



EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Background:

This policy informs the School's EYFS. It is underpinned by the shared commitments below:

1. To ensure the pupils have the very best start to school life, making positive relationships with staff and peers.
2. To realise our aim of establishing positive learning behaviours within our children in order for them to reach their potential.

Trust's Learning Behaviours:

We embrace a 'Learning without Limits' ethos. We believe in the potential of every child so all the children are given the opportunity to develop the capacity to surprise themselves and those around them. They are taught to challenge themselves to build confidence and resilience and a growth mindset is nurtured.

We are aware of the new framework introduction 21/22 however this policy is designed around current statutory guidelines.

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfill 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 Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.' DfE March 2014).

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In our school all children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- 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;
- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

The Unique Child

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We know that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's learning behaviours are influenced by school and home environments and we strive to build strong links with families. We observe how each child learns to gain an understanding of the characteristics they develop to become effective learners. We use questioning, praise and encouragement to develop a positive attitude to learning and high self-esteem. During their first year at school, the children are introduced to our learning behaviours. They are taught to be observant, investigative, curious, determined, imaginative, adventurous, co-operative and to use reasoning. Children begin to understand the concept of the growth mindset. They are taught that they can 'grow their brains' so that they understand that everyone can learn with practice and effort. The children are not only taught knowledge and skills but how to become successful learners.

Inclusion

All children and their families are valued within our school. We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate because of differences. All children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or stage of learning. We do not group children based on notions of fixed ability. We teach the children that practice and effort lead to learning and improvement.

Teachers plan low threshold, high ceiling tasks which enable all children to access the learning and to achieve as highly as possible. In the early years the children begin to learn to take responsibility for their learning and begin to understand the concept of challenge. Children are also encouraged to set their own challenges for themselves and their peers and encouraged to review both any outcome and the learning process itself.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. Planning for children with additional needs is in line with the Special Educational Needs & Disability policy.

In the EYFS we have realistic and challenging expectations and meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning a balance of adult led and child led opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests and develop their self-esteem and confidence through a creative curriculum and learning environment
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs, including highly motivating and engaging provocations
- providing a wide range of opportunities and environments to motivate and support children to help them to learn effectively
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which each child's contribution is valued
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary

It is vital that all children in the school are safe. Through our distinctive church school approach and the nurturing teaching environment we provide children with opportunities to help them develop the skills they need to keep themselves safe. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards both in the real and virtual world.

Positive Relationships

Here both at St. Andrew's and Feering we recognise that children learn to be confident and independent through the development of secure relationships. We develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise the important role parents play in educating the children. We do this by:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts our school on home visits and during our evening introductory meeting;
- inviting the children to spend time, two afternoons, with their teachers in the classroom before starting at school
- inviting all parents to a further information meeting during the term when their child starts school to look at early reading skills and also the Tapestry system
- encouraging parents to attend consultation meetings and learning together sessions to see how learning is approached in the classroom.
- providing parents with a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year
- encouraging parents to contribute observations via the Tapestry interactive learning journey
- inviting parents to various information sessions during the school year
- holding 4 'learning together' sessions per year. Monthly share afternoons to encourage pupils to talk about their learning with parents.

Staff develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. We pride ourselves on being a listening school.

We have good links with the local feeder pre-school providers and the EYFS teachers meet with staff to discuss new intake children.

Enabling Environment

At St Andrew's and Feering we know that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending our children's development. The role of both the indoor and outdoor environment in learning/organisation of learning provides opportunities for child initiated challenges, reflecting the topic where they can develop gross motor skills, social skills etc. We provide stimulating resources that are accessible and as neutral as possible to encourage open-ended use, allowing them to be moved and combined in a variety of ways.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Planning within the EYFS starts with the Long-Term Plan in conjunction looking at coverage of the EYFS curriculum and fitting with our whole school enriching topics approach. Medium Term Plans are used by the EYFS teachers as a guide for weekly planning, they are informed by the baseline assessments undertaken within the first 6 weeks in school and previously identified strengths and weaknesses of the setting. A weekly focus is based on the learning objectives linked to the EY curriculum and shared with all EYFS staff. We plan first hand experiences and provide opportunities for child directed and adult led challenges appropriate to the development of the children.

In the EYFS assessment of attainment and progress is based on observation, discussion, questioning and evidence of children's independent learning. Valuable evidence of children's learning is obtained through observation of independent and targeted learning. These observations are undertaken by teachers and teaching assistants and are recorded using Tapestry. Parents are encouraged to post any home learning observations onto Tapestry to contribute evidence for assessment. Progress is recorded against Development Matters statements and children are assessed as to whether they are emerging, expected or exceeding against 17 ELGs (Early Learning Goals).

Learning and Development

At both St Andrew's and Feering we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected. The children have time and freedom to become deeply involved in the activities and their learning. The Challenge, Do and Review basis for our sessions encourages deep exploration and fixed timetable disruptions to the length of sessions are kept to a minimum to encourage this.

How Children Learn and What they Will Learn

The Characteristics of Effective Learning:

- 1) Play and Exploring – Engagement Play is essential for children's development. It is their 'work' and how they learn. Children need prolonged periods of time in which to play. It is where they learn to 'have a go' and take risks and try new things. They can play around with what they know.
- 2) Active Learning – Motivation This is where children are really involved in what they are doing and are at a deep level of concentrating. They may be persevering – really 'keeping on trying'. When they achieve what they set out to do, they feel a real sense of achievement.
- 3) Creating and thinking critically This is where there is evidence that children have their own ideas. They make links between different areas of their learning and they choose different ways to do things.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of six areas of learning:

PRIME AREAS

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

SPECIFIC AREAS

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

These areas are delivered throughout the topic and linked closely together. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities.

The EYFS class has its own extensive outdoor area used all year round in all weathers. Being outdoors encourages learning in different ways. It offers the children more opportunities to be creative and explore on a larger scale as well as to be physically active linking the indoors and outdoors together. We also supplement this provision with Forest Schools sessions every fortnight.

Play

Children's play reflects their wide-ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play, children can be inquisitive, creative, questioning and experimental and will learn at their highest level. Playing with their peers is important for children's development. We aim for high levels of engagement alongside high levels of attainment, as we know this is where children achieve most.

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. The adults model play and play sensitively with the children fitting in with their plans and ideas. The children are encouraged to try new activities and judge risks for themselves. We talk to them about how we get better at things through effort and practice and that we can all learn when things go wrong. They practice and build up ideas learning 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.

Transition to Year 1:

A variety of strategies are used to support the transition to Year 1 from Reception.

These include:

- Team teaching with the new teacher
- Working with their new teacher in the Reception and later in the Y1 classroom
- Going to collective worship sessions
- Cross moderation with Year One, looking at the children's work and the ELGs
- Playing in the big playground with all of the Reception staff to support them
- A member of the EYFS team to accompany the class up to support with transition
- Using the EYS alongside KS1 curriculum for the first term, where appropriate.
- Use of Tapestry for those that don't reach GLD (Good Level of Development).

Please read this policy in conjunction with other whole school policies.

Signed:

Date for approval (Trustees): Meeting: 9th June 2022

Date for review: Bi-annual review: Trust approval date +2