



## **EYFS Policy**

**EYFS Lead:** *Di Mansfield* - Deputy Head Teacher, EYFS Lead, SENDCO, Phonic Lead, TA Line Manager

Minute Number	Signed	Date	Amendment

### **'Learning and Growing Together'**

is underpinned by our school's core values of Hope, Friendship, Forgiveness, Perseverance, Respect, and Honesty. We nurture the tiny seeds (that are each individual child and our community) to grow into the mighty tree, as Jesus describes the Kingdom of Heaven (Parable of the Mustard Seed- Matthew 13) Individuals flourish in a school which is a safe, respectful and welcoming Christian community.

Learning we develop our wisdom, knowledge and skills.

Growing in our character development, hope, aspiration, resilience and social action Together; so our community can live well together, showing dignity and respect.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year and is intended 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. Our Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children from the age of 4 to 5 years. Our Reception class has a full time teacher and a full-time teaching assistant.

### **Aims**

Within St Oswald's C of E Primary School EYFS we aim to give each child a positive and meaningful start to their school life, in which they can establish solid foundations on which to develop into independent and fearless lifelong learners. We will encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere; to support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing; to help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and by developing the confidence to work towards personal goals. Our high expectations will enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally and to achieve their full potential. We will offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited availability for development through a wide range of new and exciting first-hand experiences that will give children the opportunity to consolidate, explore

and test their skills, knowledge and understanding alongside existing experiences. We will ensure that children are kept healthy and safe and that they achieve the knowledge and skills they need to start school.

## **The Curriculum**

Our Early Years setting follows the Curriculum as outlined in the 2021 Statutory Framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Our Early Years Curriculum aims to lay a secure foundation for future learning. We engage children in learning from the very start and expect our children to leave us as happy and confident communicators who are curious about the world around them. We use Cornerstone to provide our topic framework and long term plans.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

### **A Unique Child**

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

### **Positive relationships**

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. We value both children and parents and encourage secure communication between home and school, ensuring it is strong.

### **Enabling environments**

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests and stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

### **Learning and development**

Our Foundation Stage has a classroom and two outdoor areas. All our learning environments are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The areas of learning are defined so that children are able to use equipment and resources independently.

## **Areas of Learning**

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the areas of learning to support the children to work towards the final Early Learning Goals.

All seven areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

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, both in the EYFS and into Key Stage 1.

These three areas are the prime areas:

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

Children are also supported through the four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

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

At St Oswald's C of E Primary School, all areas are delivered through a well-planned play based approach with a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage our long, medium and short-term plans ensure that each child has the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area at the appropriate developmental level.

Our long term planning (Cornerstone) ensures coverage so that all children have opportunities to work towards and achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

We follow a half termly topic based approach which allows flexibility to ensure that both children's needs and interests are taken into account. A new book per week ignites the children's excitement and learning.

## **Play**

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. In doing so we can provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning and to help them make sense of the world. Children have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children

learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning and teachers plan activities with these in mind. The characteristics highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics 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. Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they can explore, think creatively and be active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

### **Inclusion**

Our whole school ethos, as well as that of the Early Years Foundation Stage, embraces inclusion. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures. 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 and we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, so that children are able to reach their full potential. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We aim to build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs

We will provide: a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively; a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued; resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping; challenging activities for all children and for those whose ability and understanding are advanced. We will monitor children's progress and take action to provide support as necessary. Where a specific need is suspected we will liaise with the Special Educational Needs co-ordinator and seek advice from outside agencies, such as the speech and language service, the educational psychologist and various other services. We adhere to the Equal Opportunity and Inclusion policies of the school.

**Early Years Pupil Premium** – we will endeavour to identify our least advantaged pupils and inform parents or carers of their opportunity to apply for their child's entitlement to extra funding in school. All extra funding we receive will be used to support areas in which we identify that the child will best

benefit. We will track children's progress to ensure that they are making good progress and to ensure that support is adjusted to target specific areas as the child develops.

## **Assessment**

Throughout Early Years, the children's knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements are assessed and tracked using the developmental stages set out in the document 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)'. These are then input into I Track each term as part of the schools tracking tool. 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 and everyone in class is encouraged to contribute. Our assessment depends on us getting to know our children and, to this end, we gather information from a range of sources; observations of the children in play, in adult led activities, through discussions with parents and carers and through talking to the children. We keep written and photographic evidence to help us build up a picture of children's strengths and achievements and to help us to plan for children's next steps in learning. Every child has a 'Learning Journal' held on Tapestry in which we record our observations and keep samples of the children's work. Learning Journeys are shared at parent meetings. Parents/carers are encouraged to send in information from home about their child's achievements. Throughout their time in Reception, parents/carers are welcomed to share their children's learning; both informally through our 'open door' policy and more formally during parent/teacher consultations, progress reports (twice a year), reading records and through email.

