudes and behaviours through the key characteristics of effective learning: playing and exploring, active learning and creative thinking and thinking critically.

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning and development, all areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

The Prime Areas

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

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development.

Early Years Practitioners must 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.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

Playing and exploring - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

Rich imaginative play provides a basis for good language development and sows the seeds for child development and communication in all areas of the curriculum. In the EYFS, we understand that play is a vital part of the informal and formal curriculum, and that play provision needs to reflect differing needs, interests and cultural backgrounds of individuals. Active play is promoted so that it supports physical development and healthy lifestyles.

Active learning - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creating and thinking critically - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

These are compatible with our School Learning Powers (Betjeman Bee, Segsbury Squirrel, Maribel Mouse and Ormond Owl) which are used throughout the school and encourage the children to continue to be effective learners beyond the Early Years.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The Observation, Assessment and Planning cycle lies at the heart of effective early years practice. Assessment plays an important role in helping parents and staff to recognise children's progress, understand their needs and plan future teaching and learning.

The cycle of assessment begins with an assessment when children join the Nursery / Reception class. This is followed by on-going formative observational assessment that helps practitioners to understand children's learning. This understanding then informs curriculum planning and the 'next steps' for the child.

Observations may be recorded in children's individual 'Learning Journals' on Tapestry. The Learning Journal also contains information from families and other settings. Families are encouraged to contribute to the Learning Journals through the sharing of home learning and their child's achievements. Families can access their child's Learning Journals throughout the year, with a final report of children's achievements in the summer term.

Reception Teachers carry out the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment in the first six weeks of the autumn term. This is a cohort measure and data is not published by the DfE. In June, the EYFS Profile is completed for each Reception child and data is submitted to the Local Authority. A summary of attainment is shared with parents in an end of year report. The child's next teacher uses this information to plan for the year ahead.

In our school, we work to enable children to achieve a 'Good Level of Development' by the end of the EYFS. We achieve this by:

- Ensuring practitioners access EYFS training and support
- Ensuring that EYFS practice reflects EYFS principles (see above)
- Regularly monitoring quality of teaching and learning
- Regularly monitoring the quality of the learning environment
- Tracking each child's attainment and progress
- Developing and implementing plans which support improvement in the EYFS
- Taking part in internal and Vale Academy Trust ("the Trust") moderation activities to ensure accuracy of judgements.

Assessment grids from the Trust are updated 3 times a year for reception classes including the initial assessment in early October. Two further assessment points are February and then the EYFS Profile is completed in June. Entry and exit data is recorded for each child in the nursery with progress closely monitored throughout the year. Children from vulnerable groups are monitored closely. Early Years Practitioners draw on their knowledge of the child and their own professional judgement to assess whether each child is at the expected level of development. We record each child's level of development to be working towards or at the age-related expectations. Data is analysed at both school and Trust level and any gaps are identified and addressed.

The Wellcomm tool is used to assess and support children's development of children's language and communication skills throughout the EYFS.

In our school, curriculum planning follows Long Term, Medium Term and Weekly plans which are based around broad topics or themes. These plans are used by EYFS practitioners as a guide for weekly planning. However, practitioners may alter these in response to the needs, interests and observations of the children.

Welfare requirements

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults that care for them. The Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2023) sets out the safeguarding and welfare requirements for all EYFS settings. All EYFS Co-ordinators within the Trust complete the Oxfordshire County Council's 'MUSTS' Audit annually to ensure that these requirements are being met effectively.

In our school, we:

- Promote the welfare of children
- Promote good health including good oral health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill
- Manage behaviour effectively (see Behaviour Management Policy)
- Ensure that all adults who work with children in a supervised/unsupervised context are suitable to do so
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs. This is supported by the child's assigned Key Person
- Maintain appropriate records, policies and procedures required for safe, efficient management of the Early Years and to meet the needs of the children.

The health, safety and wellbeing of all our children are of paramount importance to all of the adults in our school. Our governors and staff, both teaching and non-teaching, fully recognise the contribution they make to safeguarding children.

Healthy Snacks

All children in the EYFS are provided with a healthy snack each day. In our Nursery, children are also given the choice of milk or water with their snack (milk, fruit and vegetables are provided for all Nursery children by Government schemes). All children in Reception have access to water during the day and are provided with a healthy snack (fruit, vegetables and free school meals are provided for all Reception children by Government schemes).

Transitions

Effective transitions provide children with the security and support which enables them to be successful and motivated learners. Smooth transitions are achieved through strong partnership working between families, practitioners and leadership teams. Key to smooth transitions is ensuring that children remain the focus of the process. At our school, we work closely with feeder early years settings and colleagues in Year One, to overcome the challenges of the transition process.

Starting in Nursery

There are opportunities for prospective parents/carers and children to attend an Open Session at the Nursery at Wantage CE Primary School. On acceptance of a place in Nursery, children will be given the opportunity to visit the Nursery when a session is in action. Following this, there will be a home visit organised whereby the Nursery staff discuss starting at Nursery with parents. The home visit gives parents an opportunity to ask any questions, share any concerns and chance to meet their child's key worker in the home setting.

Starting in Reception

Parents of all children starting in the Reception class will be invited to an Induction Meeting in the summer term to meet their child's new teachers and other key staff and learn more about the Reception curriculum. This is an opportunity for staff to:

- Hand out a Welcome Pack
- Explain about uniform, PE kit and school dinners/ free school meals
- Purchase second hand uniform and a book bag if requested
- Explain the arrangements for the gradual induction in to reception.

New class sessions - The children are given opportunities to come in to school to meet their new class teacher and other children in their class. Arrangements are also made, where possible, for the children's new class teacher to visit them in their current nursery setting.

Starting in Key Stage 1 (Year 1) - Throughout the Reception year, each child's involvement in whole school life will have been built upon and many of the teaching and support staff will already be familiar people to them. They will have taken part in Key Stage and whole school assemblies as well as sharing playtimes with the Key Stage 1 children. Children have the opportunity to meet their new class teacher and spend sessions in their new class during the summer term.

Special arrangements are made for children with additional needs to ensure that they are supported to make a smooth transition into their new class.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of those working in the EYFS to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team, EYFS co-ordinator, and the Trust's School Improvement team, will carry out monitoring of EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. The Local Governing Body (LGB) will have oversight of the implementation and effectiveness of this policy.