

Ilketshall St Lawrence Primary School



Policy for Early Years

Date: November 2019

Review date: November 2020

Aims

- To give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning;
- To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences;
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop, to the full, socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development;
- To encourage children to develop independence within a loving, 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 developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

The Curriculum The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected but three areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive (DfE 2014: 1.3), they support children's learning in all other areas, they are known as the prime areas. The prime areas are;

- Communication and Language – Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking
- Physical Development – Moving and Handling and Self care
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – Making relationships, Managing feelings and behaviour and Self-confidence and Self-awareness

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. The specific areas are;

- Literacy – Reading and Writing
- Mathematics – Numbers and Space, Shape and Measures
- Understanding the World – People and communities, The world and Technology
- Expressive Arts and Design – Exploring and using media and materials and Being Imaginative

Characteristics of Effective Learning

- The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Reception teachers plan activities within the classroom with these in mind. They 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 'discovery and do'
- 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.

Teaching strategies

We ensure there is a balance of activities across the day following the Early Excellence principles of continuous provision, enhanced provision and adult led provision. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some cases the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in a child's game, extending it where possible. By the Summer Term the children will experience more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to year 1.

Play

Learning through play is extremely important to us. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, each week we provide children with a 'hook', which could be a story, an event, a song or an object to inspire their imaginations. This is followed with stimulating and active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practice skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue and engage in their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between child initiated play, which is valued and extended by the adult, and adult led activities is very important to us, as this is how we ensure we are targeting the right area and level of learning for the right child at the right time.

Teaching

This includes in the moment teaching where we assess the learning of each child through their self-chosen tasks and move their learning on through questioning, enhancing, inspiring, setting challenges and modelling. It also includes direct, objective led, experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on. Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place. We set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught key skills and celebrate each other's achievements. In these slots we not only focus on Maths, Literacy, Phonics, and Stories, but also on the children's interests. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still etc... Reading and story time play an important part of the day. We want to make sure our

children see themselves as readers, have a love of books and will leave the EYFS with a bank of stories they know well, both traditional and modern classics. We make sure there is always time for whole class story at the end of the day but also that there are many opportunities to enjoy books at other times.

Planning

We believe that children learn best when they are engaged in what they are learning. Our planning reflects the interests of the children and will flow from daily observations. Medium term planning reflects maths and phonics, school themes, local or international events and celebrations. Every week staff reflect on the weeks learning using daily notes, observations and interactions with children to inform where the learning journey should move to. We reflect and plan for an enabling environment and possible enhancements to continuous provision, progress for maths and phonics, focus activities and the unique child to ensure all children's learning is progressing.

Classroom organisation

Our classroom has defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure children can access them easily. It is set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning. Children are encouraged to be independent learners and select whatever resources they need for their chosen activity. The Classroom includes a writing and mark making area, maths area, creative area, book corner, role play area, construction/small world area and outdoor area. Enhanced provision in some or all of the areas is planned for and added to as the week progresses. The adults may be involved in an adult led activity or they may be observers, interacting in play when they feel it is appropriate to do so. The outdoor area is an important part of the classroom with many children choosing to learn outside. We try to ensure that the range of activities and resources outside reflects different areas of the curriculum and complements but does not replicate the indoor.

Assessment

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. To ensure we have evidence of a child's progress in the EYFS we use the online learning journey TAPESTRY. This involves taking photos of children's learning and observations which create a detailed picture of the child. Staff have their own iPad which is used to capture and note observations and next steps for learning. These are shared with parents to add comments. On entry to Reception we carry out baseline assessments for each child. Throughout the year the Class Teachers submit termly assessment data to the Head Teacher showing each child's development across the seven areas of learning. At the end of the academic year, the class teacher assesses each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) and comments on whether their development within each ELG is either 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding'. This information is also communicated to parents and carers in the child's end of year report.

Partnership with parents and carers

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We want

parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting. We offer a Welcome meeting at the beginning of the school year and all parents receive a handbook full of information and guidance on routines in school and how to support their children with them. To further support the transition process, all children are given the opportunity to participate in "Come and Play" sessions. These take place before the children start school in September. We operate an "open door" policy, where parents can come into school and meet with class teachers and/or the Head teacher at a mutually convenient time. Parents are informed about their child's learning and achievements through TAPESTRY. This also gives them the opportunity to share their child's learning and achievements at home with us. We hold two formal parents' evenings, one in the Autumn Term and one in the Summer term. A school report is also sent home in the Summer Term.

Admissions All children have the opportunity to enter Reception full time in September. They are invited to a number of induction sessions in the Summer term to familiarize themselves with the classroom, school routines and to meet other children that will be starting school with them

Partnership between school and other settings:

Children join Reception with a range of different preschool experiences. Some attend private nursery schools but the majority join us after attending the Preschool on site and we ensure close links are made between all preschool and reception staff members. In this way, we ensure the smooth transition of our children every year. TAPESTRY records from pre-school are passed on to our staff, this has been beneficial to the children, as it has provided a continuum of the children's early learning.