At the start of Early Years, children are assessed to determine a baseline, or starting point, for their future learning. This is completed using the government baseline test; however, staff will also make their own judgements based on the adults' observations of children during activities and play and this data will be used to plan next steps for each child. Once a half-term, staff assess the pupils against various 'I-track' statements generated in school. These statements are based on practitioner knowledge and experience of progress in Early Years, progression documents and the necessary skills to work towards the Early Learning Goals. Any pupil who is not currently working at the expected level is offered additional interventions to support their progress and development.

At the end of the year the EYFS profile provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements including whether they have reached a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD). Children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals (ELG) by the class teacher - who uses the exemplification documents, and their knowledge of the children to make a 'best fit' judgement. The children are assessed as achieving a 1 or 2 against each area of the EYFS curriculum: ● 2 = Expected ELG – meeting the expected level ● 1 = Emerging ELG – not yet meeting the expected level This profile data is the statutory data that is sent to the Local Authority and used to help school benchmark and identify improvements.

Parents/carers will be given information of their child's achievements in a written report at the end of the Summer term.

## **Transitions**

At St Oswald's C of E Primary School, we recognise that starting school and moving up classes has the potential to be a stressful time for both children and parents. To this end we have established a strong procedure for transitions to ensure that our children and parents are as confident and secure as they can be when facing the challenges of each year group.

We hold a meeting in the summer term before the children start school to provide parents with key information, school expectations, knowledge on our curriculum and assessment and advice on how they can help their child. All children are offered visit days. This gives children the security of meeting with their teacher to ensure they get to know the environment well. Parents are given a consultation meeting to ask questions and share knowledge or any concerns they have about their child. At the beginning of the school year, new children are given staggered entry times to ensure that they have the time to feel welcomed and to support them in exploring their new environment. In Reception there is a two-week 'settling in' period to ensure that children have the time to become secure and familiar with the new routines before starting school full-time. During this time, children attend school either a morning or afternoon session which is then reversed the second week.

At the end of Reception, children have the opportunity to meet with their new teachers in their classrooms on four occasions prior to starting Year One. At the end of each school year, teachers have the opportunity to share their knowledge of each child's knowledge, understanding and achievements, including end of year assessment data, with their next class teacher to ensure that all teachers have a well-rounded picture of the children prior to the new school year. During children's time in Early Years, a range of shared activities are planned for all classes to help develop children's confidence and to ensure continuity in experiences throughout the Foundation Stage. Children make use of the whole school facilities, such as the hall, and play areas for appropriate activities to ensure that children are confident and well prepared for moving around the school and for mixing with older children.

The Year 1 environment uses continuous provision for the first term to support children's transition into key stage 1.

During the Reception year, when children are ready, they are gradually introduced to whole school activities such as assemblies and to using the large playground areas.

## **Community Links**

At St Oswald's C of E Primary School, the Early Years Foundation Stage class learning is enriched through encouraging strong links with the local area through local visits to the library, church and Shrovetide's places of interest etc as well as inviting in members of the local community into class to enhance their learning.

## **Partnership with Parents**

At St Oswald's C of E Primary School, we value the importance of the three-way relationship between children, parents and staff. We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator, and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what their child does at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child and to feel comfortable in our setting. We offer parents a variety of learning workshops such as Phonics, to provide advice and information on how they can support their child's learning. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to share information

about their child, to ask questions and to discuss their child's learning with the teachers. Parents are encouraged to join in with their child's education from the very start of their school journey. Parents are encouraged to support children's learning through completing reading records, simple homework activities and various other organised events. Through twice-annual progress reports, parents receive information about their child's assessment and formal parents meeting are offered termly, where parents have the opportunity to speak with the teachers to discuss their child's progress and development, their next steps in learning and to view their child's learning journals. Parents are always welcomed to discuss their children informally at the end of the school day.

### **Health & safety and safeguarding**

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 caring for them. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2021) and we adhere to the school's safeguarding policy. All children have access to fresh water and free fruit from the Government. The children are all eligible for free school meals or can choose to bring in a healthy packed lunch. The Early Years Foundation Stage classroom has access to the toileting facilities and we teach the children the importance of hygiene, hand washing techniques and throughout the year we plan cooking activities to give children experiences of a range of healthy foods.

### **Monitoring of the EYFS**

We are committed to providing the best possible experiences for our children. The EYFS Leader is responsible for monitoring provision, teaching and learning and children's progress. Information is shared with the Head teacher, SLT, Governors and Reception team as appropriate, and any necessary actions are taken. All adults in the Reception team have a key role in children's learning and development. Therefore, they are required to be knowledgeable and skilled in the EYFS curriculum. Any training needs for existing or new members of staff are identified and addressed as part of performance management targets.

This policy will be reviewed and approved by Di Mansfield (EYFS Lead) after 3 years.